

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Wederkeering Met Gejuich

“En de vrijgekochten des Heeren zullen wederkeeren en tot Sion komen met gejuich, en eeuwige blijdschap zal op hun hoofd wezen; vroolijkheid en blijdschap zullen zij verkrijgen, maar droefenis en zuchting zullen wegvlieden.”

Jesaja 35:10.

Het is moeilijk om te spreken over de eeuwigheid.

Ik heb wel eens gezegd: Jesaja 34 is een beschrijving van den eersten dag in de hel, en Jesaja 35 een beschrijving van den eersten dag in den hemel.

Gij weet het, en ik stem U volmondig toe, dat men zoo niet spreken kan over de eeuwige rampzaligheid, en de eeuwige gelukzaligheid. Er zijn daar geen dagen die eerst zijn, om dan gevolgd te worden door andere, verdere dagen. De eeuwigheid is zoo geheel anders dan de tijd.

En toch, ik weet niet hoe ik mij anders uitdrukken zal over de waarheden die ons in die twee hoofdstukken vermeld worden. Het gaat daar toch over het afsluiten van de geschiedenis en het begin in de nieuwe wereld? Bovendien, de Heere schijnt ons er in voor te gaan, om over die eeuwige dingen te spreken als “de *dag* der wraak des Heeren, een *jaar* der vergeldingen om Sions twistzaak.” (34:8)

Laat mij het dan zóó mogen zeggen, dat wanneer ik spreek van een eersten dag in de hel of de eerste dag in den hemel, ik die tijdsaanduiding gebruik in oneigenlijken zin (en omdat ik niet weet hoe mij anders en juister uit te drukken).

In elk geval, er komt een tijdstip, dat het laatste tijdstip genaamd zal worden. Gods volk spreekt vaak van *den jongsten dag*. En wat er dan komt wordt ons in deze twee hoofdstukken verhaald, in het 34ste hoofdstuk ten overstaan der goddeloozen, en in het 35ste hoofdstuk ten overstaan van Gods volk.

De eersten zullen “wonen” in de hel; en dat is ontzettend. (vers 17, laatste woord). In dien dag der wrake zullen hunne beken veranderd worden in pek en hun stof in zwavel, en hunne aarde zal tot brandend pek worden. Noch des daags, noch des nachts zal het uitgebluscht worden, tot in eeuwigheid zal zijn rook opgaan, “van geslacht tot geslacht zal het woest zijn, tot in eeuwigheid der eeuwigheden zal niemand daar doorgaan!” In één woord: verschrikkelijk!

Dat is een symbolische, figuurlijke beschrijving van de hel en die daar “wonen” zullen. Evenwel, leest het geheele hoofdstuk.

\* \* \* \*

En dan komt het vijf-en-dertigste hoofdstuk. En dat is alles lieflijk en schoon.

Het begin wordt moeilijk lezen voor het Jeruzalem van vandaag. Er staat maar liefst, dat de kerk van Christus zich verblijden zal om de verdoemenis der goddeloozen. Dat staat er in figuurlijke taal. Letterlijk: “De woestijn en de dorre plaatsen zullen hierover vroolijk zijn, en de wildernis zal zich verheugen en zal bloeien als eene roos.”

Ziet ge, ten tijde der benauwdheid, in de bedeeeling der zonde, is de naam der kerk: woestijn en dorre plaatsen, en wildernis. Paulus beschrijft het ietwat anders. Die zegt, dat wij gelijk zijn aan “uitvaagsels der wereld en aller afschrapsel tot nu toe.” En David zegt van de kerk, dat zij schreit, doch straks zal juichen brengende de schoven.

Het dorre, woeste en wilde in deze beschrijving ziet op al den jammer die het deel is van de kerk hier op aarde. Wij worden gehaat, en in dien zin gedood, den ganschen dag. Wij zijn Koningskinderen, doch worden gevonden in lompen gehuld en in groot gebrek.

Doch als de jongste dag aangebroken en beëindigd is, en de eeuwige dingen komen, dan zal de kerk zich verblijden over het rechtvaardige oordeel van God over hen die de kerk benauwd hebben. Denkt hier aan het lied van Mozes en het volk bij den oever der Roode Zee. En Mirjam antwoordde de mannen met de vrouwen in het telkens wederkeerende refrein: De Heere

heeft het paard en zijn ruiter in de zee geworpen!

En tegelijkertijd zal een groote schoonheid en lieflijkheid gegeven worden aan de kerk. En zij zal zich zeer verblijden.

Luistert: "zij zal lustig bloeien en zich verheugen, ja met verheuging, en juichen: de heerlijkheid van Libanon is haar gegeven, het sieraad van Karmel en Saron; zij zullen zien de heerlijkheid des Heeren, het sieraad onzes Gods."

Het is al juichen, met blijdschap en verheuging!

Een terugkeer tot God en Zijn Gezalfde!

\* \* \* \*

Er komt een wederkeer met gejuich!

Hier gaan mijn gedachten boven het eerste Paradijs uit. En toch denk is aan den hof van Eden. Eerst dacht ik aan Eden's Hof en toen ging het hooger, al hooger.

Ziet ge: het is toch een wederkeeren tot God!

De Bijbel spreekt van "verzoening." De verlatene vrouw werd weer opgezocht, hare hoererij en overspel werd vergeven, uitgewischt; en zij werd met sieraad overladen. De asch verdween en sieraad kwam in haar plaats.

Doch, o wonder! het sieraad is veel schooner dan dat van Eden's Hof.

Ge kunt er van op aan, dat Adam en Eva gelukkig waren in het eerste Paradijs. Zij hebben daar ook gejubeld en van groote blijdschap in den Heere gezongen.

Evenwel, wat we nu hebben in Jezus Christus is oneindig grooter, schooner, lieflijker, en schitterender dan Eden ooit kon geven.

De wederkeer van het volk van Jesaja 35 is een opgang in de hoogte!

Het volk, dat de koninklijke profeet zag, wordt opgenomen uit de diepte, en gezet op de hoogten van den berg van Gods heiligheid.

En op den weg naar de hoogten van den berg Gods verliezen zij alles wat hen herinnerde aan de diepte. Aldaar zal geen smart of ellende meer zijn. Voor het slappe en struikelende komt versterking en vastheid. De onbedachtzamen van hart wordt toegeroepen om sterk te zijn en niet te vreezen. Der blinden oogen worden opengemaakt en met hunne ooren zullen de dooven hooren. De kreupele springt als een hert en de stommen juichen. In plaats van het dorre en het droge en het dorstige komen de wateren en de beken die uitbarsten tot laving en verfrissching. Op dien weg zullen zelfs de dwazen niet dwalen.

Een opgang in de hoogten naar Sion! En zij zullen alle verschrikkingen achter zich laten, want de leeuw en alle verscheurend gedierte zal op dien weg niet wandelen. De duivelen en de goddeloozen hebben geen plaats in Gods Huis.

Oneindig groot en glorieus zijn de triumfen van het

volk Israels, des zaads Abrahams Zijns knechts.

Ziet, ze keeren weder met groot gejuich!

En van het tinne des Tempels Gods weerklinkt het eeuwig welkom!

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeer met verheuging en blijdschap!

Ge kunt de jubel van zulk geluk beluisteren in hun Naam: ze zijn de vrijgekochten des Heeren!

Vrijgekocht, wat wil dat zeggen?

Letterlijk wil het zeggen, dat men losgesneden werd, en, overdrachtelijk, dat er een prijs voor ons betaald is waardoor wij vrij kwamen van een vorig gevang.

Historisch ziet dit zeker op het feit, dat door toedoen van Jehovah het historisch Israel vrij kwam van de ballingschap in Babel. Er kwam dan toch een tijd, dat de lange en bange zeventig jaren van ballingschap ten einde geloopt waren. En daar kwam de heilsmare: Zegt tot de steden van Juda: Hier is Uw God!

Neen, geheel Israel is niet teruggegaan naar Juda en Jeruzalem. Er waren honderdduizenden die liever in het vreeselijke Babel achterbleven. Dat waren de ontrouwe Sionieten. Ze hadden het goud van Babel liever dan de schatten van Gods trouwverbond.

Maar er was een overblijfsel: ter nauwernood een vijftigduizend die onder leiding van Zerubbabel, Nehemiah Ezrah en Jozua zich met popelende harten naar Juda spoedden. En reikhalzend keken zij uit naar het vergezicht van de heuvelen van het heilige land.

En God had het gedaan. Dat was zeer duidelijk geworden. Nehemiah bad voor het aangezicht van dien man, dien koning van het wreede land. En God hoorde. En Hij wrocht in het hart van goddelooze mensen die hen lieten trekken met zilver en met goud belaan naar het oude vaderland. En de plannen waren gereed: we gaan Jeruzalem weer bouwen. En: de tempel zal herrijzen!

Ze waren de vrijgekochten des Heeren.

Doch dit alles was type van een grootere en meer lieflijke vrijkoop.

Israel-Jeruzalem, het overblijfsel in de dagen van Nehemiah, is type van het Israel Gods aller eeuwen. Hun naam is Gods volk.

En dat geestelijke Israel wordt losgesneden van het vleeschelijke Israel, en verder, van Adam's wortel en wordt Gode gekocht voor een grooten prijs. We zullen wel doen om naar Petrus te luisteren die ons toeroept, dat wij gekocht zijn, duur gekocht, voor een prijs die niet bestaat in goud of zilver, maar in het hartebloed van Jezus Christus, den Heere.

Vrijgekochten des Heeren!

Eerst, er zijn er die niet vrijgekocht zijn. Velen zijn geroepen, maar weinigen uitverkoren. Ziet ge dit, en siddert ge bij het zien van de ontelbare massa die niet vrijgekocht werden, dan zegt God tegen U: Juicht, vromen, om Uw lot! Verblijdt U steeds in God! We

zullen van zulke verblijding nog meer hooren.

Tweedens, dat zij vrijgekocht werden vanuit een vreeselijke slavernij, de slavernij der zonde.

Derdens, vrijgekocht vanuit een vreeselijke toekomst: zóó grooten dood, de eeuwige verdoemenis.

Vierdens, dat God besluit wie vrijgekocht worden, en wie niet. Let er toch op, dat er bijstaat: vrijgekochten *des Heeren!*

Vijfde, dat zij zelfs niet met al betaalden tot hunne vrijmaking. God alleen betaalt den prijs. Jezus Christus is de prijs tot Uwe vrijmaking, volk van God! Gij doet daar niets toe.

Zesde, dat wij voorts schuldenaars Gods en schuldenaars van Christus zijn. Wat zal ik met Gods gunsten overlaan, dien trouwen Heer voor Zijn gena vergelden? En de Heere zal U het antwoord geven: Ik zal den beker der verlossingen opnemen en den Naam des Heeren aanroepen! Ja, en ge komt er nooit mee klaar. Tot in alle eeuwen der eeuwigheden zult ge blijven roepen en jubelen van dank voor dien losprijs. De inhoud van den beker der verlossingen is eeuwig. Hoe diep is de Liefde van God in het Aangezicht van Jezus, Uw Heer?

Eindelijk, dat ge dan ook oneindig gelukkig zijt in die verlossingen en vrijkoop. Ze worden nooit moede of mat van het groote roepen voor Gods aangezicht.

Ziet het: ze keeren weder met gejuich!

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeering met gejuich!

De tekst zegt: en tot Sion komen met gejuich, en eeuwige blijdschap zal op hun hoofd wezen.

Sion is letterlijk een berg.

En op dien berg staat de Tempel en het Koningshuis van David.

En geestelijk beteekent Sion dan ook tweeërlei: Het Koningshuis zegt ons dat God als Koning woont temidden van Zijn volk die Hem in liefde gehoorzamen; en de Tempel zegt ons, dat God en Zijn volk tezamen wonen onder één dak. De Heere heeft het dak van Zijn Huis over onze hoofden getrokken, en daarom zijn we voorts veilig en zalig. Ik hoor de refreinen van het volk van alle eeuwen: "Daar zal ons 't goede van Uw woning, verzaden reis op reis!"

Wilt ge het nog nauwer nemen, dan zegt ge: Sion is de plaats waar Jezus Christus Zijn hartebloed gaf, dus Golgotha, de kruispaal. Want het is door den prijs van dat Bloed, dat we met God samen kunnen wonen. Van verre zag Israel's zanger dat Sion, en profeteerde: De gerechtigheid en de vrede zullen elkaar kussen! Permitteer me om het nog wat anders te zeggen: Sion is het plekje der aarde waar hemel en aarde elkander raakten. Doch neem Uwe schoenen van Uwe voeten, want ge staat op heilig land: waar dat plekje gedrukt wordt vloeit het heilig bloed van Jezus.

Maar ik hoor zingen, zingen.

Ze komen aan, ze komen aan, ze keeren weder tot Sion. Het is een volk, dat vroeger in den hof van Eden woonde, doch nu oneindig hooger opgetrokken wordt naar een plaats die door den Heiligen Geest genoemd wordt: Het Paradijs Gods! En weer eens: dat is Sion.

Wie zou dan niet zingen, neen, juichen. Men juicht als het zingen vanwege blijdschap niet meer genoeg is om te uiten al de blijdschap van het hart. Daar verheffen zich te stemmen, daar wordt het al lieflijker in tempo en klankgeslacht. Daar komen groote variaties in 't zingen. En de Engelen Gods luisteren. Die weten van geen wederkeer tot Sion.

En eeuwige blijdschap op hun hoofd.

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeer met gejuich!

Vroolijkheid en blijdschap zullen zij verkrijgen, maar droefenis en zuchting zullen wegvlieden!

Droefenis en zuchting doet denken aan de woestijn, de verscheurende leeuwen die hen omringden, het stomme, het kreupele, slappe en matte van weleer.

Droefenis, dieper nog, is resultaat van besef, dat wij gezondigd hebben tegen den God van Sion, en daarom schuldig zijn, diepschuldig, zóó schuldig, dat wij weggeworpen moesten worden met een eeuwige verwerping. Dat zeggen ze tegen God geduriglijk: O God, wees mij arme zondaar genadig!

En zuchting is de uiting van groot verlangen. Als men verlangt en hunkert dan zucht men. Het is het reikhalzend uitzien naar de verhooging, naar de bergen van Gods heiligheid.

Zulk zuchten wordt soms vertolkt in de psalmen: God des levens, ach, wanneer, zal ik naderen voor Uw oogen? In Uw huis Uw naam verhoogen?

Nu dan, die droefenis en die zuchting zullen wegvlieden. Wonder, waarom hier gesproken wordt van *wegvlieden*. Dat doet men als er gevaar in aantocht is. Als de vijand ons op de hielen zit. Welnu, zoo is het. God is de vijand van onze smarten. Leest Openb. 20 en let er op, dat God net maar ziet naar de oude dingen, en zij vlieden heen, en er is geen plaats voor dezelfde gevonden.

En dan komt daarvoor in de plaats: vroolijkheid en blijdschap!

Vroolijkheid en blijdschap!

Dat zijn twee woorden die Uw hemel, daarboven bij God, vertolken.

De eerste is uiting van de laatste. Als Uw hart en wezen blijde is, dan uit ge het in groote vroolijkheid.

En zei Jesaja niet, dat God zulk volk gaarne ontmoet?

Als ge in den hemel aankomt, dan staat God klaar om U te begroeten, te begroeten. O, die groet Gods!

G. Vos.

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EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. GERRIT VOS, Hudsonville, Michigan.

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## EDITORIALS

### E. A. P. R. Y. P. C.

The Eighth Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention was held at Holland, Michigan on August 18 and 19.

I will not give a factual report of all that transpired at this convention: the regular reporter or reporters will take care of that and bring their findings to you in the Young People's periodical, *Beacon Lights*.

I would just muse a bit on what I saw and heard.

First of all, I would congratulate the Holland Young People's Society in general, and their energetic leader, the Rev. Bernard Kok in very particular, for the splendid way in which they took care of the things of this Convention! Everything ran smoothly and pleasantly so that no discord of any kind marred the program from beginning to end.

Holland and its environments lends itself for a convention of this kind. That was noticeable especially at night when the Rev. H. Hoeksema delivered his lecture on *Our Calling To Be Specific*. We were gathered in the open air in Kollen's Park on the beautiful shore of Black Lake. The weather was just right for an open air meeting of this kind, neither too hot nor too cold. And under the deep blue canopy of heaven, in the midst of the luxurious growth of God's green vegetation of tree and herb and grass, we heard the Word of our Covenant God. The audience was composed of young and old, from the Pacific coast to Michigan, ministers and their people, all of them grouped around the speaker's stand. Nights such as these leave an unforgettable imprint upon one's heart and mind. This night reminded me of the first field day which we organized as Protestant Reformed Churches. But one of the differences between it and this night is that then there were at least three times as many people present. Everybody came that day and evening. But 25 years have gone by. And with it has come the sad truth that the love of many has grown cold.

I cannot say much about the business sessions of the young people since I have not attended all their sessions. But what I have seen of it witnesses of their industry and zeal for the cause of the Prot. Ref. Young People, which cause is the same as yours and mine. More power to you, young people!

After lunch on the second and last day of the convention, it was my privilege and pleasure to speak to the young people at Tunnel Park where this part of the activities was held. I will confess that I dreaded to speak on that occasion. I thought that the several hours of play would not mix with the testimony such

as I had prepared for them. But I was in for a surprise. The young people would not hear of the elimination of this speech. And I know that you would have been thrilled, even as I was, if you could have seen the serious attention which characterized their listening.

In the evening of the second day we met in the Christian High School of Holland for the annual banquet. At this occasion there were 290 young people present. And the Rev. Hanko gave us a speech on THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS: A Mighty Challenge, which was listened to with interest by all.

One word of advice to the Federation Board when they will meet again for the planning of the ninth Convention. And it is this: try to have some worthwhile number on the program for the afternoon of the second day, say, a round table discussion or something like that. There was too much time for play, and I am sure that the young people would enjoy a number like that.

In closing I would say that I am deeply grateful to my covenant God that through His grace He has wrought all this which I might see and hear. It is a marvel that in this day of rioting and pleasure seeking, our youth loves to have their society meetings and annual conventions. How literally God fulfills His wondrous word: "and they shall not depart from the mouth of thy seed, nor from the mouth of thy seed's seed. . . ." G. Vos.

## Rededication

We must rededicate ourselves!

I hear you say: we *have* dedicated ourselves to our Covenant God and to His service! Why then should we *rededicate* ourselves?

The answer is easy: we have taken a vacation.

Now the taking of a vacation is good; it is even necessary. The man that is always in the harness is begging for trouble. There is a Holland proverb which says: "De boog kan niet altijd gespannen zijn", which means in our language: The bow cannot always be in tension. And so, man cannot always be in tension. There must be relaxation after a period of hard labour. And so we have our vacations.

But I am persuaded that our vacations are altogether too long.

Take the case of our catechism classes. In some of our churches there are no more than six months of catechetical instruction. And it is difficult to bring the child's mind under the censure of obedience and close attention and application after so long a time of leisure.

Now I do not think that my writing on this matter will shorten vacations. America is used to long vacations. Note the three months of vacation of our pri-

mary schools. In the Netherlands we had three weeks of vacation, and that was all. Therefore they crowded in six years what they teach here in eight years. Besides, the results of 6 years of intensive study in Europe is more than equivalent to the 8 years of study here. The vacations are too long. It takes the pupil *and the teacher* too long to come back into the shape he must be in for proper giving or proper receiving.

Well, our long vacation will be over by the time you read this.

Hence, we must rededicate ourselves again to the tasks that lie at hand.

Not as though we are able of ourselves to dedicate or rededicate ourselves to the living God. We know that "The Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." We know and believe and teach that He must work in us first if we are to move at all.

But the Holy Scriptures also teach that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth*. Oh yes, God works in us the power to will and to do, but He calls us to "work out your own salvation!"

And therefore, we must rededicate ourselves, and that along the whole line of christian endeavour.

We must rededicate ourselves most of all to Christian Instruction. Catechism and Christian day-school should have the love of all our heart. We should rededicate ourselves to have the children attend catechism class *always*. And they should know their lesson and song *always*. Father and mother must take care of this. We must rededicate ourselves to Christian Education. We must attend the meetings that are called by the School Board. We must pay the bills attending that instruction, and do so promptly. If it is a question of choice, we must forego all things rather than to let the bills for Christian Instruction stand on the books of the treasurer. The old faithful mothers in the Netherlands would actually count their pennies and put them one by one in the little box so that on Monday morning Johnny could take the Christian School money to teacher.

We must rededicate ourselves to society life. It is good that father goes to Men's Society every week, and that mother goes to Ladies' Society every week or every other week. There they learn how to ask questions about the Holy Word of God and how to **answer them**; there they are strengthened in the principles of true Protestant Reformed religion; there they grow by giving and receiving. Eph. 4:16.

We must rededicate ourselves to good reading material. Buy good books, and read them. The long evenings will soon be with us. Spend some time reading good literature, and you will grow in knowledge and understanding. There is too much gadding about in our superficial age. Let our Protestant Reformed

people be the happy exception. It is your heritage and calling.

Let us rededicate ourselves to our Covenant God. It is His calling who says: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Heb. 12:12, 13. G. Vos.

## Four More Calvin Commentaries

The reader will remember that some time ago I announced the mammoth task undertaken by the local book publisher Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. At that occasion I announced that four volumes were ready at that time. They are the Epistle to the Romans, to the Hebrews, and the first two volumes of the prophet Isaiah. Well, at this time it is my pleasure to announce that four more volumes have come off the press. They are: the other two volumes of Isaiah, and I and II Corinthians. All four volumes are \$3.50 each. The commentary on the epistle to the Romans is priced at \$4.50, because of its larger size. All the others are \$3.50.

Now that our various societies will resume their labor for the coming winter season, an announcement like this has added significance. I have noted time and again that our people employ the wrong kind of commentaries. When I said as much, they would ask: Well, do you know of a better commentary than the one I have at home? And I would say: Yes, but it is out of print. You should have a set of Calvin's Commentaries.

But the situation is already different today. Today there are eight books for sale of this splendid commentary. And they are written on some of the most important books of Holy Writ: Romans, Hebrews, Corinthians and Isaiah.

I would very strongly advise every one of our societies to buy a set of these books as soon as they will meet again this fall.

And all of my readers who are able to afford the purchase price of the commentary ought to do so.

They owe this to themselves and to their children, and even their children's children. My set is one hundred years old, and I am persuaded that the present new set is of better quality as far as binding and paper is concerned than the other set.

A young man of my acquaintance read my first announcement. His household budget did not allow the monthly expense of a Calvin book. Hence, he gave up smoking; saved in this way about \$3.50; and now has eight new Calvin books in his library.

G. Vos.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 24

1.

The Repudiation Of All Good Works. (cont.)

Just let us consider, for example, the question of prayer. It is supposed to be the very best of our works, the highest expression of our thankfulness to God. In it we are supposed to seek the glory of God above all. In our prayers we should seek the kingdom of God first, trusting that all things will be added unto us. By prayer we express the desire that the will of God be performed on earth as it is in heaven, that all things, even we ourselves, be made subservient to that will of God. In our prayers we are supposed to seek not the things of this world, not things carnal, but things spiritual, and to be satisfied with mere bread for this day. By prayer we express that we are heartily sorry for our sins, and that we seek forgiveness in the blood of Christ, at the same time avowing that we forgive one another even as God in Christ forgives us our trespasses. And in our prayers we express that we earnestly desire to be delivered from evil, that we look for perfect sanctification, and that God will not lead us into temptation. All this is expressed in the perfect prayer which the Lord taught us. But who would dare to maintain that this best of our works is not defiled with sin? How often are our desires carnal instead of spiritual? How often do we seek things entirely different from the glory of God, the kingdom of God, and the performance of the will of God? How often, in my prayers, must I fight back the desire to commit the very sin for which I bow my knees to seek forgiveness? And how often do I seek the temptation at the very time that I pray for strength to resist it?

O, indeed, it is the very experience of every Christian, of every true child of God, that when he would do good, evil is always present with him.

How, then, can anything but the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me, and received by faith, be my righteousness before God?

Only that righteousness is always perfect and always the same.

Only in that righteousness I have peace with God.

## 2.

## The Reward Of Grace.

The next question of our Heidelberg Catechism concerns the reward which God will give to those that are faithful to the end. The question is evidently put in the form of an implied objection: "What! do not our good works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?" This objection is raised by Roman Catholics. In the preceding question and answer the Catechism had strongly repudiated the notion that our good works can be either part or the whole of our righteousness before God. We are righteous by faith only, without works; this evidently implies that our good works do not and cannot merit anything at all. For if they merited anything we would be righteous by them, at least in part. And the Roman Catholic Church must have nothing of this repudiation of the real merit of our work. It argues that our good works are certainly rewarded by God. All Scripture emphasizes this. It follows from this, according to the Roman Catholics, that they must be meritorious. God rewards us according to our works. The Heidelberg Catechism nevertheless denies this: it does so, not by contradicting the truth that God rewards the righteous, for it admits that this evidently is plainly taught by Holy Writ. But it states that this reward is of grace only, and not of merit.

The question is, however, what is meant by this.

If we consult Scripture, we will discover that it frequently mentions the fact that God rewards His faithful servants. In general, the Bible emphasizes the truth that God will reward every man according to his works; and specifically, it frequently speaks of a great reward for those that suffer with Christ, as all the faithful people of God must suffer for righteousness' sake in the midst of a hostile world.

As to the first, that in the day of the Son of Man every man shall be rewarded according as his work shall be, this is plainly taught by Christ Himself in Matthew 16, verse 27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." In Romans 2:6-11 we read: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God." In I Corinthians 3:8 the apostle writes about those that labor in the vineyard of God: "Now he that planteth and he that water-

eth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." And in II Corinthians 5:10 we read the well-known words: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." In Revelation 11, verses 17 and 18, we hear the Church, by the mouth of the twenty-four elders, praising God in the following words: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." And again, in Rev. 20:12, John beholds a vision of the great judgment, and he "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." And to quote no more, the Lord declares in Revelation 22:12: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

This is also evident from the glorious promises that are given to the faithful servants that overcome in the struggle for righteousness' sake in the midst of the world in Rev. 2 and 3. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2:7. To the church in tribulation in Smyrna, the Lord promises: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that we may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. 2:10, 11. And the church in Pergamos, which was evidently lax in discipline and suffered them which held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which the Lord hated, the Lord encourages by the following promise: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17. To the faithful in Thyatira the Lord promises: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morningstar." Rev. 2:26-28. The church in Sardis, which the Lord, together with its

minister, characterizes by the words, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," nevertheless contains a few names of them which have not defiled their garments, and to them the Lord promises: "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." And to all that overcome in Sardis the Lord promises: "The same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:4, 5. And the small but faithful church in Philadelphia receives the promise: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. 3:12. And to those in the church of Laodicea who hear Jesus' voice and will open the door to Him, he promises: "I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:20-21.

Everywhere Scripture comforts and encourages those that must suffer for righteousness' sake by holding before them the glorious eternal reward. Thus the Lord Jesus Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. 5:10-12. He admonishes His disciples that they shall not do their good works before men, but before their Father which is in heaven, in the following words: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee

openly." Matt. 6:1-6. In Rom. 8:17 suffering with Christ is evidently presented as an indispensable condition to glory and to the reward which shall be given to the faithful saints: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." The eternal inheritance itself is presented as a reward for the faithful service of Christ in Col. 3:23, 24: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." And the apostle Paul puts his trust in the righteous Judge of heaven and earth for the reward which He shall give him in the day of Christ, as he writes: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Tim. 4:7, 8. And to quote no more, we read that Moses had respect unto the recompence of the reward when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26.

From these passages we learn the following: first, that in the day of the Lord God will reward every man according to his works, and that, too, by a righteous judgment over the good and the evil both. Secondly, we learn that this reward, for the righteous, is principally eternal life, nothing less than the eternal glorious inheritance. Thirdly, we learn that there will be gradations in the reward of glory; not all the saints in glory will be alike; they shall not all occupy the same place. There will, no doubt, be a tremendous difference between the apostle Paul's position in glory and that of the murderer on the cross. These differences and gradations will be according to each man's capacity for glory and the enjoyment of it. All the saints will no doubt be completely filled with blessing, but one has a greater capacity for blessing and glory than another. And besides, these gradations in glory will be according to each man's work and suffering for Christ's sake in the world. And finally, we learn that the hope of the reward may, indeed, encourage us and spur us on to greater faithfulness, especially as we must suffer for righteousness' sake in the midst of a hostile world.

But again, the question arises: how must we understand all this?

Is not, after all, the Roman Catholic view as to the

meritoriousness of our good works strongly supported by Scripture?

Are we after all saved by our own righteousness, at least in part?

Doctor A. Kuyper, *E Voto*, Vol. II, pp. 377 ff., offers a peculiar explanation of the reward of grace.

First of all, he emphasizes that the reward of grace does not include the blessing of eternal life itself. He argues that eternal life, the glorious eternal inheritance, is merited by Christ's atoning death, by His active and passive obedience, that it is given to all the elect, and that principally it is for all the same. I quote and translate: "In this connection we must, from the start, postulate a difference between eternal life itself and a particular honor or enjoyment in this eternal life. Without this distinction we cannot advance one step in the right direction here. For if it is established that Christ gained eternal life for all His redeemed, and that not certain redeemed receive a certain reward of grace in addition to this, then it is clear that this reward of grace cannot be the same as eternal life. For this eternal life is received by all; this reward of grace, however, is only for those that have a claim to it. Eternal life is essentially the same for all, but the reward of grace is for each one, personally, different. Eternal life also a child that is taken away in infancy receives, when it is elect; but the reward of grace a child like that never receives."

Secondly, according to Kuyper, the reward, therefore, refers only to the different degrees of glory. All have eternal life, all enter into glory, but not all have the same capacity for the enjoyment of glory, nor do they all occupy the same place in the eternal kingdom. And it is, according to Kuyper, this difference that is the reward of grace. This reward is therefore not for all the saints, but only for certain particular redeemed children of God.

Thirdly, this extra reward of glory that some of the saints receive is freely bestowed upon them by God. It must be evident, on the basis of Kuyper's theory, that it is not based upon the merits of Christ, on His atoning death. Christ merited eternal life, and He merited that for all the elect without distinction. But this extra glory and enjoyment of eternal life that is the privilege of some is not included in this: God bestows it freely upon those whom He appointed for this extra gift of grace. He uses the illustration of a parent who, of course, expects obedience and willing service of all his children from love, but who sometimes promises them a reward to encourage them or to honor their love and their devotion. So God promises an extra reward of grace to those that serve Him faithfully in the world, and especially to those that must suffer for righteousness' sake.

This, then, is Kuyper's explanation of the reward of grace.

However, we cannot agree with this attempted solution of the problem.

First of all, because it evidently would explain the reward of grace apart from the death and obedience of Christ. And this is impossible. All that we have and ever will have in eternal glory certainly flows from the sacrifice of Christ as its meritorious cause; apart from the death of Christ we have nothing. For it is only in and through that death that our sins are forgiven and that, therefore, we are righteous before God. And only upon those that are righteous in Christ, whose righteousness is imputed to them, and who receive this righteousness by a true faith, will God bestow all the gifts of grace, not only eternal life, but also the glory which Kuyper considers to be an extra gift of grace to some of the elect.

Secondly, he postulates a mechanical and entirely arbitrary division and separation between life as such and the different degrees of glory, which, according to Kuyper, some of the saints enjoy. We realize that this is an erroneous conception. These different degrees of glory are not something extra, outside and apart from eternal life, something that is added to it; but they constitute simply the full measure of glory of which each individual saint is capable. For the same reason we cannot agree that the reward of grace is something that is bestowed only upon some particular elect, while the great multitude of the saints in glory do not enjoy it but simply have eternal life. Scripture makes no such distinction; nor does the Heidelberg Catechism speak of such a distinction in the present question and answer. All the saints, without distinction from the least to the greatest, undoubtedly perform a certain measure of good works; and all will receive the reward of grace according to their works.

Thirdly, this theory does not explain those passages of Scripture that tell us that the reward will be according as each man's work shall be, is entirely general. It includes all men. It cannot refer to some that, according to Kuyper, receive an extra gift, an extra enjoyment of glory, while it does not refer to the multitude of saints that only have eternal life and nothing more.

And finally, it plainly contradicts those passages of Holy Writ that plainly teach that eternal life itself is a reward of grace. Thus, the Lord said in answer to a question of Peter what the disciples should receive who have forsaken all: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. 19:28, 29. And to the church of Smyrna the Lord promises: "Be thou faithful unto

death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10. And the meaning is evidently that they shall receive eternal life as a crown of victory. And many more passages might be quoted to prove that eternal life itself, the eternal inheritance of glory, is a reward of grace.

For all these reasons we cannot agree with the theory which Dr. Kuyper proposes of the reward of grace.

We shall, therefore, have to look for a solution in another direction.

And then we wish to proceed from the evident truth of Scripture that all that ever shall be given to us of eternal life and glory is merited for us by Christ's death and obedience. He alone merited glory and eternal life. For as the Son of God in human flesh he humbled Himself deeply. In the form of God He never thought of the robbery to be equal with God; on the contrary, He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And by this humiliation and sacrifice on the cross, by this complete emptying of Himself, He alone merited the reward of glory. For so we read in Phil. 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And this glory He merited not only for Himself, but for all whom the Father hath given Him.

He merited for us perfect righteousness, even the forgiveness of sins. This grace is fundamental, as we have explained before. Without the imputed righteousness of Christ we have no right to anything at all. Without it we have no right to be delivered from the dominion of sin, no right to dwell as free sons in Father's house, no right to the delight of serving Him and to walk in all good works. For without righteousness, even without the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we are nothing but legal slaves of sin and of the devil. But in the perfect obedience of Christ we have the right to be delivered from this awful slavery and to enjoy the freedom with which Christ liberates us. All this is grace, the free grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

But there is more. For even as Christ, on the basis of His atoning death and obedience, has the right to deliver us, so He also actually delivers us, liberates us, from the dominion of sin and death and translates us into the state and condition of free sons of God, who principally delight in doing His will. So we read in Rom. 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and

death." By His Spirit Christ Himself dwells in us, He regenerates us and gives us new life. He calls us by His Spirit into the fellowship of His everlasting covenant. And even as He justifies us, so He also sanctifies us, causes us to hate all sin and to flee from it, and to have a principal delight in all good works. Thus Paul writes in II Cor. 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And again, in Eph. 2:4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even as by the grace of Christ *for* us we are justified and made perfectly righteous by His imputed righteousness, so by the grace of Christ *in* us we are delivered from sin and its dominion and in principle perfectly sanctified. And so we have nothing to boast; there is nothing meritorious in all this on our part. It is all grace from beginning to end. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9.

It should be plain, then, that all our good works are fruits which Christ bears in us and through us. Without Him we are nothing and can do nothing. As He Himself declares in John 15:4, 5: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Besides, our good works are gifts of God to us, that in the deepest sense flow from God's eternal predestination and good pleasure. For so we read in Eph. 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Thus, then, we would explain the answer of the Heidelberg Catechism that the reward is not of merit, but of grace. And yet, also in the case of the redeemed saints it is perfectly true that each one shall receive according as his works shall be. But it should be remembered that all the sins of the saints are perfectly blotted out by the death and perfect obedience of Christ Jesus our Lord, and that they can never more be imputed unto them. And secondly, the works of the saints are the fruits of Christ dwelling in them, which God ordained for them before the foundation of the world, and in which they are privileged to walk.

In the way of good works and of suffering with Christ we must enter into glory. But it is all through grace, and never of works.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!

H. Hoeksema.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### God's Covenant and The Promise

(Galatians 3)

We must bear in mind the line of the apostle's reasoning in this third chapter of the epistle to the Galatians. He contends that we must be justified either out of the law or through faith. Both are impossible. The Galatians had begun with the Spirit. They now attempted to be made perfect through the works of the law. False teachers had bewitched these Galatians and had seduced them so that they once more were in bondage to the law as in the Old Dispensation.

In the first half of this chapter, to which we called attention in our previous article on this portion of the Word of God, the apostle had clearly demonstrated to the Galatians the fallacy of their position. Abraham, whose children the Jews boasted to be, was justified, not by the law, but by faith. In Abraham not the natural Jews but the believers would be counted for the seed and be blessed. As many as are under the law are under the curse—hence, to fulfill the law is, therefore, a hopeless task. Neither is this fulfilment of the law necessary because Christ has redeemed us from the law, having become a curse for us. And Christ redeemed us in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*.

In the verses 15-24 the apostle continues along this line of reasoning and sets forth the certainty and unconditional character of the promises of God. Sure and unconditional is the promise of the Lord because it is not dependent upon or in any way affected by the law. These verses, 15-24, read as follows: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 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. Is the law then against the promises of God? God

forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

*The Promise Made To Christ, The Seed  
Of Abraham. — verse 16.*

Verse 16 reads: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." We must, of course, maintain the literal interpretation of this text. Many accuse the apostle of rabbinical hairsplitting here, because he would base his argument upon a single letter, the singular 'seed' instead of the plural 'seeds'. This, however, is surely conceit. Paul speaks in this text by inspiration and it is none other than the Spirit of the Living God Who inspires him to write as he does. We must, therefore, maintain this particular word of Scripture that the promise was given to Abraham and to his *seed*, and this seed is Christ.

There is fundamentally no difference between the promise of verse 16 and the blessing of Abraham elsewhere mentioned in this chapter. God's promise to Abraham had been that He would bestow upon Abraham and his seed His blessing, the inheritance (verse 18), the assurance of justification and everlasting life. Stated briefly, the Lord had promised unto Abraham and his seed the promise of His heavenly and eternal fellowship and communion. And this promise, we read, was given centrally to Christ. He, to be sure, is *the* Heir of everlasting life—"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"—Romans 8:17. Christ, of course, merits all the blessings and promises of the God of our eternal salvation. And because Christ is the Heir, we are heirs, according to the promise, only if we be Christ's, through faith in Him. That we receive the promise of the Spirit and of everlasting life through faith is not, we understand, because our faith is in any sense of the word meritorious or conditional. This is impossible. Christ is the Heir exclusively. To Him the promise of eternal life has been given. He, and He alone, blots out all our sins, satisfies all the justice of God, merits for us the blessedness and glory of everlasting life. We receive the promise through faith, and are joint-heirs with Christ through faith, only because all salvation is in Christ Jesus and the Lord imparts that salvation unto us through faith in Christ. The Heir of the promise, therefore, He in Whom and

with Whom God's covenant of friendship and fellowship is established, is, of course, Christ Jesus—He merits it; to Him the Lord promises and bestows salvation; from Him, and Him alone, we receive it through faith, the faith of God's sovereign mercy and grace. Paul postulates this truth because he would refute, with all the power at his command, the error that our work is in any sense necessary toward our salvation. All the promises of God are Yea in Christ Jesus.

*God's Promise, Sure And Inviolable.*

The promise of the Lord is sure and inviolable. Even a man's covenant, writes the apostle in verse 15, is sure and inviolable. We read in that text: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." Hence, even a covenant among men, once confirmed, is not disannulled or changed. If a covenant among men, once confirmed, is not annulled or changed, such is the reasoning of the apostle, this surely applies to the covenant of the eternal and unchangeable God. Notice how the apostle proceeds to establish the sure and unchangeable and irrevocable character of the promise of God. He speaks of blessing, promise, covenant, and inheritance in this third chapter, and it is clear that these four words are synonymous. They all refer to the same thing. The idea of the word 'covenant' in verse 17 is clear. In that verse the apostle declares: "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The word 'covenant' here is clearly synonymous with promise of this text and inheritance of the following verse. It refers to the Old Testament incident when God revealed Himself to Abraham, talked with him, as a Friend with His friend, and assured him that He would establish with him and with his seed His everlasting and heavenly covenant kingdom. The Lord promised to bless Abraham and bestow upon him the eternal inheritance.

This covenant or promise was confirmed, ratified by God. It was confirmed by the symbolism of Genesis 15, when the Lord alone passed between the halves of the sacrificial animals which had been divided in the midst. Abraham was asleep and Jehovah alone passed between these pieces, in confirmation of the fact that He, and He alone, would establish His covenant and fulfill His promise. To this incident of Gen. 15 we have already called attention in a previous article. Besides, the Lord had also confirmed His promise to Abraham with an oath, even as we read in Heb. 6:17-18: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we

might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Notice also, according to verse 17, that this covenant or promise of God was "confirmed before of God in Christ". We would read this particular expression, according to the original text as follows: "was confirmed before of God *for* or *with a view to* Christ". We have already called attention to the fact that Christ is *the* Heir, *the* Object of the promise of God. Now we read that God before confirmed the covenant with a view to Christ. God, therefore, ratified His promise to Abraham and Christ was the primary object of that promise. With a view to Christ, because of the work of Christ, because of His own work in our flesh and blood, God, before time, at the time of Abraham, gave the father of believers His promise and ratified it with an oath, swearing by Himself, even as He, all by Himself, would ultimately fulfill His own promise in Christ Jesus, His Son and our Lord.

Now we also understand why the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after the promise, could not disannul that covenant or promise of God. Such was indeed the opinion of the false Jewish teachers. They advocated the theory that the law, which came after the promise, had disannulled that promise, made it of none effect, had taken its place. They would impose the burden of the law upon the Galatians as the way unto salvation. This teaching of these false teachers, however, was surely impossible. Even men do not disannul or change a covenant once confirmed. And the Lord surely would not do such a thing. And the reason which the apostle advances in support of this contention that the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after the promise, could not disannul that promise, is exactly that the covenant was *before confirmed of God in or with a view to Christ*. Hence, if the promise was confirmed by God with a view to Christ, the promise would surely be in effect until the coming of that Christ. The period of the promise, therefore, did not exclude the law but it *included* the law. And inasmuch as the promise was given primarily to Christ and for Christ's sake, the law, which came long before the Christ, could never disannul the promise which was given with a view to Christ and would be fulfilled in Christ.

Besides, the apostle continues in verse 18: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. The meaning or implication of these words speaks for itself. If the inheritance, eternal life, be of the law, we must earn and procure it—then it is not a matter of God's promise but of our meriting it. However, if the inheritance be of the law and, therefore, not of the promise, the word of God to Abraham is no longer in effect. Fact is, God gave it to Abraham, not as

something which he must earn, but as an inheritance which the Lord promised to bestow upon him. A Divine decision to impose upon His people the works of the law as the means or way of salvation would not merely imply a change in policy on the part of the Most High. It would imply a failure on the part of the Lord to fulfill His word or promise, an annulling of His solemn pledge. The law and the promise stand over against each other. The first implies that man shall earn or procure by his own works his salvation. And the promise implied that the Lord would *bestow* the inheritance of eternal life upon His people. For the Lord to change from the promise to the law would imply, therefore, a failure on the Lord's part to do as He had promised to do. It is in this light that the words of Paul in verse 18 must be understood: "But God gave it to Abraham by promise." Jehovah solemnly declared to the father of believers that He would give it to him; He certainly would not *break* that promise and now insist that man must merit it himself.

Incidentally, verse 17 establishes beyond every doubt that the period of the promise to Abraham until the giving of the law at Sinai was a period of four hundred and thirty years. I believe I may say without fear of contradiction that it is generally supposed that Israel was in the land of Egypt 430 years. To enter into a detailed discussion of this part of verse 17 is unnecessary at this time. The theory that Israel sojourned in Egypt 430 years is supported by texts such as: Gen. 15:13, Ex. 12:40, Acts 7:6. Also Numbers 26:29 and 1 Chron. 7:20 are quoted in support of this view. It is contended that 1 Chron. 7:20 refers us to nine or ten generations from Joseph to Joshua, and that this would be impossible if Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt only 210 to 215 years. The supporters of this view, however, are somewhat embarrassed by the word of Paul in Gal. 3:17. They "solve" the difficulty, however, by asserting that the apostle is quoting in this text a translation of the Septuagint (the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek by seventy Jewish Bible translators at Alexandria). This translation of the Septuagint, they say, is in error, but the apostle Paul quotes their version because he is not interested in the time element. It is no concern of the apostle whether the children of Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt 430 or 215 years. However, I do not see but that it is imperative for us to accept the apostle's presentation in Gal. 3:17. In the first place, the texts quoted in the Old Testament in support of the contention that Israel was 430 years in Egypt can be interpreted in such a way that this sojourn of Israel is limited to 215 years. Secondly, it is strange, is it not, that the apostle Paul, guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit, should quote an erroneous translation of the septuagint. We must, therefore, conclude that the word of God in this third chapter of Galatians permit

no other explanation than that the sojourn of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt was approximately 210 to 215 years, and that the entire period from the giving of the promise to Abraham to the giving of the law at Sinai was four hundred and thirty years. This also explains why the Egyptian monarch was so sorely alarmed because of Israel's growth—it was the Lord Who caused the children of Israel to wax mighty in the house of bondage.

#### *Why The Promise Is Inviolable. — Verse 20.*

We read in verse 20: "Now the mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." Some 400 interpretations have been given of this particular passage. To understand this word of God we must bear in mind that the apostle would emphasize the temporary character of the law and its powerlessness to bring righteousness. Fact is, we read that a mediator is not of one. A mediator is one who stands between, presupposes two parties, God and man. The law, we read in verse 19, was given into the hand of a mediator, Moses, by angels. Whereas the law was given of God to man through Moses, this also presupposes that man must keep this law of God, must live up to the agreement. And this, we understand, is impossible. If now the promise, too, were a matter between the Lord and man, given by God but contingent, dependent upon man for its fulfillment, it would fail. But such is not the case. God, we read, is one. The Lord appeared directly to Abraham, without a mediator. God is one; He does all the work; He is the only factor. He is the one and only Party. This also implies that the Lord is unchangeable, determined by nothing outside of Himself. It is, therefore, impossible that He would first give the promise to Abraham and later change His policy as at the time of Moses. The Lord never changes; He, and He alone, establishes His covenant, fulfills His promise, and realizes the fellowship of friendship with the people of His everlasting love.

This surely emphasizes the unconditional and therefore inviolable character of the promise of the Lord. That promise is never conditional, dependent upon man; it is as sure of fulfillment as is the prophecy of the Lord which the Lord also alone fulfills. The promises of Jehovah are as unchangeable as the Lord God Himself.

#### *The Purpose Of The Law.*

The purpose of the law, which was given of the Lord by Moses unto the children of Israel from Mt. Sinai, is surely not to annul, abrogate the promise of God. The apostle Paul has expressed himself very clearly on this point. Besides, to teach that the law annulled the promise and constituted a change in the policy of Jehovah also "smacks" of Arminianism. The arminians also spoke of various decrees of the Lord,

of various methods pursued by Jehovah in His dealings with the children of men. Our fathers, at the Synod of Dordrecht, repudiated this conception and emphasized the truth that God is one and therefore also His decree of salvation is one. God cannot deny Himself or be in conflict with himself—hence, it could not be the purpose of the law to annul the promise.

The purpose of the law, according to the presentation of the apostle in Galatians 3, is two-fold. In the first place, the law was added because of the transgression. Thus we read in verse 19: "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." The law, we read, was added *because of transgressions*. It must serve the transgressions, was given for the sake of transgressions, in order that the transgressions might occur. That the transgressions were the result of the lawgiving is an undeniable fact. Israel erected their golden calf soon after the Lord had thundered the law of the ten commandments into their ears from the top of the mountain. And this is always the result of the law. Man is like unto a snake; that snake will reveal its true nature as soon as one holds out a stick unto it; man, too, will always reveal his true nature when he stands before the holy and good law of the Lord. However, these transgressions, always the result of the law, are also the purpose of the law. The law was added, we read, because of transgressions; God, therefore, added the law for the sake of transgressions in order that they might abound. And this is also literally taught in Romans 5:20: "Moreover the law entered, *that* the offence might abound."

Secondly, the law also served as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. This we read in verse 24. On the one hand, the law serves the transgressions, purposes to reveal our sin, corruption, and hopelessness. The law must reveal that salvation can impossibly be of man. For the law must be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, in order that we might be justified, not by the works of the law, but by faith.

We may therefore conclude that the law was not given to annul the promise of the Lord. But it was given that it might serve that promise, establish the fact that our hope lies only in that promise, that salvation can come alone from the living God. In His promise the Lord declares that *He*, and *He alone*, will save unto the uttermost. And He adds His law in order that it may become perfectly plain that He alone can save and that He alone therefore must save. And it is also for this reason that salvation is bestowed only upon those who *believe*. For faith, let us understand, is not *our* work, does not represent what we must do in the work of salvation. God is one, the Lord is the only Party, and He alone is the Worker of our salvation in

Christ Jesus, our Lord. But we are saved and justified through faith, because faith is God's gift to us, and, through our believing, we experience the fulness of the salvation of the Lord exactly because, believing, we, by the grace of the living God, look away from ourselves and unto Christ as the revelation of God as the God of our salvation. The promise of the Lord is unconditionally fulfilled by Jehovah and bestowed upon us by Him through faith, according to Galatians 3.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David Chastened

It was fully explained what we are to think of David's removal to the land of the Philistines, of his attaching himself to the royal heathen, Achish of Gath. It was a doing that proceeded from unbelief. As we saw, with Achish's permission David removed from Gath and settled in Ziklag, an uninhabited Philistine city that Achish appointed him. The problem of the support of himself and his retinue David solved by plundering Amalekites and other heathen tribes that dwelt in the district that bordered on the south country of Judah. But in reporting his movements David was purposely ambiguous, and the result was that Achish took him to mean that he plundered Israelites and Kenites. Yet Achish must have surmised that David was spoiling some other tribes, what tribes he didn't know and cared less, so long as David refrained from molesting Philistines and shared the booty with him. For Achish was a greedy heathen. The original text makes this plain. After every incursion David went to Gath with a goodly share of the spoil (verse 9). And Achish invariably asked not, as the English version has it, "Whither have ye made a road today," or as some translate, "*Against whom* have ye made an incursion this time," but, "Did you not make a road today?" It was the rich booty in which Achish principally was interested. And the thrust of his question was, Where is it? Lead me to it. David would do so. In addition, by the ambiguous language of his reports he would make it easily possible for Achish to conclude that he was plundering his own people to enrich this royal pagan. To Achish the thought was too gladdening so that he could not resist the temptation of understanding David to mean just that, namely, that he was spoiling his own people. Thus he would abide with Achish forever unceasingly to enrich him with

the spoils of Israelites. What a servant he had acquired in this Hebrew. So Achish wanted to believe. The thought was too pleasant for him to relinquish. He refused to perceive the extreme unlikeliness of David's abandoning his people and attaching himself to Philistines just because he couldn't get along with Saul. He had his misgivings. But to prove them groundless he wanted to take David with him in the pending war with Israel. As could be expected, the other Philistine princes strenuously objected, and David was ordered to return to Ziklag. As was said, doubtless David had wanted to help his brethren in that war. But the Lord had determined otherwise. He had a task for his servant to perform there in the south country. But first David must repent of his sin. And his sin was that he feigned love of the world and hatred of God's people in order that he might be allowed to dwell in Ziklag beyond the reach of Saul's wrath of which in his unbelief he was afraid, saying in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul". To bring him to repentance the Lord smites His servant, and the stroke is catastrophic as to its character.

Let us consider what now happens. The measures that David has adopted to prevent his incursions into Amalekite territory from coming to the knowledge of men failed as they were bound to fail. Of the heathen communities raided he had saved neither man nor woman alive, lest they should bring tidings to Gath. But the Amalekites are a numerous people; and the communities not affected by the raids naturally learn what went on. As stirred up by God, they wreak terrible vengeance. David and his men came to Ziklag after an absence of only three days. And, behold, the walls of their city are broken down and all the dwellings are in ashes. But they find no dead bodies among the ruins. Evidently the wives, sons and daughters have been carried away captive to be sold into slavery by the invaders.

David and his men are wildly moved. They weep until they have no more power to weep. The sacred writer makes special mention of David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the former wife of Nabal the Carmelite. They, too, are included among the captives. But a special great peril threatens David. In their bitterness of soul caused by the loss of sons and daughters, the people blame David for the calamity, and there is even talk of stoning him. In all likelihood the people strongly had advised against obeying Achish's summons that these Hebrews report to him for martial duty in the pending Philistine war with the people of Israel.

David's plight is desperate. God is smiting him. He was no longer willing to exercise the faith that the Lord was able and willing to protect him against the wrath of Saul there in God's country, the land of

Israel. So he went to leaning on his own understanding. Following its dictates, he removed himself to the land of the dead, and assumed dependence on a heathen king, posing as his friend. And to ingratiate himself with that royal pagan the more, he did an abominable thing. By ambiguous speech he led him to believe that he was enriching him with booty that he was taking by force from his own brethren, and thus pretended that he cast off his people forever.

And what now has his unbelief, his attempt at self-help, his reliance on the arm of flesh to save him from the wrath of Saul gotten him but loss, unspeakable grief, anguish of spirit, shame and peril from the hand of God! From the hand of God indeed. In His love the Lord chastens His servant. And being a son, despite all his folly, he endures the chastening of the Lord. Quoting the text, "the soul of the people was bitter", hard, cruel, carnally angry. It can be explained. They do not say, 'God did this to us. And we deserve this stroke'. But they end with their misfortune in David. Hence, the urge to kill him is strong in them. But David is differently disposed. Of him the text states, "But David strengthened himself in the Lord." There is this in the statement. David sees God's hand in it all, and he is humble and penitent. Seeking God's presence, he acknowledges his sins in tears of true contrition—it is the only way in which a sinner can strengthen himself in God—implores God's forgiveness and salvation in Christ. Thus casting himself upon the Lord's mercy, he is confident that God will pardon his abominations and deliver him out of the troubles that beset him in this dreadful hour for His name's sake. And in that confidence he enquires of the Lord (by the ephod at his request brought thither to him by the priest Abiathar) saying, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them, and without fail recover?" The Lord returns answer, "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake, and without fail recover."

It is about this same time that Saul, too, enquires of the Lord. For the Philistines make war against him and his heart greatly trembles. But the Lord answers him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by the prophets. Why this difference in treatment? God loves David who in himself is just as ill-deserving as Saul, and gives him grace to repent of his sins; and in his penitent heart God speaks His answer efficaciously, the command, "pursue", and the promise, "thou shalt overtake and recover," so that David goes, he and his six hundred men in the full confidence that the Lord will work for him. So does the Lord strengthen his penitent and contrite servant for God's warfare. As to Saul, he too, goes but as impenitent and hard of heart and accordingly without the answer. Hence, he goes to his doom to which he was appointed and in preparation of which God was hardening him. For

the Lord hath mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

David and his band of six hundred men come to the brook Besor, a rivulet that doubtless begins in the hill-country of Judah and flows in a south-westerly direction toward the sea. In the ground of the valley of this brook there seems to be an insurmountable difficulty. For here the baggage is left as protected by two hundred men too exhausted to follow David any further. David's band now numbers but four hundred men. But he is unafraid. For his heart again is right with God and the Lord promised victory. But where is David to locate the invaders? All he knows is that they retreat in a southerly direction. And the country is large and the going difficult. It is doubtful whether he can even be certain that they were Amalekites. The Lord comes to his help. From the proximity of Egypt the Amalekites have Egyptians as slaves (comp. ver. 13). One of these slaves, "a young man of Egypt," taken along on this Amalekite expedition against Ziklag, fell sick and was abandoned by his master who left him without bread and water to die in the wilderness. After three days the men find him nearly perished from hunger, and they bring him to David. They place before him bread and water, some figs and raisins. When he has eaten, his spirit comes again to him. On being questioned, he tells David all about himself; to whom he belongs and whence he comes and the treatment afforded him by his master, when he fell sick. What is more important, he also reveals that it was Amalekites who had smitten and burned Ziklag and carried away captive the defenseless Hebrew populace. And from his description of the scope of the expedition, David learns that the south of the Cherethites, and the coast of Judah, and the south of Caleb also had been invaded. The Cherethites are a Philistine tribe dwelling in the south and on the sea. (In Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 11:6 the name is used as synonymous with that of the Philistines). Caleb was one of the twelve faithful spies. To him and his posterity and as a reward for his faithfulness, Hebron and its environs was given as a lasting possession. Though the allotment belonged to the tribe-territory of Judah, the district of Caleb was a distinct region. It formed the eastern part of the Negeb as far as the Dead Sea. Thus the Amalekite plundering expedition extended over the whole south-country from sea to sea. It was a mighty invasion including both Philistine and Israelitish territory and not intended for Ziklag alone. David asks the Egyptian whether he can lead him to the company. He is willing, But David must promise him under oath that he will neither kill him, nor deliver him into the hands of his master.

The Lord continues to work for His servant. The Amalekite troop, flushed with victory and delirious with joy because of all the great spoil, are in a careless

mood. Scattered over the ground, they eat and drink and dance in riotous celebration of their successful foray. Thus abandoned to jollity, their defense is departed from them. David surprises the disorganized company doubtless by a night march. No resistance is made. The whole enemy troop, seized by panic, turns to flight as is indicated by the statement, "And there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled." The statement also reveals that David and his band is outnumbered, perhaps greatly, so that what we again here witness is a wonder of God worked by Him in behalf of his penitent servant according to the promise that "keeping my commandments, ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword; and five of you shall chase an hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you," Lev. 26:8, 9. But David keeps not the commandments of his God perfectly. Apart from Christ he is a sinner lost and undone. True, by the mercy of God his delight is in the law of the Lord. But as yet he only begins to approximate its ethical ideal. We have just taken notice of his abominations. But David strengthens himself in the Lord as discerning that all his righteousness and goodness are of God. And in that conviction he overcomes the world including his own sinful flesh as represented by that Amalekite troop. And his victory is his faith.

There is also a threat of which notice must be taken, "But if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments. . . . I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies." This threat, too, goes into fulfillment this very hour. There in Mount Gilboa the Philistines and Israel, the latter led in battle by Saul, are involved in gory combat, the one with the other. And the men of Israel flee before the face of the Philistines and fall down slain. And Saul, too, dies. For he does not strengthen himself in the Lord but abhors His judgments.

How complete David's triumph over the adversary! He recovers all that the Amalekites have carried away including his two wives. "There is nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David recovers all."

There is the question of the duration of the carnage. And David smote them from twilight even unto the evening of the next day, "reads the text in translation. But the statement is not clear. From *twilight* to evening may mean from *morning* twilight to evening, or from *evening* twilight to evening, the Hebrew word twilight being used in both senses. And the succeeding Hebrew expression translated *of the next day* may be rendered, too, *until the next day*. Perhaps it is best to translate, from *morning twilight* to evening, that is,

to the next day, as bearing in mind that according to Hebrew reckoning the day begins with evening. According to this translation, David surprised the adversary in the morning, and the carnage continued to the evening and was thus of a day's duration. According to the other rendering, the carnage began in the evening and continued through the night to the evening of the following day. But the night was dark. How would David and his men be able to distinguish friend and foe?

The spoils with which the Amalekites had arrived at Ziklag is set apart from and driven before the recovered flocks and herds that the adversary had taken away from David and his people. The former David desires and appropriates for himself intending, as appears from the sequel, to put it to special use. The people cheerfully honor his desire with the cry, "This is David's spoil."

David and his company come to the two hundred men whom physical exhaustion resulting from previous exertion compelled to remain behind in the valley of the brook Besor. In friendly spirit they go forth to meet their comrades and David affectionately inquires after their welfare. But a murmuring arises among the covetous and unprincipled men in David's band. The text calls them "wicked man and men of Belial of those that went with David." Because the two hundred took no part in that expedition they object to them sharing in the spoil. All that they would allow to every man is his wife and children. They may lead them away and depart. But David, fearing God and thus imbued with a different spirit—the spirit of true Christian compassion and magnanimity—remonstrates with these lustful men, doing so in a spirit of meekness. For his purpose is not to offend but to restore. "Brethren", says he to them, "Ye shall not do so with that which the Lord hath given us," including, he means, the physically disqualified two hundred. Their right to the booty, accruing as it did from its being given them of God, is as well established as that of the others. Hence, they may not be excluded. David knows whereof he speaks as he allows himself to be instructed by the law, which requires (Lev. 31:27) that the prey be divided into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation. David's ruling merely is a special application of this divine statute. Hence, he puts to these murmurers the question, "For who will hearken unto you in this matter? what man of principle, who fears God and trembles before His word? 'For as his part is that goeth down to battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff.'" 'Such is plainly the will of God'.

It is plain how these murmurers reason. They vainly imagine that their claim to the booty reposes upon their having taken the war upon them instead

of upon God's gracious dispensation. And the lie from which their imagining stems is that they fought that war in a strength original with them and that their own arm begot them victory. To this lie David opposes the truth that the *Lord* preserved them and delivered the company into their hand, and that on this account the spoils belong exclusively to Him for Him to divide amongst His people as He chooses without any man having the right to raise his voice in protest at his choosing to give all a share in the spoil. Shame on such a protestant. Let him consider that by himself he is a vile and ill-deserving sinner whose only right is to be damned. David made his ruling a permanent statute and ordinance for Israel.

It was remarked that the spoil with which the Amalekites came to Ziklag David took to himself as purposing to put it to a special use. Coming to Ziklag, he carried out this purpose. He sends presents to such among the elders of Judah who had befriended him while he tarried among them as a fugitive from the wrath of Saul. The names of these elders, friends of David, are not revealed, nor their number. Only some of the names of the places where they reside are given. The list contains seven names. Many cities favored David such as those of the Jerahmeelites and of the Kenites. The passage closes with the remark, "And to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt, did he send of the spoil." The conclusion is warranted that the majority of elders of Judah if not nearly all of them were friendly to David. Accordingly soon after the death of Saul David by divine direction takes up his residence in Hebron, whereupon the men of Judah come and anoint him king over the house of Judah. They recognized in David a man sent of God to rule over His people in Saul's stead.

David's point of view in sending these gifts is declared in his accompanying word, "Behold a gift of blessing for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." This is a direct reference to the Amalekites who had invaded southern Judah. In making incursions into Judah, they had revealed themselves as enemies of Jehovah as Israel was God's people. Accordingly, David wants his presents to the elders to be regarded as blessings of the Lord. And rightly so, as God had given victory.

Formerly David was enriching Achish with the booty. That was sinful of him. The spoils of war belonged to the Lord, the victory being His. And His will was that the spoils be divided amongst his people and not be given to the heathen. And David, again in spiritual, discerned the Lord's will. He sends of the spoil to his friends, his brethren in the Lord, and in so doing, typified Him—the Christ—who, when He had ascended on high and led captivity captive, gave gifts unto men.

Also to be taken notice of is that David is not

afraid that Achish will learn of his doing. For he sends out the spoil from Ziklag whither he has returned. He wants Achish and all the Philistines to know that his heart is with the Hebrews only. Achish may now see that he was sorely mistaken in David. However vexed Achish may be, however disappointed in David, he does him no mischief. For the Lord cares for His servant.

G. M. Ophoff.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland

(Psalm 105; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal hebben we onze reden gegeven waarom we dit opschrift kozen voor den 105den psalm: hij getuigt van den liefde-volle Heiland, Die in liefde zwijgt van de zonde van Zijn volk, Die hen toeroept met lieflijke stem om Hem te loven en met psalm-gezag te prijzen. De eerste drie verzen spreken daarover. Israel moet den Heere loven.

Dit brengt de gedachte naar voren of we dat wel doen kunnen. En dan is het steeds wederkeerende antwoord, dat wij dat zekerlijk niet bij machte zijn te doen. Wij loven veel liever onszelf, den mensch of het ondermaansche. Maar den Heere loven? O neen. Dat is geheel en al onmogelijk voor Jakob-Israel-Jeruzalem, zooals hij is van nature.

Ik denk, dat om die reden de volgende verzen hem toeroepen om toch geduriglijk naar den Heere toe te gaan om kracht tot dien arbeid.

“Vraagt naar den Heere en Zijne sterkte, zoekt Zijn aangezicht geduriglijk.”

Ziet, geliefde lezer, dat brengt U waar ge zijn moet. Dat brengt U tot groote nederigheid. Stelt het U voor: Ge wordt opgeroepen van Godswege om Hem te loven, Zijn naam aan te roepen, Zijn daden bekend te maken onder de heidenen. Ge moet van Hem zingen en psalmzingen en aandachtelijk spreken van Zijne wonderen. Ge wordt bevolen om te roemen in den Naam van Gods heiligheid, en om dat te doen met een blij hart! Ziet daar Uwe opdracht van Godswege. Maar. . . de Heere beseft, dat ge dat niet doen kunt in eigen kracht. En dan zegt Hij tot U in nederbuigende goedheid: “Nu dan, Mijn kind, Ik weet wat van Mijn maaksel zij te wachten, hoe zwak van nood, hoe klein gij zijt van krachten, en dat gij stof, van jongsaf, zijt geweest! En daarom ga Ik voort om U te onderwijzen in den waren godsdienst: Vraagt naar Mij en naar Mijne sterkte! En doet dat geduriglijk!

In eigen kracht kunt ge Mij niet loven. Alleen als Ik U bekrachtig door Mijn Geest en Woord zult ge kunnen doen wat Ik U beveel en zingend toeroep in de eerste drie verzen van dezen Mijnen psalm!” Ik vraag U: werpt dat U niet neer in groote nederigheid en ootmoed?

Zoo moet ge het verband zien tusschen dit gedeelte en het gedeelte, dat wij de laatste maal behandelden.

Vraagt! Zoekt! Dat zijn twee werkwoorden. In de Engelsche vertaling van dit vers lezen we maar één werkwoord: Zoekt! Toch is dat niet juist gedaan door de Engelsche vertalers van den Bijbel. De Heilige Geest gebruikte twee werkwoorden in het Hebreeuwsch en daarom moesten zij ook twee werkwoorden gebruikt hebben, juist zooals de vaders gedaan hebben in de Nederlandsche vertaling. Dat moesten zij te meer doen, omdat er opgang zit in de actie waartoe Gods volk opgeroepen wordt. Het eerste werkwoord is *vraagt!* Welnu, dat werkwoord beteekent dat men onophoudelijk een pad bewandelt, dat men geduriglijk en herhaaldelijk zijn voeten zet op een zeker pad. En zoo kwam men ertoe om dit te vertalen door *vragen*. De idee is, dat men onophoudelijk zich tot iemand wendde met een zeker doel.

Het tweede werkwoord beteekent letterlijk, dat men met de vingers naar iets tast, opdat men het vinden mocht. Ge bemerkt den opgang. Men wendt zich tot iemand met uitgestoken handen, opdat men zoo iemand vinden mocht en het begeerde iets ontvangen.

Past dit nu toe, en ge krijgt het volgende. De Heere weet, dat wij zonder Hem niets vermogen. En zoo zegt Hij tot ons: Komt nu geduriglijk op het door Mij U voorgestelde pad naar Mij toe en vraagt dan om Mijn kracht en sterkte. En doe dat geduriglijk, al tastende en voelende, opdat gij Mij vindt.

In dit verband spreekt de Heere van Zijn Aangezicht. Ik heb daar eerder over geschreven, doch zal het nu herhalen. Dat Aangezicht is uiteindelijk Jezus Christus de Heere. Niemand heeft ooit God gezien, doch de Zoon die in den schoot des Vaders is heeft Hem ons verklaard. En Paulus spreekt van het kennen der heerlijkheid Gods in het aangezicht van Christus. Ook is er verband tusschen de *sterkte* van het eerste lid van dit vers; en het *Aangezicht* van het tweede lid. We moeten vragen naar de sterkte, en zoeken het Aangezicht van het tweede lid. Welnu, de man die verzadigd wordt met het staren op het Aangezicht is ook de man die gesterkt wordt door God. De sterke rechterhand des Heeren die door haar kracht Gods volk in stand houdt is ook Jezus Christus de Heere. Er is een schoon verband hier.

En dan zal 't gaan.

Ja, dan zal 't gaan. Dan zullen we luisteren naar dankens- en lovensstof. En dat is het wat we nu gaan beluisteren. Het vijfde vers is de inleiding. Het zal nu gaan over de heerlijkheid van des Heeren goedguns-

tigheid over Zijn volk. En als ge dat goed opgenomen hebt in hart en verstand en ziel en gemoed, dan zult ge door Gods sterkte in staat gesteld worden om uit te breken in loven, prijzen en psalmzingen, opgedragen in de verzen 1 tot 3.

“Gedenkt Zijne wonderen die Hij gedaan heeft, Zijne wonderteekenen en de oordeelen Zijns monds”.

Gedenkt Zijne wonderen!

Daar zullen we heel wat van te schrijven hebben ter gelegener tijd. Loopt maar een beetje vooruit en leest de verzen 28-41 en ge zult wonder op wonder zien die de Heere gedaan heeft in het land van Cham.

Zijne wonderen!

Alle die wonderen ten tijde van Israel's uittocht uit Egypte, de wonderen die geschied zijn daar voor, alswel de wonderen die later, veel later geschied zijn, hebben hun middelpunt in een groot wonder: de vleeschwording van God, met alles wat daarmede in verband staat, vooral de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden. Dat is het centrale wonder van alle wonderen. Alle wonderen die Egypte zag, zitten vast aan dat centrale wonder. En zoo is het met alle wonderen Gods.

Wat is een wonder? Of, beter gevraagd: Wat is *het* wonder?

Het Wonder van alle wonderen is, dat God U achteraan komt op Uw pad naar de hel henen, U beetneemt, en wascht van alle Uwe ongerechtigheden, en U schoon gemaakt hebbende gelijk een schoone Engel, U binnenbrengt in de zalen van het nieuwe Jeruzalem, om U te doen zingen en jubelen van eeuwige gelukzaligheid. Dat is het centrale wonder.

Vergunt het mij om hetzelfde ietwat anders uit te drukken. Het centrale wonder is, dat de DrieEenige God de duisternis van onze zonde, schuld, vloek en doem verbreekt door het Licht dat van Zijn Aan'zicht straalt, en dat Hij in het Aangezicht van Jezus Christus den Heere voor ons komt te staan, om U dan voorts tot Zich te lokken met lieflijke Stem, met de stem van Zijn eeuwig Evangelie. Dat is het wonder der wonderen.

Nu moet ik daar nog één ding bij zeggen. En dat ééne ding is het negatieve ding der verwerping. Let er op, dat ge niet alleen gedenken moet aan Zijn wonderen, doch ook aan de oordeelen Zijns monds! En dat is vreeselijk. We moeten ook gedenken aan de vreeselijke oordeelen die Hij uitspreekt over Egypte, en allen die gelijk zijn aan dat hoovaardige en wreede volk. Deze psalm zal tot in bijzonderheden spreken van die verschrikkelijke dingen der oordeelen Zijns monds. Ja, zelfs is ons het haar te berg gerezen, als we gestaard hebben op Zijn oordeelen! Zoo zingt toch de zanger Israels op een andere plaats? Maar ge moet er aan denken. Later, veel later, is ons geopenbaard, dat een volk zal staan bij de kristallijne zee, *met vuur gemengd*. En dan zullen zij het lied van Mozes en het Lam zingen. Ik beken het: het is vreeselijk om te

zingen bij het zien van de duizende lijken die dobberden op de Roode Zee. Maar het moet. En hier is het kunnen: als ge het doet om Godswil. Om Zijner gerechtigheid wil. Dan kan het en mag het. Maar dan moet het ook.

Nu dan, de psalm roept het U zingende toe om aan de wonderen Gods, mitsgaders Zijne oordeelen, te gedenken.

Ik herinner mij, dat oude mensen in Sassenheim soms spraken van heilzaam. Dit of dat is heilzaam. Welnu, te gedenken aan de wonderen van God is heilzaam. Dat will zeggen, dat zulk doen heil werkt voor U. En heil is volheid. En als ge vol zijt van het aanschouwen, gedenken en overdenken van Gods wonderen en oordeelen, dan komt ge als vanzelf in de geëischte gestalte van de eerste drie verzen: dan gaat ge aan 't psalm zingen!

Indien we Nieuw Testamentisch spreken over dezen psalm, dan lezen we hem zoo: Gedenkt aan Jezus Christus den Heere! Ziet sterk op den Zoon Gods! Bestudeer al wat Hij gedaan heeft in de volheid des tijds. En als ge dat doet, zult ge doen gelijk de ouderlingen in het gezicht van Patmos: ge zult in aanbidding nedervallen voor God en al maar roepen: Gij zijt waardig te ontvangen alle lof, aanbidding en dankbaarheid tot in alle eeuwigheid. En weer zullen de dorpele der deuren zich bewegen en het Huis vervuld worden met rook, vanwege den stem des roependen! O, het is zalig God te dienen!

En wie zal dit nu doen?

Dat is een zeer belangrijke vraag, een vraag die geleerde mensen en ongeleerde stakkerds heeft bezig gehouden in alle eeuwen en in all landen.

Ik zal de vraag in Bijbelsche taal neerschrijven: Wie klimt den berg des Heeren op? Er is geen vraag die belangrijker is uit het oogpunt van den ellendigen zondaar die van nature op weg is naar de hel, en die dat ook weet.

Onze psalm geeft het antwoord: “Gij zaad Abrahams Zijns knechts, gij kinderen Jakobs, Zijne uitverkorenen!”

Van den beginne heeft men getracht om het antwoord op die eerder genoemde, belangrijke vraag algemeen te maken. Er is groote variatie in het antwoorden, doch al zulk pogen kwam hier op neer, dat men het Bijbelsche antwoord niet wilde. Al moest het dan ook toegestemd worden, dat alle mensen zeker niet den berg des Heeren zouden beklimmen, er zou dan toch een kans voor velen, zoo niet allen, zijn. Of ook, de Heere God zou wel willen, dat allen kwamen; Hij doet zelfs Zijn best om toch allen die door Zijn Woord bereikt worden te trekken, te lokken tot Zijn Goddelijk Hart. Duizende boeken zijn geschreven om toch maar algemeen te maken wat God particulier maakte. Ook daar is van toepassing: IJdelheid der ijdelheden: het is al ijdelheid!

Want Gods Woord weet niet met al van dat geknoei der goddelooze menschen. Want goddeloos is al zulk pogen. Het mag niet.

Gods Woord zegt overal, dat alleen de gekenden zalig zullen worden. En dat het ook zoo is naar de intentie Gods. God wil alleen Zijn volk zalig maken. En de naam van dat volk is dan ook de *uitverkorenen*. Dat staat ook in onzen tekst hier. Het is Abraham's zaad, de kinderen Jakobs, Gods uitverkorenen. Wat zullen wij tot deze dingen zeggen? Eerder sprak it van de wonderen Gods, en ook van het centrale Wonder: Jezus Christus den Heere. Welnu, aanschouwt dat wonder ook hier: *Gij Zaad Abrahams!* Wie denkt hier niet aan het Goddelijke wonder van Izak? Abraham en Sara waren beiden dood ten overstaan van de vraag of zij zaad zouden hebben. De eene was honderd jaren oud en de andere negentig jaren. Van hen heeft de Heilige Geest getuigd in Romeinen 4, dat het lichaam van Abraham en de baarmoeder van Sara verstorven waren. En in het 17de vers van dat hoofdstuk, doellende op dat wonder van de geboorte van Izak, zegt de Heilige Geest: "... namelijk God die de dooden levend maakt, en roept de dingen die niet zijn alsof ze waren."

De uitverkorenen!

Er gaat een siddering door onze leden als we dit geweldige woord neerschrijven. Uitverkoren uit de millioenen van menschen. Van voor de grondlegging der wereld. Vooraleer de Heere den hemel en de aarde gemaakt had, heeft Hij Zijn volk verkoren. En Hij heeft de anderen verworpen. Wie zou niet sidderen? Vooral als we bedenken, dat er geen reden is waarom de uitverkorenen zalig zouden worden, d.w.z., geen reden in dat volk zelf. Wij zijn ook, juist zooals de anderen, kinderen des toorns, vanwege onze zonde en schuld.

En het is Gods intentie om alléén die uitverkorenen zalig te maken. Dat blijkt overvloediglijk uit de wonderen Gods. Dat blijkt uit het feit, dat Hij de dooden levend maakt. Er is niemand die zalig kan worden uit zichzelf of door eenige macht of kracht van anderen. Alle menschen zijn dood, onbekwaam en onwillig om te leven voor Gods aangezicht. En uit dat groote kerkhof roept God Zijn volk wakker. Hij roept Zijn uitverkorenen toe in alle eeuwen: Ontwaakt gij die slaapt, en staat op uit de dooden en Christus zal over U lichten! En zij zijn opgestaan en zijn aan 't wandelen gegaan. En ze zijn naar den hemel gewandeld.

De eerste Uitverkorene is Jezus.

Jezus is uitverkoren door God om de doorgang door ons graf te openen. Hij lag terneder in onzen dood en verdoemenis. Maar God riep, dat is, God die de dooden levend maakt. En dezelfde macht en kracht die in Jezus wrocht, toen Hij Hem uit de dooden opwekte, werkt in alle uitverkorenen, vroeger of later. En opgewekt zijnde, gaan zij aan 't wandelen naar God heen.

Dat kan nooit missen. Hij zal ze allen tot Zich trekken. De Waarheid heeft dat gezegd.

En hun getal is bij God bekend. Nog nooit is er één verworpen levend gemaakt; en nog nooit is er één uitverkorene in den dood gebleven.

Zouden we dan niet zingen, neen, psalmzingen?

G. Vos.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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Dear Editor:

After reading the articles of Rev. Gritters, "About Catechism, Etc.", and "Catechism Around the Confessions", I was prompted to write a word in appreciation but also in criticism.

The emphasis Rev. Gritters placed upon the need to have instruction in our creeds is worthy of all of our support. I believe we should so instruct in the creeds of our fathers that they are again appreciated as statements and standards to be used in our fight against falsehood.

My criticism comes, however, when he makes it plain in his second article that he proposes to limit instruction in the history of the Bible to the ages seven to nine and give courses in doctrine and the confessions for the ages ten to twenty. In his ideal to have the members of the church make a thorough study of the confessions and to complete such a course before they are twenty years of age and before they make confession of their faith, Rev. Gritters falls into a serious error of not reckoning with the practical situation of the pupil. I believe, too, that the method of imparting doctrine as he proposes it is not in harmony with the purpose of doctrine and history.

Allow me to submit some of my objections at random without entering too much into a detailed discussion of the educational principles involved.

1. Such a system makes us vulnerable to the charge that we are more interested in our creeds than in the Bible. The text-books of his proposal are for the greater part of the catechetical training the confessions and not the Bible.

2. Such a detailed analysis of all of our confessions in the pre-confession period does not attain to our main objective to impart doctrine to our youth. It rather gives them to know the language of the confessions.

The essential truths are treated in all the creeds, but the essential doctrines and the individual emphasis of each one of the creeds can easily be incorporated in a study of just one of the creeds for purposes of instructing our youth if we are primarily interested in imparting doctrine and secondarily in an acquainting

with the confessions as such. Furthermore, the Heidelberg Catechism is the best adapted to the use of a textbook to instruct our covenant youth because of its formulation into questions and answers and its point of view. Our fathers decided that the Heidelberg Catechism should be used as a guide for instruction of the youth and they did not use the other confessions.

3. Upon the basis of experience and psychology we must consider that much of the truths of the Confessions cannot be assimilated before the age of twenty. We must select and present the essentials in succinct and clear language for them to commit to memory. I rather think that one handbook (not a workbook) could serve the purpose for the instruction and further study of doctrine for old and young of all ages. I do not favor the multiplication of catechism books. After we have memorized various definitions about one doctrine we remember nothing. If, however, we have one clear and expressive definition about a truth we retain it and can always refer to it.

For the mature study of the confessions it is wiser to wait until the pupils are more able to make a detailed study of them. Such is done in societies and in classes for young people.

4. The ideal of indoctrinating our youth as it is proposed in the system of Rev. Gritters commits the error of abstracting doctrine from history. It fails to understand that God reveals Himself in history, that the greater part of the Bible and the proofs for our doctrine is history.

To concentrate on abstract doctrine for the major portion of our catechetical instruction takes us away from life, and kills the doctrines.

5. Such a system also goes contrary to the principles laid down in the Bible. The Scriptures teach us to instruct according to the nature of God's people. The beginners must be fed with milk. The doctrines and the truths of the New Testament are taken from the history and patterns from the Old Testament. Jesus showed us that truth is best instilled by way of parables, comparisons and through example. The apostles make repeated reference to history to impart doctrine. Deuteronomy teaches us that God shows that we must teach His statutes, judgments and testimonies by way of reference to history. The son asks the father about the meaning of all the Word of God and the father is so advised to explain the questions in reference to history. The children of Israel were given tangible evidence of God's dealings with them. They were to teach their children concerning the transactions of God with them by pointing to the silent testimony of history made real and supplemented by the living pile of stones near the Jordan.

6. The history that is given in our day schools often is not interpreted correctly. Such important historical

revelations as God's covenant with Noah, Abraham's praying for the righteous are often so interpreted as to substantiate false doctrine.

For consideration of the ideas I wish to present, I refer you to a series of historical outlines with notes on doctrines which are concerned with the history treated. This does not mean that I approve of this series as to content and form, but merely for consideration of the educational principles involved. The series is called "Geschiedenis der Gods Openbaring", now being published in the Netherlands.

I believe we should have living doctrine and to have that we should have more of history and interpretation of history in our catechism classes.

Rev. Gritters' methodology is doctrine with history added. This always makes the historical material barely an appendage in our catechism classes of one hour per week. My point is that it should be just the reverse. We should teach doctrine through history. That is, history is the main course, the basic part, that which will receive attention. In such a way I believe we also remember more of doctrine, because it becomes more vivid.

Rev. L. Doezeema.

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*Answer:—*

Brother Doezeema and I have corresponded concerning these matters, and we both thought it was well to bring these important matters to the attention of the reading public.

We do not have the space to give a detailed answer to this communication. Just this:

Brother Doezeema states that my catechism system is "doctrine with history added", whereas it is his contention that we must teach "doctrine through history". It is best perhaps to keep this main point of alleged difference in mind, and then let the readers think the matters over for themselves. In the system which we outlined we stated that our youth become acquainted with history through the early catechism, the home, the christian school, private reading, and the Sunday School where they exist, and our aim is to use this knowledge of history, meanwhile teaching doctrine. That, it seems to me, is the only way we can ever get system. In how far anyone teaches doctrine with history added or teaches doctrine through history depends on the instructor and the methods he uses. If we give instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism we are teaching doctrine, and, if the instructor will make his teaching effective and personal he will frequently use history. But this depends upon the instructor.

Let the readers read for themselves, both what the brother writes and what we wrote before, and with the catechism season coming on let every consistory see

to it that we be satisfied with nothing less than the best.

We'll come back to the letter of Brother Doezema in a later issue, D. V. And thanks for helping us to bring these things to the attention of our readers.

M. Gritters.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### The Eyes Of The Lord

Scripture speaks of God's face, His eyes, His ears, His mouth, His hands and His feet. In each case we realize that we are dealing with an anthropomorphism. That is, God has given an earthly reflection of His own invisible Being in man, His image bearer, in order that we may know Him as He is, may be able to address Him and speak of Him in our earthly language. A short time ago we examined the passages of Scripture that speak of God's face (Vol. 24, page 452); this time we wish to investigate the Scriptural significance of the expression "the eyes of the Lord".

As may be readily surmised because of the symbolical nature of the Old Testament Scriptures, this expression is much more common there than in the New Testament. Yet that does not mean that the New Testament does not speak of God's eyes, God's seeing, beholding, or searching. Especially in the New Testament we meet the expression 'in the sight of God', even though in our translation it is simply translated as 'before God'. Thus we read in Luke 12:6, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before (in the sight of) God?"

A mere glance at a few of these passages that refer to the eyes of the Lord readily convinces us that this expression is far richer in significance than we often realize, for God is the Lord, and everything about Him is altogether gloriously divine; eternal, immutable, all-sufficient. God sees the things as only God can. His penetrating gaze searches out, examines them, tries them as sovereign Judge of all the earth. His eye is as a consuming fire upon the wicked, but is filled with love and blessing upon that people which has found grace in His sight.

*"And God saw everything . . . ."*

The first passage for our consideration is found in the first chapter of Scripture, Gen. 1:31, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

a. This expresses, first of all, that God's eye regards His whole creation. All things lie open and exposed before His sight at any and at all times. This idea is substantiated by numerous other passages of Scripture, such as Heb. 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."

b. But God examines, tries all things under His searching gaze. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. 15:3.

c. And God passes judgment upon all that He sees. God always sees all things in relation to Himself, His holiness and righteousness, His plans and His purposes. God saw His whole creation as it had come forth from His hand in virgin splendor, and He laid His divine approval upon it, for it was without fault or blemish, perfect to serve the purpose for which it was made.

*"His eyelids try . . . ."*

This leads us to a second passage found in Psalm 11:4, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men."

a. Even as God sees all things, so He also searches out the life of each rational, moral creature, as it is lived before His face. Job 34:21, "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all His goings." The consciousness of living our lives in the sight of God must fill the heart of every believer with fear and trembling. Paul appeals to this to seal his oath, when he says in Gal. 1:20, "Behold, before (in the sight of) God, I lie not."

b. The Lord's eyes try every man according to the perfect standard of His holy law. Hab. 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." The idea of 'beholding' and 'looking' here is to continue to look upon a thing with approval. The Lord hides His face, turns His eyes away in disapproval from those who transgress His commandments. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within My house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in My sight." Ps. 101:7. That is God's curse that rests upon the wicked eternally. Therefore, on the other hand, God assures Israel that this curse will not come upon them, "when thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God to keep all His commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is *right in the eyes of the Lord thy God*." Deut. 13:18.

c. The Lord draws His eyelids together, as it were, to closely scrutinize the life of every individual, to judge him accordingly. Even though the wicked may seem to prosper in their wickedness, and boast in their vanity, they are always living their lives in the sight

of Him Who judges righteously. Therefore God says to them, Psalm 50:21, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

d. The result is, that there is no escape for the wicked. The Lord's eye, as we read repeatedly in Scripture, is upon them for evil, and not for good. He curses their thoughts, their plans and purposes, their words and deeds, their walk and conversation, their home and family. He turns all things to their destruction. As the Lord says of wicked Israel in Amos 9:4, "And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." They shall certainly perish. Job 34:20-22, "In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all His goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

*"To deliver their soul from death . . . ."*

We should consider in this connection the passage in Psalm 33:18, 19, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

a. The Lord looks in favor upon His people only because they are holy and blameless before Him in Christ. This is the idea of Gen. 6:5, 8, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually . . . . But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This is also the plain teaching of Eph. 1:4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him (in His sight)." Note that this brings us back to the eternal, sovereign election in Christ. God has chosen His people in Him with the purpose that they may appear in His sight as holy and without blame. Therefore Christ paid the ransom for their sins by His death on the cross. Col. 1:21, 22, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight."

b. The passage in Psalm 33 further shows that God's eye is upon His people in loving care. He always remembers them, never to forget them. He always regards them, never to lose sight of them. He "delivers their soul from death and keeps them alive

in famine." In fact, God governs all things by His almighty providence to the end that His people may be blessed. In 2 Chron. 16, King Asa is reprimanded by the prophet Hanani, because he put his trust in the insignificant king of Syria rather than in the almighty power of the Lord his God. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." (verse 9).

c. Therefore the eye of the Lord upon His people expresses His nearness, His faithfulness, His readiness to hear and to bless them. When His eye is hid from them their prayers remain unanswered. This is the complaint of the psalmist in Ps. 31:22, "For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes." Yet the psalmist was mistaken, he had spoken hastily, as he adds, "Nevertheless, Thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto Thee." Even in the prayer of Solomon at the time of the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, the hearing of prayer is associated with God's eye being focused on His people. Solomon prays, (I Kings 8:29), "That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My Name shall be there: that Thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant shall make toward this place." And the Lord answers this prayer of His servant by assuring him, (I Kings 9:3), "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My Name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." Not only God's eyes, but also His heart will be in that House, to bestow His love and His grace upon His people.

d. Thus the almighty eye of the Lord is able to deliver His people from death and to bless them with His salvation eternally. He watches over them with loving care; He remembers them always in mercy.

#### *Conclusion.*

From all these passages we may draw some very definite conclusions.

First of all, that God's eye is divine. He has given an earthly reflection of His divine sight to man. Psalm 94:9, "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear: He that formeth the eye, shall He not see?" Yet it may never escape us that we possess only an earthly, creaturely reflection of God's seeing. Let us beware always, lest we ascribe anything human to that which is entirely divine. God always sees as God. His eye penetrates to the very essence of things, so that He knows them perfectly, exactly as they are. He sees eternally, so that He does not discover new things upon investigation, but He searches out the things He has eternally willed, and brought into being. God

examines all things in their relation to Himself, His righteousness and holiness, so that He always judges righteously.

Secondly, that the eye of the Lord reveals His inmost soul. It is said that man's eye is the mirror of his soul. This is certainly true of God. All God's attributes, His sovereignty, His eternity, omniscience, omnipresence,, righteousness, holiness, His grace and power shine forth from His eyes. Even God's thoughts, plans and purposes are revealed through His eyes, which are always upon the creature. God's eyes move to and fro upon the earth, to govern all things unto the salvation of His people, even through the judgment of the wicked.

Thirdly, God's eye reveals His attitude both toward the wicked and the righteous. It burns as a consuming fire upon the wicked, so that they can never hide from before His penetrating gaze, even before their own consciousness, and cannot escape His just judgments, neither now nor unto all eternity. But the Lord regards His people as chosen and redeemed in Christ, saved by the power of His grace to fear and trust in Him. He has cast all their sins behind his back, to remember them no more. He looks upon them as holy saints, in whom His soul delights. He remembers them as a father having compassion upon his children. He watches over them as an eagle guards its young. He searches their hearts to try them and purge them from every iniquity. He sets them before His face, that His eye may shine upon them in favor, and they may rejoice with gladness in His sight.

Finally, it behooves us to remember that we always live our lives in the sight of Him Whose penetrating eye searches our inmost hearts and thoughts. On the one hand, it is an incentive to work out our salvation before Him in fear and trembling. As Paul reminds us in II Timothy 4:1, "I charge thee therefore in the sight of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearance and His kingdom." On the other hand, we know that by grace we have found favor in His sight. Thus we are infinitely blessed, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ear is open unto their prayers."

We conclude therefore with the words of **Jude 24, 25**, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence (eyes) of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

C. Hanko.

\* \* \* \*

No sin can be little, because it is committed against the great God of heaven and earth. To commit little sins the sinner must first find out a little God.

—from the *Banner of Truth*.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Ill. expresses its sincere sympathy to Mrs. L. Bruisma and Mrs. R. Huige and their families in the bereavement of their father,

MR. PETER HUIGE

May it please our Covenant God to sustain them in their sorrow that they may continue to believe that He has done all things well.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Mrs. W. Bruisma, Sec'y.

## OPENING OF SCHOOL

The Theological School will open, D. V., Sept. 14. All students are expected to be present at 9:00 A.M.  
H. Hoeksema, Rector.

## — NOTICE —

The 24th Annual Meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held on Thursday evening, September 23, 1948, at the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the theme, "Prospering in the Lord". The public is cordially invited to attend.

—The Board.

## NOTICE!!

We now have an adequate supply of "*The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*." All orders have been filled and a number of copies remain ready to be distributed. Price per single copy is \$2.00. We would urge our consistories to take advantage of the reduced price of \$1.65 per copy in quantity lots. Send orders to:

The Mission Committee  
1210 Logan St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

## CLASSIS WEST

of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D. V., on Wednesday, Sept. 1, 1948 at 9:00 at Pella, Iowa. Delegates desiring lodging should contact Rev. L. Vermeer, 609 Peace St., Pella, Iowa.

J. Blankespoor, Stated Clerk.

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### Wederkeering Met Gejuich

“En de vrijgekochten des Heeren zullen wederkeeren en tot Sion komen met gejuich, en eeuwige blijdschap zal op hun hoofd wezen; vroolijkheid en blijdschap zullen zij verkrijgen, maar droefenis en zuchting zullen wegvlieden.”

Jesaja 35:10.

Het is moeilijk om te spreken over de eeuwigheid.

Ik heb wel eens gezegd: Jesaja 34 is een beschrijving van den eersten dag in de hel, en Jesaja 35 een beschrijving van den eersten dag in den hemel.

Gij weet het, en ik stem U volmondig toe, dat men zoo niet spreken kan over de eeuwige rampzaligheid, en de eeuwige gelukzaligheid. Er zijn daar geen dagen die eerst zijn, om dan gevolgd te worden door andere, verdere dagen. De eeuwigheid is zoo geheel anders dan de tijd.

En toch, ik weet niet hoe ik mij anders uitdrukken zal over de waarheden die ons in die twee hoofdstukken vermeld worden. Het gaat daar toch over het afsluiten van de geschiedenis en het begin in de nieuwe wereld? Bovendien, de Heere schijnt ons er in voor te gaan, om over die eeuwige dingen te spreken als “de *dag* der wraak des Heeren, een *jaar* der vergeldingen om Sions twistzaak.” (34:8)

Laat mij het dan zóó mogen zeggen, dat wanneer ik spreek van een eersten dag in de hel of de eerste dag in den hemel, ik die tijds aanduiding gebruik in oneigenlijken zin (en omdat ik niet weet hoe mij anders en juister uit te drukken).

In elk geval, er komt een tijdstip, dat het laatste tijdstip genaamd zal worden. Gods volk spreekt vaak van *den jongsten dag*. En wat er dan komt wordt ons in deze twee hoofdstukken verhaald, in het 34ste hoofdstuk ten overstaan der goddeloozen, en in het 35ste hoofdstuk ten overstaan van Gods volk.

De eersten zullen “wonen” in de hel; en dat is ontzettend. (vers 17, laatste woord). In dien dag der wrake zullen hunne beken veranderd worden in pek en hun stof in zwavel, en hunne aarde zal tot brandend pek worden. Noch des daags, noch des nachts zal het uitgebluscht worden, tot in eeuwigheid zal zijn rook opgaan, “van geslacht tot geslacht zal het woest zijn, tot in eeuwigheid der eeuwigheden zal niemand daar doorgaan!” In één woord: verschrikkelijk!

Dat is een symbolische, figuurlijke beschrijving van de hel en die daar “wonen” zullen. Evenwel, leest het geheele hoofdstuk.

\* \* \* \*

En dan komt het vijf-en-dertigste hoofdstuk. En dat is alles lieflijk en schoon.

Het begin wordt moeilijk lezen voor het Jeruzalem van vandaag. Er staat maar liefst, dat de kerk van Christus zich verblijden zal om de verdoemenis der goddeloozen. Dat staat er in figuurlijke taal. Letterlijk: “De woestijn en de dorre plaatsen zullen hierover vroolijk zijn, en de wildernis zal zich verheugen en zal bloeien als eene roos.”

Ziet ge, ten tijde der benauwdheid, in de bedeeeling der zonde, is de naam der kerk: woestijn en dorre plaatsen, en wildernis. Paulus beschrijft het ietwat anders. Die zegt, dat wij gelijk zijn aan “uitvaagsels der wereld en aller afschrapsel tot nu toe.” En David zegt van de kerk, dat zij schreit, doch straks zal juichen brengende de schoven.

Het dorre, woeste en wilde in deze beschrijving ziet op al den jammer die het deel is van de kerk hier op aarde. Wij worden gehaat, en in dien zin gedood, den ganschen dag. Wij zijn Koningskinderen, doch worden gevonden in lompen gehuld en in groot gebrek.

Doch als de jongste dag aangebroken en beëindigd is, en de eeuwige dingen komen, dan zal de kerk zich verblijden over het rechtvaardige oordeel van God over hen die de kerk benauwd hebben. Denkt hier aan het lied van Mozes en het volk bij den oever der Roode Zee. En Mirjam antwoordde de mannen met de vrouwen in het telkens wederkeerende refrein: De Heere

heeft het paard en zijn ruiter in de zee geworpen!

En tegelijkertijd zal een groote schoonheid en lieflijkheid gegeven worden aan de kerk. En zij zal zich zeer verblijden.

Luistert: "zij zal lustig bloeien en zich verheugen, ja met verheuging, en juichen: de heerlijkheid van Libanon is haar gegeven, het sieraad van Karmel en Saron; zij zullen zien de heerlijkheid des Heeren, het sieraad onzes Gods."

Het is al juichen, met blijdschap en verheuging!

Een terugkeer tot God en Zijn Gezalfde!

\* \* \* \*

Er komt een wederkeer met gejuich!

Hier gaan mijn gedachten boven het eerste Paradijs uit. En toch denk is aan den hof van Eden. Eerst dacht ik aan Eden's Hof en toen ging het hooger, al hooger.

Ziet ge: het is toch een wederkeeren tot God!

De Bijbel spreekt van "verzoening." De verlatene vrouw werd weer opgezocht, hare hoererij en overspel werd vergeven, uitgewischt; en zij werd met sieraad overladen. De asch verdween en sieraad kwam in haar plaats.

Doch, o wonder! het sieraad is veel schooner dan dat van Eden's Hof.

Ge kunt er van op aan, dat Adam en Eva gelukkig waren in het eerste Paradijs. Zij hebben daar ook gejubeld en van groote blijdschap in den Heere gezongen.

Evenwel, wat we nu hebben in Jezus Christus is oneindig grooter, schooner, lieflijker, en schitterender dan Eden ooit kon geven.

De wederkeer van het volk van Jesaja 35 is een opgang in de hoogte!

Het volk, dat de koninklijke profeet zag, wordt opgenomen uit de diepte, en gezet op de hoogten van den berg van Gods heiligheid.

En op den weg naar de hoogten van den berg Gods verliezen zij alles wat hen herinnerde aan de diepte. Aldaar zal geen smart of ellende meer zijn. Voor het slappe en struikelende komt versterking en vastheid. De onbedachtzamen van hart wordt toegeroepen om sterk te zijn en niet te vreezen. Der blinden oogen worden opengemaakt en met hunne ooren zullen de dooven hooren. De kreupele springt als een hert en de stommen juichen. In plaats van het dorre en het droge en het dorstige komen de wateren en de beken die uitbarsten tot laving en verfrissching. Op dien weg zullen zelfs de dwazen niet dwalen.

Een opgang in de hoogten naar Sion! En zij zullen alle verschrikkingen achter zich laten, want de leeuw en alle verscheurend gedierte zal op dien weg niet wandelen. De duivelen en de goddeloozen hebben geen plaats in Gods Huis.

Oneindig groot en glorieus zijn de triumpfen van het

volk Israels, des zaads Abrahams Zijns knechts.

Ziet, ze keeren weder met groot gejuich!

En van het tinne des Tempels Gods weerklinkt het eeuwig welkom!

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeer met verheuging en blijdschap!

Ge kunt de jubel van zulk geluk beluisteren in hun Naam: ze zijn de vrijgekochten des Heeren!

Vrijgekocht, wat wil dat zeggen?

Letterlijk wil het zeggen, dat men losgesneden werd, en, overdrachtelijk, dat er een prijs voor ons betaald is waardoor wij vrij kwamen van een vorig gevang.

Historisch ziet dit zeker op het feit, dat door toedoen van Jehovah het historisch Israel vrij kwam van de ballingschap in Babel. Er kwam dan toch een tijd, dat de lange en bange zeventig jaren van ballingschap ten einde geloopt waren. En daar kwam de heilsmare: Zegt tot de steden van Juda: Hier is Uw God!

Neen, geheel Israel is niet teruggegaan naar Juda en Jeruzalem. Er waren honderdduizenden die liever in het vreeselijke Babel achterbleven. Dat waren de ontrouwe Sionieten. Ze hadden het goud van Babel liever dan de schatten van Gods trouwverbond.

Maar er was een overblijfsel: ter nauwernood een vijftigduizend die onder leiding van Zerubbabel, Nehemiah Ezrah en Jozua zich met popelende harten naar Juda spoedden. En reikhalzend keken zij uit naar het vergezicht van de heuvelen van het heilige land.

En God had het gedaan. Dat was zeer duidelijk geworden. Nehemiah bad voor het aangezicht van dien man, dien koning van het wreede land. En God hoorde. En Hij wrocht in het hart van goddelooze mensen die hen lieten trekken met zilver en met goud belaan naar het oude vaderland. En de plannen waren gereed: we gaan Jeruzalem weer bouwen. En: de tempel zal herrijzen!

Ze waren de vrijgekochten des Heeren.

Doch dit alles was type van een grootere en meer lieflijke vrijkoop.

Israel-Jeruzalem, het overblijfsel in de dagen van Nehemiah, is type van het Israel Gods aller eeuwen. Hun naam is Gods volk.

En dat geestelijke Israel wordt losgesneden van het vleeschelijke Israel, en verder, van Adam's wortel en wordt Gode gekocht voor een grooten prijs. We zullen wel doen om naar Petrus te luisteren die ons toeroept, dat wij gekocht zijn, duur gekocht, voor een prijs die niet bestaat in goud of zilver, maar in het hartebloed van Jezus Christus, den Heere.

Vrijgekochten des Heeren!

Eerst, er zijn er die niet vrijgekocht zijn. Velen zijn geroepen, maar weinigen uitverkoren. Ziet ge dit, en siddert ge bij het zien van de ontelbare massa die niet vrijgekocht werden, dan zegt God tegen U: Juicht, vromen, om Uw lot! Verblijdt U steeds in God! We

zullen van zulke verblijding nog meer hooren.

Tweedens, dat zij vrijgekocht werden vanuit een vreeselijke slavernij, de slavernij der zonde.

Derdens, vrijgekocht vanuit een vreeselijke toekomst: zóó grooten dood, de eeuwige verdoemenis.

Vierdens, dat God besluit wie vrijgekocht worden, en wie niet. Let er toch op, dat er bijstaat: vrijgekochten *des Heeren!*

Vijfde, dat zij zelfs niet met al betaalden tot hunne vrijmaking. God alleen betaalt den prijs. Jezus Christus is de prijs tot Uwe vrijmaking, volk van God! Gij doet daar niets toe.

Zesde, dat wij voorts schuldenaars Gods en schuldenaars van Christus zijn. Wat zal ik met Gods gunsten overlaan, dien trouwen Heer voor Zijn gena vergelden? En de Heere zal U het antwoord geven: Ik zal den beker der verlossingen opnemen en den Naam des Heeren aanroepen! Ja, en ge komt er nooit mee klaar. Tot in alle eeuwen der eeuwigheden zult ge blijven roepen en jubelen van dank voor dien losprijs. De inhoud van den beker der verlossingen is eeuwig. Hoe diep is de Liefde van God in het Aangezicht van Jezus, Uw Heer?

Eindelijk, dat ge dan ook oneindig gelukkig zijt in die verlossingen en vrijkoop. Ze worden nooit moede of mat van het groote roepen voor Gods aangezicht.

Ziet het: ze keeren weder met gejuich!

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeering met gejuich!

De tekst zegt: en tot Sion komen met gejuich, en eeuwige blijdschap zal op hun hoofd wezen.

Sion is letterlijk een berg.

En op dien berg staat de Tempel en het Koningshuis van David.

En geestelijk beteekent Sion dan ook tweeërlei: Het Koningshuis zegt ons dat God als Koning woont temidden van Zijn volk die Hem in liefde gehoorzamen; en de Tempel zegt ons, dat God en Zijn volk tezamen wonen onder één dak. De Heere heeft het dak van Zijn Huis over onze hoofden getrokken, en daarom zijn we voorts veilig en zalig. Ik hoor de refreinen van het volk van alle eeuwen: "Daar zal ons 't goede van Uw woning, verzaden reis op reis!"

Wilt ge het nog nauwer nemen, dan zegt ge: Sion is de plaats waar Jezus Christus Zijn hartebloed gaf, dus Golgotha, de kruispaal. Want het is door den prijs van dat Bloed, dat we met God samen kunnen wonen. Van verre zag Israel's zanger dat Sion, en profeteerde: De gerechtigheid en de vrede zullen elkaar kussen! Permitteer me om het nog wat anders te zeggen: Sion is het plekje der aarde waar hemel en aarde elkander raakten. Doch neem Uwe schoenen van Uwe voeten, want ge staat op heilig land: waar dat plekje gedrukt wordt vloeit het heilig bloed van Jezus.

Maar ik hoor zingen, zingen.

Ze komen aan, ze komen aan, ze keeren weder tot Sion. Het is een volk, dat vroeger in den hof van Eden woonde, doch nu oneindig hooger opgetrokken wordt naar een plaats die door den Heiligen Geest genoemd wordt: Het Paradijs Gods! En weer eens: dat is Sion.

Wie zou dan niet zingen, neen, juichen. Men juicht als het zingen vanwege blijdschap niet meer genoeg is om te uiten al de blijdschap van het hart. Daar verheffen zich te stemmen, daar wordt het al lieflijker in tempo en klankgeslacht. Daar komen groote variaties in 't zingen. En de Engelen Gods luisteren. Die weten van geen wederkeer tot Sion.

En eeuwige blijdschap op hun hoofd.

\* \* \* \*

Wederkeer met gejuich!

Vroolijkheid en blijdschap zullen zij verkrijgen, maar droefenis en zuchting zullen wegvlieden!

Droefenis en zuchting doet denken aan de woestijn, de verscheurende leeuwen die hen omringden, het stomme, het kreupele, slappe en matte van weleer.

Droefenis, dieper nog, is resultaat van besef, dat wij gezondigd hebben tegen den God van Sion, en daarom schuldig zijn, diepschuldig, zóó schuldig, dat wij weggeworpen moesten worden met een eeuwige verwerping. Dat zeggen ze tegen God geduriglijk: O God, wees mij arme zondaar genadig!

En zuchting is de uiting van groot verlangen. Als men verlangt en hunkert dan zucht men. Het is het reikhalzend uitzien naar de verhooging, naar de bergen van Gods heiligheid.

Zulk zuchten wordt soms vertolkt in de psalmen: God des levens, ach, wanneer, zal ik naderen voor Uw oogen? In Uw huis Uw naam verhoogen?

Nu dan, die droefenis en die zuchting zullen wegvlieden. Wonder, waarom hier gesproken wordt van *wegvlieden*. Dat doet men als er gevaar in aantocht is. Als de vijand ons op de hielen zit. Welnu, zoo is het. God is de vijand van onze smarten. Leest Openb. 20 en let er op, dat God net maar ziet naar de oude dingen, en zij vlieden heen, en er is geen plaats voor dezelfde gevonden.

En dan komt daarvoor in de plaats: vroolijkheid en blijdschap!

Vroolijkheid en blijdschap!

Dat zijn twee woorden die Uw hemel, daarboven bij God, vertolken.

De eerste is uiting van de laatste. Als Uw hart en wezen blijde is, dan uit ge het in groote vroolijkheid.

En zei Jesaja niet, dat God zulk volk gaarne ontmoet?

Als ge in den hemel aankomt, dan staat God klaar om U te begroeten, te begroeten. O, die groet Gods!

G. Vos.

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

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## EDITORIALS

### E. A. P. R. Y. P. C.

The Eighth Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention was held at Holland, Michigan on August 18 and 19.

I will not give a factual report of all that transpired at this convention: the regular reporter or reporters will take care of that and bring their findings to you in the Young People's periodical, *Beacon Lights*.

I would just muse a bit on what I saw and heard.

First of all, I would congratulate the Holland Young People's Society in general, and their energetic leader, the Rev. Bernard Kok in very particular, for the splendid way in which they took care of the things of this Convention! Everything ran smoothly and pleasantly so that no discord of any kind marred the program from beginning to end.

Holland and its environments lends itself for a convention of this kind. That was noticeable especially at night when the Rev. H. Hoeksema delivered his lecture on *Our Calling To Be Specific*. We were gathered in the open air in Kollen's Park on the beautiful shore of Black Lake. The weather was just right for an open air meeting of this kind, neither too hot nor too cold. And under the deep blue canopy of heaven, in the midst of the luxurious growth of God's green vegetation of tree and herb and grass, we heard the Word of our Covenant God. The audience was composed of young and old, from the Pacific coast to Michigan, ministers and their people, all of them grouped around the speaker's stand. Nights such as these leave an unforgettable imprint upon one's heart and mind. This night reminded me of the first field day which we organized as Protestant Reformed Churches. But one of the differences between it and this night is that then there were at least three times as many people present. Everybody came that day and evening. But 25 years have gone by. And with it has come the sad truth that the love of many has grown cold.

I cannot say much about the business sessions of the young people since I have not attended all their sessions. But what I have seen of it witnesses of their industry and zeal for the cause of the Prot. Ref. Young People, which cause is the same as yours and mine. More power to you, young people!

After lunch on the second and last day of the convention, it was my privilege and pleasure to speak to the young people at Tunnel Park where this part of the activities was held. I will confess that I dreaded to speak on that occasion. I thought that the several hours of play would not mix with the testimony such

as I had prepared for them. But I was in for a surprise. The young people would not hear of the elimination of this speech. And I know that you would have been thrilled, even as I was, if you could have seen the serious attention which characterized their listening.

In the evening of the second day we met in the Christian High School of Holland for the annual banquet. At this occasion there were 290 young people present. And the Rev. Hanko gave us a speech on THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS: A Mighty Challenge, which was listened to with interest by all.

One word of advice to the Federation Board when they will meet again for the planning of the ninth Convention. And it is this: try to have some worthwhile number on the program for the afternoon of the second day, say, a round table discussion or something like that. There was too much time for play, and I am sure that the young people would enjoy a number like that.

In closing I would say that I am deeply grateful to my covenant God that through His grace He has wrought all this which I might see and hear. It is a marvel that in this day of rioting and pleasure seeking, our youth loves to have their society meetings and annual conventions. How literally God fulfills His wondrous word: "and they shall not depart from the mouth of thy seed, nor from the mouth of thy seed's seed. . . ." G. Vos.

## Rededication

We must rededicate ourselves!

I hear you say: we *have* dedicated ourselves to our Covenant God and to His service! Why then should we *rededicate* ourselves?

The answer is easy: we have taken a vacation.

Now the taking of a vacation is good; it is even necessary. The man that is always in the harness is begging for trouble. There is a Holland proverb which says: "De boog kan niet altijd gespannen zijn", which means in our language: The bow cannot always be in tension. And so, man cannot always be in tension. There must be relaxation after a period of hard labour. And so we have our vacations.

But I am persuaded that our vacations are altogether too long.

Take the case of our catechism classes. In some of our churches there are no more than six months of catechetical instruction. And it is difficult to bring the child's mind under the censure of obedience and close attention and application after so long a time of leisure.

Now I do not think that my writing on this matter will shorten vacations. America is used to long vacations. Note the three months of vacation of our pri-

mary schools. In the Netherlands we had three weeks of vacation, and that was all. Therefore they crowded in six years what they teach here in eight years. Besides, the results of 6 years of intensive study in Europe is more than equivalent to the 8 years of study here. The vacations are too long. It takes the pupil *and the teacher* too long to come back into the shape he must be in for proper giving or proper receiving.

Well, our long vacation will be over by the time you read this.

Hence, we must rededicate ourselves again to the tasks that lie at hand.

Not as though we are able of ourselves to dedicate or rededicate ourselves to the living God. We know that "The Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." We know and believe and teach that He must work in us first if we are to move at all.

But the Holy Scriptures also teach that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth*. Oh yes, God works in us the power to will and to do, but He calls us to "work out your own salvation!"

And therefore, we must rededicate ourselves, and that along the whole line of christian endeavour.

We must rededicate ourselves most of all to Christian Instruction. Catechism and Christian day-school should have the love of all our heart. We should rededicate ourselves to have the children attend catechism class *always*. And they should know their lesson and song *always*. Father and mother must take care of this. We must rededicate ourselves to Christian Education. We must attend the meetings that are called by the School Board. We must pay the bills attending that instruction, and do so promptly. If it is a question of choice, we must forego all things rather than to let the bills for Christian Instruction stand on the books of the treasurer. The old faithful mothers in the Netherlands would actually count their pennies and put them one by one in the little box so that on Monday morning Johnny could take the Christian School money to teacher.

We must rededicate ourselves to society life. It is good that father goes to Men's Society every week, and that mother goes to Ladies' Society every week or every other week. There they learn how to ask questions about the Holy Word of God and how to **answer them**; there they are strengthened in the principles of true Protestant Reformed religion; there they grow by giving and receiving. Eph. 4:16.

We must rededicate ourselves to good reading material. Buy good books, and read them. The long evenings will soon be with us. Spend some time reading good literature, and you will grow in knowledge and understanding. There is too much gadding about in our superficial age. Let our Protestant Reformed

people be the happy exception. It is your heritage and calling.

Let us rededicate ourselves to our Covenant God. It is His calling who says: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Heb. 12:12, 13. G. Vos.

## Four More Calvin Commentaries

The reader will remember that some time ago I announced the mammoth task undertaken by the local book publisher Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. At that occasion I announced that four volumes were ready at that time. They are the Epistle to the Romans, to the Hebrews, and the first two volumes of the prophet Isaiah. Well, at this time it is my pleasure to announce that four more volumes have come off the press. They are: the other two volumes of Isaiah, and I and II Corinthians. All four volumes are \$3.50 each. The commentary on the epistle to the Romans is priced at \$4.50, because of its larger size. All the others are \$3.50.

Now that our various societies will resume their labor for the coming winter season, an announcement like this has added significance. I have noted time and again that our people employ the wrong kind of commentaries. When I said as much, they would ask: Well, do you know of a better commentary than the one I have at home? And I would say: Yes, but it is out of print. You should have a set of Calvin's Commentaries.

But the situation is already different today. Today there are eight books for sale of this splendid commentary. And they are written on some of the most important books of Holy Writ: Romans, Hebrews, Corinthians and Isaiah.

I would very strongly advise every one of our societies to buy a set of these books as soon as they will meet again this fall.

And all of my readers who are able to afford the purchase price of the commentary ought to do so.

They owe this to themselves and to their children, and even their children's children. My set is one hundred years old, and I am persuaded that the present new set is of better quality as far as binding and paper is concerned than the other set.

A young man of my acquaintance read my first announcement. His household budget did not allow the monthly expense of a Calvin book. Hence, he gave up smoking; saved in this way about \$3.50; and now has eight new Calvin books in his library.

G. Vos.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 24

1.

The Repudiation Of All Good Works. (cont.)

Just let us consider, for example, the question of prayer. It is supposed to be the very best of our works, the highest expression of our thankfulness to God. In it we are supposed to seek the glory of God above all. In our prayers we should seek the kingdom of God first, trusting that all things will be added unto us. By prayer we express the desire that the will of God be performed on earth as it is in heaven, that all things, even we ourselves, be made subservient to that will of God. In our prayers we are supposed to seek not the things of this world, not things carnal, but things spiritual, and to be satisfied with mere bread for this day. By prayer we express that we are heartily sorry for our sins, and that we seek forgiveness in the blood of Christ, at the same time avowing that we forgive one another even as God in Christ forgives us our trespasses. And in our prayers we express that we earnestly desire to be delivered from evil, that we look for perfect sanctification, and that God will not lead us into temptation. All this is expressed in the perfect prayer which the Lord taught us. But who would dare to maintain that this best of our works is not defiled with sin? How often are our desires carnal instead of spiritual? How often do we seek things entirely different from the glory of God, the kingdom of God, and the performance of the will of God? How often, in my prayers, must I fight back the desire to commit the very sin for which I bow my knees to seek forgiveness? And how often do I seek the temptation at the very time that I pray for strength to resist it?

O, indeed, it is the very experience of every Christian, of every true child of God, that when he would do good, evil is always present with him.

How, then, can anything but the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me, and received by faith, be my righteousness before God?

Only that righteousness is always perfect and always the same.

Only in that righteousness I have peace with God.

## 2.

## The Reward Of Grace.

The next question of our Heidelberg Catechism concerns the reward which God will give to those that are faithful to the end. The question is evidently put in the form of an implied objection: "What! do not our good works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?" This objection is raised by Roman Catholics. In the preceding question and answer the Catechism had strongly repudiated the notion that our good works can be either part or the whole of our righteousness before God. We are righteous by faith only, without works; this evidently implies that our good works do not and cannot merit anything at all. For if they merited anything we would be righteous by them, at least in part. And the Roman Catholic Church must have nothing of this repudiation of the real merit of our work. It argues that our good works are certainly rewarded by God. All Scripture emphasizes this. It follows from this, according to the Roman Catholics, that they must be meritorious. God rewards us according to our works. The Heidelberg Catechism nevertheless denies this: it does so, not by contradicting the truth that God rewards the righteous, for it admits that this evidently is plainly taught by Holy Writ. But it states that this reward is of grace only, and not of merit.

The question is, however, what is meant by this.

If we consult Scripture, we will discover that it frequently mentions the fact that God rewards His faithful servants. In general, the Bible emphasizes the truth that God will reward every man according to his works; and specifically, it frequently speaks of a great reward for those that suffer with Christ, as all the faithful people of God must suffer for righteousness' sake in the midst of a hostile world.

As to the first, that in the day of the Son of Man every man shall be rewarded according as his work shall be, this is plainly taught by Christ Himself in Matthew 16, verse 27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." In Romans 2:6-11 we read: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God." In I Corinthians 3:8 the apostle writes about those that labor in the vineyard of God: "Now he that planteth and he that water-

eth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." And in II Corinthians 5:10 we read the well-known words: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." In Revelation 11, verses 17 and 18, we hear the Church, by the mouth of the twenty-four elders, praising God in the following words: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." And again, in Rev. 20:12, John beholds a vision of the great judgment, and he "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." And to quote no more, the Lord declares in Revelation 22:12: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

This is also evident from the glorious promises that are given to the faithful servants that overcome in the struggle for righteousness' sake in the midst of the world in Rev. 2 and 3. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2:7. To the church in tribulation in Smyrna, the Lord promises: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that we may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. 2:10, 11. And the church in Pergamos, which was evidently lax in discipline and suffered them which held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which the Lord hated, the Lord encourages by the following promise: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17. To the faithful in Thyatira the Lord promises: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morningstar." Rev. 2:26-28. The church in Sardis, which the Lord, together with its

minister, characterizes by the words, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," nevertheless contains a few names of them which have not defiled their garments, and to them the Lord promises: "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." And to all that overcome in Sardis the Lord promises: "The same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:4, 5. And the small but faithful church in Philadelphia receives the promise: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. 3:12. And to those in the church of Laodicea who hear Jesus' voice and will open the door to Him, he promises: "I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:20-21.

Everywhere Scripture comforts and encourages those that must suffer for righteousness' sake by holding before them the glorious eternal reward. Thus the Lord Jesus Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. 5:10-12. He admonishes His disciples that they shall not do their good works before men, but before their Father which is in heaven, in the following words: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee

openly." Matt. 6:1-6. In Rom. 8:17 suffering with Christ is evidently presented as an indispensable condition to glory and to the reward which shall be given to the faithful saints: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." The eternal inheritance itself is presented as a reward for the faithful service of Christ in Col. 3:23, 24: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." And the apostle Paul puts his trust in the righteous Judge of heaven and earth for the reward which He shall give him in the day of Christ, as he writes: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Tim. 4:7, 8. And to quote no more, we read that Moses had respect unto the recompence of the reward when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26.

From these passages we learn the following: first, that in the day of the Lord God will reward every man according to his works, and that, too, by a righteous judgment over the good and the evil both. Secondly, we learn that this reward, for the righteous, is principally eternal life, nothing less than the eternal glorious inheritance. Thirdly, we learn that there will be gradations in the reward of glory; not all the saints in glory will be alike; they shall not all occupy the same place. There will, no doubt, be a tremendous difference between the apostle Paul's position in glory and that of the murderer on the cross. These differences and gradations will be according to each man's capacity for glory and the enjoyment of it. All the saints will no doubt be completely filled with blessing, but one has a greater capacity for blessing and glory than another. And besides, these gradations in glory will be according to each man's work and suffering for Christ's sake in the world. And finally, we learn that the hope of the reward may, indeed, encourage us and spur us on to greater faithfulness, especially as we must suffer for righteousness' sake in the midst of a hostile world.

But again, the question arises: how must we understand all this?

Is not, after all, the Roman Catholic view as to the

meritoriousness of our good works strongly supported by Scripture?

Are we after all saved by our own righteousness, at least in part?

Doctor A. Kuyper, *E Voto*, Vol. II, pp. 377 ff., offers a peculiar explanation of the reward of grace.

First of all, he emphasizes that the reward of grace does not include the blessing of eternal life itself. He argues that eternal life, the glorious eternal inheritance, is merited by Christ's atoning death, by His active and passive obedience, that it is given to all the elect, and that principally it is for all the same. I quote and translate: "In this connection we must, from the start, postulate a difference between eternal life itself and a particular honor or enjoyment in this eternal life. Without this distinction we cannot advance one step in the right direction here. For if it is established that Christ gained eternal life for all His redeemed, and that not certain redeemed receive a certain reward of grace in addition to this, then it is clear that this reward of grace cannot be the same as eternal life. For this eternal life is received by all; this reward of grace, however, is only for those that have a claim to it. Eternal life is essentially the same for all, but the reward of grace is for each one, personally, different. Eternal life also a child that is taken away in infancy receives, when it is elect; but the reward of grace a child like that never receives."

Secondly, according to Kuyper, the reward, therefore, refers only to the different degrees of glory. All have eternal life, all enter into glory, but not all have the same capacity for the enjoyment of glory, nor do they all occupy the same place in the eternal kingdom. And it is, according to Kuyper, this difference that is the reward of grace. This reward is therefore not for all the saints, but only for certain particular redeemed children of God.

Thirdly, this extra reward of glory that some of the saints receive is freely bestowed upon them by God. It must be evident, on the basis of Kuyper's theory, that it is not based upon the merits of Christ, on His atoning death. Christ merited eternal life, and He merited that for all the elect without distinction. But this extra glory and enjoyment of eternal life that is the privilege of some is not included in this: God bestows it freely upon those whom He appointed for this extra gift of grace. He uses the illustration of a parent who, of course, expects obedience and willing service of all his children from love, but who sometimes promises them a reward to encourage them or to honor their love and their devotion. So God promises an extra reward of grace to those that serve Him faithfully in the world, and especially to those that must suffer for righteousness' sake.

This, then, is Kuyper's explanation of the reward of grace.

However, we cannot agree with this attempted solution of the problem.

First of all, because it evidently would explain the reward of grace apart from the death and obedience of Christ. And this is impossible. All that we have and ever will have in eternal glory certainly flows from the sacrifice of Christ as its meritorious cause; apart from the death of Christ we have nothing. For it is only in and through that death that our sins are forgiven and that, therefore, we are righteous before God. And only upon those that are righteous in Christ, whose righteousness is imputed to them, and who receive this righteousness by a true faith, will God bestow all the gifts of grace, not only eternal life, but also the glory which Kuyper considers to be an extra gift of grace to some of the elect.

Secondly, he postulates a mechanical and entirely arbitrary division and separation between life as such and the different degrees of glory, which, according to Kuyper, some of the saints enjoy. We realize that this is an erroneous conception. These different degrees of glory are not something extra, outside and apart from eternal life, something that is added to it; but they constitute simply the full measure of glory of which each individual saint is capable. For the same reason we cannot agree that the reward of grace is something that is bestowed only upon some particular elect, while the great multitude of the saints in glory do not enjoy it but simply have eternal life. Scripture makes no such distinction; nor does the Heidelberg Catechism speak of such a distinction in the present question and answer. All the saints, without distinction from the least to the greatest, undoubtedly perform a certain measure of good works; and all will receive the reward of grace according to their works.

Thirdly, this theory does not explain those passages of Scripture that tell us that the reward will be according as each man's work shall be, is entirely general. It includes all men. It cannot refer to some that, according to Kuyper, receive an extra gift, an extra enjoyment of glory, while it does not refer to the multitude of saints that only have eternal life and nothing more.

And finally, it plainly contradicts those passages of Holy Writ that plainly teach that eternal life itself is a reward of grace. Thus, the Lord said in answer to a question of Peter what the disciples should receive who have forsaken all: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. 19:28, 29. And to the church of Smyrna the Lord promises: "Be thou faithful unto

death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10. And the meaning is evidently that they shall receive eternal life as a crown of victory. And many more passages might be quoted to prove that eternal life itself, the eternal inheritance of glory, is a reward of grace.

For all these reasons we cannot agree with the theory which Dr. Kuyper proposes of the reward of grace.

We shall, therefore, have to look for a solution in another direction.

And then we wish to proceed from the evident truth of Scripture that all that ever shall be given to us of eternal life and glory is merited for us by Christ's death and obedience. He alone merited glory and eternal life. For as the Son of God in human flesh he humbled Himself deeply. In the form of God He never thought of the robbery to be equal with God; on the contrary, He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And by this humiliation and sacrifice on the cross, by this complete emptying of Himself, He alone merited the reward of glory. For so we read in Phil. 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And this glory He merited not only for Himself, but for all whom the Father hath given Him.

He merited for us perfect righteousness, even the forgiveness of sins. This grace is fundamental, as we have explained before. Without the imputed righteousness of Christ we have no right to anything at all. Without it we have no right to be delivered from the dominion of sin, no right to dwell as free sons in Father's house, no right to the delight of serving Him and to walk in all good works. For without righteousness, even without the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we are nothing but legal slaves of sin and of the devil. But in the perfect obedience of Christ we have the right to be delivered from this awful slavery and to enjoy the freedom with which Christ liberates us. All this is grace, the free grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

But there is more. For even as Christ, on the basis of His atoning death and obedience, has the right to deliver us, so He also actually delivers us, liberates us, from the dominion of sin and death and translates us into the state and condition of free sons of God, who principally delight in doing His will. So we read in Rom. 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and

death." By His Spirit Christ Himself dwells in us, He regenerates us and gives us new life. He calls us by His Spirit into the fellowship of His everlasting covenant. And even as He justifies us, so He also sanctifies us, causes us to hate all sin and to flee from it, and to have a principal delight in all good works. Thus Paul writes in II Cor. 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And again, in Eph. 2:4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even as by the grace of Christ *for* us we are justified and made perfectly righteous by His imputed righteousness, so by the grace of Christ *in* us we are delivered from sin and its dominion and in principle perfectly sanctified. And so we have nothing to boast; there is nothing meritorious in all this on our part. It is all grace from beginning to end. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9.

It should be plain, then, that all our good works are fruits which Christ bears in us and through us. Without Him we are nothing and can do nothing. As He Himself declares in John 15:4, 5: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Besides, our good works are gifts of God to us, that in the deepest sense flow from God's eternal predestination and good pleasure. For so we read in Eph. 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Thus, then, we would explain the answer of the Heidelberg Catechism that the reward is not of merit, but of grace. And yet, also in the case of the redeemed saints it is perfectly true that each one shall receive according as his works shall be. But it should be remembered that all the sins of the saints are perfectly blotted out by the death and perfect obedience of Christ Jesus our Lord, and that they can never more be imputed unto them. And secondly, the works of the saints are the fruits of Christ dwelling in them, which God ordained for them before the foundation of the world, and in which they are privileged to walk.

In the way of good works and of suffering with Christ we must enter into glory. But it is all through grace, and never of works.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!

H. Hoeksema.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### God's Covenant and The Promise

(Galatians 3)

We must bear in mind the line of the apostle's reasoning in this third chapter of the epistle to the Galatians. He contends that we must be justified either out of the law or through faith. Both are impossible. The Galatians had begun with the Spirit. They now attempted to be made perfect through the works of the law. False teachers had bewitched these Galatians and had seduced them so that they once more were in bondage to the law as in the Old Dispensation.

In the first half of this chapter, to which we called attention in our previous article on this portion of the Word of God, the apostle had clearly demonstrated to the Galatians the fallacy of their position. Abraham, whose children the Jews boasted to be, was justified, not by the law, but by faith. In Abraham not the natural Jews but the believers would be counted for the seed and be blessed. As many as are under the law are under the curse—hence, to fulfill the law is, therefore, a hopeless task. Neither is this fulfilment of the law necessary because Christ has redeemed us from the law, having become a curse for us. And Christ redeemed us in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*.

In the verses 15-24 the apostle continues along this line of reasoning and sets forth the certainty and unconditional character of the promises of God. Sure and unconditional is the promise of the Lord because it is not dependent upon or in any way affected by the law. These verses, 15-24, read as follows: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 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. Is the law then against the promises of God? God

forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

*The Promise Made To Christ, The Seed  
Of Abraham. — verse 16.*

Verse 16 reads: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." We must, of course, maintain the literal interpretation of this text. Many accuse the apostle of rabbinical hairsplitting here, because he would base his argument upon a single letter, the singular 'seed' instead of the plural 'seeds'. This, however, is surely conceit. Paul speaks in this text by inspiration and it is none other than the Spirit of the Living God Who inspires him to write as he does. We must, therefore, maintain this particular word of Scripture that the promise was given to Abraham and to his *seed*, and this seed is Christ.

There is fundamentally no difference between the promise of verse 16 and the blessing of Abraham elsewhere mentioned in this chapter. God's promise to Abraham had been that He would bestow upon Abraham and his seed His blessing, the inheritance (verse 18), the assurance of justification and everlasting life. Stated briefly, the Lord had promised unto Abraham and his seed the promise of His heavenly and eternal fellowship and communion. And this promise, we read, was given centrally to Christ. He, to be sure, is *the* Heir of everlasting life—"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"—Romans 8:17. Christ, of course, merits all the blessings and promises of the God of our eternal salvation. And because Christ is the Heir, we are heirs, according to the promise, only if we be Christ's, through faith in Him. That we receive the promise of the Spirit and of everlasting life through faith is not, we understand, because our faith is in any sense of the word meritorious or conditional. This is impossible. Christ is the Heir exclusively. To Him the promise of eternal life has been given. He, and He alone, blots out all our sins, satisfies all the justice of God, merits for us the blessedness and glory of everlasting life. We receive the promise through faith, and are joint-heirs with Christ through faith, only because all salvation is in Christ Jesus and the Lord imparts that salvation unto us through faith in Christ. The Heir of the promise, therefore, He in Whom and

with Whom God's covenant of friendship and fellowship is established, is, of course, Christ Jesus—He merits it; to Him the Lord promises and bestows salvation; from Him, and Him alone, we receive it through faith, the faith of God's sovereign mercy and grace. Paul postulates this truth because he would refute, with all the power at his command, the error that our work is in any sense necessary toward our salvation. All the promises of God are Yea in Christ Jesus.

*God's Promise, Sure And Inviolable.*

The promise of the Lord is sure and inviolable. Even a man's covenant, writes the apostle in verse 15, is sure and inviolable. We read in that text: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." Hence, even a covenant among men, once confirmed, is not disannulled or changed. If a covenant among men, once confirmed, is not annulled or changed, such is the reasoning of the apostle, this surely applies to the covenant of the eternal and unchangeable God. Notice how the apostle proceeds to establish the sure and unchangeable and irrevocable character of the promise of God. He speaks of blessing, promise, covenant, and inheritance in this third chapter, and it is clear that these four words are synonymous. They all refer to the same thing. The idea of the word 'covenant' in verse 17 is clear. In that verse the apostle declares: "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The word 'covenant' here is clearly synonymous with promise of this text and inheritance of the following verse. It refers to the Old Testament incident when God revealed Himself to Abraham, talked with him, as a Friend with His friend, and assured him that He would establish with him and with his seed His everlasting and heavenly covenant kingdom. The Lord promised to bless Abraham and bestow upon him the eternal inheritance.

This covenant or promise was confirmed, ratified by God. It was confirmed by the symbolism of Genesis 15, when the Lord alone passed between the halves of the sacrificial animals which had been divided in the midst. Abraham was asleep and Jehovah alone passed between these pieces, in confirmation of the fact that He, and He alone, would establish His covenant and fulfill His promise. To this incident of Gen. 15 we have already called attention in a previous article. Besides, the Lord had also confirmed His promise to Abraham with an oath, even as we read in Heb. 6:17-18: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we

might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Notice also, according to verse 17, that this covenant or promise of God was "confirmed before of God in Christ". We would read this particular expression, according to the original text as follows: "was confirmed before of God *for* or *with a view to* Christ". We have already called attention to the fact that Christ is *the* Heir, *the* Object of the promise of God. Now we read that God before confirmed the covenant with a view to Christ. God, therefore, ratified His promise to Abraham and Christ was the primary object of that promise. With a view to Christ, because of the work of Christ, because of His own work in our flesh and blood, God, before time, at the time of Abraham, gave the father of believers His promise and ratified it with an oath, swearing by Himself, even as He, all by Himself, would ultimately fulfill His own promise in Christ Jesus, His Son and our Lord.

Now we also understand why the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after the promise, could not disannul that covenant or promise of God. Such was indeed the opinion of the false Jewish teachers. They advocated the theory that the law, which came after the promise, had disannulled that promise, made it of none effect, had taken its place. They would impose the burden of the law upon the Galatians as the way unto salvation. This teaching of these false teachers, however, was surely impossible. Even men do not disannul or change a covenant once confirmed. And the Lord surely would not do such a thing. And the reason which the apostle advances in support of this contention that the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after the promise, could not disannul that promise, is exactly that the covenant was *before confirmed of God in or with a view to Christ*. Hence, if the promise was confirmed by God with a view to Christ, the promise would surely be in effect until the coming of that Christ. The period of the promise, therefore, did not exclude the law but it *included* the law. And inasmuch as the promise was given primarily to Christ and for Christ's sake, the law, which came long before the Christ, could never disannul the promise which was given with a view to Christ and would be fulfilled in Christ.

Besides, the apostle continues in verse 18: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. The meaning or implication of these words speaks for itself. If the inheritance, eternal life, be of the law, we must earn and procure it—then it is not a matter of God's promise but of our meriting it. However, if the inheritance be of the law and, therefore, not of the promise, the word of God to Abraham is no longer in effect. Fact is, God gave it to Abraham, not as

something which he must earn, but as an inheritance which the Lord promised to bestow upon him. A Divine decision to impose upon His people the works of the law as the means or way of salvation would not merely imply a change in policy on the part of the Most High. It would imply a failure on the part of the Lord to fulfill His word or promise, an annulling of His solemn pledge. The law and the promise stand over against each other. The first implies that man shall earn or procure by his own works his salvation. And the promise implied that the Lord would *bestow* the inheritance of eternal life upon His people. For the Lord to change from the promise to the law would imply, therefore, a failure on the Lord's part to do as He had promised to do. It is in this light that the words of Paul in verse 18 must be understood: "But God gave it to Abraham by promise." Jehovah solemnly declared to the father of believers that He would give it to him; He certainly would not *break* that promise and now insist that man must merit it himself.

Incidentally, verse 17 establishes beyond every doubt that the period of the promise to Abraham until the giving of the law at Sinai was a period of four hundred and thirty years. I believe I may say without fear of contradiction that it is generally supposed that Israel was in the land of Egypt 430 years. To enter into a detailed discussion of this part of verse 17 is unnecessary at this time. The theory that Israel sojourned in Egypt 430 years is supported by texts such as: Gen. 15:13, Ex. 12:40, Acts 7:6. Also Numbers 26:29 and 1 Chron. 7:20 are quoted in support of this view. It is contended that 1 Chron. 7:20 refers us to nine or ten generations from Joseph to Joshua, and that this would be impossible if Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt only 210 to 215 years. The supporters of this view, however, are somewhat embarrassed by the word of Paul in Gal. 3:17. They "solve" the difficulty, however, by asserting that the apostle is quoting in this text a translation of the Septuagint (the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek by seventy Jewish Bible translators at Alexandria). This translation of the Septuagint, they say, is in error, but the apostle Paul quotes their version because he is not interested in the time element. It is no concern of the apostle whether the children of Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt 430 or 215 years. However, I do not see but that it is imperative for us to accept the apostle's presentation in Gal. 3:17. In the first place, the texts quoted in the Old Testament in support of the contention that Israel was 430 years in Egypt can be interpreted in such a way that this sojourn of Israel is limited to 215 years. Secondly, it is strange, is it not, that the apostle Paul, guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit, should quote an erroneous translation of the septuagint. We must, therefore, conclude that the word of God in this third chapter of Galatians permit

no other explanation than that the sojourn of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt was approximately 210 to 215 years, and that the entire period from the giving of the promise to Abraham to the giving of the law at Sinai was four hundred and thirty years. This also explains why the Egyptian monarch was so sorely alarmed because of Israel's growth—it was the Lord Who caused the children of Israel to wax mighty in the house of bondage.

#### *Why The Promise Is Inviolable. — Verse 20.*

We read in verse 20: "Now the mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." Some 400 interpretations have been given of this particular passage. To understand this word of God we must bear in mind that the apostle would emphasize the temporary character of the law and its powerlessness to bring righteousness. Fact is, we read that a mediator is not of one. A mediator is one who stands between, presupposes two parties, God and man. The law, we read in verse 19, was given into the hand of a mediator, Moses, by angels. Whereas the law was given of God to man through Moses, this also presupposes that man must keep this law of God, must live up to the agreement. And this, we understand, is impossible. If now the promise, too, were a matter between the Lord and man, given by God but contingent, dependent upon man for its fulfillment, it would fail. But such is not the case. God, we read, is one. The Lord appeared directly to Abraham, without a mediator. God is one; He does all the work; He is the only factor. He is the one and only Party. This also implies that the Lord is unchangeable, determined by nothing outside of Himself. It is, therefore, impossible that He would first give the promise to Abraham and later change His policy as at the time of Moses. The Lord never changes; He, and He alone, establishes His covenant, fulfills His promise, and realizes the fellowship of friendship with the people of His everlasting love.

This surely emphasizes the unconditional and therefore inviolable character of the promise of the Lord. That promise is never conditional, dependent upon man; it is as sure of fulfillment as is the prophecy of the Lord which the Lord also alone fulfills. The promises of Jehovah are as unchangeable as the Lord God Himself.

#### *The Purpose Of The Law.*

The purpose of the law, which was given of the Lord by Moses unto the children of Israel from Mt. Sinai, is surely not to annul, abrogate the promise of God. The apostle Paul has expressed himself very clearly on this point. Besides, to teach that the law annulled the promise and constituted a change in the policy of Jehovah also "smacks" of Arminianism. The arminians also spoke of various decrees of the Lord,

of various methods pursued by Jehovah in His dealings with the children of men. Our fathers, at the Synod of Dordrecht, repudiated this conception and emphasized the truth that God is one and therefore also His decree of salvation is one. God cannot deny Himself or be in conflict with himself—hence, it could not be the purpose of the law to annul the promise.

The purpose of the law, according to the presentation of the apostle in Galatians 3, is two-fold. In the first place, the law was added because of the transgression. Thus we read in verse 19: "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." The law, we read, was added *because of transgressions*. It must serve the transgressions, was given for the sake of transgressions, in order that the transgressions might occur. That the transgressions were the result of the lawgiving is an undeniable fact. Israel erected their golden calf soon after the Lord had thundered the law of the ten commandments into their ears from the top of the mountain. And this is always the result of the law. Man is like unto a snake; that snake will reveal its true nature as soon as one holds out a stick unto it; man, too, will always reveal his true nature when he stands before the holy and good law of the Lord. However, these transgressions, always the result of the law, are also the purpose of the law. The law was added, we read, because of transgressions; God, therefore, added the law for the sake of transgressions in order that they might abound. And this is also literally taught in Romans 5:20: "Moreover the law entered, *that* the offence might abound."

Secondly, the law also served as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. This we read in verse 24. On the one hand, the law serves the transgressions, purposes to reveal our sin, corruption, and hopelessness. The law must reveal that salvation can impossibly be of man. For the law must be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, in order that we might be justified, not by the works of the law, but by faith.

We may therefore conclude that the law was not given to annul the promise of the Lord. But it was given that it might serve that promise, establish the fact that our hope lies only in that promise, that salvation can come alone from the living God. In His promise the Lord declares that *He*, and *He alone*, will save unto the uttermost. And He adds His law in order that it may become perfectly plain that He alone can save and that He alone therefore must save. And it is also for this reason that salvation is bestowed only upon those who *believe*. For faith, let us understand, is not *our* work, does not represent what we must do in the work of salvation. God is one, the Lord is the only Party, and He alone is the Worker of our salvation in

Christ Jesus, our Lord. But we are saved and justified through faith, because faith is God's gift to us, and, through our believing, we experience the fulness of the salvation of the Lord exactly because, believing, we, by the grace of the living God, look away from ourselves and unto Christ as the revelation of God as the God of our salvation. The promise of the Lord is unconditionally fulfilled by Jehovah and bestowed upon us by Him through faith, according to Galatians 3.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David Chastened

It was fully explained what we are to think of David's removal to the land of the Philistines, of his attaching himself to the royal heathen, Achish of Gath. It was a doing that proceeded from unbelief. As we saw, with Achish's permission David removed from Gath and settled in Ziklag, an uninhabited Philistine city that Achish appointed him. The problem of the support of himself and his retinue David solved by plundering Amalekites and other heathen tribes that dwelt in the district that bordered on the south country of Judah. But in reporting his movements David was purposely ambiguous, and the result was that Achish took him to mean that he plundered Israelites and Kenites. Yet Achish must have surmised that David was spoiling some other tribes, what tribes he didn't know and cared less, so long as David refrained from molesting Philistines and shared the booty with him. For Achish was a greedy heathen. The original text makes this plain. After every incursion David went to Gath with a goodly share of the spoil (verse 9). And Achish invariably asked not, as the English version has it, "Whither have ye made a road today," or as some translate, "*Against whom* have ye made an incursion this time," but, "Did you not make a road today?" It was the rich booty in which Achish principally was interested. And the thrust of his question was, Where is it? Lead me to it. David would do so. In addition, by the ambiguous language of his reports he would make it easily possible for Achish to conclude that he was plundering his own people to enrich this royal pagan. To Achish the thought was too gladdening so that he could not resist the temptation of understanding David to mean just that, namely, that he was spoiling his own people. Thus he would abide with Achish forever unceasingly to enrich him with

the spoils of Israelites. What a servant he had acquired in this Hebrew. So Achish wanted to believe. The thought was too pleasant for him to relinquish. He refused to perceive the extreme unlikeliness of David's abandoning his people and attaching himself to Philistines just because he couldn't get along with Saul. He had his misgivings. But to prove them groundless he wanted to take David with him in the pending war with Israel. As could be expected, the other Philistine princes strenuously objected, and David was ordered to return to Ziklag. As was said, doubtless David had wanted to help his brethren in that war. But the Lord had determined otherwise. He had a task for his servant to perform there in the south country. But first David must repent of his sin. And his sin was that he feigned love of the world and hatred of God's people in order that he might be allowed to dwell in Ziklag beyond the reach of Saul's wrath of which in his unbelief he was afraid, saying in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul". To bring him to repentance the Lord smites His servant, and the stroke is catastrophic as to its character.

Let us consider what now happens. The measures that David has adopted to prevent his incursions into Amalekite territory from coming to the knowledge of men failed as they were bound to fail. Of the heathen communities raided he had saved neither man nor woman alive, lest they should bring tidings to Gath. But the Amalekites are a numerous people; and the communities not affected by the raids naturally learn what went on. As stirred up by God, they wreak terrible vengeance. David and his men came to Ziklag after an absence of only three days. And, behold, the walls of their city are broken down and all the dwellings are in ashes. But they find no dead bodies among the ruins. Evidently the wives, sons and daughters have been carried away captive to be sold into slavery by the invaders.

David and his men are wildly moved. They weep until they have no more power to weep. The sacred writer makes special mention of David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the former wife of Nabal the Carmelite. They, too, are included among the captives. But a special great peril threatens David. In their bitterness of soul caused by the loss of sons and daughters, the people blame David for the calamity, and there is even talk of stoning him. In all likelihood the people strongly had advised against obeying Achish's summons that these Hebrews report to him for martial duty in the pending Philistine war with the people of Israel.

David's plight is desperate. God is smiting him. He was no longer willing to exercise the faith that the Lord was able and willing to protect him against the wrath of Saul there in God's country, the land of

Israel. So he went to leaning on his own understanding. Following its dictates, he removed himself to the land of the dead, and assumed dependence on a heathen king, posing as his friend. And to ingratiate himself with that royal pagan the more, he did an abominable thing. By ambiguous speech he led him to believe that he was enriching him with booty that he was taking by force from his own brethren, and thus pretended that he cast off his people forever.

And what now has his unbelief, his attempt at self-help, his reliance on the arm of flesh to save him from the wrath of Saul gotten him but loss, unspeakable grief, anguish of spirit, shame and peril from the hand of God! From the hand of God indeed. In His love the Lord chastens His servant. And being a son, despite all his folly, he endures the chastening of the Lord. Quoting the text, "the soul of the people was bitter", hard, cruel, carnally angry. It can be explained. They do not say, 'God did this to us. And we deserve this stroke'. But they end with their misfortune in David. Hence, the urge to kill him is strong in them. But David is differently disposed. Of him the text states, "But David strengthened himself in the Lord." There is this in the statement. David sees God's hand in it all, and he is humble and penitent. Seeking God's presence, he acknowledges his sins in tears of true contrition—it is the only way in which a sinner can strengthen himself in God—implores God's forgiveness and salvation in Christ. Thus casting himself upon the Lord's mercy, he is confident that God will pardon his abominations and deliver him out of the troubles that beset him in this dreadful hour for His name's sake. And in that confidence he enquires of the Lord (by the ephod at his request brought thither to him by the priest Abiathar) saying, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them, and without fail recover?" The Lord returns answer, "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake, and without fail recover."

It is about this same time that Saul, too, enquires of the Lord. For the Philistines make war against him and his heart greatly trembles. But the Lord answers him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by the prophets. Why this difference in treatment? God loves David who in himself is just as ill-deserving as Saul, and gives him grace to repent of his sins; and in his penitent heart God speaks His answer efficaciously, the command, "pursue", and the promise, "thou shalt overtake and recover," so that David goes, he and his six hundred men in the full confidence that the Lord will work for him. So does the Lord strengthen his penitent and contrite servant for God's warfare. As to Saul, he too, goes but as impenitent and hard of heart and accordingly without the answer. Hence, he goes to his doom to which he was appointed and in preparation of which God was hardening him. For

the Lord hath mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

David and his band of six hundred men come to the brook Besor, a rivulet that doubtless begins in the hill-country of Judah and flows in a south-westerly direction toward the sea. In the ground of the valley of this brook there seems to be an insurmountable difficulty. For here the baggage is left as protected by two hundred men too exhausted to follow David any further. David's band now numbers but four hundred men. But he is unafraid. For his heart again is right with God and the Lord promised victory. But where is David to locate the invaders? All he knows is that they retreat in a southerly direction. And the country is large and the going difficult. It is doubtful whether he can even be certain that they were Amalekites. The Lord comes to his help. From the proximity of Egypt the Amalekites have Egyptians as slaves (comp. ver. 13). One of these slaves, "a young man of Egypt," taken along on this Amalekite expedition against Ziklag, fell sick and was abandoned by his master who left him without bread and water to die in the wilderness. After three days the men find him nearly perished from hunger, and they bring him to David. They place before him bread and water, some figs and raisins. When he has eaten, his spirit comes again to him. On being questioned, he tells David all about himself; to whom he belongs and whence he comes and the treatment afforded him by his master, when he fell sick. What is more important, he also reveals that it was Amalekites who had smitten and burned Ziklag and carried away captive the defenseless Hebrew populace. And from his description of the scope of the expedition, David learns that the south of the Cherethites, and the coast of Judah, and the south of Caleb also had been invaded. The Cherethites are a Philistine tribe dwelling in the south and on the sea. (In Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 11:6 the name is used as synonymous with that of the Philistines). Caleb was one of the twelve faithful spies. To him and his posterity and as a reward for his faithfulness, Hebron and its environs was given as a lasting possession. Though the allotment belonged to the tribe-territory of Judah, the district of Caleb was a distinct region. It formed the eastern part of the Negeb as far as the Dead Sea. Thus the Amalekite plundering expedition extended over the whole south-country from sea to sea. It was a mighty invasion including both Philistine and Israelitish territory and not intended for Ziklag alone. David asks the Egyptian whether he can lead him to the company. He is willing, But David must promise him under oath that he will neither kill him, nor deliver him into the hands of his master.

The Lord continues to work for His servant. The Amalekite troop, flushed with victory and delirious with joy because of all the great spoil, are in a careless

mood. Scattered over the ground, they eat and drink and dance in riotous celebration of their successful foray. Thus abandoned to jollity, their defense is departed from them. David surprises the disorganized company doubtless by a night march. No resistance is made. The whole enemy troop, seized by panic, turns to flight as is indicated by the statement, "And there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled." The statement also reveals that David and his band is outnumbered, perhaps greatly, so that what we again here witness is a wonder of God worked by Him in behalf of his penitent servant according to the promise that "keeping my commandments, ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword; and five of you shall chase an hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you," Lev. 26:8, 9. But David keeps not the commandments of his God perfectly. Apart from Christ he is a sinner lost and undone. True, by the mercy of God his delight is in the law of the Lord. But as yet he only begins to approximate its ethical ideal. We have just taken notice of his abominations. But David strengthens himself in the Lord as discerning that all his righteousness and goodness are of God. And in that conviction he overcomes the world including his own sinful flesh as represented by that Amalekite troop. And his victory is his faith.

There is also a threat of which notice must be taken, "But if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments. . . . I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies." This threat, too, goes into fulfillment this very hour. There in Mount Gilboa the Philistines and Israel, the latter led in battle by Saul, are involved in gory combat, the one with the other. And the men of Israel flee before the face of the Philistines and fall down slain. And Saul, too, dies. For he does not strengthen himself in the Lord but abhors His judgments.

How complete David's triumph over the adversary! He recovers all that the Amalekites have carried away including his two wives. "There is nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David recovers all."

There is the question of the duration of the carnage. And David smote them from twilight even unto the evening of the next day, "reads the text in translation. But the statement is not clear. From *twilight* to evening may mean from *morning* twilight to evening, or from *evening* twilight to evening, the Hebrew word twilight being used in both senses. And the succeeding Hebrew expression translated *of the next day* may be rendered, too, *until the next day*. Perhaps it is best to translate, from *morning twilight* to evening, that is,

to the next day, as bearing in mind that according to Hebrew reckoning the day begins with evening. According to this translation, David surprised the adversary in the morning, and the carnage continued to the evening and was thus of a day's duration. According to the other rendering, the carnage began in the evening and continued through the night to the evening of the following day. But the night was dark. How would David and his men be able to distinguish friend and foe?

The spoils with which the Amalekites had arrived at Ziklag is set apart from and driven before the recovered flocks and herds that the adversary had taken away from David and his people. The former David desires and appropriates for himself intending, as appears from the sequel, to put it to special use. The people cheerfully honor his desire with the cry, "This is David's spoil."

David and his company come to the two hundred men whom physical exhaustion resulting from previous exertion compelled to remain behind in the valley of the brook Besor. In friendly spirit they go forth to meet their comrades and David effectually inquires after their welfare. But a murmuring arises among the covetous and unprincipled men in David's band. The text calls them "wicked man and men of Belial of those that went with David." Because the two hundred took no part in that expedition they object to them sharing in the spoil. All that they would allow to every man is his wife and children. They may lead them away and depart. But David, fearing God and thus imbued with a different spirit—the spirit of true Christian compassion and magnanimity—remonstrates with these lustful men, doing so in a spirit of meekness. For his purpose is not to offend but to restore. "Brethren", says he to them, "Ye shall not do so with that which the Lord hath given us," including, he means, the physically disqualified two hundred. Their right to the booty, accruing as it did from its being given them of God, is as well established as that of the others. Hence, they may not be excluded. David knows whereof he speaks as he allows himself to be instructed by the law, which requires (Lev. 31:27) that the prey be divided into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation. David's ruling merely is a special application of this divine statute. Hence, he puts to these murmurers the question, "For who will hearken unto you in this matter? what man of principle, who fears God and trembles before His word? 'For as his part is that goeth down to battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff.'" 'Such is plainly the will of God'.

It is plain how these murmurers reason. They vainly imagine that their claim to the booty reposes upon their having taken the war upon them instead

of upon God's gracious dispensation. And the lie from which their imagining stems is that they fought that war in a strength original with them and that their own arm begot them victory. To this lie David opposes the truth that the *Lord* preserved them and delivered the company into their hand, and that on this account the spoils belong exclusively to Him for Him to divide amongst His people as He chooses without any man having the right to raise his voice in protest at his choosing to give all a share in the spoil. Shame on such a protestant. Let him consider that by himself he is a vile and ill-deserving sinner whose only right is to be damned. David made his ruling a permanent statute and ordinance for Israel.

It was remarked that the spoil with which the Amalekites came to Ziklag David took to himself as purposing to put it to a special use. Coming to Ziklag, he carried out this purpose. He sends presents to such among the elders of Judah who had befriended him while he tarried among them as a fugitive from the wrath of Saul. The names of these elders, friends of David, are not revealed, nor their number. Only some of the names of the places where they reside are given. The list contains seven names. Many cities favored David such as those of the Jerahmeelites and of the Kenites. The passage closes with the remark, "And to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt, did he send of the spoil." The conclusion is warranted that the majority of elders of Judah if not nearly all of them were friendly to David. Accordingly soon after the death of Saul David by divine direction takes up his residence in Hebron, whereupon the men of Judah come and anoint him king over the house of Judah. They recognized in David a man sent of God to rule over His people in Saul's stead.

David's point of view in sending these gifts is declared in his accompanying word, "Behold a gift of blessing for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." This is a direct reference to the Amalekites who had invaded southern Judah. In making incursions into Judah, they had revealed themselves as enemies of Jehovah as Israel was God's people. Accordingly, David wants his presents to the elders to be regarded as blessings of the Lord. And rightly so, as God had given victory.

Formerly David was enriching Achish with the booty. That was sinful of him. The spoils of war belonged to the Lord, the victory being His. And His will was that the spoils be divided amongst his people and not be given to the heathen. And David, again in spiritual, discerned the Lord's will. He sends of the spoil to his friends, his brethren in the Lord, and in so doing, typified Him—the Christ—who, when He had ascended on high and led captivity captive, gave gifts unto men.

Also to be taken notice of is that David is not

afraid that Achish will learn of his doing. For he sends out the spoil from Ziklag whither he has returned. He wants Achish and all the Philistines to know that his heart is with the Hebrews only. Achish may now see that he was sorely mistaken in David. However vexed Achish may be, however disappointed in David, he does him no mischief. For the Lord cares for His servant.

G. M. Ophoff.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland

(Psalm 105; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal hebben we onze reden gegeven waarom we dit opschrift kozen voor den 105den psalm: hij getuigt van den liefde-volle Heiland, Die in liefde zwijgt van de zonde van Zijn volk, Die hen toeroept met lieflijke stem om Hem te loven en met psalmgezing te prijzen. De eerste drie verzen spreken daarover. Israel moet den Heere loven.

Dit brengt de gedachte naar voren of we dat wel doen kunnen. En dan is het steeds wederkeerende antwoord, dat wij dat zekerlijk niet bij machte zijn te doen. Wij loven veel liever onszelf, den mensch of het ondermaansche. Maar den Heere loven? O neen. Dat is geheel en al onmogelijk voor Jakob-Israel-Jeruzalem, zooals hij is van nature.

Ik denk, dat om die reden de volgende verzen hem toeroepen om toch geduriglijk naar den Heere toe te gaan om kracht tot dien arbeid.

“Vraagt naar den Heere en Zijne sterkte, zoekt Zijn aangezicht geduriglijk.”

Ziet, geliefde lezer, dat brengt U waar ge zijn moet. Dat brengt U tot groote nederigheid. Stelt het U voor: Ge wordt opgeroepen van Godswege om Hem te loven, Zijn naam aan te roepen, Zijn daden bekend te maken onder de heidenen. Ge moet van Hem zingen en psalmzingen en aandachtelijk spreken van Zijne wonderen. Ge wordt bevolen om te roemen in den Naam van Gods heiligheid, en om dat te doen met een blij hart! Ziet daar Uwe opdracht van Godswege. Maar. . . de Heere beseft, dat ge dat niet doen kunt in eigen kracht. En dan zegt Hij tot U in nederbuigende goedheid: “Nu dan, Mijn kind, Ik weet wat van Mijn maaksel zij te wachten, hoe zwak van nood, hoe klein gij zijt van krachten, en dat gij stof, van jongsaf, zijt geweest! En daarom ga Ik voort om U te onderwijzen in den waren godsdienst: Vraagt naar Mij en naar Mijne sterkte! En doet dat geduriglijk!

In eigen kracht kunt ge Mij niet loven. Alleen als Ik U bekrachtig door Mijn Geest en Woord zult ge kunnen doen wat Ik U beveel en zingend toeroep in de eerste drie verzen van dezen Mijnen psalm!” Ik vraag U: werpt dat U niet neer in groote nederigheid en ootmoed?

Zoo moet ge het verband zien tusschen dit gedeelte en het gedeelte, dat wij de laatste maal behandelden.

Vraagt! Zoekt! Dat zijn twee werkwoorden. In de Engelsche vertaling van dit vers lezen we maar één werkwoord: Zoekt! Toch is dat niet juist gedaan door de Engelsche vertalers van den Bijbel. De Heilige Geest gebruikte twee werkwoorden in het Hebreeuwsch en daarom moesten zij ook twee werkwoorden gebruikt hebben, juist zooals de vaders gedaan hebben in de Nederlandsche vertaling. Dat moesten zij te meer doen, omdat er opgang zit in de actie waartoe Gods volk opgeroepen wordt. Het eerste werkwoord is *vraagt!* Welnu, dat werkwoord beteekent dat men onophoudelijk een pad bewandelt, dat men geduriglijk en herhaaldelijk zijn voeten zet op een zeker pad. En zoo kwam men ertoe om dit te vertalen door *vragen*. De idee is, dat men onophoudelijk zich tot iemand wendde met een zeker doel.

Het tweede werkwoord beteekent letterlijk, dat men met de vingers naar iets tast, opdat men het vinden mocht. Ge bemerkt den opgang. Men wendt zich tot iemand met uitgestoken handen, opdat men zoo iemand vinden mocht en het begeerde iets ontvangen.

Past dit nu toe, en ge krijgt het volgende. De Heere weet, dat wij zonder Hem niets vermogen. En zoo zegt Hij tot ons: Komt nu geduriglijk op het door Mij U voorgestelde pad naar Mij toe en vraagt dan om Mijn kracht en sterkte. En doe dat geduriglijk, al tastende en voelende, opdat gij Mij vindt.

In dit verband spreekt de Heere van Zijn Aangezicht. Ik heb daar eerder over geschreven, doch zal het nu herhalen. Dat Aangezicht is uiteindelijk Jezus Christus de Heere. Niemand heeft ooit God gezien, doch de Zoon die in den schoot des Vaders is heeft Hem ons verklaard. En Paulus spreekt van het kennen der heerlijkheid Gods in het aangezicht van Christus. Ook is er verband tusschen de *sterkte* van het eerste lid van dit vers; en het *Aangezicht* van het tweede lid. We moeten vragen naar de sterkte, en zoeken het Aangezicht van het tweede lid. Welnu, de man die verzadigd wordt met het staren op het Aangezicht is ook de man die gesterkt wordt door God. De sterke rechterhand des Heeren die door haar kracht Gods volk in stand houdt is ook Jezus Christus de Heere. Er is een schoon verband hier.

En dan zal 't gaan.

Ja, dan zal 't gaan. Dan zullen we luisteren naar dankens- en lovensstof. En dat is het wat we nu gaan beluisteren. Het vijfde vers is de inleiding. Het zal nu gaan over de heerlijkheid van des Heeren goedguns-

tigheid over Zijn volk. En als ge dat goed opgenomen hebt in hart en verstand en ziel en gemoed, dan zult ge door Gods sterkte in staat gesteld worden om uit te breken in loven, prijzen en psalmzingen, opgedragen in de verzen 1 tot 3.

“Gedenkt Zijne wonderen die Hij gedaan heeft, Zijne wonderteekenen en de oordeelen Zijns monds”.

Gedenkt Zijne wonderen!

Daar zullen we heel wat van te schrijven hebben ter gelegener tijd. Loopt maar een beetje vooruit en leest de verzen 28-41 en ge zult wonder op wonder zien die de Heere gedaan heeft in het land van Cham.

Zijne wonderen!

Alle die wonderen ten tijde van Israel's uittocht uit Egypte, de wonderen die geschied zijn daar voor, alswel de wonderen die later, veel later geschied zijn, hebben hun middelpunt in een groot wonder: de vleeschwording van God, met alles wat daarmee in verband staat, vooral de opstanding van Jezus Christus uit de dooden. Dat is het centrale wonder van alle wonderen. Alle wonderen die Egypte zag, zitten vast aan dat centrale wonder. En zoo is het met alle wonderen Gods.

Wat is een wonder? Of, beter gevraagd: Wat is *het* wonder?

Het Wonder van alle wonderen is, dat God U achteraan komt op Uw pad naar de hel henen, U beetneemt, en wascht van alle Uwe ongerechtigheden, en U schoon gemaakt hebbende gelijk een schoone Engel, U binnenbrengt in de zalen van het nieuwe Jeruzalem, om U te doen zingen en jubelen van eeuwige gelukzaligheid. Dat is het centrale wonder.

Vergunt het mij om hetzelfde ietwat anders uit te drukken. Het centrale wonder is, dat de DrieEenige God de duisternis van onze zonde, schuld, vloek en doem verbreekt door het Licht dat van Zijn Aan'zicht straalt, en dat Hij in het Aangezicht van Jezus Christus den Heere voor ons komt te staan, om U dan voorts tot Zich te lokken met lieflijke Stem, met de stem van Zijn eeuwig Evangelie. Dat is het wonder der wonderen.

Nu moet ik daar nog één ding bij zeggen. En dat ééne ding is het negatieve ding der verwerping. Let er op, dat ge niet alleen gedenken moet aan Zijn wonderen, doch ook aan de oordeelen Zijns monds! En dat is vreeselijk. We moeten ook gedenken aan de vreeselijke oordeelen die Hij uitspreekt over Egypte, en allen die gelijk zijn aan dat hoovaardige en wreede volk. Deze psalm zal tot in bijzonderheden spreken van die verschrikkelijke dingen der oordeelen Zijns monds. Ja, zelfs is ons het haar te berg gerezen, als we gestaard hebben op Zijn oordeelen! Zoo zingt toch de zanger Israels op een andere plaats? Maar ge moet er aan denken. Later, veel later, is ons geopenbaard, dat een volk zal staan bij de kristallijne zee, *met vuur gemengd*. En dan zullen zij het lied van Mozes en het Lam zingen. Ik beken het: het is vreeselijk om te

zingen bij het zien van de duizende lijken die dobberden op de Roode Zee. Maar het moet. En hier is het kunnen: als ge het doet om Godswil. Om Zijner gerechtigheid wil. Dan kan het en mag het. Maar dan moet het ook.

Nu dan, de psalm roept het U zingende toe om aan de wonderen Gods, mitsgaders Zijne oordeelen, te gedenken.

Ik herinner mij, dat oude mensen in Sassenheim soms spraken van heilzaam. Dit of dat is heilzaam. Welnu, te gedenken aan de wonderen van God is heilzaam. Dat will zeggen, dat zulk doen heil werkt voor U. En heil is volheid. En als ge vol zijt van het aanschouwen, gedenken en overdenken van Gods wonderen en oordeelen, dan komt ge als vanzelf in de geëischte gestalte van de eerste drie verzen: dan gaat ge aan 't psalm zingen!

Indien we Nieuw Testamentisch spreken over dezen psalm, dan lezen we hem zoo: Gedenkt aan Jezus Christus den Heere! Ziet sterk op den Zoon Gods! Bestudeer al wat Hij gedaan heeft in de volheid des tijds. En als ge dat doet, zult ge doen gelijk de ouderlingen in het gezicht van Patmos: ge zult in aanbidding nedervallen voor God en al maar roepen: Gij zijt waardig te ontvangen alle lof, aanbidding en dankbaarheid tot in alle eeuwigheid. En weer zullen de dorpele der deuren zich bewegen en het Huis vervuld worden met rook, vanwege den stem des roependen! O, het is zalig God te dienen!

En wie zal dit nu doen?

Dat is een zeer belangrijke vraag, een vraag die geleerde mensen en ongeleerde stakkerds heeft bezighouden in alle eeuwen en in all landen.

Ik zal de vraag in Bijbelsche taal neerschrijven: Wie klimt den berg des Heeren op? Er is geen vraag die belangrijker is uit het oogpunt van den ellendigen zondaar die van nature op weg is naar de hel, en die dat ook weet.

Onze psalm geeft het antwoord: “Gij zaad Abrahams Zijns knechts, gij kinderen Jakobs, Zijne uitverkorenen!”

Van den beginne heeft men getracht om het antwoord op die eerder genoemde, belangrijke vraag algemeen te maken. Er is groote variatie in het antwoorden, doch al zulk pogen kwam hier op neer, dat men het Bijbelsche antwoord niet wilde. Al moest het dan ook toegestemd worden, dat alle mensen zeker niet den berg des Heeren zouden beklimmen, er zou dan toch een kans voor velen, zoo niet allen, zijn. Of ook, de Heere God zou wel willen, dat allen kwamen; Hij doet zelfs Zijn best om toch allen die door Zijn Woord bereikt worden te trekken, te lokken tot Zijn Goddelijk Hart. Duizende boeken zijn geschreven om toch maar algemeen te maken wat God particulier maakte. Ook daar is van toepassing: IJdelheid der ijdelheden: het is al ijdelheid!

Want Gods Woord weet niet met al van dat geknoei der goddelooze menschen. Want goddeloos is al zulk pogen. Het mag niet.

Gods Woord zegt overal, dat alleen de gekenden zalig zullen worden. En dat het ook zoo is naar de intentie Gods. God wil alleen Zijn volk zalig maken. En de naam van dat volk is dan ook de *uitverkorenen*. Dat staat ook in onzen tekst hier. Het is Abraham's zaad, de kinderen Jakobs, Gods uitverkorenen. Wat zullen wij tot deze dingen zeggen? Eerder sprak it van de wonderen Gods, en ook van het centrale Wonder: Jezus Christus den Heere. Welnu, aanschouwt dat wonder ook hier: *Gij Zaad Abrahams!* Wie denkt hier niet aan het Goddelijke wonder van Izak? Abraham en Sara waren beiden dood ten overstaan van de vraag of zij zaad zouden hebben. De eene was honderd jaren oud en de andere negentig jaren. Van hen heeft de Heilige Geest getuigd in Romeinen 4, dat het lichaam van Abraham en de baarmoeder van Sara verstorven waren. En in het 17de vers van dat hoofdstuk, doellende op dat wonder van de geboorte van Izak, zegt de Heilige Geest: "... namelijk God die de dooden levend maakt, en roept de dingen die niet zijn alsof ze waren."

De uitverkorenen!

Er gaat een siddering door onze leden als we dit geweldige woord neerschrijven. Uitverkoren uit de millioenen van menschen. Van voor de grondlegging der wereld. Vooraleer de Heere den hemel en de aarde gemaakt had, heeft Hij Zijn volk verkoren. En Hij heeft de anderen verworpen. Wie zou niet sidderen? Vooral als we bedenken, dat er geen reden is waarom de uitverkorenen zalig zouden worden, d.w.z., geen reden in dat volk zelf. Wij zijn ook, juist zooals de anderen, kinderen des toorns, vanwege onze zonde en schuld.

En het is Gods intentie om alléén die uitverkorenen zalig te maken. Dat blijkt overvloediglijk uit de wonderen Gods. Dat blijkt uit het feit, dat Hij de dooden levend maakt. Er is niemand die zalig kan worden uit zichzelf of door eenige macht of kracht van anderen. Alle menschen zijn dood, onbekwaam en onwillig om te leven voor Gods aangezicht. En uit dat groote kerkhof roept God Zijn volk wakker. Hij roept Zijn uitverkorenen toe in alle eeuwen: Ontwaakt gij die slaapt, en staat op uit de dooden en Christus zal over U lichten! En zij zijn opgestaan en zijn aan 't wandelen gegaan. En ze zijn naar den hemel gewandeld.

De eerste Uitverkorene is Jezus.

Jezus is uitverkoren door God om de doorgang door ons graf te openen. Hij lag terneder in onzen dood en verdoemenis. Maar God riep, dat is, God die de dooden levend maakt. En dezelfde macht en kracht die in Jezus wrocht, toen Hij Hem uit de dooden opwekte, werkt in alle uitverkorenen, vroeger of later. En opgewekt zijnde, gaan zij aan 't wandelen naar God heen.

Dat kan nooit missen. Hij zal ze allen tot Zich trekken. De Waarheid heeft dat gezegd.

En hun getal is bij God bekend. Nog nooit is er één verworpen levend gemaakt; en nog nooit is er één uitverkorene in den dood gebleven.

Zouden we dan niet zingen, neen, psalmszingen?

G. Vos.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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Dear Editor:

After reading the articles of Rev. Gritters, "About Catechism, Etc.", and "Catechism Around the Confessions", I was prompted to write a word in appreciation but also in criticism.

The emphasis Rev. Gritters placed upon the need to have instruction in our creeds is worthy of all of our support. I believe we should so instruct in the creeds of our fathers that they are again appreciated as statements and standards to be used in our fight against falsehood.

My criticism comes, however, when he makes it plain in his second article that he proposes to limit instruction in the history of the Bible to the ages seven to nine and give courses in doctrine and the confessions for the ages ten to twenty. In his ideal to have the members of the church make a thorough study of the confessions and to complete such a course before they are twenty years of age and before they make confession of their faith, Rev. Gritters falls into a serious error of not reckoning with the practical situation of the pupil. I believe, too, that the method of imparting doctrine as he proposes it is not in harmony with the purpose of doctrine and history.

Allow me to submit some of my objections at random without entering too much into a detailed discussion of the educational principles involved.

1. Such a system makes us vulnerable to the charge that we are more interested in our creeds than in the Bible. The text-books of his proposal are for the greater part of the catechetical training the confessions and not the Bible.

2. Such a detailed analysis of all of our confessions in the pre-confession period does not attain to our main objective to impart doctrine to our youth. It rather gives them to know the language of the confessions.

The essential truths are treated in all the creeds, but the essential doctrines and the individual emphasis of each one of the creeds can easily be incorporated in a study of just one of the creeds for purposes of instructing our youth if we are primarily interested in imparting doctrine and secondarily in an acquainting

with the confessions as such. Furthermore, the Heidelberg Catechism is the best adapted to the use of a textbook to instruct our covenant youth because of its formulation into questions and answers and its point of view. Our fathers decided that the Heidelberg Catechism should be used as a guide for instruction of the youth and they did not use the other confessions.

3. Upon the basis of experience and psychology we must consider that much of the truths of the Confessions cannot be assimilated before the age of twenty. We must select and present the essentials in succinct and clear language for them to commit to memory. I rather think that one handbook (not a workbook) could serve the purpose for the instruction and further study of doctrine for old and young of all ages. I do not favor the multiplication of catechism books. After we have memorized various definitions about one doctrine we remember nothing. If, however, we have one clear and expressive definition about a truth we retain it and can always refer to it.

For the mature study of the confessions it is wiser to wait until the pupils are more able to make a detailed study of them. Such is done in societies and in classes for young people.

4. The ideal of indoctrinating our youth as it is proposed in the system of Rev. Gritters commits the error of abstracting doctrine from history. It fails to understand that God reveals Himself in history, that the greater part of the Bible and the proofs for our doctrine is history.

To concentrate on abstract doctrine for the major portion of our catechetical instruction takes us away from life, and kills the doctrines.

5. Such a system also goes contrary to the principles laid down in the Bible. The Scriptures teach us to instruct according to the nature of God's people. The beginners must be fed with milk. The doctrines and the truths of the New Testament are taken from the history and patterns from the Old Testament. Jesus showed us that truth is best instilled by way of parables, comparisons and through example. The apostles make repeated reference to history to impart doctrine. Deuteronomy teaches us that God shows that we must teach His statutes, judgments and testimonies by way of reference to history. The son asks the father about the meaning of all the Word of God and the father is so advised to explain the questions in reference to history. The children of Israel were given tangible evidence of God's dealings with them. They were to teach their children concerning the transactions of God with them by pointing to the silent testimony of history made real and supplemented by the living pile of stones near the Jordan.

6. The history that is given in our day schools often is not interpreted correctly. Such important historical

revelations as God's covenant with Noah, Abraham's praying for the righteous are often so interpreted as to substantiate false doctrine.

For consideration of the ideas I wish to present, I refer you to a series of historical outlines with notes on doctrines which are concerned with the history treated. This does not mean that I approve of this series as to content and form, but merely for consideration of the educational principles involved. The series is called "Geschiedenis der Gods Openbaring", now being published in the Netherlands.

I believe we should have living doctrine and to have that we should have more of history and interpretation of history in our catechism classes.

Rev. Gritters' methodology is doctrine with history added. This always makes the historical material barely an appendage in our catechism classes of one hour per week. My point is that it should be just the reverse. We should teach doctrine through history. That is, history is the main course, the basic part, that which will receive attention. In such a way I believe we also remember more of doctrine, because it becomes more vivid.

Rev. L. Doezeema.

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*Answer:—*

Brother Doezeema and I have corresponded concerning these matters, and we both thought it was well to bring these important matters to the attention of the reading public.

We do not have the space to give a detailed answer to this communication. Just this:

Brother doezeema states that my catechism system is "doctrine with history added", whereas it is his contention that we must teach "doctrine through history". It is best perhaps to keep this main point of alleged difference in mind, and then let the readers think the matters over for themselves. In the system which we outlined we stated that our youth become acquainted with history through the early catechism, the home, the christian school, private reading, and the Sunday School where they exist, and our aim is to use this knowledge of history, meanwhile teaching doctrine. That, it seems to me, is the only way we can ever get system. In how far anyone teaches doctrine with history added or teaches doctrine through history depends on the instructor and the methods he uses. If we give instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism we are teaching doctrine, and, if the instructor will make his teaching effective and personal he will frequently use history. But this depends upon the instructor.

Let the readers read for themselves, both what the brother writes and what we wrote before, and with the catechism season coming on let every consistory see

to it that we be satisfied with nothing less than the best.

We'll come back to the letter of Brother Doezema in a later issue, D. V. And thanks for helping us to bring these things to the attention of our readers.

M. Gritters.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### The Eyes Of The Lord

Scripture speaks of God's face, His eyes, His ears, His mouth, His hands and His feet. In each case we realize that we are dealing with an anthropomorphism. That is, God has given an earthly reflection of His own invisible Being in man, His image bearer, in order that we may know Him as He is, may be able to address Him and speak of Him in our earthly language. A short time ago we examined the passages of Scripture that speak of God's face (Vol. 24, page 452); this time we wish to investigate the Scriptural significance of the expression "the eyes of the Lord".

As may be readily surmised because of the symbolical nature of the Old Testament Scriptures, this expression is much more common there than in the New Testament. Yet that does not mean that the New Testament does not speak of God's eyes, God's seeing, beholding, or searching. Especially in the New Testament we meet the expression 'in the sight of God', even though in our translation it is simply translated as 'before God'. Thus we read in Luke 12:6, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before (in the sight of) God?"

A mere glance at a few of these passages that refer to the eyes of the Lord readily convinces us that this expression is far richer in significance than we often realize, for God is the Lord, and everything about Him is altogether gloriously divine; eternal, immutable, all-sufficient. God sees the things as only God can. His penetrating gaze searches out, examines them, tries them as sovereign Judge of all the earth. His eye is as a consuming fire upon the wicked, but is filled with love and blessing upon that people which has found grace in His sight.

*"And God saw everything . . . ."*

The first passage for our consideration is found in the first chapter of Scripture, Gen. 1:31, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

a. This expresses, first of all, that God's eye regards His whole creation. All things lie open and exposed before His sight at any and at all times. This idea is substantiated by numerous other passages of Scripture, such as Heb. 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."

b. But God examines, tries all things under His searching gaze. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. 15:3.

c. And God passes judgment upon all that He sees. God always sees all things in relation to Himself, His holiness and righteousness, His plans and His purposes. God saw His whole creation as it had come forth from His hand in virgin splendor, and He laid His divine approval upon it, for it was without fault or blemish, perfect to serve the purpose for which it was made.

*"His eyelids try . . . ."*

This leads us to a second passage found in Psalm 11:4, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men."

a. Even as God sees all things, so He also searches out the life of each rational, moral creature, as it is lived before His face. Job 34:21, "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all His goings." The consciousness of living our lives in the sight of God must fill the heart of every believer with fear and trembling. Paul appeals to this to seal his oath, when he says in Gal. 1:20, "Behold, before (in the sight of) God, I lie not."

b. The Lord's eyes try every man according to the perfect standard of His holy law. Hab. 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." The idea of 'beholding' and 'looking' here is to continue to look upon a thing with approval. The Lord hides His face, turns His eyes away in disapproval from those who transgress His commandments. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within My house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in My sight." Ps. 101:7. That is God's curse that rests upon the wicked eternally. Therefore, on the other hand, God assures Israel that this curse will not come upon them, "when thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God to keep all His commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is *right in the eyes of the Lord thy God.*" Deut. 13:18.

c. The Lord draws His eyelids together, as it were, to closely scrutinize the life of every individual, to judge him accordingly. Even though the wicked may seem to prosper in their wickedness, and boast in their vanity, they are always living their lives in the sight

of Him Who judges righteously. Therefore God says to them, Psalm 50:21, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

d. The result is, that there is no escape for the wicked. The Lord's eye, as we read repeatedly in Scripture, is upon them for evil, and not for good. He curses their thoughts, their plans and purposes, their words and deeds, their walk and conversation, their home and family. He turns all things to their destruction. As the Lord says of wicked Israel in Amos 9:4, "And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." They shall certainly perish. Job 34:20-22, "In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all His goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

*"To deliver their soul from death . . . ."*

We should consider in this connection the passage in Psalm 33:18, 19, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

a. The Lord looks in favor upon His people only because they are holy and blameless before Him in Christ. This is the idea of Gen. 6:5, 8, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually . . . . But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This is also the plain teaching of Eph. 1:4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him (in His sight)." Note that this brings us back to the eternal, sovereign election in Christ. God has chosen His people in Him with the purpose that they may appear in His sight as holy and without blame. Therefore Christ paid the ransom for their sins by His death on the cross. Col. 1:21, 22, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight."

b. The passage in Psalm 33 further shows that God's eye is upon His people in loving care. He always remembers them, never to forget them. He always regards them, never to lose sight of them. He "delivers their soul from death and keeps them alive

in famine." In fact, God governs all things by His almighty providence to the end that His people may be blessed. In 2 Chron. 16, King Asa is reprimanded by the prophet Hanani, because he put his trust in the insignificant king of Syria rather than in the almighty power of the Lord his God. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." (verse 9).

c. Therefore the eye of the Lord upon His people expresses His nearness, His faithfulness, His readiness to hear and to bless them. When His eye is hid from them their prayers remain unanswered. This is the complaint of the psalmist in Ps. 31:22, "For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes." Yet the psalmist was mistaken, he had spoken hastily, as he adds, "Nevertheless, Thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto Thee." Even in the prayer of Solomon at the time of the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, the hearing of prayer is associated with God's eye being focused on His people. Solomon prays, (I Kings 8:29), "That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My Name shall be there: that Thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant shall make toward this place." And the Lord answers this prayer of His servant by assuring him, (I Kings 9:3), "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My Name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." Not only God's eyes, but also His heart will be in that House, to bestow His love and His grace upon His people.

d. Thus the almighty eye of the Lord is able to deliver His people from death and to bless them with His salvation eternally. He watches over them with loving care; He remembers them always in mercy.

#### *Conclusion.*

From all these passages we may draw some very definite conclusions.

First of all, that God's eye is divine. He has given an earthly reflection of His divine sight to man. Psalm 94:9, "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear: He that formeth the eye, shall He not see?" Yet it may never escape us that we possess only an earthly, creaturely reflection of God's seeing. Let us beware always, lest we ascribe anything human to that which is entirely divine. God always sees as God. His eye penetrates to the very essence of things, so that He knows them perfectly, exactly as they are. He sees eternally, so that He does not discover new things upon investigation, but He searches out the things He has eternally willed, and brought into being. God

examines all things in their relation to Himself, His righteousness and holiness, so that He always judges righteously.

Secondly, that the eye of the Lord reveals His inmost soul. It is said that man's eye is the mirror of his soul. This is certainly true of God. All God's attributes, His sovereignty, His eternity, omniscience, omnipresence,, righteousness, holiness, His grace and power shine forth from His eyes. Even God's thoughts, plans and purposes are revealed through His eyes, which are always upon the creature. God's eyes move to and fro upon the earth, to govern all things unto the salvation of His people, even through the judgment of the wicked.

Thirdly, God's eye reveals His attitude both toward the wicked and the righteous. It burns as a consuming fire upon the wicked, so that they can never hide from before His penetrating gaze, even before their own consciousness, and cannot escape His just judgments, neither now nor unto all eternity. But the Lord regards His people as chosen and redeemed in Christ, saved by the power of His grace to fear and trust in Him. He has cast all their sins behind his back, to remember them no more. He looks upon them as holy saints, in whom His soul delights. He remembers them as a father having compassion upon his children. He watches over them as an eagle guards its young. He searches their hearts to try them and purge them from every iniquity. He sets them before His face, that His eye may shine upon them in favor, and they may rejoice with gladness in His sight.

Finally, it behooves us to remember that we always live our lives in the sight of Him Whose penetrating eye searches our inmost hearts and thoughts. On the one hand, it is an incentive to work out our salvation before Him in fear and trembling. As Paul reminds us in II Timothy 4:1, "I charge thee therefore in the sight of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearance and His kingdom." On the other hand, we know that by grace we have found favor in His sight. Thus we are infinitely blessed, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ear is open unto their prayers."

We conclude therefore with the words of Jude 24, 25, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence (eyes) of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

C. Hanko.

\* \* \* \*

No sin can be little, because it is committed against the great God of heaven and earth. To commit little sins the sinner must first find out a little God.

—from the *Banner of Truth*.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Ill. expresses its sincere sympathy to Mrs. L. Bruinsma and Mrs. R. Huige and their families in the bereavement of their father,

MR. PETER HUIGE

May it please our Covenant God to sustain them in their sorrow that they may continue to believe that He has done all things well.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Mrs. W. Bruinsma, Sec'y.

## OPENING OF SCHOOL

The Theological School will open, D. V., Sept. 14. All students are expected to be present at 9:00 A.M.  
H. Hoeksema, Rector.

## — NOTICE —

The 24th Annual Meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held on Thursday evening, September 23, 1948, at the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the theme, "Prospering in the Lord". The public is cordially invited to attend.

—The Board.

## NOTICE!!

We now have an adequate supply of "*The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*." All orders have been filled and a number of copies remain ready to be distributed. Price per single copy is \$2.00. We would urge our consistories to take advantage of the reduced price of \$1.65 per copy in quantity lots. Send orders to:

The Mission Committee  
1210 Logan St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

## CLASSIS WEST

of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D. V., on Wednesday, Sept. 1, 1948 at 9:00 at Pella, Iowa. Delegates desiring lodging should contact Rev. L. Vermeer, 609 Peace St., Pella, Iowa.

J. Blankespoor, Stated Clerk.