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MEDITATION

Predestination To Praise

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the goodpleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephsians 1:5, 6.

Paul has introduced himself to the saints that are at Ephesus: he is an Apostle of the Lamb, by the will of God. We do well, to listen to this man, for God is speaking through him.

We do well to listen: his story is engrossing. He tells us in many beautiful words of the glory of God and of the wonders of His plan.

I think that Paul knew what he was going to write; and seeing the whole message before his wondering eyes, he begins to sing: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! And Paul connects this blessedness of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to the blessedness of the saints at Ephesus (and by implication, to all the saints that are in Christ Jesus): for this same blessed God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ! Certainly, if we knew our blessedness as it really and truly is in the Lord Jesus Christ, we would sing all the day long. All the spiritual blessings are already ours in the heavenly places in the Lord Jesus. All we have to do is to wait patiently for the day of His appearing, and then He will make us blessed forever and ever.

And all that blessedness is according to eternal election.

The idea is that this blessedness is wonderful in the same measure that God elected us in love, and unto love. Vs. 4.

And that thought is worked out in the words which we have chosen for our meditation: the blessedness of the church which is according to the eternal love of God is revealed in our adoption unto children of God so that we might eternally be unto the praise of the glory of God's grace ! There is the story.

Predestinated unto the praises of God!

* * * *

Predestinated unto praise!

What is predestination?

Here it is the eternal love of God for you. And in that love He decided from all eternity that one day you would stand before His face singing, singing unto all eternity.

But between that decision and the fulfillment, as far as we are concerned, lies a long story, a bitter and a sad story.

We are predestinated unto praise, but in order to eternally praise God, we must be changed.

Ah, at one time we were children of God indeed, but our childship of God was a mere earthly childship. We were happy, but our happiness consisted in seeing and praising God for the beauties of the Godhead which were revealed in the world which He had made. And that was all. We were happy, but this happiness cannot be compared to the exalted state of the childship which we have now in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, we were children of God in Paradise. And there was light and laughter and a wonderful peace in the hearts of Adam and Eve.

But the scene changed, and a dark cloud came from hell and enveloped the erstwhile splendour and light. It became very dark.

Adam and Eve fell away from God who had made them in His image. They broke the covenant.

And since they were created covenant creatures, they made a covenant with the devil, and the results are history. We became children of the devil, and the name that God gives us is children of wrath.

That is our condition when we appear on the stage

of history: children of the devil, and children of wrath. And if nothing happens, or better: if nothing *has happened* with respect to us, we are destined for everlasting misery.

These are terrible truths, but truths nevertheless. We may try to soothe ourselves with the salves of heresy, and prate that things are not so black as they are painted (in the Bible), but we fool ourselves if we believe less than the Bible reveals concerning these terrible truths.

Note the connection of the text: we are adopted unto children of God by the Lord Jesus Christ as an effect of eternal election, as the effect of predestination.

So your happy state now, and your happy estate for all eternity comes to you from out of the wakes of eternity ere the world was.

It means that God loved us from everlasting, and in that love He predestinated you to be adopted unto Himself by Jesus Christ the Lord.

And God's purpose in all this is that you might stand before Him singing your song of the praises of God.

You are predestinated unto praise!

* * * *

Predestinated unto praise!

But in order to be able to do that you are first of all predestinated unto the adoption of children.

That means first of all that from eternity God adopted you by Jesus Christ in His counsel. In that living counsel He gave you to Christ with the express command that you be saved through Him. The sheep were of God and God gave them to Christ with the injunction that He should lose none of them.

Second, that Jesus came in the fulness of time for your sake. And we can tell that He did. Look at Him! His name is rightly called Man of Sorrows. All your sorrows and all your miseries are on Him. Because He took your guilt on Himself. Coming in the fulness of time, we see Him, and we note that He fulfills all the demands of justice. Man sinned, so a Man must pay. Man's nature is flesh and blood and soul and spirit, and I would want you to study Jesus, and you will find that He assumed our entire nature. The Substitute must be blameless, an unspotted Lamb! Well, look ye on the Christ, and you will find what Pilate did: there is no fault in Jesus!

Third, He paid the price that God's justice demanded, so that you might be adopted unto God. Oh yes, I assure you that He paid the price. He suffered hell for everyone of God's elect. He swallowed eternal death unto victory. Christ's death is your adoption unto childship of God.

Fourth, this same Christ rose from the dead and the power of His resurrection life is given unto you

by His Holy Spirit and His divine Word which He alone can speak. And this operation is called regeneration. It is the new birth which is from above. It really is this: He kills the enmity against God in the depth of your heart, and instils His love there. And through this subjective operation in you you become an adopted child of God. The Spirit of adoption begins to work in you as soon as this new birth comes to your consciousness, and then you say: Abba Father! And you are rid of the spirit of bondage again to fear! Principally this spirit is gone. You may worry sometimes; you may weep on occasion, but in the depth of your heart God is seated on the throne in that heart through Jesus Christ and by His Word and Spirit. You have done that which Peter told you to do, namely, "Sanctify the Lord God in your heart!" You are adopted children of God.

And finally, this adoption shall be published throughout the whole Universe.

You must be prepared for the shocking fact that the whole Universe seems to doubt your adoption, the angels of God excepted. They believe it gladly. But for the rest there is little adhesion to that glorious fact. The world of men laugh it to scorn. The devils tell you that you are lost, that God is too Holy a Being to have anything to do with you, and your weak heart would fain believe it sometimes, especially in those times when you have sinned grievously. Your conscience sometimes will not believe that you are adopted unto praise, that is, when it hears the thunder of the law which says: Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things that are written in the Law of God to do them! And even my brother who is also adopted will not believe my adoption at times. We sometimes doubt one another.

And so, all things cry for a day when this adoption shall be publicly revealed. And at that time the whole Universe shall see and hear the adoption unto praise of God's children. It will be so evident that no one will be able to deny it. The children of God in their totality are likened to a beautiful Bride adorned for her Husband, and that is Christ. And this Bride shall be beautiful within and without, without spot or wrinkle. And she shall begin to sing her song of love.

Oh yes, we are predestinated unto praise!

* * * *

Predestinated unto praise!

And all this according to the good pleasure of His will!

The question could be raised: but who are to be the glorious creatures that will sing eternally of God's praises? Who determines their inclusion in this happy commonwealth?

There are but two answers.

The one says: man determines who shall be included

in the number of them that are predestined to heaven.

The other says: God determines their identity and number.

It is really not such a very deep mystery as people would make you believe. As soon as you speak of eternal predestination men speak of deep things, of mysteries, of the hidden things which we must not touch.

As soon as people approach you with that reasoning you may be sure that they belong to the first sort of people that say that man determines the inclusion in the happy throng that travels to heaven.

In a thousand places of Holy Writ you may read that God determined before the foundation of the world who would go to heaven and who would not. Also in my text: it is according to the good pleasure of His will. That is all. That good pleasure said: Abel will go to heaven. And he is in heaven now, waiting for you. And so it is with respect to everyone that goes to heaven. When the only Essential Son that God has was born in Bethlehem, the angels sang of the sons and the daughters of God. Those angels called them: the men of goodpleasure. Unto them is the peace of God, and to no one else.

Before the world was created or any man was formed, God in Himself decided who would go to heaven. And His choice does not rest in anything which He foresaw in you or in me, but merely in the goodpleasure of His will. And the names of all those happy beings God put in a book: the book of life written from the foundation of the world. And if your name is written in that book you go to heaven and you are destined unto the praises of God! And why? So that God may have all the glory.

Let us restate it this time and say it a mite differently: God predestined you unto His praises forever!

* * * *

Predestined unto praise!

What is that praise?

It is this: you sing of the glory of His grace!

But what is grace and what is glory?

Grace is the beauty of the Godhead. God is gracious. He is that even apart from you and your wonderful song. When God showed Himself as never before in the Person of His Son, the church marvelled and sang:

“Supremely fair Thou art,
Thy lips with grace o’erflow;
His richest blessings evermore,
Doth God on Thee bestow!”

And remember that the inspired poet is singing of the Messianic King!

But grace is beauty, the beauty of virtue, the virtue of the Godhead.

And that virtue of God radiates, shines forth in and

over all the works of His hands. And that radiation of virtue is glory. Allow me to illustrate. You have seen the radiation of light from the sun in all its golden splendour. Well, that radiation is its glory. The rays of the sun are the glory of the sun. Another illustration: you have stood near a radiator on a cold day. And you felt the radiations of warmth coming toward you from that radiator. Well, the rays of heat emanating from the radiator are the glory of the radiator.

Thus it is in God. God is virtuous: He is the very personification of all virtue. And He manifests this virtue in the radiating rays that are spread over all the works of His hands. Read Psalm 19, the first verse.

It is a matter of record which no one can deny that God never radiated His virtuous life more gloriously than when He nailed Jesus to the cross for our sins, and raised Him for our justification. Those rays are the central rays of all the glory of God. And in those rays we stand.

And here we come to a part of the text which is hidden to the English reader who does not know the original language. The question still confronts us: how is it that some people begin to sing when they stand in the rays of the radiating glory of God, and others do not sing.

And the answer lies in a word which literally means: to be *graced*. You will understand that there is no such word in the English language. But such a word is used in the Greek text. The French is weak and has *accordée*; the English is very weak and has *accepted*; the Latin is also weak and has *acceptos*; the German, however, is closer to the original with *angenehm gemacht*; but the Holland is exactly correct with *bege-nadigd*. That is the word which is used here, and which also explains why some praise God and some do not.

Here is the explanation: The rays of God’s virtuous life which are His grace, fill you to overflowing: you are *being graced* by God.

This also explains the text when it says that we are graced in His grace. It corresponds. God’s grace is revealed. That grace radiates through His Holy Spirit and Word into the very depth of our hearts and minds, and it fills us. And being graced by the grace of God we begin our song of praise.

We do this here in principle. There is much of the dirge of sin, feeling of guilt, misery because of this terrible dispensation.

But even in the midst of the valleys of death and corruption there is already the beginning of that song of praise.

And the end is coming. We will not have to wait very long anymore, and the trump of the archangel will inaugurate the coming of the King.

And the song of praise is original to Him.

The Bible calls it the Song of Moses and the Lamb!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

The Drive-In Theatre

God's children in the midst of the world face many more temptations than those of yesteryear, and these temptations are becoming increasingly subtle and dangerous. As the world develops in every phase of its life and as all creation's potentialities are discovered and developed and placed in the service of sin and corruption, the means wherewith to sin and the forms wherein sin manifests itself become more and more numerous and treacherous. For the child of God the world is making itself more difficult than ever before. In its own evil way it is striving diligently for perfection, and who would care to deny that it is making rapid progress? Would that the church of Jesus Christ were striving as zealously for perfection in that which is good as the evil world is laboring for the ultimate in that which is of sin. That does not mean that the natural man of yesteryear was spiritually and morally better than man is today. Then, too, man was conceived and born in sin, incapable of doing any good and prone to all evil, and whatever he did or did not do with the time and means at his disposal, God was not in all his thoughts. However, it does mean that there is development, growth in sin, commensurate to the development of life itself, and in the measure this is the case the position of the Christian in the world becomes ever more difficult.

An example of this is the movie theatre of the present day. What tremendous strides have been made in this field in a comparatively short time. Since the invention of the motion picture, a thing that is certainly wonderful in itself and that could be a mighty instrument for good and for the instruction of our children in that which is proper, the world has made the most of its opportunities. Only a few decades ago there simply was no movie theatre for our people, especially our young people, to attend. Today there is no hamlet without one and the movie industry has grown to unbelievable proportions. Alongside the growth of this industry, this vicious instrument for the moral and spiritual corruption of our young people, there are other things that serve to make the temptation even greater than it already is. Only a few decades ago there were no cars. People were compelled to remain close to home and to live their lives and seek their amusement within a much smaller radius than is possible today. Now distance means nothing and there is no limit to where one can go and what one can do in a comparatively short time. In this world all things are made to serve one another.

A more recent development in this movie business advertises itself and is known among us as the DRIVE-IN THEATRE, a summerized version of the movie theatre as we have always known it. In an amazingly short time hundreds of them have sprung up like toadstools all over the country. Wherever you ride, here and in Canada as well, you see them. With them, as anyone will readily understand, the temptation has become greater than ever before. When I first saw a DRIVE-IN THEATRE (I remember it well; it was on the road from Grand Haven to Muskegon) my heart sank. Somehow I sense that many more of our young people would succumb to this vicious temptation and that the movie evil was becoming more difficult to combat all the time.

Subsequent reports and experiences have proved that those fears were not ungrounded. The DRIVE-IN is doing a thriving business, also from those who bear the sign and seal of the covenant of God on their forehead. It is my firm and happy conviction that no group of young people in this country has a better record than ours as far as movie attendance is concerned. Nevertheless, our hands, too, are far from clean. There are too many, also in our own circles, who try to serve God and Mammon both. Shame on them! Would that they really knew what was for their own good and the welfare of the church of Jesus Christ!

Movie attendance in general is on the increase. The DRIVE-IN is doing its part to help this cause of the wicked world along. There was a time, only a generation ago, when those who sought their amusement in these places of the world were the exception in the church of Christ. That the movie theatre was not for the children of God's covenant was accepted without question. Violators were regarded with distrust and disgust, even by their fellow young people. That is no longer the rule today. No longer are movies identified with the world, at least, not to the extent they once were. No longer do church and school warn against them as they once did. Young people are becoming more and more bold about frequenting them. Just how much the corrupt doctrine of common grace, the teaching that God is gracious to the wicked world and that the latter can still do much that is pleasing in the sight of God, has to do with the steady growth of this evil, eternity will fully reveal. In deed even more than in word God's church has forsaken the truth of the antithesis.

I appeal, therefore, to our young people to continue in the way of righteousness and to abstain, completely and from the heart, from this subtle evil. Watch and pray that ye fall not into temptation. Don't place yourself on the side of the powers of darkness. Don't identify yourself in any way with the forces that are working constantly for the deterioration and spiritual

emasculatation of the church of Jesus Christ. Don't try to serve God and Mammon at the same time, for this is not possible. Don't destroy yourself, morally and spiritually, by poisoning your minds with the smut and sensualism of this godless world. Seek your delight in the things that are good. Sing the songs and indulge in the sports that are wholesome. Above all, seek the things of the kingdom of God and work with and for them, your societies, your church, etc.

I appeal to our Christian parents to remember their calling and to give their children the loving but firm guidance they need. Don't minimize the danger of this temptation and the greatness of this sin. Teach your children that the movie is strictly a thing of the world, the world at its worst. Know what your children are doing and where they go. Appreciate the greatness of the temptations that surround them. Don't be too sure even of your own children. Don't imagine that they are somehow immune to temptation. Such an attitude of smug complacency does no one good and may bear bitter fruits. The disappointments in life are so many that no parent in the home or consistory on family visitation can afford simply to assume that there is no ground for suspicion. Understand that your children, too, are conceived and born in sin; that they are "angels" no more than those of your fellow Christians; that they also have within them the natural urge to indulge in the pleasures of the world. Instruct them constantly in the way of the Lord. Be as concerned about their moral and spiritual welfare as you are about their bodies.

I appeal to our churches through their consistories to remain adamant in their stand against this manifestation of the kingdom of darkness. Fight it in every possible way, through instruction and discipline. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? of what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

That there is no real difference between the DRIVE-IN THEATRE and the regular movie house is obvious to all, of course. They offer the same corruption and have the same deadly effect. If it is sinful to frequent the one it is no less evil to attend the other. The same films are shown in both. The same themes are portrayed, horror, crime, sex, carnal love,—anything that appeals to the sensuality of man. The same life of the world is depicted; the same language of the world is spoken; the same philosophy of the world is instilled into the minds and hearts of the victims; the same aspirations and ideals are glorified and the same attitudes, toward God and His church, toward heaven and

hell, toward marriage and divorce, toward idolatry and profanity, sabbath desecration and immorality, theft and murder, are revealed. In both, those who attend are instructed by an unspeakably ungodly Hollywood in all the ways of a wicked world. In both the plastic, impressionable mind of youth is molded by the world at its shrewdest,—and darkest. In both all that is sacred is ruthlessly sacrificed on the altar of sheer, carnal pleasure. In the DRIVE-IN as well as any other theatre amusement and instruction emanate from a source that is more decidedly antichristian than anything in all this evil world. The same purpose is served: mere wealth and cheap Hollywood fame; the same utter disregard for virtue and honor is revealed. For your money they will give you anything you desire,—and they do. The DRIVE-IN as well thrives on crime, murder, gangsterism, theft, deceit, lust, illicit love affairs, nudity and whatever is abominable in the sight of our God. It, too, brings to us a Hollywood of which Dan Gilbert, upon investigation of the entire motion picture industry, once said: "Hollywood is the nearest thing to 'hell on earth' which Satan has been able thus far to establish in this world. The Hollywood influence is making America over—according to the pattern of. . . . hell itself." *Hell Over Hollywood*, page 14.

It is plain, therefore, that there is no essential difference between the DRIVE-IN and any other theatre.

Still, there is something about the former, it seems to me, that makes it even more subtle, more treacherous than the latter. It represents progress on the part of the world.

Somehow the DRIVE-IN leaves the impression of being just a little more innocent. This is sheer imagination, I know, but it might be apt to impress one as such. After all, you are in God's great out-doors and you do remain in your own car.

Definitely, it is more convenient than attending a regular theatre. You simply drive in and remain in your own car. It makes no difference how you happen to be dressed. Whether you are attired in your Sunday best or whether you are returning from the beach in no more than a bathing suit; whether you look neat and clean or whether you look grimy and haggard from a day at the picnic,—you're always dressed and ready for the DRIVE-IN. Then, too, how convenient it is to take one's children, even babies. They are not a nuisance to anyone else. In fact, take a bottle of milk along with you when you go to the DRIVE-IN. Free bottle heating service is provided for them who need it. Then, if you are hungry or thirsty, all you have to do is order what you desire and refreshments are served to you in your car. Nor do you have a parking problem to solve. You simply remain in your own car. The devil certainly wants you to be comfortable.

Moreover, the DRIVE-IN certainly makes it easier for one who never went to "a show" to go for the first time. There is so little danger of being discovered. You cannot go to a neighborhood theatre or enter one of the brilliantly lighted downtown movie palaces without running great risk of being detected. However, the DRIVE-IN reduces this danger to a minimum. After all, it is evening when you go and you do remain in your own car. And so, another important obstacle has been taken away.

All these elements serve to sharpen the temptation.

Also, instead of being less dangerous than the regular theatre in town the DRIVE-IN, from certain points of view, is more so. I hate every theatre. All are dens of sin and instruments of destruction. I hate the DRIVE-IN most. When I think of young people, boys and girls, sitting in those cars, all by themselves, at night, looking at a movie produced by actors and actresses who care nothing about morality and sobriety and by directors and film companies whose sole motive is greed,—when I think of these boys and girls together looking at scenes of love, sex, violence, seduction, nudeness, murder, flirting, license, unbridled lust, lewdness, kisses, embraces, and what not,—when I consider that of all human instincts the sex instinct is the most powerful of all in its effect on conduct,—when I read the reports of prominent men who have made a thorough study of the movie situation and the frank confessions of delinquents who testify how the movie theatre helped them on the road of shame,—when I read this testimony of a fifteen-year-old girl, "When with the opposite sex I am rather quiet and allow them to tell me what to do. When they go to make love, to kiss or hug, I put them off at first, but it always ends in them having their own way. I guess I imitated this from the movies because I see it in almost every show I go to". . . .when I read a paragraph like this, "It is interesting that fifty percent of the high school students examined by Professor Blumer indicated that their idea about sexual love came from the movies". . . . then, frankly, I shudder at what must go on in some of those cars. Considering that thirty million young people and children attend the movie every week only to soak in that kind of "stuff", it is no wonder that women and girls go around as they often do and that the bathing beach has come to resemble a nudist colony more than anything else.

One could write no end on this subject, but our space is more than used up.

Let him who has sinned in this respect, do so no more.

Don't sacrifice your spiritual health and the welfare of Zion on this altar of worldliness and passion.

"Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

R. Veldman.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Mercy Of God

(continued)

Idea of Mercy in Holy Writ.

Mercy, we declare, has its seat in the affection, is rooted in love, is a strong desire to bestow upon a certain object a certain good. The mercy of God has its end or purpose in the glory and blessedness of the object of His love. God cannot rest until the object of His love is blessed and rejoices in everlasting glory. Mercy is the desire to make one blessed. Hence, it must be evident that when the object of this mercy is in misery, it will reveal itself as pity, sympathy, compassion, the desire to relieve the object of one's love in his misery and distress.

Hence, we would define the mercy of God, as a Divine attribute applicable to the Lord Himself, as that virtue or attribute of the Lord according to which He perfectly desires Himself, as the infinitely blessed God, in eternal and Divine glory. We must bear in mind that mercy is a Divine attribute. This implies that the Lord Himself is merciful. God does not become merciful; we do not render Him merciful; it is not true that, becoming merciful, the Lord became something which He was not before. God *is* merciful, within Himself, and apart from any creature. We do not determine this attribute of God anymore than we determine any other virtue of the Lord. The Lord reveals Himself as He *is*. It is for this reason that the Scriptures declare of the Lord that He *is* merciful and gracious, the God Who *is* abundant in goodness and in truth.

Hence, the Lord *is* merciful. This does not imply, we understand, that the Lord is personally acquainted with misery. God is a Light and in Him is no darkness at all. He is the God of everlasting life and blessedness. At His right hand are pleasures forevermore. He is the God of infinite perfection and all misery is eternally foreign to His eternal and infinite Being. Yet, the Lord *is* merciful. God's mercy is His eternal desire to know Himself as the eternally blessed God and to rejoice forever and ever in His own infinite goodness and glory. And this, we understand, is true of God as the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

God's mercy toward His people is that operation of His love whereby He would bless them as He Himself is blessed. This people of God is by nature the object of God's wrath and conceived and born in sin. They are of themselves a miserable people. Hence, the mercy of

the Lord reveals itself as the Divine desire to save, revealed in all its glory in the Lord Jesus Christ. But, into all eternity, the Lord will rejoice eternally in His own blessedness, and also in the eternal blessedness of His people in and through Jesus Christ, their Lord.

THE SUFFERING AND FORBEARANCE OF GOD.

Of interest, in connection with these attributes of the Lord, is their discussion by the late Prof. H. Bavinck and Prof. Berkhof. Prof. Berkhof writes the following on pages 72-73 of his Reformed Dogmatics: "*The longsuffering of God*. The longsuffering of God is still another aspect of His great goodness or love. The Hebrew uses the expression "erek aph," which means literally "long of face", and then also "slow of anger", while the Greek expresses the same idea by the word "makrothumia". It is *that aspect of the goodness or love of God in virtue of which He bears with the froward and evil in spite of their long continued disobedience*. In the exercise of this attribute the sinner is contemplated as continuing in sin, notwithstanding the admonitions and warnings that come to him. It reveals itself in the postponement of the merited judgment. Scripture speaks of it in Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; Rom. 2:4; 9:22; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 3:15. A synonymous term of a slightly different connotation is the word "forbearance".—thus far Berkhof. We would note here that Prof. Berkhof defines the longsuffering of God as "that aspect of the goodness or love of God in virtue of which He bears with the froward and evil in spite of their long continued disobedience." This definition, we shall point out, is utterly impossible. And we would also note that he practically identifies the longsuffering of God with His forbearance. He does declare that the synonymous term, "forbearance", is of a slightly different connotation, but does not point out the difference between the two. Besides, the longsuffering and forbearance, according to Prof. Berkhof, are synonymous terms.

Dr. H. Bavinck writes concerning this attribute of God as follows, Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. II, page 181, and we translate: "The sparing goodness of God towards those that are worthy of punishment is called 'longsuffering,' 'ruach' or 'orek appayam,' makrothumia, anochee, chreestotees." Scripture often mentions also this attribute of God, Ex. 34:6, Num. 14:18, Neh. 9:17, Ps. 86:15, 193:8, 145:8, Jonah 4:2, Joel 2:13, Nahum 1:3. It has revealed itself through the time before Christ, Rom. 3:25, and is yet being oftentimes shown to sinners, Rom. 2:4, 9:22, I Pet. 3:20, according to the example of Christ, I Tim. 1:16, II Pet. 3:15".—thus far the quotation of Bavinck.

The similarity between Bavinck and Berkhof in regard to these attributes of the Lord is self-evident.

Also Dr. Bavinck identifies God's forbearance with His longsuffering, as is evident from the words: "makrothumia (longsuffering)" and "anochee (forbearance)". And because Reformed theologians have identified these attributes, longsuffering and forbearance, we have decided to discuss them together.

*The Terms, Longsuffering and Forbearance,
in Holy Writ.*

The term for longsuffering in the Old Testament is the Hebrew expression, "erek aphim", which means literally: long of face. The idea of this expression is literally that one restrains himself, holds himself in check, is not tempted to do anything under the influence of temper. The word longsuffering in the New Testament is "makrothumia". This word means literally: to be of a long spirit, or passion. And the thought underlying this word is the same as that of the Old Testament "erek aphim", namely: to hold oneself in check or restraint. The word for forbearance in the New Testament is "anochee"—this word means literally: toleration, forbearance, and is derived from a word which signifies: to hold oneself, to hold oneself in restraint.

In connection with these words for longsuffering and forbearance, in both the Old and New Testaments, we must note that the words, longsuffering and forbearance, as such are neutral. Both words, "makrothumia (longsuffering)" and "anochee (forbearance)" simply mean literally: to hold oneself, restrain oneself, hold oneself in check, and this can refer to a restraining of one's anger or love. The words themselves do not indicate the one or the other. Hence, whenever these words appear in Holy Writ, the context must decide whether the meaning of Scripture is that of a restraining by the Lord of either His love or His wrath. Although we will confine ourselves to the New Testament, in our effort to determine the true meaning of these concepts, let us quote, as an example of that which we have written in this paragraph, Nahum 1:3. That text reads: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." Note the expression in this text: The Lord is slow to anger. A common interpretation of this expression is that the Lord is inclined to be sparing toward the ungodly; He spares them in His goodness and compassion. Let us be reminded once more of the definition of "longsuffering" by Prof. Berkhof and apply this definition to this passage in Nahum: "God's longsuffering is that aspect of the goodness or love of God in virtue of which He bears with the froward and evil in spite of their long continued disobedience". The Lord's slowness to anger, then, in this text of Nahum 1 must be understood in the sense that the

Lord restrained Himself toward the ungodly in His love and compassion toward them. However, this interpretation of the text, the interpretation of "Common Grace", is utterly untenable. Let us carefully read the context, the verses 1-6: "The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him." Hence, the expression, translated, "slow to anger ('lankmoedig' in the Dutch—literally: long of spirit or breath)," certainly does not mean that the Lord checks Himself in love. There is absolutely nothing in this entire context of verses 1-6 which would faintly suggest such a love of the Lord. In fact, the very opposite is true. We read in verse 3 that the Lord will not at all acquit the wicked, and in verse 2 the prophet declares that the Lord "reserveth wrath for His enemies". Nahum 1:3 teaches, therefore, that the Lord is holding His wrath temporarily in restraint—the text surely does not teach any general love or compassion of the Lord. And this verifies our remark or observation to the effect that the word, "makrothumia" or "anochee", is in itself neutral and must be determined, as far as its significance is concerned, by the context. However, the New Testament gives us abundant material to ascertain the significance of this word; and we will, therefore, confine ourselves to the New Testament.

Scriptural Passages in which these Attributes Occur.

The word, longsuffering, occurs in the following passages: Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 2 Cor. 6:6; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 2 Tim. 3:10; 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:9, 15; Luke 18:7. We shall quote these passages: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?"—Luke 18:7; "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"—Rom. 2:4; "What if God, willing to shew forth His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known

the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory."—Rom. 9:22-23; "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned."—2 Cor. 6:6; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering gentleness, goodness, faith."—Gal. 5:22; "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."—Eph. 4:2; "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;"—Col. 1:11; "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"—3:12; "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."—1 Tim. 1:16; "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering charity, patience,"—2 Tim. 3:10; "Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."—2 Tim. 4:2; "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."—1 Pet. 3:20; "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. . . . And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;"—2 Pet. 3:9, 15.

The word, forbearance, occurs in the following passages: Rom. 2:4; Col. 3:13; Rom. 3:26. We need not quote the first passage, in which the word, longsuffering, also appears. In Col. 3:13 we read: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." And Rom. 3:25-26 reads: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

The Common Interpretation of Longsuffering.

Dr. H. Bavinck defines the longsuffering of God as the sparing goodness of God towards those that are worthy of punishment. And Prof. Berkhof defines it as "that aspect of the goodness or love of God in virtue of which He bears with the froward and evil in spite of their long continued disobedience." The common definition today of this attribute of the Lord is that the Lord bears with the froward and the evil

in spite of their long continued disobedience in order that they may be given time and opportunity to repent. The Lord suffers long with the evil, "puts up with" them, tolerates them, and does so in His goodness and love, and therefore with the Divine purpose and intention that they may have additional time to repent of their evil way and turn unto the Lord. Texts such as Rom. 2:4 and 2 Pet. 3:9 are commonly interpreted to-day with this arminian application.

However, let us put this definition to the test and note, in connection with a few texts, how utterly impossible it is. The first passage to which I would call attention is Luke 18:7, where we read: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" If now we proceed from the thought that the longsuffering of God signifies His sparing goodness with respect to the evil, and thus translate the word which, in this text, is translated, "bear long", we have the following interpretation of this passage of the Word of God: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, although in His sparing goodness He still bears with them, worthy of punishment though they may be?" This is nonsense and obviously absurd, is it not? According to this interpretation the Lord bears with them in His sparing goodness but will presently, or ultimately, punish them in His justice and righteousness. But this is exactly contrary to the word of our Lord in this particular word of God. This is obvious, first of all, from the text itself. We read in this text of "His own elect", do we not? Is it not absurd to say that the Lord, in His sparing goodness, bears with His elect, worthy of punishment though they may be? However, this definition of the longsuffering of God, as applied to the word of Luke 18:7, is also absurd in the light of the context of this passage. In the context we read of a judge who feared not God and did not regard man. This judge was therefore a "brute", a very godless and unmerciful man. A widow of his city approaches him and implores him to help her over against her adversaries. At first this judge paid no attention to this poor widow. Why should he? He did not fear God and had no regard for man. The plight of this poor widow did not concern him in the least. However, this widow gives him no peace. She continues to come unto him and implore him for help. And, now, not because he feared God or regarded man, but because of her continual coming to him, he will avenge her and help her over against her enemies. This is the context of Luke 18:7. The parallel between this judge and verse 7 is striking. Even as that poor widow troubled this unjust judge, sought and implored him constantly, so also the afflicted people of God seek and implore the Lord constantly. These people of God are in trouble. They are being harassed and afflicted continuously

by an ungodly and wicked world. And they cry unto the Lord in their distress. And it might seem at times that the Lord does not hearken to their cry. They beseech the Lord but the ungodly continue to trouble and afflict them. However, if this unjust judge, who did not fear God and regarded not any man, will avenge the poor, afflicted widow, shall not the Lord avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? Is He not the Lord? Besides, are these afflicted people not His own elect? Does He, therefore, not love them with an everlasting love? Consequently, He will certainly avenge His own elect. He will surely come to their aid. He will most assuredly vindicate them and pour out the fury of His anger upon their enemies. It is true that He may not come immediately to their aid and hear them as soon as they cry unto Him. However, we must understand that He "bears long" with them. He suffers long with them. He sees them in their affliction, suffers along with them in their suffering, and will avenge them in His own good time. But, it is quite obvious that the definition of the long-suffering of God does not apply to Luke 18:7.

Another passage to which we would call attention is 1 Tim. 1:15-16: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Applying the "Common Grace" definition of the longsuffering of God to this sixteenth verse we would read this text as follows: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all His sparing goodness toward them that are worthy of punishment, for a pattern to them which should afterwards believe on Him to life everlasting." This interpretation of the text, however, is obviously ridiculous. The Lord, then, showed unto Paul all His sparing goodness toward them that are worthy of punishment when He apprehended him on the way to Damascus? However, if the Lord desired to *spare* him, would permit him to continue in his wickedness, would it not have been more logical for the Lord to show Paul His "long-suffering" by permitting him to go on instead of apprehending and stopping him in his tracks? The Word "longsuffering" in this text undoubtedly means: unchangeable, and refers to the Lord's redeeming love which cannot be quenched. Christ's apprehending of Paul on the way to Damascus was therefore a manifestation of this unchangeable love of God and serves as an example to them who hereafter should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life.

(to be continued)

H. Veldman.

The Fathers Regarding Conditions

Rev. Petter, it will be recalled, told his readers that our Reformed fathers taught that there are conditions in the covenant. Here are your words brother, "The Reformed fathers also were not adverse to speaking of conditions in the plan of salvation. And if we may trust the statement of scholars about such historical data, then both Ursinius and Olevianus, the authors of our Heidelberg Catechism, maintain the terms conditional promise.

"But it is still more interesting that the theologians who carried on the battle with the Remonstrants do not hesitate themselves to teach that there are conditions in the covenant even when they are engaged in fighting the doctrine of conditions as the remonstrants held it. Prominent among these were the famous Contra-remonstrants Gomarus and Walaeus, co-authors of the Standard "Synopsis of Purer Theology". And even the monumental Staten Vertaling of that day has a forward to the New Testament which informs us that this New Testament means that covenant which God made with man whereby He gives him eternal life *under certain conditions*, (italics, Petter's). A half century later the prominent theologian Turretin gives a long discussion on the conditions without thinking of denying them. Also from the editorial in the same Standard Bearer of May 1, in which the "open letter" is found, it appears that the Netherland Theologians, Dordrecht, 1618-19, spoke of conditions of the covenant."

I must return to this disclosure of yours, Rev. Petter, to your letting us see what the Fathers taught. You withheld some important facts. What these facts are we learn from a paragraph contained in the Dogmatic of the late Prof. Herman Bavinck,—a paragraph that reads, "In den eersten tijd spraken de Gereformeerden vrijmoedig van voorwaarden des verbonds. Maar toen de natuur van het genadeverbond dieper ingedacht werd en tegen Roomschen, Lutherschen en Remonstranten moest verdedigd worden, voelden velen daartegen bezwaar en vermeden dit spraakgebruik." I'll translate this, "In the first period the Reformed freely spoke of conditions of the covenant. But when the nature of the covenant was more deeply thought into and had to be defended against Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Remonstrants, many in their hearts objected to the usage of that language and avoided it". Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, derde deel. (Derde onveranderde uitgave). Bldz. 241.

Such was the experience of many of the Reformed of that first period, Bavinck tells us. In a footnote he mentions a few names. They are names of such

men as Olevianus, Cloppenburg, Witsius, Franken, Brakel, Comrie, Vitranga, and Coccejus. These theologians and many others of the reformed objected to the use of the phraseology in question and to the idealology it denotes. For the two cannot be separated. It means that as they were contemplating the nature of the covenant, that whole condition-theology rose before their minds for what it is—a miserable heresy. And they saw the utter futility of defending the truth of the sovereignty of God's grace with themselves discoursing on the covenant in the terminology of Arminius. Hence, they avoided that terminology. Of course, brother Petter, this change of heart on the part of the *many* of the Reformed has weight with me. It supports me in my conviction that I am reading the Scriptures aright and that your condition-theology is false doctrine. Yet I, no more than you, stand in awe of the fathers. Our only authority in all matters of faith is the Scriptures, so that though *many* of the Reformed had not repudiated that phraseology, I would still be pronouncing it the vehicle of untruth.

Calvin did not have to do battle with the Remonstrants. He passed from the scene before they made their appearance. Hence, he was not driven by their subtle philosophies to take up anew the study of the covenant and to re-examine his terminology. The result was that he continued to speak of conditions of the covenant. In after years there were some among the Reformed who did likewise. They spake of conditions of the covenant even while fighting the arminian doctrine of conditions, as if, so I remarked in one of my articles, it is possible to do both without violating every law of logic. As I also remarked, it shows what fallible men also the fathers were and of what strange intellectual blunders they were capable. It also shows how wrong it would be for us to live by the traditions of the Fathers and not to live solely by the Scriptures.

As to Bavinck, he also states his personal stand regarding the point at issue. He writes, "Actually (*eigelijk*) there are in the covenant of grace, that is, in the Gospel, by which the covenant is made known, no requirements and no conditions (*voorwaarden*). For God gives what He requires; Christ finished all; He did not bring to completion regeneration, faith, and conversion in our stead, but He merited these graces for us; and the Holy Spirit realizes them in us."

The right way of saying this is to state simply that, with God working regeneration, faith, and conversion in His people, there are no conditions in the covenant; and that, this being true, the promises of God are unconditional and unfailing.

The statement of Bavinck to the effect that there are *actually* no *requirements* in the covenant is not true. It is true that there are no *conditions* in the covenant; but there are *requirements*, *commands*, in

the covenant. That God gives power to believe no more renders the command to believe unactual than it destroys faith *as an act of the believer*. Bavinck's reasoning here is illogical and unscriptural. It plays into the hands of the Pelagians, whose teaching it is that the command to believe can be actual, genuine and well-meaning on the part of God, only if it be concluded that man originates his own faith. Bavinck's mistake, which is the mistake also of the Liberated in the Netherlands, is that he identifies the two concepts *condition* and *command* or *requirement*. The dictionary tells us that we deal here with two wholly distinct ideas. To deny, on the ground that God is the author of faith, the actuality and reality of the command to believe is to deny the reality of the accountability of man and of the sovereignty and holiness—the moral will—of God. What God requires and demands of man is not that he originate faith and obedience in him, but that he believe *by the mercy and power of God*. That command is as actual and real, certainly, as is the work of God whereby He originates faith and obedience in man.

But if the command to believe is actual even with God originating faith in man, must it not be said by dint of that reasoning that the *condition* in the covenant is just as real and actual even with God fulfilling it? The question is pointless. For the fact of the matter is that there are no conditions (*voorwaarden*) in the covenant in that implicit in such a conception is the idea of a human will able to originate faith,—thus a will limiting God. Such an idea does not underly the command to believe. And I beg to remind my readers that now, too, I am using my terms according to the meaning that they have in the dictionary. As we have seen, according to the definitions that the dictionary gives of "condition (*voorwaarde*) faith, conceived of as a condition, is a circumstance that limits God; it is a cause that would produce in God the will to be gracious to such who believe of their own free will—free in the Pelagian sense of the word. And we do not right ratters here by saying that God originates faith. All we do by such a saying is to disguise the heresy by camouflage. For if God is the author of faith, He is not limited by it; and then faith, the will to believe on the part of man, is not a condition (*voorwaarde*) in the covenant. To nevertheless speak of faith in this way is to deceive ourselves and God's people. On the other hand, we may and must speak of *commands* and *requirements* in the covenant. For the definitions that the dictionary gives to these terms are not of a kind that render the statement heretical. The statement is true; it sets forth sound doctrine.

It must not be supposed that I allow the English dictionary to tell us whether a view of doctrine is scriptural. I repeat what I said before; all we allow

the English dictionary to do is to define English words. But it stands to reason that only the Bible can tell us whether the ideas and concepts with which English words are associated are contained in the Holy Writ. We derive the meanings of English words from the English dictionary or we fabricate meanings for such words. Rev. Petter does the latter with the word *condition*. That is one of his great mistakes, as already has been explained.

What our study has revealed is that the word *condition* as a sentence element of the statement to the effect that God saves men *on condition* of their faith and repentance is a bad term; but that the doctrine according to which God *demand*s of His people in the covenant that they believe in Him through Christ and keep His covenant is certainly sound doctrine. And these demands are actual. We must not with Bavinck deny, on the ground that God is the author of faith and obedience, the reality of these commands and requirements in the covenant. Because then we play into the hands of the Pelagians. I know; we deal here not with a *problem* but with a *mystery*. And the mystery is how faith and obedience can at once be man's act and God's work in man; how, in a word, the command to believe can be real and genuine with God the author of both. It is a thing that simply defies our powers of penetration and in all likelihood will continue to defy our powers of penetration everlastingly. At bottom it is the mystery of human accountability and divine sovereignty. Both are real and actual, but it takes a mind like that of God to comprehend how both can be actual. And we are but creatures. God has revealed these mysteries unto us not that we should be troubled and vexed by our inability to comprehend them and in our sinful vexation go prating about the problems and contradictions in which the contemplation of God's works involve us, but that believing though not comprehending we should worship that great God.

And here you have my answer, Rev. Petter, to your wrong reasoning contained in your reply to the last letter of Rev. H. Veldman in the Concordia for June 23,—a reasoning that reads, "And supposing that we should substitute the words 'obligation', 'calling', 'requirement' ([which I deem possible]). The phrase in brackets is from the pen of Rev. Petter), would we not have the same problem? Would we not have to say that also the relations which Rev. Veldman suggests are not real because God Himself provides for their fulfillment by His power and grace in His people? That offers no solution, I am convinced."

No, Rev. Petter, we do not have the same problem. We have no problem at all. What you mean to say in your determination to compel us to admit the imagined rightness of your error is that, if the reality of the *condition* in the covenant be denied, consistency demands

also the denial of the reality of the *command*. But this is not true. The teaching that there are commands in the covenant is not, as is the case with the idea that there are conditions in the covenant, excluded by the Scriptures on account of the conceptions with which the English words *command* and *requirement* are associated in the English language. There are commands in the covenant; and they are real and actual also as imposed upon the reprobated though God sovereignly wants them in hell and accordingly withholds from them the power to believe and hardens them through the command. Such is the plain teaching of the Scriptures. But where does Holy Writ teach that God saves men on condition (*voorwaarde*) of their fulfilling them? Quote me one text and show by your exegesis that such is the doctrine contained in it? It can't be done. Also here, then, your whole reasoning is pointless. And so, your concluding statement, "No, we must see the reality of those conditions and make them a living part of our theology," conveys no sense. For how can we see the reality of that which does not exist and make it a living part of our theology? Your repeating that sentiment over and over in your refusal to face the real issue and come with exegesis is becoming real tiresome. What it indicates is your inability to refute effectively my argument with the Scriptures. And that is not a wonder. My argument itself is scriptural. It cannot be refuted with the Scriptures.

But the principal point that I am arguing in this writing is that when Rev. Petter stated that, to use his own words, "the Reformed Fathers were not adverse to speaking of conditions", he was not telling the truth. The statement is too sweeping to be true. For, as we have now seen, the eyes of many of the Reformed were opened to the danger of speaking of conditions in the covenant and accordingly they refrained from the employment of that phraseology. And Bavinck's stand was that *actually* there are no conditions in the covenant. Such are the facts.

But in the sequel Bavinck says that the covenant of grace nevertheless assumes this conditional *form*, the purpose being to acknowledge man in his rational and moral nature; to treat him also in his fallen state as created in God's image; to establish him on this highest plain, where the issues are those of man's eternal weal and woe, responsible and inexcusable; and to cause him to break with sin and enter the covenant consciously and without constraint.

But the use that Bavinck here makes of the terms *actual* and *form* won't do, his saying that there are *actually* no commands in the covenant but that nevertheless the covenant assumes an requiring *form*. That would come down to this that the commands of God are such not *actually*, not as to idea, but only as to the form of their words. And if there were conditions in the covenant, that would hold also of them. Bavinck's

teaching here is impossible. It comes down to this, that God is not *actually* commanding His people; that in communicating His will to men He was uttering words as disconnected in His mind from their significations in human speech; or that He was just talking without meaning what He said. How with such a view could it be maintained that man is a responsible agent and that God is the holy and the sovereign One? One of two: 1) If there are not *actually* conditions in the covenant, neither, then, is the covenant *conditional* as to its *form*; or 2) If the covenant is conditional as to its form, then there are *actually* conditions in the covenant. And the same holds of the requirements of God. As they stand Bavinck's statements are worthless. The fact of the matter is this: There are no conditions in the covenant; the covenant therefore is unconditional also as to its form. There are commandments in the covenant; the covenant therefore is also commanding as to its form.

Bavinck doubtless was troubled by the "if" clauses of the Bible of the type with which we are occupied. "If thou keepest my covenant, all these blessings will come upon thee. . . ." Certain it is that the current doctrine of Holy Writ forbids taking those declarations to mean that there are conditions in the covenant; that God saves men on the *condition* of their faith. But what is to be done with that "if" Here in all likelihood was Bavinck's difficulty, which he thought to have solved by saying that though there actually can be no conditions in the covenant, it nevertheless is conditional as to its form. My exegesis of Ezekiel 18 and Deut. 28 taught us how that "if" is to be dealt with. Your teaching, brother Petter, is that there are *actually* conditions in the covenant. That "if" gave you no difficulty at all. You simply rendered it "op de klank af", *on condition that* as closing your eyes to the current doctrines of the Scriptures in the light of which every single verse in the Bible must be explained. And then you told your readers that you had the Fathers on your side by saying that they were not adverse to speaking of conditions in the covenant. But we know better now. Many of the reformed were adverse to the employment of that phraseology. They avoided it, their eyes having opened to heretical ideologies denoted by it. Such are the facts.

G. M. Ophoff.

The *Concordia* for July 21 contains Rev. Petter's answer to Rev. H. Veldman's last letter. The answer of Rev. Petter has a paragraph that reads, "Also the Rev. Ophoff at one time freely spoke of 'conditional promises' and defended them." (Standard Bearer, Vol. II, pages 46 and 47). I will reply to this in the following issue of the Standard Bearer.

G. M. Ophoff.

Revs. De Jong and Kok in The Netherlands

A REPORT.

Prof. Holwerda is the incumbent of the chair of Church Polity in the seminary of the Liberated Churches. In Canada dwells a certain immigrant who came to these shores about a year and a half ago and settled in Chatham, where we have a mission station. Though this immigrant attends our meetings for public worship, he was at a loss to know whether to affiliate with us or join the Christian Reformed Church in Chatham. He wrote Prof. Holwerda for advice. The professor gave advice. His letter to the immigrant found its way into my hands. I felt it my duty to publish it, which I herewith do, for reasons that will be obvious to all who read.

The professor wrote:

"Gister ontving ik uw brief en nu direct per airmail antwoorden. We hadden eergister een gemeenbespreking met Ds. Kok en Ds. De Jong. Wij hebben heel openhartig gedachten gewisseld. Ze hebben nu dit gezegd: Inderdaad hebben we in de Protestant Reformed Church veel aan Ds. Hoeksema te danken. Maar zijn opvatting in zake verkiezing enz. is geen kerkleer. Niemand is daaraan gebonden. Er komt ook van sommigen een heel ander geluid. Naar hunne opinies dachten de meesten niet als Ds. Hoeksema en Ds. Ophoff. En de sympathie voor de vrijgemaakten was groot ook in zake hunne verbonsleer. Wel leggen ze in Amerika, gezien hun andere historie, meestal het accent wat anders, maar voor vrijgemaakte opvatting was volledig plaats. En van andere zijde hoorde ik dat vrijgemaakten in de Chr. Ref. Church moeilijkheden krijgen als ze op hun stuk blijven staan.

Zij, d.w.z., Ds. Kok en Ds. De Jong, hebben ook verlag gegeven van wat er in hunne kerken wordt gedaan om de geestelijke verzorging der vrijgemaakten ter hand te nemen. Ik moet eerlijk zeggen hierdoor is veel van mijn vrees weggenomen. Ik vind de methode van het Amersfoortsche besluit in zake correspondentie met de Prot. Ref. Church nog ongelukkig. Maar ik zie het nu zoo. Ten eerste, de Prot. Ref. Church, hoewel de ligging in zake uitverkiezing enz., daar eenigzins anders is, wat gezien de geheel andere historie, is de ware kerk. Ik ben het daarom niet geheel eens. Ten tweede, de Prot. Ref. Church bewijst de ware kerk te zijn ook hierin dat ze de uit Holland gaanden thans waarachtig zoekt en bewust voor hun standpunt alle ruimte laat. In deze situatie geloof ik dat aansluiting bij de Prot. Ref. Church roeping is. En laat men dan als vrijgemaakten vooral het contact met Holland bewaren, en ook onze lectuur daar doorgeven. Onze vrijgemaakten zouden zeker vruchtbaar werk doen, als ze in de Prot. Ref. Churches werkten aan wegneming van mis-

verstand en aan verdieping van inzicht. Ds. Kok zei, We kunnen nog veel van elkander leeren. Zeer merkwaardig vond ik de mededeeling dat Ds. Hoeksema, die eerst vrij skeptisch tegenover de vrijgemaakte immigranten stond, een bezoek aan hun gebracht heeft, en enthousiast terugkeerde; en een ander moet hebben gezegd: "Dat zijn kerels die weten waar het om gaat. Je zou ze zoo allemaal Ds. kunn'n maken."

Als er binding was aan Ds. Hoeksema's opvatting, zou ik zeggen, Nooit aansluiten. Nu geloof ik echter dat toetreding roeping is. En dan zoo dat de vrijgemaakten ook de dogmatische rijkdom van Holland de Prot. Ref. Church helpen doorgeven."

Here follows the translation of this missive:

"I received your letter yesterday, and a direct reply per airmail is in order. Day before yesterday we held a meeting with Rev. Kok and Rev. De Jong, the purpose being mutual discourse. We had a wholly openhearted exchange of thoughts. They said this: Indeed, we have much to be grateful for to Rev. Hoeksema. But his conception regarding election etc. is not church doctrine. No one is bound by it. Some are emitting a totally different sound. Their opinion was that most (of the Prot. Ref.) do not think as Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff. And sympathy for the Liberated was great also in the matter of their doctrine of the covenant. They do accentuate differently in America, considering their history, but for the conception of the Liberated there is ample room. And from other quarters I heard that Liberated in the Chr. Ref. churches run into difficulty, if they hold their position.

They, that is, Rev. Kok and Rev. De Jong, also reported what is being done in their churches for handling the spiritual care of the Liberated. I must honestly say that thereby much of my fear has been removed. I still consider the method of the Amersfoort decision regarding correspondence with the Protestant Reformed Churches unfortunate. But now I see the thing thus: First, the Prot. Ref. church is the true church, be it that the lay (of conception) regarding election, etc. is somewhat different, considering their wholly different history. However, I am not entirely agreed. Second the Protestant Reformed Church proves to be the true church also herein that she truly seeks the immigrants from Holland and consciously allows all room for their conception. In this situation I believe that joining the Prot. Ref. church is calling. And let them then as Liberated preserve their contact with Holland by all means, and also spread our literature. Our Liberated would be doing a fruitful work, if they labored in the Prot. Ref. churches to remove misunderstanding and to deepen insight. Rev. Kok said, We can still learn much from each other. The communication that Rev. Hoeksema, who first was skeptical of the immigrants, paid them a visit, and returned enthusiast, struck me as remarkable; and another must have said, 'Those are strong men, who know what it is all about. You could

make them all ministers, just like that'. If Rev. Hoeksema's conception was binding, I would say, Never join. Now I believe, however, that accession is calling; and then so that the Liberated also help to disseminate the dogmatical wealth of Holland in the Prot. Ref. Churches."

This is an astounding letter, especially the statements in it that bear on the doings of Revs. De Jong and Kok in the Netherlands and on the state of affairs in our own communion of churches.

Do I have the right to publish this letter and thereby make it the property of all our people? I do have that right. Let us consider the following:

a) Prof. Holwerda's letter partakes of the nature of a report of the acts of a conference that was open to the public certainly. Any interested person could have attended that meeting. It was not held behind locked doors. Fact is then, that I am not by my doing revealing things that were meant to be kept secret, or that from their very nature are secret and therefore ought to be kept secret. The deliberations of that conference in the Netherlands are being spread far and wide among the Liberated in the Netherlands and among the immigrants in Canada. Our people, too, have a right to know.

b) Revs. De Jong and Kok, be it as self-appointed ambassadors—they were not sent by the Protestant Reformed—were speaking for all our people. Hence, every man, woman and child of our communion has a right to be made acquainted with the content of the professor's letter.

I not only have the right to publish the professor's letter, but I am persuaded that it is my solemn duty, and this for the following reasons:

a) The deliberations of that conference in the Netherlands vitally concerns all our consistories, all our churches, all our people. Our whole movement is at stake, if the statements contained in the letter are true.

b) The difficulties in which the professor's letter, report, involve the brethren De Jong and Kok cannot be settled to my satisfaction alone; they cannot be settled to the satisfaction of the consistories of Holland and Creston alone; they must be settled to the satisfaction of all our consistories, of all our churches, of all our people. For, as was just stated, the deliberations of that conference vitally concerns all our churches. This—the fact that the aforesaid difficulties must be settled to the satisfaction of *all* our people—demanded the publication of the professor's letter and will certainly also demand the publication of the brethren's explanations of the statements that they are reported to have made, if they can have any.

c) If the report of the professor is true, the brethren De Jong and Kok involved most of our people in-

cluding the clergy. For the report states that most (of the Protestant Reformed) do not think like Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff. This was said to the leaders among the Liberated in the Netherlands. It is being broadcasted far and wide. Certainly every minister, elder and deacon in our communion, and every common member must receive the opportunity of expressing himself regarding that statement, and regarding all the other statements occurring in the letter as well. This demanded the publication of the letter.

d) The Rev. De Jong has been called to labor among the immigrants in Canada as the missionary of *all* our churches. He can be allowed to accept that call, certainly, only if he succeeds in dispelling the thick cloud of suspicion under which he has been brought by Prof. Holwerda's letter again to the satisfaction not only of the calling church—Fuller Avenue—but to the satisfaction of all our churches. This again demanded the publication of the professor's letter.

There is still this question. Why all the haste? Why not have waited with the publication of the letter until the brethren De Jong and Kok have spoken. I ask in turn, why the delay seeing that for all the reasons stated above the letter would have to be published even though the brethren succeeded in clearing themselves. The seriousness of the case rules out all delay. There will not be another issue of the Standard Bearer until Sept. 1. Rev. De Jong cannot be allowed to accept that call without our people being informed and the difficulty settled. Postponing publication of the letter would not be making things any easier for the two brethren. The possibility that Prof. Holwerda fabricated the statements that he attributes to the Revs. De Jong and Kok is remote. Certainly, the man didn't fabricate those statements. If Rev. De Jong and Rev. Kok succeed in exonerating themselves their reputation will not have suffered at all on account of the publication of the letter. In view of all these considerations what would be the sense of postponing the publication of it? How could that be right?

As was said, according to the professor's report, the brethren De Jong and Kok made some astounding statements on the meeting of that conference. Rev. Hoeksema's conception regarding election, etc, is not church doctrine? None are bound by it? Some are emitting a totally different sound? How these statements are to be taken is hard to say. The brethren better explain.

Then these statements, "And sympathy for the Liberated was great also in the matter of their doctrine of the covenant. They do accentuate differently in America, considering their history, but for the conception of the Liberated there is ample room." This is plain language. It comes down to this: The Protestant Reformed Churches, as to the bulk of their member-

ship have repudiated the covenant-theology of Rev. Hoeksema and embraced the covenant-theology of the Liberated in the Netherlands. But that covenant-theology of the Liberated is false doctrine. I would not be using language too strong should I characterize it as a damnable heresy. As I intend to treat this theology in a brief series of articles to appear in the Standard Bearer, I shall now limit myself to presenting its principal tenets, which are two in number: 1) The promise of the covenant is unto all the baptized, reprobate and elect alike. It can also be stated this way: All have a legal right to Christ and all His benefits. Now what have we here? The Arminian doctrine of universal atonement pure and simple, the teaching that God called all men, reprobate and elect alike, His sons and reconciled them to Himself through Christ's cross. Such is the teaching also of the Christian Reformed as appears anew from Rev. Ghysel's meditation in The Banner for July 15. The meditation contains this statement, "Being children of the covenant they—the reprobated—have the right—mark you, the *right*—to the blessings of the kingdom. At the present time baptism assures them of that right just as circumcision did in the olden time. But baptism does not assure them of the *actual*—mark you, *actual*—possession of the blessings of the covenant." This is Heynsianism through and through. It is Arminianism. It is the covenant-doctrine of the Liberated.

This doctrine involves those addicted to it in a problem. It is this: If God calls all His sons, if all have a right to Heaven, how is it to be accounted for that many perish? What is the answer of the Liberated and the Christian Reformed? It is this (the second of the two principal tenets of the covenant theology of the Liberated). 2) God places the benefits of Christ's cross in the *actual* possession of men, including the reprobated, *on the condition* of (op voorwaarde van) faith and repentance. That can mean but one thing, of course, namely, that man's will is free in the Pelagian sense, that God, on that account, stands powerless over against man's corruption and that, if he is to be saved, he must originate faith in him. Here we have the absolute proof that the condition (voorwaarde) in the covenant-theology of the Liberated is indeed a circumstance that limits, prevents God; an efficient cause,—thus at once a circumstance that induces God to be gracious unto all such who of their own sovereign will choose to be saved. Such is the covenant-theology of the Liberated and of the Christian Reformed.

But one will say, Do not the Liberated confess the doctrine of sovereign election and reprobation and that faith is God's gift in man? They do. But these beliefs have strictly no place in their covenant theology, which is thoroughly arminian. They are excluded, are these tenets, by the very logic of that theology. Certainly,

the idea that man originates his own faith excludes the idea that faith is of God, doesn't it? And in their covenant-theology man does, necessarily must, appear as originating his own faith, for the simple reason that though all have the right to the blessings of the kingdom many nevertheless perish. All these points will be fully explained in my series.

What, then, is that covenant-theology? It is a heresy of the first magnitude. And to think now that the Protestant Reformed Churches as to the bulk of their membership have embraced that covenant-theology. If that is true, we, Protestant Reformed, are but another communion of Arminian churches. And in that case why sacrifice the way we do to maintain ourselves as a separate and distinct communion of churches? Why send out missionaries? Why preach on the radio? Why found and maintain our own Christian schools? What right have we to call ourselves distinctively reformed, if we have embraced that covenant-theology of the Liberated? We should close the doors of our churches; nail them shut with long spikes, and return to the mother-church that cast us out, if we have embraced that covenant-theology of the Liberated. For in that case we walk in a vain show, and all our activities and ventures are vanity, a waste of money, time, and effort.

But I don't believe that it is true. I can't believe it. I am certain that our people still hold the foundation that was laid among us twenty-five years ago; still believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that God calls not all but some only His sons in Christ; that these sons and none others have the right to be saved, they being justified in Christ,—saved by grace and by a faith that is God's gift in them, and that the promises of God, given unto these sons, and to them only, are on that account unconditional and unfailing. This was the covenant-theology of the Protestant Reformed twenty-five years ago; and I believe that with rare exceptions it is still the covenant-theology of our people. It is a thoroughly Scriptural, and on this account strictly logical covenant-theology, and therefore so easy to grasp. A child can understand it. Can it be that we were so foolish as to exchange this beautiful truth for that rotten heresy of the Liberated? I can't believe that we have been that foolish.

Prof. Holwerda wants to see us converted into a communion of Liberated churches. He tells his correspondent that the Liberated in Canada by all means should make that their aim. They shall go about their task by spreading the literature of the Liberated among our people. And they have the opportunity. For the conceptions, the covenant-theology, of Rev. Hoeksema is not binding. The Protestant Reformed even allow ample room for the covenant-theology of the Liberated. If it were otherwise, his advice would have been, Never join. But the situation being what it is they must

affiliate with us and get to work. Can it be that we here hit upon the fundamental purpose of that visit to the Netherlands,—the purpose, namely, to show the irreconcilable leaders among the Liberated that they need have no scruples about advising their people who come to these shores to affiliate with the Protestant Reformed? But to get their way with them, the Revs. De Jong and Kok had not only to repudiate in their hearing the covenant-theology of Rev. Hoeksema but had also to assure them that sympathy among us for the theology of the Liberated was great. And according to the report of the professor they did just that. And so the professor is now convinced that we too are the true church as well as they. And why are we now in his eyes the true church? Because in our great love of the theology of the Liberated, we repudiated the theology of Rev. Hoeksema; and, second, because we allow their people to hold fast their theology as members of our communion. Let us not feel honored.

According to the report of the professor, the Revs. De Jong and Kok had the habit of speaking of the covenant-theology of the Protestant Reformed as the theology of Rev. Hoeksema, as if it were his private conception and personal possession and therefore not binding on the churches. In fact, according to the professor's report the two brethren explicitly stated that it was not binding on the churches. But that is not true. It is the covenant-theology of the Protestant Reformed, their unwritten creed, officially adopted, and therefore binding indeed. Consider the following. We are all familiar with or at least aware of the existence of the Three Points or doctrinal deliverance of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924. The doctrine contained in these propositions includes also the covenant-theology of the late Prof. Heyns. The Revs. H. Hoeksema and H. Danhof and the undersigned with their consistories were placed before the choice of subscribing these points—thus placed before the choice of subscribing the covenant-theology of Prof. Heyns—or being ejected from the communion of Christian Reformed churches. These consistories officially decided not to subscribe the aforesaid points or propositions; and by that decision they officially pronounced also the covenant-theology of the Liberated, heretical; and its logical contrary—the covenant-theology of Rev. Hoeksema—scriptural. This certainly amounted to an official adoption of that theology. That theology is therefore binding indeed. And when the Revs. De Jong and Kok allowed themselves to be inducted into the office of ministers of the gospel in our communion, they declared by that act before God and man, "We subscribe the covenant-theology of the Protestant Reformed, and promise to be bound by it in our preaching and teaching.

One more thing. We must all be agreed, certainly, that it is high time that we as churches take an official

stand in the matter of the covenant-theology of Heyns. It is high time that we as churches officially pronounce that theology heretical and its contrary—the covenant-theology of the Protestant Reformed—Scriptural and true. This has already been done, as was explained. But let us do it again, that all may understand that we do have a covenant-theology that is binding, and that we allow no room at all in our communion to its contrary—the covenant-theology of Heyns and of the Liberated. Those who will not allow themselves to be bound should then leave; and I have reference here in the first instance to our clergy. Why should any of them want to be occupying our pulpits, if they are agreed with that very heresy the official repudiation of which twenty-five years ago constitutes the very reason of our separate existence as Protestant Reformed churches? What right have they in our pulpits, if they are agreed with that heresy and are thus opposed to its very contrary — that only covenant-theology which is according to the Scriptures? No right whatsoever either legal or moral. If it is true what Rev. De Jong is reported to have said, if the opponents of our covenant-theology are in the majority, no action as that just suggested will be taken, and that will prove that what Rev. De Jong is reported to have said is only too true; and that therefore there is absolutely no sense to me continuing my labors in our communion of churches. For then all is vanity indeed.

G. M. Ophoff.

IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Mannen Vereeniging van de Eerste Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk in Grand Rapids, Mich., wenscht bij dezen hare innerlijke deelneming te betuigen aan een harer leden, broeder W. Zwak, in het plotseling en tragisch verlies van zijn dochter,

MRS. A. BRUMMEL

Moge de Heere rijkelijk Zijn troost aan hem en de verdere familie schenken.

G. Koster, Pres.

G. Borduin, Secr.

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sympathy to its fellow member, Mrs. Harry Zwak, in the sudden loss of her sister-in-law,

MRS. A. BRUMMEL

May the Lord comfort the bereaved with His wonderful grace and presence unto the healing of the wounds He struck. All His ways are wonderful.

Rev. Gerrit Vos, Pres.

Mrs. C. Spoelman, Sec'y.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Vloekpsalm

(Psalm 109; Tweede Deel)

De vorige maal hebben we een soort introductie gegeven van dezen psalm, en dat was noodig. Deze psalm is zeker niet populair in onze dagen. Ik denk niet dat hij ooit populair geweest is, maar sindsdien elke dag erger is dan zijn voorganger, haat men dezen psalm vandaag meer dan gister. Het is om van te weenen. Want deze vloekpsalm is geïnspireerd door God's Heiligen Geest.

“O God mijns lofs, zwijg niet!”

Wat een angstkreet! Het is den zanger bang. Hij is omringd van venijnige menschen die hem benauwen. En het schijnt alsof de Heere er maar werkeloos bijstaat. En dat gaat den zinger aan 't hart. Daarom schreeuwt hij tot God om wraak. Hij vraagt God eigenlijk om recht tegenover zijn wederpartijders. Ge kunt het nog duidelijker zeggen: hij schreeuwt om den oordeelsdag.

Maar dat kon nog niet.

Er is een bestemde tijd voor alle dingen. Er is een bestemde tijd voor den oordeelsdag, en tot zolang moet Gods volk lijden van het goddelooze rot.

Het was anders wel benauwd voor David. Luistert: “Want de mond des goddeloozen en de mond des bedrogs zijn tegen mij opengedaan, zij hebben met mij gesproken met een valsche tong.”

En dan wordt het benauwd.

De goddeloozen zijn het volk waarop de Heere vergramd is tot in eeuwigheid. Hun naam in de Schrift is teekenend: zij zijn goddeloos, dat is, zonder God in de wereld.

Wat wil dit eigenlijk zeggen? Dit: zij handelen en wandelen, bestaan, denken, spreken en leven alsof er geen God in het heelal is die alles ziet en gadeslaat en oordeelt, alle dagen.

En dat is vreeselijk. Want er is wel een God. En die God is zoo dicht bij hen, dat Hij zelfs tot in het diepste hart der goddeloozen Zich openbaart en zegt: Ik ben God en niemand meer. Daarom zegt de goddelooze *in zijn hart*: Er is geen God! En die God laat Zich ook niet onbetuigd. Hij geeft de kracht aan de tong van alle zoogenaamde Godloochenars om te zeggen: Er is geen God!

Die goddeloozen zijn menschen die een tong des bedrogs in hun mond hebben. Dat zegt de tekst.

Een tong des bedrogs wil zeggen, dat wij geestelijke kinderen van den duivel zijn. Hij was het die voor het eerst een tong des bedrogs openbaarde, en dat was

in het Paradijs. Bedrog staat tegenover de waarheid. God had Zijn waarheid geopenbaard aan Adam, en tegenover die waarheid zette de duivel zijn leugen. Leugen en bedrog zijn vreeselijke dingen. Eigenlijk zeg ik het zoo nog niet goed, want leugen en bedrog zijn juist *geen dingen*. De leugen-wereld is een wereld die niet bestaat. En het is vreeselijk om een leugen-leven te leven. Want als we dan toegekomen zijn aan het einde van zulk een leven, en dan voor Gods troon komen te staan, dan zal geopenbaard worden, dat zulk een leugen-leven geheel en al ijdel was. Zoo zien we dat die menschen beschaamd uitkomen. Stelt het U voor: men leefde vele jaren, en als we dan rijp worden en het einde genaken, dan zien we aaneens ons geheele leven ineenvallen. Er blijft dan niets over dan te weenen, smartelijk te weenen.

Maar hier op aarde, terwijl God zwijgt, gaat de mond van den goddelooze en den bedrieger open, om te wonden, te wonden. En het liefst keert zich de leugemond tegen het volk van God. Denkt hier aan de poging der Raadsheeren, anno Domino 33, om valsche getuigen te vinden tegenover Hem wiens naam de Waarheid is.

Deze vuile menschen spraken met David en tegen David.

En het werd bang. Het doel van die menschen was natuurlijk om David te vernielen.

En het ergste was wel, dat men die dingen deed zonder oorzaak.

Luistert: "en met hatelijke woorden hebben zij mij omsingeld, ja ze hebben mij bestreden zonder oorzaak."

Dat is erg.

Zelfs de goddelooze wereld maakt onderscheid in het toepassen van straf, als bewezen kan worden, dat er aanleidende oorzaken waren, waarom de eene menschen andere dood sloeg. Dat worden dan verzachtende omstandigheden. Er was een oorzaak. Zeg, dat ge iemand trijtert en plaagt uren aaneen. Als dan zoo iemand een stok beetneemt om U blauw te slaan, dan is er een oorzaak, ook al is het dat men geen kwaad met kwaad mag vergelden.

Maar die oorzaken zijn hier niet. David had die menschen niets in den weg gelegd. En toch omsingelden zij hem met niet dan haat.

Haat is een bang ding. Haat is moord. Haat is het beginsel in het hart dat zegt: die man moet dood. Hij staat mij in den weg. God plaatste hem naast mij en zijn naam is naaste, maar ik heb een hekel aan hem, en ik zal hem dooden als ik kan. En meest begint dat met woorden. En wordt beëindigd met den dood.

Nu is er niemand die dat meer ervaren heeft dan Jezus Christus onzen Heere. En ge moet er ook op letten, dat deze woorden overgenomen worden in het Evangelie van Johannes en toegepast op Jezus. Neen, ook zoo zeg ik het niet goed. Er staat, dat deze woorden *vervuld* werden bij Jezus. Dat wil zeggen, dat David

die woorden gevuld zag, maar er bleef ruimte over, veel ruimte over. De *vervulling* van die toestanden wachtte op Jezus. En toen is het vervuld. David schreef die dingen zelfs hoofdzakelijk voor Jezus.

Hoe komt het toch, dat de goddeloozen David en Jezus zoo haatten? En het antwoord kan niet moeilijk zijn, als we ter eener zijde zien hoe zondig wij menschen zijn van nature, en hoe heerlijk God is ter andere zijde. Wij zijn zoo zondig, dat wij het goede haten. En hoe heerlijker nu de goedheid zelve op ons toetreedt, hoe vreeselijker brandt onze haat tegen die goedheid. En zoo zien we dat deze woorden eigenlijk ten volle toegepast moeten worden op Jezus, want Hij was de Goedheid Zelve. En zoo zien wij het ook, dat niemand gehaat is zooals Jezus.

"Voor Mijn liefde staan zij mij tegen, maar ik was gebed." Ik maak daar allerlei stipjes, in plaats van woorden. Ik doe dat met opzet. In onze vertalingen staat: Maar ik was steeds in het gebed. Maar dat staat er niet. Er staat wat we boven neerschreven: "Maar ik was gebed!"

Daar zit heel wat in.

Eigenlijk hebt ge hier het nakomen van het Nieuw-Testamentische gebod: "Bidt zonder ophouden!" Ik was gebed, zegt de dichter. Hij bedoelt daarmee: Temidden van al die hoon, haat en smaad richtte ik mij geduriglijk tot God. Ik stortte mijn hart en leven uit voor Zijn troon. Mijn geheele leven kenmerkte zich door smeecken en klagen voor den troon van God.

Hoe schoon is dit vervuld in Jezus Christus. Vooral als ge twee dingen ziet: eerst, dat Jezus vaak Zich afzonderde en zelfs nachten lang bad tot God; en ten tweede, dat het letterlijk gezegd wordt in Hebr. 5:7. Als woorden iets beteekenen, dan beteekenen zij in die plaats, dat Jezus' leven gekarakteriseerd werd door "gebeden en smeekingen, met sterke roeping en tranen".

Wat een beeld krijgen we hier! Jezus, omsingeld door goddeloozen die Hem haten, Hem aanranden met bedrog en valsheid, maar Hij was eigenlijk niet anders dan gebed!

En wat een oordeel voor die ongelukkige goddeloozen.

Hij openbaarde niet dan de liefde Gods.

En om den wille van die liefde stonden zij Hem tegen. Is het niet om van te gruwen?

De Heere zal het nog eenmaal zeggen, en dan nog sterker: "En zij hebben Mij kwaad voor goed opgelegd, en haat voor Mijne liefde."

Openbaart zulk doen niet de hel zelf?

Ziet Jezus! Hij gaat het land door goed doende. Hij openbaart de liefde Gods, Hij verkondigt het eeuwig Evangelie, Hij toont het Evangelie in wonderen en gelijkenissen, en wat ontvangt Hij daardoor? Men legt Hem het kwade op. Het ging zelfs zoo ver, dat men van Hem zeide dat Hij een duivel was. We rillen

in het diepst van ons hart. Hoe openbaart de mensch der zonde zich als van den vader der leugen, den duivel.

En dan komen de vloeken.

Gods Geest wordt vaardig over David-Jezus. En zij zeggen: "Stel een goddelooze over hem, en de satan sta aan zijne rechterhand."

Dat is een vreeselijken vloek afbidden, en toch, het past. Dit volk openbaarde zich als van de partij des duivels, en daarom vraagt dan ook David om des duivels gezelschap voor dezulken.

Let er op, dat David opeens in het enkelvoud gaat spreken, zonder overgang. Eerst waren het de goddeloozen. Doch nu is het een eenige persoon dien hij voor zijn aandacht heeft.

En zoo is het ook vaak in het leven. Men bindt zich samen tegen eenen of tegenover velen. Maar men heeft zijn leider.

Leest nu het achtste vers, en ook zijn toepassing op Judas in Hand. 1:20. En zoo zien we, dat David ook zijn Judas gehad heeft. En zooals we de vorige keer opmerkten, het is hoogstwaarschijnlijk, dat die Judas van David zijn vriend Achitofel geweest is.

Het is vreeselijk om de Satan te hebben aan zijn rechterhand. En toch, daar bidt David om. Als de Satan aan iemands rechterhand staat, dan beteekent dit, dat al wat zulk eenen doet duivelsch is. Al de uitgaande kracht van zijn rechterhand is Satanisch.

Het is eigenaardig, dat ook Achitofel zich verhing, juist zooals Judas dat later doen zou. Twee mannen die den Satan hadden tot hunne rechterhand.

"Als hij gericht wordt, zoo ga hij schuldig uit, en zijn gebed zij tot zonde."

Ik ijs er van als ik het lees.

In Uw verbeelding ziet ge het. Hier staat de man die den Satan tot zijn rechterhand heeft. Zijn zaak is onrechtvaardig. En de rechter veroordeelt hem. Maar zulk een mensch kent ook de benauwdheid, juist als zijn slachtoffers. En dan gaat zulk eenen aan 't bidden. Neen, geen werkelijk, godvreezend gebed. Maar een gebed zooals elk mensch bidt in benauwdheid. En dan bidt de Heilige Geest in David tot God: Zijn gebed zij tot zonde. Ik moet er niet inkomen. Het is in één woord vreeselijk. Bidden, smeeken in groote benauwdheid, en terwijl ik bid, zegt de Heilige Geest: Zijn gebed zij tot zonde! Ontzettend oordeel voor hen die duivelskinderen zijn. O God! Wees ons zondaren genadig!

"Dat zijn dagen weinige zijn; een ander neme zijn ambt."

Lankheid der dagen is een zegen van God, indien zij verkregen wierd in gerechtigheid. Het is goed om vele dagen te ontvangen als de Heere Uw deel is. Anders zijn de dagen niet dan ellende en verdriet. En aan het einde der dagen zullen zij ons verdoemen.

O, tijd te vullen met goddeloosheid en bedrog! Het roept om straf.

En dan zijn ambt.

In het geval van Judas kwam er een andere raadgever voor den man Gods.

In het geval van Judas kwam Matthias. God vult het vacant geworden ambt met Zijn verkorene.

Het algemeene ambt is het prijzen van God.

Een iegelijke mensch heeft zulk een ambt ontvangen. God zegt tegen elk mensch komende in de wereld: wandel voor Mijn aangezicht en zijt oprecht. Zing, loof, prijs Mijner Naam en verheerlijk Mijne deugden. Laat dat Uw leven zijn.

En de mensch der zonde zegt: Ik heb geen lust aan U noch aan Uw mandaat. Ik haat U den ganschen dag.

En zulke menschen verdelgende, zegt God: Laat een ander zijn ambt nemen. En die man die tien talenten had ontvangt ook nog datgene wat die andere scheen te hebben.

"Dat zijn kinderen weezen worden, en zijne vrouw weduwe."

Ziedaar de vloek Gods, afgebeden over den man die de Satan tot zijn rechterhand had. O, hij heeft het verdiend, maar mijn hart krimt ineen vanwege het vreeselijke oordeel hier afgebeden. Het is zoo smartelijk weezen te zien. Ze hebben geen vader meer die voor hen zorgt, die hen liefhebt, die met hen speelt en vertroetelt op de kniën.

Een vrouw die alleen overblijft is een treurigheid. Zij is te beklagen. De weduwe wordt in Gods Woord genoemd met hen die veel lijden hebben.

Maar hier wordt het afgebeden over den man die God en Zijn volk hatte.

Ik kan begrijpen, dat men aan den drang van alle deze woorden wil ontkomen, en zoo "verklaren" dat er niets ellendigs van overblijft. Dat men tracht om dit bidden van David als zondig te brandmerken. Maar, alhoewel ik het begrijpen kan, ik kan het niet rechtvaardigen. Gods Woord is duidelijk hier. Het moet verdiend zijn door die mannen.

"En dat zijn kinderen hier en daar onzwerfen en bedelen, en de nooddrift uit hunne verwoeste plaatsen zoeken."

De weduwe en de kinderen van den man die David haatte, woonden in verwoeste plaatsen. En vanuit die verwoeste plaatsen gaan zij rond om te bedelen. Het is om bij te schreien. Maar verdiend, want God zegt het.

O God, bewaar ons!

G. Vos.

NOTE! — Following our usual custom, the *Standard Bearer* will not appear on the 15th of August.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Office Of Elder

The Qualifications Of An Elder.

The special office in the church is the highest position that any person can possibly hold in this world. In distinction from the minister, or teaching elder, the ruling elder is overseer over the flock as ambassador of Jesus Christ. Therefore Scripture uses the term bishop, which means overseer. He must comfort the weary, admonish the wayward, and drive away the wolves that appear in sheep's clothing. He must see to it that the flock is well fed in the green pastures of the Word, having oversight over the preaching to preserve it in all its purity. He must jealously guard God's heritage from the powers of sin, the world, and the devil. Whatever other duties he may have in the administrative affairs of the church they are always subservient to his task as overseer.

That raises the important question, what are the qualifications required for fulfilling this office? Every consistory faces this question at least once a year, or as often as it is called to present the congregation with a new nomination for office bearers. True it is, that only Christ can appoint to any office within the church, yet He does so through the institute, that is, through the consistory and the congregation. Therefore every individual member of the consistory is responsible before God to place only such men on nomination who are qualified for that work. So easily sinful flesh plays a prominent part in their choice. Sometimes, in the way of least resistance, the nomination may be limited to a select few rather than trying to find other talents that God may have placed in the congregation. On other occasions, a man may be chosen for his financial support or his influence in the congregation, rather than for his capabilities. Again, even personalities or friendships may prejudice the mind. Or a new arrival may seem so much more gifted than the more familiar faces in the church. When the nomination is finally ready the whole consistory must be convinced in their souls that they have acted according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as before the face of God.

As soon as the nomination is presented to the congregation for approbation it becomes the responsibility of the whole church. Silence can only mean consent. How readily suspicions arise that the consistory, which consists of mere men, has allowed itself to be influenced by sinful motives and intentions. How little the congregation often realizes the problems they have faced. But each member is likewise duty bound to put aside his own personal likes and dislikes to desire men for

the office according to the Word of God and for the welfare of the church. When finally the vote is cast and certain men are chosen, all must rest assured that Christ has wrought a great work by His Holy Spirit in the church, appointing men out of their midst as His ambassadors.

Also those persons who are placed on nomination may not consider this matter lightly. On the one hand, they may not assume the attitude that they need not present their objections because they may not be chosen anyway. Nor may they lightly invent objections in order to escape the task that may fall upon them. On the other hand, in case they do have desire to serve (which Scripture certainly commends, I Tim. 3:1), they must be willing to wait for the objective calling through the church in God's own time.

Well may we ask, what are the qualifications of an elder according to the Scriptures?

Nor need we seek for an answer in vain. For the Scriptures are very ready to instruct us.

Acts 6:3 teaches us, "Wherefore, brethren, look out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." This is surely the first requisite of primary importance, that the men to be appointed to this office be "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." If anyone should raise the objection that Acts 6 speaks of the appointment of deacons, and not of elders, we are ready to agree, but we hasten to add that since this is a requisite for the office of deacons it is no less a requisite for those who must serve as elders. To be full of the Holy Ghost means to be endowed with the Spirit of the living Christ as He dwells in the church of the new dispensation. A person is either "filled with the Holy Ghost" or he lacks this gift entirely. And he who is full of the Spirit receives the blessings of Christ according to his place and calling as member of Christ's Body. Therefore the wisdom referred to in the text is not a mere natural wisdom, but is a sanctified wisdom wrought by the Spirit, enlightening the eyes of the understanding and filling the heart with love and devotion to God. The Spirit instructs him to discern the truth of Scripture and directs him in sound judgment, that he may use his gifts and talents unto the best interests of God's church.

Negatively, there are certain evils that definitely disqualify a person for the office.

Thus we read in I Tim. 3:2, 3, 6, "A bishop must . . . not be given to wine (no brawler), no striker (a contentious, quarrelsome person), not greedy of filthy lucre (covetous, seeking his personal gain), . . . not a novice (one recently brought into the church), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

In his epistle to Titus (1:7) Paul mentions almost the same evils, "For a bishop must be blameless, as

steward of God; not self willed (overbearing, self-centered), not soon angry (the servant of the Lord must not strive, II Tim. 2:24), not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre (eager for base gains)."

In a similar strain the apostle Peter instructs the elders in the church, (I Peter 5:2, 3), "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, 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."

No one can fail to see the implications.

1. An overseer must not be guilty of gross sins. How shall he admonish others if the finger of accusation points squarely at himself? Moreover, how can he be an example to others if his own walk is to be condemned?

2. He must never forget that he is always only servant. It is God's church; not his. Christ is Lord; not he. He is but an unprofitable servant. The garb of a servant is becoming to him rather than the robes of a domineering lord.

3. He may never lose sight of the fact that it is a unique privilege that such an office is entrusted to an unfit and unworthy mortal. It must fill him with fear and trembling. It helps him to labor willingly and ungrudgingly, even in the face of opposition.

4. Finally, he must not seek a carnal reward. Let it be sufficient to him that he is privileged to serve in God's heritage. His reward is the assurance that he is well pleasing to his Lord, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear he will receive a crown of glory that never fades away. I Peter 5:4.

But the Word of God also records the positive qualifications of a bishop.

We read in II Tim. 2:24, 25, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness correcting those that oppose themselves (note: they oppose themselves, foolishly seek their own destruction); if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

And in I Tim. 3:1, 2, 4, 6, 7, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless (above reproach) the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober (sober-minded), of good behavior, apt to teach; . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. . . . Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Again in Titus 1:6-9, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; . . . a lover of hospitality (willing to aid and to shelter); a lover of good men (or

simply, a lover of the good), sober (able to exercise self control, not unstable), just, holy, temperate (strong to curb the evil); holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Summing up these qualifications, we find that an elder must,

1. First of all, be sound in doctrine. He must know and love the Scriptures; be ready to expound the Word when necessary, but also to maintain and defend it against all those who oppose it. It is interesting to note that this is also one of the questions asked in the Form for the ordination of elders, "Whether ye believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God, and the perfect doctrine of salvation, and do reject all doctrines repugnant thereto?"

2. Secondly, he must manifest a godly walk. This is necessary for his own sake, lest he fall into reproach and the snares of the devil. But this is also necessary for other believers, that he may be an example to them by his godly walk and conversation. Even the world must testify that he does not share her fellowship. And it is necessary, likewise, for the church, lest God's heritage be reproached and God's name be dishonored.

3. And finally, he must be able to teach. That is his calling as overseer. He must comfort the afflicted with the comfort of God's Word. He must admonish and correct the wayward with the sword of the Spirit. He must, in one word, rule the flock, govern the church. And his ability to do so must become evident from the fact that he knows how to rule his own family well.

Yet who is fit to these things? No one, except he who is filled with the Holy Spirit Who calls and qualifies to the office. Faithfulness demands an unceasing vigilance in prayer for the guidance of the Spirit. And therefore the officebearer also needs the unceasing prayer of the congregation, not only in the public worship, but also in their private devotions, that all may benefit by their labors, "for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4:12, 13.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! They shall prosper that love thee!" Psalm 122:6. C. Hanko.

When you have given up yourself to something more important than defending your own self importance, you don't mind criticism, you expect it."

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PERISCOPE

Appeal *

This is the title of a brochure which we received from the Netherlands and which has been sent to many others in the U. S. The form letter which accompanied the booklet explains what it is and its purpose. This letter reads, in part, as follows: "In the name of the Board of Netherlands Federation of Young People's Societies and the Federation of Young Women's Societies, we have sent these few copies of the brochure 'Appeal'.

"It sets forth simply, clearly and concisely the issues of the Church strife, how the schism in the life of the Church occurred, and at the same time it clearly points out how apostasy reveals itself and continues in the bound Churches."

The brochure contains two articles dealing with each of the above subjects. The first concerning the issues is by Professor C. Veenhof and is entitled: "De Zaak waar het om gaat"—The Issue. It is true that this is one of the clearest and simplest statements of the Church struggles in the Netherlands. For this reason and also because the differences between the conceptions of the covenant and baptism as they are held in the Liberated Churches and those which are current in our Churches becomes very evident, we have decided to review the contents of the first article, adding a few comments here and there. The first article is rather neatly divided in various sub-heads which we will follow.

"A Good Idea. . . ."

This is the title of the introduction in which the author relates how he was approached by the President of the Federation of Young Ladies' Societies and requested to write this article for Holland youth. He points out that although the schism has grieved him greatly and as such cannot be a cause of rejoicing, yet because the issues concern the riches of God's covenant, the glory of baptism and the Kingship of Christ over His Church, he feels its importance of the Church of the future and is happy to have opportunity to state the issues.

"Concerning Holy Baptism". . . .

Here Prof. Veenhof states: "This strife is concerned with something that is *very personal* to all of us, that touches us all *in our heart* and *in our whole*

life. . . . Our daily life of faith is completely at stake in it. If we have understood the heart of the ecclesiastical conflict and have made a good choice in the matter we have acquired riches for which we shall be thankful to God our whole life.

"For the ecclesiastical conflict concerns, as we have already said, *holy baptism*."

Further under this heading the writer emphasizes that essentially God Himself baptizes us. For example: "For when true baptism takes place, that is, when a child is baptized according to God's ordinance and in the manner which He has decreed, *then the Baptizer is essentially the great, eternal God Himself*."

As stated this point is made very emphatic. We quote a bit more: "Yea, above all we must know and maintain this; through faith we must also see that: God, our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, baptizes the little children of the Church! When a child is baptized the LORD Himself comes to that child, He Himself sprinkles the water on its head and says very really and personally: *John, Mary, Anna, I, the LORD Himself, baptize you, in My Holy Name. You are now of Me!*"

Then the Professor continues: "That baptism, which has been performed by the LORD, *always remains of power, every day, every hour, until our death, yea, to all eternity*. It is essentially so, that the Lord continuously baptizes us. After He sprinkled us with water when we were but a few days old, He always keeps, so to speak, that water fresh and living and powerful, upon our foreheads. And the words which He first spoke, He continues to speak through our whole life! Every second Jehovah repeats: Carl, William, Mary, I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Or, better said Jehovah does not repeat that Word: *He continues to say it it continuously comes to us, earnestly and graciously out of His heart, in unbroken power*. . . .

"It should ring in our hearts: *The LORD baptizes us and continues to baptize us from day to day and hour to hour*. He said once and continues to say now from day to day and hour to hour: 'I am the LORD your God and you are completely mine.' That baptism which the LORD once performed continues ever real, ever living, ever powerful, as it was the moment the Lord began to baptize; when God's baptism first came into our life through the service of the minister at the foot of the pulpit in the midst of the gathering of God's people."

"Baptism is a Seal". . . .

Under this heading the author answers the question of what baptism is and what it seals. He writes: "In answer to this question, true Reformed people

*(Translated from the Holland brochure: *Appél!*)

have said with great unanimity: *Baptism is a seal of God's promise!*

"To rightly understand what this means we must surely know and always hold fast that the LORD in His wondrous love has thought it good to give all the children of believers His promise. Or, in other words: it has pleased Him to express to those children a glorious pledge. That is, He says to all those children, head for head, day in and day out, meaningfully and sincerely: *I am the LORD your God*. I establish my covenant with you. I wash you from all sin in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; My Holy Spirit lives in your. In short: I declare to you the complete forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation: all the treasures and riches which I can and will give to mankind.

"And God gives this promise day in and day out. It comes out of His own mouth to us, without interruption. With this His pledge God embraces and penetrates us all the years and days of our whole pitiful earthly existence.

"The continuous expression of this promise by God and the new reception of it every day, is an amazing great thing for us in our life! There is simply nothing thinkable which is more glorious than the permanent expression by our Heavenly Father Himself of this rich word of promise.

"Of course, we must not forget even for one second, *that God never declares this word of promise alone or apart from aught else*.

"He always declares *with* and *in* this promise something else.

"For when He gives His promise, He calls us at the same time to love Him with all our heart, to humbly believe His word and to walk in His ways. When the LORD said to Abraham: *I am the LORD your God*,—then He says, in the same breath, as it were, walk now always before my face and be ye upright.

"But this charge, this demand, does not make the promise any poorer or weaker! Not at all!

"This demand, which is always included in His promise by the LORD and which comes with that promise, is exactly a summons *to believe His promise*; hence, *to trust and live out of that promise*.

"And now, in order to impress us as deeply as possible, that the LORD has really and truly given this promise and continues to give it each day; in order to engrave it upon our souls that the Lord continues to say every second: *I am your God and you are my child*,—therefore the LORD gives His Baptism, as a *seal* upon that promise.

"O, He well knows, how difficult it is for us, how our heart always turns against actually and securely believing that God is truly our Father and that the

Lord Jesus genuinely washes us from our sin by His blood and that the Holy Spirit will indeed gladly live in us.

"And therefore the Lord helps us!

"Therefore the Lord gives His baptism to us!

"He gives us in that baptism a sealed promise!

"Just as the princes of old, whenever they conferred great privileges on a certain city or subject, drew up a sealed declaration of the same and then solemnly delivered it to the city council or subject concerned.

"Yea, that is the great joy of our life: God gives us baptism as a sealed declaration that He is indeed our God. In that baptism He gives us a sealed pledge that He grants unto us complete salvation. He did that already in the first days of our life. And He continues that giving all our life long."

"*Baptism does not seal 'internal grace'*"

Here Professor Veenhof discusses the opposite view of baptism which, he claims, is presented by the Synodicals. He states that the difference appears when it is asked: WHAT does God seal in baptism and TO WHOM does He seal that which is sealed?

In answer, the author maintains that all agree that baptism seals God's promises but that the difference becomes apparent in answer to the second question. He states: "It is true that the Synodicals have said that baptism seals God's promise. But—at the same time they declare that the promise which is sealed by baptism is a promise *which is presented to the elect only*." Of this the writer wants nothing; claiming that it depreciates baptism and makes it often of none effect—a fake or only apparent baptism—for the non-elect.

He further states that this position demands holding to pre-supposed regeneration. The argument is as follows: since the sacraments are for the strengthening of faith, that faith must be presupposed in baptism. Hence, the Synodicals declare that all children of believer's must be assumed to be regenerated and that they shall be considered and treated as children who participate in the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit.

He concludes this section as follows: "You see how this all fits together. If we do not consider the children as partakers of regenerating grace the entire Synodical teaching concerning baptism falls apart as a house of cards!

"But the reverse is also true: if we actually hold to the teaching that that is only a true baptism which guarantees complete salvation alone to the elect, then we must also consider and treat the small children of the congregation, with our whole heart, as children



who partake of the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit!

"Hence, the teaching that the children must indeed be so considered and treated is the key-stone of the entire structure of the Synodical doctrine."

* * * *

Thus far the Professor has said many things which sound amazing and strange to us. And he has said them emphatically. Before we add any comment we will continue to review the balance of his article next time.

W. Hofman.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., hereby expresses its sympathy to elder H. Meulenberg in the loss of his mother,

MRS. N. MEULENBERG

May the thought that their loved one is now rejoicing in glory comfort the brother and his family in this hour of sorrow.

R. Veldman, Pres.

H. H. Kuiper, Vice-Pres.

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., hereby wishes to express its sympathy to Mr. H. Meulenberg in the death, after a lingering illness, of his mother,

MRS. H. MEULENBERG

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved family with the hope of eternal salvation for them who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Veldman, Pres.

A. Haan, Sec'y.

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

On Friday, July 22, our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

GEORGE LUBBERS

was suddenly taken away from us by the Lord, at the age of almost 63 years. The knowledge that his life was Christ and his death gain comforts us in our poignant loss.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Psalm 92:12.

Mrs. George Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit J. Lubbers.

Grada Lubbers

and three grandchildren.

Hudsonville, Michigan

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Mich., hereby expresses its sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. George Lubbers and Mrs. Gerrit J. Lubbers, in the sudden and heavy loss of the husband and father,

GEORGE LUBBERS

May the God of all comfort be with the sorrowing relatives, and may we all wait patiently for the glorious day of the resurrection.

Rev. Gerrit Vos, Pres.

Mrs. C. Spoelman, Sec'y.

* * * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 21, 1949, our beloved parents,

MR. & MRS. JOHN VAN OVERLOOP

hope to commemorate the Twenty-Five year jubilee of their marriage.

It is our desire to publicly express our thanksgiving and gratitude to our Covenant God that He gave us our dear parents for all these years, and we express the hope and prayer that they may be spared for us and for one another for many years to come, in subservience to His holy will.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Van Overloop

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Van Overloop

Donald Van Overloop

Hudsonville, Michigan and 1 grandchild.

* * * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With deepfelt appreciation to our Covenant God for His manifold blessings, we hope D. V., to celebrate our 25th Anniversary on August 27. It is our hope and prayer, that He, who has so richly blessed us in the past, will continue to guide us with His Word and Spirit.

Rev. Bernard Kok

Mrs. Bernard Kok, nee Bos

Gerald Walter

Lois Jean

Holland, Michigan

* * * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Tuesday, August 16, the Lord willing, our parents

JOHN HOLLEMAN

and

CATHERINE HOLLEMAN (nee Kuipers)

hope to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Heavenly Father with them for having kept and sustained them together through the years and pray that the Lord may grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. William Holleman

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Folkema

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

The July session of Classis East was opened with the singing of Psalter No. 165. Rev. R. Veldman, the president of the last Classis reads Psalm 25 and leads in prayer.

The credentials are read and accepted. Classis declared constituted. According to rotation, Rev. G. Vos presides. Rev. H. De Wolf functions as stated clerk in the absence of Mr. D. Jonker.

The delegates, especially they who are at the Classis for the first time, including the delegate from our newly organized church at Hamilton, are welcomed by the chair.

The Formula of Subscription is signed by those who are present at the Classis for the first time.

The minutes of the last classical meeting are read and approved.

The Classical Committee reports that they have met twice; the first meeting was held for the purpose of providing classical appointments for Holland; the second meeting to provide classical appointments for Hamilton.

There are requests for classical appointments from Oak Lawn, Holland, and Hamilton. Classis decides to grant three classical appointments a month to these three congregations. The following committee is appointed to draw up a schedule for these classical appointments: Revs. J. Blankespoor, J. A. Heys and Elder A. De Borst.

Later in the day they present the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

Holland: — July 10, C. Hanko; July 31, M. Schipper; Aug. 14, G. Lubbers; Aug.

21, H. Veldman; Aug. 28, J. Blankespoor; Sept. 4, G. Vanden Berg; Sept. 18, J. De Jong; Sept. 25, M. Schipper.

Hamilton: — July 10, R. Veldman; July 17, G. Lubbers; July 24, G. Vos; Aug. 7, H. Veldman; Aug. 14, J. Blankespoor; Aug. 28, H. De Wolf; Sept. 4, J. De Jong; Sept. 18, J. A. Heys; Sept. 25, C. Hanko; Oct. 2, G. Lubbers.

Oak Lawn: — July 10, J. A. Heys, July 24, H. De Wolf; July 31, R. Veldman; Aug. 7, G. Vos; Aug. 14, M. Schipper; Aug. 21, G. Vanden Berg; Sept. 4, M. Schipper; Sept. 11, H. Veldman; Sept. 18, J. Blankespoor; Oct. 2, R. Veldman.

Sarnia-Chatham: — July 10, G. Lubbers; July 31, J. A. Heys; Aug. 14, C. Hanko; Aug. 21, G. Lubbers; Aug. 28, G. Vos; Sept. 25, G. Vos; Oct. 2, H. Veldman.

Creston: — July 10, J. Blankespoor; July 31, G. Vanden Berg; Aug. 14, J. A. Heys.

The Mission Committee will be asked to take over the schedule for Sarnia and Chatham.

Rev. E. Knott, who appears at the meeting at this time, is given advisory vote.

The Church Visitors have no report at this meeting. The committee is instructed to do their work and report at the next meeting of Classis.

Oak Lawn asks Classis to make provision for a Book of Sermons that can be used for special days such as Christmas, New Year, etc. Classis decides to make such a provision and appoints Rev. J. Blankespoor and Rev. G. Vanden Berg to make the necessary regulations.

The First Church asks for advice in re the erasure of a member by baptism. After the necessary information is given by the Consistory, Classis advises the Consistory to proceed with erasure.

The next Classical meeting will be held in Kalamazoo the first Wednesday in October.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are asked, and answered satisfactorily by the various Consistories.

The Consistory of Holland thanks the churches for all the classical appointments given them during the illness of Rev. Kok.

The minutes are read and adopted. Upon motion Classis decides to adjourn.

After the singing of Psalter No. 400 Rev. G. Vos leads in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.