

# THE STANDARD

## *Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### Des Heeren Eisch

“Waarmede zal ik den Heere tegenkomen, en mij bukken voor den hoogen God? Zal ik Hem tegenkomen met brandofferen? Met eenjarige kalveren? Zou de Heere een welgevallen hebben aan duizenden van rammen? aan tienduizenden van oliebeken? Zal ik mijn eerstgeborene geven voor mijne overtreding? de vrucht mijns buiks voor de zonde mijner ziel? Hij heeft u bekend gemaakt o mensch! wat goed is; en wat eischt de Heere van u, dan recht te doen, en weldadigheid lief te hebben, en ootmoedigheid te wandelen met uwen God?”

Micha 6:6-8.

De groote vraag voor het geslacht dat leefde in de dagen van den profeet Micha was: Wat eischt de Heere van ons?

Op die vraag gaven zij verschillende antwoorden, maar alle antwoorden waren foutief. Wij komen daarop terug.

Ook in onzen dag, evenals in alle dagen der historie is die groote vraag gedaan: wat eischt de Heere God van ons? Hoe zullen wij den Heere welbehaaglijk zijn?

Er is veel godsdienst; en er is altijd veel godsdienst geweest. Men heeft mij verteld, dat waar men ook volkeren vond, daar vindt men ook godsdienst. Het doet mij denken aan den Apostel Paulus die in Athene zelfs een altaar vond, hetwelk tot opschrift had: Den Onbekenden God! Zij schenen bang te zijn om ook maar één god over te slaan. O, er is zooveel godsdienst.

Nu hebben alle godsdiensten van 's menschen vond dit met elkaar gemeen: men draaft, en loopt en zwoegt voor God; men brengt Hem allerlei offers en presentjes: men zal den grooten God vóór zich stemmen door Hem veel, o zoo veel, te geven!

De populaire godsdienst is de gave van den mensch aan God.

En toch: zoo is het niet.

Twee antwoorden: God heeft alles al, vooraleer ge klaar zijt om te geven. En het tweede antwoord: wat Hij eischt hebt ge niet; moet Hij U schenken. Godsdienst, ware Godsdienst, is de groote GAVE GODS aan den mensch.

Maar het komt tot ons in den vorm van een eisch.

Des Heeren Eisch!

Dat klinkt eerst zoo bang!

\* \* \* \*

Des Heeren Eisch!

Bang, noemde ik het.

En het is bang.

Laat ons dien eisch ietwat bestudeeren.

Wezenlijk hebben we hier niet anders dan de Wet der Tien Geboden.

Er is wel verschil, maar geen essentieel verschil. Ge hebt hier te doen met een soort hoofdsom der Wet. Ge moet recht doen, weldadigheid liefhebben, en ootmoedigheid met God wandelen.

Het tweede verschil is dat ge opklimt van Gods eisch tegenover den naaste tot Zijn eisch ten overstaan van Hemzelf. Het gaat van buiten naar binnen, en niet omgekeerd zooals bij Horeb.

Toch is het wezenlijk hetzelfde. Ge hebt hier in Micha beide tafelen der Wet. En ge zult al vaak opgemerkt hebben, dat op meerdere plaatsen in Gods Woord de Wet Gods in een hoofdsom U gegeven werd.

Het recht doen en weldadigheid lief te hebben gaat over Uwe verhouding jegens Uw broeder, en het ootmoedigheid wandelen met God is de hoofdsomma voor den inhoud der eerste tafel.

Eerst onze verhouding tegenover den naaste wordt ons voorgehouden door den profeet, en dan klimt hij op tot de eerste tafel der Wet.

Ik denk, dat Micha eerst de tweede tafel noemt, omdat vooral het verbreken van Gods geboden tegenover den naaste zoo gruwelijk gevonden werd.

Ik kreeg dien indruk bij het lezen van de geheele profetie van Micha. Men stal, verdrukte, moordde, enz. En Micha, staande te midden van al dat breken der geboden die te doen hebben met Uw verhouding tot den naaste, noemde daarom het rechtdoen en weldadigheid liefhebben eerst. Want Micha wist natuurlijk ook wel, dat de eerste tafel basis is voor de tweede.

Het is een mooie hoofdsomma. Bijna zoo schoon als die welke de Heere Jezus er van gaf.

In het algemeen zegt Micha drie dingen van die Wet Gods, van dien eisch die God ons stelt.

Eerst, dat die Wet bekend gemaakt is, 't zij direkt of indirekt.

Er is nu eenmaal een algemeen getuigenis des Heiligen Geestes in eens ieders hart. Dat zegt ons Gods Word op vele plaatsen. Ik denk, b.v., aan Rom. 1, Psalm 19 en Rom. 10. Ja, ook nog, en vooral Joh. 16:8-11. De Heilige Geest gaat rond en overtuigt den mensch van zonde, gerechtigheid en oordeel. Dat zult ge hier aan deze zijde van dood en graf nooit gewaar worden, want de mensch is geneigd om te liegen. Wanneer hoort ge nu eens een hartelijke, gewillige, ware belijdenis van zonde. Het wordt meesttijds afgedwongen. Maar straks, als de laatste dag gekomen is, dan zal men het zien, dat de wereld al die eeuwen overtuigd geweest is van zonde, gerechtigheid en oordeel. O ja, de Wet Gods is bekend gemaakt.

Maar er is ook een speciaal getuigenis, en dat had Israel tot wie deze profetie kwam. Toen Micha deze profetie uitsprak in de ooren van Israel, toen wisten zij waar hij het over had. God had gesproken op Sinai en Zijn Wet gegeven door den dienst der Engelen.

Het tweede algemeene ding, dat Micha zegt van deze Wet Gods is, dat zij *goed* is.

O, dat is een schoone openbaring, en tevens zoo waar.

O zeker, de Wet is goed! Ik zou hier haast een boek over kunnen schrijven. De Wet is goed. Overal waar ge die Wet vindt ziet, proeft en smaakt ge, dat zij goed is. Leest David's boek over de Wet, en zingt met hem: Psalm 119.

De Wet is goed als zoodanig.

Hoe zou het ook anders: zij is reflectie van Gods eigen Goddelijke leven. Ik heb mij altijd gestooten aan de uitdrukking, dat God verheven is boven Zijn Eigen Wet. Het is goed bedoeld. Men wilde Gods grootheid en Souvereiniteit handhaven, en toch geloof ik, dat het een averrechtsche voorstelling geeft van God. De Wet doet ons zien, smaken en proeven wat het leven Gods is. De Wet is immers Liefde? In dat eene woord is de geheele Wet vervuld. De Wet beschrijft de Liefde Gods, d.w.z., Gods Eigen Liefdeleven. Het bemint Zichzelf boven alle dingen en schep-

selen. En zoo moesten wij nu ook wandelen van harte. Gedreven door de Liefde Gods moeten we Hem minnen en ook den naaste om Gods wil.

O ja, de Wet is goed.

En die Wet is ook goed in hare onderhouding. Ge zingt ervan: "vindt daarin grooten loon!"

Wandelt naar die Wet en ge ondervindt wat het zeggen wil om in den hemel te zijn. Laat een ieder U vervloeken, en laat er allerlei smart Uw deel zijn: indien ge naar de Wet Gods wandeldet dan zoudt ge zelfs in die toestanden kunnen zingen van blijdschap.

Het derde algemeene ding wat de Heere ons van Zijn Wet hier geeft is dit: Hij eischt het.

En dat is vreeselijk voor ons die zondaren geworden zijn.

In dat woordje *eischt* zit de reuk van vuur en sulfur.

Maar het is een vreeselijk woord. Het snijdt alle excuus af. Blijft eeuwig staan. Want de Eischer is God.

Geen wonder, dat ik zooeven zei: het is bang om dit eerst te lezen: Wat EISCHT Hij van U, o mensch?

Des Heeren Eisch!

\* \* \* \*

Des Heeren Eisch!

Bezie het iewat nader.

Ge moet recht doen.

Ai mij! want ik verga: ik doe onrecht! Dat is de belijdenis van een ieder die in het licht staat van des Heeren Heiligen Geest die het Woord van God toepast in het diepe hart.

Wat is recht doen?

Recht doen beteekent, dat vanuit het harte, al uwe gedachten, woorden en werken conform zijn aan de eenigste norm voor het goede, en dat is God!

Ik zal het nog duidelijker zeggen: Al Uw leven moet conform God zijn. Dat is recht doen.

God is recht.

Dat wil zeggen, dat al Gods leven conform is aan het eenigste en het hoogste goed, en dat is Hijzelf. God is in Zijn eeuwig leven conform aan Zijn Eigen Wezen. En God eischt dat gij conform zijt aan datzelfde leven. Daarom schiep Hij den mensch naar Zijn beeld in ware kennis, gerechtigheid en heiligheid.

Tweedens, ge moet weldadigheid liefhebben.

Daar wordt het niet beter op voor den zondaar.

Er is veel openbaring van gerechtigheid, van recht doen. Alle volkeren hebben een schijn van recht doen. Justitia bouwt hare tempels in alle eeuwen en in alle landen.

Maar het is de ware gerechtigheid niet. In al hun recht doen missen zij één element, en dat eene is God.

Alle rechtdoen is om den mensch en dat is verachtelijk.

Maar er is dan toch een uiterlijke betrachting tot de tucht. Een feit dat de dwaze mensch er toe leidde om te bazelen van gemeene gratie. Een zondig rechtdoen, en een rechtmatig zondigen! Bah! Men walgt van die voorstellingen.

Maar nu doet de Heere er nog een element bij: ge moet weldadigheid liefhebben.

Het woord beteekent, dat ge liefelijk moet zijn tegenover den naaste, en dat ge die lieflijke houding moet minnen.

Hier schijnt het heerlijke van de Wet Gods.

Ge moet de liefde liefhebben.

Ja, de wereld bouwt ook haar liefde-gebouwen: hospitalen, Sanatoria, lazaretten, en wat er meer zij.

Maar het fundament van al die dingen is niet dit wonderlijke element der liefde Gods.

De Heilige Geest heeft aan die dingen der wereld geroken, en toen zeide Hij: de barmhartigheden der goddeloozen zijn wreed.

Derdens, ge moet ootmoediglijk met God wandelen.

Dat is het schoonste van alles. Dat gaat God aan.

Dat is ook het moeilijkste van alle drie.

Hier hebben we de kroon der Wet.

Het woord staat in den causalen vorm van het werkwoord. Het beduidt, dat gij eigener beweging Uzelf moet beetnemen en vernederen voor Gods aangezicht, opdat ge met Hem zoudt wandelen.

Dat moet ge afgedacht van de zonde. Uit tweeërlei motief: omdat Hij zoo wonderlijk en groot is, en omdat gij zoo klein zijt; stof en asche.

O, die Eisch van God!

\* \* \* \*

Des Heeren Eisch!

Wat is daarop Uw antwoord, o mensch!

Dit: dat wij er ons niets van aantrekken!

Hij maakt het U bekend: en te midden van die stroomen der openbaring stoppen wij onze ooren dicht.

Als wij de vervulling der Wet zien in Jezus Christus, en als wij als 't ware Zijn goedheid proeven, dan zijn wij kwaad, nemen Hem beet en hangen Hem aan 't Kruis van Golgotha.

Hij maakt U bekend wat goed is: maar wij zijn kwaad en boos al ons leven.

Hij eischt van den hemel, en zal blijven eischen. Maar tegenover dien eisch schreeuwen wij rauwelings: Wijk van mij; Ik heb geen lust aan de kennis Uwer wegen!

Tegenover openbaring, het goede Gods en de onverbidde eisch die Zijn gerechtigheid doet; tegenover de gerechtigheid, lieflijkheid, en geëischte nederigheid

is de mensch hard, leelijk, krom en trotsch! Ziedaar Uw beeld, lezer!

O, die Eisch van God!

Ach, wat is ons antwoord gruwelijk en goddeloos!

Wij zetten er wel wat tegenover. Als God eischt, dan antwoorden wij en zeggen: ik zal brandofferen rooken, eenjarige kalveren, rammen en oliebekken U geven. En als dat niet genoeg is, dan zal ik mijn eerstgeborene geven!

Eén ding geven wij nooit, en dat eene is mijn hart!

Het ziet er vreeselijk uit: o, die Eisch Gods!

\* \* \* \*

Des Heeren Eisch!

En onze overtreding!

Daar hebt ge de lange en bange geschiedenis.

Meer wacht wat: de Heere openbaarde nog meer.

Ons antwoord van harde goddeloosheid is gelegd op een Mensch: Zijn naam is Jezus Christus.

En Hij betaalt de prijs voor die harde antwoorden. Hij draagt de zonde der wereld weg.

En die Man is de Representant van alle de gekenden Gods. En als zoodanig gaat Hij aan 't werk.

Hij geeft het antwoord *voor* ons.

Hij zegt: Ik draag Uw heilige wet, die Gij den sterveling zet, in 't binnenst ingewand!

Hij geeft het volmaakte antwoord voor ons.

Hij is recht en doet recht. Zoo recht is Hij, dat Zijn naam is De Heere onze gerechtigheid.

Hij heeft de liefde lief.

Ziet het aan het Kruis: Heere, vergeef hen want zij weten niet wat zij doen! Is er ooit iets lieflijkers gesproken?

En Hij is nederig. Neen, er is niemand gelijk aan de nederige Jezus. Hij vernedert Zich tot den ver-smadelijken dood des kruises. Hij gaat naar de diepste hel en daar buigt hij het hoofd onder de striemen Gods. En Hij lijdt uit liefde.

En Hij is degene die het juiste antwoord geeft en doet *door* ons.

En zoo komt het dat er zijn onder de menschen-kinderen die een beetje van Micha 6 hebben. In het diepe hart woont Jezus en Hij werkt door ons. Wij neigen het oor en luisteren naar Zijn klanken. Wij stemmen der Wet toe dat zij goed is. En wij smachten naar die Wet. Hoe lief heb ik Uw Wet! zong David, en wij zingen het hem na.

Wij doen recht in beginsel. En wij minnen de liefde Gods.

En ja, wij buigen het hoofd, en God hoort ons heete snikken: o God! wees mij, den zondaar, genadig! En Hij hoort om Jezus' wil! Amen.

G. Vos.

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C O N T E N T S

MEDITATION—

Des Heeren Eisch .....433  
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS—

Facts and Figures .....436  
Rev. R. Veldman

OUR DOCTRINE—

The Mercy of God .....439  
Rev. H. Veldman

Reply to Rev. Petter .....442  
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

SION'S ZANGEN—

Een Vloekpsalm .....447  
Rev. G. Vos

FROM HOLY WRIT—

The Office in the Church .....450  
Rev. C. Hanko

IN HIS FEAR—

Detecting and Labeling .....452  
Young Men, Where Are They? .....453  
Rev. M. Gritters

PERISCOPE—

Synod-Varia .....455  
Rev. W. Hofman

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## EDITORIALS

### Facts and Figures

Did you ever stop to consider just how much, or how little, our church and denomination really cost us and how much we receive for the price we pay? People complain at times about the size of their congregational budget or the rising cost of denominational life. In this article a few pertinent facts and figures will be given.

We do not mean to be profane or sinfully mundane when we speak, in connection with our congregational and denominational existence, of "cost" and "price" and "budgets" and "assessments". Some good people have a strong aversion to the use of such terms and feel that they give too much of a business aspect to our church life. They would prefer to speak of contributions or donations.

Our own Heidelberg Catechism, however, uses the term "maintain". To the question, "What doth God require in the fourth commandment?" the answer is given in Lord's Day 38, "First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be *maintained*". This answer has frequently amazed me. At first glance it seems evasive and irrelevant. One almost feels that the fathers made a studied attempt to dodge the issue. The fourth commandment reads: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, etc." That charges us, say our fathers, "first, to maintain the ministry of the gospel and the schools." A deeper study of the commandment, however, will reveal that our fathers knew precisely what they were talking about and that this answer is indeed beautiful and to the point. We are not particularly interested, however, in an exposition of this commandment, but only in this one clause of the catechism, "First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained." We underscore the word "maintain".

Most of us have families to maintain. That costs money. We have our homes and other things to maintain. That costs money. Thus we have a ministry of the gospel and a school to maintain. That costs money.

Our catechism, you will notice, does not speak of maintaining religion. Religion as such man does not maintain; God does. It is the mystical flame that only the almighty Spirit of Christ can kindle. It is life itself; the wonder of the grace of God; the gift of divine love. All the saints together, with all their zeal, cannot keep one smoldering ember of religion

aglow. Hence, what we are called to maintain is not religion, but our divine worship; the divinely ordained *form* of religious life; the institute through which it pleases God to bless His people and which it pleases God to maintain *through* His people.

Obviously, Lord's Day 38 identifies that divine worship with the sabbath. Apart from the former the latter means nothing. It is because of the church that we love the sabbath and need it. It is to the church that we dedicate our time and talents on the sabbath. Through the church we are enriched on the Lord's Day. Without the church and divine worship you have no sabbath. There God dwells among His people. There is the communion of the saints and the blessing of Jehovah. There alone, nowhere else, not at work, not at home, not in a cottage by some lake, not on the beach, but in the house of our God,—there you find your God on the sabbath. Our vacationers had better bear this in mind. That is, if we are able to attend divine worship, we shall not find God anywhere else on His day. Church and church life, therefore, are of paramount importance to every child of God. To maintain the "ministry of the gospel" means to maintain that church in its widest significance.

The heart of that church life and divine worship is the ministry of the Word, in preaching and sacraments and catechism instruction, in the direct and narrower sense of the word. This is the core of our entire church life for the sake of which our entire ecclesiastical structure must be maintained. On that ministry of the gospel, the preaching of the divine Word, to which all else in God's house is subordinate, depends the welfare and life of the church and the individual Christian. Weak and uncertain preaching must cause decay, retrogression, spiritual blindness. The weaker the preaching the less spiritual growth can be expected, the more heresy will run amuck and the more our garden will be overrun with weeds. God will never speak the almighty word of salvation through the lie. Sound preaching gives strength, life, growth, vitality. Above everything else in the world, therefore, we need a sound ministry of the gospel. It is the business of every one to make certain that we get it.

However, to maintain such a ministry involves many things. An adequate ministry of the Word requires well-trained ministers. Our catechism has this in mind, too, for it speaks of "the schools". Hence, we need a well equipped school. We need students who desire to be trained for the ministry, competent professors to give the best instruction possible, and a suitable place where such training can be given. Once in the ministry a man needs a home and an income. We need church buildings where the Word of God can be administered and these buildings must be main-

tained, heated and lighted. We need organists to lead us in our congregational singing and additional catechism teachers, perhaps. All these must be provided and are included when we speak of maintaining "the ministry of the gospel". Also, we must have affiliation with other churches of the same faith, and these must come together from time to time in classes and synods. We need missionaries, too, and they need an income and means with which to labor, for the Word must be administered to others too, even to the ends of the earth. Maintaining "the ministry of the gospel" means a great deal.

It is not at all difficult to see how the schools fit into this picture. How can the ministry of the gospel be maintained properly without well directed schools? In the broader sense we may think here of all our Christian institutions of learning, since there is a definite connection between our divine worship and all the training our children receive. The great Dr. Kuyper stressed correctly that ministers are prepared to preach and listeners to listen from childhood on. We do well, also as Protestant Reformed people, to see this point. However, at present we are thinking especially of our theological school, where our future ministers receive their training. That school, friends, is of the utmost importance for the welfare and future of our churches. Are we as conscious of this as we should be? The future of our churches and the whole of our divine worship depends on our seminary. As the school goes our churches go. If you are at all concerned about our Protestant Reformed Churches you had better be deeply concerned about our Protestant Reformed seminary.

That "ministry of the gospel" must be **MAINTAINED**.

We know what it means "to maintain". It means: to support, to sustain, to keep from declining, to bear the expense of, to keep up, to conserve and uphold. We maintain families, homes, cars, schools. We maintain properties, roads, bridges, parks. Thus we must maintain the ministry of the gospel and the schools. That, say the fathers, is our initial sabbath obligation.

Whether this is done by means of voluntary contributions or by means of budget and assessments is quite beside the point here. If only we understand that we are morally and financially obliged to maintain church and school; that church and school on the one hand and the poor on the other do not stand on one line; and that the support of the former, therefore, is not a question of mere donation. The catechism speaks of "contributing to the relief of the poor", especially on the sabbath, but of "maintaining the ministry of the gospel and the schools", quite independently of the sabbath day as such. What you con-

tribute toward the maintenance of church and school is not a question of voluntary donation, in the sense that you are doing something you need not do, but it is a matter of moral and financial obligation. Church and school are your "business". Ministers and professors are not objects of charity. They do not live from "alms". They receive and are entitled to salaries. As laborers they are worthy of their hire. It is your financial obligation to pay your full share toward church and school, according as the Lord has prospered you, just as well as it is your financial obligation to pay your gas and electric bills. Only, in the church of Jesus Christ the obligation is determined by our means. The former grows with the latter. We do the maintaining together and Christian love dictates that the strong carry the weak. It is not my purpose now to break a lance for the budget system, but I do suggest, that this system must not be rejected on the grounds that the support of church and school is a matter of donation. It is not! It's a question of maintenance.

Now this takes money, of course.

However, let us ask ourselves in all seriousness: Did the Lord ever ask too much of us? Have we any reason to complain? Remember, we are speaking of our churches and theological schools. Let me give a few figures, not for the purpose of underrating the efforts of our people, for there is more to pay than the running expenses of church and school, but of coming to a somewhat better understanding of cost and values received.

Do you know what it costs to maintain our seminary? For the year 1949 the assessment was \$10.50 per family. That amounts to less than three cents per day, less than the price of three sticks of gum, less than the cost (synod pays six cents per mile) of operating a car four city blocks. For three pennies each day we have our seminary, three instructors, and we lay aside one penny for the purpose of some day securing a humble school building of our own. And remember, our future rests on our school. Is that too much? You say: but the school is only a single item on our ecclesiastical budget. Oh, but it's a vital one! How many of us do not spend many times three pennies for things that cannot compare with a seminary in importance, and we think nothing of it.

Do you know what it costs to maintain our entire denomination? For the year 1949 the total assessment was slightly over \$32.00 per family. According to the Christian Reformed Yearbook of 1949, page 239, their churches were required to raise \$39.15 per family for their denominational needs. Hence, we have no complaint on that score. Our denominational obligations amount to about nine cents per day, the price of one Melba cigar, the cost of operating a car from Fuller

Avenue to Division st. For that amount we have our school, our instructors, our missionaries, we support our needy churches, we have our classes and synods, and provide funds for other essential purposes.

Do you know what your entire budget amounts to? I have before me the 1948 Church Directory of our Fuller Avenue congregation. On page 11 I find the Adopted Budget for 1948. At the bottom of the page I read: "The Weekly Budget Amounts to \$2.00." Just above this I read: "The item for "Our Poor" formerly included in the budget has been excluded but the monies for this purpose are to be raised by means of free offerings to be collected during the services." Now I know that some of our smaller churches have budgets larger than Fuller Avenue, but on the whole the difference is not great enough to make a substantial difference. Two dollars per week comes to about twenty eight cents per day, less than two quarts of milk or two loaves of bread. Now, let us glance over the budget and see what we have for 28 pennies per day. Here is the list: Three ministers and all the labors they perform, three services each Sunday, sick visitation and family visitation, funeral services and instruction of the covenant seed; a janitor and janitor supplies; fuel, phone, gas, electric and water; stationery, bulletins and budget boxes; pulpit supply, organists and extra catechism teachers; consistorial and communion expenses; insurance and maintenance of several buildings; classical and synodical expenses; theological school and three instructors; two missionaries of which one is supported by Fuller Avenue alone; radio preaching from Sunday to Sunday. There is even a substantial amount for new pianos. All this for 28c per days, not per individual but per family. Now, that's a bargain that no White Elephant Sale can begin to duplicate.

That means that the average man today works no more than fifteen or twenty minutes per day for his whole denominational and congregational existence; and some of us work less than ten minutes.

I know, our religion as a whole costs more than that. I know that extras like new organs and new church edifices are not included in our calculations. I know that Christian school contributions and tuition amounts to considerable for many of our families, and that if you add all these things together you get a burden that some people find difficult to bear. For that reason the strong must continue to shoulder the lion share of the burden. Nor is there reason to become careless and wasteful. However, we are speaking now about our normal church and denominational expenses, and they, certainly, are not prohibitive.

Least of all when we consider the values received.

R. Veldman.



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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Mercy Of God

#### *God's Mercy According To Berkhof*

Another important aspect of the goodness of God is His mercy or tender compassion. Concerning this attribute of the Lord, Prof. Berkhof writes in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, page 73, as follows: "*The Mercy of God*. Another important aspect of the goodness of God is His mercy or tender compassion. The Hebrew word most generally used for this is "chesed". There is another word, however, which expresses a deep and tender compassion, namely, the word "racham", which is beautifully rendered by "tender mercy" in our English Bible. The Septuagint and the New Testament employ the Greek word "eleos" to designate the mercy of God. If the grace of God contemplates man as guilty before God, and therefore needs forgiveness, the mercy of God contemplates him as one who is bearing the consequences of sin, who is in a pitiable condition, and who therefore needs Divine help. It may be defined as *the goodness or love of God shown to those who are in misery or distress, irrespective of their deserts*. In His mercy God reveals Himself as a compassionate God, Who pities those who are in misery and is ever ready to relieve their distress. This mercy is bountiful, Deut. 5:10; Ps. 57:10; 86:5, and the poets of Israel delighted to sing of it as enduring forever, I Chron. 16:34; II Chron. 7:6; Ps. 136; Ezra 3:11. In the New Testament it is often mentioned alongside of the grace of God, especially in salutations, I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:4. We are told repeatedly that it is shown to them that fear God, Ex. 20:2; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 86:5; Luke 1:50. This does not mean, however, that it is limited to them, though they enjoy it in a special measure. God's tender mercies are over all His works, Ps. 145:9, and even those who do not fear Him share in them, Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Luke 6:35, 36. The mercy of God may not be represented as opposed to His justice. It is exercised only in harmony with the strictest justice of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ. Other terms used for it in the Bible are "pity, compassion, and lovingkindness".

In this quotation of Prof. Berkhof we are told that repeatedly this mercy of the Lord is shown to them that fear God. Of course, we are also reminded once more of the theory of "Common Grace", and told that also this virtue of the Lord is not limited to the people of God, but is also shown unto those who do not fear Him. And let us please note the passages which are

quoted by the professor. We certainly need not make any remarks about Ps. 145:9—to this passage we have called attention more than once in this series of articles. The word of God in Luke 6:35-36 reads as follows: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." To this passage also we have called attention in the past. And we repeat at this time what we wrote in a preceding article, namely, that we do not deny that the Lord is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Let the exponents of "Common Grace" prove that these unthankful and evil also include the reprobate unthankful and evil. This we deny. But we should carefully note the other references which the professor quoted in support of a general mercy of the Lord. He refers to Ezek. 18:23, 32, and 33:11, and these passages reads as follows: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his way, and live? . . . Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live, turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" We must note the arminian thrust in Berkhof's quoting of these passages. The "Common Grace" theory, we must understand, as developed by the late Dr. A. Kuyper, pertains only to the things of this present time. According to this eminent theologian the general love or grace or mercy of the Lord touches only upon the sinner's earthy and temporal existence, and must never be confused with the things of God's eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Dr. Kuyper would distinguish sharply between the heavenly and the earthy, the natural and the spiritual, the things of this present life and our eternal salvation. However, the "general mercy" of God as expressed in these passages from Ezekiel deals with salvation. The Lord has no pleasure at all that the wicked should die, but that he should turn from his ways, and live. And this is explained by the professor simply in the sense that, the Lord has no pleasure in the eternal death of any sinner, but that He wills and desires the salvation of all men. This, we must understand, should no longer be presented to the people as a general grace or mercy of the Lord, but simply as the particular grace or mercy of God which has become common or general. Then we should no longer distinguish between the natural and the spiritual, the earthy and the heavenly, but boldly present the Lord as offering, without distinction, His heavenly and eternal salvation to all men. This would help to clear the atmosphere.

And, finally, we should also note the hopeless con-

fusion of the professor when he writes that "the mercy of God may not be represented as opposed to His justice." He may have in mind Lord's Day 4, Question and Answer 11: "Is not God then also merciful? God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore His justice requires, that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul." However, how can a general mercy of God, which purposes the salvation of all men (Prof. Berkhof's quoting of the texts in Ezekiel), ever be harmonized with particular atonement? How is it possible for the Lord to offer His salvation to all without distinction upon the basis of strictest justice? To offer salvation to all certainly must imply that there must be salvation for all; one can hardly conceive of the Lord that He would offer something that does not exist. And there is salvation for all only if Christ died for all, for all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. However, if Christ did not die for all (and no Reformed man would even dare to affirm that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be applied to all men, head for head), the "general" mercy of the Lord would be devoid of any basis of strict justice and righteousness. To harmonize, therefore, a general mercy of the Lord which is in harmony with His strict justice is impossible. However, the Lord is strictly just; only, there is no such thing as a general mercy of God.

#### *God's Mercy According To H. Bavinck.*

Dr. Bavinck is also brief in his discussion of this virtue of God. He writes in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. II, pages 180-181, and we translate: "This goodness of God appears in various forms, depending upon the objects upon which it is directed. Closely related to it is loving kindness or tender mercy (*goedertierenheid*), "*chesed* a.v. *chasan*", "*stringere*", to bind, "*chreestotees*", related to "*prautees*", II Cor. 10:1. At times it is used in a general sense, I Chron. 16:34 (how this text can be generally interpreted may well be considered an enigma—H.V.) but it mostly expresses God's special favor (*gunst*) to His people, the inclination whereby He is bound to his "favored ones (*gunstgenoten*)", Rom. 2:4 (notice, please, that Bavinck applies this text to the people of God, not to all sinners as did the Synod of 1924—H.V.), II Cor. 10:1 . . . The goodness of God, when shown to those who are miserable, is called mercy, "*rachemin*, *splagchna*, viscera, misericordia", New Testament "*eleos*, *oiktirmos*". Of this mercy of God we read everywhere in Scripture, Ex. 34:6, Deut. 4:31, II Chron. 30:9, Ps. 86:15, 103:8, 111:4, 112:4, 145:8, in contrast with men, II Sam. 24:14, Prov. 12:10, Dan. 9:9, 18. This mercy is manifold, II Sam. 24:14, Ps. 119:156, great, Neh. 9:19, Ps. 51:13, without end, Lam. 3:22, tender

as that of a father, Ps. 193:13, is shown to thousands, Ex. 20:6, and returns, after chastisement, Is. 14:1, 49:13 f.f., 54:8, 55:7, 60:10, Jer. 12:15, 30:18, 31:20, Hos. 2:22, Micha 7:19, etc. In the New Testament God, the Father of mercy, II Cor. 1:3, has revealed His mercy in Christ, Luke 1:50 f.f., Who is a merciful High Priest, Matt. 18:27, 20:34, etc., Heb. 2:17, and He moreover manifests the riches of His mercy, Eph. 2:4, in the salvation of the believers, Rom. 9:23, 11:30, I Cor. 4:1, I Tim. 1:13, Heb. 4:16, etc."—thus far the quotation of the late Dr. Bavinck. Comment on this quotation of Dr. Bavinck is unnecessary. The mercy of God, according to this eminent theologian, is the goodness of God as shown to His people in misery.

#### *Idea Of The Terms.*

Two terms are particularly of interest in the Old Testament. The term most frequently employed in the Hebrew is "*chesed*". This word denoted an inclination of the emotion, of the affection toward an object in misery. Another word which appears in the Old Testament is "*rachaemim*", the plural of "*rechem*", which is, first of all, the womb, in a broader sense the bowels, and therefore used of the inner parts as the seat of affection. This word may be translated as: compassion, tender mercy.

The idea of mercy, as it appears in the New Testament, is about the same as in the Old Testament. The word most frequently used in the New Testament is "*eleos*", which means mercy or kindness toward the miserable and the afflicted, and accompanied by a desire to help and relieve them. Another word used in the Greek is "*splagchna*", the usual translation of the Hebrew, "*rachaemim*", a word which means: bowels, intestines, inasmuch as the Hebrew conceived of the bowels or intestines as the seat of the affections. And a third word which appears in the New Testament, also used in the Septuagint (the translation by the Seventy of the Old Testament Scriptures into the Greek) is "*oiktirmos*", which means: viscera, or bowels. Besides the individual appearance of these various words in the New Testament, they also appear in combination. In Luke 1:78, for example, we read of the "*splagchna eleous*"—bowels of mercy, and in Col. 3:12 the word "*oiktirmos*" is used with "*eleos*". Then again, the words "*splagchna*" and "*oiktirmos*" are used alone in the New Testament to designate the mercy of God.

The common word, however, is "*eleos*", and this word, together with its synonyms which we have mentioned, designates the goodness of God as it manifests itself toward His people in misery with the desire to relieve them in and of their distress.

#### *Its Use In The New Testament.*

First of all, we would call attention to I Pet. 1:3. This text reads as follows: "Blessed be the God and



Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." In this particular Word of God the mercy of God is held before us as the standard as well as the source of that which God works for His people. This mercy of the Lord is certainly, first of all, the source of our salvation. This salvation consists, on the one hand, of our deliverance from sin and death, our deepest and terrible woe. And, positively, it leads us unto the eternal inheritance, whereof the apostle speaks in the following fourth verse: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." The Lord, now, has begotten us again unto a lively hope *according to His abundant mercy*. Hence, the starting point of this mercy of God is our misery, and the end or goal is our greatest glory. And the "eleos" or mercy of God is therefore the Divine motive, desire to bless His people in misery. Secondly, this mercy of God is also the standard of our salvation. We are blessed, so declares the apostle in this text, "*according to His abundant mercy*." Mind you, this mercy of God is called: abundant, great. Neither is it difficult to understand why the apostle calls this mercy of our God an abundant, a great, a tremendously rich mercy, a mercy with a tremendously rich and abundant content. All we need do is attempt to measure the tremendous distance between our unspeakable misery and ultimate salvation. It saves us out of the misery of sin and death. It reaches out unto us as we lie in deepest hell. It extends to people who are by nature objects of wrath and the indignation of God, children of wrath and of disobedience even as are all the others (Eph. 2:1-4). It saves, therefore, from the unspeakable woe of being eternally forsaken of God. And it leads us into a glory so great that it could never enter into the heart or mind of man. The mercy of the Lord, therefore, transfers us out of deepest hell into an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance, which fadeth not away. No wonder that the apostle can speak of this mercy as an abundant mercy, a tremendously rich mercy.

Another passage to which we would call attention is Jude :21. There we read: "Keep yourselves in the love of God; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life". The word "mercy" has undoubtedly the same significance in this passage as in I Pet. 1:3. We must look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The mercy of our Lord, which will be revealed at His coming, is a mercy that will lead us into everlasting life, is a mercy, therefore, that cannot and therefore will not rest until it have saved us completely from all sin and death and corruption and have bestowed upon us everlasting life, the eternal fellowship and communion with the Lord in His eternal and heavenly tabernacle, when God's covenant-

fellowship with His people in Christ Jesus shall have been completed. And notice also in this connection the first part of this text: "Keep yourselves in the love of God". This does not refer primarily to our love of God, for: "Not herein is love, that we loved God, but that He loved us". The love of God is surely God's love toward us. And in this love of God we must keep ourselves. In that amazing, unchangeable love we must stand; that love of God we must keep ever before us; to that love of God we must cling and in it we must walk. Then, because our God is Jehovah, the unchangeable and almighty covenant God, we will be assured that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will lead us into everlasting glory in the day of His coming.

A third passage to which we would call attention is Eph. 2:4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us". The expression "for" means literally: because of. Bearing this in mind, we may translate: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us". This text, particularly when viewed in its context, is truly an amazing portion of the Word of God. Also here the starting point is our great misery. We read in verses 1-3: "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Moreover, also this fourth verse of Eph. 2 speaks of the *riches* of God's mercy and connects it with the love of God as its ultimate reason and ground. The text declares, does it not, "But God, Who is rich in mercy, *because of His great love* wherewith He loved us." Obviously, therefore, the love of God, yea the great love of God is the ground of and reason for the mercy of God. The love of God lies at the root of His mercy and His mercy consequently serves His love. By mercy the end of His love is reached. God loves His people with an everlasting love in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. And because of that great love of God He would save them out of their great misery, so that this love of God reveals itself as His mercy toward His people in misery. Notice, also in this context, that the riches of the mercy of God becomes manifest in our being made alive in Christ, in our being raised with Him and being placed with Him in heaven, even as we read this in verses 5-6: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And all this occurs, so we read, in order that the Lord

might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace, as we read in verse 7: "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Hence, the Lord willed to save us out of such a great misery and lead us into an unspeakable glory in order that the exceeding riches of His grace might be shown and receive our praise even for evermore.

A fourth and final Scripture to which we would call attention is Rom. 9:23. There we read: "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." The people of God are called in this text: "vessels of mercy", and this expression signifies that they are products of this mercy of God. Vessels of mercy are vessels produced by mercy; as the people of the Lord we owe our existence (our existence as people of God) exclusively to the mercy of God. In the second place we would note, in connection with this text, that this mercy of God, which produces these vessels, upon whom the Lord visits His glory, has its purpose in the everlasting God Himself. We read, do we not, that God had *afore prepared them unto glory*. Hence, it is God Who, before the foundation of the world, willed that these "vessels of mercy" should be clothed with the riches of His glory. And that this sovereign good pleasure should receive all the emphasis, also in this passage, need not surprise us, particularly if we consider the entire context in which this text occurs. This entire ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, from the beginning to the end, is one song of praise which sings of the eternal sovereignty of the Lord. And, finally, notice in this twenty-third verse that "God makes known the riches of His glory *upon* these vessels of mercy. Having prepared them unto glory from before the foundation of the world, He also actually visits this glory upon them, and thereby makes them, by his mercy, vessels which reveal the glory of the Lord. And all this takes place, we understand, in order that He might make known the *riches* of His glory, in order that we may forever sing of the amazing and unfathomable power of the grace and mercy of our God. For it is indeed the purpose of the Lord that no flesh may boast, but that whosoever boasteth shall boast of glory forever in the Lord.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

#### 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.

## Reply To Rev. Petter

(Continued)

Dear Brother:—

Especially my last article must have made it crystal clear to you that the doctrine contained in your proposition is heretical and that in denying its contrary you repudiate the truth. But, of course, I am only a sinful, fallible man. I therefore may be in error. If so, please instruct me. Such again is my request. You must realize that you are under the necessity of doing one of two: 1) of pronouncing your proposition false; 2) or of proving my argument false. The latter you as yet have not even attempted.

Brother, your whole action from beginning to end is rather astounding. In explaining that statement I must begin with your doing by which you suddenly appeared in print with the pronouncement that the promises of God are conditional; that God saves His people on the condition of their faith and repentance. You may reply, "What of that? The contrary doctrine—the doctrine that the promises of God are unconditional—is not contained in our official creeds. Being thus extra-confessional, it may be publicly denied and its contrary ideologies publicly defended with impunity."

But you realize, brother, that the matter is not as simple as that. The doctrinal tenet in question is extra-confessional *only as to the form of its words*. Its underlying idea, which is that God's predestination and His saving grace are sovereign, is contained in our creeds. I know, you will deny this. You perhaps will want to maintain that the thought of your proposition as to its underlying idea is contained in our creeds. But it seems to me that by this time your eyes should have opened to the fallacy of your position.

2. The doctrine that the promises of God are unconditional and unfailing has been current among us for the past twenty-five years, ever since our expulsion from the communion of Christian Reformed Churches. It was Rev. H. Hoeksema who first directed our minds to these things. And through the years, largely as a result of his polemical writings, it has become the settled conviction of most of our people, I believe, that the doctrine is true, and that its contraries—the condition-theology of the late Prof. Heyns along with the related theory of common grace—are heretical.

3. Exactly because we could not subscribe these theories—it being our conviction that they are heretical—we were deposed in our office and ejected from the communion of Christian Reformed Churches. And since that time we have been known, and I may add, hated, slandered, despised and ignored, for our per-

sistent rejection of the aforesaid heretical speculations and for our consistently apposing to them the truth that God is God and none else and that accordingly His promises to His people are unconditional and unfailing. Through the years this confession has been our banner, our badge of distinction, and our glory and reproach. Should we ever as churches repudiate that confession—let us call it our heritage—we would be cutting the heart out of our theology; we would be destroying our significance and influence and the sole reason and meaning of our separate existence as churches; and we would soon find that we had lost our power, and that our candlestick had been removed out of His place. Our habit of calling ourselves distinctively reformed has reference to that confession especially, and to our repudiation of its contrary tenets.

With these circumstances before our eye, how difficult it should be for any of us openly to repudiate the doctrine that the promises of God are unconditional and unfailing, and publicly to champion, recommend and eulogize its contrary tenets even though we have the right, the legal right. How we should recoil from taking that step lightly and thoughtlessly, and unconsiderately. Yet, that is what you did, brother. Your writings make this crystal clear. You had made no study of things. You were ignorant of the meaning of the term "condition" as a sentence-element of your proposition. You had not an inkling of an idea of the use of that term in logic, philosophy, and common life. The definitions of the term with which you supplied me are as fatal to your proposition as any definition could be; but you realized it not. You imagined that the conjunctive "if" has but one meaning, "on condition that", while the fact is that this is but one of the several meanings that the particle can have. In support of your proposition you quoted "if" texts of the Scriptures as going "op de klank af" to use one of your own expressions. You failed to ascertain the meaning of that "if" by exegesis of these texts. Thus you failed to determine by close study of the text the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek equivalents of the conjunctive "if" as a sentence-element in the "if" clauses of the Bible of the type of your proposition. You quoted a few texts, referred to many others but exegeted none. Yet, in that state of profound ignorance you boldly appeared in print with the denial of the doctrinal tenet that God's promises are unconditional and unfailing, and unblushingly defended and extolled its contrary ideologies. How utterly unscholarly your procedure, brother! Did it not once occur to you that in your ignorance you might with one thoughtless stroke of your pen be breaking down and destroying what others by hard work in the way of unwearied study of the Scriptures have built up? How by such a procedure can we hope to advance the cause of truth in our midst? How can we hope to contribute anything

to the development of the knowledge of the truth? It is to this thoroughly unscholarly procedure of yours, which is only calculated to bring us all to grief if persisted in, to which I especially refer, when I speak of your rather astounding actions. If your writings on the points at issue only bore the evidence of real and hard study on your part, I would still, of course, be attacking your doctrinal tenets; but then you would find the phrases of my polemic interspersed with expressions of esteem for your effort and industry. As it is, I find myself capable only of frowning upon the content of your productions. However, I am persuaded that had you prefaced your public announcements by real study of terms and connectives in the three languages concerned you would not have made them, unless, of course, you are laboring under a powerful bias, which I don't want to believe.

But there is more to say. My first open letter to you was friendly and brotherly. I stated that what you had from my pen was not to be regarded as criticism; that all I desired was discussion. In the body of my article I pointed out your mistake, which is your illegal use of words, definitely the word "condition". I pointed out that you are in duty bound to use this term according to the meaning that it has in the dictionary and that, doing so, you find yourself under the necessity of pronouncing your proposition heretical. In your reply you took little notice of my letter, it being your sole purpose to neutralize as soon as possible the effect that my writing may have had on our people. You shoved my whole argument aside by virtually accusing me of having fabricated the definition of the term "condition", that I had presented. You have learned by this time that your accusation is groundless, learned that the definition is genuine indeed. Other writings from your pen followed. But they all tell the same story. It is this:

1. You persist in teaching that the promises of God to His people are *conditional*.

2. Thus, you persist, after all that I have written, to use the term "condition", always as a sentence-element in your proposition, according to the meaning that it has in your private vocabulary; it means that you refuse to admit that as teachers in the church of God we are in duty bound to use our words according to the meaning that they have in the dictionary. As I stated in my open letter, to employ words as you employ words is exceedingly dangerous. As was explained, it allows one to make the Bible say anything one pleases, and thus to smuggle into the church any heresy under heaven. By the employment of such a method of dealing with words, it was pointed out, I can even make the Bible teach that Satan is a creature of virtue. All I do is to strip the words *evil*, *sinful*, *corrupt*, *depraved* of the meanings that they have in

the dictionary and define them as *virtue*. It is as simple as that.

3. You refuse to admit that if God is the author of Faith, the will to believe on the part of His people is not a condition according to the use of the term *in logic*; that it is a condition only according to its use in *your private logic*.

4. My exegesis taught us that the sole function of the conjunctive "if" in the "if" clauses of the Bible of the type with which we are occupied is to establish before the minds of the believers the certain connection between faith and salvation. You saw that idea in my articles and adopted it. But you continue to insist that this "if" is conditional. In that way you corrupt my whole exegesis and destroy the fruit thereof.

5. A final question: How can God bestow upon His people salvation on the condition of their faith, if faith is included in salvation.

Your latest articles contain some strange and dubious reasonings. Your reply to W. Wildeboer, whose letter was published in the Concordia for May 26 attracted my attention. Brother Wildeboer (of Penwick, Ontario, Canada and a member of one of the Liberated churches until seven months ago), explained in his letter the condition-theology of the Liberated. He not only explains this theology but defends it as well and this in opposition to Rev. H. Veldman whose statement he read in the Concordia. Rev. Veldman let it be known to the readers of Concordia that he considers the term "condition" dangerous and on this account would have the term eliminated from our dogmatical vocabulary. Brother Wildeboer is of the opinion that, to quote his own words, "they (the Liberated) emphasize more the condition while the Protestant Reformed Churches more or less emphasize the 'working of God in man'. Actually both mean the same. A real danger of misunderstanding is the difference in terminology to which both parties have to get used to." Let us pause here for a moment.

Rev. Petter, you should have replied to these statements of brother Wildeboer. You should have informed him that he is sorely mistaken. But you didn't. How could you, seeing that you have appeared in print with a denial of the doctrinal tenet—the promises of God are *unconditional*—that has been current among us for the past twenty-five years, and for which we were ejected from the fellowship of the communion of Christian Reformed Churches. You not only openly denied that doctrinal tenet but publicly defended and eulogized its contrary as well. So I shall now have to make good your failure.

Brother Wildeboer. You are sorely mistaken in your imagining that the difference between the Protestant Reformed and the Liberated touches only on the form of words. The difference goes much deeper. It is fundamental and as such, vital, actual and

real. My settled conviction, and the conviction of most of the Protestant Reformed, I believe and hope, is that the promises of God are *unconditional* (onvoorwaardelijk), while the position of the Liberated is that the promises of God are *conditional* (voorwaardelijk). Certainly, you must perceive that the two propositions, doctrinal tenets, are contrary and thus mutually exclusive, necessarily so, as the two terms "conditional", and "unconditional" are contraries. Our firm belief is that in the light of the Scriptures the doctrine of the Liberated as it comes to expression in the proposition that the promises of God are *conditional* is thoroughly heretical and that our doctrine is according to the Scripture. Brother Wildeboer, you will bear with me in my making this revelation to you. I dare write these things to you, because I gather from your letter that you are a sincere man who wants to know the facts and that in your heart you love the truth, so that when once your eyes have opened to the errors of the Liberated you will reject them with all your heart and embrace what we believe to be the truth of God's Word on the point at issue.

Allow me to quote to you a few lines from a certain protest of mine which was treated on our last Synod. These lines read: "Our sole calling is to preach the gospel, as willing that God use our preaching as He chooses, preach what we believe to be the true gospel of the Scriptures. Only if we (as Protestant Reformed) walk worthy of this calling, does our mission enterprise repose on a true and Scriptural basis. And then we also deal honestly and not deceitfully with those among whom we labor whether they be immigrants in Canada or Christian Reformed here in the States. And dealing honestly with these people means that we set before them what we believe to be their doctrinal errors without equivocating and mincing words and appose to these errors what we believe to be the truth of God's Word. Certainly we must have controversy with the brethren among whom we labor. For this is but another way of saying that we must fight the good fight of faith. Doing these things, there is real purpose and meaning to our mission endeavor. Then we show that we are constrained by the love of Christ and the brethren among whom we labor. Then we seek the church, which we must. And if God makes us to see fruit upon our labors, we will be organizing churches formed of such who have received of God cars to hear." With few modifications, So I wrote, brother Wildeboer. If you are the kind of man I think you are, you fully agree with the sentiments here expressed.

You write further, "It is hard to answer exactly what the Liberated churches teach. They wish to be in no way against Holy Writ. Also we might find a difference in interpretation."

It does not surprise me at all, brother Wildeboer,

that, to quote you, it is hard for you to answer exactly what the Liberated churches teach". The fault lies not with you but with the teaching of the Liberated. This teaching is not only unscriptural but it destroys itself by inner conflict. It raises questions that no one can answer unless one comes with answers that are thoroughly impossible answers in the light of the Scriptures. It is not a wonder, therefore, that you are confused. And you are confused brother, as is so evident from that section of your letter that touches on the doctrine of the Liberated. And yet I believe with you that our liberated brethren in the Netherlands want to be reformed; they do not wish in any way to speak against the Scriptures. And we regard them all, certainly, as dear brethren in Christ. How we wish their eyes would open to their errors.

You continue in your letter, "Now I am not going to say that a difference in interpretation might not hurt." Allow me to pause here for a brief remark. Of course you are not going to say that. You are, too reformed at heart to make such a statement. You realize only too well that a difference of interpretation does hurt indeed if it touches on fundamentals. And it is our firm belief that such is here the case. The difference between the Protestant Reformed and the Liberated deals with fundamentals indeed.

You continue, "But noticing that difference people have to be careful and completely awakened. That must make them start thinking and, no doubt, speaking with others." I can certainly agree with you here. Our whole purpose in working in Canada among the immigrants is tactfully and in love to start the brethren to thinking on their theology and on ours, definitely on the propositions that the promises of God are *unconditional* and its contrary. Of course, you realize, brother, that we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, have not entered Canada with a question-mark behind our theology. Our firm stand is that our theology as it comes to expression in the doctrinal tenet that God's promise are unconditional is sound and that its contrary is heretical. And our purpose is to win you—instrumentally, of course—for our doctrine. You as yet may be holding to the doctrine that is contrary to ours. It is well. We will discuss the matter together. But our readiness to discuss must not be taken to mean that the attitude we assume toward our doctrine is that it may or may not be true. Our firm belief is that our doctrine is true. And in that conviction we preach and discuss. But, of course, if you believe that our doctrine is false you have every right in the world to attempt to convince us of our error. And we assure you that we will respectfully listen. We are a very reasonable and open-minded people in that respect. We greatly desire discussion. But, brother, we have taken a stand. And we know what we believe. And that is the secret of our power. How else could we preach?

You continue, "That is the movement you find all over the Liberated churches." I must pause to ask a question and to make a remark. Have the Liberated churches also taken a stand? Do they, too, know what they believe?

I do not gather that from the following lines from your pen. You write, "We cannot deny being a lot of trouble there." What is all that trouble about? The doctrinal tenet that God's promises are conditional and its contrary doctrine to which we hold touches on fundamentals. It's basically a question whether *God is God*. Can't they agree on fundamentals in the Liberated churches? Are they still toiling with the foundation tenets of Christian theology? That, certainly, is not as it should be. I am reminded here of the word of the writer of the Hebrews. He writes, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit". (Hebrews 6:1, 2).

The text deals with foundation of truths of the religion of Jesus Christ. According to us Protestant Ref. this category of doctrines includes also the doctrinal tenet that the promises of God are unconditional and unfulfilling. With us it is one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, the foundation that has been laid in our ecclesiastical consciousness. Should we then, as Protestant Reformed churches, assume toward this principle of doctrine a critical, skeptical attitude and *in that attitude* go to discussing it amongst ourselves, we would be doing what the sacred writer forbids; we would again be laying the foundation of our theology; and we would be like the people of whom Paul writes in his second epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:7), "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." We may not be like that. Our calling as believers is to *grow* in knowledge as holding the true foundation. Our calling as believers is to develop not the truth, which is impossible, but our *knowledge* of the truth. Or in the words of the sacred writer, our calling as believers is to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection, that is, perfection of doctrine. Under the constraint of a living faith we must perfect our *knowledge* and *understanding* of the truth, that is, of what we believe to be the truth of God's Word. But how could we as Protestant Reformed hope to undergo such growth, and this applies, of course, to every communion of churches, if we could not agree amongst ourselves on what is truth; if we were forever returning to and re-examining the doctrines that are basic to our theology in our skepticism of these doctrines? What right would we have to be referring to ourselves as dis-

tinctively reformed, if our attitude toward our distinctively reformed principles were one of doubt? We would be lying. How could we labor among the immigrants in Canada or among the Christian Reformed in the States, with such a doubt filling our souls? We could not and might not. It would be sheer hypocrisy. And we would have no power. We would be weak. And in our weakness we would find ourselves agreeing with our opponents on the mission field.

It seems to me, Rev. Petter, that you should have replied to your correspondent in this vein. But you didn't. You flatly refused. You wrote, "I have only one point that I would call attention to in the above letter. That does not concern the doctrinal but the practical." That is a nice distinction. But there is a reason why you have only one point to which you would call attention. That reason has already been stated.

Your reply contains some strange reasonings. Allow me to single them out. 1. As we have seen, the attitude of your correspondent toward the differences between the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed is that no difference *actually* exist (both mean the same, he states); that the existing differences are only a matter of different interpretations; that differences of this character "do not hurt as long as we are trying to find the truth", to quote his own words. He means well, as appears from the sequel of his letter. But his attitude toward our differences is nevertheless faulty. Yet for this attitude you have greatest admiration. Here are your words, "First of all we must admire the sober, calm, level-headed attitude this brother takes toward the differences that exist between us and the liberated brethren". So also your position is that no actual differences exist. The two propositions: a) the promises of God are *unconditional*; and b) the promises of God are *conditional* are not mutually exclusive. The thought of each is the same. The term *conditional* and *unconditional* are not contraries. We seek the truth because we do not have it. Hence, both propositions are wrong. Through our discussion of these erroneous propositions, we find the truth.

Now it can easily be understood that your correspondent should take this attitude. He is a newcomer. He is not informed. As yet he does not understand our principles. His ability to say what he means in English is limited although I am surprised that he uses his English as well as he does. But that you should be taking that attitude!

2. You state further, "And his picture of a church that has 'a glorious heritage' and falls asleep in self-satisfaction is very instructive." I agree. True, sad to say, there are such churches. Their being overtaken by such sleep goes hand in hand with the repudiation in their heart of their 'glorious heritage', if it is *truly* a glorious heritage, that is, the truth,

the true gospel of Christ. And the membership of such churches are then indeed nevertheless satisfied with themselves for their nominal adherence to their heritage which they neither love nor practice anymore, and with which eventually they do not any longer appear in their pulpits either. And on the ground of that abominable work—their outward adherence to their creeds—they think to go to heaven. The disease with which such churches are smitten is known as dead orthodoxy. It is of such churches that you speak, I believe. You go on to tell us, "In this process (of spiritual deterioration) we can, of course, easily discern two phases. There is, first, the repeating of *certain dogmatical statements* (italics supplied) as if that is the assurance of a pure, safe church. And there follows the resultant hollowness and emptiness, so that we fall asleep, while we think we still stand foursquare on the truth. Mr. Van Spronsen, when he was among us, called this the feeling of arrivedness.

"I hope," you continue, "that the Lord will keep us as Protestant Reformed churches from this terrible process. (I hope so, too, who in the world wouldn't? G. M. O.). One of our people once said that when a man is being overcome by gas in a stuffy room he thinks he is slipping into a delightful snooze, and does not have sense enough to jump to his feet and race out of the house. In a similar way a church goes to sleep and dies." So far the Rev. Petter.

So, then, when we hear a church repeating *certain dogmatical statements*, we may be certain that it is apostatizing and is on its way to moral-spiritual ruin. The repetition of such statements is the infallible symptom of such deterioration. You certainly should have gone a step further, brother, and revealed just what those dogmatical statements are so that, should we be guilty of repeating them, we could know that we are being overcome by gas, and betimes jump to our feet and run out of our ecclesiastical house. Do these dogmatical statements also include the doctrinal tenet that the promises of God are *unconditional*, and is the point to your argument that, if we as churches know what is good for us, we will stop repeating that tenet and adopt and begin repeating your doctrine to the effect that the promises of God are *conditional*? I can't see why you didn't tell us, seeing that you are so concerned about us. Why did you leave us in the dark? And concerned you are. For you go on to say, "I do not think that when our people speak of our heritage they are exactly guilty of this sin. However, there is always that danger for all of us."

You go on to say, "Therefore we as Protestant Reformed also are now thrown into these problems rather unexpectedly must try to make these questions alive to ourselves, we must try to discuss freely as brethren among each other, and to understand each other." We were not thrown unto any problems, brother; and



this for the simply reason that the things whereof you speak are for us no problems. We know what we believe. As churches, we took a position with respect to these things twenty-five years ago. They may be problems to you, but not to us. This does not mean that we are unwilling to discuss these things with you. There is nothing that we would rather do than discuss these things with you. For it appears that you have need of it.

And yet that is precisely what you do not want—discussion, despite all your pretty words about *discussion*. That you shun discussion like a plague again appears from what you next write, “Also the editor in the Standard Bearer, May 15, devotes a couple of paragraphs to the question that is being discussed among us. (I should say he does. He emphatically denies that the promises of God are *conditional*. G.M.O.) It shows again how necessary it is that we keep understanding each other, when on the one hand we want to avoid all Pelagianism *and on the other hand want to do justice to the many passages in Scripture that teach conditions in the covenant, and want to understand the place that our Reformed fathers gave to the conditions in the covenant*”. (italics supplied).

The sentence in italics is very revealing. It shows your stand, which is that there are *conditions* in the covenant and that this is self-evident from the type of “if” sentences in the Bible to which your statement has reference. Thus you persistently refuse to admit that the issue is precisely *whether* there are conditions in the covenant, and *whether* those “if” sentences teach such a thing. It means that you stubbornly refuse to face the real issues; and this in turn means that you want no discussion. Your attitude is, “There are conditions in the covenant. I, Rev. Peter, say it. And that settles the matter. No discussion please. Those “if” sentences do teach that there are conditions in the covenant. This is so very self-evident as to render exegesis of those Scripture passages wholly unnecessary. I, Rev. Petter, say it. And that settles the matter. No discussion please. If we want to discuss, let it be about what place our Reformed fathers gave to conditions in the covenant.” Such is your attitude brother. Your posture is sheer popism; it is a brand of individualism that will surely destroy us, if not crushed. What you are doing, brother, is to destroy the foundation that was once laid among us and lay a foundation of your own choosing. And the sole authority for your action is the “I, Rev. Petter, have said, that settles it. No discussion please!” of Rev. Petter.

G. M. Ophoff.

## SION'S ZANGEN

### Een Vloekpsalm

(Psalm 109; Eerste Deel)

Dat men geen raad weet met dezen psalm bevreemdt ons in 't geheel niet. Dat past bij onze eeuw. Onze eeuw kent den vreeselijken God niet. De God die een verteerend vuur is, voor wiens aangezicht de engelen Gods hunne aangezichten bedekken, is ons geslacht vreemd. Men praat vandaag liever van de gemeene gratie, van de gustige gezindheid Gods jegens alle menschen. Het eelste deel van Gods kerk bazelt gekke dingen. In de zuiverste openbaringen van de kerk van Christus hoort men allerlei malle dingen zeggen van een God die goedgustig, barmhartig en goedertieren is tegenover het volk waarop Hij vergramd is tot in eeuwigheid. En als men dan dezulken voorhoudt, dat dit toch niet opgaat, dat dit vasloopt, dat zoo het Eeuwige Wezen tegen Zichzelf verdeeld moet zijn, dan spreekt men heel wijs van een mysterie, van twee-lijnen-theologie.

Neen, onze generatie weet niet wat te doen met den honderd-negenden psalm. In dien psalm hooren we den vloek Gods afgebeden, en dan wel door den man naar Gods hart, die door den Heiligen Geest bidt en smeekt. En als men U dan tegenwerpt, dat David wel een fout gemaakt kon hebben in dezen psalm, en met zijn wraakzuchtig hart te rade gegaan is, dan komt dat ook niet uit, want Petrus neemt het hart van den psalm over en past het toe op Judas, zoodat degene die om den vloek Gods bidt Jezus geweest moet zijn. Deze psalm is vervuld in Christus. Christus bidt hier eeuwen te voren om den vloek over Judas en de Judassen.

En dan komt er dit nog bij: de psalm is bestemd voor den opperzangmeester. Hij moet hem aandachtig bestudeeren. Hij moet er muziek op maken, en hem leeren zingen. Voorts moet hij het koor van zangers leiden, opdat zij het ook kunnen zingen. En, eindelijk, dan moet de psalm gezongen worden in den openbaren eeredienst van God.

En dat is ook geschied. De psalm is nog steeds in den bundel der liederen Davids. Voor lange eeuwen is hij gezongen. En gij zingt dien psalm vandaag nog, tenminste, ge behoortet hem te zingen. Het behoort bij Uw taak in den log des Heeren.

Dat die psalm bewaard gebleven is moet als een wonder Gods beschouwd worden. Geen wonder, dat men in de dagen van 1924 zoo smalend sprak van “de vloek-psalmen”. De psalmen behoorden bij de Oude Bedeeling die uitmuntte in hardigheid, toorn, vloek en verdoemenis. Die psalm behoort niet in den mond van het Nieuw Testamentische kind Gods. En zachtken

NOTE: — Following our usual custom the Standard Bearer will not appear on the 15th of July and August.

speelt en zingt en kwinkeleert men van "Jesus is tenderly calling. . . ."

Maar de vloekpsalmen, en dan vooral deze! Men weet er geen weg mee.

Lezer! Doe de moeite (?) en lees den psalm eerst even. Ik denk dat het de meest verschrikkelijke psalm is uit den bundel.

Ik ben tamelijk zeker, dat hij gedicht is in verband met de rebellie van Absalom. En dan gaat het in den psalm vooral over Achitofel. Dat was de Judas uit het Oude Testament. Evenals David de vertegenwoordiger is van den Geliefde, den man naar Gods hart: Jezus Christus. En David kon een type zijn van dien Geliefde, want het uitstekende van David's leven voor God was zijn groote nederigheid. Ge kunt allerlei zonden opsommen die David gedaan heeft. Het is een ontzettende catalogus van misdaden. Maar kunt ge ergens een vinden die zich dieper voor God boog in het stof dan David?

En Achitofel is de Judas van het Oude Testament.

Leest wat David van hem zegt in den vijf-en-vijftigsten psalm: "maar gij zijt het, o mensch! als van mijne waardigheid, mijn leidsman en mijn bekende; wij, die te zamen in zoetigheid heimelijk beraadslaagden; wij wandelden in gezelschap ten Huize Gods."

Eigenaardig dat er in dien psalm dit staat: "Dat hen de dood als een schuldeischer overvalle, dat zij levend ter helle nederdalen. . . ." Het is eenzelfde inhoud als in den psalm die ons nu bezig houdt.

Achitofel was de Judas.

Hij was de innige vriend en raadgever van David. En gij allen weet hoe hij zich verkocht aan Absalom. Het is voor mij geen wonder, dat hij zich verhing. Hij kon het aangezicht van David niet meer zien.

En de vervulling is Judas en Jezus.

En, let er wel op, het meervoud wordt ook gebruikt, zoodat Judas de vertegenwoordiger is van alle verworpenen.

O, het is moeilijk om deze verschrikkelijke taal te beschrijven! Het is moeilijk in onze dagen om te spreken van een God die vergramd is op de verworpenen van eeuwigheid. Het wil er niet meer in. Ik zie de teekenen in onze kerken ook. Hoe zou het ook. Wij zijn van nature een vijand van God, en wij haten beide Jezus en Zijn Vader. En hoe dichter die Zoon op ons toetreedt, hoe vreeselijker die haat Gods tot openbaring komt.

Hoe is het toch gekomen, dat deze psalm tot ons kwam door al die eeuwen heen. Leest de zoogenaamde "verklaringen" van dezen psalm, en huivert! Men tracht, en tracht, en weet niet wat men er mee moet doen. David kan toch niet zoo gebeden hebben! En indien hij alzo bad, dan past dat niet in ons lieve Nieuwe Testament. God is liefde. Hoe kan de Heilige Geest die vloeken ingeven?

En zou Jezus, die lieve Jezus, zulke vreeselijke vloeken van Zijn Vader afbidden? Dat kan toch niet? Leest de "verklaringen", en huivert.

Geliefde lezer, sta mij toe, dat ik God verdedig in dezen psalm. En ik zal het duidelijk voorstellen. Men vraagt: hoe kan God, hoe kan Jezus, hoe kan de Heilige Geest, hoe kan David zoo vloeken, en bidden om den vloek? En dan is hier mijn antwoord: hoe denkt gij, dat het er naar toe gaat in de tegenwoordige hel, waar ontelbare millioenen schreeuwen, weenen en tandenknersen? Wie doet dat? Is het niet God die het doet, en dat wel door Jezus? En luistert naar het gebed van Uw dierbaren die in den Heere stierven: "Hoe lang, o heilige en waarachtige Heerscher! oordeelt en wreekt Gij ons bloed niet van degenen die op de aarde wonen?" Openb. 6:10. En let er op, dat als God al de fiolen van Zijn toorn uitgiet op het verworpen menschedom, men dan in den hemel begint te zingen, en God looft, omdat "Zijne oordeelen openbaar zijn geworden." Zijt ge het vergeten, dat toen de Egyptenaren verzwolgen in den vloed, Israel stond te zingen op het strand? Spreekt de Heilige Schrift ooit andere taal?

En als ons booze vleesch dan blijft vragen: waarom! waarom! dan moet ge Uw vleesch den mond snoeren en zeggen: wij hebben het verdiend vanwege de gruwelijke zonde. Als straks de laatste dag gekomen is en ook weer heenging, als straks alle harten van alle goddelooze menschen binnenst buiten gekeerd zullen worden, en wij alle verschrikkelijke zonden zullen zien, en als straks alle verworpenen al schreeuwende gaan naar de poel die brandt van vuur en sulfur, dan zal niet een mensch of duivel zeggen: al deze onuitsprekelijke smart beantwoordt niet aan mijn misdaad, maar dan zal een ieder der verworpen menschen en verworpen engelen zeggen: we hebben het verdiend.

Lezer! indien ge geen vreemdeling zijt aan Uw eigen hart, en dan dezen psalm leest, dan zult ge huiveren en zeggen: O God! ik heb het eeuwiglijk verdiend om onder te gaan onder alle deze vloeken van David, van Jezus!

Laat ons bevende binnengaan, en luisteren naar het bidden om den vloek. De bidder is eerst David. Maar David bidt om den vloek, omdat Jezus in hem vooruit bidt om den vloek. David's bidden om den vloek is vervuld toen Jezus bad om den vloek.

En de gebeden van David-Jezus zijn verhoord. Dat zoudt ge weenende uitroepen indien het U gegeven ware om voor eenen kleinen oogenblik te luisteren en te blikken in de aanvankelijke hel, nu, terwijl ge dit leest. Dan zoudt ge weenende uitroepen: Ik heb psalm 109 gezien in actie, in de verschrikkelijke actie Gods!

Herinnert ge U hoe God profeteerde, dat hij zeggen zal tot de verworpenen: Gaat heen gij vervloekten!?

Geen wonder, dat de Roomsche Kerk in de dagen van Calvijn sprak van "the horrible decree".

En dat men vandaag al die dwaze dingen zegt van

een God die de verworpenen liefheeft! God beware ons! Het vloekt tegen den vloekpsalm!

En dan moet mij nog één ding van 't hart. Zegt nu toch niet, dat wij schik hebben in de eeuwige rampzaligheid der verworpenen! Zegt het niet, want het is eenvoudig niet waar. Mijn hart beeft als ik er aan denk. En ik heb innig medelijden met hen. In goeden zin bedoeld, zou ik kunnen wenschen dat alle menschen zalig wierden! Maar God wil het niet! En dan behooren we te zwijgen.

Zwijgen, zeg ik? God wil, dat wij zullen zingen van Zijn vreeselijke werken. Doch wie zingt tegenwoordig:

“Verklaar hem schuldig in 't gerichte;  
Verdrijf hem van Uw aangezichte;  
Houdt zijn gebeden zelf voor zonden;  
Hij heeft zich tegen God verbonden;  
Verkort zijn dagen; vel hem neer;  
Een ander neem' zijn ambt en eer”?

En toch, dit versje vindt ge in de berijmde psalmen: Psalm 109:4.

Wat we hebben in dezen psalm is dit: Jezus Christus levende en lijdende in Zijn volk in alle eeuwen, bidt tot Zijn Vader om de openbaring van Zijn grooten toorn over de goddeloozen die Hem haat gaven voor Zijn liefde. Zoo moet gij het klagen van al Gods volk verstaan. En zoo zag de Apostel Petrus het toen hij dezen psalm toepaste op het vreeselijk einde van Judas. Leest Hand. 1:16-19.

En al deze gebeden om de wraak Gods over het goddelooze rot worden ten deele vervuld nu, en zullen zekerlijk vervuld worden in den grooten en vreeselijken dag des Heeren. Die vreeselijke dag des Heeren werd gezien door alle profeten en zij hebben zich ontzet.

Als het voor eeuwig te laat is, dan zullen alle geslachten der aarde de eindelijke vervulling zien van dezen psalm, en dan zullen zij te laat verstaan, dat God de goddeloozen haat, dat God alle dagen der geschiedenis der wereld getoornd heeft, dat de steeds oordeelende God eindelijk Zijn oordeel ten volle zal openbaren.

Indien ge een vooruitzicht wilt zien van de vervulling van dezen psalm moet ge Openbaring 16 lezen. Daar zult ge hooren van zeven engelen Gods die de zeven fiolen hebben en uitgieten over de aarde, in welke zeven fiolen de toorn Gods be-eindigd wordt.

En zoo goddeloos zal dan de aarde en hare bewoners zijn, dat “zijn lasterden den God des hemels vanwege hunne pijnen en vanwege hunne zweren, en zij bekeerden zich niet van hunne werken.” Openb. 16:11. Maar leest het geheele hoofdstuk, en als de Heilige Geest in U woont, zult ge voorbereid worden om dezen psalm te lezen, te gelooven, en te zingen.

Let op dat eene vers wat we overschreven. Zij lasterden den God *des hemels!* Daar hebt ge het recht-

vaardige van dit gebed om den vloek. De goddeloozen zijn zoo boos, dat zij den *hemelschen* God lasteren. En van Hem zal Uw gezang zijn in groote blijdschap. Zulk een schoonen en lieflijken God te lasteren toont, dat al het vloeken van God verdiend is.

Mijn ziel, zwijg Gode! Hij is geheel en al lieflijk.

Ach, wat zijn er weinigen in onze dagen die God rechtvaardigen.

Twintig en meer jaren geleden hoorde ik Prof. Ophoff zeggen: Een ieder heeft medelijden met den mensch, en niemand heeft medelijden met God!

Tracht dit zware spreken te verstaan!

God wordt vertrapt, gehoond, gedood (denkt aan het Kruis van Golgotha!), en er zijn zeer weinigen die roepen om den vloek der goddeloozen. Met heeft geen medelijden met God, maar wel met den mensch. Tast den mensch der zonde aan, en zegt, dat hij door God gehaat wordt, en men zal drie punten uitbroeden om den goddelooze in bescherming te nemen. En als die goddelooze drie punten gewraakt worden door hen die voor God spreken, dan werpt men hen uit. Dat is geschiedenis.

Maar God heeft het al gezien. En al zwijgt hij in al die jaren: er is een gedenkboek voor Zijn aangezicht.

Het zal niet lang meer duren.

Hij begint te spreken. We hooren in onze dagen het begin van de groote donderslagen. Zij zijn het begin van de vervulling van den tekst waar staat, dat God zal brullen uit Sion!

De groote dag des Heeren zal niet lang meer uitblijven. De teekenen der tijden zijn zeer sprekend. Er zijn tijden, dat ik er blij om ben. Het heeft zoo ontzettend lang geduurd. Men kon wat men wilde; men maakte zich groot tegenover God en Zijn gezalfde; hun stem tast zelfs den hemel aan. Alle deze dingen deed men en God zweeg!

En dat gaat de dichter aan zijn hart. Dat kan hij niet staan. En daarom hebt ge den honderd-negenden psalm.

“O God mijns lofs, zwijg niet!”

Zijt ge klaar om dien psalm met al Gods volk te zingen?

Jezus zong dien psalm, en die van Jezus zijn zingen de refreinen.

G. Vos.

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To Thee I stretch my hands,  
Let me not plead in vain;  
I wait as weary lands  
Wait for refreshing rain.  
O let the morn return,  
Let mercy light my day;  
For Thee in faith I yearn,  
O guide me in the way.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### The Office In The Church

#### *The Office Of Elder.*

The office of elder in the church is frequently not esteemed as highly as that of the minister of the Word. A minister spends years of preparation for his calling before he enters the ministry, while the elder is called out of the midst of the congregation without any special preparation. Again, the minister is called for life, while the elder serves intermittently for periods of two or three years at a time. Moreover, the minister devotes all his time and efforts to his work, while the elder continues his regular vocation while he serves. And finally, the minister may be a stranger to most of the members of the church, but the elder has frequently spent years of his life in the congregation, is known personally and intimately to almost all of them, and even daily plies his trade or carries on his business among them. And thus, since a prophet is not without honor except in his own country and among his own kindred, it can easily be understood that the office of an elder is frequently considered of lesser importance than that of the minister.

Yet it must always be borne in mind that these two offices are actually one, and therefore equal. Both ministers and elders are referred to in Scripture as elders or overseers of the flock. The only difference is that the former serve as teaching elders, while the latter are ruling elders. They both represent Jesus Christ, each in their respective capacity. Both are called to the office in the same way, by Jesus Christ through the medium of the church as far as their outward calling is concerned, and through the Holy Spirit in their hearts according to their inward calling. None other than the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, makes them overseers over the flock, calling and qualifying them to the work. (Acts 20:28). Therefore, although the elder is a member of long standing in the congregation, although he is well known to old and young alike, although his personal weaknesses against which he fights daily are also known to all, and although there is a constant association with him through his vocation, he must be respected, not merely as a person because of his person, but especially as office bearer because of his calling.

#### *The Office.*

Two words are commonly employed in the New Testament to designate the office. The more common one is the term 'elder' (presbuteros), and the other is

'bishop' or 'overseer' (episkopos). In some churches distinction is made between elders and bishops. They maintain that a bishop holds a higher position than an elder. A bishop is overseer over the whole church, even over the elders, so that a bishop is always an elder, but the elders are not all bishops. In the early church, so they say, certain elders were set apart to be bishops. Yet it is evident from many passages in the New Testament that both these names designate the same office. In Acts 20:28 the elders of Ephesus are admonished to take heed to themselves and to all the flock "over which the Holy Ghost has made them (all, not one) overseers (bishops)." In Titus 1:5, 7 the terms are used interchangeably. Titus is instructed to ordain *elders* in every city, and he is at the same time advised that "a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God". In Philippians 1:1 Paul addresses the "bishops and deacons", evidently assuming again that elders are bishops. This passage bears the more weight because it speaks of more than one bishop in a local church. And if we compare I Timothy 3:2-7 with Titus 1:5,7, we find that the same qualifications are required for both elders and bishops. For all these reasons we can safely conclude that the terms 'elder' and 'bishop' refer to the same office in the New Testament. An elder is a bishop.

The term 'elder' is evidently derived from the Old Testament. We know that Moses appointed elders over Israel while they were still in the wilderness. This body of elders developed into the sanhedrin, the ruling body in Israel. After Pentecost the apostles appointed elders for every church that was established. Thus the New Testament office of elders came into existence. The name means one of advanced years, a senior, evidently because capable men of experience were chosen as the best qualified for this work. Thus the name designates respect for those who serve in this capacity. The name 'bishop' describes the work of one who has charge of the flock. He is bishop, overseer, in the name and on the authority of the chief Bishop, Jesus Christ. He does not act in his own name nor on the basis of his own credentials or merit, nor on his assumed authority, but only by the mandate of Him, Whom Scripture calls the "Shepherd and Bishop of your souls". I Peter 2:25. By virtue of his calling he is nothing more and nothing less than a steward of God's house. Titus 1:7.

#### *The Duty.*

The duty of the elder is therefore to have oversight, to superintend, that is, to rule. Just as the minister of the Word represents Christ in His church as prophet, and as the deacon represents Christ as High Priest, so the calling of the elder is to represent Christ as King of His Church. In that sense there can cer-

tainly be no objection to the term 'ruling elder', in distinction from the minister as 'teaching elder'. Elders are called to rule. In I Timothy 5:17 the church is admonished to count those elders who rule well worthy of double honor. In Hebrews 13:17 we are told to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch over your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." And in I Peter 5:2, 3 the apostle instructs the elders to take oversight over the flock of God, "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." It is exactly for this reason that Christ has entrusted unto his church, and thus to the elders, the keys of the kingdom of heaven to open and close the gates of the kingdom, so that whatsoever they bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Our Form for the ordination of elders expresses this by saying, "Therefore, in the first place, the office of elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to take oversight of the church, which is committed to them, and diligently to look, whether every one properly deports himself in his confession and conversation; to admonish those who behave themselves disorderly, and to prevent, as much as possible, the sacraments from being profaned: also to act (according to Christian discipline) against the impenitent, and to receive the penitent again into the bosom of the Church."

Thus oversight over the flock includes, first of all, to watch over all the sheep, care for them in their needs, discipline the unruly, and gather those who stray back into the sheepfold. But this oversight also includes that they be fed in the green pastures of the Word. And this responsibility also rests on the elders. also the minister in the ministry of the Word is under their supervision on the pulpit, in the catechism and whenever he instructs or preaches. Actually the church ministers the Word in the Name of Christ, through her elders, and thus through her ministers. In times past it was a common custom in Reformed circles for the presiding elder of the consistory to extend a hand of consent to the visiting minister or student at the foot of the pulpit before the service, as a token that he received the right and authority from the local consistory to minister the Word from that pulpit. This custom has practically disappeared today, but it did give expression to a sound principle. In our churches we still follow the practice of having the consistory shake hands with the minister after the sermon. This is not a mere friendly gesture, nor should it be regarded as such, neither by the minister, nor by the consistory, nor by the congregation. Actually the office-bearers thereby express their approval and agreement

with the Word that was preached. It is just another token that the Church of Jesus Christ through her office jealously guards the preaching of the Word, and thereby protects the flock from lurking foes and threatening dangers. As Paul admonishes the elders of Ephesus to take heed to the whole flock, "for", he adds, "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20: 28-31.

Again it becomes evident that the various offices in the church can never be separated. Even as the offices of prophet, priest and king are one in Christ, so they are also one in the church. The minister of the Word also exercises the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the preaching, for it is particularly through the preaching of the Word that the gate of the kingdom is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers. On the other hand, the elder can never serve as overseer of the flock except by means of the Word. He not only watches over the Word, but he also is called to admonish, rebuke, advise, comfort and instruct by means of the Word. He acts always only on the authority of his Sender, and therefore must always say, "So saith the Lord!" The only difference between the two offices is, that the prophetic office is on the foreground in the calling of the minister, while the ruling office is on the foreground in the work of the elder.

Thus the elder must also teach. That belongs to his task as overseer, for he must feed the flock of God with the Bread and Milk of the Word. Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:2. He must exhort, giving himself to exhortation. Romans 12:8. He must admonish. I Thess. 5:12. He must be apt to teach. I Tim. 3:2. He must be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayer. Titus 1:9. He must pray with those who have need of it. And he must comfort the fatherless and the widows. James 1:27; James 5:14.

That makes it a very responsible position in God's church. Ministers frequently are transferred from one congregation to another by the chief Shepherd, but an elder may probably serve intermittently for a whole lifetime within the same congregation. And his influence is bound to be great, upon the minister, but also upon the other, less experienced consistory members, and also upon the congregation. He who serves well is certainly worthy of double honor. But who is fit for these things? No man, except in the assurance that he is called by Christ, and that therefore he is unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. II Cor. 2:16.

(to be continued)

C. Hanko.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Detecting and Labeling

In connection with the Common Grace world-and-life-view, labeled or unlabeled, on which we commented last time, we want to add a line or two.

We and our people are constantly in contact with this Common Grace world-and-life view. There are areas in which we can work together, and there are areas in which we have to work together, but in practically all areas we meet that same unscriptural world-and-life view. It may not perhaps seem so dangerous, but it nevertheless is. If it is not labeled, we ought to be detective enough to label it, and having labeled it to reject it. Not only ought we to reject it, but we ought also to attempt to persuade others to reject it. If they may have their eyes opened they may be won. But let us be careful that we be not gradually weaned away from the God-and-Word faith, which will surely happen if we be weaned away from the world-and-life view which Scripture gives us and our Confessions present us. It is not merely a doctrinal issue which erupted in 1924, it was an ethical issue no less. Our relation to God and our relation to the world was called into question. It needed definition. In 1924 that definition was given. We were not in nineteen twenty-four arguing about what the other side of the moon looked like. That were a thing so abstract that it meant nothing for our everyday life. But the issue was our relation to the world, determined by our relation to God and God's relation toward the world. There was defined our world-and-life view to a very great extent. We must never lose that.

#### *And The School . . . .*

We mentioned last time how this dangerous world-and-life view glares at us from the pages of the "Course of Study for Christian Schools" (1947). This in itself already presents us a great danger, for our children are exposed to it. The philosophy which this book presents us has been described very pointedly as follows: In this book. . . "total depravity is denied, the atoning death of Christ is silently ignored and sanctification confused with social betterment. . . what is plainly evident, is the fact that the whole idea of God's Covenant is sought for in vain. There is not one word in this philosophy that in any way refers to Christian education as covenant training" (Standard Bearer, Vol. 24, page 308). That in itself is a great danger, because our children are exposed to it. But it becomes the more dangerous if the Union of Christian Schools becomes powerful enough to compel this kind of in-

struction upon the schools which there are. A central board was a fine thing, it one time seemed, for it helped to procure efficiency and unity. But now there is concentration of power, unionization, and what will the local schools do? The philosophy of education is practically dictated to us and who can successfully resist it or propose something in its place? These are very sad things. Sad not only because we can no longer find the reformed heritage here for our children, but sad especially because it is our conviction that our brethren are moving ever further away from the way of the Cross and moving ever closer toward the seduction of anti-christ.

Here then we deal with world-and-life views which we must detect and label, lest our children receive them.

#### *And Schools Of Our Own . . . .*

But we cannot leave it here. On the one hand we hope that the various Christian School Boards throughout our country will take this Course of Study seriously enough to study it in the light of Scripture, and especially in the light of such pertinent issues as: the covenant, regeneration, antithesis, etc. Our schools ought not to teach doctrine but if we will have a philosophy of education, so-called, sound doctrine must underlie it. In due time come the new text books. Will they be an extension of that same dangerous world-and-life view? Our Boards must answer that question and our men in these Boards have great responsibility. We would like to urge all our present school boards to examine these things carefully and our men in these boards to see that this is not left undone. For more light on what this Course of Study includes, I refer you again to Standard Bearer, Vol. 24, pages 307 and 332.

On the other hand, such action naturally is preparation for schools of our own. It moves us in the direction of schools of our own. They are necessary and become more necessary, yea vital, in proportion that the Union becomes more powerful. Nothing can take the place of schools of our own. We already have a few such schools. Many of our churches are small and already heavily burdened. But schools of our own will not come as a luxury. They ought not. They come as a necessity. If there shall be a world-and-life view imposed upon us which has become progressively corrupt, schools of our own become necessary. And they are.

We honestly believe however, that in every community where we leave the present school system and begin schools of our own, we should be able to give an intelligent account of why we do it. We should be able to indicate rather definitely why we leave them. The people, especially the new board, should have a definite



and intelligent reason for doing what they do. Especially because this will help us to begin our own schools with a positive world-and-life view. It is not enough to reject the erroneous view, we must put in the place of it the positive, correct view, at least in principle. I have little hope for a distinct world-and-life view in schools of our own, except we develop a Reformed course of study and our teachers be well versed therein. Surely we all, our new boards and especially our teachers must know what Common Grace looks like when it is kneaded into history, geography, science, etc. Not only in order that they will be able to reject it when they run upon it in the text books which we will have to "borrow", but above all in order that they may positively instruct along Reformed lines.

#### *An Illustration . . . .*

Certain children come home from school with the information that there could be people living on the planet Mars. The teacher did not say that there WERE people living there, but there COULD BE people living there. The telescope will reveal more about this later. Now, here one deals directly with a world-and-life view. What shall we as reformed people state over against this notion? If we admit that there could be people living there we take position in regard to doctrinal things. But what will we say? We should know what the Word of God says about this. You see therefore how important these things are, and how important that our teachers be well versed in the correct world-and-life view. Or again, when our geography book tells us that coal and oil were formed over hundreds of thousands of years, and the Grand Canyon required millions of years to be cut to its present depth, we need to answer in view of the Word of God and be careful for the philosophy of geologists.

But why cite more examples?

God grant that we may be true to His Word and faithful to the truth which He Himself has delivered unto us.

#### *In Ourselves . . . .*

To make matters worse, all of us are constantly prone to corrupt world-and-life views, and prone to practise them in our daily life. We are by nature self- and material-centered.

A humanist one time wrote that we all spend about ninety five percent of our time and energy defending our own ego. I doubt whether the percentage is quite that high, but I fear he saw something there. To be ego-centered is only a modified form of being world- and material-centered. We must also detect and label this world-and-life view as being carnal and promptly reject it. And who goes about his daily work in the

consciousness of being in the service of God as He ought? Do we not all suffer of seeking the things which are below? Also this perversion needs labeling. And when the farmer looks at his crops, his hogs, his cattle, who does not think in terms of \$ (dollars), only in dollars? When his cow becomes sick and is going to die, do his thoughts go much further than the consideration of loss to himself in terms of dollars? Isn't this also a world-and-life view which needs detection and labeling? Paul says "seek not the things which are below," and again, "seek not each his own", and, "labor not for the things which pass away," and, "lay up treasures not on earth, but in heaven". Does he not mark off definite areas in which our christian world-and-life view ought to express itself? What is that for instance to be rich toward God? and what is that: to seek the things which are above? and what is that about not giving eye-service as men pleasers?

Paul says: think on these things.

M. Gritters.

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## Young Men! Where Are They?

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There was a call issued to young men in our denomination who would take up the work of the ministry.

But the Synod of 1949 has come and gone, and there is no one who answered the call. None came forth to be enrolled in our school. None to take up the ministry. None to heed this work of the Lord.

It is two years now since there has been a graduation from our theological school.

Where are the young men? We need young men.

We need young men and young women in our Christian schools too. Within a year or two there will be a greatly increased need for men and women to teach in the schools for Protestant Reformed instruction. There also we need consecrated help.

But let me this time emphasize the question: where are the young men to heed the call to the ministry and the preparation thereto at our theological school?

#### *Why No Answer?*

Why is there no response? The call seems to fall upon deaf ears. Why is this? Surely we are faced with this question and we search for an answer.

We ought to ask ourselves why this situation exists.

This situation comes upon us under the providence of God. We are fully conscious of that. But we are

not fatalists. Under the providence of God there is connection between one factor and another, between cause and effect. While we go to the throne of God to ask Him to send forth reapers, we must also go to our own hearts and lives and inquire why this situation is upon us.

I want to show you this connection by way of a concrete example which can come straight from our real life.

When a young man has the opportunity to attend high school and has also the necessary gifts to take up such higher training, but refuses. . . . the door to the ministry is closed. That person makes it impossible to ever heed the call to take up the work of the Lord in the ministry. Or, worse yet, when the parents of this young person are indifferent too, or even opposed to giving their son a high school education, they have automatically closed the door to an eventual call into the ministry for their son. Thus the door to the ministry is closed and pious prayers for ministers means nothing as far as their case is concerned.

Our 1949 Synod has definitely postulated that entrance into the seminary requires a complete high school education. No one can enter our school except he have had a complete secondary education. Parents, your son cannot take up the ministry unless you provide him a secondary education. Young men, if you refuse a secondary education, or if you discontinue after you have begun, the door is closed to the ministry and every call the Synod sends must fall upon deaf ears.

There are, of course, young men who acquire a high school education and then abuse it. Sin is always with us and temptations beset us. We must condemn this abuse both in ourselves and in others. There are also who use this education for ends other than the ministry, and that is entirely normal and proper. But the point we want to emphasize now is that we tempt the providence of God if we expect our theological school to train ministers, while at the same time we refuse high school education to our sons.

The call for young men in the ministry is therefore first of all a call to the home, to the parents and the young people to acquire a secondary education at least.

### *Shall They Go On?*

There are states whose laws compel our sons to continue education at least until an age which brings them into high school. But there are also localities where no such laws exist, or where there are loop holes enough so education need not be continued.

Shall they go on to school?

If not, remember, the door is closed to the ministry.

This pertains first of all to the parents. There

are parents who are very indifferent about giving their sons higher education. There are parents who scoff at it. There are parents who can barely afford the added burdens of providing their sons such an education. There are also parents who are so eager to get their sons on the production line that they figure a high school education is a waste of time and waste of potential income. By sending your son to the neighbours to "work out", to the assembly line, or to your own field or shop to save the expenses of a hired man, you succeed perhaps in finding in your son a mortgage lifter but you succeed thereby also in closing the door of the ministry to another young man.

Some parents maintain their position by saying that high school spoils their son, or this other excuse that they first want to see whether "there's a minister in him or not" before sending him on. Forgetting meanwhile that the only way to find out what is in them generally is exactly to provide them an education. We do not maintain that every son MUST go on to higher education, but we do maintain that if you refuse your son a higher education you have made an eventual call to the ministry impossible. That connection is there under the providence of God and we must observe it.

The call for young men to our theological school is therefore a call to our parents to consider the children which God has given them, if perhaps God would use them in the ministry of the Word. But if you refuse to give them that education, all other things being equal, you simply tell God before hand that He must not call upon any of your sons. And is that not an evil? Are not our children an heritage of the Lord?

And as for our young men themselves, you ought seriously to consider the vocation which you intend to follow. Not all of you are equipped to become ministers of the gospel, but you must prayerfully consider whether the Lord has equipped you. Don't let your vocation be determined by the glitter of gold or the quest of wealth but consider that God may want to use you in a position where you have comparatively little income. The call to the ministry must become a challenge. Can you consider choosing a vocation where you become servant to men and God, but with little earthly gain? Are you "big" enough to consider such a challenge?

We need more prayer that God may send forth laborers into His vineyard. We should hear those prayers from the pulpits and in our homes. May God prepare us parents and young men who have consecration and devotion enough to make the ministry their calling. . . . because it is God calling them thereto.

Lord of harvest, send forth reapers. Give us devoted parents who shall say: here is my son; and young men, who shall say: here I am, send me.

M. Gritters.

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## PERISCOPE

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### Synod-Varia

Last time we gave a rather complete report of the main business of Synod and that which consumed most of the time of meeting. Besides the items mentioned in our last report there were various miscellaneous matters treated and decided upon.

As you may know our Churches are working towards the compilation of a completely new manual of praise for use in our worship. This new book will be a revision of our present Psalter with various changes and additions. Two committees have been appointed and have been busy with this task for the past several years. The Liturgy Committee, composed of the Revs. P. De Boer and L. Doezenia has for its task "to check the translations of our adopted Forms of Unity, together with the Forms for the Lord's Supper, etc., with a view to obtaining a more correct translation than we now have in our Psalters." This committee has already completed a large amount of its task which is now being studied by the various Consistories of our Churches. Since its task is not yet completed the Committee was continued.

The second committee working on this project is called the Psalter Revision Committee and is constituted of various ministers and individuals, with musical and poetical ability, from in and around Grand Rapids. The report of this committee expresses its task as follows: "The committee meets on the first Friday evening of each month. We have begun our work with the first number of the Psalter, carefully checking to see if it measures up to the following requirements: a. That the versification is as close to the language of the Psalm as possible, and that the Psalm is fully covered. b. That there are no doctrinal errors in the versification. c. That the tune fits the words of the song, prayerful when the Psalm is a prayer, joyful when the Psalm is a song of praise. d. That the tune is singable, especially for a congregation. . . . The Psalter committee also comes to Synod with the request for permission to work on versifications, as literal as possible, of Scripture passages dealing with Christ's birth, crucifixion, resurrection, Pentecost, etc., and incorporate it in the new Psalter." Thus far the report of the Psalter Committee.

The committee of pre-advice which treated this report brought the following advice to the floor of Synod. "We advise Synod to grant the permission requested, namely, to work on the versification of other passages of Scripture. Further to advise the committee to search the field of existing hymns for doctrin-

ally sound hymns for special occasions." Without a great deal of hesitation, a motion to adopt this advice was defeated on the floor of Synod.

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For the past few years our Churches have been sending representatives to the meetings of Classis Eureka of the Reformed Church in the U. S. A. (German Reformed Church). On occasion one of their brethren has also been present at the meetings of our Synod and brought greetings, but this has been very irregular on their part. Last year our Synod appointed the Revs. J. Blankespoor and A. Petter to bring our greetings while visiting the meetings of Classis Eureka. They were also instructed to inform the gathering that they could not expect us to continue to send representatives unless they would also be present at our meetings. Our men carried out their visit and mandate but again no return delegation was present at our Synod. Therefore, our Synod of this year decided not to send any representatives to their meetings; which implies that we have broken off any relations we may have had with the Reformed Church in the U. S. A.

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The Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education of Grand Rapids brought a very interesting request to Synod. They had placed it before the Theological School Committee, which in turn, presented it to Synod. We quote from their letter. "We realize that our greatest need is for teachers, able and equipped, to teach our children the required subjects permeated by the Protestant Reformed life view. For these teachers to do this we feel that they should receive a specific course of instruction. . . . As you know, some work has been done along this line by our Teachers' Club. The Board, however, deems it necessary that we should have a regular normal course where our prospective teachers would receive their final training. This we feel is very essential in order that our school may indeed reflect the truth as we know and love it. This is not only of local importance, for we also have other Protestant Reformed Schools and plans are being made to open more. We come, therefore, to your body with the request that, if at all feasible, a normal course be added to the curriculum of our Theological School this coming year. If, for various reasons, you do not see your way clear to do this, kindly forward this request to synod with or without your recommendations."

An overture from Randolph also dealt with this matter and read as follows: "The Consistory of Randolph advises Classis to overture Synod to consider ways and means of establishing our own Normal Training School to train prospective teachers to teach in

our own Christian Schools." Synod followed the advice of its committee of pre-advice in this matter "to place this matter before the Faculty and the Theological School Committee for study and possible execution."

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The various subsidies for the needy churches were granted as follows: Doon—450; Orange City—\$2800; Pella—\$1000; Oak Lawn—\$1500; Randolph—\$1500; Grand Haven—\$2000; Hamilton—\$3500. This year the Congregation of Sioux Center informed Synod it would no longer need support and expressed gratitude for the aid received in the past.

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An annual appropriation of 25 cents per family per year was granted to the Theological School for the purpose of library expansion.

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Synod again decided to publish a year-book of our Churches which will be incorporated with the Acts of Synod. This year there will also be added a Seminary year-book, included in the book above. They will be sold for \$1.00 per copy and should be purchased by every family, that we may live along with our Churches in their work and activities.

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The Theological School Committee was instructed to make the necessary arrangements for the installation of our Professors if and when the new appointee accepts the charge.

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Synod decided that the Churches should be informed that Mr. H. C. Hoeksema is now in a position to consider a call. Since Mr. Hoeksema has been serving the Churches during the past two years, Synod decided to continue his salary for six months or until he accepts a call, whichever may first occur.

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Hull, Iowa was appointed as the calling Church for the Synod of 1950 which will meet, the Lord willing, beginning June 7, 1950.

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Since the Synod closed its sessions the Calling Consistory has made the following trio for a third Holland-speaking missionary: The Revs. A. Cammenga, J. De Jong and H. Veldman.

W. Hofman.

# IN MEMORIAM

On Saturday, the twenty-eighth day of May, our dear husband father and grandfather

LEWIS BRUINSMA

passed away in the Lord.

Our great comfort and rich assurance in our loss is this: that he now beholds His face in righteousness.

Mrs. Anna Bruinsma

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bruinsma

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Bruinsma

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Bruinsma

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Dekker

Lewis Jr.

5 grandchildren.

South Holland, Illinois.

# IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Protestant Reformed Church at South Holland, Illinois, hereby expresses its sympathy to three of its members: Mr. E. Bruinsma, Mr. W. Bruinsma, and Mr. R. Bruinsma, in the loss of their father

LEWIS BRUINSMA

who also was a faithful member of our society

May our heavenly Father comfort the bereaved family by His Word and Spirit, and strengthen their hope in His Eternal House of many mansions.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Gise A. Van Baren, Sec'y.

# IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Protestant Reformed Church at South Holland, Illinois, wishes hereby to express its sympathy to Mrs. L. Bruinsma and her family in the loss of their husband and father

LEWIS BRUINSMA

May the God of all grace give them always the peace that surpasseth all understanding in this time of bereavement.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Mrs. W. Terpstra, Treas.

# IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with our fellow elder, Harry Zwak, in the sudden loss of his sister

MRS. ANDREW BRUMMEL

May the God of all comfort heal the wounds by His marvelous grace.

D. Dykstra, Vice-pres.

Rev. G. Vos, Pres.