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MEDITATION

Saved By The Dawn

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. . . . He saved us. . . ,"

Titus 3:4, 5b.

Saved by the dawn!

Saved by the Dawn of God!

The night had been so long and so dark!

Attend to the night: "folly, disobedience, deception, slavery of lust and pleasure, a home of malice and envy, hatred, so terrible that man is described as being hateful! To be hateful is worse than to hate on occasion. Hatefulness stresses the fact that this malignity is basic to our nature.

What a night!

That is the natural darkness of the human heart.

The Apostle is writing to one of his spiritual sons.

The occasion for the description of our night is found in the connection of our text. The Apostle had told his son to put his people in mind to be good. They had to be good in the midst of the evil ones. And when they stood in the midst of the dark night of sin and corruption, denouncing it at all times, they had to do it with all meekness. They should take care not to talk down to the people in haughty pride. They might not look down on the wicked and the evil, and say as the hypocrites do: Depart from me, for I am holier than thou! Oh no, but they should be very meek, tender-hearted, lowly in mind and demeanor, and that for a very good reason: at one time in your life you were not a whit better. For you also were sometimes foolish, etc.

And then follows a description of the night of sin and corruption. It tends to wholesomeness to read that description once in a while. It will take the pride of

life out of you if you have grace. Titus 3:3 is your name as you are by nature. Paul, at another place, says that we *are darkness*.

And then comes the text.

Be sure, beloved, (so reasons Paul) that you are meek among the wicked, for you at some time or another were also wicked and evil from morn till night. And you remained wicked and dark, until the Dawn of God appeared.

The Dawn of God!

It is the Face of God!

A Face of love and kindness!

* * * *

The Dawn of God!

The dawn is the appearance of the sun in the heavens. It is the harbinger of light.

O, when the sun appears in the heavens, as soon as the first glimmerings of light appear at the eastern horizon, the birds begin to sing. And as the light increases, the darkness must flee.

And so it is in the firmament of God's eternal love and mercy.

The Sun appeared.

Its name? Here it is: The kindness and the love of God.

How meagre are our words! How entirely inadequate is our speech, when we set ourselves to describe the beauty of the Sun of Righteousness. Let me state the same thing in another way: How are we to describe the beautiful Face of God?

His Face? Yes, the Face of God is the revelation of His inmost Being. And my text gives you a description of it. The Beaming Light-Face of God is His kindness and His love.

The Lord is kind. He loves to be kind.

Let us combine the two and look at them: if you can do it. Did you ever try to look into the shining light of the sun?

In order to understand somewhat what it means that God is kind, I must first know that He is love.

The love of God toward man appeared. Well, this

is such a wonderful virtue of God that the Greek word itself has found its way into our American vocabulary. It is the word *philanthropy*.

Philanthropy! One of the most wonderful words in the dictionary of the Holy Ghost. That is, from the point of view of the poor sinner, corrupt, and corrupting himself evermore, until he arrives into the very place of eternal corruption: the night of eternal hell.

O, beloved reader, look at that word, that Greek word which the Holy Ghost uses here to describe the Gospel of Eternal Light!

Philanthropy of God!

Attend to it that the word *philos* is used in the Septuagint for *friend* and that the word *anthropos* is the word for *man*.

Attend to it, study it, ponder on it. Read the Bible and let the whole Bible shed its light on that combination, and you will shout with glee and rejoicings.

The Friend of Man appeared in the heavens. No wonder that the title of Saviour is attached to the description of the Godhead here.

God, the Friend of Man!

Behold the Covenant idea!

I ask you: what is the root-meaning of a PHILOS? What is really that peculiar something which makes a friend a friend?

I will tell you: it is a man that is open unto you. It is a man that is so open unto you that his whole heart is directed at you and he is ready to take into himself all your heart. A friend is a man who is so attached to you that he wants to give you his whole heart, and in return he hungers for your heart.

Friends are exchangers of hearts.

And thus it is not strange that the word philanthropy is one of the words which is translated *love* in our modern language. And yet I rather translate as I did above.

But attend once more to the text: The Philanthropist appeared in the heavens.

It is God the Saviour of Man.

And this Saviour is an Philanthropist for He opens His heart to Man. He gives him His heart, and He calls to Man from the heavens: My son! give Me thy heart!

As such He is the shining Sun in the universe of His eternal mercy!

The Dawn of God!

* * * *

The Dawn of God!

It is the Open Heart of God, directed toward Man!

And in this connection we will see how the first virtue of the text belongs to the second, and springs from it: the kindness of God!

The kindness of God is the urgency of that open heart to go into action. It is the urge of the Godhead

to impart itself unto Man. It is the impassioned Heart of God to shower goodnesses and blessings upon and into Man.

Ah, but you know exactly what I am trying to tell you. The Lord God has provided weak shadows in your own lives.

Do you not remember? Do you remember how you loved, how you adored? Do you remember that your heart was entirely open, and how you hastened to show and to speak and to murmur and to do and to give and to shower a veritable flood of good things, words, gestures, smiles upon the object of your love? If you had searched the depths of your spirit you would have found that the urge would never be satisfied until you had given yourself, and received in return the object of all your yearning.

Oh yes, God has supplied you with weak, miserably weak shadows.

But however miserable our kindnesses may be, it is enough to show us the archetype, in its sublime beauty.

God the Philanthropist!

Study the word, and you will note that God has made one word out of two: friend and man. The Friend of Man! God succeeds, even as He always will to obtain the object of His desire. It is His desire to make Himself one with Man, and He succeeded. The word Philanthropia in the text is an evidence of God's success, and it is a prophecy of its ultimate triumph and completion.

Philanthropia!

It is Jesus of Nazareth.

Look upon the Face of that Babe, and you will recognize the Philanthropia of God.

Look upon His Face, and you will recognize God. It took Thomas a long time, but at long last he recognized the Face of the Babe. Listen to him, and tremble: My Lord, and my God!

Now look again, and you will recognize yourself: He is also Man. Oh, how He loved that name. If and when He would speak of Himself, He would use most often the name: Son of Man!

God has found the object of His eternal desire: He reveals Jesus! And Jesus is this: God has united Himself with Man. God's heart is so completely open to man that He has united Himself with us.

Look upon the Face of Jesus of Nazareth, and I assure you that when grace is your portion, you will at last murmur in the beginning of adoration: Immanuel! My Lord, and my God!

The Dawn of God!

* * * *

The Dawn of God!

Yes, beloved reader, the dawn of God has come. But also the night. Do you remember that scene in Isaiah? A man was wandering around in Dumah,

that is, Edom, and he cried: Watchman, what of the night? The matter was rather urgent so he repeats his anxious question: Watchman! what of the night? And the answer is: The morning cometh, and also the night!

Well now, that is strange! The morning cometh, the dawn is here. The light appears at the horizon. But then I cannot understand the sequel to the answer: and also the night.

Well, dear reader, you must distinguish. I can conceive of a smile, an enigmatic smile, on the face of a blind man when you start singing about the roseate dawn of the morning. That poor man smiles for it is still night with him, and the darkness of night abides with him, even though the sun may stand at the zenith.

Now, return to the several occasions when I subjoined the name of Man to the name of the Friend. Repeatedly I have said: God is the Love of Man, the Friend of Man. The Sun of Righteousness appeareth unto Man.

Oh yes, but it is the Man of God's goodpleasure.

First it is Jesus. He is the Friend of God originally and fundamentally.

When all is dark on the earth, and in the heart of all men, and when there are the signs that a still greater darkness of hell is a-preparing, then we see a Babe. And this Babe is the ONLY One who has His heart open to God in answer to God's open heart to Him. And this Babe is going to give His heart to God.

But, o miracle of all miracles! in the action of that heart-exchange, the heart of Jesus is bleeding. He brings a bleeding heart into the Inner Sanctuary, and that Inner Sanctuary is the Heart of the Triune God!

And when the heart, the bleeding heart of Jesus, enters the Inner Sanctuary, the juridical ground is laid for all intercourse between hearts of men and the heart of God.

It is only through this offering of the heart of Jesus that we are recipients of the heart of God. Eternally so, both from the point of view of the dizzying depths of the past, and the marvellous heights of the future.

Look to the horizon!

The Sun of God appears. His kindness and His Philanthropy!

Love toward Man!

The Dawn of God's eternal Gospel!

* * * *

How good it is, after a night of horrors, to see the light of the dawn of a new day, where you will be delivered of all your nightmares.

Yes, but is that for all men?

No, it is for the Man of His goodpleasure.

It is necessary to have Jesus for your Substitute in the heart of God. If Jesus has not paid for you in the Inner Sanctuary, then the heart of God remains closed to you.

It is only for those who are the foreknown of His eternal love that the dawn appears.

For the others? Listen to the watchman of Isaiah: "and also the night!"

It was very dark in the heart of Judas. And he walked with the Light of the World!

It was gloomy in the council chamber of the Sanhedrin. You could "feel" the darkness in and around the Hall of Justitia of Pilate (I hear the terrible laughter of a God!). And the Light of God's loving heart stood before him with a bleeding Face. He would add to that blood, and so make the light of God's love more radiant. Pilate proves his darkness by allowing Jesus to be scourged and beaten, to be tortured and to be slain. Oh yes, he will add to the blood.

The morning had come! Must I prove it? Well, come along! we will go to the garden of Joseph. Hold on, do not be rash! Take off your shoes from off your feet: the place where you walk is holy ground.

The morning is come! There He is, at the extreme horizon. What golden light; what radiant beauty! Jesus begins His eternal song: the song of the Lamb. It tells of the love of God for you, my brother.

But, o horrors, what of that watch? They become as dead men. They drop their swords and run as though the very devil were at their heels. And they are dark, in darkness, and they shall accumulate more darkness when the advice of the Sanhedrin is heard and followed.

But Mary weeps.

She loves the Light of God. As no one ever did. She heard the Voice of God that beckoned to the shore. And standing there she saw, she saw the Face of God all radiant with light of love!

No, Mary weeps no more. She came to halls where light is ever bright, where God is near and songs are made, the melodies of love that is eternal. She is in heaven, the source of dawn and sun and light, where darkness will be gone forever.

Oh, blessed Dawn!

G. Vos.

NOTICE TO OUR CHURCHES!

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches hereby informs the Churches that Candidate Homer C. Hoeksema is able to consider a call from one of our churches and that he has received six weeks time to consider such a call.

By order of the Synod of 1949,
D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

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EDITORIALS

Propositions Concerning The Covenant Of Grace

The Revs. Bos and van Teylingen continue their repudiation of what they consider errors concerning the covenant of grace as follows:

"2. Every opinion which, in the nature of the covenant promise with respect to elect and non-elect children of the covenant, introduces a distinction which denies that the full covenant promise comes seriously to all."

In this connection we must quote at the same time proposition 3.

"Every opinion, which does not take account of the fact, that the full covenant promise, although seriously coming to all the children of the covenant, works through efficaciously only in the elect."

Now, here we have again the crux of the whole question concerning the covenant about which there is difference between the liberated and the synodicals. And one could wish that the Revs. Bos and van Teylingen had expressed themselves more explicitly and clearly on the matter.

In the first proposition under the head "Rejection and Errors" they stated that they reject every opinion that makes the covenant promise a conditional assurance.

And with this we could, of course, quite agree. For the promise of God can never be conditional.

But now they state that the full covenant promise comes seriously to all, that is, of course, to all children of believers that are born under the covenant.

The question is, of course, just what do they mean by this. Or do they intentionally choose this particular language to avoid the question for the sake of compromise? When they state in unison that the full promise comes to all, elect and non-elect children that are born under the covenant, do they both mean the same thing? Or does the Rev. Bos mean by "the full covenant promise to all" one thing, and the Rev. van Teylingen another?

In a way this expression may be understood in the sense that the preaching of the Word comes to all that hear and that therefore through the preaching the promise of salvation comes to all. This is expressed in Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 8: "As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called, should come to him. He, moreover, serious-

ly promises eternal life and rest to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him."

But notice, in the first place, that even in this article of the Canons the promise is not presented as universal, but particular. It is not for all, but for "as many as shall come to him, and believe on him." And that means in last instance that the promise is for the elect only.

Besides, why speak in this connection of the covenant at all? Is not the external calling of the Word universal in the sense that it comes to all to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel and not only to those that are born under the covenant? In that sense of the word, therefore, you can preach the gospel of the promise to all even in a heathen world.

Or does the proposition after all mean to leave the impression not that in the preaching of the Word the promise is externally presented to all, that all that are under the covenant are in contact with the promise through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, but that the promise *is* for all, that on God's part the full covenant promise is meant for all the children of the covenant? In that case the promise is changed into a certain well-meaning offer of salvation.

And this is the covenant view of the late Prof. Heyns lauded at least in the early numbers of *De Reformatie* since the liberation by the leaders of the liberated churches. According to Heyns the very essence of the covenant is the promise, "I will be your God." This promise, according to him, is objectively for all that are born under the covenant. God gives to all that are born in the historic line of the covenant the right to the promise. With all He establishes His covenant in the real sense of the word. All He adopts as children and heirs. All He gives the right to be incorporated into Christ. And all have the right to the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. All in the book of the testator are mentioned as heirs. All that is contained in the promise is an objective bequest to whosoever are born under the covenant.

But, of course, also Prof. Heyns faces the question why all are not saved and why all do not receive the benefits promised.

And to this question he has his own peculiar answer. He realizes, of course, that the Holy Ghost alone can apply unto us all that we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal. But whether the Holy Spirit will make the heirs of the promise actual possessors of the benefits of Christ depends upon the use they make of a certain grace which all receive and which enables them to accept or to reject the promise and their covenant obligations.

Is it this that the Revs. Bos and van Teylingen mean when they say that the covenant promise seriously comes to all?

In the light of the preceding proposition it seems that they mean something else. For they state, as we have written before, that the promise is not a conditional assurance. And also in the light of the following proposition, which we already quoted above, we receive the impression that they mean something else. For there they assert positively that the covenant promise efficaciously works through only in the elect.

May I ask them to clarify their own meaning, either in the *Standard Bearer* or in *Eenigheid des Geloofs*?

But it is clear that in this particular proposition both the Rev. Bos and van Teylingen attempt to express something favorable of all that are born under the covenant.

And I ask: Why should they make that attempt, seeing that Scripture so plainly speaks of a two-fold seed running along the line of election and reprobation and that, according to Rom. 9, election and reprobation cut right through the historical line of the covenant?

With the positive statement under proposition 3, we are, of course, in agreement. Every opinion must certainly be rejected that does not take account of the fact that the full covenant promise works through efficaciously only in the elect.

But the Revs. Bos and van Teylingen ought to have placed themselves consciously and deliberately before the question: what is the effect of the promise of God and that, too, according to His own purpose upon those in whom that promise does not work efficaciously unto salvation?

I would like to have an answer to the question: why was Esau under the covenant?

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Young People's Society of South Holland, Illinois hereby wishes to extend its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Lewis Bruinsma Jr., in the loss of his father,

LEWIS BRUINSMA SR.

May our Covenant God comfort and sustain the bereaved with His Word and Spirit with the blessed assurance that nothing befalleth us without the will of our Heavenly Father.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God".—Romans 8:28.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Agnes A. Van Baren, Sec'y.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXVII.

1.

The Sign and Its Meaning (Continued)

But, perhaps, even if that question is put to you point blank, you will answer: "No, of course: even that water of baptism that is sprinkled upon my forehead by the Church does not wash away my sin." Yet it is by no means superfluous to ask the question which the Heidelberg Catechism puts to us in Question and Answer 72, "Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?" And the answer: "Not at all: for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin." The fact is that our sinful nature is so constituted because of sin, it is so inclined to superstition, idolatry, and formal worship, that we readily put our trust for our salvation in other things than the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, so that we say in our heart that if only we are baptized by the church institute we are saved. Thus the Jews of the old dispensation boasted of being children of Abraham if they were only circumcised, although they were far from being spiritual sons of Abraham. And this is often still the case. It is not in vain when the parents are addressed in the midst of the Church on the occasion of the baptism of their children and admonished that they should not receive the sign of baptism as a matter of superstition or as an external form and custom.

The theory that baptism as a rite administered by the Church is always effective is expressed in the Latin term, *ex opere operato*, which means that grace is conferred upon him that is baptized through the act performed. The baptism therefore has a magic effect. This theory was developed at a very early age in the Church, especially in connection with the baptism of infants. Even Augustine held this theory. Baptism according to him was absolutely necessary unto salvation; it removes the guilt of original sin. And later the Roman Catholic Church fully accepted the theory expressed in the term *ex opere operato*. Not only in case of infants, but in the baptism of adults also the outward sign is always effective. It expressed this officially in "The Canons and Decrees of the Council

of Trent", where, in the decree of the Sacraments, we read in Canon VIII: "*Si quis dixerit, per ipsa novae legis sacramenta ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, sed solam fidem divinae promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere: anathema sit.*" Which means that they pronounce him accursed who denies that the sacraments do not confer grace upon him that receives them through the act performed, but who insists that faith only in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace. And also in Canon VI of the same chapter this theory is expressed in the following words: "*Si quis dixerit, sacramenta novae legis non continere gratiam, quam significant; aut gratiam ipsam non ponentibus obicem non conferre; quasi signa tantum externa sint acceptae per fidem gratiae, vel justitiae, et notae quaedam Christianae professionis, quibus apud homines discernuntur fideles ab infidelibus; anathema sit.*" Which means that he is pronounced accursed who claims that the sacraments as such do not contain the grace which they signify, or that they do not confer that grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereunto, but who insists that they were outward signs of grace or righteousness received through faith and certain marks of the Christian profession whereby believers are distinguished among men from unbelievers. Cf. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, pp. 120-121.

According to the Roman Catholics the grace bestowed on him that is baptized delivers *ex opere operato* from the guilt of original sin and of all actual sins committed up to the time of baptism. It also delivers from the corruption or defilement of sin and from eternal punishment. It incorporates the one baptized into the communion of saints and effects spiritual renewal by the infusion of sanctifying grace. From all this it should be evident that it is by no means superfluous to ask the question, "Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?" And this question the Catechism answers in the negative. The mere fact that you have received the outward sign of baptism by the Church does not mean that your sins are washed away. The mere fact that in an outward sense you are members of the Church in the world does not mean that inwardly and spiritually you are members of the body of Christ. To have your names on the church roll does not mean that you have your names in the book of life of the Lamb. The church register is not an exact copy of the book of life in heaven. It is therefore indeed possible to be externally baptized and to be an external worshiper and an external member of the Church in the world and have no part with Christ and all His benefits. As the apostle Paul writes in Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the

heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

And positively the Catechism answers that "the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin."

We must understand that even the expression "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" is figurative. Blood in itself cleanses no more than water. And the blood of Jesus Christ refers to the life of the Good Shepherd which He poured out on the cross. Christ poured out His life when He shed His blood on the accursed tree. And that act of pouring out His life was an act of perfect obedience. No one took His life from Him, not even when they hammered the nails through His hands and feet; but He laid it down voluntarily. The nails whereby they fastened Him to the cross would have been without effect if the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had not accompanied that wicked deed of the ungodly by an act of His own will whereby He shed His own blood drop by drop. And because the pouring out of His life was an act of perfect obedience and love, therefore the blood of Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice itself, the life that was shed in obedience to the Father for the remission of sin. Such is the significance of the blood of Christ.

And that blood of Christ alone is able to cleanse us from all sin. There is no other remedy that can cleanse us from sin except that act of perfect obedience that was accomplished by Christ when He shed His blood and poured out His life.

This is not changed when the Catechism adds that not only the blood of Jesus Christ, but also His Spirit cleanses us from all sin. This does not mean that after all there are two efficient causes for the washing away of sin, the blood of Jesus Christ and His Spirit; but these two are one. There is in all the world only one remedy, only one power, whereby we may have the remission of sin and whereby our sins are washed away: and that is the blood of Christ. But it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ that takes our soul into that blood-bath and washes away the guilt of sin to justify us, and the pollution of sin to sanctify us. It is the Spirit that takes the blood of Christ and pours it over our souls, completely cleansing us from all iniquity. Or, to abandon the figure, the Spirit of Jesus Christ applies unto us the death of the Saviour and causes us to partake of and appropriate that deed of Christ whereby He poured out His life as a sacrifice for sin, so that it becomes our own by a true and living faith. More than nineteen hundred years ago Christ poured out His life unto death; and by that one sacrifice every last one of the elect were cleansed from sin objectively. The blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, which He shed more than nineteen centuries ago, did indeed cleanse

the souls of all the elect from all sin. That is an accomplished fact and can never be made more perfect. But that blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the accursed tree must reach our soul. We are born in sin, guilty, corrupt, defiled, enemies of God. And if the guilt of our sin is to be washed away from our consciences, so that we are able to say that we are righteous before God, and if the pollution of sin is to be washed away from our souls in sanctification, then the blood of Jesus Christ must be made efficacious and must be applied unto us. And that is the work of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, when the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that the blood of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin, we must not understand this as meaning that there are really two remedies for the remission of sin, but rather that the blood of Jesus Christ is made efficacious for us by the Holy Spirit.

Of this power of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse away our sins and of this grace of the Holy Spirit whereby He brings our souls into a saving contact with that blood of Christ baptism is a sign and seal. It teaches us, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, "that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ;" and further, "that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really, as we are externally washed with water." The act of the Holy Spirit whereby He cleanses our souls from guilt and pollution of sin is, of course, spiritual and wholly invisible. You have never seen a soul washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. But nevertheless it is very real, no less real than the washing of your body by water. But how shall we possibly apprehend the reality of the cleansing of our soul unless God Himself brings it in a very definite way into our consciousness. And this He does in the first place by the preaching of the Word and the proclamation of the promise. But in the second place, He also accomplishes that same end by the sign and seal of baptism. Just as in the preaching of the Word He proclaims to our ear that our sins are forgiven forever in the blood of Christ, so in baptism He places that same reality of the washing away of our sins before our very eyes in a sign and seal. For He accompanies the sign of baptism with His sure promise, the promise that just as surely as water washes away the filth of our bodies, so surely He washes away the filth of our soul in and through the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. But just as the promise of the gospel is not for all, but only for the elect; and just as the atonement of Christ is not universal, but particular; so also the promise of God as signified and sealed in the sacrament of baptism is not general, but particular, is not for all that are baptized, but only for the believers, that is, therefore, for the elect.

2.

Different Views of the Covenant

In Question 74 the Heidelberg Catechism treats the question of the baptism of infants. In reply to the question whether infants are to be baptized it states: "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 the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the christian church." Here, therefore, we meet with the idea of the covenant as the ground for infant baptism, and baptism is presented as a sign of the covenant.

In this connection, the only proper connection we have as far as the Heidelberg Catechism is concerned, we must therefore discuss the Reformed conception of the covenant. This doctrine since the time of the Reformation has occupied an important place in Reformed theology and a dominating position in the life of the Reformed churches. It is a peculiarly Reformed heritage, even more distinctively so than the doctrine of sovereign predestination. For while the latter truth is held by other than the Reformed churches, the truth of the covenant was developed exclusively by them.

This development of and emphasis on the truth of the covenant is not to be traced in the first place to Calvin as its source, and certainly not to Melancton, the synergist, as some would contend, but rather to Bullinger and the Swiss theologians. Calvin does indeed speak of the covenant, both in his insistence on the unity of the old and new testaments and in his defense of the baptism of infants; but he does so rather in passing. Cf. Calvin, *Institutio*, II, 10, pp. 1, ff. It was through contact with Zurich that Olevianus and the Reformed theologians of Germany gave the doctrine of the covenant an integral place in their theology. And through the same contact this truth received a place in the theological system of the theologians of Reformed persuasion in the Netherlands, such as Junius, Gomarus, Trelcatius Sr. and Jr., and in England, of whom may be mentioned the names of Thomas Blake, Perkins, and James Ussher. Cf. Dr. G. Vos, *De Verbondsleer in de Gereformeerde Theologie*, pp. 6 ff.; H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, III, 217. The development seems to have been thus, that the idea of the covenant was applied first of all to the relation between God and His elect in Christ Jesus and to the way of salvation, and later to the relation between God and Adam in the state of rectitude. The former became known as the covenant of grace; the latter was known by various terms, such as, the covenant of works, the covenant of nature, the covenant of the law.

That in the history of Reformed thought the idea of the so-called covenant of works was developed later than that of the covenant of grace is evident from the Reformed confessions: for while some of the earlier confessions, such as the Confessio Belgica and the Heidelberg Catechism, do speak of the covenant of grace, they fail to mention the covenant of works. Cf. Confessio Belgica, Art. 34; Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 74. And not only are they silent concerning the covenant relation between God and man in the state of rectitude, but it is a striking fact that in their explanation of original sin they follow exclusively the organic line and omit the idea of imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity altogether. Cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 7; Confessio Belgica, Art. 15; Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 1-3. This may be considered all the more important in view of the fact that Reformed Theologians generally adopted the creationist view of the origin of the individual human soul. Even the Canons of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, attribute the corruption of the human nature wholly to the propagation of the fallen and corrupt human nature of our first parents. The idea of federal imputation is not so much as suggested. Cf. Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 1-3. Only when we come to the Westminster Confession, which dates from the middle of the seventeenth century, do we find mention of the covenant of works and in close connection therewith of the imputation of original guilt as a basis for the corruption of all mankind. Cf. Westminster Confession, Ch. 6, 3. Since that time, however, also the idea that the original relation between God and man was that of a covenant was generally accepted and developed by Reformed theologians everywhere. The covenant idea occupies an essential place in any Reformed system of dogma. Reformed theology is federal theology.

Yet it cannot be said that there is unanimity of opinion among Reformed theologians of the idea of the covenant.

When we consult our Reformed confessions, we find little or nothing that can be of aid to us in defining the idea of the covenant. The Heidelberg Catechism merely declares that infants "as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God", but does not define the idea of the covenant at all. The Confessio Belgica condemns the error of the Anabaptists, "who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received, and moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised, upon the same promises which are made unto our children." Art. XXXIV. Our Baptism Form speaks of "an eternal covenant of grace" which God the Father seals unto us, and of two parts in the covenant, our part consisting in this, that we are

“obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life;” and it declares that “baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God.” And children of believers are said to be entitled to baptism “as heirs of the kingdom of God and of his covenant.” Cf. Baptism Form, doctrinal part. All this is indeed significant, but it offers no definition of the covenant.

The Westminster Confession reflects the later development of the covenant idea in English theology. It describes the covenant with Adam as something added to his relation to God as creature and as “a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.” It speaks of the covenant of grace as a second covenant “wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved.” Cf. Westminster Confession, ch. 6, 1-3. Here we meet with the idea of the covenant as something additional and secondary, a way to a certain goal, a means to an end; and it is this notion that has become rather prevalent in Reformed theology.

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Grace Of God

(continued)

We concluded our preceding article with the observation that the root or fundamental meaning of the word “grace” is beauty, attractiveness. This applies to the Hebrew “chen” and also to the Greek “charis”. And we noted that this fundamental meaning of “beauty, attractiveness,” is clearly expressed in passages as Prov. 22:11 and Luke 4:22, in connection with which we made a few remarks. Let us now attend to various uses of the word “grace” in the Holy Scriptures.

Its Use In Holy Writ.

In the first place, I would call attention to Scriptural passages in which it is self-evident that the word “grace” signifies more than a mere attitude. We must bear in mind that the concept “grace”, is very common-

ly defined as the Lord’s unmerited favour to sinners,—His “Common Grace” is the Lord’s unmerited favour to all sinners. However, Scripture surely uses the word “grace” in a sense which shows conclusively that the word signifies more than a mere attitude. We read in Ps. 45:2: “Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever”. It is evident that the word “grace” is not merely to be understood in the sense of: unmerited favour. The significance of “beauty, attractiveness,” is certainly better suited to the text. We have already called attention to Prov. 22:11 in our preceding article. Neither need we call attention at this time to Luke 4:22. In Col. 4:6 we read: “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man”. The implication of these words is evidently that our speech must always be “tasty,” seasoned, we read, with salt. It must be “tasty” in the spiritual sense of the word. This does not mean, we understand, that it must be “tasty,” attractive in the sense that it be appealing to all men. But, it must be with grace, tasty and attractive, in the sense that it be characterize at all times by the beauty of the truth and of the Word of God. Only then, when thus it is always with grace, will our speech be such that we may know how we ought to answer every one. And in I Pet. 2:19, 20 we read: “For this is thankworthy (literally: for this is grace, “charis,”), if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” It should be quite evident that the common definition of grace, “unmerited favour,” does not apply in the interpretation of this passage of the apostle, Peter. In all these passages the word “grace” must be understood in the fundamental, objective sense of: beauty, attractiveness, charm.

Secondly, the word also appears in Holy Writ in a subjective sense, in the sense of an attitude of gracefulness, a gracious disposition, a friendly willingness or inclination of the heart which one may assume over against or with reference to another. This appears particularly in connection with the expression, “to find grace in the eyes of another,” which occurs repeatedly in Holy Writ. We read in Gen. 6:8: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” And in Gen. 19:19: “Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.” And in Gen. 32:5; 33:10, 15 we read: “And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. . . . And

Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. . . . And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord." See also Gen. 34:11, 39:4, 47:25, 29, 50:4. This expression also occurs in the New Testament. We read in Luke 1:30: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God." And the first martyr of the Church of the New Dispensation, in his defence before the Jewish council, speaking of David, declares in Acts 7:46: "Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob." The word, translated "favour" in these texts, is literally "grace, charis." To find favour or grace in the eyes of another certainly implies an attitude of gratefulness or a gracious disposition on the part of that particular person unto us. Hence, the word "grace" occurs in Holy Writ in this sense of the word.

Thirdly, when this grace of God extends to a people who are in and of themselves guilty and condemnable sinners, it, of course, assumes the significance of unmerited and forfeited grace or favour. This explains, e.g., why the Word of God uses the word "grace" as opposed to debt or obligation or work. Such is the teaching of the Scriptures in Rom. 5:5: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." And in Rom. 3:24-25 we read: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." In chapter 11, verse 6 the same apostle declares: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." And in Eph. 1:7 we read: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." That the word "grace" assumes in Scripture the significance of unmerited favour or grace and therefore stands opposed to works is not because the idea of unmerited favour expresses the fundamental significance of the word. This, however, is due to the fact that the recipients of this grace of God are unworthy and condemnable sinners. When we view this grace of God, therefore, from the viewpoint of them who receive it necessarily assumes the significance of unmerited favour.

Fourthly, the word "grace" also appears in the Word of God as the efficacious, almighty, and irresistible power of God, cleansing us from all the power and filth of sin and corruption. In this sense it denotes an operation of the Lord upon and in the corrupt and

dead sinner. That the word is used in this sense is beyond all doubt. In Eph. 1:5-6 we read: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." The expression, "wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved," reads literally: "Wherein He hath *graced* us in the Beloved." The translation, "Wherein He hath made us *accepted* in the Beloved," proceeds from the subjective idea of the word, "grace," and expresses the idea that the Lord is graciously disposed to us. However, fundamentally this does not make a particle of difference. Fact is, the Lord *has made* us accepted in the Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Lord. To say that the Lord has graced us or to declare that He has made us accepted in the Beloved is the same. Fact is, the text speaks of that operation of the Lord whereby we, who are by nature objects of wrath, have become the objects of His favour and pleasure. And notice, also, that this work of the Lord whereby He graced us or made us accepted in the Beloved is further described by the apostle in the verses that follow. This "having graced us or made us accepted in Christ Jesus" refers definitely to a work of the living God which he accomplished for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His death and resurrection and glorification at the right hand of God. Besides, verse 6 reads: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Hence, in this text "grace" is mentioned by the apostle as the power whereby we were made accepted in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Besides this passage in Eph. 1, however, Scripture repeatedly speaks of the grace of God as an efficacious, almighty, irresistible power of God. We read in John 1:16: "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Grace, here, is *something which we have received*. And in I Pet. 1:13 we read: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The apostle speaks in this text of "the grace *that is to be brought unto you* at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The reference undoubtedly is to the fulness which shall be bestowed upon the Church in the day of Jesus Christ, and this fulness of salvation is associated by the apostle with the "grace that is to be brought unto us." Of importance, in this connection, are the apostolic blessings and benedictions which appeared throughout the epistles of the New Testament. In I Pet. 1:1-2 we read: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multi-

plied." And well-known is the apostolic benediction in II Cor. 13:13: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." Throughout the New Testament these apostolic greetings occur, with slight variations, according to the nature and the condition of the congregation unto which they are directed. These are not to be regarded merely as apostolic greetings in the sense that they are but personal salutations of the apostles. They are *apostolic* greetings to the Church of Jesus Christ; in them the apostles, led or inspired by the infallible Holy Spirit declare *God's blessing* upon His people, that His grace and mercy and peace are upon them and will continue to be bestowed upon them. In these apostolic greetings the "grace" of God undoubtedly refers to all the spiritual blessings, the efficacious operations of the Holy Spirit which the Lord bestows upon and operates within the Church. The "mercy" and "peace", whereof we read in these apostolic greetings are but certain aspects of this grace of God. For example, peace, the peace of God and therefore blessed assurance that, come what may and whatever may betide, all is well, was needed particularly by the "elect strangers" to whom the apostle, Peter, directed his epistles. That church was a congregation of "elect strangers", strangers in the midst of the world and regarded as such by the world, and about to suffer a fierce persecution. They were surely in need of peace, the blessed assurance that all was well. Hence, in harmony with their particular need, the apostle adds this peace in his apostolic greeting to that Church of the living God. Finally, that the word "grace" must be understood in this efficacious, irresistible sense of the word is also evident from a passage as Eph. 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." In this text "grace" is the power of God which has saved us.

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Its Significance.

God is Himself the God of all grace. Of importance at this time is the expression or phrase in Scripture in I Peter 5:10: "But the God of *all grace*, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." We refer, of course, to the phrase: "the God of all grace." This implies two things. In the first place, God Himself is the God of all grace. God Himself and God only is gracious or grace. Grace is therefore an attribute of His being. If this were not true He could not be the God of *all* grace. That He is the God of all grace surely implies that all grace is in Him, that there is no grace outside Him, that grace is, therefore, an attribute of His being

and that it is exclusively a Divine attribute. And, secondly, the expression implies that the Lord is the Source of all grace for the creature. The apostle is surely speaking of the grace of God which the congregation received, the grace as we become the blessed recipients of it. Concerning this grace the apostle writes that the Lord is the God of all grace. Hence, He only gives that which makes the creature graceful. There is for the creature no grace outside the Lord.

God is the God of all grace. This is true, first of all, objectively, with respect to God Himself. That the Lord *is* His virtues applies to all the attributes of God. God *is* grace, mercy, righteousness, holiness, etc. Thus we read in Ex. 34:6: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Mind you, in this text, according to the preceding fifth verse, the Lord proclaims unto Moses the *Name of the Lord*. Hence, the Lord Himself *is* merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth. And in Psalm 86:15 we read: "But Thou, O Lord, art a God *full* of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." And in Psalm 103:8: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." That God *is* the God of all grace, in the objective sense of the word, implies that He is, in the absolute sense of the word, the implication of eternal and infinite perfections, of all goodness, the God of eternal and infinite beauty and attractiveness. However, God is the God of all grace also in the subjective sense of the word. He is not only the God of eternal and infinite perfections but He also knows Himself as such. Eternally He delights Himself in His eternal and infinite beauty. Fact is, according to Psalm 16, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Also subjectively, therefore, He is the God of all grace—He finds favour in His own eyes forevermore. Hence, that God Himself is the God of all grace signifies that He is, within Himself, and in the absolute sense of the word, the God of infinite beauty and perfection, and also that as such He contemplates Himself with infinite delight.

Moreover, God is also the God of all grace for and unto His people. For the Lord has eternally willed to reveal Himself in all the beauty of His Being and Life. He has willed to reveal Himself in all His infinite grace and perfection. And this our God willed to do in the highest sense of the word. And because He has willed to reveal His beauty and glory in the highest sense of the word, He sovereignly chose the way of sin and grace. He willed the darkness to reveal His light and the hopelessness of our sin and guilt in order to reveal the amazing power of His grace and love. For all eternity must testify that the Lord alone is the God of all grace, and that we are the

objects of His love and favour only through His sovereign mercy and compassion. It is for this reason that God is for us the God of all grace only in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. This truth receives the emphasis throughout the Word of God. The blood of the Christ is as a scarlet thread which runs throughout the Old Dispensation, and the law of the Old Testament is called, in Gal. 3, a schoolmaster which led the people of God unto the Lord Jesus Christ. And the entire New Testament proclaims the truth that the Name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby we can be saved. Everywhere, we say, this receives the emphasis also in the New Testament, as, e.g., in the apostolic blessings or benedictions, such as Paul's salutation in Eph. 1:1-2: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." We may, therefore, conclude that the grace of God is that operation of the Lord, in and through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, whereby He makes His people perfect as He Himself is perfect, pure as He Himself is pure, drawing them irresistibly unto Himself, until they finally shall stand before Him without spot and without wrinkle as an assembly of the elect in life eternal.

Hence, the grace of God is never common but always particular. It is surely striking that the word "grace", even according to the exponents of the theory of "Common Grace", is almost exclusively used in the Scriptures with respect to the elect. Prof. Hepp of the Netherlands produces but one Scriptural proof in support of his contention that there is such a general goodness or grace of God, Is. 26:10. Prof. Berkhof calls attention to only two Scriptural passages, namely, Is. 26:10 and Jer. 16:13. And the late Prof. Bavinck declares that the word "grace" never applies in Scripture to the creature in general or to the heathens. Secondly, the grace of God is particular because it is Divinely sovereign. Not our love of God is first, but God's love toward us is first. For, "this is not love that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And, indeed, the Lord loved us *while we were yet sinners*, and reconciled us unto Himself through the death of His Son. And this also applies to the grace of God. That grace is always Sovereignly first. He operates in whom He pleases. When He begins to work within us, and only then, we become perfect as He is perfect. Besides, this grace of God is irresistible. Hence, the grace of God is not common; if it were, all the world would be saved. And, thirdly, the grace of God cannot be common because the gracious God is the God Who delighteth in perfection. The reprobate wicked are vile and corrupt. Such is Scripture's testimony concerning them—see Psalm 14 and Rom. 3. And the godly, by

nature corrupt even as are the others, in themselves objects of wrath and children of disobedience, are the objects of Divine favour only because of the grace of God toward them in Christ Jesus. The Lord delights in His people only as He sees and knows them in Christ. This the people of the Lord know by experience. They know and experience that, in paths of sin, they do not experience the nearness and fellowship of the Lord. We can taste that the Lord is good, can experience His pardoning love and mercy, can exercise communion and fellowship with the Lord only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves only them who are holy as He is holy. His grace is never common but always particular. And we may conclude, therefore, with the remark that the grace of God is the power of the Lord, whereby He, Himself the God of infinite perfection, objectively and subjectively, draws His people unto Himself, makes them gracious as He is gracious, through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, and has fellowship with them now in principle and afterwards in eternal and heavenly perfection, even as He has fellowship with Himself as the Triune God of infinite goodness and perfection.

H. Veldman.

Reply To Rev. Petter

(Continued)

As we saw, my dictionary defines the concept "condition" (always, of course, as a sentence element in your proposition) as follows: "Condition: that on which something else is contingent." You don't like that definition, brother. You say that it is a borderline definition, and that it does not really apply. I promised to show that it is the only correct definition. To this task I now address myself.

In my previous article I made the following statement, "Had you published all the definitions of the term in question contained in your dictionary, it would have appeared that so far from the truth it is that my definition is border-lined as to its character that it would have become plain to all that it is the only truly correct definition." So I wrote. I am now able to give proof for the truth of that statement. And this for the following reason. The postman has just delivered to my address the latest issue of the "*Concordia*" containing your reply to the missive of Rev. Herman Veldman. In this reply you include some definitions of the term "condition" contained in *your* dictionary. These definitions are in perfect, *substantial* agreement with the one I first used. Allow

me to make this plain to you and to all who read this article from my pen.

Your definitions read: 1) *Condition*, an event, fact or the like that is necessary to the occurrence of some other, though not its cause; a pre-requisite. 2) Or, something required as a pre-requisite to a promise or to its fulfillment."

Let us concentrate first on the definition under 1. It raises this question: If the *condition*, the *event* or *fact* is the *necessity* but not the *cause* of the occurrence of that *other event*, what, then, is its *cause*? The answer is the usage of the term *condition in logic*. What is this usage? Allow me to quote my encyclopedia.

"In logic the term 'condition' is closely related to 'cause' in so far as it is applied to prior events, etc., in the absence of which another event, called the effect, would take place. It is, however, different from 'cause' inasmuch as a 'cause' usually consists of a multiplicity of conditions each of which is indispensable, but only the totality of which is adequate to the production of the effect. (The Encyclopedia Britannica, Fourteenth Addition, Vol. 6, p. 220)."

Let us take notice. Both in the field of physical and mental-spiritual phenomena a condition is a *producing, an efficient cause as to its essential idea*. Such, certainly, is the implication of the statement that a cause consists of a *multiplicity of conditions*. We now understand your definition, brother. A condition is not a cause *only* in the sense that *alone* it is inadequate to the production of the effect. But it *is* a cause nevertheless as to its idea and working. The only reason of its impotency as an effect-producing circumstance is the absence of the other conditions indispensable to the production of that effect. We see, then, what it would mean were God saving His people *on the condition* of their faith. It would needs mean that the faith of the believers, their will to believe, were the *producing*, that is, the efficient cause of God's saving them; that their faith sovereignly moves God to take pity on them and produces in Him the will to save them. And this in turn would needs imply that they, the believers, originate their own faith. It is plain that this whole condition-theology is as unscriptural as any thought-structure can possibly be unscriptural. God is not a man that He can be influenced and moved by the creature. He is God. Being God *who is God* He worketh all things according to the counsel of *His* will. Being God *who is God* He doeth all *His* good-pleasure. Being God *who is God* He hath mercy on whom *He* will have mercy, and whom *He* will He hardeneth.

Let us now attend to your definition under 2, which, of course, is in substantial agreement with your definition under 1. According to *your* dictionary a condition

is also something required as a pre-requisite to a promise or to its fulfillment. In a word, God promises salvation to His people on the condition that they believe. And He assures them that He will fulfill His promise to them again on the condition that they believe. Here, too, the will of man to believe is the efficient, the producing, cause of the act of God whereby He saves all such who believe. What this again must mean if words have meaning, and if words are used according to the meaning that they have in the dictionary, is that man, the believers, originate their own faith.

In the light of these observations it is as plain as can be, isn't it, that the definition I first used is thoroughly correct. For if God saves men on the condition of their faith; if He must be moved by men's faith in saving them; if faith is of man and not of God, it must needs follow that the salvation of God's people, being, as it is, contingent on their own capricious, arbitrary, yet sovereign will, is uncertain even for God; it may or may not occur. For a condition, also in the field of mental-spiritual phenomena, is an efficient, a producing cause. To illustrate: I will do so and so on the condition that you do so and so. The implications here are plain. What I will do awaits your decision and is the result thereof. My will is subject to your will, and your will as translated into action is the cause of action on my part. Apply the illustration to the proposition: God saves His people on the condition that they believe. What God will do, awaits the decision of man and is the result thereof. God's will is subject to the will of man, and man's will to believe is the cause of God's saving him. It is again plain that there can be no conditions with God. So you see that the definition I first used is correct—correct according to the very definitions with which you supplied me.

However, there is still to be considered one more element in the term condition (as a sentence-element in your proposition). This element is brought out by the definition of the term *condition* which I published in my preceding article. This definition, which of course is in substantial agreement with the ones already considered, reads as follow, "A requisite; something the non-concurrence or non-fulfillment of which would prevent a result from taking place; a pre-requisite; hence, a restricting or limiting circumstance; a restriction or limitation. To understand this definition we must again have before our mind that a cause consists of a multiplicity of conditions each of which is indispensable but only the totality of which is adequate to the production of the effect. This being true, it follows that the non-concurrence or non-fulfillment of any one of the conditions prevents the result or the effect from taking place. Hence, so conceived, a condition is a limiting circumstance indeed. It directly limits, restricts, all the other conditions involved as without its concurrence the others are inadequate to

the production of the effect. Indirectly it therefore limits also the result or effect.

Let us now apply this definition to the proposition, "God saves His people on the condition that they believe." Here we deal *not* with a multiplicity of conditions but with one only and this one the faith of the believer, his will to believe. Hence, we deal here with but one limiting circumstance which is again the faith of the believer, his will to believe. It raises this question: What does the believer's will to believe limit? There is but one answer: The will of God to save. The implications of the proposition that God saves His people on the condition that they believe are now as clear as can be. Were the proposition true, then God is limited by His creature, then man is in God's throne with God at man's feet. For man originates his own faith. He believes or does not believe as he chooses. And God can't do anything about it. Man's will, therefore, is supreme in the matter of his salvation or damnation. Being supreme it limits, restricts God. Verily, the proposition that God saves His people *on the condition* that they believe is pregnant with potential heresy.

But one will say, does it necessarily follow that, if God saves His people *on the condition* that they believe, God is limited by His creature? Can't this just as well follow, namely, *not* that man limits God but that faith limits salvation in the sense that a man cannot be saved unless he believe. But let us consider this. Actual faith implies a believer who believes, and a believer who believes implies a believer who wills to believe. So, too, salvation. It implies a God who saves. And a God who saves implies a God who *wills* to save. *Faith* as such is an abstraction. It doesn't exist except as an idea, a concept. And likewise *salvation*. Hence, the limiting circumstance here is very actually the believer's will to believe. And so the thing limited here is God's will and power to save.

Your reply to Rev. Veldman's missive contains still another statement on which I must remark. The statement reads, "I believe the essential difference comes to the surface between the two (between the word *condition* on the one hand and the words *obligation* and *requirement* on the other, Rev. Petter means). The latter words—obligation and requirement—which Rev. Veldman suggests, speak only of something that God imposes, demands, exacts, with divine authority. The other—condition—implies the relation between two factors or events, thus that the one is necessary to the other." So, then, what you here tell us is that when the relation between two events—in this case the believing saint and the saving God—is necessary—the relation or connection is conditional, mark you conditional. But here again, brother, you are using words according to the meaning that they have in your own private vocabulary. For *in logic* the relation or connection, *when necessary*, is *unconditional*. Allow me

to prove my statement by quoting from a work by Adam Leroy Jones, Ph. D. entitled, "Logic, Inductive and Deductive." In this work I come upon the following paragraph:

"*Causal Connection*. (That by the way is what we deal with in your pieces, namely with *cause*. For, as we have seen, in logic *conditions* are *causes*. G.M.O.) The terms, cause, causal connection, causal law, occur constantly in this part of scientific method. What is cause? The term implies a connection of some sort between phenomena; but of what sort? In ordinary usage it probably means most frequently something which produces or brings about something else. . . . The notion of cause implies that the relation of cause and effect not only is invariable, but also that it *must* be so; that there is an *unconditional* or necessary connection between the two; that if the first does not happen, the second cannot." Pages 83, 84 of the work cited above.

So you see, brother, if the relation or connection is necessary it is not *conditional*, as you tell your readers but *unconditional*. So it is *in logic* and of course also in the dictionary. Only when the relation or connection is *not necessary* but contingent is it *conditional*. So it is *in logic*. Don't you see how true it is what I said, namely that you give to words your own meaning—a meaning that is contrary to the meaning that they have in the dictionary?

To the statement from your pen cited above you add some touching remarks on conditions. You write for example, "I believe we must be interested in understanding this conditional element and seeing its beauty and wisdom and glory, and giving to it its real living organic integral place in the organism of our knowledge of God, etc." I believe you will agree with me now when I say that what you write here is sheer nonsense.

I would also like to know how you came by the idea that the conjunctive "if" (of which you erroneously say that it signifies *condition*) brings out that the relation between faith and salvation is *necessary*. You read my exegesis of Ezek. 18 of course. In a word, you got that idea from my article. This is plain. For previously you were telling your readers that this "if" means "in the way of faith". Remember those two parentheses "in the way of" which you inserted in your quotations from Isaiah? This proves it. But now you write, "And it does not suffice either to suggest that faith for example is a means or a way. This is another idea altogether. . . ." In a word, now you write as if you never taught such a thing. And you fail to state that you got that other idea (namely, the function of "if" is to establish certain connection between faith and salvation) from my article. And what is far worse, you corrupt also this idea by insisting that it indicates *condition*.

G. M. Ophoff.

The "If" Sentences In Deuteronomy

We were addressed to the task of treating the "if" sentences in the Bible of the type, "If the wicked turn from their evil way, they shall live." In one of my previous articles or letters I dealt with the "if" sentences of that type as contained in the 18th chap. of Ezekiel's prophecies. We found that, to quote from my former article, "the Hebrew equivalents for the English "if" are nowhere to be found in that discourse (of chapter 18)." And then I made this statement, "It shows how far the mind of the prophet and thus also the mind of God was removed from any such notion as "God saves His people *on the condition* that they believe. . . ." This statement from my pen must be made to read differently, namely as follows, "Though the Hebrew equivalent for the English "if" (this Hebrew equivalent is properly *im*) did appear in the sentences that we examined, it would still be true that the mind of the prophet and thus also the mind of God was far removed from any such notion as "God saves His people on the condition that they believe." For the fact is, of course, that we do find in the Bible sentences of the type in which we are now interested in which the Hebrew *im* appears in the original. The parting addresses of Moses contain sentences of that kind. Let us now get them before us and ascertain the force and purpose of that Hebrew word *im* as a sentence-element of these declarations.

A sentence of the kind we are now to examine is contained in the discourse of Moses at Deut. 28:1-2. The passage reads, "And it shall come to pass, if—Hebrew *im*—thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God shall set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if (here the text must be rendered *when* and not *if*; for the Hebrew has *ki* and not *im*) thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." The correlate of this declaration is found at verse 15, "But it shall come to pass, *if* (Hebrew *im*) thou wilt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee:"

Before I go into these verses, I must make a remark. It is this. What we now again deal with in the first instance is the Scriptures in Hebrew, and thus not with the Scriptures in the English language. Hence, rightly considered, the question here confronting us is the following: What is the meaning, force, and purpose of the two Hebrew words *im* and *ki* as sentence-elements of these verses. This, certainly,

can only be determined by the context. And by context we all mean, must mean, first the very verses in which these words appear; second, the entire discourse; and third, the whole of the Scriptures.

And now the meaning of that Hebrew word *im* in the sentence, "And it shall come to pass, if—Hebrew *im*—thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God that all these blessings shall come upon thee." What now is the meaning of the Hebrew word *im* (rendered "if" in our versions)? Could we translate here, "All these blessings shall come upon thee *on the condition* that thou hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord?" Let us try it and see what we get. It is verily this: "My people (it is, of course, the Lord speaking here), whether all these blessings will come upon you, I know not. They may or may not. For however eager I am to do thee well my blessing thee is contingent on thy arbitrary and capricious willingness to originate faith and obedience in thee. Thy will is sovereign. Before it I must bow." This is again a terrible theology, isn't it? Well, then, is it necessary to show that the verse as thus construed is in conflict with its near and far surroundings, that, in other words, such ideas are not anywhere to be found in the whole of the Scriptures? Does the Bible teach atheism? The Hebrew *im*, it is plain, cannot mean *on condition that*. It cannot have that meaning in this connection.

What, then, may be the function and purpose of the Hebrew word *im* in the verse under consideration, and in its correlate, "But it shall come to pass if thou wilt hearken unto the voice of the Lord that all these curses shall come upon thee." The sole function and purpose of *im* in these connections is to establish conceptionally before the minds of the people of Israel the *certain connection* between obedience and blessing on the one hand, and disobedience and *cursing, destruction* on the other. That this is the sole function of *im* in these connections is as plain as can be from the whole context. Verse 3 reads, "Blessed shalt thou be in the city," implying, "if thou hearken to the Lord's voice. This idea is repeated with variations over and over as interspersed with "if" clauses such as, "If thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God and walk in his ways," and, "If thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God. . . ." And so, too, the correlate of the idea, "Cursed shalt thou be in the city," implying, "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." This idea, too, is repeated with variations over and over (verses 15-68).

Second, we must take notice of the *ki* clause contained in verse 2 of this chapter, "When thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." Here *ki* approaches in meaning *im*. This accounts for the rendering in our versions, "If thou shalt hearken. . . ."

Yet there must be a distinction between the two particles *ki* and *im*, especially when they occur side by side in the same context as is here the case. Usually the distinction is carefully made and usually also easily discernible. It is discernible here. The sole function of *im* in these verses is, as was said, to set forth the certain connection between *obedience* and *blessing* on the one hand, and *covenant infidelity* and *cursing* on the other. In a word, *im* in this connection is a particle showing *certain logical connection*. So, too, *ki* in the verse under consideration. But this particle is here used also of time, "All these blessings shall come upon thee. . . . *when* thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord". This reads like a prediction. And so it is, as is plainly evident from the tenor of the whole discourse. It is evident from the text at 30:1, "And it shall come to pass, when—*ki*—all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee." Moses, being a prophet and of all the prophets the greatest, here foretells the dispersion and exile of the people of Israel and the ultimate turning of their captivity. That we understand him aright is placed beyond the shadow of a doubt by the sequel, "And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will return, and gather thee from all the nations of the earth, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. *If*—Hebrew *im*—any of thine be driven out into the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee unto the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thine seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which presecuted thee" (30:2-7).

Verily, it is prediction, prophecy, with which we here deal. If so, how can the Hebrew particle *im* in the verses examined signify doubtful hypothesis? How can these verses be rendered, "The Lord will bless thee *on the condition* that thou obeyest," and, "The Lord will curse thee *on the condition* that thou disobeyest," meaning, "whether I, the Lord, will bless thee or curse thee, I know not. For my blessing thee or cursing thee is contingent on thy obedience or disobedience as a condition. Hence, all is uncertain." But fact is that all was certainty. God knew, because He works

all things according to the counsel of His will. Faith and obedience are of Him; and He hardens whom He will. Moses and the people knew because God revealed it to them. The nation will alternately forsake God and with His curses upon them, cry to Him in their distress. And He will raise them up a saviour, and His blessings will be upon them for a season. But with the crisis past, they again will turn to their abominations and corrupt themselves more than their fathers in following other gods to serve them. When they will have filled their measure of iniquity, God will scatter them among the nations. But ultimately He will turn their captivity permanently. All is certainty here. Necessarily so, as with God there can be no uncertainties and hence no conditions.

Let it be repeated, the *im* in this discourse can only be a particle setting forth, establishing before the minds of the people of Israel certain connection between obedience on the one hand and blessing on the other and thus also certain connection between disobedience and faithlessness on the one hand and cursing and destruction on the other. And in this discourse, too, as well as in the discourse of Ezekiel 18, the obedient are the contrite of heart, the ungodly whom God justifies in Christ, and whose hearts therefore He circumcises. For, take notice of the statement, "And the Lord will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thine seed."

But what now is the English equivalent of the Hebrew particle *im* as a sentence-element in the kind of sentences with which we now are occupied? The English equivalent for that Hebrew particle *im* is our word "if". In the kind of sentences we are considering "if", too, like *im* indicates, sets forth, establishes conceptionally a certain and unbreakable connection between *faith*, *obedience*, and *righteousness* on the one hand and *salvation* and *life* on the other; and thus sets forth a certain connection between disobedience and unbelief on the one hand and cursing and destruction on the other. And this is its sole function in the sentences under consideration. The attempt to give to the word "if" always as a sentence-element in the type of sentence under consideration, an additional meaning, is to carry into these sentences an element of thought that doesn't belong in them. In dealing with "if" as a part of speech in these sentences we must go no further than to say that its function is that indicated above. Allow me to show how true this is. Let us take for our purpose that text in Rom. 9, "If (Greek *ei*) God be for us, who can be against us." That pronoun "us" includes not everybody—reprobate and elect alike—but the elect only is a matter that is settled by the verses that immediately follow, "He that spared not His Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely grant us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? (Mark you,

elect). It is plain that the pronoun *us* includes only the elect of God. It is therefore permissible to read, *If God be for the elect, who can be against them?*" Here, too, the sole function of the particle "if" is to set forth, establish conceptionally, certain connection between God's being for His believing people on the one hand and *all things* being for them on the other. To give to that "if" the additional meaning "on condition that," or "in case," or "granted," or "in the event," is to destroy the Gospel of God contained in that scripture. Certainly it won't do to make the verse read, "All things are fore the elect "in case," "in the event," or "granted," or "on the condition that," God is for them." By giving that "if" any such additional meanings we make the fact of God's being for His people and the fact of all things on that account being for them problematical indeed and thereby impose upon the text an impossible theology—a theology impossible in the light of the whole of the Scriptures.

So, too, with the type of sentences under consideration. All there is left for us to do is to limit ourselves to saying that the sole function of "if" (*im ei*) in all such sentences is to establish conceptionally connection between the faith of God's people, their obedience and contrition of heart on the one hand and their life and salvation on the other as a connection of such a character that the two—faith and salvation—always go hand in hand with God the author of both. Mark you, with God the author of both. For, certainly, the idea is not that these callers upon the name of the Lord, these seekers after God, these wicked who forsake their abominations and turn to the Lord, do so in their capacity of sinners dead in trespasses and sins; and that they live and are saved as a result of their taking these action in the sense that they originate them. To the contrary, the fact of their seeking is the evidence that they have life in them abiding and are saved; and of this life their seeking is the fruit.

And so, likewise, the sole function of that "if" in the type of sentences under consideration is to establish conceptionally connection between the disobedient, unbelief, and impenitence of the reprobated on the one hand and their eternal destruction on the other as as connection of such a character that the two invariably go hand in hand with the latter the reward of the former.

Now this use of "if" is not contrary to its use in common life, but right in line with its use in common life. In common life, too, the principal and basic use of the word "if" is to establish connection between certain types of clauses and their corresponding provisional events. To illustrate this point, we will take the sentence, "I will go, *if* you will go." Here, too, the function of the particle "if" is to establish connection between my going and your going of such a character that our goings shall go hand in hand. But let us

take notice of the difference. First, I am not the master of your will. Hence, I find myself under the necessity of allowing you to decide to go or not to go independent of me. In the relation that your will obtains to mine, it is free, despite the fact that there is such a thing as moral coercion. Hence, my going is indeed dependent, contingent, on your going. Second, as your heart is not in my hands for me to turn as I choose, your going or not going, as far as my knowledge reaches, is uncertain. You may or may not go. I know not. In the meantime, I may change my mind, so that, should you decide to go, you shall have to go alone. Here, therefore, everything is limited and uncertain, the reason being that the two wills involved in this bargaining are finite, human wills and minds. It is with these uncertainties and human limitations before his eye that the philologist defined for us the word condition as that on which something is contingent. And with these same uncertainties and human limitations before his mind, he defined contingent:—not existing or occurring through necessity; due to chance or a free agent; accidentally existing or true; dependent on the will of a human being or finite agent; depend on a foreseen possibility; provisionally liable to exist, happen, or take effect in the future; hence, something that may or may not occur.

It means that the terms *condition* and *contingent* and their synonyms are words that simply cannot be used of God, cannot certainly be used of Him in sentences of the type with which we are now occupied (God saves His people on the condition that they believe). To nevertheless use the terms in question of God is to change Him into an idol. But far be it from me, brother, to hurl accusations at you. I hurl them not at you but at your proposition. I separate in my mind you and that proposition. For of course you will repudiate it, the moment your eyes open to all its horrible implications. However, I am only a fallible man. I may therefore be in error. True, but I am admitting this only wholly in the abstract. As it is, I am thoroughly convinced that I do not err, but that I am right. But if you believe that I do err, if you think that you are justified in using the terms in question of God, please make this plain to me. I place myself at your feet. Instruct me. And I will listen. I repeat what I said: You may call my argument anything you like—abject nonsense, sophistry, it makes no difference. I like strong language—providing you do one thing: Make plain that your characterizations are true. To call my argument sophistry or nonsense and to let it go at that is something that I don't like. I have entered deeply into your arguments; please do the same with mine. And please come with exegesis of the Scriptures and not merely with speculation.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Lied Des Harten

(Psalm 108; Slot)

We vervolgen deze overdenking van den 108sten psalm, en beginnen bij het achtste vers. In het zevende vers had David gebeden voor heil door Zijn rechterhand. En het groote motief is: dat Gods beminden mochten bevrijd worden. En het hart van die beminden is de groote Beminde: Jezus Christus, de Heere. Hij is eigenlijk de David bij uitnemendheid.

Nu gaan we verder: "God heeft gesproken in Zijn heiligdom, dies zal ik van vreugde opspringen:"

Zou David hier gedacht hebben aan de Goddelijke rede die tot hem kwam door Nathan, nadat hij het voornemen gehad had om den Heere een Huis te bouwen? Het waren heerlijke woorden die de Heere hem gegeven had. In het kort kwam het hier op neer, dat de Heere zijn troon zou bevestigen tot in eeuwigheid.

En nu is het wondere ervan, dat we dan ook al weer uitkomen bij den Christus. In die Goddelijke beloften had Salomo ook een plaats gevonden, maar de schrijver van den Hebreër brief past die woorden eenvoudig op Christus toe, zonder ook maar één woord van verklaring. God had gezegd van Salomo: "Ik zal hem zijn tot een Vader, en hij zal Mij zijn eenen zoon." Er bestaat geen twijfel aan dat deze woorden niet van Salomo getuigen, en toch zegt God in Hebreë: Dat is Mijn Zoon!

Ja, misschien heeft David aan die beloften gedacht bij het neerpennen van dit vers. God heeft gesproken in Zijn heiligdom!

Dat maakt, dat de woorden Gods dan ook heilige woorden zijn. Dat is het adjectief, dat altijd bij den Bijbel gebruikt moest worden: Het heilige Woord Gods.

Gods woorden zijn heilige woorden: zij zijn afgescheiden van alles wat profaan en vuil is. Zij zijn ook afgescheiden van het gewone, het gemeene, het alledaagsche.

Tweedens, dat de woorden Gods in het heiligdom gesproken zijn beteekent ook, dat het woorden zijn die van uit de duizelingwekkende hoogte komen. Het zijn verheven woorden. Men gevoelt dat direkt bij het lezen van het Heilige Boek. Ze komen vanuit de hoogte en het boven-aardsche, waar God Zelf woont. En dat maakt het groote, ik zou haast zeggen, het vreeselijke verschil tusschen alle woord van menschen en het Woord van God.

Derdens, de woorden die God spreekt zijn heilige woorden, en dan denk ik aan de heerlijkheid van het Woord. Het Woord van God zoekt God. Het is het Heilige Woord en dat beteekent dat het ten allen tijde

en tot in der eeuwigheid toegeweid is aan God. Alle woorden Gods roepen U op om het toch te zien hoe heerlijk en glorieus God is. Zijn Woord verheft Hem, want het heiligt Hem.

En vanwege die heilige woorden, gesproken bij den Heilige in het heilige, doen David opspringen van vreugde. Luistert naar hem: "dies zal ik van vreugde opspringen!"

Daar herkent ge het kind van God.

Daarin ligt alle verschil tusschen menschen en menschen.

Van goddelooze menschen zegt God, dat zij Zijn Woord achter hunnen rug werpen, dat zij die woorden verachten.

Maar David verblijdt zich grootelijks in die woorden.

En waarom?

Omdat hij een schoone plaats in die woorden mocht hebben. God sprak woorden voor David.

En als ik nu de volgende verzen bestudeer dan komt het mij voor, dat David dacht aan de woorden Gods die Hij gesproken had door Nathan aangaande den troon van Israel. Die troon zou bestendig worden. En ten tijde van dit spreken waren er zoovele vijanden die het verzien hadden op David en zijn ondergang. Maar als God zegt: David! Uw troon zal bevestigd worden! Dan weet hij, dat er overwinning zal komen over zijn vijanden. En dan is zijn geloof in dit Goddelijke en heilige Woord zoo sterk, dat hij zijn lied van blijdschap zingt vooraleer hij uittrekt ten strijde tegen Filistijn, Edomiet en het vuile Moab.

Later zou Paulus zeggen: "wij zijn meer dan overwinnaars!" Ja, als ge strijdt aan de zijde van God, dan zingt ge het overwinningslied voor den strijd. God had dat van eeuwigheid af al gedaan. Voor vierduizend jaren zong God in den hemel van de overwinning, en toch, er was nog geen kruispaal geweest die de wereld veroordeelde, versloeg. En Satan kwam nog steeds in den hemel om zijn strijd te strijden. Maar de overwinning was zeker. God wist dat. En Michael schijnt het ook geweten te hebben, want hij streed met zijne engelen tegen satan en voor Gods volk.

De goddeloozen hebben die spreek- en zing-trant overgenomen van God en van David.

Voor den strijd zeggen alle leger-aanvoerders: Ik spring op van vreugde, want ik ga de overwinning hebben. Ik heb het Hitler hooren zeggen vanuit de Sportpalast. Ik las wat die goddelooze generaal in Japan zeide: Hij zou immers de vredesbepalingen en onderhandelingen doen geschieden in het Witte Huis, na de totale vernieling van Amerika?

En toen president Roosevelt December 8, 1941 voor het Congres ons verzekerde, dat wij zekerlijk de overwinning zouden hebben, toen heb ik gehuiverd. Hij had geen recht om dat te voorspellen. Wat wist hij

ervan? O ja, ik weet wel, dat die voorspelling uitkwam en die van Japan en van Hitler niet, maar ik huiverde. En weet ge waarom? Roosevelt had geen woorden van God gehoord vanuit het heiligdom. Daarom had hij geen recht om de overwinning te voorstellen.

Ook dit nog: ik ben soms banger voor een overwinning, zoo bekomen, dan voor een nederlaag. Jezus werd wonderlijk omneer geworpen. Maar Hij is de eeuwige Triumfator!

Het zit alles vast op de heilige woorden van God.

Maar David springt op van vreugde. Hij zal overwinnen, want God had het gezegd in Zijn heiligdom. Wel, zingt dan maar. En ik zal trachten om met U te zingen.

“Ik zal Sichem deelen, en het dal Sukkoth zal ik afmeten.”

Wie zoo spreekt heeft de overwinning. Die zoo spreekt is “baas”. David heeft het hier over de stukken van het heilige land. Hij vervolgt: “Gilead is mijn, Manasse is mijn, en Efraïm is de sterkte mijns hoofds, Juda is mijn wetgever.”

Al deze beschrijvingen gaan over het heilige land. Ik denk, dat er vele benden van vijanden rondwaalden in het heilige land. Denkt eraan hoelang de heilige stad Jeruzalem in de handen der Jebusieten geweest waren, vooraleer David die burcht bestormde en nam in den naam des Heeren.

Maar David zou met God ten strijde trekken, en in de verte ziet hij het: straks sta ik in Sichem en geef elk zijn deel, straks sta ik in het dal Sukkoth en meet de velden, zoodat een ieder zijn portie mag hebben naar het strengste recht. Manasse behoort mij toe, want God heeft het gezegd. En de twintig duizend helden van Efraïm trekken ten strijde onder mijn banier. Zij zullen de voorhoede zijn van het goddelijke leger. O die sterke mannen van Efraïm! En Juda is immers mijn Wetgever?

En komt de beschrijving van de overwinning over vuile vijanden.

“Moab is mijn waschpot!”

Hoe totaal is de overwinning van David, neen, van Jezus!

Van David, want Moab heeft niets meer te zeggen. Het is geheel en al ontmand. Het is minder dan een slaaf geworden.

In het Oosten heeft men waschpotten. Die zijn er om de voeten in te wasschen. Dat is zoowat het nederigste werk wat er is. Nu dan, als dat zoo is, wat moeten wij dan zeggen van iemand die bij de waschpot vergeleken wordt? De waschpot was een vat ten on-eere.

Nu dan Moab, het vuile Moab, zal een waschpot gelijk worden als David terugkeert van den heiligen oorlog.

Niet beter zal het Edom vergaan.

Edom is Ezau, de onheilige die voor een schotel linzenmoes zijn eerstgeboorterecht verkocht; het is Ezau die altijd Jakob gehaat heeft. Het uiterste van die haat zou de wereld zien als Jezus-Jakob voor Herodus-Ezau zal komen te staan, om bespot te worden. Maar Jezus had toen ook de overwinning. Wat, dunkt U, denkt Herodus nu van die ontmoeting? In de akelige vlammen van de aanvankelijke hel?

Edom is het volk waarop de Heere vergramd is tot in eeuwigheid.

Ik moet er niet aan denken. Stelt het U voor: God is vol van grimmige haat tegen U. Hij staat voor U om te verdelgen! O, vreeselijk zal het zijn om te vallen in de handen van een grimmigen God.

Welnu, David zal zich opmaken om in het zoutdal met Edom te vechten. En hij zal alle mannen dooden met de scherpste des zwaards. Joab was de generaal die het deed in David's naam.

Maar van te voren weet David den uitslag. Hij gaat de overwinning hebben. Hij zegt het poetisch: Over Edom zal ik mijn schoen werpen. Er zijn verschillende verklaringen van die uitdrukking. De beste van die verklaringen is, naar mijn bescheiden meening, deze: David zal, in verachting, zijn schoenen uittrekken en neerwerpen op het land van Edom, om daar mee uit te drukken, dat hij waard is vertreden te worden.

Zoo verga het allen, O Heere, die U haten!

“Over Palestina zal ik juichen.”

Het volk der Filistijnen! Zij waren een doorn in de zijde van Israel. Maar ook dat volk zal door David worden veroverd. En de overwinning zal zoo totaal zijn, dat David zal uitbarsten in juichend jubelen. Men vertelt mij, dat de soldaten dat doen na den slag.

De overwinning van David over zijne vijanden is compleet.

Dat is zoo, al is de vijand nog zoo sterk. Och arme! waar praat ik van? Wat is alle kracht? Is alle kracht niet afkomstig van den God van David?

David zoekt en vindt den “sterkste” van zijn vijanden. Dat is Edom. En van dien zeer sterken vijand zingt hij vervolgens: Wie zal mij voeren in een vaste stad? Wie zal mij leiden tot in Edom? Zult Gij het niet zijn, O God! die ons verstooten hadt, en die niet uittoogt, O God! met onze heirkrachten?”

Edom was een vaste stad. Zij was gelegen in de rotsen. De toegangen waren smal, en uitgehouwen uit de rotsgevaarten, waarop de burcht Edom zich verhief.

Welnu, God zou uittrekken naar dien trotsche. En dan helpt niets meer. Dan wordt de burcht genomen en dan plant David zijn banier in Edom.

Soms was God niet meegegaan in het verleden. En dan wordt het bang. Als ge daarvan weten wilt, leest dan Psalm 44.

Maar nu had God beloofd om op te trekken. En dan is de strijd gestreden. Dan moet de overwinning komen, want alle kracht is Godes kracht.

Nu nog een kort gebed, en een resolutie.

Het korte gebed: "Geef Gij ons hulp uit de benauwdheid, want 's menschen heil is ijdelheid."

Zegt nu, dat ge alle menschen aan Uw zijde hadt in Uw twistzaak. Veronderstelt verder, dat alle engelen Gods zouden neerkomen om U te helpen uit al Uwe benauwdheden. Laat ons verder aannemen, dat ge alle oorlogsmateriaal bezat, tot den laatsten kogel toe, en de vijand niets had. Maar God was niet aan Uw zijde. Wat dan? Dan verliest ge den strijd voordat gij uittoegt. Want God alleen heeft macht en kracht. Alle heil en hulp van menschen is ijdel, als God er niet inzit.

Daarom, Heere, o help ons!

En dan zal 't gaan. Luistert maar: "In God zullen wij kloeke daden doen, en Hij zal onze wederpartijders vertreden." Dat is de resolutie.

David was kloek. Maar zijn kloekheid zat hierin: Hij streed in God. En dat wetende, geeft hij God de eer: als de strijd over is, dan zegt David: God heeft het gedaan.

Nu dan, David was maar een kleine, zwakke schaduw van Jezus.

Ik ga het zeggen met een heilige bedoeling: vergeet nu maar al die geschiedenissen van David tegen Edom, *cum socii*. Ik bedoel niet, dat ge ze geheel en al moet vergeten, maar ge moet ze vergeten, nadat ge ze gezien hebt in de heilige historie. Want daarna moet ge dieper en hooger zien. Ge moet Jezus zien, in en achter David.

En ga dan staan naast Jezus in de rechtzalen van Annas, Kajafas, Pilatus en Herodus. Gaat staan vlak voor het kruis. En al is het dan, dat Jezus zweet, klaagt, bloedt en uiteindelijk sterft, dan moet gij daar beginnen om te zingen een lied dat tot in eeuwigheid gezongen zal worden. De zelfde David zal U onderwijzen. Hij zeide eens: Zingt, zingt een nieuw gezang den Heere. . . .

Het is het gezang van de eeuwige overwinning van Jezus, den beteren David!

G. Vos.

CLASSIS EAST

meets in regular session Wednesday, July 6, 1949, at 9:00 A. M., at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Office In The Church

The Minister Of The Word.

Some weeks have elapsed since the last article appeared under this general heading. Thus it may be well to recall to mind that we distinguished in our previous article between the special office of ministers, elders and deacons and the general office of all believers. In the new dispensation all true believers are office-bearers. Through the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they are partakers of His anointing. They have the unction of the Holy One whereby they know all things. I John 2:20. Every member of the Body of Christ functions according to his own peculiar place in the Body and according to his own measure of the gift of Christ. Each one serves in his own way in the threefold office of prophet, priest and king. But together these believers make up the church as institute, for where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, He is in the midst of them. And out of the office of believers in the church as institute arises the special office of ministers, elders and deacons. For Christ calls to these offices, objectively through the channel of the church, and subjectively by His Spirit in their hearts.

We commonly distinguish between those three, ministers, elders and deacons. Yet there is actually only a twofold office in the church, simply the office of elders and deacons. And these two are essentially one. Essentially the office is always one, for Christ is the Office Bearer, Who is at the same time Prophet, and Priest, and King. Thus also believers hold the same threefold office in Christ's name. This also becomes evident in the special office. A minister is first of all prophet since he preaches the Word. But he is also priest, for he conducts the divine worship, visits the sick and leads in prayer. And since in the ministry of the Word he exercises the chief key of the kingdom of heaven, opening and closing the kingdom of heaven according to divine purpose, binding and loosing according to sovereign election and reprobation, he represents the King of the church in His kingly office. Even the elders minister the Word when they exercise discipline, for they speak the Word of God on the authority of Jesus Christ. And they also dispense the mercy of the merciful Highpriest when they visit the orphans and widows and comfort the sick and the afflicted. And likewise the deacon can never sever his work of mercy from the ministry of the Word, nor even from the exercise of discipline, as the need may require. The offices plainly overlap, even though the prophetic office is on the foreground in the ministry of the Word, the kingly

office in the exercise of discipline and the priestly office in the dispensing of mercy.

Even so, Scripture speaks of two offices, the office of elder and of deacon. And then Scripture further distinguishes between teaching elders and governing elders. This is the evident meaning of the well-known message in I Tim. 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine."

1. This text distinguishes between elders who "rule well" and those who do not "rule well". The latter, of course, deserve no honor at all. The former are to be counted worthy of double honor.

2. But this text also distinguishes between those who "labor in the Word and doctrine" and those who do not. Thus there are some whose particular task it is, in distinction from the others, to labor in the Word and doctrine. And these are also called elders.

Also in Acts 20:28 the work of shepherdizing the flock (pastoral work) is included in the work of the elders. There Paul admonishes the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

No one can read this remarkable passage without being impressed by the fact that,

1. First of all, the Church is called the "church of God". She is God's church. She is God's as to her origin, chosen before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1:3, 4. She is God's peculiar possession, His heritage, His people, His prophetic, royal priesthood, His Bride. He has purchased her unto Himself with His own precious blood. And thus she is God's as to her purpose, to share in His life, to delight in His perfections, to reflect His glory and to show forth His praises eternally.

2. Secondly, that God purchased her with His own blood. God's blood was shed on the cross to save His church. Nothing less could save her. The Son of God suffered and died, shed His blood as atonement for sin in our flesh. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." II Cor. 5:19.

3. That this church is the flock of Jesus Christ. They are His sheep. He is the chief Shepherd. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:11, 14, 27, 28.

4. That the Holy Spirit places overseers (elders) over the flock to watch over them and to feed them. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ Who prepares,

calls and qualifies those whom God will use as human instruments unto His work. Only Christ calls, prepares, qualifies. Only His Spirit works the work of Christ, even in and through the human instrument.

5. The calling of the elders is to "feed the church of God," as well as to be overseers over them. Oversight belongs to the work of governing. Feeding belongs to the pastoral labors. The minister of the Word is *pastor*, under-shepherd under Christ. He must feed the flock through the means of the Word, breaking the Bread of Life.

6. And finally, that anyone who assumes this task must certainly take heed to himself. He has a unique privilege, for it is the highest calling that any man can receive. But it is also an obligation that must fill him with fear and trembling.

From the foregoing it is evident that it is the calling of the minister of the Word to be pastor, servant of the chief Shepherd. This same term is used in Eph. 4:11-13, "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 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."

1. We note here, that pastors are mentioned in the same breath with apostles, prophets and evangelists. Now it is true, as we noted in a previous article, that the apostles, prophets and evangelists were peculiar to the early church and have long since disappeared. The office of pastors and teachers still remains.

2. We note, moreover, that the expression "pastors and teachers" refers to one and the same group of persons. They are mentioned together; some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. Thus a pastor is also a teacher. He must minister to the needs of the flock by teaching. Even the preaching of the Word is instruction; and must be instruction. And thus all his pastoral work is instruction. He must instruct young and old, weak and strong, healthy and sick, willing hearers but also perverse ones. He instructs the children of the church in the fundamentals of the truth. He instructs the young men and young women to apply that truth to their own lives in preparation for their places that they must occupy in God's church and covenant. He instructs those who are busy fulfilling their calling, either as parents in the home, or as pilgrims and strangers in the world, or as soldiers of the cross against the powers of darkness, or as God's witnesses of the faith and hope that they possess. And he instructs the aged of days, that while their physical strength fails, their spiritual eye may see clearly, their spiritual ear may plainly discern, and their hope may never grow dim. For to the believer

"to live is Christ and to die is gain."

3. We note also that "He gave. . . some pastors, and teachers." "He" in this passage is Christ. In the previous verses Christ is described as the triumphant Lord Who took captive and received gifts to be distributed to His people. (Ps. 68:18). As a reward on His accomplished work of the cross, God exalted Him to the highest heavens and bestowed on Him the gifts of eternal salvation, which He shares with His church eternally. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." (vs. 10). "And He gave".

a. Christ gathers and beses His church from heaven. He feeds His flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs with His arms, and carries them in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. (Isa. 40:11). He leads them in the green pastures of His Word. He grazes them beside the still waters. He guards them from devouring wolves and threatening dangers. He brings them into the eternal sheepfold of glory.

B. Therefore pastors are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. Nothing more and nothing less. Christ prepares them, calls them and qualifies them. Thus we read in II Cor. 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for (in the stead of, in behalf of) Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead (the same word; thus, in Christ's name) be ye reconciled to God." Which means that pastors are His servants. In that they glory, even as the apostle Paul (Romans 1:1). But they are also ambassadors, mouthpieces, to never speak their own word, but only always the word of Him Who sent them. Their office is "Minister Verbi Dei", servants of the Word of God. Their talents and gifts, their power of oratory or persuasion can never save. The Word, and the Word only is the power that saves. For that Word is the Word of the living God, and is therefore powerful and efficacious. God uses man as an instrument to bring that Word. But only as an instrument whereby God works His own work. Therefore the ambassador of Jesus Christ can himself only listen and in turn only say, "So saith the Lord!" And as he does so he rests assured that this Word will never return void, but will do all that God intends that it shall do. Heb. 4:12; I Cor. 1:18; II Cor. 2:15, 16.

4. And finally, we note that the purpose of this ministry of the Word is "the perfecting of the saints." It is well to stress this in our day when the ministry of the Word has commonly become a matter of "evangelization". By evangelization is frequently meant nothing more or less than an attempt to save the whole human race or changing the church into a society for the "social betterment" and "spiritual uplift" of this present world that is sold under sin. The church too

often becomes only a good influence in the community instead of the lone City upon a hill, the Light that shines amid this present darkness. Surely, the ministry of the Word is the means whereby Christ gathers, defends and preserves His church, which the Father has given to Him from eternity. The saints are perfected.

a. And the saints must be perfected, in turn, in order that they may be fitted, "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Each must be fitted by the Holy Spirit, through the means of the Word, to serve in his or her peculiar place in the office of believers for the edifying of the Body of Christ, both here and in the life to come.

b. Thus we exercise the communion of saints. And through the communion of saints each is individually benefited, "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 Christ." The whole Body reaches its perfect manifestation with Christ in heaven. The ministry of the Word serves that ultimate purpose.

Allow me to quote from an editorial of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, appearing in the Standard Bearer, Vol. 12, p. 436, under the heading "Minister Verbi Dei".

"But the preacher must be minister of the Word of God!

"That makes his calling incomparable, unique, superhuman! He must deny Himself, men, the world, the wisdom of men, all that is of the world, its conventions, its customs, its self-will, its lie, its deceitfulness; also its wisdom, goodness, nobility, righteousness, philanthropy, charity, glory, ambition, success, power; its aims and aspirations; he must listen only to the Word of God, that impossible Word, which no man will hear nor even can will to hear, which is heard, not at all in the world, but only in the sphere of grace and by grace, and which yet men pretend to hear when they do not hear it; and having listened to that Word of God, only *listened*, without contradiction, and having filled his soul with that Word, and only after he is quite sure that his soul is filled with nothing but that Word, he must speak!

"And all that is mere Man, within him and without, will oppose him, both in hearing and in speaking.

"His path is beset with temptations to 'corrupt the Word of God', to mix that Word with the word of men, in order that he may please mere Man!

"Who is sufficient unto these things?

"And who, that serves in the ministry of the Word of God, does not realize that he is a man of unclean lips?

"He that has never feared and trembled at this ministry has never fully realized the 'aweful glory' of that calling!"

C. Hanko.

PERISCOPE

Report of Synod Of 1949

The pre-Synodical prayer service was held on Tuesday evening, May 31, in the Second Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. The Rev. H. De Wolf, vice-president of the Synod of 1948, brought a fitting message from Psalm 122:6. He very aptly applied these appropriate words of Scripture to the work for which the Synod had gathered.

On Wednesday morning Rev. De Wolf officially opened the sessions of Synod. Roll call showed the following ministers and elders delegated and present. The Revs. C. Hanko, J. Heys, H. Hoeksema, G. Vos, A. Cammenga, J. Howerzyl, M. Gritters, P. Vis and Elders H. De Jong, G. Koster, D. Langeland, N. Yonker, C. De Vries, B. Gritters, J. Kuiper, and C. Vander Molen.

The following officers were chosen: President—The Rev. C. Hanko, Vice-president—The Rev. A. Cammenga, Secretary—The Rev. J. Heys, Vice-secretary—The Rev. J. Howerzyl. The elected officers then took their places and the President read the Public Declaration while the delegates remained standing and answered "yes" in expression of their agreement with this declaration.

After the President had spoken a word of welcome it was decided to meet daily from 9 to 12 and 1:30 to 5. The President then appointed a committee for committees who distributed the work and material among 3 committees of pre-advice. During the remainder of the day these committees met in separate session organizing the material submitted to them and preparing their reports of advice to Synod.

The first matter reported on the floor of Synod on Thursday morning was the protest of the Rev. G. M. Ophoff against his consistory's decision to separate the two missionaries. This protest had been sustained by Classis East, which decision had been appealed to Synod by the Consistory of Fuller Ave. The Synod adopted the advice of its committee of pre-advice on this matter which was as follows: "We advise Synod to express agreement with the decision of Classis East sustaining the protest of Rev. Ophoff on the ground of transgressing the Church Order by overruling Art. 33 of the Acts of Synod of 1948. (1) The Protestant is correct in maintaining that Art. 31 of the Church Order has been violated. (2) He is also correct in maintaining that Art. 84 of the Church Order has been violated. (3) Therefore the contention of the protestant that the grounds of the consistory's decision are invalid is also correct." In connection with the protest and its material the Synod also expressed itself

on points 4 and 5 of the protest. In point 4 Rev. Ophoff had attempted to show that "The Consistory's decision as carried will render our mission enterprise abortive and in consequence thereof result in a wasted expenditure of the churches' money." Point 5 of the protest was a discussion of the position and doctrine of the Liberated Churches. Concerning the material of these two points the Synod expressed "that although we do not express our opinion as Synod upon the truth or untruth of this part of Rev. Ophoff's allegation, we believe that the matter is irrelevant to the case."

The next matters of import that were discussed were those related to our Theological School. The report of the Rector, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, revealed that another successful year had gone by under the Lord's blessing. This report read in part as follows: "Another school year belongs to the past, and in it, we believe, the grace of our God was abundantly with us. Professors and students performed their work with joy, and the mutual relationship between them was one of harmony and love. Nothing untoward happened throughout the year."

Due to the partial incapacitation of one of our professors Synod was faced with the problem of making the necessary arrangements that full instruction might be continued in our Seminary either through the appointment of an instructor or an additional professor. The Theological School Committee had advised Synod that Mr. H. C. Hoeksema be appointed for a period of two years as professor of college subjects at our school and to give clerical assistance to Prof. H. Hoeksema. The committee of pre-advice in this matter advised that this appointment be limited to one year. Synod, however, decided "that the Theological School Committee present us at this Synod with a nomination for another full-time professor for our seminary".

That same evening the Theological School Committee met and drew up an aggregate list of names from which Synod made a nomination for this professorship. The final nomination included the Revs. P. De Boer, L. Doezema and G. Vos. By an almost unanimous vote the Rev. L. Doezema was chosen for the appointment with Rev. P. De Boer as alternate. The stated clerk was instructed to inform the appointee by phone and later reported that he had carried out this mandate. Synod decided to give the Rev. L. Doezema three weeks in which to make his decision. We wish to take this opportunity to express our hearty congratulations to Professor-elect Doezema and our prayer that the Lord may lead him to a decision unto the glory of His name and the welfare of His Kingdom.

The following recommendations of the faculty, as presented through the Theological School Committee, were also adopted by Synod: 1. "The faculty recommends. . . changes in the scholastic requirements of

our school, to be included in the constitution of our school: a. To require a complete high school education of every entrant to our school. b. To require of every student that he maintain at least a C average in his work, and to forbid the final examination before Synod of any student having less than C average. 1) To make arrangements for a re-examination of any student having a failing grade in any branch. 2) To forbid, in case a student should fail such re-examination, such a student to proceed to the next subject in any branch until he shall take the course in which he has failed anew and show a passing grade therein. 2. The faculty proposes that a definite annual appropriation be made for the purpose of library expansion. (Synod stipulated that this should be 25 cents per family per year.) 3. The faculty proposes that the Seminary year-book, with the necessary annual revisions, be published annually with the denominational yearbook and Acts of Synod."

The Synodical Committee for correspondence with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands reported as follows: "Your committee for correspondence with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands has nothing positive to report, the reason being that they have not heard a word from the deputies *ad hoc* appointed by the Synod of Amersfoort 1948, nor have they received any official report of the decisions of that Synod *in re* correspondence with our Churches." Synod received this report for information and continued its committee.

Synod also dealt with several matters in connection with the Mission work of our Churches. The Mission Committee brought several proposals and recommendations which were treated by Synod and decided as follows: The first proposal was "That Synod review the decision made in 1947 (art. 79, page 60 and art. 83, page 64, Acts of Synod 1947) 'that the calling church call two missionaries to labor together in the work of home missions.' " Synod decided that "two missionaries shall labor together in the establishment of a field but that they may be separated when in the judgment of the calling Church and the Mission Committee there is need for this." In second place Synod decided to call a third, Holland-speaking missionary and that Fuller Avenue be designated as the calling Church. Synod rejected the advice of the Mission Committee "that the suggestion be passed on to our churches that one of our present missionaries be considered in making trios." Finally, Synod decided "that work be continued for a time in the Sumas, Washington area." The manner of execution of this decision was not treated by Synod and, hence, is left to the Mission Committee in conjunction with the calling Consistory.

The Synod also considered an overture from the Consistory of Bellflower. This overture read as follows: "Whereas we consider it part of our calling be-

fore God to call the members of the Christian Reformed Church to return to the Reformed Truth as expressed in our Forms of Unity and the Scriptures, and thus to reject the three points of their Synod of 1924 and its relative subsequent actions; We ought also to consider it our calling to give testimony to the Christian Reformed Church by way of an official communication to their Synod. Although this has been done by our Synods of 1940 and 1941 and has apparently proved fruitless to arouse them to reconsider their actions, we ought not therefore to desist entirely. We ought to consider that years have elapsed since this exchange of communications was last made and that during that time a younger generation has taken its place in their ranks of leadership. Furthermore, in view of our labors in their churches and the misunderstanding as to our motive and purpose, we consider it well to direct their attention to this by way of a new communication to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, advising them as to the work we conduct among them. Therefore we overture Synod to direct such a communication to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. We would suggest the following: 1. To appeal to them to reconsider their actions of 1924, 1926 in the light of the Scriptures and the Confessions. 2. To base this appeal upon our convictions that their actions are in error, and that our convictions have been repeatedly published, preached, and officially adopted by us since. That these have never been officially answered by them, which is their christian obligation to do so. 3. Refer them to the 'History of the Protestant Reformed Churches', as an indictment against them. 4. To inform them of our conviction that we are called upon before God to continue laboring among them as long as they continue to preach and officially maintain the Three Points. To explain that we are entering the fold by the door, Jesus Christ." Thus far the overture.

Synod decided not to adopt the overture on the following grounds: "1. Our experience in 1940-1941 convinces us that it would not be received. 2. Since their Synod has expressed that the matter is closed we could not expect them to re-open it. 3. Because of our letters to their Synod of 1940-1941, their Synod decided that ecumenical relationship with us is impossible."

Synod adjourned at a rather late hour on Monday evening after a four day session. Next time, the Lord willing, we will report various other decisions and hope also to be able to give the decisions of the Mission Committee and calling Consistory in execution of the continuation of labor in the Washington field. In connection with that latter we hope to shed some light on the motivation of this decision to continue our labor there.

W. Hofman.