

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Take The Water Of Life

"And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Rev. 22:17.

"As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!"

There, water and streams of living water are used figuratively to denote that blessed condition that is expressed by Asaph: To be near unto God! And blessed man is pictured in agony because he must be without that blessed water for a season.

Ever since sin entered into this world, man ceased to be "near unto God". Yet he did not thirst. And the reason is clear: his life-element changed from God to the devil. With the latter he made a very careful covenant.

But when regenerating grace enters the heart of man, the consciousness of loneliness is awakened: I am away, I am apart from God! And that consciousness is the reason why the first experiences of the Christian's life are not reasons for joy, but rather for sadness and unspeakable loneliness. That sense of loneliness, longing for God, is expressed as "thirst" in the Word of God. And that same Word holds out to the thirsty ones the Water of Life.

And so we have it in our text: God comes to the "thirsty" and says to them: And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!

A wonderful invitation!

Whosoever!

Yes, but only those who are willing.

And thereby hangs a wonderful story.

We will meditate on that story for a little while.

\* \* \* \*

Let him that is athirst come!

And whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely!

Who are called? Judging from the two statements above, they are those who are athirst, and those who are willing to come and take the water of life freely.

Well, dear reader, there are some common notions about this beautiful text.

There are so-called messengers of the Gospel, bringing the good tidings, who err grievously with regard to this and like texts.

They picture the abundance of grace: there is enough for all. And addressing all at all times and at all places, they say: All may come! Everybody is welcome with the Godhead! God wants all men to be saved! There are even some otherwise orthodox churches they dare say: As far as God is concerned everybody may come! No, they go ever further: As far as God is concerned, He seriously, solemnly and well-meaningly desires the conversion of everyone who ever lived, now lives, and who shall live hereafter.

It seems as though the present day church has a very big heart indeed. Even bigger than the heart of God.

For God has never taught us anything like this.

But the church of today certainly extends the invitation! They love to dwell on words such as "whosoever, all, everyone, every, etc."

And when men, certain men do not come to take the water of life freely, they dare say: Man can thwart the counsel of God with regard to themselves.

And so they say with regard to our text under consideration: Do you not see? Whosoever will let him take the water of life!

And they certainly want to imply that man, mere man, has a free will to choose to take eternal life unto himself. They ascribe power to man to lift himself from death unto life eternal. For, so they say, the first impulse to come and take must be with man. Horrible doctrine!

And they also teach with regard to the text, that all men are thirsty for this water. When Jesus calls the thirsty ones then the very limits of the world of

man is the limit of the Gospel call unto the water of life. And we would admit that the Gospel preaching is universal, but we will maintain with Scripture that man by nature does not thirst for God!

\* \* \* \*

Let him that is athirst come!

That does not mean everyone!

Man, by nature, will not come, and cannot will to come to procure salvation. Man does not want the bread and the water of life. He cannot desire it, and he does not thirst and hunger for it.

And my evil and perverse nature of sin and iniquity will never manifest itself clearer than when brought into contact with the water and the bread of life, and that is Jesus. Then my nature rears itself in wicked pride and godless hatred against God, and then I crucify Jesus afresh. Such is my nature, and such is the nature of all men, without one exception.

When God preaches to men: I command you to listen to Me, and to convert yourself, and to walk on the way of truth and righteousness to My glory! Then man says: Never!

Whosoever will let him come! and man says: I will not come and take the water of life!

And the outcome is that his debt is greater before God when you preach the Gospel to him, his heart becomes harder, for the Gospel is also a savour of death unto death, his condemnation becomes more terrible, for he has neglected so great salvation, and God is justified when He judges.

Whosoever is willing let him come!

And the result will be, if nothing more is said, that no one will come to God, and heaven will be empty of men.

\* \* \* \*

Let him that is athirst come!

That is the effectual call.

God never calls promiscuously. He does not wish everyone to come. He never called Pharaoh, Judas, Bileam, etc.

God calls His sheep only, and they come.

That truth you will find on a thousand pages of the Holy Bible; that is, if you have eyes to see the truth.

It is unworthy of God when we should present it otherwise than that only the sheep are called to the fold. Jesus told us very plainly: I give My life for My sheep. And: My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me!

Unworthy of God! As though He is ever thwarted in His counsel! The very thought is blasphemy. Imagine if you can, God standing with abundant grace in His holy hands and millions that refuse to be "graced".

No, throughout the Word of God He calls His own by name.

I hear the call to the weary, the hungry, the thirsty, the heavy laden, the willing ones, those that believe, those that follow, etc.

He discerns the state of the heart and calls that state by name. He knows all our hearts and the secrets within. He knows the hearts of His sheep for He gave them that heart which is forever longing for Him and His communion.

And it is also God who takes care of it that every one of those calls is heeded. He says to those eternally blessed human beings: Seek My Face! And every one of them answers: Thy Face, Lord, I will seek!

And only then may you begin to emphasize those words that speak of universality: everyone, yes, but only everyone *that thirsteth*. All, oh yes, all, but all *who believe*. Yes, it is for whosoever, but whosoever *that is willing*.

Is it not plain that all those words are carefully restricted by a condition?

Here is the water that must be drunk unto life eternal.

But it is for the thirsty only.

Here is Christ Jesus the Lord Who is the Fountain of living waters.

But He is for those that are willing followers only.

\* \* \* \*

What is thirst, even the thirst of my beautiful text?

It is a need of something.

But the character of the figure used implies that an extreme longing is meant. Thirst is really the greatest longing of physical man. If no water is forthcoming, the lips grow dry and ever drier, the mouth is parched, the throat is burned, the roof of the mouth will crack, and when prolonged, all the juices of the body are dried up, including the blood, and death, a horrible death follows.

That is thirst.

There pants the hart for living streams of water.

Very expressive figure in the Word of God.

Apply this picture if you will.

The child of God is regenerated.

And that means that the love of God is spread abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost that is given unto him. Rom. 5.

And that life of the love of God is God's own covenant life which He lives in blessed harmony in the Triune Godhead.

Christian is a child of God.

When, however, through some cause or other that life ceases to flow smoothly from God, through Christ and His Spirit into the soul and heart and mind of

the child of God, then he grows thirsty, hungry, weary, heavy laden.

And then he sings psalm 42: O God I thirst for Thee, for Thee my heart is yearning! When shall I come Thy gracious Face to see?

There is no more poignant longing anywhere than in the heart of the child of God.

And when God tarries, he dries up in agony and cries with David: My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is! Attend to the naïve child of God. Naïve in the innocence of the childhood that is born of the Spirit. See: Psalm 44.

I thirst for Thee!

\* \* \* \*

The willing ones are invited to take the water of life freely.

On the surface of it, it still sounds as though man shall be the determining factor in this drinking of the water of life.

Yes, it seems as if God will have to wait patiently for man to make up his mind and will to come and to take. The Lord will have to wait in bestowing His grace until mere man decides he will receive it.

Does the text say that it is for those that are willing?

Yes, but we must find out what the will of man wills, and, secondly, how the Lord acts with regard to that will.

The will of man is set on the earth, men, and sin. And his will is definitely set against God and His law. Read Rom. 8:7.

And God does wonders with that will of man. If God wants a certain man to listen to Him, and to take the water of life freely, He regenerates that man and makes him tractable. And then he becomes willing to listen. Note Philipp. 2 where we read that it is God that works in us the *to will* and the *to do* according to His goodpleasure.

Wonderful operation of God!

\* \* \* \*

And when that is done by God, He bids us "come" and "take"!

Oh yes, God did not choose little machines. The Christians that are called unto life eternal are moral and rational creatures. God works it in us, but then He begins to play upon the strings of our heart and will and mind.

He bids us come. He calls us to take.

And that is your part, my brother. That is your privilege, my sister.

That is your Christian life on earth.

You must come and you must take.

And blessed be God, they come and they take. Such is the history of the church from the time that

Adam and Eve appeared before the face of God out of the concealment of sin.

And God supplies the spiritual power to come and to take. It is all of God, through God, and to God. He has all the glory.

\* \* \* \*

Come and drink, take the water of life!

What is it?

And again we hear figurative language. Water is a picture, imagery for something else, something spiritual, something beautiful beyond compare.

We shall have to determine the meaning thereof.

The time and the space is lacking to quote all the texts that speak of water and water of life, but I bid you read: John 7:37, 39; Isaiah 44:3; Zacheriah 12:10 and Matthew 5:6.

Taking the Word of God in its entirety, in the places quoted and other places, we may sum up and say that water, and water of life means the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ the Lord such as it is imparted to us by His Holy Ghost, that is, the Holy Ghost as it was poured into the church on Pentecost.

And still I would like to ask: what is it? What does it mean that the righteousness of God is given unto me?

My brother, it is the most wonderful thing in the whole universe.

It is this: if you have the righteousness of God in Christ, you do not have to worry about the terrible question: How shall I be able to stand before the searching eyes of God in the judgment day. Righteousness that will clothe us like a garment is that Jesus is your Saviour and Redeemer. That He wiped away all your sins and that He give you the positive side of His death in that it will seem as though you have done all that God asked of you. Righteousness means good conduct in thought and word and act. When you stand before the judgment seat it will seem as though you in your own person have fulfilled the whole law of God.

Justified before God. That is your state if you have drunk of the water of life.

Then God smiles on you for ever and ever.

Justified!

It means that my whole life is such that when the only norm of goodness is laid alongside of me and my life, that I answer to that norm in wondrous perfection.

That water is The Lord our Righteousness.

Shall we then not come and drink? Oh yes, and we receive it free, gratis, freely. That is the test of sweet humility that is taught you by Jesus!

Oh, let us come then and drink! It spells eternal life!

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

### As To Teaching Our Confessions

(Cont. from page 151)

"Under the heading of formal catechetics I treated the methods and means of teaching catechism. Here attention must be called first of all to the division into classes. In the nature of the case this division must first and chiefly figure with the different ages of the catechumens. These ages are readily divided into three, namely: the age of children from six to twelve years; the age of early adolescence, from thirteen to sixteen; and the age of later adolescence or of young people of sixteen years and older.

"The chief characteristic of the child in the first period is undoubtedly that of receptivity. The soul of the child is easily receptive for impressions. What his teacher tells him is usually accepted by the child without question. His attitude is not critical: he easily accepts what is taught him. Moreover, in this period memory is usually strongest; just because things are new for him they easily attract his attention, and hence they are retained in memory. And finally, in this period the child usually has a lively imagination. It is only toward the close of this period that independent judgment is being developed in the child. The catechete therefore uses this period according to the best of his ability. He must not proceed from the false notion that he doesn't have to prepare himself for these earlier catechism classes. Much tact and discernment are demanded to adapt himself to the psychological life of the child. And because the child easily accepts what is taught him and does not assume a critical attitude, the catechete must be very careful and must be conscious of his great responsibility. This is true not only in respect to the contents of his instruction but also for his entire appearance, for the child imitates easily,—especially the smaller child. What the teacher does he will want to do also. His mien, his bearing and gestures, and the entire appearance of the teacher make an impression on him; and he copies his instructor in every respect. All the more he must be careful and must not proceed from the supposition that his instruction and bearing do not matter so much in the class of small children. He must also attempt to think himself into the life of the child and to adapt himself to it. He must therefore be simple in his instruction and not make a great show of wisdom; the child does not understand great things. Not only must he refrain from giving a dogmatical exposition of the Trinity for a child of six years old, but he also must not speak of hundreds of miles in

the discussion of a narrative of Scripture, for the child does not know what a mile is and also has no conception of the number 100. He therefore must connect himself by the apperceptions of the child. He also may make use of the imagination of a child and render his instruction as concrete as possible. It is also of the greatest importance that he gain the confidence of the child: this will encourage the pupil to open his childish heart for him; and when the child does that, the teacher must be careful that he does not leave the impression of considering the childish problems of no account. He must much rather take into consideration that these childish questions are very serious to the child. He must also be honest in relation to the child, for the latter feels very keenly. When he makes a mistake in the treatment of the lesson and the mistake is noticed by the child, the teacher must not try to save his face by all kinds of subterfuges, but rather acknowledge his mistake freely.

"The age of the child is easily divided into three periods, and this division is also to be recommended as a basis for division into classes, if, namely, the number of pupils permits. In that case the first class includes the ages of six to eight; the second class the ages of nine and ten; and the third class the ages of eleven to thirteen. In these different classes there ought to be a gradual ascent from the simple narrative, without mention of time or place, in the first period to the connected narrative, mentioning time and place, in the second period, and finally to the treatment of Biblical History from a somewhat ideal point of view, with the explanation of the significance of persons, historical events, types, etc., in the third period.

The period covering the ages of thirteen to fifteen, inclusive, is called the period of early adolescence. It is a period of transition both from a physical and from a psychological viewpoint. This is true first of all because this period is the age of puberty. In this period the body of the child grows almost visibly. The arms and legs of the boy and girl in this period sometimes become so long that he does not know what to do with them. Besides, this period is characterized by a certain instability. On the one hand, there is often a certain inclination to act very independently; but on the other hand, there is as yet no stability. The boy and girl in this period are exposed to all kinds of influences. Besides, they are becoming critical. The period of early childhood, in which one accepts everything on authority, is past. The age of reflection has set in, and the boy or girl begins to judge somewhat independently. The catechete therefore must in this period especially be discrete and wise, sympathetic, kind, longsuffering, and steadfast. He must attempt to gain the confidence of these early adolescents and be not only their instructor but also their

friend and their guide. He must exercise patience also, if from the midst of a class of catechumens of this age all kinds of questions arise that probably have seemingly nothing to do with the lesson that is being taught. In the meantime in this period a serious beginning must be made with the instruction in the fundamental dogmatical truths. It is possible that in the first part of this period the truths are still viewed from a historical point of view; but nevertheless, the emphasis must no longer fall on the history but on the doctrine. The catechete must insist in this period that the lesson be committed to memory. It is also commendable that the catechumens of this age be assigned to do some work at home in connection with the lesson. The catechete, however, must be careful that he does not demand too much in this respect, lest some of the catechumens be discouraged.

"The last period is that of later adolescence, or young people of the age of sixteen until the time of making confession of faith. This period is characterized by more stability than the former. In every sphere the young people confront the necessity of making a choice, also in respect to the covenant. The words of Scripture, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve,' are impressed more deeply upon their consciousness. The instruction of this period must take this into account. It must be indeed chiefly doctrinal instruction, but with a more thorough discussion of the various doctrinal problems and with application to practical spiritual life. This period is, of course, closed by the making of confession of faith.

"However, it is strongly to be recommended to continue catechism even after confession of faith has been made, in order that those especially who have a desire to learn may have an opportunity for further development. Various questions and subjects that cannot be treated in the common catechism class can be discussed in such a special class. Problems that are related to the church political side of ecclesiastical life, to the task of officebearers, to liturgical questions, as well as our confessions, the Netherland Confession and the Canons, and the forms—especially of Baptism and the form for the Lord's Supper—offer abundant material that is worthy of being treated.

"In catechism it is undoubtedly the best rule to divide the classes according to the ages of the catechumens. These ages will have to be changed, no doubt, according as the classes are larger or smaller; but as a rule the ages must determine the size of the classes. This is undoubtedly not ideal, and it has been attempted to let the advancement of the catechumens determine this matter; but in actual practice this is very difficult to be realized. The young people of the same age in the midst of the congregation feel that they belong together and will not easily let themselves be put in a class in which they do not belong according

to their age. And therefore practice must dominate the ideal in this respect."

Thus far the quotation from my Catechetics.

And this quotation may serve at the same time as an answer to the Rev. Gritters, both in regard to my system of catechetical instruction and in regard to my method of instruction the youth in the knowledge of our confessions.

According to this system I have given catechetical instruction for over thirty years, and I found it very satisfactory. We have no need of a new system at all. My young people I instructed in almost everything of any importance in the line of Reformed truth, as the reader may judge from the following list of subjects.

1. Three times I went with them very carefully and thoroughly through the Canons of Dordrecht, once in question and answer form.

2. For the third time I was teaching the Netherland Confession when I took sick.

3. More than once I went through the Baptism Form.

4. Besides, I went through the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, the form for excommunication, and the form for re-admitting excommunicated persons.

5. For two years I studied with them the entire book of Revelation.

6. Twice I went through the book of Daniel.

7. The first three chapters of Genesis we studied for two or three years.

8. I gave them a popular course in the history of doctrine.

9. Besides, I studied with them the Three Points.

10. And one year I explained to them the recent controversy in the Netherlands.

Always I prepared a mimeographed lesson which they might study and save.

But let me emphasize once more in conclusion that it is very essential that our children start with Biblical History, and to ignore or discard this is a fundamental error.

H. H.

## Advice To Immigrants

In the *Gereformeerd Kerkblad Voor Overijsel en Gelderland* the Rev. J. Van Raalte from Neede writes a word of advice to immigrants from the Netherlands to America and to Canada especially in two articles, of which only the second one reached me. I am very sorry that the copy of said paper in which he wrote the first of those articles was not received by me, because I have reason to surmise that especially the first article would have been of interest for us as

Prot. Ref. Churches. However, also in this second article, although the Rev. Van Raalte does not mention our churches, he expresses his opinion rather plainly that he does not think it advisable for the immigrants to America and Canada to join the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is evidently his opinion that the immigrants from the Netherlands, seeing that they cannot join the Christian Reformed Churches of this country either, stay by themselves and organize, if possible, churches of their own.

Let me state first of all that the Rev. Van Raalte was one of the brethren that opposed the synodical decisions regarding correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. Concerning this matter I found the following news item in the *Gereformeerd Kerkblad Voor Overijsel en Gelderland*:

"Br. A. Zijlstra rapporteert, dat men in commissie I van mening is, dat de tegen deze correspondentie ingebrachte bezwaren van de Particuliere Synode van Overijsel-Gelderland niet steekhoudend zijn, en beveelt aan om deputaten voor correspondentie met buitenlandsche kerken op te dragen deze correspondentie voor te bereiden en tot een goed einde te brengen, en reeds nu de predikanten van die kerken toe te staan in onze kerken een stichtelijk woord te spreken.

"Dit rapport met de voorstellen ontmoet een zware bestrijding, met name van Ds. Visée, Prof. Holwerda en Ds. Van Raalte.

"Bijzonder Prof. Holwerda wijst er op, dat we met het aanvaarden van die correspondentie ondraagbare consequenties op ons nemen: wij brengen onze eigen mensen in onzekerheid, wij geven de synodocratie een stok in de hand om ons te slaan, en we geven de Christelijk Gereformeerden aanleiding om ons te vragen, of we het niet meer voor onze rekening nemen en de formule van 1905 eerlijk hebben gemeend.

"Later wordt het rapport met tal van argumenten verdedigd door Ds. den Boeft en Prof. Schilder, waarbij wel enkele dingen verhelderend werken, maar de bezwaren bij de bestrijders niet weggenomen blijken te zijn.

"Namiddags wordt het debat voortgezet, waarbij Ds. D. Van Dijk het rapport ook aanvalt.

"Tenslotte gaat het naar de commissie terug, opdat ze er zich nader over berade."

In brief this means that the proposed advice of committee I regarding correspondence with our churches met with strong opposition from some of the members of the synod.

In a later number of the same paper we read that the conclusions of committee I regarding correspondence were adopted by synod, but at the same time we read:

"Een negental leden der Synode ging deze conclusie te ver. Zij wilden ze iets meer gereserveerd houden, en het zo formuleren, dat de deputaten zouden onder-



zoeken, of correspondentie met deze kerken geoorloofd en geboden is.

"De synode heeft echter anders beslist. De tegenstemmers verzochten aanteekening van hun tegenstemmen in de acta."

This means that nine members of synod were opposed to the decisions concerning correspondence with our churches. They wanted to change the decisions in such a way that they would merely have the deputies for correspondence investigate whether or not it is permissible and demanded to have correspondence with our churches.

And in still another news item in the same paper we read:

"Vooraf worden de Acta vastgesteld; daarna wordt meegedeeld, dat ds. v. d. Born, ds. Bosscha, ds. D. van Dijk, prof. Holwerda, oud. Pilon ds. van Raalte en ds. Visée aanteekening verzoeken dat zij het besluit inzake de correspondentie niet voor vast en bondig houden en zich voorbehouden dat besluit te bestrijden."

The above seven delegates, therefore, wanted it recorded in the Acts of Synod that they do not regard the decision concerning correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches as settled and binding and that they intend to combat that decision.

In this light we can understand what the Rev. Van Raalte advises to immigrants in America and Canada. I will quote the entire article. He writes as follows:

"Broeders en Zusters!

Er is ook wat veranderd in Amerika: Daar heeft men de zijde van de synodale kerken gekozen. Daar mogen de dominees preeken, die ons hebben geschorst en afgezet, maar de geschorsten en afgezetten worden er niet toegelaten.

"Nu poogt men in den laatsten tijd onze menschen daar te vangen op eene andere manier, n.l. door het verhaal, dat onzerzijds nooit eene aanvraag is gedaan om met de C.G.K. in correspondentie te treden. Ook dat is weer eene scheeve voorstelling van de dingen. De ware situatie is deze:

"Wij hebben altijd in correspondentie gestaan met de Chr. Ger. Kerk in Amerika. Daarom zou een verzoek om de correspondentie op te nemen dwaas zijn.

"Want dat zou beteekenen, dat wij ons als een nieuwe kerk aandienden bij de Chr. Ger. Kerk.

"Wij zijn geene nieuwe kerken, maar de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, die zonder meer met de Chr. Ger. Kerk in correspondentie staan. Daarom is de Chr. Ger. Kerk door ons dan ook uitgenoodigd om afgevaardigden op onze Synode te Groningen te zenden. Dat is telegrafisch verzocht.

"De Chr. Ger. Kerk heeft geweigerd om afgevaardigden te zenden, met de opmerking, dat men geene correspondentie met onze Kerken had.

"Daarop is op 9 Juli 1946 nog eens een brief ge-

schreven om hun duidelijk te maken, dat wij geene nieuwe kerkformatie zijn, maar de voortzetting van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, en dat wij begeeren de correspondentie voort te zetten.

"Het heet nu, dat die brief niet is aangekomen bij ds. Danhof.

"Dat is mogelijk, maar het is geene reden om de correspondentie op te zeggen of te weigeren, want het telegram heeft reeds om voortzetting van de correspondentie gevraagd, maar de Chr. Ger. Kerk wil niet.

"Die verlangt van ons, dat wij eenen brief schrijven en daarin om correspondentie met haar vragen. De Chr. Ger. Kerk wil de oude correspondentie niet voortzetten, die wil eene nieuwe met ons aanknoopen. Waarom?

"Omdat zij ons als een nieuwe kerkgroep beschouwt, als eene groep van scheurmakers. Dat zit daar achter.

"Zij wil, dat wij door het schrijven van zoo'n brief zelf zullen erkennen dat wij de scheurmakers zijn geweest.

"Want wij worden door haar als scheurmakers beschouwd en behandeld.

"Wilt gij U daarbij aansluiten?

"Dat beteekent eene totale verloochening van hetgeen gij hier zijt geweest en in volle overtuiging des geloofs hebt gedaan.

"Daarom is dat onmogelijk.

"Daarom willen wij ook met allen nadruk er op aandringen: Sluit U niet aan bij deze 'kerk' die ons ook uitwerpt, en die op dezelfde wijze camoufleert als de synodale kerken in Nederland.

"Misschien vraagt U, wat U dan naar onze meening moet doen?

"Dat is eenvoudig:

"In gehoorzaamheid aan Gods Woord Uwen weg gaan, gelijk gij dat in Nederland hebt gedaan; en daarbij, als het noodig is, alleen staan.

"Wil de synode der Chr. Ger. Kerk op haar besluit terugkomen, en de oude correspondentie voortzetten, dan verandert de zaak.

"Maar zij heeft reeds tweemaal het bewijs geleverd, dat zij dat niet wil, zoowel in 1947 als in 1948.

"Daarom is daar onze plaats niet, want zij weert Christus getrouwe knechten even zoo goed als de 'synode' hier heeft gedaan.

"Wij geven U daarom den raad om als leden van de Gereformeerde Kerken contact met elkaar te zoeken. De Kerk van Neede, die ook leden in Canada heeft wonen, nam daartoe het initiatief het vorige jaar en werd door de classis Arnhem aangewezen als 'contact-kerk' voor deze classis; de partic. synode van Overijsel-Gelderland wees de Kerk van Neede aan voor het opnemen en bevorderen van contact tusschen de emigranten voor deze beide provincies.

"Intusschen is ook in andere provincies deze zaak ter harte genomen. Er is eene particuliere commissie

in Zuid-Holland, en een kerkelijk Bureau in Utrecht opgericht, alles met het doel om U in Uwe moeilijke positie te helpen.

"Houd daarom stand in het geloof!

"Bouw mee aan de Kerk van Christus en help haar vergaderen naar het Woord van God en niet naar menscheninzicht en zondige synodebesluiten.

"Tracht zoo mogelijk daar de Kerk van Christus naar Zijn Woord tot openbaring te brengen in dezen geest:

" 'God van den hemel die zal het ons doen gelukken en wij Zijne knechten zullen ons opmaken en bouwen.' "

We have no space in the present issue of the *Standard Bearer* to reflect upon this advice of the Rev. van Raalte, but, the Lord willing, we will do so in our next issue, and hope that in the meantime we will probably still receive the first installment of this advice. If we do not receive it, I would kindly ask the Rev. van Raalte still to send the copy to us as soon as possible.

H. H.

## Once More: Advice To Immigrants

Just after I wrote the above article the mailman brought me the copy of the *Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijsel en Gelderland* in which the first installment of the advice to immigrants by the Rev. J. van Raalte appeared. That first article, however, was extremely disappointing, since we surely expected that in it the Rev. van Raalte would at least have mentioned our churches. But there is not a word about them in it. He only complains that from the side of the Christian Reformed Churches in America every attempt is made to have the immigrants also from the Liberated Churches join them. This attempt, according to the Rev. van Raalte, is made under the pretext that the Christian Reformed Churches in America have not assumed any position whatever over against the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands under Art. 31. And this he indignantly denies.

However, since we as Prot. Ref. Churches are less interested in the controversy which the Rev. van Raalte may have with the Christian Reformed Churches here on this point, we do not deem it necessary to quote the entire first installment of the advice to immigrants.

Seeing, however, that we have both articles now in our possession, we may as well utilize the rest of our space in this issue to finish our remarks on this matter.

And then I must in the first place express my surprise that while the Rev. van Raalte and others are so

opposed to correspond with the Protestant Reformed Churches, they evidently are very desirous to seek correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church. This is very evident: in the first place, from the fact that twice they attempted to establish or to continue such correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church; and secondly, from the fact that the Rev. van Raalte writes that the attitude of the immigrants toward joining the Chr. Ref. Church in this country may change as soon as the attitude of the Chr. Ref. Church in regard to correspondence with the Liberated Churches changes. It is clear from all that the Rev. van Raalte writes in his advice to the immigrants in Canada and also in the United States that as soon as the Chr. Ref. Church condescends to establish correspondence with the Liberated Churches the immigrants from the latter may join them.

Now, I ask in the hope that the Rev. van Raalte will serve me with a well-motivated answer: why is this? How must it be explained that he is so opposed to establish correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches, while he seeks such correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church? I hope that the underlying motive for this difference in attitude with the Rev. van Raalte is not that our churches are small and despised.

Yet, on the other hand, I cannot conceive that this difference is a matter of principle with the Rev. van Raalte. Consider the following:

First, the Chr. Ref. Church accepts the theory of presumptive regeneration, at least unofficially. Unofficially they have repudiated Heyns and his view of the covenant. When I say "unofficially", I mean in the first place that the theory of presumptive regeneration is taught in the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church, and in the second place that the editor of the *Banner* openly defends this theory and presents it as the doctrine of the Chr. Ref. Church. Now, the decision concerning this matter by the synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in 1942 was one of the main stumbling blocks over which the people of the Reformed Churches under Art. 31 fell and because of which they liberated themselves in 1944. And on the other hand, although we do not accept their view of the children of the covenant, we neither hold the view of presumptive regeneration. But we ask: how can the Rev. van Raalte, if it is a matter of principle with him, be so desirous to establish correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church?

Secondly, the Chr. Ref. Church in 1926, at their Synod of Englewood, Chicago, accepted the hierarchical principle that classis and synod have power and authority over the local consistories. They therefore condemn the interpretation of Art. 31 of the Church Order which is maintained by the Liberated Churches. On the other hand, we, as Prot. Ref. Churches, accept



wholeheartedly the principle of the autonomy of the local congregation. But again I ask why the Rev. van Raalte is so opposed to seeking correspondence with the Prot. Ref. Churches, while he deplors the fact that they cannot have correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church in America.

Thirdly, in 1924 the Chr. Ref. Churches accepted the doctrine of common grace in the well-known Three Points, and it is because we refused to accept this doctrine as Reformed and Biblical that the Chr. Ref. Church cast us out from their fellowship. But we understand, and all that is written recently in the various papers in the Netherlands corroborates it, that also the Liberated Churches refuse to accept this doctrine of common grace as contained in the Three Points. And again I ask the Rev. van Raalte, if it is a matter of principle with him, why he can so earnestly oppose correspondence with our Protestant Ref. Churches and be so desirous of establishing such correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church.

Finally, the Rev. van Raalte is well acquainted with the fact that the Chr. Ref. Church in America adopted in 1908 the Conclusions of Utrecht, 1905, which our churches have never adopted and which the Liberated Churches in the Old Country have repudiated. But again, how can the Rev. van Raalte be so enthusiastic to seek correspondence with the Chr. Ref. Church, while he is opposed to correspondence with the Prot. Ref. Churches?

But there is another matter to which I want to call attention.

It is very striking indeed that in the articles of advice to the immigrants in the United States and Canada by the Rev. van Raalte not one word is said about the Prot. Ref. Churches.

He is, of course, well acquainted with them. He knows, besides, that our churches have been and are still working in Canada among the immigrants. Yet, he completely ignores us and acts as if we did not exist. By implication, of course, he plainly intimates that the immigrants are advised not to join the Protestant Reformed Churches; but he never even mentions them.

That hurts.

The reason why this hurts is not because we are so eager to increase the membership of our churches and to become a large denomination. We are not looking for anything like that at all. We strive rather to keep our churches as pure as possible, both in regard to doctrine and life. And as a result we cannot expect a remarkable growth, especially not in the miserable age in which we live. There are not many that will accept the pure Reformed truth, and very few in our age will live from the principle of the antithesis and keep their garments clean. And as far as increasing our membership from the immigrants in Canada is

concerned, I have stated before, and I say it again, that we detest Heynsianism; and if the Liberated Church members in Canada believe the Heynsian view of the covenant, they cannot be received as members with us unless they are converted. For it is our conviction that Heynsianism is not Reformed but Arminian.

But that does not mean that we like to be contemptuously ignored.

For his attitude the Rev. van Raalte cannot offer as an excuse that his churches have decided to seek correspondence with our churches, for he plainly declared and has his name in the Acta for this declaration that he does not consider the decisions reached by synod concerning correspondence with our churches settled and binding and that he will oppose them.

To realize this opposition, however, he must not simply be silent and ignore us, but come out in the open and state his reasons and motives for his opposition to correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches.

And therefore I earnestly hope that the Rev. van Raalte will write about this matter and that he will answer my questions.

In conclusion, let me state that the immigrants from the Netherlands in Canada, from Vancouver to Montreal, generally complain that the preaching of the Christian Reformed ministers is very poor and certainly not reformed, while they hear a new note,—a Reformed note,—in the preaching of the ministers from the Protestant Reformed Churches.

H. H.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Attributes Of God

(INCOMMUNICABLE)

Toward the close of our preceding article we had begun our discussion with the attributes of God's Immutability. We concluded that article by calling attention to several passages from the Word of God which seem to indicate that the Lord is characterized by changeableness in His attribute toward and dealings with the children of men. We noted that Scripture speaks of the Lord as repenting Himself of an action taken, of changing His purpose, of becoming angry, of laying aside His wrath, etc. But there is more.

In the fulness of time God comes to us in the Christ, assumes our flesh and blood, and establishes His dwelling place within the Church by His Spirit;

He thereupon rejects Israel and takes the Gentiles into His fellowship. And in the lives of His people there is a continuous change in the consciousness of guilt and the forgiveness of sin, of the experiencing of His wrath and then of His love, of a being forsaken of Him and then the enjoyment of His presence—this is everywhere substantiated by the Word of God. Yet, on the other hand, Scripture repeatedly emphasizes the truth that Jehovah is ever the same. All things may and do change; but the Lord remains ever the same—with Him there is no change or shadow of turning; He is Jehovah, the I AM, the First and the Last, yet ever the same God. And even as He is unchangeable in His Being and essence, so also He is unchangeable in all His relations to the children of men. He is not a man that He should lie or the son of man that He should repent; He does what He declares, He never forsakes His people, He finishes what He has once begun.

How must we understand these passages in the light of the Scriptural truth that the Lord is the immutable God? On the one hand, we must bear in mind that the realization of God's eternal works occur in time; and, inasmuch as these works do not affect any change in God Himself because as in Him they are exalted above all the laws of space and time and are eternally perfect and complete, God remains the Immutable. We have in time merely the unfolding of His eternal thoughts, and they remain ever the same. And when the Lord, in Christ, assumes our flesh and blood, He does not change, for according to our Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 14, the Son of God, assuming our human nature, is and remains the true and eternal God. And, although the Scriptures speak of God as repenting Himself, or that He apparently changes in His relation to the children of men, yet this does not signify an actual change in the living God Himself, but it merely refers to the realization of His counsel in harmony with the nature and condition of the creature.

Hence, the Lord is the Immutable One. He is unchangeable within Himself, in His own Being. He is the God of infinite perfection, the Rock, in Whom there is no change or shadow of turning. He is also the Unchangeable in His attitude toward and in all His dealings with the children of men. His pity does not become indignation, and He does not change from an attitude of love into that of wrath. This the "Common Grace" theorists would have us believe. They proclaim that, in this life, the Lord is favorably inclined to the children of men, that He reveals this attitude of pity and compassion in the good things which He bestows upon them, such as sunshine, rain, health, bread, etc. In addition to the many good things which the Lord bestows upon all men and also upon the ungodly in His mercy and compassion, He

also gives them the preaching of the gospel, and this preaching of the gospel is presented today as a token of Divine mercy and love toward all the hearers of the "good news". Today is the day of salvation, the day of grace, the day of mercy and compassion, the day when the Lord proclaims His general love to save and to pardon, the day when the Lord stands with His arms extended, offering to all the hearers of the gospel the salvation in Christ Jesus; tomorrow it may be too late. Today is the day of salvation; tomorrow may be the day of wrath. Today the Lord is graciously inclined; tomorrow He may have withdrawn His love and grace and reveal Himself exclusively as the God of wrath and indignation. Today the Lord loves; tomorrow He may hate. This, we understand, surely presents the Lord as a changeable God, a God characterized by a shadow of turning. This God Who loves today and withdraws His love tomorrow is not everlastingly the same but is changeable and variable in His moods and inclinations. The theory of "Common Grace" suffers shipwreck also upon the rock of God's Immutability. The Lord is the same, today, tomorrow, and forever.

#### *The Attributes Of God. (Communicable)*

The communicable attributes of God are those attributes or virtues of God which, in a creaturely manner, are reflected in man. Strictly speaking, so we remarked in previous articles, all the perfections of the Lord are incommunicable. God is His attributes. God cannot be communicated to the creature; this also applies to His attributes. Yet, whereas the incommunicable perfections of the Lord are to be ascribed to the Lord alone, man (the child of God) does reflect, in a creaturely measure, as a creature, some of the virtues of God, and these are, therefore, called communicable. We must bear in mind that man possesses them and reflects them *only in a creaturely measure*. These communicable attributes of the Lord are: Intellect (Knowledge and wisdom), Will (Righteousness, Holiness, Goodness, Justice, Longsuffering, Mercy, Love, Friendship, Grace, Lovingkindness), and Power.

#### *God's Knowledge.*

The Knowledge of the Lord we define as that virtue of God whereby He completely fathoms and knows with perfect consciousness Himself and all His works within and outside Himself. This is thoroughly Scriptural. *God knows Himself*—"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.", Matt. 11:27; "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. . . . As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father:

and I lay down My life for the sheep", John 1:18, 10:16; "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God", I Cor. 2:10-11. *But the Lord also knows all things outside His own Being.* Shall He not hear, Who hath planted the ear; shall He not see, Who hath formed the eye?—Ps. 94:4. *Repeatedly the Scriptures speak of the Lord's knowledge and wisdom*—Job 12:13: "With Him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding"; see also Job 28:12-28; Prov. 8:12ff.; "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. . ."; Ps. 147:5: "Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite."; Rom. 11:33, 16:27: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."; Eph. 3:10: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Moreover, this knowledge of God has the entire creature for its object. *The eye of the Lord runs to and fro throughout the whole earth*, 2 Chron. 6:9: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars."; *everything is known unto Him and lies naked before His eye*, Heb. 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."; *the smallest and least significant*, Matt. 6:8, 32, 10:30: "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. . . . For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. . . . But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."; *the reins and the heart*, Jer. 11:20, 17:9, 10, 20:12: "But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them: for unto Thee have I revealed my cause. . . . The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. . . . But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see Thy vengeance upon them: for unto Thee have I opened my cause."; Ps. 7:9: "Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts

and reins"; 1 Kings 8:39: "Then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; (for Thou, even Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)" Luke 16:15: "And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before me; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."; Acts 1:24: "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, Which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen."; Rom. 8:27: "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."; *our thoughts and deliberations*, Ps. 139:2: "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off"; Ezek. 11:5: "And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them."; I Cor. 3:20: "And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, and they are vain."; 1 Thess. 2:4: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."; Rev. 2:23: "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."; *man in his origin and being and in all his ways*, Ps. 139: *night and day*, Ps. 139:11, 12: "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."; *hell and corruption*, Prov. 15:11: "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men?"; *evil and sin*, Ps. 69:5: "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Thee."; Jer. 16:17: "For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes"; Jer. 18:23, 32:19: "Yet, Lord, Thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before Thee; deal thus with them in the time of Thine anger. . . . Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Indeed, everything is known unto the Lord.

To this we may add that the Lord knows all things, not by perception, not merely by seeing them before hand, but eternally. This, too, is abundantly taught in the Word of God—Acts 15:18: "Known unto God

are all His works from the beginning of the world.”; 1 Cor. 2:7: “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”; Romans 8:29: “For whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”; Eph. 1:4, 5: “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”; 2 Tim. 1:9: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Hence, the knowledge of the Lord is not subject to change or increase (Is. 40:13-14: “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him in knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding?”; Rom. 11:34), *is sure and definite* (Ps. 139:1-3: “O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways”: Heb. 4:13: “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.”), *so that all the revelation of God is true* (John 8:26, 17:17: “I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him. . . . Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.”) *All the works of God reveal unto us His wisdom* (Ps. 104:24, 136:5: “O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. . . . To Him that by wisdom made the heavens: for His mercy endureth for ever.”; Eph. 3:10: “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”; Rom. 33:10: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”), *and prompt us unto worship and admiration* (Ps. 139:17-18: “How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee.”; Is. 40:28: “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His

understanding.”; Rom. 11:33: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”)

The knowledge of God must, of course, be distinguished from our knowledge. In the first place, God knows all things of Himself and all things are as He knows them; we know the things only through perception (waarneming) and revelation. Our knowledge of things is determined by the things; we know the things only after they exist; their existence precedes our knowledge of them. The Lord knows all things of Himself and they are as He knows them. His knowledge is foreknowledge, goes before in the sense that it precedes the things. God does not know them as they are, but they are as He knows them. God's knowledge is a creative, all things-determining knowledge; we know about the things whereas the Lord simply knows the things; all things exist as the Lord creatively has known, conceived of them. We know because the things exist: but, with respect to the Lord, they exist as and because He sovereignly knew them. And this, we understand, applies to everything. In this sovereign, creative, all-determining sense of the word the Lord knew sin and salvation, the elect and the reprobate, light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, angels and demons, the truth and the lie, righteousness and unrighteousness, the love of God and the hatred of Him, every thought and inclination and desire within the heart and soul of men. Fact is, according to Prov. 16:1: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.” God's knowledge, and that with respect to everything, is strictly foreknowledge, also eternally; it simply precedes the existence of all things, never follows upon their existence.

In the second place, the knowledge of the Lord must be distinguished from our knowledge because God's knowledge is strictly omniscience, whereas our knowledge is and ever remains very limited. We know only in part. Our knowledge of the things is limited, first of all, to the things of our immediate surroundings; we know only a little, a very little of what is going on in the world wherein we have a name and place. Besides, what we know we know very superficially. The essence of things, of persons, of events we do not, cannot see. Many things we learn to know, if we ever learn to know them, long after they have happened. God's knowledge, however, is strictly omniscience. This applies, first of all, of course, to Himself. The Lord knows Himself, His own infinite and eternal Being, perfectly and with complete consciousness. There is in God no sub-consciousness. But this omniscient knowledge of the Lord also applies to all things. He knows all the things of today. He sees and knows whatever is going on, throughout the world,

in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth. Nothing is hid from His sight. Besides, He knows all things in the sense that He fathoms them, understands them, really *knows* them. God's knowledge is never superficial; it is always profound and complete. Moreover, God knows all things in their proper relation to one another; if this were not true, how could the knowledge of the Lord be perfect and complete? And, finally, Jehovah knows all things from the beginning until the end of time. The Lord enjoys constantly a "bird's eye view", not only of everything that is happening at the present moment, but also of everything from the beginning until the end of time, and this "bird's eye view" of all things is perfect, thorough, complete, so that He has all His works constantly before His eye. This omniscience of the Lord is taught throughout the Word of God, as in: Job 37:16, 1 Sam. 16:7, 1 Chron. 28:9, Ps. 139:1-4, Jer. 17:10, Deut. 2:7, Job 23:10, 24:23, 31:4, Ps. 1:6, 119:169. We will quote the first three passages: "Dost thou know the balances of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him Which is perfect in knowledge? . . . But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. . . . And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever." And in Ps. 139:1-4 we read the wellknown words: "O Lord Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." Indeed whereas our knowledge is and remains very limited, the knowledge of the living God is strictly omniscience—He knows all things, and that in the complete and perfect sense of the word.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

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"He goes before thee, O my soul!  
Fear not to follow where He leads;  
He knows the strength each task demands:  
He knows the grace each trial needs."

*"I am the Light of the World: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."*—John 8:12.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### Abner's Assassination

Leaving David's presence, Abner went forth to gather all Israel unto his new lord as he had vowed. He was gone but a little while perhaps when the servants of David and Joab came "from a troop". They had been warring against some enemy of Judah and brought in a great spoil with them. David was still dependent on such raids for his livelihood. For no arrangements with the people had yet been made for the support of himself, his household and his army. The text again states that Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, David having sent him away and he having gone in peace. And when Joab and all the host that was with him arrived, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to David, and he dismissed him and he went in peace. Hearing, Joab was incensed. To his mind David had done foolishly. Abner should have been taken captive and executed. It could still be done. So Joab came to David not to consult with the king, but to take him severely to task for allowing Abner to leave his presence in peace. Said he to the king, "What hast thou done? Behold, Abner came to thee; what is this that thou hast sent him away, and he is gone indeed?" The word "indeed" (the rendering of the Hebrew absolute infinitive) must not be allowed to escape our notice. It indicates that Joab was in great heat. He would say, 'Verily, he is gone, the rebel. He was only too eager to get him from thy presence. Woe unto thee, O king.' Joab justified in David's hearing his anxiety and passion and his extreme disgust with his lord. These are his words, "Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to open thee," that is, 'by fair promises and honeyed words to get thee to reveal to him the secrets of thine heart', "and thus to know thy outgoing and thy incoming and to know all that thou art doing," that is, 'all thy undertakings, thy whole course of life'.

Leaving David's presence, Joab sent messengers after Abner, which overtook him at the well of Sireh perhaps about two and a half miles from Hebron. Abner, suspecting no evil, returned with the messengers. Doubtless, they had been instructed to say that they were under David's orders and that he wanted one more word with him. When he was returned, Joab was on hand. Connected with the gate was a space where, according to the custom of the day, men used to meet for private and public conversation. Joab turned Abner aside to the middle of this space as if he had need of speaking to him privately out of hearing of the people, and there without warning he stabbed



him in the abdomen so that he died. That was first degree murder. It was a foul deed to which only a godless, reprobated man, consumed with ambition, would stoop. Doubtless Joab was afraid that he was to be superseded by Abner as general in David's army.

It was a foul deed, unadulterated murder. This is evident. In view of Abner's previous antagonism, Joab would have been justified in warning David, cautioning him to be on his guard. But he accused Abner of seeking David's ruin still. But he had no right. For the charge was baseless not only but even refutable. For since their covenanting together, Abner, as was stated, had been as zealous for David as formerly he had been determined in his opposition to him. He had returned Michal to David. He had communicated with the elders of Israel. He had spoken in the ears of Benjamin. He had reported to David that all the tribes had expressed their willingness to acknowledge him as their king. Confirming his report by their presence were twenty men. Verily, it was plain that he was already addressed to the task not of organizing a new revolt against David but of gathering all Israel "unto my lord the king". The evidence was there. Joab knew of this. It must be assumed that David had told him all. Yet in the face of all this evidence to the contrary, Joab insisted that Abner was still the antagonist of yore and thus a low character who could not be trusted out of sight and to whom a covenant meant nothing, a man whose words "though smoother than butter and softer than oil", were "drawn swords". Abner's covenanting with David was only a trick. Such were Joab's accusations. But he had failed to substantiate them. He had come with no facts. Notwithstanding he slew Abner.

It might be, of course, that Joab knew Abner to be guilty. If so, he should have brought him to trial, acquainted him with his accusations, produced his evidence, and given him opportunity to defend himself. But this he failed to do. He simply assassinated Abner as untried and thus unheard and unconvicted. There could be but one reason. Joab had not a shred of evidence to substantiate his charges. And of this he was fully aware. He thus slew a man whom he was in duty bound to account innocent.

Thirdly, let us consider how he slew Abner. He slew him by the employment of the basest kind of treachery.

Finally, who was Joab to set himself up as judge over Abner. David was king and judge, not he. And David had taken Abner into his confidence and had covenanted with him. That should have ended the matter also for Joab unless he had been able to produce evidence that Abner was seeking David's hurt. But he had no such evidence. But he wanted Abner out of the way nevertheless.

To his account of Joab's deed the narrator attaches the notice, "For the blood of Asahel his brother." Here is revealed that Joab sought to justify his doing by an appeal to the command (Deut. 4:41 sq.; Josh. 20:1-9) according to which the *intentional* slayer had to be put to death by the nearest of kin of the victim. But Abner had not slain Asahel willingly but in self-defence on the battle field. Hence, the law just alluded to exonerated him. Joab's deed was murder. The narrative says as much in the sequel at verse 30, "So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in battle." Here the text reveals, too, that Joab had committed that crime with Abishai as his accomplice.

Joab was a godless man. So he continued to reveal himself during the rest of his career. Later on he murdered Amasa by the employment of the same kind of treachery, (20:10). At the close of his career and to his own destruction he joined the party of Adonijah and was slain by order of Solomon as grasping the horns of the altar.

One of the worst aspects of Joab's crime was that it brought David under a cloud of suspicion with the people. Every one hearing of it would naturally ask whether David was co-responsible. The nation had been brought to the verge of owning him as its king. Should it be allowed to conclude that he had a share in the deed, his reputation as a lover of righteousness and a hater of iniquity would be gone, and God's believing people would be lost to him forever. So when David heard of it, his first act was to issue a public declaration to the effect that "I and my kingdom—his posterity in the throne—are guiltless before the Lord forever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread." Was this terrible curse uttered under the impulse of David's sinful flesh in a moment of unbridled carnal rage? Or was it inspired by the Spirit of Christ. The latter, certainly. Joab's repeated treacheries and the judgment of God by which he was finally overtaken—he perished by the sword of Solomon in punishment of his sedition—indicates that it was prophecy to which David here gave utterance. The curse would pursue also Joab's father's house, implying that all its members were wicked and reprobated men.

It was indeed a terrible curse that was here called down upon Joab's head. In terms of a typical language it exiled him to the desolation of an eternal darkness. And to enlarge his punishment it would be made to operate also in his father's house in connection, certainly, with the wickedness of its members. To regard this curse as an ebullience to David's sinful



flesh is to put him so far in the shade as to make it difficult to hold to his essential goodness. God put these words of cursing in David's mouth; and he cursed Joab, did David, under the constraint of God's Spirit and the righteous wrath that burned in his own bosom. This is further corroborated by the fact that Joab was not in the least disturbed by David's imprecations. As often as he reappears on the pages of Holy Writ it is the same impudent, self-willed, ambitious, and treacherous Joab that we see.

Having thus avowed and born witness to his innocence regarding Joab's crime, David ordered an official mourning for Abner in the presence of his corpse. He commanded Joab, even Joab and him in the first instance, and the people that were present to "rend your clothes, and gird you with sack-cloth, and mourn before Abner." The public demonstration of grief was followed by the burial in Hebron. The king followed the bier. He "lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner. And all the people wept with him. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, O, why had Abner to die as a nabal—a godless, worthless fool—dieth?" The form of the words of the Hebrew text shows that it was a question that David here put. Abner's horrible and inglorious end mystified David. "Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men—sons of wickedness—so fellest thou." Abner was not overpowered in combat, bound and fettered and slain by the hand of the captor. He was murdered, assassinated unawares. The end to which he came was that to which only worthless fools are made to come. Yet Abner was not a nabal. Such is here the underlying thought. The lamentation had its effect. All the people wept again over Abner. But David's grief was more enduring than that of any of them. The burial was followed by the mourning meal. The people came to David to force him to take nourishment. But he vowed that he would not eat while it was yet day. These were his words, "So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down." The people took notice and were pleased. The whole conduct of the king pleased all the people. They absolved him from all blame and gave him their love and confidence. "For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. "Alone with his servants, David was still occupied with Abner. He paid him this tribute, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel."

It must not be doubted that David's expressions of grief were genuine. Being an essentially good man he would not feign grief for purely political reasons. That would have been abominable. Certainly, David was not that kind of man. Joab's deed horrified him. It moved him to the core. Also his heart was sad for

Abner's sake. His elogy, the tribute he paid Abner, binds us to the view that Abner had won his confidence, affection and esteem, and also his forgiveness. How else could he have covenanted with him. True, he went no further than to say that Abner was a great man in Israel. But it cannot be that Abner seemed to him great only in the sense in which this term is applied by the world to the Napoleons. But Abner did not confess to David that he had been pursuing a sinful course. Yet he may have, of course, on the feast. Besides, Abner had proved his sincerity. And actions, too, speak. They speak as loud, if not louder, than words.

But there is still the question what David meant by that last tribute which he paid Abner. Doubtless he was referring in the first instance to Abner's natural capacities for leadership which were indeed great as is indicated by his ability to gather all Israel to David. Abner's influence with the people was truly remarkable. Yet if Abner at the close of his career had not placed his gifts in the service of Christ but instead had persisted to oppose David, David's characterization of him would have to be labeled a preposterous lie. For the Scriptures do not call an antagonist of Christ a prince and a great man in the church—Israel was the Church—just because he is wonderfully well endowed with natural abilities. Holy Writ calls such a man an anti-christ and not a prince in Israel. In the Scriptures such and similar titles are born only by men who show by their works that they are friends of Christ and His people. Thus Abner had come to stand out in David's mind—a prince in Israel, a friend of God's people and a man of true nobility of heart. And, therefore, taking him into his confidence, David could and also did covenant with him. To David's mind Abner's change of attitude was the fruit of true repentance. If David in his heart had subscribed Joab's accusations against Abner, thus if Abner had stood out in his mind a worthless fool still bent on eliminating him as king, all his expressions of grief would have been thoroughly hypocritical. What would we have to think of David, were that true? Besides, how in that case would David have dared to covenant with Abner? It is plain that what we must think of David has everything to do with what we allow David to think of Abner after his break with Saul's house. Holding to David's integrity of heart is permissible only if we take the stand that David meant what he said when he paid to Abner that final tribute.

Now, of course, we can allow Abner to stand out in David's mind as a prince in the church but at the same time insist that David erred in his judgment of Abner. Then we say with Joab that Abner at the time of his assassination was still the antagonist of yore, or we say that he broke with the house of Saul solely as

constrained by ambition; or we say that, since God only knows the heart, we can do no better than to pass no judgment on Abner at all and thus leave him to God and that this is what David, too, should have done. But we may and must judge a man by his works. The question is then whether, judging Abner by his last works, David was justified in holding him to be the kind of man that he said he was and evidently wanted him to be—a prince in Israel. We believe that David was justified in holding Abner to be such a man.

There is still this question: Should not David have brought Joab under the sentence of death and without delay have made him pay for his crime with his life. David should have. It was his solemn duty. Had he performed it he would have provided the people with the strongest possible proof that he had no part in Joab's deed; and he could have been more sparing with his tears in public in the presence of Abner's corpse. He could also have afforded to refrain from eulogizing Abner in the hearing of his servants. It would have been better if he had in view of Abner's history. True, Abner had finally broken with Saul's house. And we like to believe as David evidently liked to believe that his motives were right. But it had taken him a long time to bring himself to take that step. That is a thing that David should have taken into consideration. Not that in his public reactions to Abner's assassination he was not sincere. But if he had done his duty by Joab it would not have been necessary for him to go to those extremes in convincing the people that he was guiltless from the blood of Abner. The pretended slayer of Saul he had promptly ordered executed; and likewise the assassins of Ishbobsheth. But about Abner he did nothing except to weep and wail in public as justifying his inaction by saying that, as a weak young king, he was unable to bring a man like Joab to justice and that therefore he had to limit himself to an imprecation and leave the punishment to God. These were his precise words, "I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the son of Zuriiah—Joab and Abishai—be too hard for me; the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness," (3:39). David was a man according to God's heart. But he, too, was not without his many infirmities and evil lust of the flesh. True David was young. He was but thirty years old at the time. It is also true that Joab and Abishai were hard, fierce, and treacherous men. But Joab was a man of great military ability. Without a doubt he had a following among David's servants and the people at large. And he must have been older than David. It did require great courage on the part of the young king to bring a man like Joab to justice. But that should not have deterred David. He was king; and he had the support of the good element in his kingdom. Besides, he had God on his side.

(Erdmann rejects the above interpretation of David's words, "I am this day weak, though anointed king, etc." He presents the following objections. "David could not and durst not so express himself. It would have been very unwise to acknowledge his fear and weakness in respect to Joab and Abishai; nor would it have been true; for he who had conquered Abner, had the power to punish this crime; such a self-exculpation based on confession of weakness does not at all agree with the courage and fearlessness that formed a fundamental trait of David's character." Erdmann's objections would have weight were it not true that David was in duty bound to put Abner to death in punishment of his crime. Since this was David's calling, he already by his failure to bring Joab to trial was acknowledging his fear and weakness in respect to Joab and Abishai. But Erdmann denies that it was David's calling to put Joab to death in punishment of his deed. He even commends David for sparing Joab, saying that he did it because he wished to avoid the appearance for personal avenge. But if this were true how is David's calling down on Joab and his father's house those dreadful imprecations to be explained? According to Erdmann the meaning of David's words is this: I am soft, that is, tender-hearted, I, an anointed king. Hence, I pardoned Abner and took him to my bosom; but these sons of Zuriiah are in disposition harder than I. Hence, they destroyed Abner, instead of forgiving him as did I, the king.)

G. M. Ophoff...

## Our Student-Teacher Club

The last issue of the S. P. R. E. News carried the following notice,

"This is to introduce the Student-Teacher Club. The Rev. G. M. Ophoff, co-Chairman; Mr. H. Hoeksema, co-Chairman; Miss Rosetta Carroll, Secretary.

"The Club meets every Thursday evening in the basement of the First Protestant Reformed Church. The co-chairmen are assisted by other ministers who freely contribute of their time and talent. The student body at present includes one who is already a teacher, three who hope to graduate from Calvin College in 1949, and others who will graduate in succeeding years.

"It is contemplated that the Club will supply teachers who are qualified to teach Protestant Reformed youth, not only for the Grand Rapids school-to-be, but also for Redlands, Hope,

and other communities as the need may arise. In behalf of the Club, we take this opportunity to invite all teachers and teachers-to-be to visit the Club some Thursday evening and thus see for themselves the scope and quality of the work undertaken by them."

"The scope and quality of the work. . . ." The program in process of execution at present is formed of subjects such as the following: 1) Creation or Evolution; 2) The days of Genesis 1, solar days or periods; 3) The Deluge; 4) The Confusion of Tongues; 5) The Egyptian Learning of Moses; 6) The Code of Hammurabi; 7) The fulness of time; 8) Constantine the Great; 9) The Reformation, etc. These are some of the subjects dealt with in this particular course, the purpose of which is to stimulate implicit faith in the Holy Scriptures.

On our last meeting we were occupied with the Deluge in the point of view of its geological significance and implications. We treated the following points: 1) The Genesis Narrative of the Deluge; 2) The Genesis Narrative sanctioned by the Authority of Christ; 3) An examination of the objections of the critics to the Genesis narrative of the Deluge; 4) The Testimony of the legends; 5) The Deluge and the speculations of the geologists; 6) The Deluge and the fossils; 7) The Deluge and the Glacial Epoch; 8) The Deluge and the seasons.

Here follow a few excerpts from one of the two papers that served as a basis for our discussion.

#### 1) The Genesis narrative of the Deluge:

Gen. 6:7: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man which I have created from the face of the earth, from man unto beast, unto the creeping things and the fowl of the air."

Gen. 7:11: "And in the year of the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, on the month the second, on the seventeenth day of the month, on this day were opened all the fountains of the great deep and the lattees of heaven were opened. And the violent rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

Gen. 7:17: "And was the flood forty days upon the earth and increased the waters and lifted up the ark, and it was high above the earth. And were strong the waters and they increased very upon the earth. And the ark walked upon the faces of the waters. And the waters were exceptionally strong upon the earth, *and was covered every high mountain which was under the whole heavens. And fifteen cubits from unto upward were strong the waters and were covered the mountains.* And expired *all flesh*, the creeping thing upon the earth, fowl and cattle and beast and every swarming thing that swarmed upon the earth, and man. *Everything* as to which was the breath of life in his nostrils, from *everything* which was in the dry land, died. And was destroyed *all sub-*

*stance* that was upon the face of the ground from man unto beast unto the creeping thing and unto the fowl of the heavens were destroyed from the earth. And remained *only* Noah and that which was with him in the ark." This is not idiomatic English but so reads the original text literally. More was quoted (from the Gen. Narrative) which is not reproduced here. The italics, of course, are supplied.

If words have meaning, then what is here stated is this: 1) That there was a deluge; 2) that the deluge was universal in the sense of its being destructive of man and animal—every man and every animal from the domesticated animals to the swarming thing upon the earth. All was destroyed with the exception of the creatures that went into the ark; 3) the deluge was universal in the sense that its waters covered the earth under the *whole* heaven.

The critics have raised many objections to the Genesis narrative of the Deluge. They say among other things that the idea of a universal flood destructive of all life is in conflict with the findings of the geologists. We will go into this. The objections of science will be dealt with in the sequel. Let us first emphasize the following. Christ gave the sanction of His authority to the Genesis narrative of the flood. He did so directly by the words of His own mouth and through the agency of the apostle Peter. First the text at Matt. 24:37 and Luke 17:26. The text at Matt. 24:37-39 reads, "But as the days of Noah were—It is Christ speaking here—so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And in the same vein at Luke 17:26, 27, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat and they did drink, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." See further 2 Peter 3:3-5 and 1 Peter 3:19-21.

Christ believed the Genesis narrative of the Flood. Now we can depend on it that all the the so-called difficulties that the critics discover in the Genesis narrative of the Flood were present in the mind of Christ but not however as difficulties. Consider that his human intellect was superior to any of theirs. And His heart was free from the prejudices of sin. His spiritual insight into the things of God was perfect. By common consent of the critics He was one of the greatest teachers that ever taught. And for us He is the Son of God come into the flesh. Now Christ accepted the Genesis narrative of the Flood as the infallible Scriptures. Nay more, He was the one who wrote that narrative in the sense of His being its primary author.

The question then is this: Are we ready to accept Christ's own infallible narrative of the Flood? Or are we going to allow ourselves to be disturbed by the speculations of science in conflict with the testimony of this narrative? It's either the critics or Christ.

Let us add this remark: We are living in a scientific age. Men today worship science. The speculations, conclusions, and hypotheses, also of the geologists, are to-day men's Bible. When science goes to speculating even about things that it knows nothing about men stand at attention in reverential awe and imagine that they listen to the very voice of God and this as willingly ignorant of the fact that what they are allowing themselves to be captivated, fascinated, and infatuated by, is the prating of mere men. These devotees of science include today many Christians. When the speculations of science clash with the Scriptures they are sorely troubled in their souls. Let us not be that way. Let us grow up spiritually, let us believe in Christ. Let us ask God to give us implicit faith in Christ's scriptures. With that faith in our hearts we will brand the speculations of science in conflict with the Scriptures a lie. We must have that faith as teachers in our Protestant Reformed Schools. We must radiate that faith. It must shine out of our eyes. It must animate from all our speech in the class-room. Then we will be instrumentally an influence for good in the lives of our pupils, and otherwise not.

NOTE: This quotation is from the paper submitted by the undersigned.

G. M. Ophoff.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Liefdevol, Schoon Zwaar Getergd

(Psalm 106; Vifde Deel)

Het ging in het laatste gedeelte van ons vorige artikel over die reuzen die tusschen ons en het Kanaan staan.

O ja, tusschen ons en dat schoone land van Kanaan staat de slagorde van Satan.

Ge wandelt zoo maar niet naar den hemel. Er is een gedichtje, dat ik niet geheel en al mij herinner, maar er komt in voor: er moet veel strijds gestreden zijn! En de idee is, dat die strijd gestreden moet worden voor dat wij aankomen daarboven bij God. Er zijn reuzen, Enakskinderen, op ons pad, dat naar den hemel leidt.

Er zijn drie groote reuzen die overwonnen moeten worden met het zwaard in de hand. En ge kent hen:

de duivel, de wereld, en het vleesch dat zondig is. En ge ontmoet die drie reuzen elken dag. En ge moet elken dag weeraan strijden. En overwinnen.

En het zwaard des Geestes waarmede ge die drie Enakskinderen verslaat is het Woord Gods.

In den tekst die we bespreken staat, dat zij Gods Woord niet geloofden. En een uitvloeisel van zulk ongelooft is, dat zij het beloofde land versmaadden.

Dat gaat altijd hand in hand.

Als ge Gods Woord niet gelooft, versmaadt ge ook den hemel der heerlijkheden.

En als ge Zijn Woord gelooft, waardeert ge het Kanaan Gods.

De Heere heeft ons beloofd, dat Hij ons in het beloofde land zal brengen. En die belofte doet Hij gestand van geslachte tot geslachte. Grootvader en vader zijn ons voorgegaan. Zij wachten op ons. Want het Huis Gods in Kanaan moet vol zijn. En ik verzeker U, dat de kinderen hen navolgen. Let maar op Kaleb en Jozua. Ge moet U niet te veel vergapen aan die huilende menigte die neergeworpen wordt in de woestijn. Let op Kaleb en Jozua. Die twee mannen bewijzen dat zij ware zonen zijn. Zij bewijzen het door te strijden met het zwaard des Geestes. Zij herinneren Israel aan des Heeren Woord.

Petrus heeft eens gezegd, dat beide het volk bewaard wordt en dat de erfenis bewaard wordt.

Maar dat gaat altijd door het geloof. Leest het maar in zijn eersten zendbrief.

Ge wordt in de kracht Gods bewaard door het geloof.

Dat is Uw zaligheid. Maar dat is ook Uw strijd. Uw strijd tegen de Enakskinderen. Uw strijd des geloofs.

En hier is de troost dergenen die des Heeren Woord gelooven: Gij zijt meer dan overwinnaars, want Uw vijanden moeten medewerken U ten goede!

Hoe zalig is het volk. . . .

"Maar zij murmureerden in hunne tenten; naar de stem des Heeren hoorden zij niet."

Is het niet om doodmoede van te worden?

Telkens maar weer aan de verschrikkelijke zonde van murmureering tegen God. We lezen in het verband, dat het volk den Heere tienmaal verzocht had. En daarom zou dan ook niemand van twintig jaren en daarboven het beloofde land zien, behalve Kaleb en Jozua die godvreezende mannen waren.

"Dies hief Hij tegen hen Zijne hand op, zwerende dat Hij ze nedervellen zoude in de woestijn, en dat Hij hun zaad zoude nedervellen onder de heidenen, en hen verstrooien zoude door de landen."

Hoe verschrikkelijk is die eed Gods uitgekomen.

Ge kunt dien eed lezen in Num. 14:28. God is recht in al Zijn weg en werk. Dit volk had het er naar gemaakt. De Heere was des vergevens moede geworden. Er was een verkeerde geest in hen. Zij

bewezen duidelijk niet tot het ware volk te behooren.

Vreeselijk uitgekomen, want tot op den huidigen dag zwerft de Jood en zijn zaad van land tot land, en eens ieders hand is tegen hen. Zij zijn verjaagd, verstrooid en verschopt. Denkt aan de verschrikkelijke smarten die over hen kwamen in den laatsten oorlog. En hoewel hunne belagers voor God verantwoordelijk staan, vervult God Zijn Woord en Zijn eeden.

“Ook hebben zij zich gekoppeld aan Baal-Peor, en zij hebben de offeranden der dooden gegeten, en zij hebben den Heere tot toorn verwekt met hunne daden, zoodat de plaag eene inbreuk onder hen deed.”

Die geschiedenis is ons geboekstaafd in Num. 25. Het is een bange geschiedenis.

Israel was gelegerd in de vlakke velden van Moab. En toen hebben zij zich gekoppeld aan de goddeloozen door zich te verlieven op de dochters der godvergetenen.

God haat dat.

God wil, dat Gods volk met Gods volk zal trouwen. Hij wil niet dat we een ander juk aan zullen trekken met de goddeloozen.

De gevolgen blijven dat ook niet uit, als we het toch doen.

Ziet het in het geval van Israel.

Eerst staat er: En Israel verbleef te Sittim, en het volk begon te hoereeren met de dochteren der Moabieten. En dan volgt daar direkt op: En zij noodigen het volk tot de slachtoffers harer goden, en het volk at, en boog zich voor hare goden.

Als men zijn hart kwijt is aan de goddeloozen, dan volgt men hen gelijk een lam dat ter slachting geleid wordt. Ziet het met Israel. Zij hoereerden met hunne dochteren, en op die goddelooze meiden verliefd zijnde, worden zij een gemakkelijke prooi aan verdere verzoeking. Komt toch! Buigt U neder voor onze goden! En eet met ons het vleesch dat hun geofferd is.

En Israel deed het. Dat wil zeggen, het goddelooze gedeelte. Er zijn er geweest die zich onthouden hebben.

Maar des Heeren toorn ontstak: Neem de oversten en hang hunne lichamen den Heere tegen de zon; zoo zal de hittigheid van des Heeren toorn gekeerd worden tegen Israel. (Numeri 25:4)

En toen is er iets geschied dat heel goddeloos was.

Terwijl het volk stond te weenen bij te dent der samenkomst, was er een van de prinsen van het volk die met een dochter van een prinselijk geslacht der Midianieten naar de vergadering der Israëlieten kwam, en voor hunne oogen nam hij deze vrouw in den hoerenwink.

En toen lezen we in onzen psalm: “Toen stond Pinehas op en hij oefende gericht, en de plaag werd

opgehouden; en het is hem gerekend tot gerechtigheid van geslacht tot geslacht, tot in eeuwigheid.”

Ziet ge, Pinehas had het gezien. Hij had dien prins van het volk Gods met die goddelooze prinses der Midianieten zien binnenkomen in de vergadering van het volk van God. En hij had ook gezien, dat zij in den hoerenwink gegaan waren. En toen is hij zeer toornig geworden. Van dien toorn staat er geschreven: “dewijl hij Mijnen ijver geijverd heeft in het midden van hen”. Zoo, hij heeft met een goddelijken ijver geijverd toen hij die verschrikkelijke zonde zag voor zijne oogen.

Hij nam een spies en ging den hoerenwink binnen, waar die twee lagen. En met éenen steek heeft hij hen beiden doorstoken door hunne buik.

En de plaag hield op.

En die daad is hem gerekend tot gerechtigheid van geslacht tot geslacht, tot in eeuwigheid.

Wat mag dit beteekenen?

Wordt de mensch gerechtvaardigd door de werken?

Neen, dat kan niet. Dat leert Gods Woord ons geduriglijk en overal.

Wat dan?

Hier hebt ge weer een voorbeeld, even zooals Jakobus een voorbeeld gebruikt, om aan te toonen, dat men alléén gerechtvaardigd wordt door een levend geloof. Men moet zijn geloof toonen door zijn werken.

En dat doet Pinehas hier duidelijk.

Hij zag een grove zonde, een zonde die zij met elkaar aan het beweenen waren. God had gezegd, dat Hij vertoornd was over de koppeling met de Moabieten. En ziet, hier komt een van de vooraanstaande mannen van Israel en hij voert aan zijne arm een dochter van een der vooraanstaande mannen der Midianieten, en hij gaat een vuile daad doen! Daardoor ontstak den rechtmatigen toorn van Pinehas.

Hij bewijst door zijn grimmigen toorn, dat Hij den Heere vuriglijk mint. En de Heere mag gaarne Zijn Eigen werk in Zijn volk zien, en beloonen.

Dat doet Hij ook hier.

We lezen het vreemde, maar ook liefelijke gezegde van God: “Zie, Ik geef hem Mijn verbond des vredes!”

Ten overstaan van Pinehas beteekent het, dat hij van geslacht tot geslacht priester Gods mag zijn.

Wonderlijke wet in Gods Huis: de Heere geeft genade-loon op genade-werken.

Alleen zóó ontvangt Hij straks al de eer, aanbidding, dankzegging tot in alle eeuwigheid.

En nu komt die geschiedenis van Mozes die de Rots sloeg inplaats van er tegen te spreken.

“Zij maakten Hem ook zeer toornig aan het twistwater, en het ging Mozes kwalijk om hunnentwil; want zij verbitterden zijnen geest, zoodat hij wat onbedachtelijk voortbracht met zijne lippen.”

Mozes was een zeer zachtmoedig man, maar in dit geval was hij bitter en toornig geworden. Hij was ook zoo lang geplaagd!

Maar hij zondigde desniettemin.

Hij had tegen de Rots moeten spreken. En de Rots zou haar water gegeven hebben voor den dorst van Israel.

Maar Mozes was kwaad geworden. En hij schreeuwde tegen het volk: "Hoort toch, gij wederspanningen, zullen wij water voor ulieden uit deze steenrots hervoorbregen?"

En toen nam Mozes zijn staf en hij sloeg tweemaal tegen de rots. Het was natuurlijk zijn bedoeling, dat er zeker geen water zou komen uit de rots voor deze keer.

Doch nu toont God Zijn groote goedertierenheid, want we lezen dit: "en daar kwam veel water uit, zoo dat de vergadering dronk, en hunne beesten."

Hoe zit dat toch?

Het antwoord is gemakkelijk, als ge voor de aandacht houdt, dat Israel Gods volk is. God had dat volk lief, dat wil zeggen, de uitverkorenen onder hen, van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid. En daarom zegt God tegen Mozes: "Omdat gijlieden Mij niet geloofd hebt, dat gij Mij heiligtet voor de oogen der kinderen Israels, daarom zult gijlieden deze gemeente niet inbrengen in het land, hetwelk Ik hun gegeven heb."

Mozes had God moeten heiligen voor de oogen van het volk van Israel.

En God heiligen wil zekerlijk zeggen, dat men Zijn deugden vertelt. En Mozes had gehandeld in dit geval naar menselijke bitterheid. Zijn geest was verbitterd tegen Israel, vanwege hun murmureering. Maar Mozes had moeten gedenken, dat hij middeelaar was in des Heeren naam ten overstaan van het volk Israels, en als zoodanig had hij moeten spreken, lieflijk spreken tegen de Rots, opdat het water mocht komen tot verfrissching en laving.

Stelt het U toch eens voor dat die Rots haar water in zou houden?

Hebt ge er op gelet, dat ik het woord Rots met een hoofdletter schreef? Luistert naar Paulus, want die zegt in I Cor. 10, van deze Rots: en de Rots was Christus.

Als die Rots nu eens haar water inhield?

Dan is er geen verlossing en laving voor het volk Gods.

En dan wordt God niet geheiligt in Zijn wondere deugden van liefde en genade.

Neen, Mozes zondigde daar. Met Aaron. En daarom mochten zij niet inkomen in het beloofde land.

De vervulling is gekomen.

Onze Rots is ook geslagen. Maar geslagen door God.

En die Rotssteen gaf Zijn water.

En het Israel der eeuwen heeft gedronken, drinkt nog, en zal drinken uit Hem tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Een profeet heeft eens geschreven, dat er te Jeruzalem een Fontein geopend is tegen de zonde en de ongerechtigheid.

En die Fontein is Jezus.

Dat wij dan drinken, drinken tot eeuwige verfrissching!

G. Vos.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Training For Life's Calling

*Training In The Geography Class (cont.)*

Last time we gave you the principles drawn by the Rev. Gritters whereby this subject ought to be taught in the Christian School. The definition that Rev. Gritters gave of Geography is, "Geography is a study of the earth, its disposition and its fulness as it belongs to God the Lord (Psalm 24:1) but as it has been given to the children of men. (Psalm 115:16). That is the language of faith pointing out to texts in God's Word where He reveals to us the significance of the study of geography. Contrast it a moment with what is written in the world in regard to this subject. We have at hand a geography book which as far as being comprehensive and having the right intellectual approach for youth is concerned leaves little that need be added. But it lacks EVERYTHING that a Christian school child needs: The book is written for seventh and eighth grade children and is entitled, "The World at Work". The author is Wallace W. Atwood, and it is published by Ginn and Company. Purely from an intellectual aspect that title is even a well chosen one. It is indeed an interesting approach to the subject of geography. We can even conceive of a book written by one of our people using that same title, but surely it would have a different application. When the world works—and now there is no ethical content to that word world here—there are two factions, the two mentioned in Genesis 3:15 who work the same soil, the same mines, the same machines, etc.; yet the one dies so as God's steward and to His glory and the other to his own lust and setting himself up as lord over God's creation. That antithesis is, of course, entirely lacking in the text books of the world. The Rev. Gritters writes this in regard to geography, (see last issue of the Standard Bearer for the complete copy of these principles), "(1) The central viewpoint therefore is *man* as he under God is the respon-



sible Head and King of creation. This is evident already in Paradise." In that sense we can speak of the world at work, but the antithesis will have to be drawn! And the proper goal of all that work shall have to be pointed out! And the fact that GOD WORKS TOO will have to be stressed!

But to return to what we began to say, in the light of the above treatment of this subject in that book mentioned, we are not surprised to find quite a different definition of geography in this book. We find the following statements, "Geography today is a study of the basic factors essential to the understanding of a civilization. . . . Geography has a unique contribution to make in the education by giving to young people of a nation a world point of view." What a different approach from that presented by the Rev. Gritters! It is not a difference of emphasis. It is the difference of faith in God as the sovereign Lord of all and of refusal to recognize Him when dealing with what He made for His own glory. Not only is the emphasis upon man but *only* man is recognized! It deals with the young people of any nation and is written for their benefit rather than to be written for the Covenant Youth of God's Kingdom and rather than to serve them in the explanation of their calling as Stewards of God's vast creation.

As is characteristic of what is written apart from faith, there is nothing definite that can be said in this work on geography. On page 205, for example, we read concerning the work of miners. The vagueness of unbelief is indicated in these words, "Long ago, so far back in history that no man knows exactly when or how, somebody picked up a piece of what we now call metal; very possibly it was a piece of copper. Soon men learned that metal, when made into tools and spear-points, was much more useful than stone. Old records have been found which indicate that the people of Egypt were using copper four thousand years before Christ."

"Later the people who lived about the shores of the Mediterranean Sea learned with the help of heat, to combine native copper with tin, thus making the much harder metal which we call bronze." For one thing, that which this author presents as a real fact is in error and any child in his first catechism classes already will tell you the time when man first began to melt or pound metals and used them for tools. Four thousand years before Christ there was no Egypt yet. Four thousand years before Christ the world was created. In an apparently harmless statement such as that above the seeds are sown for the theory of evolution although it is not mentioned in so many words. Egypt does not appear until after the flood and after the confusion of tongues which more accurately took place less than two thousand years before Christ. In the statement above the truth of Scripture

is denied and the chronology there presented is brushed aside. So is the truth of God's Word discounted if not even considered in contempt when Scripture declares that Tubal Cain, the son of wicked Lamech, the descendent of Cain, was the father of those who work in brass and iron. How definite the child of God can be when he believes God's Word! How definite then too must be the teaching that is given him in a Christian school! How definite it CAN be too!

As to the giving of instruction in this subject, the Rev. Gritters mentions three things to be remembered. Briefly they are: (1) The sovereignty of God, (2) Man's stewardship, and (3) The temporary nature of this present earth. With this we can fully agree. However, if the Rev. Gritters does not mind, we would rather place the emphasis somewhat differently. Instead of speaking of these three things as things to remember, we would call the three things to point out, three things to stress in the geography class. The teacher must remember these things in preparing and delivering her lesson, but she must do so in order that the children may see these things.

The sovereignty of God is a truth of which the *believer* never grows weary. Whether it is in the history class, the geography class, the physiology or civics class or whether it is from the pulpit on the Sabbath, this is a truth that thrills the elect believer. And why should it not? It is such a fundamental principle that it presents us God in all His glory in the very first of the commandments God gave us. We are *first* told that we may have no other gods before HIM. There is no god besides Him, and this ONE and ONLY God forbids any creature to behave to any thing or person so as to ascribe divinity unto it. He is God alone and therefore sovereign, so sovereign that He may forbid all other worship. The earth with its fulness is His alone. He made it and all it contains. Let the child clearly see that he cannot pick up a grain of sand that God did not make and does not sovereignly own. Let him learn that early in life. And let him see it more clearly each time a new phase of geography is taught. The coal, gold, silver, iron, copper and other metals are His. But so are the trees, the rivers, the crops that grow on the field in the soil He made and sustains. The fish which we eat and which produce a livelihood for many are His. But likewise is He sovereign in His distribution of these things. Fish are found in only some waters. Coal is found in its greatest deposits in the lands bordering the eastern and western sides of the northern Atlantic Ocean. God sovereignly put it there for His own sovereign purpose. Though we ought to see the infinite wisdom of God, we ought above all to see the infinite sovereignty of God whereby there had to be the city of Pittsburgh, just exactly where it stands. The oil fields are just where they should be. Wars

must come according to God's counsel, and they must be fought in definite sections of the world. And where He sovereignly placed the rich deposits of coal, oil, and even gold and silver determine these things. Consider once how the Ruhr valley in Germany plays such an important part even today in peace talks. Then, too, if you look at a cross section of a coal mine or even gold and silver mine, or when you look at an open coal mine or copper mine, you see how the minerals are in veins which do not run parallel with the ground above as a rule, but on a rather sharp angle. The believer who only can recognize God's sovereignty also sees His wisdom and goodness in this, and he does not go back billions of years and speak of natural phenomenon to explain all this. He knows that he need but go back to the flood to be reminded that God then opened the fountains of the deep and made a new world. He sees how God sovereignly and mightily *brought* these hidden minerals to the surface for man to discover and employ for the realization of His counsel. After all God *wanted* them to be discovered. He wanted Tubal Cain to start man on this interesting career, but He wanted it for the realization of His own sovereign counsel. Man does not just *happen* to discover things. WITHOUT exception, God has been working in the past both remote and immediate to *bring* man to these minerals at the right time for the realization of what He eternally decreed must take place. There must be nails for the cross of Christ. There must be a spear to pierce His side. Tubal Cain must thousands of years in advance prepare the way for the manufacturing of these things. But God sovereignly brought him into contact with the iron and brass or copper which he mastered. Sovereignly He brought Tubal Cain into contact with these and not Seth or Methuselah.

In this connection also the sovereignty of God must be maintained in regard to the way in which the human race was and is today distributed over the face of the earth. Unbelief does not recognize that fact, of course, yet God's Word speaks of it. God confused man's speech that it might be realized. God prophesied that Esau and his descendants would be *away* (not as in the English translation) from the fatness of the earth. God sovereignly decides where man shall settle and what He wants man to do in that locality with the riches or lack of riches of the earth that is found there.

So only can we go one step further and can we teach in geography the stewardship of man over all this rich creation of God. More of this we hope to do in the next installment. But this we wish to say now in conclusion, that this sovereignty of God is fundamental; and believing it we are prepared to teach also man's great calling in this life in regard to the things which God sovereignly made.

J. A. Heys.

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## PERISCOPE

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*Van Kust Tot Kust*, by Rudolph Van Reest. . . .

About a week ago we received this very interesting and well-written book by the talented Dutch author who is better known to us as Mr. K. C. Van Spronsen. Nothing we could say could be more effective to create interest in the book than to quote snatches from it, so we will let the book speak for itself. It is a detailed account of the author's recent trip to this country. The promise he made before he left our country, that he would do all in his power to gain recognition for our Churches in the Netherlands, has been very faithfully fulfilled in this volume. His praise for our Churches and their ministry is extensive. We hope that many of our people may procure the volume and enjoy it as we did, not only for the personal compliments he pays our Churches but also for the keen characterizations and descriptions he gives of life in the United States. Here follow a few excerpts. Dedication. . . .

"To the Rev. H. Hoeksema, pastor of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., I dedicate this book, in remembrance of the blessed and joyful acquaintance during the beautiful Autumn of the year 1946."

This Is America. . . .

"Het groepje, dat de gereformeerde beginselen bejijdt in Amerika is zo verdwijnend klein, en de dynamiek van het amerikanisme, ook wat het geestelijke leven betreft, is zo beangstigend sterk. . . .

"Die dynamiek. . . .

"Daar krijgt ge elk uur van de dag, dat ge in Amerika zijt, mee te maken. Alles beweegt er, alles is er in ontwikkeling, in 'Sturm und Drang', niemand heeft tijd, alles heeft haast."

A Typical Description. . . . There Are Many More of Our Ministers. . . .

"De eerste indruk, die men van Ds. and mevrouw Hoeksema ontvangt is al direkt innemend. Hij is een charmant gastheer en mevrouw verstaat de kunst, die trouwens vele Amerikaanse dames bezitten, een gast zich terstond thuis te laten voelen.

"Ds. Hoeksema heeft een korte, gedrongen gestalte, met een scherpe, vierkante intellectuele kop. Een ruige verschijning maar met een warm, kinderlijk teder hart. Het is een groot genoegen deze man nader te leren kennen. Zijn kleine, grijze ogen kunnen je staalhard aanblikken, wanneer hij het heeft over de zonden binnen en buiten de kerk, maar ze kunnen een oogenblik later glanzen van tederheid, wanneer hij spreekt over zijn kleine catechisanten, waarvan hij

miniatuurportretjes heeft. Van sommigen heeft hij lokjes haar op karton gespeld en daarom heen heeft hij bloemen geschilderd en in sierletters de namen der kleinen geteekend. Verscheidene van die kartons liet hij ons zien.

"Dat is Ds. Hoeksema."

"Dan zijn er nog de Protestants gereformeerde Kerken, die in 1924 door de Chr. Ref. Church uitgeworpen zijn.

"Over deze kerken, waarmede wij van dichtbij hebben kennis gemaakt, hopen we verderop iets meer te vertellen. Wij zijn er van overtuigd, dat deze groep van kerken de Vrijgemaakte Kerken in Nederland het dichtst nabij komen, vooral door de handhaving van het oude gereformeerde kerkrecht, dat in deze kerken-groep even principieel als door de Vrijgemaakte Kerken in Nederland werd gehandhaafd."

"Bij Ds. Doezeema hoorden we voor het eerst een Prot. Ref. preek en het was wel zeer opmerkelijk dat we hier een geheel ander geluid hoorden dan we gewoon waren te beluisteren in de kerken van de Chr. Ref. Church. Hier was een diepgaande Schriftexegese en een rijke Christus-prediking, veel minder besmet door de Amerikaanse oppervlakkigheid dan we elders gehoord hadden. . . . en de geest in deze kerken zo is, dat we ons er geheel in thuis gevoelen."

We could quote a great deal more that is of interest and instruction but our space is filled. Perhaps, another time we will continue. In the meantime get the book and read it. Contact the Rev. B. Kok for further information.

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#### *Synodical Decisions. . . .*

The General Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Art. 31) was held recently in Amersfort. Of special interest to us are the decisions taken in response to our own Synodical suggestion of possible closer contact and relations. From an early report in *De Reformatie* we translate the following:

"From the Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches of North America a letter was received in which the Synod declares to be desirous to seek closer contact with the Reformed Churches (Art. 31). They further declare, that the Churches represented at their gathering stand on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, that they maintain the pure Reformed Church Order, and are adverse to all hierarchy. Should our Synod decide to take steps in the direction of closer contact, they then request that, by means of our Deputies, we correspond or confer with their Deputies in order to serve the respective Synods (theirs and ours) with advice in the matter of such contact.

"From the Particular Synod of Utrecht there were proposals and testimonies of consent, in which Synod was also given advice to consider to take decisions,

which should be conducive to the realization of correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches of North America.

"In considering this matter the attitude and position taken towards the liberation of our Churches by the Prot. Ref. Churches was discussed; also what Rev. Hoeksema has published in America in regard to his theological insight of the Covenant and Promises of the Covenant. Attention was also given to the conflict, which the Prot. Ref. Churches have waged and do wage since 1924, against Modernism and Hierarchy. In this connection attention was also given to the difficulties confronting our emigrants in their entrance into the church-life in America.

"In view of all the factors that must be considered in this matter, Synod finally decides to, as yet, not make any decisions, but requests Committee I to study both the report and the conclusions once more, and to consider a possible revision in connection with what was brought forward in the discussion.

"In one of the future sessions Synod hopes to return to this matter."

From the above it is evident that the first report of Committee I of Pre-advice, which handled the material, was not too favorably received by Synod. In the long discussion that followed this first report, we have heard that especially Dr. Schilder and Mr. Van Spronsen argued nobly in favor of our Churches. It is also evident, both from the above and from what follows, that there was some strong opposition to the suggestion of closer contact. The final decisions, taken in one of the later sessions of Synod and reported in the last Reformatie which was received, are as follows, again we translate:

"Next in order is the revised report of Committee I in respect to the seeking of contact with the Prot. Ref. Churches in North America. The reporter, brother A. Zijlstra, reads the report. In the discussion it appears that some of the objections are not completely removed in the revised report and suggested conclusions. Also in the following discussion these objections were not removed to the satisfaction of all. After an amendment to the third point was made and adopted by the Committee the revision was before the meeting and the following decisions were adopted:

"1. In answer to and in agreement with that which was proposed in the communication of the Prot. Ref. Churches, to empower the deputies for correspondence with other Churches, to seek contact with these Churches; to the end that the way may be prepared to the establishment of the relationship of corresponding churches.

"2. That these deputies shall serve the following General Synod with advice in this matter.

"3. That in the meantime, while we wait a definite ruling, the question whether the ministers of the

Prot. Ref. Churches shall be permitted to speak a word of edification in the Geref. Kerken in Nederland, shall be left to the discretion and freedom of the local churches."

It is evident that this last point is somewhat of a compromise. Since we expect that these decisions will, undoubtedly, be reviewed by the editor we will make no further comment except to express our own personal appreciation and pleasure for these beginnings.

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A "Common Grace" Mystery???? . . . .

In one issue of *The Banner*, that of December 11, 1948, we found the following two items. Though when considered together they form a glaring contradiction, they must undoubtedly be "explained" and "harmonized" as a "mystery of common grace". Hence, even though our little minds may not be able to rationalize and comprehend such a paradox we must blindly accept that it is possible, that is "faith", it is said.

The first is a partial quotation from an editorial entitled, "Love Not The World". Here it is stated: "But if it is a sin against God to attach too much value to legitimate things, to set our hearts on possessions, human persons, and innocent pleasures, how much more sinful it is to love the impure things of this evil world: its profane literature, its lustful pleasures, its godless institutions, its evil customs, its human idols. Why should Christians, who are not of the world but of the Father, love or admire the movie stars, the prize-fighters, the Sabbath-desecrating baseball players, the writers of lewd literature, the noted preachers and scholars who scorn the Word of God and the simple faith of the true believer? They are the enemies of God; why should we count them as friends or worship them as heroes? Love not the world! If we are lover of the world, we are haters of the Christ."

Turning a few pages we came upon the quarter-page ad announcing in bold type: Calvin College Thespian Players Present. . . . "I REMEMBER MAMA". One of the largest public high school auditoriums in Grand Rapids and three successive nights of the Christmas season (O, the irony of it!) were reserved to accomodate the anticipated crowds!

So. . . . the smash-hit from New York's stage and the Hollywood production lot could be "enjoyed" by the "Christian" while it was still running in movie-houses throughout the country!

A "common grace mystery"???? A downright-contradiction! Which no-one could ever harmonize with the Word of God and the Christ-Child lying in a manger!

W. Hofman.

## NOTE OF THANKS

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the many from all of our churches who remembered us with kind expressions and greetings during the past holiday season. We would very much like to write you each individually but that is impossible. It is indeed encouraging and heartening to know and hear of your interest in us and our work. Once again our hearty thanks and the same to you all.

The Rev. W. Hofman and family  
The Rev. E. Knott and family.

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday, December 30, our dear parents

JOHN SIETSTRA  
and  
TENA SIETSTRA (Hoekstra)

celebrated their Thirtieth Wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Covenant God Who through them has showered upon us Christian love and devotion, and given us a home where we may know the fear of God.

Our prayer is that the Lord may richly bless them with His grace in the way that lies ahead, and that in all their experiences they may enjoy that blessed peace which is found in the blood of Christ.

Their grateful children:

Tillie  
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Sietstra  
Reka  
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Sietstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Sietstra  
1 Grand-son.

Boyden, Iowa

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## IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., expresses its sympathy to our fellow member, Mr. Ray De Windt and family, in the loss of his father and brother,

OSCAR DE WINDT  
BENJAMIN DE WINDT

May the Lord comfort and sustain the bereaved in their sorrow.

O. Vander Woude, Sec'y.  
A. Van Tuinen, Pres.

# Report of Classis East

## Convened, Jan. 5, at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Classis East met in the auditorium of the Second Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., January 5, 1949.

The Chairman of the previous meeting Rev. S. Vanden Berg, called the meeting to order and conducted the opening exercises. After the singing of Psalter No. 239 he reads I Cor. 4 and leads in prayer.

The credentials are read and accepted. They showed that all the churches were represented by two delegates. We were happy to see Rev. G. Lubbers in our midst again able to take an active part in the work of the Classis.

According to rotation the Rev. H. Veldman was asked to preside. He begins his work by addressing a few words of welcome to the delegates of Classis East. Those who are present for the first time are asked to sign the Formula of Subscription.

The minutes of the previous meeting of Classis are read and adopted.

Oak Lawn and Second Church request Classical Appointments. The following committee is appointed to draw up a schedule: The Rev. M. Schipper, Rev J. Heys and Elder D. Alsum. Later in the day they present the following schedule which is adopted by Classis:

### OAK LAWN

Date	Minister
January 9 .....	M. Schipper
January 23 .....	J. De Jong
January 30 .....	B. Kok
February 6 .....	G. Vanden Berg
February 13 .....	J. A. Heys
February 20 .....	M. Schipper
February 27 .....	C. Hanko
March 6 .....	R. Veldman
March 13 .....	H. De Wolf
March 20 .....	G. Vos
April 3 .....	G. Lubbers

### SECOND CHURCH

Date	Minister
January 9 .....	J. Heys
January 16 .....	H. De Wolf
January 23 .....	G. Lubbers
February 6 .....	H. Veldman
February 13 .....	G. Vos
February 20 .....	J. De Jong
February 27 .....	B. Kok
March 6 .....	G. Vanden Berg
March 20 .....	M. Schipper
March 27 .....	C. Hanko
April 3 .....	R. Veldman

Hudsonville protests against a decision of the last Classis. Classis now rescinds its former decision on the grounds given by Hudsonville's Consistory.

The Consistory of the First Church of Grand Rapids notifies Classis they have complied with the decision of the last Classis, and that an answer has been prepared which will be presented at the next meeting of Classis.

The Classical Committee reported that they had made provision for Classical Appointments for Oak Lawn and Second Church in the interim.

Classis Decided to recommend to Synod that the following churches receive the subsidy they are asking for: Oak Lawn \$1500.00 with a minister and \$1000.00 without a minister; Randolph \$1500.00; and Grand Haven \$2000.00.

Upon motion it was decided that the Chairman should thank the ladies from Second Church for their catering services.

Classis voted for Synodical delegates with the following result:

### MINISTERS

Primi	Secundi
C. Hanko	J. De Jong
J. Heys	H. De Wolf
H. Hoeksema	B. Kok
G. Vos	R. Veldman

### ELDERS:

Primi	Secundi
H. De Jong	E. Bylsma
G. Koster	D. Dykstra
D. Langeland	D. Kooienga
N. Yonker	H. Zwak

Classis decided to arrange Primi and Secundi delegates in alphabetical order and to grant the delegates the right to call on any secundi, provided their's cannot attend Synod.

The next meeting of Classis will be held D. V., the first Wednesday in April at Hope Church.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order are answered satisfactorily.

The minutes are read and approved. A motion to adjourn carries. We sing the Holland Psalm 25:2 and then Rev. B. Kok leads us in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.