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MEDITATION

Enmity Between Seed and Seed

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Genesis 3:15.

And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good!

Oh yes, it was very good! Everything that He had made was very good! What a most wondrously harmonious picture that must have been! Man in the midst of the things which God had made, walking with his God, knowing Him in the cool of the day!

The world sings today that "there is a song in my heart!" Do not believe it! There is no song in his heart today. There is the dirge and the melancholy wail in his heart. But in that day when the Lord had made the heavens and the earth, yes, then there was a song in his heart and he was supremely happy.

God was his great Friend, and he was a friend of God. He loved Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. All that Adam and Eve did in Paradise was an expression of that love.

And with him, the whole creation shared in the great jubilation. The animals were also happy. The whole animal world found there calling in serving man, so that he in his turn might serve God. The trees and the flowers and the grass, with all created things around them, were as many servants of man so that he might be the better equipped to serve his God.

Oh yes, man in the midst of a beautiful creation was supremely happy.

* * * *

But a dark shadow crept out of hell and covered this picture of light and of joy with a melancholy pall, blotting out all joy and gladness in the whole earth.

The devil came into Paradise to wag his lying

tongue. That is our conviction, even though not once the name of the devil or of Satan is used in these chapters.

The Holy Bible says: Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And in subsequent texts where mention is made of the history of the temptation and the fall of man, not once is the name of the devil mentioned. It is the serpent who spoke and tempted, and it is to the serpent that the words of the above text is addressed.

And still we know that the serpent was the devil's mouthpiece.

Read Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Especially the former text is illuminating. There we read: And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world*. . . .

There we learn that the actual, created serpent which really spoke within the hearing of Eve, was nothing but an instrument in the hand of the devil, to tempt man, and to make him fall away from the living God. We say this not as though the spoken word of God does not find fulfilment, to a degree, in the serpent who was used by the devil for his awful work of temptation, for the contrary is true. God did address the serpent first of all. That is plain from the foregoing verse where the Lord sentenced the serpent to a perpetual curse "above all cattle, and above every beast of the field." Moreover, we read in the same verse that the curse of God found expression in this, that he would have to go "upon his belly, eating dust all the days of his life." And this curse was consummated and is consummated continually in the history of the world.

The same is true of the enmity which God has put between the serpent and the woman with her seed. There is an universal hatred against all snakes.

And, finally, the text also emphasizes that the end of the serpent shall be that the seed of the woman shall crush his head. And that is fulfilled also. The snake will always try, and in many cases succeed, to crush the heel of the woman and her seed. The stealthy attack of the snake in the grass has become proverbial. But the seed always crushes the head of the serpent

in the most literal way. It is the only correct way to deal with the whole race of snakes.

But that is not all.

The snake and the serpent and the old dragon are the devil and Satan. And the woman with her seed hate that devil. And that hatred, that enmity is divinely put.

There is a perpetual enmity between the woman and her seed on the one hand, and the devil and his seed on the other.

* * * *

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed!"

That, beloved reader, is the everlasting Gospel of our Covenant God! Look at the picture of the erstwhile harmonious Paradise, after the devil has done his hellish work! Man, created in God's image and likeness, placed into covenant communion of friendship and love with his God, is fallen away from Him, who is the Source of heavenly glee and jubilation.

Neither is he neutral with respect to God. He has made a very careful covenant with hell and the devil. His slave he is and will be after the successful temptation. He is an enemy of God, and his seed will be the same. And we note the enmity at once. When God comes to him in His great mercy, and says: Where art thou? he crawls away into the underbrush and hides himself from the light and the love of God. When God takes him to task for his disobedience, he accuses God: the woman *whom Thou gavest to be with me!* When the woman is addressed and accused of her evil, she says: The serpent beguiled me! There is no honesty or uprightness left in their inmost heart. Instead, they should have said: We have sinned against Thee! We are guilty and we have deserved nothing but to be cast away forever from Thy love and from Thy grace!

But they are filled with enmity against God.

They are of the party of the evil, and have become his spiritual children. And from that time on, all they can do is produce offspring of the same kind, with this difference that they will make it worse from year to year and from generation to generation, until the wholly logical seed will be produced in the end of the ages: the Antichrist! The foul seed of sin which our first parents sowed calls for the fouler fruit of the Man of sin who will sit in the temple of God in the end of the ages, proudly proclaiming that he is God!

Indeed, there is enmity in the heart of man, but it is enmity against God!

* * * *

But God said: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman!"

That means that Eve went to heaven. If you ever are required to produce proof for the contention that Eve is saved, you will find it here. God placed enmity against the devil in the heart of the woman, and that

is Eve, our first mother. And to hate the devil is principally to love God. You cannot love God and not hate the devil, and conversely, you cannot hate the devil and not love God. The one postulates the other. The service of God is antithetical.

And if you ask me how the Lord put enmity in the heart of Eve against the devil, then the answer is easy: God put the love of God in her heart through His Word and His Holy Spirit.

And that results in two things.

First, if you have the love of God in your heart, you will hate all that is evil. And, remember, that is so in the absolute sense of the word: *all* evil. There is no evil which a man loves who has the love of God in his heart. And the reason is clear. God hates all evil, and so His child hates all evil. There is no exception to the rule that God hates evil, is there? At once your heart and mind answers: No! The same holds true of the child of God who has the love of God spread abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost that is given unto him or her. And, incidentally, that is the reason why John says that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for he cannot sin.

Second, if you have the love of God in your heart, the devil will hate you. And the reason is clear: the devil hates goodness. And also here, there are no exceptions to the rule. Are you a child of God? Then the devil hates you with a cruel hatred. And he hates you, not so much because you are you, but only because he smells God in you, he tastes God in you, he hears and sees and feels God in you. And God he hates, and God he would like to murder, and God he will murder on the cruel cross in the fulness of time.

Hence, to have enmity put in your heart by God is the most blessed Gospel of God. I am glad I hate the devil, and that he hates me. For it is proof that I have the love of God in my heart, and that I hate evil, even the devil, who is the very embodiment of evil.

Oh the boon of having enmity against the devil divinely put into one's heart!

* * * *

"And between thy seed and her seed!"

Thy seed refers to the children of the devil.

You ask: how can the devil have offspring? Well, he cannot have real, natural offspring, for he is a spirit, and spirits do not marry and have sexual life.

But the Lord God here speaks of spiritual children. And Jesus affirms it. Said He: "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it." This Scripture is very illuminating with respect to the subject matter at hand. If you are a natural son or daughter of Eve, you are conceived of the devil, and the sphere of that concep-

tion is the sphere of the lie. So that the product is the foul product of the lie.

And that is true of all of us; as we are by nature. Can anyone produce the clean out of the unclean? No, not one. We are all children of the devil by nature, and therefore we are all liars from our birth. And the principal lie is this: God is no God! There is no God. But to the contrary: I am God and there is no other God besides me. But the seed of the woman receive the love of God in their heart, become regenerated and converted, receive the image of the heavenly in their heart and mind and soul, become in a sense Godlike, certainly the sons of God! There is all the difference.

Incidentally, note that the seed of the woman receive the enmity against the evil in their heart, put there of God! Later, people would quarrel about what the seed receive. Some say: God offers to put the enmity there. Others say: God promises to put the enmity there. Still others: you may put it there yourself. But the text says: And I will put enmity between . . . thy seed and her seed! Here is the only warranted conclusion: if you want to put content into the phrase: the seed of the woman, you will have to say: those that are or will be regenerated, in other words, the elect. I am curious to know what could ever be said against this. God simply says: I will put enmity between thy seed, that is, the devil's children, and her seed, that is, God's children who receive the love of God in their heart. God does not say: I will put that blessed enmity against the devil in your heart, provided you believe on Me or on Christ! But He says: I will put enmity in your heart, and therefore you believe! Believing on God in Christ is the proof that the enmity is put there. Wonderfully comfortable doctrine!

* * * *

“. . . and her seed”.

Yes, that is the offspring of God throughout all the ages. That is the Church of God, the number of the elect unto eternal life. But they have a core, a center, a common origin in the one Seed of all seeds of God. Principally, the seed here is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Paul is our instructor here. Said he in Gal. 3:16: “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.”

Oh yes, Christ is the Seed of God. He has the love of God and therefore the enmity against the devil in His heart as no other son or daughter of Adam. He is the beginning of the creation of God, the Firstborn of all the creatures. He is the Firstbegotten of the dead and the Image of the invisible God. It all turns around Him. It was not God's purpose to unite Himself with all created things unto the everlasting joys of His covenant through Adam and Eve and their poster-

ity. He wanted to unite all things in Christ, the Seed of all seeds.

And so the Lord God placed enmity in Jesus' heart against the devil like in no other. And how He hated the devil. Wherever He smelled him, Jesus said: Get thee behind me, Satan!

Blessed enmity against the devil. It spells the love of God. In Christ Jesus the Lord!

* * * *

“It shall bruise thy head!”

Yes, that means historically first of all that we hate the whole race of snakes and that we crush their heads. We said as much a while ago. But its fulfillment came in the fulness of time. Hatred against the devil was never revealed as when Jesus took the devil and crushed his head on Calvary.

The head is representative of the mind, the counsel, the planning brain. And the plan of the devil is known to us. He would remove God from His Throne and put himself in His place. And, consequently, he would destroy God's kingdom on earth; he would replace God as the King of His created people, and become in His stead the Prince of this world.

But Jesus breaks this head, crushes this counsel of the devil, and brings it to nought. First, He restores and exalts the revealed covenant communion between God and man to heavenly heights. He does so by taking the sin of Adam and of the seed of the woman on His own head and pays for it. And further He fulfills the law of God, and does it so intensively that they for whom He labored are brought very closely to the heart of God.

Second, He earns the right of the judgment of the devil and of all his seed. The Lord God told Him this: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I shall make Thy enemies Thy footstool. Oh yes, the head of the Serpent is crushed.

* * * *

“. . . and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

And how the devil has bruised us! Principally, this refers to all the anguish and pain and horror which Jesus suffered of man and of devils. But it also refers to the suffering which the seed of the woman received from man inspired by the devil and devils, as well as the suffering which we endured immediately from the hand of the devil and his demons. There is temptation and doubt which he always will try to sow in our hearts. And he sometimes, no, often succeeds. But we have the victory.

The bruising of our heel is only a “light affliction which is but for a moment”, and here is the joy in the midst of the tribulations of the devil: they work an exceeding weight of glory.

Blessed enmity! Blessed love of God which is spread abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto us!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

A Tendency Toward Individualism

In the past, as anyone will be able to verify when he peruses the volumes of the *Standard Bearer*, we have been accustomed to direct our criticism to others, rather than to ourselves.

The object of our criticism was often the Christian Reformed Church and its publications; especially the Three Points and anything that was connected with their pernicious doctrine was the object of our attack frequently. Yet, we did not confine ourselves to this. If we peruse the volumes of our *Standard Bearer* in the past, we will notice that our criticism, both positive and negative, was rather wide and varied. It included also, and especially, a judgment and evaluation of many controversies in the Old Country—particularly, of course, in the Reformed Churches there.

Now, it was but natural that in our early history our critical attention should be directed to others, rather than to ourselves. This must not be attributed to the fact that we were, or thought ourselves as churches, perfect, and that there was nothing to criticize within them. But we were in our first love; and, in that first love, we were apt to overlook our own faults. Besides, as newly established churches, cast out by the Christian Reformed Church connection, we had been so maltreated and suffered so much injustice, that we felt very much inclined to concentrate all our attention upon those that had inflicted this injustice upon us. Nor may our attitude, especially over against the Christian Reformed Churches, ever be different than critical as long as they do not officially repent of their evil works, and as long as they do not retract the dangerous and pernicious doctrine embodied in the Three Points. We are not of those that are inclined to forget the past; still less do we condone the attitude of those that for any reason can leave our churches and join the Christian Reformed Churches. What was for us the truth in 1924 is still the truth today: never may we compromise; always we must be watchful and militant.

Now, however, since we have passed the age of our first youth, and, the Lord willing, will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our churches next year, it may be well and salutary to cast a look at ourselves. No doubt, we are old and experienced enough by this time to stand a little well-meant, brotherly, and up-building criticism. And how could criticism passed by the *Standard Bearer* upon our own churches ever be anything but brotherly and well-meant, and positive

and upbuilding criticism. Moreover, if the critical remarks of the *Standard Bearer* should be judged to be out of place and unfair, anyone can set himself to write a well-founded and well-motivated contradiction.

And then I want to subsume my remarks under the heading placed above this article, "A Tendency Toward Individualism".

By this I mean a tendency to go one's own individual way rather than to work in unison as churches. A tendency, moreover, to ignore or to forget the decisions of the churches in general, reached in their major assemblies; a tendency that is often rooted in lack of historical knowledge and a certain disrespect for historical precedent. This evinces no evil intentions on our part; on the contrary, we are all equally zealous for the cause which our churches represent, and certainly seek their welfare. But that this tendency exists, nevertheless is true; and, it cannot but be harmful to our churches in the long run. As a denomination we are very small, and we need to unite all our efforts and all our resources to become strong and to accomplish effective work. As an illustration of what I mean, I may point first of all to the new system of catechetical instruction that has been introduced in some of our congregations. Thus I read in the bulletin of my own congregation, the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids; "For some classes the lesson material has been changed. We have planned to begin teaching doctrine at an earlier age." The proposed change is rather important. It seems that our children will be taught the Biblical History only during the ages of 6 to 9 years; while from the age of 10 until the time that they make confession of faith they will be taught nothing but doctrine.

Now, it is my purpose to point out first of all that this is an illustration of what I call a tendency toward individualism in our churches. It ignores entirely the decision of a major assembly, I think it was by the general classis, before our churches organized as synod, that a committee was appointed to compose catechism books on Biblical history. The committee consisted of the Reverend J. De Jong, the Reverend P. De Boer, and myself. The proposed schedule of the new system of catechetical instruction ignores this decision completely, and also ignores the work of the committee, especially of Reverend P. De Boer, particularly as far as his books on Sacred History for Seniors are concerned. The result is, too, that hundreds of dollars worth of catechism books are put out of use; and this money was supplied by a private fund, which the undersigned happened to have, and which was given to him for the special purpose of books for instruction in our churches.

In view of this, and in view of the former decision

and work which was accomplished by the committee, it would have been but proper to submit the new system to consistory, classis, and synod before it was introduced into our churches by private and individual initiative.

Besides, the new system is based on a mistaken notion of proper catechetical instruction and of instruction in Biblical History. I appreciate the fact, of course, that the writers of those new catechism books, as well as those that are in favor of introducing them, are motivated by the desire to instruct our children and our youth thoroughly in the Protestant Reformed truth; and for this I will give them credit. I nevertheless think that it is a serious mistake; and, as I said, it is an illustration of individualism, when something so radically new is introduced into our churches without the advice of our major assemblies.

Why did the Lord give us such a large part of His revelation in the form of history, if it was not His purpose to instruct our children, the children of the covenant, thoroughly in the works which He has accomplished for our salvation in the past? Moreover, and in close connection with this, all the main doctrines of the church, as revealed in the Bible, are historical and should be thoroughly taught in their historical form, in order, before we teach our own system of doctrine. What else are we taught in so-called Biblical History but the truths of creation and the fall, the truth of the covenant, the covenant with Noah, Abraham, Israel; the giving of the law, the apostasy of the old covenant people, and their rejection in the end? What else are we taught than the great doctrine of predestination as manifest in the line of Seth and Cain, the line of Shem and Ham, the line of Abraham and the nations, in the line of Jacob and Esau, in the line of the children of the promise and the children of the flesh? Besides, are not all the great truths concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ taught in the historical form in Scripture? I mean such truths as the incarnation and the cross and the atonement, the resurrection and the exaltation, the truths of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost and the establishment of the Church of the new dispensation: all these truths are revealed in Scripture, not in the form of a dogmatics system, but in the form of historical facts, revealing to us how God established His covenant and kingdom in the ages of the past. Besides, are we to omit and to ignore such important parts of Scripture as the miracles and the parables of Jesus and the discourses of our Lord and of the apostles? On the contrary; especially the older children should be taught all these things and become acquainted with the riches of Scripture as the living Word of God, rather than with the dead intellectualism of cold dogmatic system.

Nor should it be said that we can safely leave the

instruction in Biblical History to the Christian School. For apart from the fact that many of our Christian School teachers are not competent to teach Biblical History in a proper way, the children of our own Protestant Reformed Churches should be instructed by the church.

Looking over the new system and the proposed books for catechetical instruction, I venture to predict, in the first place, that during the ten years of proposed doctrinal instruction our catechumens will find so much repetition of the same things that in the end they will get weary of that instruction. And, in the second place, I predict that by the new system we make little dead intellectualists and dogmaticians, rather than believers that live from the Bible as the living Word of God.

H. H.

Divine Worship With Best Men and Bridesmaids?

From Mrs. J. W. of E., Minnesota, I received the following question:

"Does the consistory have the right, according to the Word of God and the Church Order, to refuse divine worship to two members at the occasion of their marriage, because they are attended by a bridesmaid and a best man?"

Answer:

1. I do not find anything in Scripture or in the Church Order to that effect. On the contrary, I do find evidence in the Bible of silent approval of rather elaborate wedding parties.

2. If the consistory should object to too much worldly show in weddings, they should object to this at all weddings, and not only at those that are solemnized in divine worship.

3. It seems to me, therefore, that the burden of proof in this case rests with the consistory. Perhaps they can show why it is contrary to Scripture or to the Church Order to conduct divine worship at weddings attended by bridesmaids and best men. If so, I am very glad to give them ample room and opportunity in the *Standard Bearer*.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 25

1.

The Means Of Grace.

Q. 65. Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?

A. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments.

Q. 66. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

Q. 67. Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?

A. Yes, indeed: for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.

Q. 68. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant, or testament?

A. Two: namely, holy baptism, and the holy supper.

The next seven chapters, or Lord's Days, of the Heidelberg Catechism bear the heading "The Sacraments".

This heading, however, does not cover all the material that is treated under it. The sacraments do, indeed, receive the lion's share of the attention of the Catechism in this connection. In Lord's Day 25 we find the definition of the sacraments, the explanation of their general significance, and the mention of the number of the sacraments that are instituted. In the twenty-sixth Lord's Day the general significance of baptism is explained, and the Scriptural basis for its institution is mentioned. Lord's Day 27 explains the sign of baptism in relation to its meaning as the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins, and adds a question and answer on the important doctrine of infant baptism. Next there follow three very long

chapters on the Lord's Supper: on its significance and institution; on the relation between the sign and the thing signified, refuting the error of transsubstantiation; on the difference between the popish mass and the Lord's Supper; and finally, on the proper partakers of this sacrament. Yet, it must be observed that in Lord's Day 25 also the preaching of the Word is at least mentioned and presented as the main means of grace. And under the same heading, "The Sacraments", the keys of the kingdom of heaven are explained in Lord's Day 31.

That in the time when the Catechism was composed all the emphasis was indeed placed on the question of the sacraments, and these stood in the center of attention is also plain from "Het Schatboek", the well-known commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism written by Ursinus himself. To the preaching of the Word and the sacraments together he devotes only two little paragraphs, as follows:

"This Question points out the connection which holds between the doctrine of faith and the sacraments. The Holy Ghost ordinarily produces faith (concerning which we have spoken) in us by the ecclesiastical ministry, which consists of two parts, *the word and the sacraments*. The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel; and cherishes, confirms, and seals it by the use of the sacraments. The word is a charter to which the sacraments are attached as signs. The charter is the gospel itself, to which the sacraments are affixed as the seals of the divine will. Whatever the word promises concerning our salvation through Christ, that the sacraments, as signs, and seals annexed thereto, confirm unto us more and more for the purpose of helping our infirmity. It is proper, therefore, that we should now speak of the sacraments, the seals of faith, appended to the gospel.

"Obj. But it is said that the Holy Ghost and the word produce faith in us, and that the sacraments strengthen it. In what, therefore, do these three differ from each other? Ans. They differ very much. 1. The Holy Ghost works and confirms faith in us as the efficient cause, whilst the word and sacraments do this as instrumental causes. 2. The Holy Ghost can also work faith independent of the word and the sacraments, whilst these, on the other hand, can effect nothing independent of the Holy Ghost. 3. The Holy Ghost works effectually in whomsoever he dwells, which cannot be said of the word and sacraments."

One-half page, therefore, is devoted to the discussion of the preaching of the Word as a means of grace; and, in comparison with this, the next one hundred pages of his commentary Ursinus devotes to the discussion of the sacraments. This emphasis must, of course, be explained from the controversy which our fathers, at the time of the Reformation, had with

Rome,—a controversy in which the question of the sacraments occupied the center of attention.

Now, we certainly must not make the mistake of minimizing the importance of this question of the sacraments. In the first place, we must not overlook the fact that the Romish Church is still powerful and influential, and that our controversy with her is a perpetual one. Secondly, we have a very real and present controversy with many outside of the Reformed faith. Many there are in our day that deny the Scriptural basis for infant baptism, while others contemptuously speak of *water* baptism, as over against the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and despise the sacraments in general as a means of grace. In the third place, even in Reformed churches the sacraments are repeatedly occupying a place of central importance in the discussion and interest of theologians. Witness the recent controversy and schism in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Questions that concern the covenant of grace, the parts or parties of that covenant, the members of that covenant, the question of presumptive regeneration, as well as the question what is sealed by the sacraments and to whom it is sealed;—all these are intimately related to the problem of the sacraments. We should, therefore, not assume the attitude of those that would rather quickly pass over the next six Lord's Days and, perhaps, even combine more than one chapter of the catechism in the same sermon; for this would simply reveal ignorance in regard to the fundamental questions involved.

However, it is true that the preaching of the Word is not given the proper place and attention in the Catechism. A more proper heading for the material treated in the next seven chapters would undoubtedly be "The Distinguishing Marks of the True Church." But it is more in harmony with the subjective character of the Catechism as a book of comfort to treat the material under the general subject of "The Means of Grace." This therefore, we propose to do.

Several questions must be asked here, and answered, in this connection. What are means, and, what are the means of grace? How is the preaching of the Word a means of grace? Why is preaching, together with the sacraments and the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the distinguishing mark of the true Church? These and other questions are involved in the subject of the means of grace.

First of all, then, what are means of grace?

As to means in general, we may remark that they are elements taken from the world of our experience, from the outside world in which we live, and that are adapted to our human existence and nature. Food and drink, for instance, are such elements from the world in which we live, and that are so adapted to our nature that they can nourish and sustain our bodies. We call

them means because God must use them for the purpose to which they are adapted. Things are nothing in themselves, but exist and are sustained by the almighty and omnipresent power of God which we call providence. But it pleases God to use these means always in the same way and for the same purpose. Bread always sustains and nourishes our bodies. God never uses bread to poison us, and because we have this confidence in God, we also are able to use the means. If God would use bread one day to poison us and another day to nourish us, it would be impossible for us to use those means, of course. Means, therefore, are elements taken from the world in which we live, the world of our experience, which are always used by God in the same way, and which, for that very reason, we can also use.

Now, we speak in this connection of means of grace. The idea of means of grace is certainly implied in Question and Answer 65 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." The Catechism therefore teaches that the Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts, but that this faith is wrought by means of the preaching of the Word and of the holy sacraments. It is true that the Catechism really speaks of the preaching of the Word and the sacraments as a means of *faith*, rather than as means of grace; but since faith is the bond of union with Christ, and it is therefore through faith and by faith that we receive all the blessings of grace, it is perfectly proper for us to use the term which the church has always used in this connection: means of grace.

What do we understand by grace?

The word *grace*, as it occurs in Scripture, appears to have many different connotations, although we believe that they all refer to some underlying idea. Perhaps the most general and basic notion from which all other connotations can be most readily explained is that of *pleasantness, attractiveness, beauty, gracefulness*. In this sense the word occurs both in the Old and in the New Testament. Thus, we read in Proverbs 22:11: "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." Here the word evidently has the signification of *pleasantness, beauty*. A man speaks pleasant and agreeable words; his speech is graceful, so that for the sake of it the king is his friend. The pleasantness and grace of his speech, however, is not superficial; it is not the vain beauty that characterizes the speech of the flatterer or boaster; but it is the beauty that expresses pureness of heart. Grace has an ethical meaning: it is rooted in goodness. It is an ethically pure speech that is considered grace-

ful and beautiful. The same meaning occurs in Ps. 45:2: "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." Also here it is evident that grace is used in the sense of beauty and attractiveness that is rooted in ethical goodness. In Proverbs 31:30 the word *grace* is even employed for the outward gracefulness of bodily form, of which it is, then, asserted that in itself it is deceitful and vain. This is also in harmony with the root meaning of the Hebrew word, which signifies *to incline gracefully toward one, to be pleasant toward someone*, and thus *to favor that one*. The word that is used in the New Testament for *grace* is derived from a verb that signifies *to be pleasant*, and thus *to afford joy*, even as a thing of beauty is a joy forever. And so, also the New Testament word for grace has the fundamental notion of charm, gracefulness, attractiveness, beauty. We read of the Lord that all bear Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth; by which undoubtedly is meant that the speech of the Lord was remarkably pleasant and in the true sense of the word beautiful, graceful. The Lord was a charming speaker. Luke 4:22. The same significance of the word we find in Col. 4:6, where the apostle admonishes the Christians that their speech must always be with grace, seasoned with salt, in order that they may know how they ought to answer every man. Their conversation, in other words, must always be characterized by the beauty of ethical purity. Perhaps the same meaning may be found in Eph. 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" where speech that giveth grace, or that is truly pleasant, stands over against corrupt communication. And the apostle Peter writes in I Pet. 2:20: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Here the word for *acceptable* is *grace* in the original, so that the meaning is: patience in suffering for the sake of righteousness is beautiful in the eyes of God. So that, on the basis of Scripture, we come first of all to the conclusion that objectively grace denotes the attribute, virtue, or quality of beauty or pleasantness or charm; more especially of that ethical beauty or charm that is rooted in true goodness and purity, and that is the expression of true perfection: for only what is truly good is truly beautiful, while all that is corrupt and imperfect must be condemned as ugly and repulsive. It is only in the world of sin that the ethically corrupt can be considered charming and attractive. In the sight of God, and according to the judgment of Scripture, it is never so presented.

In this general and fundamental sense of the word

grace is, first of all, an attribute of God. God is gracious in Himself, absolutely, that is, without any relation to the creature. Thus it is, of course, with all the attributes of the Most High: God is love in Himself; He does not depend on the existence of a creature that can be the recipient of His love in order to possess or be this virtue actively, but He is love in Himself. So God is merciful, righteous, holy, true, and faithful, the God of peace in the absolute sense of the word. If this were not so, He would not be God, seeing He would not be self-existent and independent. The same is true of the attribute of Grace. God is eternally and in Himself the God of all grace, even apart from any relation to the creature. He is all grace. Graciousness is an attribute of His very Being, even though there never were a creature to whom this grace of God were revealed. Grace belongs to the name of God. Thus He proclaimed His holy name to Moses on the mount, according to Ex. 34:6: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Again, thus the Psalmist addresses Him in Ps. 86:15: "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." Thus he sings in Ps. 103:8: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." And, in Ps. 116:5: "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful."

This implies with respect to God in the absolute sense of the word, that He is the perfection of all beauty, because He is the implication of an eternal, infinite perfection of all goodness. God is good in the ethical sense of the word. Goodness is His very Being; He is a light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. His very Being is righteousness and holiness and truth. He is peace and love and life. In Him there is no unrighteousness, no corruption, no lie, no war, and no envy and hatred. He is very goodness, ethical perfection in His very Being. For that reason God is also gracious in the sense of beautiful and charming, attractive and pleasant in His whole Being; for true goodness is true beauty. And these are in God in the supreme, in the absolute and infinite sense of the word, so that we may conclude that God is indeed the perfection of beauty. Even as the ethically evil is ugly, so the ethically perfect is beautiful and charming. Grace in God is, therefore, the perfection of His ethical beauty. For that reason we read in Ps. 27:4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." And in Ps. 16:11: "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." And once more, in Ps. 50:2: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." God is altogether lovely. He is absolute

loveliness. All that is in God is charming and pleasant and graceful.

As such, as the perfectly lovely and beautiful One, God knows Himself. He eternally beholds Himself as beautiful. He has an eternal delight in His own beauty. For, He is the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Son is the Word, and in Him the Father expresses all the goodness and beauty of His image. And in the Spirit the Son returns to the Father, and the Father contemplates Himself as the perfection of beauty. Hence, God knows Himself as gracious; He has a delight in the beauty of His perfection. So that we may come to the conclusion that grace, as it is in God in the absolute sense of the word, is that virtue of the divine Being according to which He is the perfection of beauty in Himself and contemplates Himself as such with infinite delight. The absolutely gracious God is graciously inclined toward Himself and rejoices in Himself with perfect joy.

Hence, in the second place, we find that the word *grace* in Scripture denotes the attitude of graciousness or pleasantness, the gracious disposition of God to the creature. This is, no doubt, the meaning of the frequently occurring phrase "to find grace" in the eyes of God. Thus also it occurs in Luke 1:30, where we read that the angel addresses the prospective mother of our Lord, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor (grace) with God." The meaning is evidently that God is favorably inclined, is graciously disposed toward her. In the same sense Stephen employs the word of David, concerning whom he declares that he found *favor* (grace) before God, and desired to raise a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. And once more, in Acts 14:26: "And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled."

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

On Tuesday, the fifth of October, our dear husband, father and grandfather,

GERARD PASTOOR

passed away in the Lord. Our great comfort and rich assurance in our loss is this; that he now beholds His face in righteousness. (Psalm 17:15).

Mrs. Alberdina Wierenga Pastoor
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. G. Pastoor
Mr. and Mrs. Donald O Pastoor
Mr and Mrs. Clarence Pastoor
Mr and Mrs. John G. Pastoor
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pastoor
Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Pastoor
and 12 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Van Boeken

Conflict Met Rome, Dr. G. C. Berkhouwer

J. H. Kok, Kampen,
The Netherlands.

Ieder, die belang stelt in "het gesprek met Rome", schaffe zich dit boek aan. Dit geldt in de eerste plaats wel onze predikanten, maar ook de rest van onze lezers, voorzoover ze nog tamelijk gemakkelijk Hollandsch kunnen lezen, kunnen met vrucht dit boek bestudeeren, ofschoon de stijl soms wel een beetje zwaar en ingewikkeld is.

Het boek is een zeer grondig stuk werk. Dr. Berkhouwer kenmerkt zich er door als iemand, die door en door op de hoogte is met het onderwerp, waarover hij schrijft, en hij spant zich in, "slooft zich uit" had ik bijna gezegd, om Rome recht te doen, en haar geen verkeerde voorstellingen toe te dichten. Sommige lezers, vooral hier in Amerika, zullen dit misschien een zwak achten, en hadden liever iets meer gehoord van de "vervloekte afgoderij", waarvan onze Heidelbergse spreekt.

Maar men leze en oordeele zelf.

H. H.

* * * *

Het Hooglied, Dr. G. C. Aalders.

J. H. Kok, Kampen,
The Netherlands.

Dit boekje van zestig bladzijden is niet zoozeer een commentaar als wel een inleiding op het boek, Het Hooglied.

De schrijver verwerpt, m.i. met recht de allegorische verklaring van dit Bijbelboek, ook door de Kantteekeningen aanvaard, een meent, dat we in Het Hooglied allereerst moeten zien een lied der reine liefde tusschen man en vrouw, en wel tusschen Salomo en een Sulammietische. Ook wijst hij af de mogelijkheid, dat er in Het Hooglied en derde persoon wordt genoemd, een herder aan wie de Sulammietische eerst verbonden was, welke laatste door Salomo naar het paleis gebracht werd, maar wier liefde voor den herder overwon. Naar de opvatting van Dr. Aalders is Het Hooglied niet van Salomo, maar van iemand anders vervaardigd op Salomo.

Eindelijk wijst de schrijver op de hoogere en typische beteekenis van Het Hooglied, als doelende op de betrekking tusschen Christus en de gemeente. En hier is m.i., des schrijvers betoog het zwakst. Want als Het Hooglied wezenlijk niets anders is dan een minnelied, kunnen de twee hoofdpersoonen misschien wel

gansch in het algemeen verklaard worden *als beeld* van Christus en de gemeente, maar *de typische* beteekenis is, in dat geval ver gezocht.

Maar de lezer oordeele zelf. Taal en stijl zijn glasgelder.

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

God's Covenant and The Promise

*The Dispensation of the Covenant Follows
the Line of the Generations of the Believers.*

In our previous article we called attention to the Scriptural truth that the development of God's covenant runs along the line of the continued generations of the believers. This we proved from the Scriptures, historically and textually. In this article we are confronted with the question: How must we understand this organical development of God's covenant with His people? In what sense are all within the covenant and what, according to the Holy Scriptures, is the Divine purpose with respect to this two-fold seed, the carnal and spiritual Israel?

God's Covenant Established Centrally With Christ.

We have already called attention in this series of articles on "The Covenant" to the fact that the question has been much discussed among Reformed theologians: With whom does the Lord establish His covenant? Does the Lord establish this covenant with Christ? And if He does establish His covenant with Christ, is it with Christ as Head or as Mediator or as Surety? Or, does the Lord establish His covenant with the elect? Again, the question is asked whether God establishes His covenant with the elect sinner in Christ, or with the believers and their seed, and, then, with all the seed?

It must be clear that God's covenant is certainly established with Christ. This is the undeniable testimony of Holy Writ. In Galatians 3 we are told that "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made and this seed is Christ" and also, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And in Ps. 89: 1-3: "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I

have made a covenant *with my Chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant.*" That God should establish His covenant with Christ lies in the very nature of the case. God's covenant, we have noted in preceding articles, is that relationship of living friendship with His people, whereby the Lord and His people are united in the bond of perfect love, a relationship of love in which God blesses us as our Sovereign Friend and we bless and praise the Lord as His friend-servants. Christ, alone, is the Servant of Jehovah. Apart from Him there is no fellowship between God and man. For we all have departed from the living God and corrupt the glory of the Lord. In Christ, and in Christ alone, the law of God is fulfilled and completely satisfied. In Him and alone in Him is everlasting life. God's covenant of living friendship has therefore been established in Christ, rests in Christ, is possible only in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is surely the Head and Mediator of God's covenant with His people.

*God's Covenant Established With The Believers
And Their Seed.*

On the other hand, the covenant of God with man is established with the believers and their seed. This is surely Scriptural. We read in Gen. 9:12, 17: 7, 9: "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . . And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations." And in Acts 2:39 we read the well-known words already quoted: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." In connection with this last passage we note the following. Firstly, the implication of the text is certainly such that we may read: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, and their children." Secondly, the calling whereof the text speaks must surely be understood in the saving efficacious sense of the word. We are aware of the fact that some would interpret this calling as an invitation. The implication, then, would be that the Lord extends the promise of eternal life to all, together with their children, to whom the gospel is proclaimed. The Lord invites all unto eternal life, the promise is Divinely meant for all who come within range of the preaching of the gospel. However, this interpretation of the text in Acts 2 is impossible. Firstly, it is not Scriptural to confuse the promise with an offer. Even in our daily life, to promise something

is not the same as to offer something. And, according to the Word of God, the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus; besides, according to Romans 9 the Word (or promise) of God has not become of none effect, exactly because not all are Israel who are called Israel and in Isaac shall the seed be called. Moreover, how can, e.g., the sacraments speak of an offer of salvation to all without distinction when they symbolize the sacrifice of the Lamb of God Who laid down His life only for His sheep, for those whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world? Furthermore, this "arminian" interpretation of Acts 2:39 is also impossible in the light of the context. Do we not read in the concluding verse of this chapter, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"? Must verse 39 not be explained in connection with verse 47? And do we not read later in this book of Acts, chapter 13, verse 48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."? Hence, the calling of Acts 2:39 must be understood in the saving, efficacious sense of the word. Permit me to quote but one passage, Rom. 8:29-30: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

What is the implication of the truth that the covenant of God is established with the believers and their seed? On the one hand, this cannot mean that *all* the seed of Abraham, or that all the seed of the believers are essentially in the covenant, that all are covenant-children in the same, equal sense of the word, that all have equally a right to the promises of the Lord, that that which distinguishes them does not lie therefore in God but in the fact that some believe and others reject the one, well-meaning offer of salvation. This, we maintain with all the powers at our command, is impossible. Fact is, according to 1 Cor. 10:1-5, the Lord was not well pleased with many of the Israelites, and we quote: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Please notice, in this passage, that externally all the Israelites had everything in common. They were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; all were baptized unto Moses

and in the sea; all ate the same spiritual meat and all drank the same spiritual drink. One thing, however, distinguished the one group of Israelites from the other: the Lord was not well pleased with many of them. And it is clear from the apostle's epistle to the Romans, in chapter 9, that the Lord's good pleasure towards some of them and not towards others is not based upon the good of some and the evil of others, but only upon the sovereign good pleasure of Jehovah. It is simply not true that all have an equal right to the promises of God and eternal life, that all therefore stand equally before the Lord. How could this be possible? God elected some and sovereignly reprobated others; He does not love all but only the people of His eternal love. Christ did not die for all but only for His sheep. How can the sacraments speak of a promise which is Divinely meant for all the seed of the believers, when they symbolize a sacrifice which is atoning and particular and speak of a blood which flowed only for some? God's covenant fellowship and communion applies, therefore, only to some of the seed of the believers and not to all the children of the people of God. And neither does the Lord make the attempt to save all the seed of the covenant; to the contrary, He causes the gospel to be preached with the Divine intention that only some shall be saved whereas it is also His divine good pleasure that the same gospel shall be a savor of death unto death. We conclude and maintain, therefore, that although the covenant is established with the believers and their seed, this can never mean that all the seed of Abraham, or all the seed of the believers are essentially and equally in this covenant of God. And yet, on the other hand, it is also true that all are Israelites, that Esau was a covenant-breaker, that all receive the sacrament of Circumcision or Baptism, that all are, therefore, covenant children.

To understand this Scriptural truth we must bear in mind the following. In the first place, the stream of God's election follows the river-bed of the continued generations of the believers and that in such a way that this river-bed is dug out and prepared for this stream. This river-bed is the seed of Abraham, the seed of Abraham, if you will, according to the flesh. The Jewish nation, in the Old Dispensation, was the river-bed in which the stream of the elect people of God flowed. Also, it pleases the Lord to develop His covenant, essentially and spiritually, from generation to generation, or, if you will, God calls His elect people out of sin and darkness into His blessed covenant fellowship from generation to generation. Fact is, the glory of God's Name is *the* purpose of salvation. God saves us, not for our sake but for His own Name's sake. The fundamental question is not, therefore, "Are you saved?" We hear this often nowadays, especially from those who would minimize the dis-

tinctiveness of our church, who would emphasize that too much emphasis is being laid upon the truth, and who would therefore maintain that the all-important question does not concern the knowledge and profession of the truth but our personal salvation. We must not be deceived in this respect. Of course, we deplore any intellectual maintaining of the truth when it is not accompanied by a conviction of the heart. Nevertheless, the purpose of salvation is the glory of God. We have been called out of darkness into the light to proclaim the virtues of the alone blessed God. And it is an undeniable fact that the love for and maintaining of the word and truth of God constitutes eternal life itself—to know the Triune God, through Jesus Christ, is eternal life. Then we also understand why the Lord establishes His fellowship and communion in the sphere of the truth and from generation to generation. His Word must be preserved; His truth must be maintained and confessed; the knowledge of the Scriptures must be passed on from generation to generation; the purpose of our salvation, the glory of God's Name, is possible only in the sphere of the truth and the development of that truth. It is also for this same reason that God usually regenerates His people in infancy and provides for their instruction from infancy on. This truth has been maintained by the Reformed fathers throughout the ages. They even regarded Baptism as a sign and seal of this regeneration, not because they assumed the regeneration of every baptized child but because it was their conviction that, although we may not limit the work of Divine grace and determine when it takes place, the Lord usually calls His own out of darkness into the light in their earliest infancy. This was not a supposition on the part of the fathers but a conviction. Hence, the stream of God's election follows the river-bed of the continued generations of the believers.

Secondly, inasmuch as the elect people of God follow the river-bed of the original development in the generations of the believers, also the carnal seed, organically one with the spiritual seed, stand in close connection with this covenant of Divine friendship with His own. The Scriptures emphasize this truth when they employ the common and well-known figure of the vine and the olive-tree. Or, let us use the figure of the tomato plant. A tomato plant has two kinds of branches, fruit-bearing and non fruit-bearing. Both branches are very much alive. Both grow. Only the one bears fruit and the other does not. Nevertheless, the entire plant is called 'tomato plant'. And this is due to the fact that both branches constitute a single organism which bears the name of what it essentially is: a tomato plant. This also applies, spiritually, to the organism, church, in the midst of the world. There is a people, an organism, called "Church, Israel", in the midst of the world. This organism is composed of a two-fold

seed. Moreover, even as the tomato plant bears the name of what it essentially is, so also this organism bears the name of its elect kernel, and is called "church". That this organism bears the name of its elect essence or kernel, is for various reasons. On the one hand, God's covenant is established with the believers and their seed. The reprobate shell comes forth out of the elect not v.v. This is simply an historical fact. Branches that depart from the ways of the living God and reveal their reprobate mind in their rejection of the gospel are cut off, also historically, from the line of the covenant, and the covenant of the Lord continues with His people and their children. Moreover, the entire organism, the entire church is treated according to its elect kernel. This also applies to a tomato plant. If the whole plant were composed of "suckers", branches that do not bear fruit, no attention would be paid to that particular plant. Now, however the entire plant is treated according to its essential character. This is also true spiritually. The entire organism receives the same spiritual treatment. Thirdly the entire organism grows out of Christ. Also this applies to the natural figure of the tomato plant. The "suckers" grow as well as the fruit-bearing branches. Only, the one bears fruit whereas the other does not. The church, too, the whole church grows out of Christ. The preaching of the Word, the catechetical instruction, all the spiritual labor which is bestowed upon all the members of the church, influences all the members. All are affected. All respond to the same spiritual treatment. The difference is, of course, that the one responds positively and the other negatively. The one bends the knee in humility and contrition whereas the other hardens himself and progresses in the way of sin and evil. And this growth of both seeds, elements within the church of God, is effected through the same means and by the same Spirit of God and of Christ Jesus. It is He Who causes the same gospel to be a savor of life unto some and a savor of death unto others.

In The Realization Of God's Covenant All The Seed Comes Into Contact With The Blessings Of The Lord.

Hence, in this dispensation of the covenant of God, the Lord's realization of His eternal covenant in Christ with His people, all come into contact with the promises of God, yea, all the blessings of the Lord. This does not mean that this is in itself grace for all the children of the covenant. To this we have already called attention in this article. The Divine promise is simply not extended unto, meant for all. All do not share the favour and love of God. All do not have equally a chance to be saved. To be historically and externally in the covenant is not in itself a token of

Divine grace and mercy. This does mean, however, that the promises come to all *in the historical dispensation of the covenant of God*. All are baptized. All receive the gospel, in the preaching of the word and in catechetical instruction. All are subject to the same discipline. All are commanded to repent; all come into contact with Christ as the only Way of salvation, and are exhorted to believe in the way of repentance. And therefore all stand before the responsibility to serve the Lord with all their heart and mind and soul and strength. None has the right to choose the way of sin and reject the gospel because they love the larkness rather than the light.

And what may be the purpose of God with respect to this? What the Lord's purpose is with respect to the elect we all understand. And the reprobate? That he has a name and place in the midst of the church is surely not a token of Divine grace unto him. God loved Jacob and hated Esau before either had done good or evil. The Divine purpose of the two-fold seed in the sphere of the covenant is surely that the Lord's eternal purpose according to both, election and reprobation, may stand and be sovereignly realized. God seeks and realizes the salvation of the elect and the eternal ruin of the reprobates, and that according to His eternal good pleasure.

The Reprobates Trample God's Covenant Under Foot.

Of Esau we read that he was a covenant-breaker. To be a covenant-breaker or trample the covenant under foot does not necessarily imply that we belong essentially to the covenant of God's fellowship and friendship. To reject the promise of the gospel does not necessarily mean that that promise is offered unto us. All who know the way but refuse to walk therein, who have been born and raised within the sphere of the church but choose the things below rather than the things above are covenant-breakers. This expression refers to a conscious act on the part of these wicked for which they are and will be held responsible. Our calling and obligation is to serve the Lord with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. However, we refuse to serve the Living God. We refuse the things above in preference to the things below. We refuse to forsake the way of sin and corruption and walk in the way of God's statutes and commandments. We thereby show by our every action that we are profane, love the earthly rather than the heavenly, the fellowship of the world rather than the fellowship of God, the glories of Egypt and of this world rather than the afflictions of the people of God and to be called an heir of the world to come. We are covenant-breakers. The idea, of course, is not that we can break what the Lord has once begun. The viewpoint is that of the

wicked. We trample the covenant of the Lord under foot. We reveal our scorn and disdain for the fellowship of the living God. We reject the Christ and turn our backs upon the gospel because faith in Christ must be accompanied by a forsaking of the ways of sin, and we love sin and the things of this world and refuse to forsake them for the affairs of God's church and covenant.

This also seals the condemnation of the wicked. They are held responsible. Responsibility does not imply freedom of action in the sense that we are sovereignly free, are able of ourselves to choose either the good or the evil, and that the Lord's attitude toward us is therefore determined by our attitude toward Him. Responsibility, however, does imply that we are *morally* free. Spiritually and subjectively we sin because we choose sin, never because we are driven unto sin. Our walking in paths of evil is always characterized by a voluntary choice on our part whereby we wilfully choose the world and reject the things of God's kingdom and covenant. For this we are held responsible and accountable. But the Lord fulfills all His counsel, also with respect to the reprobate wicked. We cannot explain this phenomenon of the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God. Both are true and must be maintained, not as at conflict with one another but in the light of each other. The elect, on the other hand, are saved to the uttermost. In them the Lord fulfills His promises which are Yea in Christ. And they are enabled to stand by the grace of the Lord as the party of the living God.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Saul's End

The deceased Samuel, speaking for God, reveals to Saul the doom that awaits him and the armies of Israel on the morrow. The Lord will deliver all Israel into the hands of the Philistines. Saul and his sons will die on the battle field.

Hearing, Saul is moved to the core, and falls straightway all along the ground, or, in the language of the original text, "Saul made haste and fell with the fullness of his stature." The shock of the seer's dreadful message is too great. With his body weakened from lack of nourishment — the text states that he has eaten no bread all the day nor all the night — Saul suffers a physical collapse. For the Lord speaks

Samuel's words in his heart. His distress is great. Words cannot utter it.

The woman comes to him. She sees that he is sore troubled. His distress touches her heart. Though a sorceress, she is not devoid of human sympathy. But being a godless person, her tenderest mercies are cruel. Saul suffers the agonies of the doomed in hell. The only remedy for such distress is heartfelt repentance. She should be admonishing him to humble himself under God's mighty hand. Actually, all she does is to insist that he rise from the earth and eat. "Behold," says she to him, "thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in thine hand and have hearkened unto thy words, which thou spakest unto me. Now, therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsal of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way." The point that she argues is that he does her a favor, if he eat, and that she, by hearkening unto his voice, put him under a kind of obligation. But Saul refuses. "I will not eat," he tells her. It is not a wonder, considering his anguish of spirit. He is aware of the Lord's waiting to destroy him yonder in mount Gilboa. Rather than face that judgment, he chooses to carry through his fast and die where he lies. If the woman would only lay off. But she is insistent. Her pertinacity is of the Lord. For Saul must eat, that he may have strength, when he goes on his way to his everlasting doom. Accordingly, his two companions come to the woman's aid. By their joint effort they break down his resistance. He rises from the earth and sits on his bed, as having yielded to their entreaties to take food.

The woman has a fat calf in her house, which she hastens to kill. She take flour, kneeds it, and makes unleavened bread thereof. She sets before Saul and his servants. And Saul, too, eats. His spirit comes again to him. Having eaten, he rises, he and his servants. On the strength of that bread he goes away this same night and rejoins his army there in mount Gilboa, a man under the ban of God and thus doomed to extinction.

As was explained, the Philistines are pitched in Shunem, on the western declivity of the little Herman. The Hebrews are encamped in Gilboa, that is, on the mountain range in the territory of Issacher, which traverses the south-eastern part of the plain of Jezreel. The two armies are thus encamped on two groups of mountains, separated by a distance of only four miles and enclosing the broad plain of Jezreel toward the east.

Morning has come. It is high time that Saul go out before his army against the Philistines, who already swarm the plain. But the doomed and trembling king takes thought of but one thing, namely, how he

may escape the sword of the Philistines and thus save himself out of the hand of God. Accordingly, he refuses to bestir himself, so that the Philistines are compelled to carry the war to him in the mount. (This is strictly according to the text, which reveals that the scene of battle was not the plain but the mount. At verse 1 of chapter 31 the statement accurs that the men of Israel, fleeing before the Philistines, fell down slain *in Gilboa*). The Philistines continue to advance. They ascend the mountain, and the conflict is on. And Saul? He stands afar off, surrounded by his body-guard. He takes no part in the conflict. Mindful of the words of Samuel, he goes not to the battle. This doubtless, is the implication of the text at verse 2, "And the battle went hard to Saul," implying that Saul went not to the battle, appeared not on the scene of conflict to give leadership to his forces, it being that he was bent on escaping the sword of the adversary. We are not allowed to read "against" instead of "to". For the Hebrew preposition here employed is "el", (written with the aleph); it is not "al" (written with the ayin). The phrase describes the movement of the battle toward Saul.

It all goes to show that even in this dreadful hour Saul hardens his heart, first, by his unwillingness to repent, and, second by his denying that he was actually made to hear the word of God concerning his end there in Endor. The voice that he heard must have originated in his own disordered nervous system. Hence he will not die but live, he tells himself, if only he takes the necessary precautions. But his heart tells him that he will die; and so he will, for the Lord has said. Accordingly, the battle goes hard to Saul. The hard-fighting and conquering Philistines are being directed by the unseen hand of God to the place of Saul's retreat. Doubtless, his whole army, all the Hebrews, have already taken recourse to flight; and Saul flees with them with the adversary in hot pursuit. "And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons", (ver. 2). But the Philistines, it seems, are not aware that they pursue the king. For the text at verse 8 states that, on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mt. Gilboa.

As by chance and perhaps without recognizing him, "the shooters and the men of the bow find him—Saul—and he is sore afraid of the archers." (this is the correct rendering of the text at this place, and not, "And the archers *hit* him; and he was sore *wounded* of the archers. That Saul was sore *wounded* is disproved by the fact of his being able to lean on a sword in the act of taking his own life). Saul perceives that all his efforts to nullify the prophecy of Samuel by saving his life come to nought. He will die, as God has said. With most of his body-guard fallen down slain, it is clear that his hour has struck. But even now he is

occupied solely with his own honour. He refuses to die by the hand of those uncircumcised Philistines. He is determined to spare himself that disgrace. So he commands his armour-bearer, "Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised ocme and thrust me through and mock me." But his armour-bearer will not; for he is sore afraid. It is the Lord's anointed whom he would be slaying. Saul now takes a sword and falls upon it as imagining, perhaps, that in dying by his own hand he still prevents God from having His way with him by slaying him with the sword of the Philistines. But Samuel's prophecy did not exclude suicide. These were his words, "And to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me," namely in Sheol, the realm of the dead. All that the seer had spoken is come to pass. Saul and his three sons are dead. The host of Israel is in the hands of the Philistines.

The rout of the armies of Israel is complete. The tidings of the disaster is spread far and wide by the fleeing remnant. The men of Israel that dwell beyond the plain and even those that dwell beyond the Jordan near its bank forsake their cities and flee to safer regions. So great is the panic. The evacuated cities are taken over by the Philistines, who dwell in them.

On the morrow the Philistines come to strip the slain. They find Saul and his three sons fallen in Mt. Gilboa. They cut off Saul's head and strip off his armour, which they send into their land round about to publish the good news to their idols and among their people. They put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth. His body they fasten to the wall of Bethsham, four miles west of the Jordan. According to the Chronicler, they fastened his head on the temple of Dagon. According to verse, 12 they deal in the same way with the corpses of Saul's sons.

When the men of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, they thought of what Saul once had done for them. Under the cover of the night they go to Bethsham, and from its walls take the body of Saul and the body of his three sons and burn them there. The bones they bury under a tree.

The Lord brought Saul to a terrible end on account of his rebellions and impenitence. His destruction was sudden. He was cut off from God's country—the land of the spiritually living—in the midst of his days, in the prime of life. His head was made a public gazing-stock there in the temple of Dagon. His decapitated body was suspended between heaven and earth by its being fastened to the walls of Bethshan, and finally it was burned. These ignominies were signs of the Lord's hot displeasure, of the anger of His hatred of Saul. So they were regarded in that day and rightly so. And they were given, were these signs, that all Israel might know that Saul was wicked, and that

David was righteous.

"And it came to pass after the death of Saul" (II Sam. 1:1). This clause connects the first book of Samuel with the second. It refers directly to I Sam. 31, thus continuing the narrative after the account there given of the death of Saul. The narrator continues, "And David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David abode two days in Ziklag." On the third day a man comes out of the camp from Saul and brings David the news of Saul's death. The coming of the messenger at this time indicates that the battle of Gilboa took place on the previous day of David's return to Ziklag. The messenger comes with rent clothes and earth upon his head, the signs of grief. He falls down and does obeisance in recognition of David as future king. David asks him from whence he is engaged in coming. He returns answer, "Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped." David's heart trembles because of those words of the man. He fears that the worst has happened to Saul and Jonathan his son and the people of the Lord and the house of Israel. "What is the matter? I pray thee, tell me." The man does as requested. He completes his report in these words, "The people are fled from the battle; moreover many of the people are fallen and dead; and moreover Saul and Jonathan are dead." That last statement about Saul and Jonathan causes David to wonder at the man. He doesn't like the tone of voice in which the man uttered those words. He looks at the man again and this time his gaze is searching as is the question that he puts to him, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son is dead?" The young man welcomes the question. Little does he anticipate David's reactions to his fabricated answer. This is his story. He happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa, and saw Saul leaning upon his spear. This cannot well be understood of Saul's attempt to kill himself (according to Sam. 31:4). Perhaps we must suppose that Saul, badly wounded, was leaning on his spear (which was fixed in the ground) in order to hold himself up in a sitting position. While he was sitting there, "Lo, the chariot-warriors and the horsemen followed hard after him," came so near that soon they must have reached him. But according to I Sam. 31:4 the pursuers were the men of the bow, thus footmen. Looking behind him, Saul saw this young man who in reply to Saul's question, "who art thou," said that he was the son of an Amalekite stranger. Saul implores the man to slay him, giving as his reason that anguish was come upon him, because his life was still whole in him. Being certain that Saul could not live after his fall, the man, complying, dealt Saul the stroke that ended his life. Taking the diadem that was upon Saul's head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, he brought them to David.

(Some suppose that, according to this narrative,

Saul was not wounded at all, but utterly exhausted and that he was leaning on his spear to hold himself up in a standing position. They suppose, further, that, in consequence of his excitement and exertions, he was seized by a cramp so that, finding himself in a bodily condition in which he could not defend himself, besought the Amalekite to slay him. And the Amalekite consented, seeing that Saul could not live after his fall, that is, as this class of interpreters have it, after the defeat of his army and with the chariot-warriors so near. But this interpretation is too unlikely).

There is conflict between the account of the Amalekite and I Sam. 3:1. According to the latter, Saul killed himself by his own sword, that is, died as the result of a mortal and self-inflicted wound. According to the former, the Amalekite dealt him the stroke that ended his life. But there is no point to the attempt at harmonizing the two accounts for example by saying that Saul only *wounded* himself severely by falling on his own sword, and received the death-stroke from the Amalekite. For the conflict is not between two *personal* accounts of the sacred writer, but between the personal account of the latter and the personal report of the Amalekite to David concerning the same event.

The conflict implies of course not that the sacred writer was in error — writing as he did under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, he could not err—but that the Amalekite lied. Yet, his lying communication to David is still the infallible word of God, but of course only in the sense that what he said to David forms a part of the book of Samuel and that the sacred writer's *narration* of what he said is infallibly true; thus only in the sense that he actually said to David what he is reported to have said to him by the sacred writer. And therefore we need not attempt to harmonize the two accounts in question, as if the Amalekite's lying involves the word of God in a conflict. Such is not the case, certainly; and therefore the matter that has significance here is not whether or no the report of the Amalekite can be harmonized with the narrative of the sacred writer (it can, of course, by baseless conjecture), but what the man *reported to David*, namely that, finding Saul mortally wounded, he, at Saul's request, delivered the stroke that ended the king's life.

Let us take a closer view at this Amalekite. The man is a study in masked wickedness. To David's question, "Whence art thou," he replies, "I am the son of an Amalekite stranger, that is, of an Amalekite who had settled in Israel. The law of Moses often bears on the stranger. If he let himself and all the males of his house be circumcised, he was allowed to keep the passover to the Lord; and would be as one born in the land, Ex. 12:48; Num. 9:14. These circumcised strangers, incorporated through their circumcision into the

commonwealth of Israel, the people of Israel were commanded to love; they had to refrain from vexing them. "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in the land," so read the law, "ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33, 34).

Whether the young man of our narrative belonged to this class of strangers the text does not reveal. But he must have already resided in Israel for a long time. For his knowledge of David seems to be considerable. He is confident that David is to rule in Saul's stead. For he brings to David the symbols of royal dignity—the crown and the bracelet—that he had taken from Saul's corpse. But David had made no attempt to hurl Saul from his throne; abiding the Lord's time, he patiently bore Saul's persecutions. For David is not of the violent men of the earth; he does not live by his sword. He is of the meek of the earth. He loves God and his people. He loves Saul, too, as *his* enemy. Of this, too, the young man seems to be more or less aware. And therefore he thinks it prudent to pretend that he is heart-broken by the events that he reports to David. So he rushes into David's presence with his clothes rent and earth upon his head.

Yet the man does not really know and understand David. For he imagines that he ingratiates himself with David by being able to report to him that Saul is actually dead. What is worse, it seems not to occur to the man that David will decry his having dealt Saul the stroke that ended his life. The man himself sees no wrong in what he did. Saul was in his death-agony. Besides, he slew Saul in accordance with his own request, because he saw that he could not survive his wounds. Saul would have died anyway. Doubtless, the whole story is a lie. The reason that the man invented it is that he wanted to be able to tell David that Saul was actually dead. He knew that the king was dead, he meant to say, because he had slain him with his own hand. Besides, he brought from Saul's corpse the royal crown to confirm his words.

Having heard the young man out, David takes hold of his clothes, and rends them; and likewise all the men that were with him. And they mourn and weep, and fasted until even. David's heart is heavy with grief for Saul, and Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; "because they were fallen by the sword."

The young man may have anticipated this expression of grief on the part of David and his men. The man had rent his own garments. But he had not anticipated the question that David now puts to him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David can hold him fully responsible because of his long residence in Israel.

Perhaps the man denies his deed and his denial is rightly disregarded. Telling the man that his blood is upon his own head, in that his mouth testified against him, David orders him slain.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Israel's Liefdevolle Heiland

(Psalm 105; Vijfde Deel)

De vorige maal kwamen we tot aan het vers in dezen psalm, dat gewaagde van den honger die door God "geroepen" werd; en wanneer God roept, dan is er ook gehoorzaming: de honger kwam en drukte zwaar in het land van Egypte. En ook de omliggende volkeren leden van dien honger, want we lezen, dat Jakob en zijn kinderen vanwege dezen hongersnood naar Egypte reisden om koren te koopen.

Nu gaan we verder.

"Hij zond een man voor hun aangezicht henen; Jozef werd verkocht tot een slaaf."

Ik heb wel eens hooren praten van de Goddelijke en de menschelijke factoren. Er was wat gebeurd. En het gebeurde, zoo zeide men, was resultaat van een doen van God en het doen van den mensch.

Nu kan dat wel, doch it zou U willen verzoeken om die twee factoren niet naast elkaar te zetten. Zij zijn niet coördinaat, maar de eene is subordinaat aan de andere. Zij zijn niet nevengeschiedt, maar de eene is ondergeschikt aan de andere.

Leest nu den tekst nog eens. God zond een man voor het aangezicht van de patriarchen. Dat is de hoofdgedachte.

En hoe heeft God dat gedaan? Door middel van het zondige doen der patriarchen die hem als slaaf verkochten naar Egypte.

Dit is een heel vreeselijke waarheid. Ook heeft Jozef het uitgevonden. Later, veel later, heeft hij er van getuigd, zeggende: "Gijlieden wel, gij hebt het kwaad tegen mij gedacht, doch God heeft dat ten goede gedacht, opdat Hij deed gelijk het is te dezen dage, om een groot volk in het leven te behouden."

Hier komen te pas de souvereiniteit van God en de verantwoordelijkheid des menschen.

En, nog eens, het is een heel vreeselijke waarheid.

Gods volk heeft altijd die vreeselijkheid gezien. Ik zal U drie voorbeelden geven, en het laatste is het vreeselijkste.

Het eerste voorbeeld: Isak veegt zijn lippen af.

Hij heeft gegeten, gesmuld van het geitebokje, dat Rebekka klaarmaakte. Doch daar komt een forsche tred, en een bekende stem: "Mijn vader sta op en ete van het wildbraad zijns zoons, opdat uwe ziel mij zegene!"

En als Isak vernam, dat het Ezau was, dan lezen we: "Toen verschrikte Isaak met zeer groote verschriking gansch zeer!"

Vraagt Uzelve af, waarom Izaak toch zoo ontzettend verschrikte. Het antwoord ligt in den laatsten volzin van het volgende vers: "ook zal hij gezegend wezen!" Isaak vernam, dat de Heere een wonderlijk werk aan 't doen was, dwars door zijn eigen zonde en de zonde van Rebekka en Jakob heen. Daarom zeide hij: "ook zal hij gezegend wezen!" Hij zag, dat God zijn eigen zondige handen die zich zegenende over Ezau wilde uitbreiden, opzij wierp, en dat Hij Zijn Goddelijke armen zegenende over Jakob uitgebreid had. "Ook zal hij gezegend wezen!"

Isaak zag Gods soevereiniteit, en zijn eigen zonde.

David vlood voor het aangezicht van Absalom. En Simeï vloekte hem. En toen zijn krijgsoverste dien goddeloozen man wilde dooden, zeide David: O neen. Maar God heeft tot hem gezegd: Vloek David! Doch later, werd die goddelooze Simeï gedood door Salomo, want hij was verantwoordelijk voor zijn goddeloosheid.

Jezus hangt aan het kruis.

En de Heilige Geest zegt: "Dezen, door den bepalen raad en voorkennis Gods overgegeven zijnde, hebt gij genomen en door de handen der onrechtvaardigen aan het kruis gehecht en gedood". Hand. 2:23; en nog duidelijker in Hand. 4:27: "Want in waarheid zijn vergaderd tegen Uw heilig Kind Jezus, welken Gij gezalfd hebt, beide Herodus en Pontius Pilatus, met de heidenen en de volken Israels, om te doen al wat Uwe hand en Uw raad te voren bepaald had dat geschieden zoude."

En dit laatste voorbeeld is het vreeselijkste. Maar ook het duidelijkste.

Gods hand en Gods raad bepaalde, dat Jezus door Herodus, Pilatus, de heidenen en de volken Israels aan het kruis gehecht zou worden.

En in de volheid des tijds geschiedde dat.

Door middel van de goddeloosheid van al dat gebroed, welke goddeloosheid door God bestuurd werd tot het bereiken van Zijn doel.

Beiden, de soevereiniteit Gods en de verantwoordelijkheid van Herodus, Pilatus en consorten, zijn niet nevengechikt, doch de laatste is ondergeschikt aan de eerste.

Vandaag maakt men vooral twee fouten. Men zet op nonactiviteit de soevereiniteit Gods, of men maakt de verantwoordelijkheid des menschen nevengechikt aan de soevereiniteit Gods.

En vraagt ge mij nu waarom men zoo doet, dan is

het antwoord: omdat men zoo vreeselijk hoogmoedig is. Het is zoo ontzettend vernederend om zelfs in zijn woeden tegen God instrument te zijn in Zijn hand. Farao, en al dat soort van gebroed, wil nog wel vloekende ondergaan in de bruisende baren van de Schelfsee, als hij maar een kleine menschelijke factor mag zijn, die ten slotte zich toch verzette tegen dien verschrikkelijken God! Maar God ontnam hem dien waan door tot hem te laten zeggen: Hiertoe verwekte God U! Opdat Hij Zijn macht en kracht in U zou openbaren in Uw verwoesting, en Zijn naam zou verkondigd worden over de gansche aarde! Ziet ge, dan blijft er pas niets van U en mij over!

Wilt ge dat?

Indien ge daarop ja zegt, dan zijt ge voor eeuwig gelukkig.

"Men drukte zijne voeten in den stok, zijn persoon kwam in de ijzers."

Och arme! Ja, och arme! In die enkele woorden hebt al den angst van Jozef, al de benauwdheid der ziel van Jozef toen hij zijn broederen om genade bad. In die enkele woorden hebt ge al de haat van de patriarchen die den lieveling van Jakob benijdden, al de onverschilligheid der Midianieten die hem verkochten aan Potiphar, al de vuilheid en valsheid van Potiphar's vrouw, al de eenzaamheid in het bange kerkerhol van Egypte, en al de vergeetachtigheid van den schenker aan Farao's hof.

Enkele woorden, maar er zitten jaren van angst en pijn, tranen en zuchten in. Let er op, dat men zijne voeten in den stok *drukte*. Men is niet zeer zachtzinnig met hem die door God overgegeven wordt.

Maar in die laatste paar woorden zit de troost voor Gods volk, en is ook troost voor Jozef. God gaf hem over aan 't geweld.

En het doel?

Och, we hebben daar al veel van gezegd in dit opstel. We zullen het hier niet herhalen. Ge moogt gerust gelooven, en ge zult het ook te belijden hebben, dat al die overgaven, al die drukking in den stok en in de ijzers, eigenlijk niet anders zijn, dan de groote lieflijkheid en goedgunstigheid Gods. Ook in den stok is God de liefdevolle Heiland voor Jozef. Het is de diepe weg die tot den troon leidt. Overal is God zijn God.

Luistert maar: "Tot den tijd toe dat Zijn Woord kwam, heeft hem de rede des Heeren doorlouterd."

Daar hebt ge het.

Jozef zuchtte en traande. Hij was ook maar een nietig mensch die net zulk een gevoel hebt als gij. Soms denk ik, dat een kind van God nog fijngevoeliger is dan een goddeloos mensch. In elk geval, de Heilige Schrift zegt ons, dat Jozef's ziel benauwd was, en dat hij zijn broeders om genade bad! Hij heeft veel geleden onder de harde menschen van allerlei slag.

Maar let er nu op, dat al dat lijden een "doorloute-

ring" was van des Heeren "rede". Wat mooi! Wat onbeschrijflijk heerlijk! Ik mag in den nacht zingen van Zijn trouw en liefde. Al Zijn baren en golven zijn eigenlijk niet dan zegeningen. Want het is heerlijk om doorlouterd te worden. Dat doet men met goud ook. Door het vuur van beproeving schittert de ziel die God wederbaarde.

O God is goed! Hij is goed tot in der eeuwigheid!

"De Koning zond en deed hem ontslaan, de heerscher der volken die liet hem los."

In deze weinige woorden wordt ons verhaald hoe Jozef ten langen leste uit het kerkerhol ontslagen werd. Het was een lang en bang wachten geweest. En ge weet hoe hij in dit kerkerhol gekomen was. Het werd veroorzaakt door die valsche vrouw van Potifar.

Voorts had hij zich als een kind Gods gedragen ook in de gevangenis. En zooiets ziet men op den langen duur. Tenminste, hij werd een soort "trusty" in de gevangenis: hij mocht het eten en drinken bij de andere gevangenen brengen.

Zodoende kwam hij in aanraking met een tweetal dienaren van Farao: den bakker en den schenker.

Op zekeren morgen kwam hij in hun cel en zag dat zij er "ontsteld" uitzagen. Zij hadden beiden een droom gedroomd, en die droomen waren zóó eigenaardig, dat zij ze maar niet kwijt konden raken. Geen wonder! Zij waren openbaringsdroomen. God had ze gezonden. En nu is het wel waar, dat God alle droomen zendt naar alle menschen, maar deze droomen waren iets speciaals. En die mannen hebben dat ook beseft. Het was er mee als met die droomen van Farao later en, nog later, met dien droom van Nebuchadnezzar.

Men kan het bemerken, dat Jozef zijn oor te luisteren gelegd had naar eenig teeken van zijn God, want hij verzoekt deze beide mannen ernstiglijk om toch hun droom te vertellen, en, zegt Jozef: "Zijn de uitleggingen niet Godes?"

Ge weet het verdere verloop: Jozef geeft de juiste verklaring, door Goddelijke aanspraak vermaand zijnde, en. . . wordt door den schenker vergeten, waar hij toch beloofd had om Jozef te gedenken als hij vrijkwam. Hoe echt menscheijk! Maar de Heere werkt langzaam maar zeker: Farao droomt ook, en ook die droom is in zeer bijzonderen zin van God. De schenker wordt herinnerd aan zijn ervaring met Jozef, en het koninklijke woord komt naar het kerkerhol om Jozef te halen. De tijd der doorloutering van Jozef liep ten einde. Het gaat nu hooger, al hooger. Eerst wordt hij uit het kerkerhol verlost; dan mag hij des Heeren mond zijn tot Farao; om eindelijk op den troon te zitten in Egypte: de tweede in het koninkrijk.

Evenwel, laat ons bedenken, dat al dit bedrijf niet is dan God's liefdevolle zorg voor Israel: er moest een groot volk in het leven behouden worden. En dat groote volk is Israel.

"Hij zette hem tot een heer over zijn huis, en tot eenen heerscher over al zijn goed, om zijne Vorsten te binden naar zijnen lust, en zijne oudsten te onderwijzen."

Ja, ja, Farao verhoogde Jozef, doch sloeg geen acht op het woord, dat Jozef gesproken had aangaande den God des hemels en der aarde. Jozef had duidelijk gesproken van dien God. Luistert naar hem: "Het is buiten mij: God zal Farao's welstand aanzeggen." Ziet ge, Farao had tot Jozef gezegd: "ik heb van u hooren zeggen, als gij eenen droom hoort, dat gij hem uitlegt." Merkt ge het op, hoe Jozef de eer van zichzelf afkeert en brengt waar zij hoort, namelijk, bij God? Dat doet hij later keer op keer. Als de droom verteld is, zegt Jozef: "Hetgeen God is doende heeft Hij Farao te kennen gegeven." En later weer: "hetgeen God is doende, heeft Hij Farao vertoond." En aan het einde van zijn verklaren zegt Jozef: "En aangaande dat die droom aan Farao ten tweeden male is herhaald, dit is omdat de zaak van God vast besloten is, en, dat God haast om dezelve te doen."

Jozef geeft God alleen de eer.

Maar Farao doet dat niet. Hij mag dan later zeggen: Naardien God u dit alles heeft kond gedaan, enz., feit is, dat hij zijn afgodendienst niet opgeeft, noch ook zich buigt voor den levenden God zooals Jozef dat deed. Jozef heeft hem God verkondigd, doch Farao heeft niet gehoorzaamd. Wat hij wel doet is dit: hij stelt hem over geheel Egypte, maar dat is uit eigenbelang.

Dat dit zoo is en niet anders blijkt ten overmaat uit het feit, dat hij het volk beveelt om voor Jozef te knielen. Vergelijkt dit nu bij het doen van den koning van Nineve. Hij vergat Jona, maar hij geloofde in den God des hemels en der aarde, en vernederde zich voor Hem. Zijns was een waarachtige bekeering. Maar Farao handelde uit eigenbelang. Het was een "wijzen" staatsgreep om Jozef eerste minister te maken. Later zouden Nebuchadnezzar en Darius hetzelfde doen.

Maar God deed naar Zijn raad.

En naar dien raad kwam Jozef op den troon met macht om "Vorsten te binden" en "Oudsten te onderwijzen".

"Daarna kwam Israel in Egypte, en Jakob verkeerde als vreemdeling in het land van Cham".

Ziet ge, geliefde lezer, daar was het God om te doen. Israel-Jakob moest in Egypte komen, om als vreemdeling ook daar te verkeerden. Eerst moesten zij behouden worden van den honger; dan moest Jakob vertroost worden over Jozef dien hij weer aan zijn hart mocht drukken; en, eindelijk, moest het tooneel klaargemaakt worden voor het drama van de benauwdheden van Israel-Jakob. Egypte wordt een smeltkroes der ellende voor Gods volk. Indien ooit dan heeft Jakob daar ondervonden dat zij vreemdelingen op de aarde waren.

"En Hij deed Zijn volk zeer wassen, en maakte het

machtiger dan zijne tegenpartijders.”

Wat mij hier telkens treft is, dat de Heere alles doet. In weinige woorden wordt dat hier telkens verhaald. God deed hen wassen: zij braken uit ter rechter en ter linkerhand. Bij de uittocht uit Egypte waren er twee millioen volks. En toen zij er in kwamen telden zij slechts een zeventig personen. God deed hen wassen. Hij is het die ook in het natuurlijke, vleesche-lijke leven den wasdom geeft. Hoe groot is God!

Tegenpartijders!

Dat zijn de Satans van Gods volk. De wereld, ook Egypte van Jozef's dagen, is de Satan, dat is, de tegenpartijder van Israel-Jakob. Zij waren vreemdelingen in het land van Cham. Wilt ge meer daar van weten, moet ge maar de Egyptologie bestudeeren. Die Egyptologie is gebouwd naar haar stof uit de feiten die men vergaderde uit de graven der pyramiden. En alles wat men daar vond getuigde van grooten afgodendienst.

“Hij keerde hun hart om, dat zij Zijn volk haatten, dat zij met Zijne knechten listiglijk handelden.”

Wat een vers!

Eerst, God keerde hun hart om!

Laat het valsche Israel van vandaag daar hun tanden stomp op bijten!

God keert het hart om van den mensch: dat hart is in Zijn hand als waterbeken. Hij wendt die harten naar Zijn wil.

O ja, ik weet wel, dat dit gaat door middel van veel en velerlei. Maar let er op, dat als God de hoofdsomma geven wil, Hij zegt: Ik keerde hunlieder hart om, opdat zij Mijn volk haatten zouden. Zware theologie!

Ik weet ook, dat Egypte in hun haten en in hun listigheden voor God verantwoordelijk zijn, maar dieper dan hun verantwoordelijkheid ligt de raad en werkt de hand van God. Later, veel later, zegt de Schrift tegen Farao: Hiertoe heb Ik U verwekt! Zware theologie! Zwaar, want Goddelijk.

Tweedens, let er op, dat God geen apologie maakt voor Zijn daden. Ik heb dat al gedaan: hierboven heb ik getracht om God te verdedigen. God trekt zich niets aan van al Zijn beschuldigers. God zegt hier eenvoudig: Ik keerde hun hart om, want Ik wilde hebben, dat Mijn volk voor tijd en wijle gehaat zou worden! Dat dient Mijn raad en voornemen tegenover Mijn teeder beminde volk. Ik ben een smeltkroes van ellende aan 't bouwen voor Mijn volk. Ik wil hen doorlouteren, en, tweedens, Ik wil straks Mijn liefste Naam openbaren. En gij, Egypte, met Uw Farao, zijn Mijn instrument. Ziet het toch: Ik keer Uw hart om! Gij zult Mijn volk haten, en straks zullen zij klagelijk weenen. En tot Mij roepen.

Zware theologie! Maar theologie die God tot Zijn eer doet komen.

Listige handelingen der haat van Egypte. Leest het historieblad, en weent!

Hebt ge dat nooit gedaan?

Israel in Egypte zijn Uw broeders en Uw zusters. En zij hebben vooruit geleden wat wij elken dag lijden van de wereld, van het vervloekte Egypte van vandaag.

En het hart van al dat lijden is de smaadheid van Christus dragen.

Gelukkige lijdens! Het gaat door lijden tot verblijden, tot de blijdschap van het ingaan in het Hemelsche Kanaän!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

When this department which bears the title “In His Fear” was inaugurated some two or three years ago, it was presented as one set aside for the treatment of educational subjects, subjects that have to do with the field of education in home, school and church. The phrase, “In His Fear” also suggests that one might treat matters that have to do with practical Christianity. Our purpose at this time is to use this department for a time to treat educational matters.

The thing we wish to treat for a few issues of the Standard Bearer is Christian instruction in the school room whereby our children are trained for their life's calling. That is what we should be doing for them when we send them to school. Our goal must not be worldly wisdom for worldly gain. Our children must be trained to live as the royal priesthood that they are by God's grace. That is their life's calling, and that calling requires training. The purpose of these articles is not to prove that our children should attend Christian schools, we leave that a foregone conclusion and consider it an undeniable fact. But our purpose is to focus our attention on the fact that the duty of the Christian school is to provide the child with a *Christian education* that it may be trained for calling in this life which it has from God.

We wish to present something positive along the line of education and not destructively criticize the efforts and work of others. To do this we will present and discuss in this department a set of principles of practical Christian instruction which we have at hand.

These principles were originally drawn up by the Educational Committee of the Christian School of Sioux Center, Iowa, and unless we are greatly misinformed they are chiefly the work of our own Rev. Gritters who now serves one of our congregations at Oak Lawn, Ill. These principles later were adopted

by the Christian schools of Pella and Peoria, Iowa, and last year were also adopted by the Hope Protestant Reformed School for Christian Instruction.

We present these principles for various reasons. In the first place, we believe that our readers, whether they have children of school age or not, will benefit by following these principles with us and will understand more fully the calling of the Christian School. Many of our readers have never seen these principles, and we believe that even those who have seen a copy would appreciate having them printed again. In the second place, being greatly interested in Christian instruction, we would like by these lines to do our little to encourage those who are preparing for a teaching career. Especially in light of the fact that those of our young men and women who are preparing for a teaching career have organized a club to discuss matters such as those to be treated in this department, we would like to print these principles and pen down a few thoughts in connection with them. If these articles invoke a discussion either in this paper or amongst the teachers and prospective teachers, if they are instrumental in bringing about a more definite and richer presentative of the calling of the Christian school, we will be satisfied that they have been worthwhile.

We begin by presenting in this issue that which we find in these principles under the heading of "History". In the following article we hope to say a few things about history and these principles of instruction in that branch of the curriculum.

HISTORY

1. History is the study of and the observation of God's eternal plan and purposes in regard to the earth's peoples, as these purposes have been and throughout the ages are being carried out. See for example Eph. 1:11; Psalm 33:11, 12; Isaiah 46:10; Psalm 46:6-9, and also the Belgic Confession, articles 2 and 13.

2. That plan of God was also made known to us. It is principally to bring His Church into the final glory of His perfected Kingdom, and all events in history are subservient to that Plan. (See for example Eph. 1:11; Psalm 40:5. Consider also the history of Israel enroute to Canaan and in Canaan; Rev. 20 and Dan. 4:34 where we see it finally perfected).

a. The Church passes through the deep way of sin and grace (Genesis 3:15). Everywhere we see the development of sin, all of it gradually and finally culminating in the Antichrist. (See Rev. 13:17, questions and answers 52 and 123 of the Heidelberg Catechism and Art. 37 of the Belgic Confession.)

2. Nations are born, they rise up, develop and fall at the Word of God's power. They are given

power by God (Dan. 5:18). They live out of the principle of sin (Dan. 5:20) attain many-sided developments and come to great riches as for example Babylon and Greece and the Antichristian kingdom of Rev. 18:10-17. Through all these God also sets forth and forward the cause of His Church in this world, but along that way comes also the fulfilled power of the Antichristian kingdom.

c. In and through it all is God's providence (Rom. 8:28, Prov. 21:1, and Psalm 121) appointing all events as the Belgic Confession declares in Art. 13 and protecting and nourishing the Church (Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 54 and Revelation 12:14). Thus He ripens the harvest, good as well as evil (Rev. 14:14-20). Until the King of kings shall appear and His glorious Kingdom shall crush all the kingdoms that be, like the rolling stone of Daniel 2:44, God's providence shall appoint all events in the history of this world. Then the great Building which is the Church (Eph. 2:21) shall be revealed in all its glory, in the great unveiling ceremony Christ shall be all in all while all the wicked shall be punished for their sinister plans to destroy the Church, God's Great Building.

d. If therefore the Church is God's Bride, His Building, the dove and also apple of His eye; and if His eye is ever upon that Church, we too shall look at all history in the light of that Church and shall judge the nations according to the position they have taken toward that Church and the truth she preaches.

3. But in the third place, Scripture teaches and the Confessions teach that in all these works which the Lord doeth, God is intent upon showing or revealing HIMSELF. Thus, for example, we read in Ezekiel 24-27 the statement that occurs 25 times: "And they shall know that I am the Lord." See also Romans 1:19; Ezekiel 36:21-22; Psalm 19:3; Romans 9:17; Calvin's Institutes I, 5, 1; Belgic Confession Art. 2, and the Heidelberg Catechism the answer to question 122.

a. In Romans 4:19, 20 God calls us to see in history His power and His Godhead together with His majesty.

b. The catechism sums all this up so beautifully in the answer to Question 122 when it states that in history we are to see:

(1) God's POWER (In Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Dan. 4:35).

(2) God's WISDOM (Eph. 3:10; I Cor. 3:10, wisdom wherein God is able to attain to His purpose.)

- (3) God's GOODNESS (Romans 11:22; Calvin's Institutes. "Goedheid en Gestrengheid". He showeth Himself good before the eyes of all men, but His goodness is over them that fear Him, Ps. 103:17).
 - (4) God's JUSTICE (judgments over the nations, punishment of evil-doers and calling for the Day of Justice: Heidelberg Catechism, the answer to the 11th question.)
 - (5) God's MERCY and His TRUTH (showing Himself to be reliable and unchangeable, true to His covenant promises which He has made to His people and His promise which in short is: "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32.
- c. Conclusion: Hence then as Calvin also says, the final purpose of looking into history must be to lead us to contemplate; not to worship, not the achievements of man, but the infinite greatness of God; and to worship, not men or countries, but to worship our God. Therefore the teachers and pupils must love God and know Him from the Scriptures as He there reveals Himself as the true God. And as the Church preaches Him and the Scriptures teach Him, He must become the God of the school-room through the instruction given in this important subject of history.

J. A. Heys.

It is simply absurd to say you believe, or even want to believe, in Him, if you do not do anything He tells you. — *George MacDonald, quoted in Calvin Forum.*

Men nowadays cheerfully give up the substance, but never the name of Christianity — *B. B. Warfield, quoted in Blue Banner Faith and Life.*

The sermon will be better if you listen as a Christian rather than as a critic. — *from the Banner.*

Whoso seeks from God any other reward but God, and for it would serve God, esteems what he wishes to receive, more than Him from whom he would receive it. What then? hath God no reward? None, save Himself. The reward of God is God Himself. — *Augustine.*

PERISCOPE

Dramatic Fever—4.

As Entering Wedge!

"The Netherlands Reformed Weekly, Trouw, in the issue of July 20, contains an item of interest to us in our constant concern over the movie problem. Twenty Protestant leaders, among whom are such familiar Reformed figures as Prof. G. C. Berkhouwer and Prof. H. Doorijeweerd, have published a significant comment on the subject of the public movie. They are impressed by the fact that the Protestant Churches have not solved the serious problem of the evil influence of movie-attendance by the prevailingly negative and all-too-general approach to the issue, especially in view of the fact that more than half of the members of the Protestant Churches in Amsterdam attend the movie-houses without the benefit of any dependable Christian guidance in the matter." (Does this figure also include members of Reformed Churches? One would almost receive this impression if one considers the fact that Reformed leaders were included in this group and their report was published in Trouw.—JH)

"While recognizing that most films are highly objectionable both from a cultural and Christian point of view, and that serious warning against the dangers of movie-attendance is always in place, especially for the spiritually immature, these leaders believe that it is neither necessary nor desirable to declare all movies, without further qualification, contraband, since such a policy often simply ignores the principle of the Christian's individual responsibility. They suggest, as a more positive and effectual approach to the problem, the formation of local boards of experts, made up of Protestants who understand the needs of the Protestant constituency, which will serve as censorship bodies, and publish in the daily papers a list of their selection of those movies that are suitable for the entertainment of the Protestant Church folk. The proponents of this suggestion are convinced that such a policy would have the effect of encouraging greater spiritual and moral discernment in the use of movies and other forms of entertainment by church members.

"This proposal will sound a little revolutionary in our circles. But it must be admitted that among us too, the negative approach has been and is unsuccessful, and that, within the limits of the Christian Reformed Church, the movie problem has not been solved. It is high time for some fresh and courageous thinking on the subject, not with a view to taking a more easy-going attitude toward the moral and spiritual perils present in the majority of popular screen presenta-

tions but with a view to furnishing the kind of confidence-inspiring guidance that will cultivate sound individual judgment in these matters. Whether the proposal of the Dutch leaders is the answer is subject to debate. That some new answer must be found is not." Quoted from *The Banner* of Sept. 24—Other Churches in the News, by Rev. Peter Van Tuinen.

We wrote above "An Entering Wedge?" and would, in this connection, also issue a warning. For the history of various churches overagainst certain ethical questions, particularly those involving amusements is always the same. First the church constituency becomes superficial, carnal, worldly-minded and pleasure-mad. Then the leaders in Zion dare no longer raise their voices against the present evil for fear of the results. This in both the ministry and in the exercise of discipline soon becomes evident. (By this order we do not mean to suggest that the other is never the case, i.e. that the corrupt preacher is the false prophet leading astray the people of God. This also happens of course.) Then, that which can only be saved in the way of a complete reformation is attempted in the way of compromise—censorship committees, together with implied approval, ending inevitably in the way of a complete capitulation to the carnally-minded element in the church involved and the eventual loss of her light on the candlestick.

And if the time has come also in the Christian Reformed (and in the Protestant Reformed?) Churches for some "fresh and courageous thinking on the subject" let it by all means be in the direction of a principal rejection of all acting together with a renewed emphasis on our spiritual separation in this world.

Mixed Marriages.

"If there is one thing in our life regarding which we should seek counsel from God it certainly is in the matter of seeking a wife (or husband—JH). Similarly, how important it is for a girl to ask herself the question: "Can I go through life with that boy who is proposing to me?"

"Not that we can evade trouble and sorrows in our wedded life: indeed not. The path which God has marked out for us we shall have to tread. But that is a different matter.

"God's Word forbids us to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Neither may we take the position, "Let us do evil that good may come". The secret counsel of God is unknown to us and therefore we are to give heed to the revealed will of God.

"We may not join in affinity with the enemies of the Truth and of the Church of God. Just think of those examples given us in the Word of God as a warning. We read in Genesis 6 that the sons of God inter-

married with the daughters of men. What was the Lord's answer? "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." God put an end to it by means of the Deluge and spared and delivered only Noah and his family.

"Rebekah had much grief because of the daughters of Heth, because her son Esau married women outside of the pale of God's Church. Indeed, these strange wives were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah. (Gen. 26:35).

"We read of Ezra that he mourned because many of the people that returned, the holy seed, intermarried with the people of the lands. At the command of Ezra the strange wives were sent away, and the people, those who were guilty of transgressing God's law, made sacrifice unto the Lord. See Ezra 9 and 10.

"But what about marrying outside of our own church? Are such marriages always evil? Dare we assert that all marriages of people in one and the same denomination or confession are always happy ones? Alas, there are instances among them, too, which are deplorable and upon which a judgment clearly rests. There certainly are happy marriages with people outside of our own denomination, are there not? I should not like to dispute this. It may be difficult at times to find someone in one's own congregation. Parents are indeed obliged to act with discretion in circumstances of this kind. We cannot manufacture love and . . . there must be love!

"But what I mean is this, let us never forsake our confession for the sake of marriage. If it should happen that a person meets someone outside of his own church, and the young man or young lady is willing to go along, then that is another thing. On the other hand, it should not be this way, either, that one comes to church for the sake of a boy or for the sake of a girl. Let the boy or girl do everything possible to convince the other of the purity of our doctrine so that the other's heart may be won over, as far as it lies in our power to do so. To go to church, and later on join the church, solely for the sake of a boy or a girl, but to continue to cling to a wrong doctrine, results in serious danger to the church, and in many instances will avenge itself.

"In some cases it turns out for good, but we may not and cannot act in accordance with this. We do not take the stand that we alone are The Church. . . . However, we should adopt a definite position regarding the church. Never deny the truth. If we should, sooner or later we shall regret it." From *Banier der Waarheid*, August, 1948.

"No Substitute for the Word".

"The Church has nothing worth preaching and teaching except the Word of God. Take that away and

she has no mission. There are many things worth lecturing about, holding classes upon, writing on, and debating about; but preaching and teaching are not lecturing and debating. Unless the Church gives forth the Word in its simplicity and purity through its preaching and teaching force, there is no reason for these high offices to exist as distinct from the lecturer who seeks the improvement of the moral, social, and financial condition of the people. Man has a far deeper needs than these, which cannot be met except by the Word of God.

"In insisting on the supremacy of the Bible in the Church, it is not to be inferred that it is to be treated as a charm or talisman, the mere presence of which insures the desired results. Far from that. The Word of God is "living and operative", as the apostle declares, but only as it is read and expounded under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. . . .

"One of the most subtle temptations besetting the preacher and teacher is to devote his time and energy lecturing *about* the Bible instead of preaching and teaching it. . . .

"When the Church ceases to offer a stone for bread and gives herself fully and faithfully to the preaching and teaching of the unadulterated Word of God, she will again have that authority and power which so many say she has lost. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that there is no substitute for the faithful, Spirit-directed preaching and teaching of the divinely inspired Word. To meet the need of the hour nothing less will suffice, and nothing more is needed. Its effectiveness is guaranteed by God Himself in the familiar but little relied upon promise: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." From *Southern Presbyterian Journal*, Sept. 15, 1948.

J. Howerzyl.

We are God's; therefore let His wisdom and will preside in all our actions. We are God's; towards Him, therefore as our only legitimate end, let every part of our lives be directed. — *Calvin*.

When one thinks of the similarity between the world and the church it is necessary to remember that the world has not become more Christian; Christians have simply become more worldly. — *Vance Havner, quoted in The Banner*.

ANNOUNCEMENT

You may still subscribe to the R. B. Serie. This Book Series includes four books, which will be sent you direct from the Netherlands, during the next few months. The first book "Om Woord en Kerk" by the Dr. K. Schilder, has already been mailed. You can still get this first book by subscribing to the R. B. Serie *now*. The second book to be sent is "Van Kust Tot Kust", by Mr. K. C. Van Spronsen (Rudolf Van Reest). This book contains the experiences and the impressions Mr. Van Spronsen received on his trip to America. It will also contain several photos taken on his American tour. The third and fourth books of this series consist of sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism by Ds. J. W. Tunderman, who died a martyr's death in the concentration camp of Dachau. All these four books may be had for the nominal sum of five dollars. Just send \$5.00 (money order, or check) to the Rev. B. Kok, 105 W. 19th St., Holland, Michigan, together with your name and address, and the books will be mailed to you directly from the Netherlands. *Do it today*.

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CONSISTORIES — ATTENTION

I have sent the Acts of the Synod of 1948 to all our consistories. If you have received an extra copy, please sell it and send the money to the undersigned.

And may I urge every consistory to appoint one of its members as agent to sell the Acts and Yearbook of 1948. I am sure every one of our families would like to have a copy. Price \$1.00. There are also a number of Church Orders left which sell for \$1.00.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk
1210 Wealthy St., S. E.
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

A man must not choose his neighbour; he must take the neighbour that God sends him. . . the neighbour is just the man who is next to you at the moment, the man with whom any business has brought you into contact.—*George MacDonald, quoted in Calvin Forum*.

Report of Classis East Convened, Oct. 6, at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Classis East met in the church parlors of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., October 6, 1948.

The chairman of the last meeting of Classis, Rev. M. Schipper, conducted the opening exercises. He read I Peter 5 and then led in prayer.

The credentials, which were read and accepted, showed that all the churches were represented by two delegates except the congregation of Randolph, which had only one delegate, due to the fact that Rev. Lubbers could not yet be with us on account of illness.

After the Classis was declared constituted, Rev. G. Vanden Berg was called upon to preside. He speaks a word of welcome and further asks those delegates who are present for the first time to sign the formula of subscription.

The minutes of the last Classis are read and adopted. Article 10 of those minutes refers to the report of the Church Visitors that was to be written in the book that is kept for this purpose. It is reported that this had been done now.

The committee, appointed at the last Classis to visit Rev. G. Lubbers, report that they had done so and further that his condition is greatly improved, that he will soon be able to return to his home and probably also in the near future will be able to take up his work in Randolph again.

The Classical Committee handed in a written report of their activities as was requested of them at the last Classical meeting.

Randolph asks for Classical appointments. Classis decides that the same arrangement for classical appointments be continued, this applies also to the right

to ask for collections in our churches to defray the expenses involved in all these classical appointments.

Randolph also asks for advice in re the prolonged illness of Rev. Lubbers.

Classis advises Randolph, in view of the favorable change in the condition of Rev. Lubbers, to continue as they have been doing in the past.

The chair appoints a committee to draw up a schedule of classical appointments for Randolph. Later in the day they present the following schedule, which is adopted by Classis:

Oct. 17—Rev. M. Gritters.
Oct. 24—Rev. B. Kok.
Oct. 31—Rev. J. A. Heys.
Nov. 7—Rev. S. Cammenga.
Nov. 14—Rev. C. Hanko.
Nov. 21—Rev. G. Vanden Berg.
Nov. 28—Rev. H. Veldman.
Dec. 5—Rev. J. De Jong.
Dec. 12—Rev. H. De Wolf.
Dec. 19—Rev. R. Veldman.
Jan. 9—Rev. M. Schipper.

A Consistory, that asked for advice in re increase of censure, was advised that the Consistory first make this decision before they bring this matter to Classis.

Classis received two invitations, one from Hope and the other from Second Church in Grand Rapids, to hold its next meeting there. Upon motion it was decided to accept the invitation of Second Church.

A protest of a brother against his consistory, together with the answer of the consistory involved, is read and received for information.

Classis decides in this matter, that the protestant has proved the main point of

his protest and that the consistory therefore should retract the decision against which this protest was directed. Four delegates ask to have their negative vote recorded in the minutes in re this matter.

Concerning the last part of the above mentioned protest, Classis decides, that the protestant had no right to protest since he did not protest on the meeting in question.

Classis now takes up the matter of voting for a Stated Clerk. From a nomination of three, D. Jonker is chosen.

The terms of two members of the Classical Committee expire. From a nomination of six, Rev. G. Vos and Rev. G. Vanden Berg are elected.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order are asked, and satisfactorily answered by the consistories.

The minutes are read and adopted. A motion to adjourn is passed. Rev. J. De Jong leads us in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.