

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Imitate God!

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

Ephesians 5:1, 2.

The Holy Apostle Paul admonished the Christians at Ephesus that they should henceforth not walk even as the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind.

The Gentiles have a vain mind. There is nothing to it. It is like air. There is no substance in it. They get nowhere with it.

Moreover, their vain minds are not merely neutral. They are very evil indeed.

And the Christians at Ephesus should not copy them.

They should copy God.

Copying the Gentiles that surround them they would become lascivious and unclean.

And gather unto themselves the wrath of God which is against all those that do such things.

But they had no so learned Christ.

They had *heard* Jesus, and were taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

And this Jesus, speaking unto them constantly, teaching them His own truth, had told them to put off the old man and to put on the new man.

Doing that they would be pleasing to God.

For then their walk would be in holiness, in righteousness and in the knowledge of God.

Negatively, they would crucify the old man of sin and divers lusts, and, positively, they would be "kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake had forgiven them".

And then comes the text: Be ye therefore *imitators* of God!"

It is the most blessed thing you can possibly do on earth or in heaven!

\* \* \* \*

Be ye *imitators* of God!

No, you do not find the word which I have placed in italics in the text. The text says: Be ye therefore *followers* of God!

If you would ask me: why did you substitute that word for the word *followers* in the text, my answer would be: because that is the word which the Holy Spirit used in the original language. I will copy the word exactly as it is in the text: *mimētai*. And I will add that our word *imitate* is directly derived from this word.

And so you see that the word *follower* is really a commentary of the text, and the word which I used for the title of this little meditation is the exact meaning of the idea proposed in the text. God calls us to be *imitators* of Him!

Wonderful idea!

Study God in His revelation to you. Listen to the way He speaks. Observe His steps as He walks through the ages of history recorded for you in the Bible. I would almost say: Taste Him!

And then imitate Him. Do as He does. Love as He loves. Hate as He hates. Speak His Word. Sing His Word. Think His Word. Weep His Word. And act His Word.

Imitate God all the day long.

Be ye therefore followers of God!

Behold your calling!

And ye shall be blessed for time and for eternity.

Imitate God!

\* \* \* \*

Imitate God, and walk in love!

That is an explanation of the first commandment. To imitate God and to walk in love is the self-same thing.

What does that mean? How am I to understand

what it means to walk in love? What is love and what is my walk?

Your walk is not merely your manifestation in face, voice and deeds.

It is much, much more. Your face may be as an angel's face, but your walk may be like the devil himself.

Your voice may be ever so sweet, so that people are charmed by your conversation, but it is very well possible that your walk is dark as darkness itself.

Oh, but your walk is ever so much more than the way you show yourself before the face of man.

I think that I may say that your walk is *you!*

And you are as your heart is.

From the heart are the issues of life.

If your heart is godly and good, your walk is bound to be good.

If your heart is evil and dark, your walk is abominable, even though your face may be wreathed in smiles and your voice ever so wonderful in its tone and quality.

Now then, your walk should be in love.

And what is love?

Love is God Himself. John has told us. God is love. And that means that in all His essence and life He is bound to Himself in the bond of perfectness. That is also Scripture. Love is the bond of perfectness. It is the tie that binds the perfect ones together in wonderful unity and peace. In the atmosphere of perfection the perfect ones seek one another, find one another and are bound to one another. They find their complete delight in one another. And they will sing of it forever.

For love is God, and God is love!

God walks in beauty. In the beauty of His own love.

And you and I?

God tells us in my text to study Him and to watch Him how He walks in the beauty of His love, and then to imitate Him.

Imitate God!

By walking in love.

\* \* \* \*

Imitate God, as dear children!

That last phrase strengthens the idea of the admonition.

It is entirely comely that you should walk like your Father in heaven walks, for you are His dear children!

And certainly the child should be like unto the father!

Do you notice with me that you can do nothing with this text with regard to the child of the devil, be he in the church or without the church?

This text is for the child of God exclusively. It would have no sense at all to say to the unregenerate: Walk in love! Imitate God! *For you are His dear child!* If we did that we would be liars unto God!

Oh no, but this admonition is for them who are the dear children of God.

Who are they?

Well, in Paradise we were the dear children of God in Adam and Eve. These two were dear children of God. And unto them God said: Study Me in My ways and revelation! And then copy Me in your walk. From the heart out, walk in love. Draw near to Me in all your heart and thought and word and deed. And you will be happy.

Adam and Eve were happy, dear children of God. For a while. For a very short while.

For they fell.

They studied the devil, and imitated him.

They followed the devil, and he led them into untold misery. They did as the devil did, and they corrupted their way upon the face of the earth. And so it was that the whole earth was filled with violence.

By nature, we all are walking in the hatred of God and of our neighbour.

And are very unhappy.

But God remembered His covenant of Love.

And from the very beginning He called His own from darkness to light.

He did that by spreading abroad the love of God in their heart. He gave them His own image again, but now the image such as it was exalted to the highest heavens. The love of God in God's elect children is far sweeter than the love of God as Adam tasted it in his innocent heart. Later I will come back to that far sweeter love.

But now the child of God receives that far sweeter love in the hour of his regeneration, brought to consciousness in his conversion.

And so some of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve become again *dear children of God!*

And to them He says in the words of my text: Imitate Me! Follow Me! Walk in love! For you are My dear children! The child should behave as the Father behaves!

Imitate Me by your walk of love! For you are My dear child!

\* \* \* \*

Imitate Me!

But Lord, how am I to know how I must conduct myself in this walk of love?

And the Lord has given you an answer. It is in the text: "as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God!"

This brings me to a mighty and most wonderful thought. This reminds me of the sole purpose of the

whole universe. It is this: God wants to show to untold millions how loveable He is. That is the reason why He created, and recreated. He wanted to show us His walk in love.

A little while ago I promised you that I would come back to the idea of a *sweeter love*? Well, here it is.

Oh yes, if you would have asked Adam: Come, tell me, is God a God of love? he would have grown voluble in telling you of the love of God. He would have pointed you to all created things, himself included, and say and sing of the love of God as it was shown to him in the morning and in the night, in the lion and in the sheep, in the whale and in the eagle. He would point you to the blue canopy of heaven and tell you that it all spoke of His wonderful love and loving-kindness. And his song would end with a beautiful stanza about his own life in Paradise: this God loves me, o stranger! He loves me and He takes care of me from morning till night. And when I and my wife sleep in the garden, His care is over me and within me. I laugh and I leap for joy in this God of my love.

But if you were a child of God through Jesus Christ the Lord, you would have been able to tell Adam of a love that is infinitely sweeter than the love of God such as Adam knew. You would have told him of God who is now known as Jehovah, who came down to you in your hell and in your damnation, and Who in His Son Jesus Christ took all your hell and your damnation upon Himself in order to annihilate them, and that so completely as though they had never been.

Oh, you would have told him of the love of God's walk in Gethsemane and on the accursed tree. And all for you!

You would have told Adam of a love that would come down and become a curse for you. So that you might become the blessed of the Lord.

And Adam would greatly wonder at such love.

And he would say: I know not! I cannot follow you! Your sermon is too deep for me!

The love of God's walk is infinitely sweeter now than it was in that first morning in Paradise where Adam slept.

Adam knew of no forgiveness in the blood of Jesus.

He did know of a walk of love, but not of the walk of the bloody sacrifice and the burnt-offering unto God.

God's child in Jesus! You are infinitely richer than that first innocent child Adam in Paradise!

But there is your burden!

You must imitate that God who came to you in Jesus to prove and to manifest His wondrous love!

Imitate God!

\* \* \* \*

Oh yes, imitate God!

And to do it: look strongly on Jesus of Galilee!

Its opportunity?

Look around you in the church, and with the church, into the world round about you, and weep!

There is the fruit of the evil all around you. People walk as the Gentiles walk in the darkness of their foolish mind. And in the church there is also a remnant of that dark and evil walk.

Your brother will on occasion bind you and send you to Egypt. You will cry in the pit.

The power of evil, be it in the world or in the church of Jesus Christ, will lay you low in tears and bitterness. They will give you bread and water of affliction.

For God's sake, for Jesus' sake and for His righteousness' sake you will be hated and persecuted.

Listen to *your* cry: We are killed all the day long! It is your cry is it not?

Oh yes, there is ample opportunity to live this text.

Do it then.

Walk in love in the midst of the devils and the children of the devil.

When they curse you, bless thou.

When they hate you, pray thou.

When they kill you, forgive them.

Imitate God!

Walk in His love!

Prove to the whole universe that you are "dear children of God"!

Ah, but it is wonderful to be imitators of God!

\* \* \* \*

But why?

That you may be unto God a sweet-smelling savour!

That is the only purpose.

When Christ hung on the accursed tree, God smelled of that sacrifice and He said in the heavens above you: Oh, but this love of Mine, there on that cross, smells sweet! It shall be to My glory and praises forever!

And so it is.

In the midst of the throne shall be the little lamb, standing as if slain. It is the reason for all the singing of heaven.

If you return evil for evil in evil hatred, God smells of you, and turns from you in Divine disgust.

If you love those that despitefully treat you, and if you live the life of the Lamb of God, God will rejoice in you.

I think of a certain strain of singing: Let God in His people forever delight!

Do it, beloved! Imitate God!

Through His wondrous grace in Jesus Christ our Lord!

G. Vos.

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EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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## EDITORIALS

### Proposition Concerning The Covenant Of Grace

In the Dutch paper *Eenigheid des Geloofs (Unity of Faith)*, edited for the benefit of the entire Reformed persuasion (gezindte), there occurred recently several articles constituting a colloquium, or correspondence, between a minister of the synodical church and one of the liberated. The former is the Rev. E. G. van Teylingen; the latter Dr. F. L. Bos.

The subject of their discussion was, as might be expected, the doctrinal differences between the two churches, especially *in re* the covenant of grace in connection, of course, with the decisions of the synods of the Reformed Churches of 1942-'46.

At the close of their discussion the two brethren offered several propositions concerning the covenant of grace on which they declared to be in mutual agreement.

It is no doubt instructive also for us to study these various propositions critically and to see how we as Prot. Ref. Churches agree or differ with them.

Hence, we wish to devote a few articles to this subject.

The propositions are in the form of a *credo*, and are headed by the clause: "We believe."

The first proposition reads as follows:

"That the new covenant of grace which God the Father established with men through the mediation of the death of Christ (Canons of Dordrecht, II, Rejection of Errors, 4) is the way along which He leads His elect unto salvation (cf. Heb. 9:15; Canons of Dordrecht, II, 8)."

In the Canons of Dordrecht, II, Rejection of Errors, 4, the errors of those are rejected "who teach that the new covenant of grace which God the Father through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not herein consist that we by faith, inasmuch as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, but in the fact that God having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of faith, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does not esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through His grace." And, in the same Canons, II, 8, to which the above proposition also refers, we read: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious

death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence for ever."

And Hebrews 9:15, another proof text with this proposition, reads: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Notice that in this first proposition the covenant of grace, or the new covenant, is here defined as a way along which God leads His elect to salvation.

Perhaps this is not designed to be a proper definition. The emphasis probably falls on "elect", and means to say that the covenant includes strictly speaking only the elect. Only they accept the merits of Christ by faith and are saved. This seems to be the intention of the quotations from the Canons, especially of II, 8; and that may even be the chief purpose of the quotation from Heb. 9:15, for there it is emphasized that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Yet, the proposition has the form of a definition. It defines the covenant of grace as a way along which God leads His elect unto salvation.

And with this we cannot agree.

According to our conception, for which we can find abundant evidence in the Word of God, the covenant is the eternal relation of friendship between God and His people in Christ Jesus, in which He is their God, their Friend-Sovereign, and they are His people and His friend-servants. According to that covenant, God, their sovereign Friend, establishes an eternal covenant of grace with His people, grants unto them the adoption for His children and heirs, washes them in the blood of Christ from all their sins, dwells in them by His Spirit to sanctify them to be members of Christ and to apply unto them all that they have in Christ, "till they shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal." And as a fruit of this work of grace of their covenant

God they, the elect, become the friend-servants of God in the midst of the world; they cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, trust in him, love Him with all their hearts and minds and souls and strength, forsake the world, crucify their old nature, and walk in a new and holy life.

We may note that even the Baptism Form, like Scripture, speaks of the eternal covenant of grace. Now, a way is not eternal, but temporal. As soon as the destination is reached, the way may disappear. But the covenant is not a way unto salvation, but is the destination, salvation and glory, the dwelling of the people of God with Him in His everlasting tabernacle, itself. Now, I say once again that the proposition may not intend to offer a precise definition of the covenant of grace; nevertheless, for a proper settlement of the difficulties between the liberated churches and the synodicals it is very important to define the concept *covenant* before anything else.

The second proposition reads as follows: "That the new covenant of grace consists herein, that we by faith, in as far as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, (Canons of Dordrecht II, Rejection of Errors, 4), so that we may live eternally with Him, and for Him, according to the Word of the Lord: 'And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.' (II Cor. 6:18; cf. the Baptism Form)."

To this proposition we still have the same objection: still no clear-cut definition of the covenant is offered. And this certainly is prerequisite. What is the covenant? Is it a pact, or contract, or agreement? Is the essence of the covenant, as Heyns has it, the promise? Or is it a way of salvation, as it was defined in the first proposition?

Evidently the Canons, in II, Rejection of Errors, 4, do not mean to give a definition of the covenant, for they simply reject the errors of the Remonstrants, who really deny that by faith, in as far as it accepts the merits of Christ, we are justified before God and saved. And as far as the Baptism Form is concerned, to which this proposition also refers, it certainly speaks of the *eternal* covenant of grace and then describes what our covenant God does for the elect and what is the part of those with whom God establishes His covenant. And once more I suggest that the brethren in the old country agree, first of all, on the idea or concept of the covenant of grace itself.

The third proposition reads as follows: "That all the children of the congregation (church) are included in the covenant and church of God, and that redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost, the Author of faith, is promised to them."

This proposition is rather important. It refers to the crux of the difference between the synodicals and the liberated. And I am rather surprised that

the Reverend van Teylingen, a synodical, can subscribe in agreement with Dr. Bos, a liberated, to one and the same proposition on this matter. For, according to this proposition, all the children of the church are really in the covenant. And not only that, but the promise of the Holy Spirit is given to all. For notice that the 74th answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, which treats of the baptism of infants, is here generalized and made universal as far as the covenant children, those that are historically comprehended under the covenant, are concerned. The Catechism simply teaches: "Are infants also to be baptized? Answer. Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and by the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised them no less than to the adult. . . ." etc. But the proposition has it that all the children of the congregation are included in the covenant and church of God and that they all have the promise of the Holy Ghost. Now, we have no objection against the proposition that children, as well as adults, are included in the covenant and church of God, and that to them as well as to the adults the promise of the Holy Ghost is given; but we do object to the generalizing of this proposition and to the statement that the promise of the Holy Ghost is for all the children that are historically under the covenant and that are born of believing parents. For we certainly believe that God always fulfills His promises and that He certainly realizes the promise of the Holy Ghost to all the elect and to them only. And as it is very plain from Scripture that all those that are under the covenant and that are born of believing parents are by no means elect and that all are not Israel that are called Israel, we object to the generalizing of this proposition.

Let us ask first of all what Ursinus, one of the composers of the Heidelberg Catechism, has to say on this subject. In his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism he makes the following comments on question and answer 74: first he writes: "Those who are not yet disciples of Christ, not being of the number of those who are called, and not believing the doctrine of the gospel, nor obeying the ministry, are not to receive baptism. Nor ought those who feel that they are not the disciples of Christ to desire baptism. And the reason why we ought neither to receive, nor desire baptism, is, because Christ says, first, teach or make all nations my disciples, and then baptize them. Hence all, and only those are to be baptized according to the command of Christ, who are, and ought to be regarded as members of the visible church, whether they be adults professing repentance and faith, or infants born in the church; for all the children of those that believe are included in the covenant and church of God, unless they exclude themselves. They are, there-

fore, also disciples of Christ, because they are born in the church, or school of Christ; and hence the Holy Spirit teaches them in a manner adapted to their capacity and age."

In the above quotation Ursinus seems to teach indeed that all the children of those that believe are included in the covenant and church of God.

Yet, in a later connection Ursinus very definitely changes this notion and limits it to those infants that potentially have the faith. For writes he: "But, say our opponents, the church ought to be satisfied with a profession of faith. This we admit, and would add, that to be born in the church is, to infants, the same thing as a profession of faith. Faith is, indeed, necessary to the use of baptism with this distinction. Actual faith is necessary in adults, and an inclination to faith in infants. Those who do not believe, that is, who have no faith at all, neither by profession nor by inclination, are not to be baptized. But infants born of believing parents have faith as to inclination. We also deny the minor proposition; for infants do believe after their manner, or according to the condition of their age; they have an inclination to faith. Faith is in infants potentially and by inclination, although not actually as in adults. For, as infants born of ungodly parents who are without the church, have no actual wickedness, but only an inclination thereto, so those who are born of godly parents have no actual holiness, but only an inclination to it; not according to nature, but according to the grace of the covenant. And still further: infants have the Holy Ghost, and are regenerated by Him. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb, and Jeremiah is said to have been sanctified before he came out of the womb. (Luke 1:15; Jeremiah 1:5). If infants now have the Holy Ghost, He certainly works in them regeneration, good inclinations, new desires, and such other things as are necessary for their salvation, or He at least supplies them with everything that is requisite for their baptism, according to the declaration of Peter, 'Can any man forbid water to them who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' It is for this reason that Christ enumerates little children among those that believe, saying, 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me.' (Matt. 18:6). Inasmuch now as infants are fit subjects for baptism, they do not profane it as the Anabaptists wickedly affirm."

Here it is very plain that Ursinus limits the concept *covenant children* or those that are included in the covenant and church of God, who have the promise of the Holy Ghost, and who therefore are proper subjects of baptism, to those that are regenerated and have the potential faith, that is, therefore, to the elect.

H. H.



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## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

#### Of Man's Redemption

#### LORD'S DAY 25

#### 5.

#### The Idea Of The Sacraments.

In the French confession of faith, which dates from 1559, Article 34, we read the following on the sacraments in general: "We believe that the sacraments are added to the word for more ample confirmation, that they may be to us pledges and seals of the grace of God, and by this means aid and comfort our faith, because of the infirmity which is in us, and that they are outward signs through which God operates by His Spirit, so that He may not signify anything to us in vain. Yet we hold that their substance and truth is in Jesus Christ, and that of themselves they are only smoke and shadow."

We may note here: 1) That the Word of God is always the main means of grace, and that the sacraments are added to the Word for more ample confirmation. 2) That they are pledges and seals of the grace of God. 3) That they are an aid and comfort to our faith, so that also here faith is presupposed. 4) That they are outward signs, through which God operates by His Spirit. 5) That of themselves, that is, as mere signs, they are nothing, but only smoke and shadow, and that their substance and truth is in Jesus Christ.

In the same confession, Article 36, it is affirmed of the Lord's Supper: 1) That through the Lord's Supper the Holy Spirit feeds and strengthens us with the substance of the body and blood of Christ; and 2) that this is done spiritually and can be apprehended only by faith.

In Article 37 of the same confession it is emphasized that in the sacrament the sign and the thing signified belong together: "We believe, as has been said, that in the Lord's Supper, as well as in baptism, God gives us really and in fact that which He there sets forth to us; and that consequently with these signs is given the true possession and enjoyment of that which they present to us." But again it is emphasized that this is true only for the believer: "And thus all who bring a pure faith, like a vessel, to the sacred table of Christ, receive truly that of which it is a sign; for the body and blood of Jesus Christ give

food and drink to the soul, no less than bread and wine nourish the body."

Also the Scotch Confession of Faith, dated 1560, in Article 21 emphasizes that the sacraments are instituted for the confirmation and strengthening of the faith of the believers, to seal unto them the assurance of the promise of God and the most blessed communion which the elect have with the Head, Christ Jesus. And they are not naked and bare signs, but they are so efficacious that by baptism we are ingrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of His righteousness and of the forgiveness of sins; and by the Lord's Supper Christ is so joined with us that He becomes our very nourishment and food for our souls. But all this is effected through the sacraments by the power of the Holy Spirit, "Who by a true faith carries us above all things that are visible, carnal, and earthly, and makes us to feed upon the body and blood of Christ Jesus, which once was broken and shed for us, which now is in heaven, and appears in the presence of His Father for us." Besides, the article teaches that the sacraments are effectual not only at the moment when they are administered or when the believers partake of them, but that "they shall bring forth fruit afterwards, as a lively seed sown in good ground. For the Holy Spirit, who can never be separated from the right institution of the Lord Jesus, will not frustrate the faithful of the fruit of that mystical action." But once more it is emphasized that "all this comes of true faith, which apprehends Christ Jesus, who only makes the sacrament effectual unto us."

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, dated 1563, (American revision, 1801), in Article 25 speaks of the sacraments in general as follows: "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

And in Article 27 it speaks of the sacrament of Baptism as follows: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

And concerning the Lord's Supper it confesses in Article 28: "The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that

to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ."

Also in this confession it is emphasized that faith is presupposed in the administration and the use of the sacraments, and that without faith no one can really or essentially receive the sacraments properly. This is emphasized in Article 29 of the same confession: "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine said) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing."

The Anglican Catechism, dated 1549, is rather instructive in that it emphasizes that to the sacraments proper belong not only the outward and visible sign but also the inward spiritual grace; in other words, without the latter there is really no sacrament according to this catechism. We quote:

"Question. How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his church?

"Answer. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation: that is to say, baptism, and the supper of the Lord.

"Question. What meanest thou by this word *sacrament*?

"Answer. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

"Question. How many parts are there in a sacrament?

"Answer. Two: the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

"Question. What is the outward visible sign or form in baptism?

"Answer. Water; wherein the person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"Question. What is the inward and spiritual grace?

"Answer. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for, being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

"Question. What is required of persons to be baptized?

"Answer. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.

"Question. Why, then, are infants baptized, when

by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?

"Answer. Because they promise them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

"Question. Why was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?

"Answer. For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

"Question. What is the outward part or sign in the Lord's Supper?

"Answer. Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

"Question. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

"Answer. The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

"Question. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?

"Answer. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.

"Question. What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?

"Answer. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; and a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men."

Here too it is plainly emphasized that in the administration and the use of the sacraments faith is required, and, in connection with the statement that the sacrament consists both of the outward visible sign and of the inward spiritual grace, it is evident that there can be no true sacrament except for the believer. Like the preaching of the Word the sacraments are not a general offer of grace; but just as to those who have not the faith the preaching of the Word is always a savour of death unto death, so the sacraments are always unto condemnation of those that partake of them without faith.

In the Irish Articles of Religion, dated 1615, we read of the sacraments in paragraph 85 to 100; and from it we quote the following: "The sacraments ordained by Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather sure witnesses and effectual or powerful signs of grace and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him." Also in this confession the truth is emphasized that sacraments are not only unto salvation for the believer, but also unto judgment and condemnation for the unbeliever. They must not



be carried about, but should be properly used, and "in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect and operation; but they that receive them unworthily, thereby draw judgment upon themselves."

Baptism, according to this confession, is the "sacrament of our admission into the church, sealing unto us our new birth (and consequently our justification, adoption, and sanctification) by the communion which we have with Christ Jesus." And "the Lord's Supper is not only a sign of the mutual love which Christians ought to bear one towards another, but much more a sacrament of our preservation in the church, sealing unto us our spiritual nourishment and continual growth in Christ."

Again, it describes the Lord's Supper as follows: "In the outward part of the holy communion, the body and blood of Christ is in a most lively manner *represented*; being no other wise present with the visible elements than things signified and sealed are present with the signs and seals—that is to say, symbolically and relatively. But in the inward and spiritual part of the same body and blood is really and substantially *presented* unto all those who have grace to receive the Son of God, even to all those that believe in his name. And unto such as in this manner do worthily and with faith repair unto the Lord's table, the body and blood of Christ is not only signified and offered, but also truly exhibited and communicated."

And again, that faith is required and presupposed in the partaking of the Lord's Supper is evident from the following words: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Lord's Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner; and the means whereby the body of Christ is thus received and eaten is faith." And like the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England the confession emphasizes that those that are wicked and have not the faith, although they carnally and visibly eat and drink the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, "yet in no wise are they made partakers of Christ; but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing."

Finally, we quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647: "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him: as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word."

Also the Westminster Confession of Faith includes a sign and the thing signified in the sacrament as such: "There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and

the effects of the one are attributed to the other." But the whole of the sacrament is not effectual in itself, nor does its efficacy depend on the intention of him that administers the sacrament, but "upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with the precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers."

The sacrament of baptism is not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, "but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life."

Of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper it states that it should be observed in the Church unto the end of the world "for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body."

And as to the relation between the sign and the thing signified in the Lord's Supper it states the following: "The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such a relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the names of the things which they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before."

And also in this confession it is emphasized that the sacraments are efficacious only to the believer and that the wicked can receive them only to their condemnation. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper faith receives and feeds upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death. But, on the other hand, "although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."

We have quoted rather elaborately from the Reformed symbols of the past in order to show what is the common conception of the Reformed churches of the sacraments, both of the sacrament of baptism and of the Lord's Supper.

H. H.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Attributes Of God

COMMUNICABLE (cont.)

*God's Goodness*

The Goodness of God could conceivably be defined as that virtue of the Lord whereby He is the implication of all infinite virtues and perfections, and therefore is also the highest and only Good for all His creatures. Dr. Hepp of the Netherlands has defined this attribute of God as the Lord's "Self-Desirability". The undersigned would refer all our readers to a beautiful, clear, concise exposition of the "Goodness of God" by the Rev. H. Hoeksema in his book, "God's Goodness Always Particular"—every Protestant Reformed home should have this book and make a thorough study of it.

The goodness of God is generally treated as a generic conception. This implies that it is a conception which includes several shades and varieties, such as: love, friendship, mercy, grace, righteousness, holiness, etc. This explains why the goodness of the Lord has been defined as the implication of all infinite virtues and perfections. That the Lord is good signifies, therefore, that He is love, mercy, pity, longsuffering, righteousness, holiness, etc.

The late Dr. H. Bavinck, as one might expect, discusses this attribute of God in his Reformed Dogmatics on page 176-178 of Volume II. This writer introduces this subject by declaring that the word "goodness", as far as its original and first significance is concerned, expresses a relation rather than an inner quality. We, according to this learned and eminent theologian, speak, e.g., of a good home, a good friend, etc., and thereby express the thought that that home or friend is good for us, is good in relation to us. Besides, what is good for one might not be good for another. Hence, the word "good" expresses in this connection a relation rather than an inner quality. However, Dr. Bavinck thereupon proceeds to show that the word "goodness", as it appears in the Scriptures, expresses more than a mere relation. The Word of God, he declares, speaks of goodness as an inner quality, as something which is good in itself, apart from and irrespective of any relation. He writes: "According to Scripture God is the implication of all perfections. All virtues are present in Him in the absolute sense. In this absolute sense Scripture calls Him good only a few times, OUDEIS AGATHOS EI MEE HEIS HO THEOS (No one is good but one, namely, God), Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19. He is TELEIOS (perfect), Matt. 5:48. But whatever virtue the Scriptures may

ascribe to God, they always proceed from the assumption that this virtue belongs to Him in the absolute sense. Knowledge, wisdom, power, love, righteousness, etc., are ascribed to Him in a unique, that is, Divine sense. His goodness, therefore, is one and the same with His absolute perfection. He is pure EIDOS, purest action. He need not become anything but is what He is eternally. He has no purpose outside himself, but is Self-sufficient,—Ps. 50:9, f.f., Is. 40:28 f.f., Hab. 2:20. He receives nothing, He only gives. Everything needs Him, He needs none or nothing. He always purposes Himself, because He cannot rest in anything less than Himself. Whereas He is Himself the Absolute Good, the Perfect One, He can and may not love anything else except in and for Himself. He can and may not be satisfied with anything less than absolute perfection. When He loves others, He loves in them Himself, His own virtues, works, gifts. . . . Therefore He is absolutely blessed in Himself, as the implication of all good, of all perfection." Thus far Bavinck.

Prof. L. Berkhof, in his Reformed Dogmatics, pages 70-71, describes the goodness of God as follows, and we quote him in full: "The Goodness of God. This is generally treated as a generic conception, including several varieties, which are distinguished according to their objects. The goodness of God should not be confused with His kindness, which is a more restricted concept. We speak of something as good, when it answers in all parts to the ideal. Hence in our ascription of goodness to God the fundamental idea is that He is in every way all that He as God should be, and therefore answers perfectly to the ideal expressed in the word "God". He is good in the metaphysical sense of the word, absolute perfection and perfect bliss in Himself. It is in this sense that Jesus said to the young ruler: None is good save one, even God," Mark 10:18. But since God is good in Himself, He is also good for His creatures, and may therefore be called the *fons omnium bonorum*. He is the fountain of all good, and is so represented in a variety of ways throughout the Bible. The poet sings: "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light," Ps. 36:9. All the good things which the creatures enjoy in the present and expect in the future, flow to them out of this inexhaustible fountain. And not only that, But God is also the *summum bonum*, the highest good, for all His creatures, though in different degrees and according to the measure in which they answer to the purpose of their existence. In the present connection we naturally stress the ethical goodness of God and the different aspects of it, as these are determined by the nature of its objects.

a. *The goodness of God towards His creatures in general.* This may be defined as *that perfection of God which prompts Him to deal bountifully and kindly*

with all His creatures. It is the affection which the Creator feels towards His sentient creatures as such. The Psalmist sings of it in the well known words: "Jehovah is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works. . . . The eyes of all wait for Thee; and Thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing," Ps. 145:9, 15, 16. This benevolent interest of God is revealed in His care for the creature's welfare, and is suited to the nature and the circumstances of the creature. It naturally varies in degree according to the capacity of the objects to receive it. And while it is not restricted to believers, they only manifest a proper appreciation of its blessings, desire to use them in the service of their God, and thus enjoy them in a richer and fuller measure. The Bible refers to this goodness of God in many passages, such as Ps. 36:6; 194:21; Matt. 5:45; 6:26; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17." Thus far Berkhof.

This quotation of Prof. Berkhof is merely another example of the confusion which exists in the Christian Reformed Church today in connection with the goodness of the Lord. On the one hand he would maintain the Scriptural truth that God is truly God and He alone. He emphasizes this in the following words, does he not (and we underscore): "In our ascription of goodness to God the fundamental idea is that *He is in every way all that He as God should be, and therefore answers perfectly to the ideal expressed in the word "God"*. Notice also this statement of the professor, and again we underscore: "*He is good in the metaphysical (here 'supernatural') sense of the word, absolute perfection and perfect bliss in Himself*. And on the other hand we read of the same writer, and again we underscore: "*All the good things which the creatures enjoy in the present and expect in the future, flow to them out of this inexhaustible fountain*"—notice that, although this is true in itself, the way is hereby opened to a conception of God's goodness which must be understood as a kindness toward all men. It is, of course, in itself true that the things as such which the creature receives are good and that these things flow unto him out of this inexhaustible Divine Fountain. But that the professor is opening the way unto a conception of the goodness which must be interpreted as a general kindness toward all men is evident from the following words which he himself underscores: "*The goodness of God toward His creatures in general may be defined as that perfection of God, which prompts Him to deal bountifully and kindly with all His creatures*." And the following Scriptural passages are mentioned as proof for this conception of the general goodness of the Lord: Ps. 36:6; 104:21; Matt. 5:45; 6:26; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17. Later, when he discusses the love of God, which is one of many aspects of this goodness of God, the professor quotes John 3:16

as a proof of his contention that God's love also extends to the sinner in general.

The late Rev. D. Zwier, for many years a writer in the "Wachter", one of the official organs of the Christian Reformed Churches, prefers the definition of the goodness of God as given by Prof. Hepp of the Netherlands. Dr. Hepp defines God's goodness as His Self-Desirability. Indeed, the Rev. Zwier, when writing of the goodness of God (see the book of Rev. Hoeksema to which we have already referred) writes concerning this goodness in a manner which is thoroughly Reformed. He writes (Rev. Hoeksema quotes him on page 86 of his book, "God's Goodness Always Particular"): "When, however, we speak of God's goodness as His self-desirability, all emphasis falls on the fact that God's goodness is absolutely unique in character, that it cannot be measured by any human standard, that it far transcends all creaturely goodness. And to mention no more this definition of God's goodness places on the foreground that which for us must be of supreme importance, namely, God Himself. When we think of God's goodness, we may not in the first place aim at ourselves, but God must be our purpose. God is good in Himself, apart from all creatures. He does not need the creature to manifest His goodness. When we hear mention of God's goodness, we are so easily inclined to think immediately of His disposition to the creature. And, indeed, we may not forget this. Usually this is called the *outgoing* goodness of God. And when we speak of this the question is: Who and what is God for us? But when we understand that God's goodness is His self-desirability, we place on the foreground that God is good in Himself, apart from the creatures. This idea must precede all others and receive all the emphasis. In dogmatical works this goodness of God is usually denominated His *in-dwelling* goodness. And when we treat of this the question is: Who and what is God in Himself? Even though God had never made any creature, it would have been eternally true: God is good, absolutely good, His goodness endureth forever. He does not need the creature to become good. For He is the implication of all good, of all perfections. He desires Himself, and cannot desire anything else than Himself as the highest good." And attend to this of the same writer, which the Rev. Hoeksema quotes of him on pages 87-88 in the same book: "When we speak of this we must bear in mind that by the outgoing of God's goodness to the creature this virtue of God does not change its character. God is the unchangeable, also with respect to His goodness. His goodness before the creation of the world does not essentially differ from His goodness after the creation of the world. His goodness remains essentially the same from eternity to eternity. Also when after creation His goodness proceeds to the creatures, it still remains essentially self-desirability. In the creature

He desires Himself, and Himself only. When He loves the creatures, He loves in them His virtues, works, and gifts. This it is that Scripture teaches us when it says that the Lord has wrought all things for His own sake (also the ungodly to the day of evil; this belongs with it and the Rev. Zwier should not have forgotten this. This is exactly the point at issue, for this is also God's goodness, His Self-desirability, H.H.), that He formed for Himself a people to proclaim His praises. In all that He does, in the realm of creation as well as in that of redemption, He seeks Himself as the highest good."

On the other hand, the Rev. Zwier would also generalize the matter and speak of the goodness in general. He prefers the term, "general goodness", to the term, "general grace", because it is broader and includes such virtues as grace, mercy, pity, compassion, longsuffering, etc. Hence, as soon as he views the goodness of the Lord from the aspect of the relation of the Absolute Good to His creatures, he speaks of that goodness as mercy, kindness, pity, longsuffering, love, compassion, benevolence, etc.

The serious mistake is made in the above reasoning that God's goodness, when viewed in His relation to the creature, is no longer regarded as God's Self-desirability. This is truly a serious mistake. The determining factor is no longer the Lord but it has become man. The goodness of the Lord is viewed as a generic concept but merely as including such virtues as mercy, kindness, pity, compassion, longsuffering, benevolence, etc., and that from the viewpoint of the creature. However, the goodness of Jehovah also includes His holiness, righteousness, wrath, indignation, etc. It is forgotten that the Lord seeks Himself. He now seeks man, and man has become the center in the revelation by the Lord of His goodness. The exponents of a general goodness may then assert, as we noticed in the above quotation, that "For He is the implication of all good, of all perfections. He desires Himself, and cannot desire anything else than Himself as the highest good", but, in their interpretation of the attitude of the Lord toward all His creatures in general, this maintaining of the absolute and unique goodness of God has become an idle and empty sound. And one may well wonder how the following statement of Prof. Berkhof can be true, which we quoted in this article: "This may be defined as that perfection of God which prompts Him to deal bountifully and kindly with all His creatures". How is it possible for God, Who is perfect and therefore hates the wicked every day, to deal bountifully and kindly with the wicked, who are surely also included in "all His creatures."? Do we not have a spiritual monstrosity here? The Lord, then, showers good gifts upon the children of men; they continue to use them against the cause of God in the midst of the world; and yet the Lord continues to

shower these gifts and talents upon them every day in His kindness and benevolence. This, in the light of what the Scriptures teach us about the living God, is surely an attack upon the goodness of the Lord, upon the truth that He is in every way all that He as God should be, the God of infinite and eternal perfection. The defenders of "common grace" have forgotten that the goodness of the Lord include *all* the perfections of God, also His righteousness, holiness, justice, etc.

#### *Significance of God's Goodness.*

In the first place, the goodness of the Lord is that virtue of God whereby He is the implication, the sum-total of all infinite perfections. God Himself is good. This is certainly the teaching of Holy Writ. We read in Exodus 33:19: "And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will show mercy." It is evident from this passage that the goodness and Name of the Lord are synonymous. The Lord's goodness is His Name. The Lord will reveal Himself in all the beauty of His perfections to Moses. Notice also the connection between the first and second parts of the text. It is exactly because of the goodness and Name of the Lord that He will not be merciful and gracious to all but only to some, and that according to His sovereign good pleasure. Because the Lord is infinitely perfect He is merciful and gracious only to the people of His sovereign choice. This is also the teaching of the Word of God in Nehemiah 9:20 and Psalm 25:8: "Thou gavest also *Thy good Spirit to instruct them*, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. . . . Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way". That the Lord Himself is good, according to these passages, is evident from the word "instruct" which appears in these texts. And in Matt. 19:17 we read: "And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Indeed, the Lord is the God of infinite perfections. All of Scripture, declares the late Dr. Bavinck, is an anthem of praise on the Goodness of the Lord. He is the Absolute Good, the God in infinite light and beauty and perfection, Who also is the Triune Lord and as such knows Himself, eternally seeks and desires Himself. In this sense, proceeding from the thought that the Lord is the God of infinite perfection, we may speak of the goodness of God as His Self-desirability, if we only bear constantly in mind that He eternally seeks and desires Himself exactly as the only Absolute Good.

Secondly, this significance of the goodness of God

must and does determine the significance of this Divine attribute as far as the Lord's relation to the creature is concerned. To be sure, the Lord is good in the sense that He is the highest and only good for the creature. To know Him is eternal life, and to experience His love and fellowship fills us with peace and joy and blessedness. This applies to God alone. His fellowship alone gives life and joy.

Moreover, it is also true that God is good to all in the sense that He gives good things to all. This does not mean that this is necessarily the interpretation of Ps. 145:9, where we read: "The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works." For a clear refutation of the error of "common grace" as applied to this particular passage we refer the reader once more to the book of Rev. Hoeksema, "God's Goodness Always Particulier". Nevertheless, it is true that God is good in the sense that whatever He gives to the creature is good. Notice, however, that this emphasizes the truth that the Lord Himself is good. The rain, sunshine, bread, are good, not merely in the sense that the Lord simply bestows things upon the creature for his own carnal enjoyment, but in the sense that they are perfectly adapted unto the purpose which they must serve. They are good because they are adapted to the strengthening of our bodies and therefore to the service of the living God. But, is God not also good, then, when He visits floods, calamities, wars, eternal hell upon wicked men?

Does this, however, imply that the Lord is good to all men in the sense that He is kindly and benevolently disposed to all? Let us remember in this connection that God is good in the sense that He eternally seeks Himself as the Absolute Good. Consequently, this goodness of the Lord also implies His righteousness, holiness, justice, etc. Because the Lord is God and seeks exclusively Himself, He blesses those who bless Him, is merciful to the merciful, satisfies those who come to Him for aid in time of need, hearkens unto them who cry unto Him in their distress; but, also because He is the good God, He hides His face from the ungodly, hates the wicked every day, is filled with wrath toward the profane, has no fellowship with the sinner, is unto the wicked a Consuming Fire. In the description of this antithetical attitude of the living God toward the godly and the ungodly the Word of God abounds. The Psalms and Proverbs are full of this presentation of the goodness of God. Continually the people of God are contrasted with the ungodly, and continually the antithetical attitude of Jehovah toward the righteous and the unrighteous is set forth. This will become clearer as we continue our discussion in subsequent articles of the attributes of God. We conclude, therefore, that God's Goodness is that perfection of the Lord whereby He eternally seeks and desires Himself as the Absolute Good and as such always

reveals Himself toward the children of men. This goodness of God which is constant and operative throughout the ages, for God is the unchangeable God also in His love and wrath, will ultimately be fully revealed in the new heavens and the new earth, when He shall take His own people unto Himself in everlasting glory for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son and our Lord, and will visit eternal ruin and desolation upon those whom He has not known from before the foundation of the world.

H. Veldman.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### The Capture Of Jebus

The last matter with which we were occupied in our previous article is the transactions between David and the elders of Israel in Hebron. David made a covenant with them before the Lord. The covenant concluded, they anointed him king over all Israel. As was stated, the section closes with a statement of David's age and of the whole time of his reign. He was thirty years old when he began to reign. The whole time of his reign was forty years and the time of his reign over Israel was thirty-three years. This is followed by the narrative of the victory over the Jebuzites, the conquest of the fort of Zion, and the selection of Jerusalem as the capital.

The Jebuzites were one of the several great Canaanitish races (Gen. 10:6), who dwelt at the time of Israel's conquest of Palestine at a place called Jerusalem and whose stronghold was Mt. Zion. (The name *Jerusalem*, which probably means "men of peace", was not given by the Israelites. The place had born the name from time memorial). Joshua in a battle had conquered the Jebuzites that dwelt in the surrounding territory (Josh. 15:8, 63; 18:28), but neither the children of Judah, who only got possession of the lower city (Judg. 1:8) nor the Benjamites, to whom the city had been allotted (Josh. 18:28), were able to capture the fort of Jebus on Mt. Zion. In the time of the Judges Jebus was still called "a strange city, in which are some of the children of Israel" (Judges 19:12).

This stronghold in the possession of the heathen cast a reproach on Israel which David now with the help of God must remove. "The king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites,"—the king and his men, that is, according to the Chronicler (1 Chron. 11:4), the warriors in Israel who rallied about him from "all Israel" and who were now joined to his former band. Mindful of their strength that hitherto had proved invincible, the Jebusites derided David

by saying, "Thou canst not come in hither, nay, but the blind and the lame will remove thee: saying, David cannot come in hither." (This doubtless is the correct rendering and not, "which spake unto David saying, *Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither.*") Without a doubt the meaning is, "Were only the blind and the lame to defend it, thou couldst not take the stronghold." This brag-gartism shows how great was their reliance on the impregnability of their citadel city. "Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion." The narrator adds, "the same is the city of David".

The Jebusite fortress lay on Mount Zion (2 Kings 19:31). It was the highest of the three hills that surrounded Jerusalem. The name *Zion* probably means "sunny" mountain. Some take the name to mean "the dry" mountain (from *tzijah* "to be dry"). A distinction must be made between it and Jerusalem, although the name "city of David" was sometimes given afterwards to Jerusalem.

Verse 8 continues the narrative of the taking of the fortress. The text here is difficult and has been variously explained. The authorized version translates, "And David said on that day, whosoever getteth up to the gutter and smitteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain.* Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." This gives the general sense, but it is a rather impossible translation. The text reads, "And said David that day, Whosoever smitteth the Jebusites and reaches the canal or cataract. . . . And the lame and the blind are hated of David's soul. Therefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." The statement is not complete. The protasis is lacking which the aforesaid version supplies from the book of 1 Chronicles. Here the text at chapter 11:6 reads, "Whosoever smitteth the Jebusites first *shall be chief and captain.* . . ." This remark may rightly be taken as an exhibition of the sense of our passage. David inflamed the ardour of his men by holding forth the prize of chief in his new army to be gained by him who should be the first to reach the gutter or canal by smiting the Jebusites, that is, by battling his way through their ranks. Whether *zinnor*, translated *gutter* in the authorized version, denotes a canal or a cataract makes little difference. From the Chronicler we learn that the prize was gained by Joab. (Denying that our passage may be filled out by drawing on the text of the Chronicler, some translate, "Whosoever smites the Jebusites shall cast the slain in the waterfall or cataract." The explanation of these orders is then supposed to be that David was "embittered by the derisive remarks of the Jebusites", as David's words "the lame and the blind are hated of David's soul are held to indicate. But in the light of the text

rendering, "Let him cast into the waterfall the lame, etc." is untenable. The verb that this class of interpreters render "cast" is *nagah*, which cannot be so translated whether in *qal* or *Hiphil*. In *qal* its meaning is only "to reach, touch, strike," the object reached being usually introduced by *b'*. In *Hiphil* it means to cause to touch, to join, to raze. There are several other translations of our passage of which we need take no notice).

It must of course be true that the posture of the Jebusites as manifest in their resistance to Israel's army and to God, and in their flaunting and derisive words, embittered David and his men and that in his vexation of spirit and in reference to their taunts called them all lame and blind. And this they were spiritually. They belonged to a race of men that had filled their measure of iniquity. And though now for several centuries they had been dwelling in the midst of God's people, they were still the heathen of yore. Had they been truly wise they long ago would have surrendered to Israel without a struggle and cast themselves on the mercy of God and His people, as the Gibeonites had done. David's soul hated them. "Wherefore they said, The lame and the blind shall not come into the house." Some take this to mean, "One holds no intercourse with hateful and disagreeable people like the Jebusites. Others understand by "in the house" the temple and assume that the incident occasioned the making of a new law forbidding the blind and the lame to enter the temple. The whole statement is obscure. In fixing upon its meaning we can only take recourse to conjecture. But there is no reason why "in the house" cannot refer to the house of God, the sanctuary. This agrees with the thrust of David's words.

"So David dwelt in the stronghold (of Zion), and called it the city of David. And David built round about from the Milo and inward." The definite article prefixed to Milo shows that this citadel already existed at the time of the war, having been constructed by the Jebusites. "David built round about from Milo and inward," that is, "while Milo formed the most advanced fortification, he built in connection with it and out from it on Zion, 1) *round about* the city and citadel for further fortification; 2) *inward* so that the upper city (city of David or of Zion) was extended by defensive edifices, and more and more covered the mountains". (Erdmann)

In this conquered citadel David took up his residence, thereby making Jerusalem the capital. It was a place of remarkable strength and it lay almost in the middle of the land.

The text does not state that David extirpated the Jebusites. But he did break their power by capturing their stronghold which he must also have compelled them to evacuate.



"And David went on and grew great," great as shepherd-king and captain over Israel, great in peace and in war, great in power and might and in influence and prestige both at home and abroad in heathen lands. And the source of his growing greatness was God's favor. God was for him and therefore all things conspired to work together for his good. To this idea the sacred narrator gives expression by the words, "And the Lord God of hosts was with him." This means more than that God was the author of his greatness as king; it means that God exalted him in His love and empowered him to know God's mercy as the author of his greatness.

The first conspicuous example of David's growing greatness to which the narrator points is the doing of Hiram king of Tyre with respect to Israel's king. Hiram "sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house." Back of this doing must lay the fact that already for some time Hiram and David had been friends. From the book of the Kings we learn that "Hiram was ever a lover of David" (1 Kings 5:1). Was it simply a natural affection such as worldly men feel for their friends or was it at bottom love of Israel's God? This latter does not yet follow from Hiram's greeting to Solomon in which he blessed Israel's God. These were his words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to king David a wise son. . . ." (2 Chron. 11:12). Almost identical words proceeded out of the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, who nevertheless died a godless heathen. Hiram's sending David supplies and men for the building of his palace must have been according to an agreement previously made. Just when these events took place, whether immediately after the capture of Jebus or some time later after the two wars with the Philistines narrated below, the text does not make plain.

Contemplating these demonstrations of Hiram's goodwill toward him, "David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." David's perception was not an imagining originating with him but a spiritual insight into God's dealings with him. It was an assurance that God was with him, and thus at once a good conscience toward God. Had David come into power by the employment of violence this perception would not have been his. And that he perceived that the Lord had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake has significance. It implies the sanctified awareness that he was God's gift of love unto Israel and the will to rule Israel according to God's will.

But what is next related of David is not to his credit. "He took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron." Here

he follows the custom of eastern princes in violation of the law laid down by the Lord in Deut. 17:7, "Neither shall he—the king—multiply wives unto himself, that his heart turn not away." The doing was sinful. It could only stem from pride and lust of sinful flesh. The harem with ancient men was the symbol of royal power. Though David's polygamy was not held against him as a crime, the Lord, as David's family troubles testify, did not fail to manifest His displeasure. The statement, "Sons and daughters were born to him," shows that all these summary notices concerning family and building imply a greater space of time than at the beginning of his reign is assumed. David had in all eighteen, perhaps nineteen, sons of whom six were born in Hebron (2 Sam. 3:2sq.)

As was stated, at the time of Saul's death, the Philistine had set as their goal nothing short of the conquest of the entire land of Canaan. And their victory over Saul and his army had brought them astonishing success in that direction. By that victory they had extended their jurisdiction over the whole of the West-Jordan tribes with the exception of Judah, and must have been exacting tribute. The Israelites had been utterly crushed. This is evident. Even the great dishonor done to Saul and his three sons failed to sting them into a new effort. The anointing of David as king over Judah seemed not to have disquieted the Philistines. At least they took no action. They had no reason seeing that Israel now had two kings each refusing to recognize the other and by whose mutual strife the dominion of the Philistines was being confirmed. Besides, David as well as Ishbosheth must have been vassal-king of the Philistines during the time of his residence in Hebron. Thus it seemed that Israel would never again be able to throw off the yoke of the Philistines. Then David availed himself of Abner's help to gather all Israel to him. But before he reached his purpose Abner was assassinated. Shortly thereafter Ishbosheth was murdered by the two Beerothites. Mindful of David's military achievements as captain in Saul's army, the tribes came to him in Hebron and anointed him king over all Israel. Herewith the struggle between Israel and the Philistines entered a new phase. Now the Philistines found that they were confronted by a man who understood their military organization, who has united about him a well trained army, and who could depend upon the support of the whole nation, that finally seemed to understand that unity is one of the primary requisites in its struggle for freedom. Now the Philistines did bestir themselves. "And when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came to seek David." They came from the lowlands of Judah where they held sway and from their own land. This invasion must have taken place before the capture of Mount

Zion. For we read that when David heard of it he marched down to the stronghold. This expression cannot have reference to Mount Zion, for that hill was so high that invariably the Scriptures speak of "going up to Zion". The hold to which he resorted was in a lower position. It was one of the places of refuge to which David fled when he was pursued by Saul. For at verse 13 and 14 of the twenty-third chapter of our book we read that when the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim David was in the hold near the cave of Adullam." The valley of Rephaim was a plain to the south-west of Jerusalem. These facts indicate that David now found himself in a precarious condition. The Philistines were encamped on the height of the plateau; while David was encamped in a cave of the low country. His position seemed desperate.

David enquired of the Lord. He said, "Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hand?" The Lord returned answer, "Go up, and I will certainly deliver the Philistines into thy hand." The attack was sudden and impetuous as is indicated by the meaning of the name "Baal-perazim" which he gave to the place where the battle was fought to perpetuate the memory of the victory. Giving the Lord the glory, he said, "The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me as the breach of waters," that is, as a violent torrent demolishes everything before it, David had rushed upon the Philistines and cut their ranks in pieces. "Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perizim," *lord of the breaches*. The Philistines in their mad flight had left behind them their idols that they had carried with them and upon whose aid they had relied. David and his men buried them.

G. M. Ophoff.

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## SION'S ZANGEN

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### Liefdevol, Schoon Zwaar Getergd

(Psalm 106; Zevende Deel)

De vorige maal behandelden we het droeve feit, dat Israel zich ontreinigde vanwege het hoereeren door hunne daden.

En vanwege dat droeve feit lezen we: "Dies is de toorn des Heeren ontstoken tegen Zijn volk, Hij heeft eenen gruwel gehad aan Zijn erfdeel."

Dat is een vreeselijke waarheid. We lezen ergens, dat "zij zijn wederspanning geworden, en zij hebben Zijnen Heiligen Geest smarten aangedaan; daarom is Hij hun in een vijand verkeerd, Hij zelf heeft tegen hen gestreden." We lezen dit in Jesaja 63:10.

Dezelfde waarheid beluisteren we keer op keer in den 90sten psalm, waar Mozes, onder meer, zegt: "Want wij vergaan door Uwen toorn, en door Uwe grimmigheid worden wij verschrikt." En om niet meer te noemen, willen wij U ook wijzen op dat gesprek tusschen God en Moses, toen de laatste het bevel Gods ontving om naar Egypte te gaan ter verlossing van Gods volk uit de slavernij. Ook daar lezen we immers, dat "de toorn des Heeren ontstak over Moses"!

Hoe zit dat?

Hoe kan God in toorn ontsteken tegen Zijn volk hetwelk Hij liefheeft met een eeuwige liefde?

Het antwoord kan niet moeilijk zijn als we slechts twee dingen voor de aandacht houden. Eerst, Gods volk is een zondig volk. Zij bestaan uit een mengsel van goedheid en boosheid. Want allereerst is daar het element in Israel, dat wel den naam draagt van Israel, doch desniettegenstaande geen Israel is. Dat zijn de verworpenen die altijd gevonden worden onder het volk van God. Zij zijn het onkruid in de tarwe. Tweedens, zijn er altijd veel Israëlieten die nog niet wedergeboren en bekeerd zijn. In elk tijdstip van de historie zijn er kinderen Gods die nog in hun natuurlijke hardigheid des harten opgaan te midden van Gods volk. En, derdens, is daar het vleesch van Gods volk zelf. Neemt nu het laatste woord van God, dat we aanhaalden, namelijk, de geschiedenis van Mozes bij den braambosch. Het was het vleesch van Mozes, dat hem deed tegenspreken tegen God, toen Hij het Goddelijke bevel ontving om naar Egypte te gaan. En het vleesch van Gods volk is altijd wederstrevend tegen het bevel Gods. Het vleesch onderwerpt zich der wille Gods niet, want het kan ook niet. Die in het vleesch zijn kunnen Gode niet behagen. Mozes behaagde God niet, toen hij keer op keer den Heere tegenstond. En zoo is het met een ieder kind Gods. Zonde is de uiting van ons vleesch, dat altijd wederstreeft. Uw en mijn vleesch wordt hier op aarde nooit veranderd. Daarom is er maar één uitweg en die is, dat we het vleesch met zijne werken dooden.

Die drie elementen in Israel zijn het kwade.

Maar te midden van al dat kwade is er het goede van den nieuwen mensch in Israel. En dat is zoo op elk tijdstip in de historie van Gods volk op aarde. Altijd is er die kern, dat zaad, het eeuwige leven in het diepste hart.

En als nu dat volk leeft uit het beginsel van het kwade, dan ontsteekt de toorn Gods.

En het tweede ding, dat we moeten overwegen bij het huidige probleem is, dat God de Heilige is.

God kan geen zonde aanzien en niet toornen, neen, zelfs niet in Zijn volk.

Als Israel zich bezoedelt met de onreinheden der hoererij, dan toornt God.

En zegt nu niet, dat er verandering bij God is, want dat is er tot in alle eeuwigheid niet. God is de

Onveranderlijke. Zegt Gods Woord niet, dat er geen schaduw van omkeering bij God is?

We stemmen toe, dat het wel schijnt alsof God verandert, doch meer dan schijn is het niet.

Permitteer me, dat ik een beeld gebruik. Gods heilige wegen zijn als een snel vlietende stroom. Welnu, als ge in Uw bootje dien stroom bevaart en met den stroom mee, in heiligheid des levens leeft, dan gaat alles goed. Doch als ge Uw bootje omwendt en tegenstroom opgaat, dan wordt het benauwd. De stroom veranderde niet, maar gij veranderdet!

En zoo is het met het huidige probleem (?).

Als ge den Heere vreest, Hem liefhebt, en in Zijn wegen wandelt, dan ervaart ge Zijn liefde. Doch als ge U tegen Hem keert, Hem tegenstaat in Uw hart en leven, dan bewijst Hij Zich een worstelaar. Zoo spoedig wij zondigen, ervaren we de onlust Gods. Vraagt het aan Gods volk. Ze zullen er U van verhalen.

Zoo was het met Mozes, bij den braambosch.

En zoo was het met Israel in Jesaja's dagen.

En als God dan tegen Zijn volk toornt, Zich als een vijand openbaart, Zijn grimmigheid uitstort over de Kerk der eeuwen, dan is het omdat Hij Zijn volk wil zuiveren.

Als ge de onlust van God ervaart vanwege Uwe zonden, dan is het de eerste stap van bekeering. Dan begint ge, met Petrus, bitterlijk te weenen in de bekeering.

En zoo moeten we dit vers bezien. Dan loopt alles los.

Misschien moet ik er nog aan toe voegen, dat het vleeschelijke element in Israel in de dagen dat God Zich vertoornt over Zijn erfdeel, zich nimmer bekeert. Met dat deel gaat het altijd van kwaad tot erger.

Als Jezus zegt tot Laodicea: Zie, Ik sta aan de deur en Ik klop, dan zegt het vleeschelijke deel: Klop maar! we gaan U toch niet opendoen. Maar degenen die Hem kennen, ontvangen genade, zoodat zij hunne zonden zien, beweenen en zich bekeeren. Ze verstaan het, dat de Heere toornde uit liefde tot hen. Ze hebben het gehoord, dat Hij zeide: "Zoo wie Ik liefheb, die bestraf en kastijd Ik."

Nu dan, hier hebt ge die straf van God over Zijn zondigende erfdeel: "en Hij gaf ze in de hand der heidenen, en hunne haters heerschten over hen, en hunne vijanden hebben ze verdrukt, en zij zijn vernederd geworden onder hunne hand."

Wat een bange historie!

Als ge de Richteren leest, dan wordt ge soms moede van het bange proces. Daar leest ge van zonde, verbanning, ellende, geschrei, en dan weer verlossing. En dan weer: zonde, verbanning, ellende, geschrei, en dan weer verlossing.

Let op den titel die ik boven deze stukjes schreef, keer op keer! Liefdevol, *schoon zwaar getergd!* Alle onze zonden zijn evenzoo veel tergen van God.

O God, wees ons zondaren genadig!

Daar komen de Filistijnen!

Dat God-vergeten volk haat God en het haat Israel.

En daar komen ze: God is toornig geworden over Israel vanwege hunne zonden. En dan gebiedt God Filistia om Zijn volk te benauwen. Soms gebruikt Hij Edom, Babel, Moab, Kores, Caesar.

En dat God-vergeten volk is erg gewillig. Zij hebben schik om Gods volk te trijteren. Ze mogen hen gaarne dooden, den ganschen dag!

En daar gaat Israel henen: zij worden geacht als schapen ter slachting.

Ze wilden niet buigen in nederigheid voor God; zij wilden niet hebben dat God Koning over hen was. En nu zegt God: Welaan dan! Laat dan Filistia over U heerschen! Buigt dan in het stof voor Babel met zijn goddeloozen Nebuchadnezar!

Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat de straf zoo vreeselijk past bij de zonde?

Leest Romeinen 1 tot het einde, en. . . huivert!

Ge wilt U baden in het vleesch en aan het vleesch alles opofferen? Welaan dan! zegt God, en Hij geeft U over aan de lusten van het vleesch, en. . . ge ziet de schimmen van Sodom en Gomorra!

Bange dagen voor het Israel Gods!

En dan?

Leest: "Hij heeft ze menigmaal gered, maar zij verbitterden Hem door hunnen raad, en werden uitgeteerd door hunne ongerechtigheid. Nochtans zag Hij hunne benauwdheid aan, als Hij hun geschrei hoorde, en Hij dacht tot hun best aan Zijn verbond, en het berouwde Hem naar de veelheid Zijner goedertierenheden."

Hier kunt ge weenen, en ook zingen!

Weenen, want het is toch al te erg!

Het kind van God dat duivelsch wandelt.

Zingen, want ge beluistert een God die goedertieren is.

O ja, Hij heeft hen veelmalen gered.

De gansche Bijbel is daar vol van.

Aan de zijde van God is daar altijd de redding, maar aan onze zijde is daar de vreeselijke raad der zonde die ons verbittert, en de ongerechtigheid die ons uitteert. Zonde draagt haar eigen loon met zich.

En dan gaat Gods volk aan 't schreien. Petrus weent bitterlijk.

Was er zulk een groot onderscheid tusschen de zonde van Petrus en van Judas? Ja, er was onderscheid, maar zonde is toch zonde. Wat die twee van elkaar doet verschillen is de genade die in het hart van Petrus komt, en de ontstentenis van die genade in het hart van Judas. En zoo is er bekeering bij beiden, doch de eene ontvangt een duivelsche bekeering, en hij grijpt naar 't koord en verhangt zich. Doch Petrus ontvangt een Goddelijke bekeering en traant naar God. En wordt aangenomen.

God hoort het geschrei van Petrus! Hallelujah!

Dat geschrei van Petrus en dat geschrei van U komt voort uit het nieuwgeboren hart. Judas heeft dat niet.

En als God dat geschrei van Zijn volk hoort, denkt Hij tot hun best aan Zijn verbond.

Dat verbond is eeuwig.

Van eeuwigheid tot in der eeuwigheid denkt God aan Zijn verbond.

Wat is het verbond? (Ik ben bang, dat sommige zeer geleerde Heeren hier zullen glimlachen, en heel geleerd fluisteren: Simplicisme!)

Het verbond is dit: de relatie van onbegrijpelijke liefde en vriendschap tusschen God en Zijn volk *in Jezus Christus!*

Die Laatste heeft ook geschreid vanuit de diepten der hel. En God heeft aan Zijn eeuwig verbond gedacht. En Hem gered. Het mocht want Hij legde een grondslag voor al dat minnen en lieven in Zijn dierbaar bloed, dat sprak van de liefde der gehoorzaamheid.

En zijt ge nu in Christus Jezus, dan zondigt ge wel, doch dan is er voor U het erbarmen van Hem die U in Christus bemint. En dan redt Hij U! Dat is het Evangelie.

Dan berouwt het God en Hij grijpt U en Uw bootje, en door bekeering en heiligmaking die in ons werken door het geloof, draait Hij U om op de stroomen, de stroomen van de wegen Gods.

En nu komt het einde van den psalm die ons zoo lang ophield(?)!

Nog twee dingen.

Het wordt den dichter wat benauwd. Hij denkt aan de huidige toestand van het volk Gods.

Hij zal wat bidden, neen, smeeken tot God.

Luistert: 'Verlos ons, Heere onze God, en verzamel ons uit de heidenen, opdat wij den naam Uwer heilichheid loven, ons beroemende in Uwen lof!'

Dat is mooi! Dat is hemelsch!

Verzamel ons uit de heidenen!

Gij allen die dit leest, ziet om U heen! Ge bevindt U in het midden der heidenen. Duivelen en goddelooze menschen omringen U. Vrage: hoe zijt ge te moede als ge dit leest? Voelt ge op Uw gemak? Zijt ge thuis bij hen? Neen? Dan zijt ge zalig. Dan moet ge straks naar den hemel toe. Dat kan niet anders.

Laat ons eens zien. Wat zit achter dit gebed?

Dit: de zanger is veel liever in den hemel, tusschen een ontelbare schare van volmaakt rechtvaardigen en lieflijke troongeesten. Gij ook?

De zanger heeft het ervaren: vaak roemen wij niet in God. Vaak loven wij Hem niet, die de Muziek is des hemels. God is in de lofzangen Israels.

Daarom: verlos ons, Heere onze God!

Ge zult dat nog een poosje moeten bidden, mijn broeder!

En dan, dan komt het. De dichter heeft het gezien: "Geloofd zij den Heere, de God Israels, van eeuwigheid en tot in eeuwigheid; en het volk zegge: Amen. Hallelujah!"

Kunt ge U een mooier, een glorierijker slot indenken?

Het is de hemel daarboven bij God.

Geloofd zij den Heere! Dat wil zeggen: laat ons al Zijn deugden zien, opsommen, uitspreken, uitgalmen met lieflijken klank. Laat ons zingen, lofzingen den Heere. Laat ons daarmee beginnen en om dan nooit meer te eindigen.

Van eeuwigheid en tot in der eeuwigheid! O, ik heb schik van die lieflijke phrase. Hier mag ik het woord *verrukkelijk* bezigen.

Uw deel, lezer? Dit: Zeg: Amen. Hallelujah!

G. Vos.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### The Multiformity Of The Church

(cont. from page 215)

#### II. *Its Manifestation.*

When we ask ourselves the question, how does this multiformity of the church manifest itself?, the answer is evident. True multiformity follows from the basic oneness and rich diversity of the members.

At this point we must pause to refute an error that has gained widespread acceptance in Reformed circles, and already shows its detrimental influence. I refer to the presentation of the multiformity of the church as given by the late Dr. A. Kuyper. Dr. Kuyper sought the multiformity in an outward difference, manifesting itself in various denominations and creeds. He argued that the holy, catholic church is found in every denomination, possibly even among the Roman Catholics and rankest modernists. In fact, each of these various denominations is a manifestation of the true church. They all have the truth in part, since none of us are perfect and none can have the truth in all its purity and perfection. Even the purest manifestation of the body of Christ may err in some degree, or may be onesided in the presentation of the truth. Therefore we need all kinds of churches and creeds to present the full truth in all its riches. Each must stress some aspect of the truth; some must fill in where others fail; one must stress a vital point that another fails to stress. In that way even the superficial Arminian can serve to counteract the staunch Calvinist, may exert influence where the Reformed theologian would fail. Thus even the Baptist, with

his denial of the covenant and infant baptism, may do much good for the church. He appealed to the example of a wheel with various spokes, all running toward the center and meeting in the hub. No matter how far apart the various denominational spokes may be when their differences are stressed to the limit, they nevertheless are basically one and meet at the hub, that is, in seeking the ultimate salvation of the church and the glory of God.

This language is so common in our day, that it may hardly be passed by in silence. First of all, it should be evident to all of us, that difference in doctrine is not a mere difference of opinion or viewpoint. Nor is it a matter of emphasis, that the one emphasizes the phase of the truth, while another stresses some other phase of it. It is a matter of truth or error. Every departure from the truth of Scripture is definitely the lie, which is born out of hell. Scripture is very emphatic in condemning those who teach false doctrine, and even warns us against them. As for example, in Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive". And again in 2 Peter 2:1-3, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

Moreover, it must always be borne in mind that the chief mark of the true church is the pure preaching of the Word. Where the Word is preached in all its purity, the sacraments are properly administered, and Christian discipline is duly exercised, there the Spirit dwells, and there the blessing of the Lord abounds. The truth of the Scriptures is the foundation of the church, with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. Ephesians 2:20-22. Any departure from the truth is apostasy, a breaking away from the true church to form an alliance with the false church. The Holy Spirit will never approve of such an action, nor bless it, but certainly condemn it. The individual who departs from the purest manifestation of the body of Christ will at first experience prickings of conscience, but if he continues in that way will suffer spiritual blindness and dormancy according to the measure that he departs from the truth. And the parent who keeps his children away from the purest manifestation of God's church will bear the responsibility of misleading the children which God has entrusted to him, even to

the extent that the evil consequences will be borne in the generations that follow. God will not be mocked. Likewise the erring church will experience the disapproval of the Spirit. For a time the Spirit will linger there, warning the true believers to repent and to return from their evil way. In fact, if the church continues in that way, Christ will call His own out of her midst and the Spirit will completely withdraw Himself, as was the case with the church of Laodicea, as described to us in Rev. 3. History always proves that the church that once has departed from the truth and continues in her evil way becomes ever more corrupt, only to end up in rankest modernism, rationalism, and spiritual decadence.

The true multiformity of the church lies in the diversity of its many members. This is taught in many passages of Scripture. We can refer to Ephesians 4:7-13, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". This is also the idea of that well-known passage in 1 Cor. 12:4-12, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews, or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

This same idea we find in the parable of the talents, where each is entrusted with a certain amount of talents, either five, two or one, to labor with until the lord of the household returns. These talents represent

so many means, opportunities, gifts and abilities entrusted to those who are obligated to serve in God's house. The faithful servant is guided by the Holy Spirit to make proper use of these talents in his own personal life, in fulfilling his calling in the midst of his family, in ministering to the saints, and in witnessing in the world. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Moses and all the saints who have lived before us have held their own unique place in the midst of God's covenant here on earth, a place which only they could occupy with the gifts entrusted to them, even as they now hold their own peculiar place in heaven.

Thus Christ works through all His saints. We are God's possession, fellow workers together as members of the same Body, God's temple. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Together the saints make up a mighty choir, which finally assembles before the throne to sing in perfect unison and harmony the song of Moses and the Lamb.

### III. *The Implications.*

We have time to mention only a few of the many implications of the multiformity of God's Church.

This certainly implies, first of all, that we must labor together for the manifestation of the one body of Christ. Its true spiritual unity is hardly discernable as far as its outward manifestation is concerned. It is even sorely disrupted. There are natural barriers, as was mentioned before, but there are also other barriers created by sin, causing schisms and disharmony within the body of Christ. Not those who remain steadfast in the truth are the cause for schism in the church, but those who depart from that one and sure foundation. No one will deny that schism is always wrong, and that every effort must be put forth continuously to strive for church unity.

But then let us be forewarned against the many pretended attempts at unity as are put forth in our day. Interdenominational youth movements are very popular. National religious associations without denominational color make their appearance. World-wide church congresses are quite common. In fact, denominational barriers are crumbling everywhere as the various churches unite in seeking a common cause. The various denominations are actually beginning to discover how much they have in common after all, and that by uniting their efforts they can be much more successful in reaching their goal. By uniting they can become a power to be reckoned with in the world. But this unity is attained at the expense of the truth. A true, internal, spiritual unity on the basis of truth is not sought, but an artificial, outward unity is sought on the basis of some colorless, man-made confession. An attempt is made to find a super-

ficial expression of agreement, that is acceptable to all, to which even the world of darkness will not take offence. And I would dare to predict that these efforts will also meet with success. Yet thereby the "church" will lose her distinctiveness as God's peculiar heritage in the world, will be swallowed up by the world. She will prove herself to be the apostate church, without God and without Christ and without hope. She will do her part to bring forth the antichrist, even the man of sin which must still be revealed. The calling of the believers is to have nothing to do with this unrighteous cause, but to come out from among her, "and be ye separate."

Yet we do strive for the unity of the church of Jesus Christ in the world. If those who pride themselves in defending the truth of God's Word cannot do it, who can? For we take as our only foundation the Word of God, which has Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone. We seek unity on that basis, and on that basis only! We strive for unity by maintaining the truth and opposing all that is repugnant thereto. That Word of God is the power unto salvation. And therefore that Word survives all the assaults of the powers of darkness. False teachers may come and go, but the Word of God abides forever. Those who are knit together in the truth are firmly founded on the one and only sure foundation.

We seek our unity then, only with those who can agree on the basis of Scripture. That unity of faith in the Spirit surmounts all natural barriers. In that respect, the Philistine, the Moabite, and the Ammonite can meet together to worship in God's temple. Distinctions between races, between Jew and Gentile, between bond and free disappear. We are one in the Lord. Not in the natural sense, as if we could all live under one roof, or even encourage intermarriage between the various races, but certainly in the spiritual sense that we are knit together through one Spirit in one faith and in one Lord. The spiritual unity and fellowship of Pentecost must manifest itself in that true Church of Jesus Christ. They are my father and mother, my brother and sister, who do the will of my heavenly Father. They, and they only!

But the multiformity of the church also implies that each member of the body of Christ must make proper use of the talents which God has entrusted to him. They are not ours to do with as we see fit, but they belong to the Lord. We are only stewards in God's house, called to labor while it is day in the charge entrusted to us. Possibly we complain that we have but a single talent, while others possess so many more. We might even try to flatter ourselves with all the things *we* might have done if *we* had been entrusted with five talents. Yet who are we to criticize Christ, Who bestows upon everyone the needed talents according to his place in the body? Moreover, we never



mean anything as individuals, no more than a finger has significance if it would isolate itself from the body. We only have significance in our divinely appointed place within the body of Christ. In that place we have all we can do to labor faithfully in the responsibility entrusted solely to us.

There are many outlets for our talents. There are obligations, or rather opportunities right in our own families. There is a calling within the church; even in the various societies in the church. There is a duty resting upon us wherever we walk, even among sinful men. For our calling is to always "let our light shine among men, that they may see our good works," and thus God may be glorified.

Thus we have a foretaste of the heavenly life already here on earth. When the church is finally assembled before the throne it will become fully evident that every one occupies his own unique place in the Body of Christ. Each one occupies a place that he alone can fill and has a name that he alone can read. Together, freed from all imperfections, we shall perfectly and eternally show forth the praise of the glory of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. C. Hanko.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Training For Life's Calling

#### *Training in the Physiology Class.*

From man's stewardship as taught in the geography class to the calling of man which must be taught in the physiology and hygiene class is a very small step. There is an expression to the effect that "missionary work begins at home". The same can be said very emphatically of man's stewardship. It begins at home, and in this instance it surely begins with man's body. If there is a precious possession which God has given man, it is his body, his life and his health. As God's steward he must care for that body far more faithfully than the machinery he oils and greases and the buildings he paints and cleanses. And he will have to be taught too that his body is far more than a marvellous fleshly mechanism. The covenant child as he comes home from his *Christian* school may well be heard to sing:

All that I am I owe to Thee,  
Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me;  
I give my Maker thankful praise,  
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.

Ere into being I was bro't,  
Thy eye did see, and in Thy tho't;

My life in all its perfect plan,  
Was ordered ere my days began.

And so let us consider the training for life's calling which the physiology class affords. We reprint here that which the Rev. Gritters has to say in regard to this subject.

#### *Physiology.*

1. In Physiology we examine the earthy, the body-side, of our existence, and contemplate the nature of the earthly house we have of God. In Hygiene we examine what God ordained rules ought to be observed in order to further the best possible function of these bodies.
2. In Physiology we deal with the "earthly house" (1 Cor. 15:47 and 2 Cor. 5:1), but always as it has become through sin. It is a body which lies between what at one time it was and what it through grace shall at one time be.
  - a. This body is of the earth earthy (1 Cor. 15:47) Even apart from sin we are earthy, that is, we are bound and confined to the earth, to its atmosphere, food, water, etc. We cannot loose ourselves from these things, although there is a greater glory in store for those who believe in God and His Son (1 Cor. 15:49 and Philippians 3:21). As we were created in Paradise, that is, earthy, so we are throughout our entire existence. That first creation was wonderful, but it was earthy, and God has some greater glory laid up for His people. It must appropriately be shown in the study of Physiology that however wonderful these bodies are, we must not end there. For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. If we have no more than these bodies, we are most miserable. Besides, it may be shown that to go from the earthy to the heavenly requires death. . . . and thus in Physiology show the need of Christ's death and atonement.
  - b. But at best it is besides that a body that has been devastated and corrupted by sin. The Heidelberg Catechism in the answer to Question 34 asserts that the body as well as the soul must be redeemed, (set free) from sin. Therefore:
    - (1) On the one hand Physiology shows us the disturbances and sicknesses of the body, all reminding us of the presence of sin in ourselves and in this world.
    - (2) On the other hand Physiology shows us that fallen man is become a "servant of sin" (Rom. 6:17). Sin exploits the body we have. It moves it. Fallen man is under the power of

sin. He is "sold under sin", serves sin, and is not able to free himself therefrom. By so doing he gains for himself the "wages of sin" which is death. Moreover under the power of the deception of sin he enjoys sin and willfully uses his body in the employment of sin. Let the teacher show this as she discusses the members of the body and their use.

- (3) Through the Grace of Christ the man of God is freed from sin in principle while still in this life (Rom. 6:18). Hence it becomes our duty to crucify the carnal and evil passions, regard our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, our members as members of righteousness and use our bodies in the service of our Covenant God.
3. Finally, however, this body still shows the traces of the perfect workmanship of the creator.
  - a. In part, there is external beauty. But on the other hand this beauty has turned to shame, for the body has to be covered with clothes (not for beauty but for shame). On the other hand our beauty must not be computed in terms of cosmetics and drugstore make-up, but our genuine beauty is inward, obedience, piety and godliness (1 Pet. 3:3-5).
  - b. There is beauty in the fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, as we read in Psalm 139:14. Consider also the symmetry, the variety as well as the co-operation of all the members (Col. 2:19), which picture to us also the unity of the Church which is the Body of Christ. There is that which causes us to marvel at the adaptability of the various parts for service. . . . not service of sin, but service of God. **REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR!**

To train a soldier to use the modern weapons of warfare requires far more than to show him how to aim his gun and to press the trigger. It surely consists in teaching him to have, if we may use the expression, a "healthy respect" for the destructive power he is able to release. In fact he is taught this first lest, after he aims his gun or bombsight, he defeats the very purpose of his training. So to train the covenant child for his life's calling requires far more than to show him what a wonderful body he has. The marvelous and harmonious working of all the organs together, the amazingly wonderful position of these organs with a view to the work they must perform and their sensitivity as for example that most delicate of all organs, the brain, being encased in the bony frame of the head for protection, and the heart deep within the chest behind the "fence" of ribs rather than somewhere on the surface of the body, should surely be brought to the attention of the child. And

in the schools of the unbelievers this is surely done. But if we do no more, we do not train our children for life's calling. Here again we must point our children to the Infinitely Wise and Wonderful Maker of these highest of all fleshly physical organisms. How can we train our children to care for their bodies and to use their members to the glory of God, if we do not first confess that HE made them and unless we throw in the rubbish heap all that nonsense about our "monkey ancestry". But if we discard all teachings of evolution, which the world and the unbeliever has not done at all, and then do no more, we are still failing in our calling in regard to the instruction of our children. Simply to keep silent on the subject of man's maker, being an attempt to be neutral, is always fruitless also. Nay, we must reveal to our children the wisdom, the beauty, the power and glory of our God. The Scriptures, and we, teach them to remember their creator in the days of their youth. But then, indeed, to the utmost of our power we must hold before their eyes the fact that God is their creator, and we ought to send them home singing the words above rather than many of the silly, worthless songs they are taught. That which a real course in physiology and hygiene requires is another reason why the school where our children attend must be a Christian school in word and deed as well as in name. Only the Christian school can teach the child to understand his own body and his calling in regard to it.

Let the child then according to his age be shown what wonders the Lord has wrought. He takes the dust of the earth and makes these wonderful bodies. The finished automobile as it rolls off the assembly line in some city of Michigan is such a very, very faint wonder in comparison with this mighty work of God! A body composed of the elements of the dust of the earth, a body supported and fed by the dust of the ground and a body that presently returns to the dust! But then too what wonderful things can be done by that body between its birth and its death! Where will you find physical freedom such as that which the human frame enjoys? Especially today, man goes where he pleases. He rides on the clouds and through them, rivalling the bird. He goes to the depths of the sea. He burrows into the earth farther than any creature can go. He walks on the earth, he rides swiftly over it. All that and more the human body which has been created out of the dust enjoys! But it all points to the Maker and says of Him that His glory is infinite, that His wisdom is incomparable. And applied by the Spirit it works in God's child the reverence and respect which is the fear of the Lord and makes him aware of his tremendous calling with that wonderful, versatile yet delicate instrument which God has made for the glory of His Own Name.

J. A. Heys.

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## PERISCOPE

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### HOME MISSION NEWS - - -

A rather long and eventful month has gone by since we last reported of our work and labors. From the first of the new year we have been holding two services each Sunday. One of these has been devoted to preaching in connection with the Heidelberg Catechism. During the latter part of January we also held a series of lectures. Two of these were delivered in Lynden and two more were scheduled for the nearby town of Sumas. The series of letters, examining and criticizing the Three Points in the light of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions, was also completed.

Thus far the positive results and tangible fruit of our efforts has been meager. So much so, in fact, that it seems the Scripture is being fulfilled when it speaks of the times in which they will not endure sound doctrine. Certainly the times in which we live are not conducive to study and development of the Truth. And it becomes increasingly clear that the day of great things for the Church which maintains the pure doctrine of the Word is past. In our own day we may yet see a great struggle to even maintain, with what little strength we have, the great Truth that God has entrusted to our care. We, too, must beware and hold fast; diligently instructing our youth to continue in the faith of the fathers.

Undoubtedly, through all these things the Lord reveals His will and way to us, as He leads us in experience and history. With many shortcomings and failures we stumble after Him; trusting that His way is good. Perhaps, He is teaching us to revise our thinking and to expend our efforts in a different direction.

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### *Modern Inquisition . . . .*

"Evangelical believers in Spain face many problems beside the open attacks of fanatical mobs on their meeting places. According to law everyone, unless he can prove that he was not baptized in the Roman Catholic priest. Marriage by a Protestant minister is not recognized as legal. To get around this apparently insuperable difficulty, many evangelical Christian couples are reported to write out a secret document, signed before a notary public, promising to live together as husband and wife. They then go to the gospel church for a wedding service, which is not always public. Of course the ceremony is not officially recognized, and the state considers the children of such unions illegitimate. But the young couples know that their marriage is sacred in the sight of God and their

children are dedicated to Him."—From the February number of *Moody Monthly*.

### *Problems and Criticism. . . .*

During the past year especially, many and varied voices have been raised in the Christian Reformed Church, criticizing and questioning a like varied number of circumstances. Among other things these discussions have concerned themselves with marriage and divorce, unions and amalgamation with the world, millennialism, and prayer for the public schools. Especially this last has produced an amazing raising of "voices". It all began when someone criticized ministers praying for the public schools. The flood of counter-voices maintaining that such prayers were proper and called for, was so great that the *Banner* was finally closed to any further discussion of the matter and the Editor himself had to sound a warning note against the implications of many of the letters.

In respect to all these things, some discussion has been sound and encouraging in the reformatory tone that it struck. Much more of it, however, has been radical and reactionary. From it all, it becomes evident that the old struggle is reviving in the bosom of that church. Some would fling caution to the winds and develop honestly and whole-heartedly along the lines of "common grace" modernism. Others realizing the dangers and beginning to see, it seems, ever more clearly the pitfalls of this error, sound a word of warning and attempt to back-track or still hold to an impossible dualism. At times one is almost hopeful that a reformatory movement is possible. We wait and wonder.

How much and how far, the error of "common grace" has led some astray is clearly revealed in much that has been said. It has been written, for example, in connection with the Public School prayer question: ". . . he (referring to the original writer that opposed the practice, W.H.) may be surprised to find that in the common grace of a loving Father, God and the Bible and Christ *are still honored* in thousands of public school rooms of this country whose very coins are inscribed, 'In God we trust'." And again in another connection: "I, on the contrary, do not believe that a-millennialists have a well-articulated philosophy of history, one that includes a Christian conception of time, eternity, the validity and carry-over value of common grace achievements, of historically realized social structures, *et cetera*." Surely this is reaping what has been sown!

The most recent expression comes from a group of young people who call themselves The Youth and Calvinism Group. In a small 75 page booklet entitled "Youth Speaks on Calvinism", they have attacked what they consider weaknesses and deficiencies, and sound a call to greater Calvinistic action in every

sphere. The most striking and revealing of the eight essays which the book contains, is the last, which is entitled: "A Road Block". As the title indicates this is to reveal the barrier that accounts for these deficiencies and lack of progress. If it would be removed great advances could be made toward a true Calvinistic civilization.

And what is this "Road Block"? It is briefly stated in the following quotation: "Is a simple taboo of three particular amusements (referring to dancing, card-playing, and movies, W.H.) a satisfactory application of our doctrine of common grace to legitimate recreational and aesthetic needs?" Although this position has been severely criticized by competent reviewers and the Editor of *The Banner*, it is, nevertheless, revealing.

We would like to maintain that all these symptoms are only secondary. The *road itself* is an old impassable detour. The wash-out of "common grace" has made it an impossible road, and no simple warning sign will prevent travellers from rushing headlong into the ditch of its error.

If the Church has the grace and courage to get off this spur-track and return to the main-line of Scripture the road is clear. We do not maintain to have a pleasing answer for the flesh to the problems which our old-nature and this world can always raise, but we do maintain that the Light of Scripture and not the man-made philosophy of "common grace" must lead the way; difficult though that may be for the flesh to follow in the resulting Christian position and calling in this world of time and history.

"Van Kust Tot Kust" — Another Excerpt. . . .

"De Synode van South-Holland duurde een week. Een mooie avond was het, toen de drie kandidaten hun bul in ontvangst namen en Ds. Hoeksema een rede uitsprak over de betekenis van het ambt van de Dienaar des Woords. De gemeente van South-Holland en velen uit Oak Lawn waren daarbij tegenwoordig. Het was meteen een gezellig samenzijn, waarbij vier der predikanten een quartet vormden en hymnes zongen. Dat is, wat in de Amerikanen altijd aantrekt, men weet stemming en sfeer te scheppen; van stijve deftigheid, waardoor onze vergaderingen maar al te zeer gekenmerkt worden, is daar nooit sprake. Het blijft altijd gemoedelijk, ook bij de ernstige en moeilijkste onderwerpen en zelfs op de aller gewichtigste vergaderingen.

"Enkele dagen na deze synode waren we nog eenmaal de gasten van Ds. en Mevrouw Hoeksema. De week daarna vertrokken zij voor een vakantie-tocht. Ds. Hoeksema was vermoeid en hem was rust voorgeschreven door zijn arts. Het doel van de tocht was Bellflower, waar zijn schoonzoon woont. Op deze tocht kreeg hij een ernstige inzinking, zoodat hij terug vervoerd moest worden naar zijn pastorie. Enkele

maanden daarna, voor ons vertrek uit Amerika, hebben we hen nog even bezocht. Hij lag toen in een ligstoel in zijn mooie pastorietuin, in de nabijheid van de prinsesseboontjes, die ik hem nog had zien zaaien en die nu als rijpe vruchten aan de stok hingen. Toen ik hem bij dat zaaien gadesloeg, en hij mij lachend en zwetend tegemoet kwam, had ik hem herinnerd aan de psalmregels: Wie met tranen zaait, zal met gejuich maaïen. . . . Toen ik aan zijn ziekbed zat, moest ik opnieuw aan deze woorden denken. Hij heeft met tranen, zeer veel tranen, gezaaid, maar ook aan deze man wordt het woord der Schrift vervuld: Hij zal met gejuich maaïen, reeds nu in dit leven en straks rijke schoven dragen in Gods schuur. Hij is een trouwe dienstknecht, die niet met vlees en bloed te rade is gegaan."

W. Hofman.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Wednesday, February 23, our dear parents

DICK HEYS

and

ANNA HEYS—Mulder

hope to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our covenant God who has given us Christian parents and a home where we may know the fear of the Lord.

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

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Veltkamp

Mr. and Mrs. John Heys

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timmer

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Heys

Mr. and Mrs. George Kamps

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heys

Mr. and Mrs. Sieger Heys

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Dykema

Mr. and Mrs. John Braaksma

Richard Heys

Manhattan, Montana

and 16 grand-children.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Den 6den Januari behaagde het den Heere om tot zich te nemen onze geliefde echtgenoot, vader, grootvader, en overgrootvader;

MR. CORNELIUS SCHUITEMA

in den ouderdom van 75 jaren

Alhoewel dit verlies ons zeer smartelijk valt, zijn wij den Heere dankbaar voor de verzekering dat hij is ingegaan in de vreugde zijns Heeren, daarin kan onze bedroefde harten zingen.

De Familie:

Mrs. C. Schuitema (nee Heemstra)

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. P. Schuitema

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Schuitema

6 Kleinkinderen

1 achter-kleinkind

Grand Rapids, Michigan