

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Silent In Love

"... He will rest (shall be silent) in His love. ..."

Zephaniah 3:17b.

I have heard people utter a peculiar expression in their prayer. At the time I did not understand the meaning. Freely translating from the Holland, the phrase referred to would be: O God, be silent in Thy love about our sins and trespasses! In later years I found the Biblical basis for all such praying. We read in the prophecy of Zephaniah a similar expression. We hear that God shall be silent in His love with respect to all His people.

Moreover, when we read the very words of Jesus Himself, we can see still clearer the beauty of so great salvation. . . . Jesus tells us that when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. And then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . .

And here is the point that I would like to stress: the Father at such time shall be silent in His love.

Of that silence I would speak.

It opens a field of thought that is wondrous beyond compare. The Father silent? It must be a great love that keeps Him from roaring all the day long even unto all eternity. Because our sins are many and they are very real. There are mountains of sin which have outraged the Father in His adorable virtues.

Silent?

How is that possible? Even when *we* saw all those iniquities, *we* could not keep from crying and lamenting! How can the Lord God be silent with respect to them?

If you would somewhat understand this I would bid you to return with me through the ages and I will lead you to a little hill outside the gates of Jerusalem. It is anno Domini 33.

Yes, there is a great multitude on that hill. They all seem to be drawn to a very sorry spectacle. Three crosses on the place of the skull. The poor sufferers are the very center of a morbid attraction. The mob seems to have a wonderful time, mocking, laughing, sneering, taunting, deriding. Especially the central figure of the three crucified ones receives derision and contempt.

No, do not turn away from this awful spectacle. Do not turn away because millions of angels and the multitude of saints that no man can number shall be busy singing about that cross unto all eternity. A few years hence we will hear the voice of Paul. He will tell you of his most resolute determination. He will tell you that he has determined with himself to know nothing among the Jews and the Greeks than this central figure, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And if you insist on clearer demonstration, we would point you to the visions of the night that were given to the beloved apostle John. He saw the door of heaven ajar. And, lo and behold, in the midst of heaven there was a great throne and in the midst of the throne a Lamb standing as if slain. Yes, o, yes, the blood of Golgotha shall be the chief attraction in the heavenly paradise.

Look strongly now on that central figure there on Calvary's hill. Note that He is silent. If He speaks at all, it is for other than Himself.

But we are getting weary. Early comers have told us that this awful spectacle had its beginning at nine o'clock in the morning and now it is well-nigh noon.

\* \* \*

But, o God of eternal miracles! What means this

strange phenomenon in nature? It's getting dark. God Himself is blotting out the shining luminance of the great light of day. It's getting very dark. It is the end of scoffers. It will not be long now and they will smite their breasts and wailingly they will hasten to return to the streets of Jerusalem.

It grows silent around the cross. Yes, silent and horrible. The soldiers and their centurion must stay. They are well trained in the iron discipline of Rome. They might tell you, if they so pleased, that in the darkness they heard the movement of tortured bodies during these three awful hours of darkness, and perhaps they heard the splash of drops of blood on arid soil. But for the rest, silence for three brooding hours.

But what nonsense do I speak: three hours? Three eternities rather. Those three hours on the place of the skull are the hush of eternal desolation. We stammer when we speak. But speak we must. Come tell me, what think ye of the silent Christ? He found no words to utter. It was all so just, so Divinely correct. During those three hours especially, there descended on Him all the burden of the wrath of God because of sin and guilt that properly belonged to the Church of God, or if you please, the sin and guilt of God's world, the world of His everlasting goodpleasure. God, our God, loved that world so much that He took all the sin and guilt of that world and heaped it upon the defenseless head of His beloved Son. Seeing that guilt it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.

And that was Divinely correct. Jesus, the Son of God, was made the Head of the world of God's election from all eternity. And He must take care of that world. So that when God in justice comes and demands all the righteousness of His law, Jesus has nothing to say. He is the Scape-goat and enters the wilderness of hell because He loves the Father and those that Father gave Him. He is silent in His suffering.

\* \* \*

How could Jesus answer the Father? His demands were just. God had said in Paradise: The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die! Man ate and man must die. Either himself or another must die for him. And here hangs the Mediator of the Church of God. Therefore Jesus has nothing to say. He is silent in the experience of eternal death on the accursed tree, silent in the hush of desolation.

And His silence is the very answer of love. He loves the Father in the stead of His sheep. You and I did not love Him and now Jesus loves God in our stead, that is, if we are the sheep of Christ.

God's justice and righteousness were outraged and on this cross all such crookedness is made straight. But at the cost of His heart's blood. Such, my friends, is the Cross of Golgotha.

He suffered for many while suffering alone. He suffered as the Holy One while suffering for the enemies of His beloved Father. He suffered hell while His fitting place would be in the bosom of the Father. Will you ever be able to approach the understanding of such love?

And still we stand at the foot of the cross.

Such stillness is the stillness of untold agony. It is so overwhelming that even the hardened centurion of the legions of Rome is impressed. Later he will say: Truly this man was the Son of God!

But, oh, what means that terrible cry? From the center of the scene, just above our heads, we hear a cry that is heartrending, piercing, unearthly, terrible. Yes that cry came a long way off. It came from out of the bottomless bottom of eternal hell, death and damnation. Be very still now: Jesus has tasted the experience of the curse of God. He is made a curse for His sheep. That cry tells us that Jesus is far away from Home. Jesus was used to the blessedness of heaven from all eternity and now the Son must experience in the human soul and the human body forsakenness such as no creature shall ever be called upon to bear. Say it in the hush of wonder: *all* the waves and *all* the billows of God's wrath with eternal intensity have come in upon His soul. Be very still and marvel: that cry is the expression of the love of the Son crying to the heart of Father. He is so far from home that He dare no longer say: Father! He cries: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

\* \* \*

And heaven is silent too. I sometimes wonder what the angels of God have thought in that strange hour. In Bethlehem the night grew into day in the song of heavenly glory. Now the day became night and the cry is the depth of despair, such as no creature can fathom. No, we do not wonder that the mob, the wicked scoffers, hastened away, smiting their breast. It is not easy to look upon hellish torture in the Person of the shepherd of God.

Heaven is silent and God is silent too.

But there are the thoughts of the Almighty. And praise be to God, we know them. He has revealed them unto us.

Here they are: Why I have forsaken Thee, My Son? Thou knowest. Thou wert with Me ere the world was. Thou knowest that We would reveal all the loveliness and the beauty of the Godhead. Thou wert with Me when We as the Triune God counselled to show Ourselves to the millions of men and the angels to be created. . . . That world would travel the way of sin and grace. And throughout all the fearful history Thy Cross would shine as the lode-star for the Church of Ours. They would slowly on, o so slowly, begin

to see the beauty of holiness in the womb of the morning. They would see that Cross and that agony as the manifestation of the love of God. We would preach *Thee*, My dying Son, as the way to the heart of God!

Later on we would explain the wonders of Our mercy and goodness and truth and glory. We would teach the elect church of all the ages that We had taken all the sin and guilt upon Ourselves and that in *Thee*, My Son, all righteousness should be fulfilled. Therefore, Thou art now travelling the road of eternal sorrows. Thy name is Man of sorrows so that the joy of God may be won for all Thy sheep. WHY HAVE I FORSAKEN THEE, MY SON? It is that Our glory may be revealed in the vessels of honor afore prepared unto glory, a glory such as this sorry world has never seen.

\* \* \*

Yes, now I can understand why my elders prayed: Be silent in love, o God, with regard to all my sins! It is because Jesus paid the price in His blood and was forsaken of God.

Isaiah has seen that cross from afar. And seeing he testified: He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. Let us put it this way: He was silent and hushed in desolation so that you, my brother in Christ, might sing unto all eternity.

Jesus said: Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the Kingdom. And God was silent in His love. He leads us through Jesus to the Home of God.

And the wicked that refuse to believe in that silent and suffering and dying Christ? The song of Hannah in the days of Samuel tells the fearful story. When the wicked come before God in the Judgment Day, He shall surely not be silent to them. Here you have God's own words to that effect: These things hast thou done and I kept silence, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forsake God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!

For that reason Hannah sang in her song of victory: "The wicked shall be silent in darkness."

O, for a long time, almost 6000 years now, the godless have spoken hard speeches against Jesus and the God of Israel. But then God will come and will not silent be. Can he, the unregenerate man, imagine what the speech of God will be like on the Judgment Day?

All those that refused to have Jesus be King over them shall be silent in darkness. Paul has told us: in that Day the mouth of every one shall be stopped and the world shall become guilty before God.

I have spoken to you of different kinds of silence but there is still more.

The judgment of the righteous and avenging God

when the 7th seal is broken shall be so great that there will be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. It will be the silence of wonder. It is because His works of judgment and equity are adorable wisdom and worshipful glory.

It is well, therefore, that *we* also grow silent in meditation and think upon God. Remember Him in all your days and in the watches of the night. It is the most wonderful exercise for the soul and the heart of man.

And the more you see the silent God in His love, the silent Christ in His agony, the silent heavens in adorable worship, the more *you* will be silent in admiration. My soul in silence waits for God; My Saviour He has proved!

\* \* \*

But you will not be silent for long.

I can now readily understand the poet who shouted upon a thousand hills: O Church of our God, sing His praises! For with you and in you He dwells! O sing hallelujah's before Him, Whose glory all praises excels!

For a while that Church must travel in the desert of sin and suffering where all the streams are dry. But when Jesus comes upon the clouds of heaven He shall save you from the desert and the waste and the wilderness of this dispensation. He shall show you the beckoning beauty of the New Jerusalem with its wonderful streets of gold. And there the angels of God will come flying to give you the harps of God's symphony. That harp will remain eternally in tune with God's heart-beat of love and His eternal glory.

And when your wondering eyes has grasped the heavenly scene and your ear the melody of heaven, then the fingers of your eternal body will caress the strings for the strains of a song that will make heaven musical forever!

Sing in anticipation, beloved!

Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion! For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee!

Song, o sing of my Redeemer!

Sing, o Church of God, for all things are for you, since God and His Christ are for you.

Sing for the accusing law is silent: Christ fulfilled it.

Sing, for the accuser of the brethren is silent in darkness. The false prophet, the old dragon, the wicked world, will never plague you again. They all taste the sorrows of Satan. There is the hush of desolation forever! Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new!

And they did begin to be merry. Merriment before the face of God.

Sometimes it seems I hear their beauteous strains.

G. Vos.

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EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

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

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

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## EDITORIALS

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### A Letter To Dr. Schilder

Amice Schilder:—

Involuntarily I began to write this editorial in the form of a friendly letter to you, when I received and read the copy of the article you intend to publish in the *Reformatie*, and which you sent to me by airmail. I had another editorial all prepared, mainly directed to prof. Holwerda, and which, in the nature of the case, was less friendly in tone than I hope this one will be. But when I read your article, and imagined your smiling face behind it, I somewhat melted, and decided to rewrite the editorial in the form of a friendly letter to you. You must not take this to mean that my first editorial was written in a hateful spirit, offensive to prof. Holwerda, nor must you expect that, for the sake of friendship, I will camouflage the truth, for that would neither be true friendship, nor would it be salutary to the church of God in the world. But, nevertheless, there is considerable difference between writing to a friend, with whom I can have an honest difference of opinion and of conviction, even on such an important and fundamental issue as the covenant, and a man like prof. Holwerda, who is so intolerant that, evidently, he cannot even conceive of correspondence with our churches unless we first adopt the liberated conception of the covenant, and who advises his people never to join the Prot. Ref. Churches, as long as the view of Rev. Hoeksema is binding.

In a way, amice, I wish that prof. Holwerda himself had written about the conference you had in Kampen with the Revs. De Jong and Kok. I mean that he should have expressed his impressions of that conference publicly in the *Reformatie*, and I still wish that he would do so. For, after all, I feel that in your article, which will appear in the *Reformatie*, you do not squarely face the issue between him and us, but try to smooth things over. You will forgive me the expression. I will explain what I mean.

First of all, you deny that the Revs. De Jong and Kok spoke for our whole church. And that is true, of course, as far as their official capacity is concerned. But it is not true as regards the contents of what they said, and as regards the impression they left of the stand of our churches upon your committee of correspondence, and that impression was, undoubtedly, false as I hope to explain presently. You write, that you invited them to come to Kampen and to meet with your committee of correspondence because "we (you) thought it nice, not to design a letter which we (you) as deputies for correspondence had been commissioned

to write, without profiting from their (the Revs. De Jong and Kok's) presence in our country." But, in the first place, amice, don't you yourself think it somewhat strange that, a year after the Synod of Amersfoort, our committee of correspondence, never yet received a single word from your committee, so that we would not even know what your Synod had decided in the matter except from the papers and from a personal letter from prof. Veenhof? Is that your customary way of doing the church's business, amice? We think it very strange, and upon us it naturally leaves the impression that, after all, you are not very eager to start correspondence with us. And, now, in the second place, must you gain information unofficially, ignoring our committee of correspondence, before you can even write a letter to us? Don't you think, amice, that it would have been far more proper to correspond with us directly, or even to come over to us (you ought to know from experience how loyally our people entertain strangers), or invite us to come over to your shores? We, on our part, certainly think so. But by this time I am sure that the Revs. De Jong and Kok certainly left a false impression with your committee of the stand of our churches. I am sure, that is, from your own article.

But to return to the smoothing over of prof. Holwerda's letter, which was published in the *Standard Bearer*, and the "smoothing over" process of which I was going to explain.

First of all, amice, you try to cast reflection on the authenticity of the letter of prof. Holwerda. From the printing errors by our printer, you seem to draw the conclusion, that the Holland text as found in the *Standard Bearer* will probably not be authentic ("wel niet origineel zal zijn"). But that argument is very flimsy. The Rev. Ophoff was very painstaking in copying the letter, and although he found it very difficult to copy it, because the script of prof. Holwerda is very fine, he assures me that it is a faithful copy. Besides, cannot Mr. Koster of Chattam, who possesses the original, check up on the authenticity of the copy? No, there can be no reasonable doubt about the fact that the letter in the *Standard Bearer* is a true copy of the original.

Then you doubt that it was good to publish the letter, "because one would involuntarily make a different choice of words when one is mindful of publication, than when one thinks innocently: this is, in haste, a letter for a man that asks me something. The main thing is, and that I consider very fine, that prof. Holwerda seems to have advised someone (the matter concerns an immigrant): just join the Prot. Ref. Churches."

Now, amice Schilder, this argument cuts both ways, and it rather favors the contention that in his letter prof. Holwerda wrote the truth without reservations,

both as to his own attitude to us and to our churches, and as to what the Revs. De Jong and Kok said at the conference. He states exactly what he meant, without being careful of his choice of words. And as to his advice to the immigrant you may consider that very fine but I do not, for it certainly must be read in the light of one of the last statements in prof. Holwerda's letter: "If Rev. Hoeksema's conception was binding, I would say: Never join." But about this I will have more to say presently.

Amice, the letter of prof. Holwerda has greatly disturbed our people. And about this I cannot but be glad. For on the majority of our people it will have a salutary effect. It will wake them up. It will make them ask the question: what is going on in our churches anyway? Where do we stand if two of our ministers can report about our churches as they did?

But all the more reason there is, amice, why we must know the exact truth of just what was said at that conference in Kampen. About this you do not inform us in your article. You do, indeed, inform us of the great respect the Revs. De Jong and Kok evinced for the persons of the Revs. Ophoff and undersigned, but in this we are not at all interested. We are interested in the truth. To only one statement in the letter of prof. Holwerda you give the lie, the statement allegedly made by the Revs. De Jong and Kok that, in their opinion "most (of the Prot. Ref.) do not think as the Rev. Hoeksema and the Rev. Ophoff." And this, viz., that the two ministers made that statement, is not merely an impression of the Rev. Ophoff, but is literally quoted from the letter of prof. Holwerda. On this point, therefore, you give him the lie. For the rest, you contradict none of the things prof. Holwerda alleges that the Revs. De Jong and Kok reported.

But we must know much more.

Did the two brethren report, for instance, that the conception of the Rev. Hoeksema regarding election is not the doctrine of our churches? That would, of course, leave room for the denial that the covenant is established only with the elect, although there are, indeed, reprobate under the dispensation of the covenant as it runs historically in the line of the continued generations of believers. If that was the meaning of the statement allegedly made by the Revs. De Jong and Kok (and I cannot see what other impression it can have made upon liberated ears and minds), they reported falsely of our churches.

Is it true that, with evident approval on their part, they reported that "some are emitting a totally different sound"? It seems very probable that some such statement was made, for it is a fact that recently a somewhat strange sound is heard, foreign, it would seem, to our Protestant Reformed tradition. I am referring, of course, to the writing in *Concordia* by the Rev. A. Petter. To him, no doubt, the statement made



at the conference in Kampen also refers, and to him you, amice, must refer in your article when, indirectly, you try to defend the proposition that faith is a condition to enter and remain in the covenant of God. Besides, that the statement refers especially to the Rev. Petter is evidenced also by a letter I received from one of your liberated ministers, who appeals to the fact that the Rev. Petter is not put under discipline for his writing as evidence that there is room in our churches for the liberated conception of the covenant.

Now, about that conditional theology (of which I must have nothing, as you, amice, well know), and about the Revs. Petter's position in our churches, I will write presently. I am now concerned with the question just what the Revs. De Jong and Kok reported concerning the stand of our churches at the conference in Kampen.

Did they state there, amice Schilder, that the sympathy of our churches for the covenant conception of the liberated is great, and did they leave the impression that the Protestant Reformed churches left ample room for their conception? Thus prof. Holwerda states in his letter to Mr. Koster of Chattam.

But I cannot possibly believe this; for in that case they would be guilty of deliberate falsehood. The Revs. De Jong and Kok are both well acquainted with our work in Canada and the very specific nature of that work. It is certainly true that our churches are very much interested in the work in Canada. They sacrifice themselves, both in labor and money, for the Canadian immigrants. And we find some excellent people among them. I give the people that I met in Hamilton my personal testimony that I find them to be spiritually earnest-minded, eager to find and to join themselves to the true church, and willing to hear from us the truth, and to learn all about our Protestant Reformed truth in distinction from the liberated view of the covenant. True, they are not all theologians, and it is saying nothing deprecatory in regard to them when I say they cannot be made "ministers just like that", as one innocent enthusiast, according to the letter of prof. Holwerda, must have reported. (Was it, perhaps, the enthusiast that, according to the way you describe him in your article, went to Hamilton by submarine and returned in an airplane?). But they are good people and we are very much interested in them.

But, amice, you must not receive the impression that our work in Canada consists in gathering groups of liberated immigrants and organizing them into a church. That is not our way of working. On the contrary, before we organize them into a church we thoroughly instruct them in our Protestant Reformed truth, teach them to discern, as clearly as possible, the difference between their conception of the covenant and ours. And only those that become convinced of the truth of

our conception are received into our fellowship.

And must you not yourself admit that this is the only proper and scriptural way to work in and for the Church of Christ?

But to return to the point, the Revs. De Jong and Kok were well aware of all this. They knew that our Mission Committee always worked along the line indicated above, and that they always guarded against opening the door of our churches for the Heynsian view of God's covenant. How, then, can they possibly have stated, or even have left the impression, that there is great sympathy and ample room for the covenant conception of the liberated in the Protestant Reformed churches? As I say, that would make them guilty of a deliberate falsehood, and this I positively refuse to believe. And I certainly would wish that prof. Holwerda (for he is involved) would admit that he misrepresented or misunderstood the statements made by the Revs. De Jong and Kok on this point.

But this letter is becoming too long, not for you, of course, but for our readers; and as I have much more to say, I will now say: So long till the next issue of our Standard Bearer! H. H.

\* \* \* \*

## A Letter from Prof. C. Veenhof

To have our readers know all the truth about the case, and to do full justice to the Revs. De Jong and Kok, I publish the following letter:

Kampen 23. 8. 1949

Beste Oom en Tante,

We hebben reeds dikwijls tegen elkaar gezegd: we moeten noodig eens weer naar Oom en Tante Hoeksema schrijven. Het is al zoo lang geleden dat een epistel van ons over den Oceaan ging. En daarom klimmen we samen in de pen om een poosje met U te praten. Zoals U zult begrijpen, is de drang om even wat van ons te laten hooren sterk gestimuleerd door wat we in de S. B. lazen. En daarover moet eerst wat van mijn hart.

Reeds eerder had ik het voornemen opgevat U een impressie te sturen over onze ontmoetingen met de beide predikanten De Jong en Kok. We hebben ze verschillende malen ontmoet. Zeer grondig met hen over alle actueele kwesties gesproken. Ook had ik het voorrecht Ds. De Jong éénmaal te hooren preken.

En dan wil ik beginnen met u te verzekeren, dat Uwe kerken geen betere mannen hadden kunnen zenden. Ja, ik weet wel, ze waren niet afgevaardigd, maar, het spreekt vanzelf, niemand in Nederland kon of wilde ze isoleeren van de kerken, van welke ze lid zijn en die ze, ook al waren ze niet afgevaardigd, toch vertegenwoordigden.

Het éérste wat ik U wil zeggen, wat ik juist U wil zeggen, is dit, dat deze broeders door hun optreden en door hun spreken een diep begrip en een dankbare waardeering voor Uw jarenlangen strijd hebben mogen wekken onder onze broeders en zusters. U en Uw strijd waren hier onbekend. Men had door Schilder's schrijven wel eenige notie gekregen omtrent wat er in Amerika gaande was, maar nu hoordē men het met de viva vox van mannen, die er in betrokken waren geweest en nog zijn. Ze hebben den afval in de Christel. Geref. Kerken geteekend en de doodelijke arminianiseerende tendenz van de prediking en de theologie, waar tegen U moest optornen en waarvan u tenslotte het slachtoffer werd. Ze hebben zeer duidelijk gezegd wie U was, en ook wat U en Uw medebroeders omtrent het verbond leerden. Met groote dankbaarheid en innige liefde hebben ze over U en Uw werk gesproken. Het is hun gelukt om, zonder ook maar iets van hun opvatting omtrent verbond, belofte, doop—een opvatting, welke geheel de Uwe is—te verbloemen, bij de kerken hier de overtuiging te wekken: de Prot. Ref. Churches zijn kerken waarin de Heere gediend wordt en die den goeden strijd des geloofs in het demonisch veramerikaniceerde leven met groote trouw en ten koste van geweldige offers voeren. Wat ik nooit had gedacht, ook niet in mijn stoutste droomen is geschied: mee door hun geloovig vertrouwen wekkend optreden in een conferentie van afgevaardigden van kerken, welke beraadslagen moest over de adviezen welke van emigranten gegeven moesten worden, zoover gekomen, dat men, ondanks de ideeën van de leiders daarvan, algemeen tot de overtuiging kwam: wij mogen niet anders dan onze emigranten adviseeren zich aan te sluiten bij de Prot. Ref. Churches.

Het heeft mij daarom ontzaggelijk pijn gedaan, dat Ds. Ophoff zóó over hen schreef. Dit is wel het ergste wat men broeders kan aandoen. Ik heb dat zeer diep gevoeld. Deze mannen hebben rusteloos, met de volle liefde van hun hart, in onkreukbare trouw, de zaak van de kerken, welke te mogen dienen hun een genade van God is, verdedigd, zonder ook maar één druppel water in de wijn te doen. En nu wordt hun—want daar komt het op neer—feitelijk in de schoenen geschoven dat zij hun kerken verraden hebben. Nu wordt hun een immoraliteit verweten, die hen in één woord, als ze bij hen aanwezig was, tot minderwaardige sujetten zou maken. Ik kan er werkelijk niet bij! Ik herinner mij nog levendig een gesprek met Ds. De Jong over de School Uwer kerken. Met wat voor waardeering sprak hij óók over Ds. Ophoff. Over zijn harde werken en zijn scherpzinnigheid en zijn eerlijkheid. En nu dit?

Ik kan mij ook niet goed begrijpen hoe men als *broeders* met elkaar levende, afgaande op een *persoonlijke* brief, welken men m.i. zonder toestemming van den afzender niet eens mocht publiceeren en zonder de

mannen, wien het betrof, te *hooren*, zulke ontzettende beschuldigingen c.q. verdachtmakingen kan lanceeren. Hier is een geest aan het werk, die niet uit Christus is!

Ik hoop en bid vurig, dat deze kwestie radicaal uit den weg wordt gedaan. Ik geloof ook, dat het om Gods wil moet. Hier is *onrecht* gedaan.

Ik hoop ook daarom dat deze zaak grondig en christelijk uit den weg wordt geruimd, omdat, dank zij het rusteloze werken van Schilder, Van Spronsen en anderen het begrip voor en de liefde tot de Prot. Ref. Churches hier gestadig groeide. Daarom heeft het artikel van Ds. Ophof hier gewerkt als een ijskoude waterstraal! En velen vragen zich af: kan er in Christus' kerk nu eens nooit liefde, vertrouwen, meeleven, meelijden groeien zonder dat Satan zijn vergiftigend werk er in mengt?—Neen, natuurlijk, dat kan ook niet: maar die waarlijk door den Geest geleid worden overwinnen ook dan den Booze en het booze.

Ik heb niet gesproken over de zakelijk zijde van deze kwestie. U weet hoe ik er over denk. Ik wal niet gansch mijn hart toe aan ieder, die de eeuwige, soevereine, verkiezing en verwerping aanvaard. Ik verfoei iedere aanranding van de heerlijke waarheid, dat de zaligheid van het begin tot het eind uitsluitend en alleen het werk van Gods genade, het werk des Geestes is. Ik verlang de rusteloze prediking van de radicale verdorvenheid van den mensch en zijn totale onmacht tot eenig goed. En tegelijk en daarom aanvaard ik ook dat de belofte en ook de doop—de belofte als *gesproken, openbarend* woord, dat nooit voorkomt zonder den eisch Gods, ja, dien eisch qua talis in zich draagt en de doop als verzegeling van die belofte—aan de geloovigen en hun zaad zonder uitzondering toekomt. Ik wil er met nadruk bij zeggen, dat Ds. De Jong en Ds. Kok het hiermee *niet* eens waren. En dat openlijk zeiden! Maar tegelijk zagen ze ook, dat ook wij, in alle zwakheid, den strijd des Heeren strijden in een ondergaande wereld.

Nu houd ik op, Oom. Vergeef me deze hartsuitstorting. Mijn hart was zéér vol. Wij hebben de laatste jaren zóóveel onrecht en verdachtmakingen moeten ondervinden dat men opvlamt als men ze anderen ziet aandoen.

God geve, dat het den duivel niet gegeven worde, de Prot. Ref. Churches en de onze uiteen te slaan. Hij heeft de laatste jaren al teveel kapot gemaakt. Allen mogen komen tot die hoogte, waarop de conferentie te Grand Rapids kwam, waar U van Schilder en Schilder van U konden getuigen: gij zijt Gereformeerd ondanks verschil van inzicht.

Met zeer hartelijke groeten, als altijd,

Uw, Kees.

P.S.—U hebt er natuurlijk geen bezwaar tegen, dat ik afschrift van deze brief zend aan Ds. De Jong en Ds. Kok. Hij handelt immers over hun zaak en persoon.

I translate:

Dear Uncle and Aunt:—

We have often said to one another: it is necessary that we write once again to Uncle and Aunt Hoeksema. It is already so long ago that an epistle from us crossed the ocean. And therefore we both climb in the pen in order to talk to you a while. As you will understand, the impulse to let you hear from us was strongly stimulated by what we read in the Standard Bearer. And about that I must first unburden myself.

Even before this I have had the intention to give you an impression relative our meetings with the Revs. De Jong and Kok. We have met them several times. We have talked to them very thoroughly about all actual questions. I also had the privilege once to hear the Rev. De Jong preach.

And then I will begin by assuring you that your churches could have sent no better men. Yes, I know indeed that they were not delegated, but, as a matter of course, no one in the Netherlands could or would isolate them from the churches of which they are members, and which they represented, even though they were not delegated.

The first thing I wish to tell you, and which I want to tell *you* particularly, is this, that these brethren by their appearance and by their speech might awaken among our brethren and sisters a profound conception and a grateful appreciation for your continuous struggle. You and your struggle were unknown here. Because of Schilder's writings one obtained, indeed, some notion of what was going on in America, but now one heard it *viva vox* of men, who were concerned in it, and still are. They have pictured the apostacy in the Chr. Ref. Churches, and the deadly arminianizing tendency of the preaching and the theology, against which you had to struggle, and of which you finally became the victim. They have said very clearly who you are, and also what you and your brethren taught relative the covenant. With great gratitude and fervent love they have spoken about you and your work. They have succeeded to awaken the conviction of the churches here that the Prot. Ref. Churches are churches wherein the Lord is served, and who fight the good fight of faith in the demoniacal Americanized life with great fidelity and at the cost of great sacrifices. And they (the Revs. De Jong and Kok) did so without camouflaging in the least their conception relative covenant, promise, baptism, a conception which is entirely yours. That which I never expected, not even in my fondest dreams has happened: also because of their faithful and confidence-inspiring activity in a conference of delegates of churches, which had to deliberate concerning advice to be given to the emigrants, it came so far that in spite of their leaders, they generally came to the conviction: We may do nought else

but advise our emigrants to unite themselves with the Prot. Ref. Churches.

Therefore it has greatly grieved me that the Rev. Ophoff has written about them as he did. This is indeed the worst that one can do to the brethren. I have felt that deeply. These men have, with all the love of their heart, in unquestioned fidelity, defended the cause of the churches, which churches to serve they count a grace given them from God, without ever diluting the truth of the matters before us. And now they are accused (because that is what it amounts to) that they have betrayed their churches. Now they are accused of an immorality, which, if it were true, would make them, in a word, low characters. Really, I cannot understand this! I vividly remember a conversation with Rev. De Jong about the School of your churches. With what appreciation he also spoke of Rev. Ophoff. About his hard work and keen perception and his honesty. And now this?

Neither can I understand how one, living together as *brethren*, and proceeding on the basis of a *personal* letter, which without permission from the sender might not be published, and without *hearing* the men whom it concerned, can utter such terrible accusations c.q. suspicions. Here is a spirit active which is not out of Christ!

I hope and pray fervently that this matter will be radically solved. I believe also that this must be done for God's sake.

I hope also that this matter may be disposed of thoroughly and christian-like, because of the fact that due to the untiring efforts of Schilder, Van Spronsen and others, the understanding of and the love for the Prot. Ref. Churches was on the increase. For that reason the article of Rev. Ophoff has had the effect here of a cold bath! And many ask themselves: Is it then entirely impossible for love, confidence, fellowship and sympathy to grow in the Church of Christ without having Satan mixing his poisoning work in them? No, of course, that cannot be: but those who are really led by the Spirit also then conquer the Evil One and the evil.

I have not spoken relative the actual side of the question. You know how I stand on that score. I do not close my heart to anyone who holds to the eternal, sovereign election and reprobation. I detest every attack on the glorious truth that Salvation is from beginning to end exclusively and solely the work of God's grace, the work of the Spirit. I desire the incessant preaching of the radical depravity of man and his total impotence unto good of any kind. And at the same time and for that reason I also hold that the promise and also baptism—the promise as *spoken*, *revealed* word, which never occurs without God's demand, yes, which bears that demand *qua talis* in it; and baptism as the seal of that promise—is pledged



unto the believers and their seed without exception. And I want to say with emphasis that the Revs. De Jong and Kok did not *agree* with it. And they said so openly. But at the same time they also saw that also we in all weakness fight the battle of the Lord in a perishing world.

And now I quit, Uncle. Forgive me this outpouring of the heart. My heart was very full. We had to experience these last years so much injustice and suspicion that one is set aflame when one sees how others are treated likewise.

May God give that it be not given to the devil to disperse the Prot. Ref. and our churches. He has broken up too much already these last years. May all come to that height which characterized the conference at Grand Rapids, where you could witness of Schilder, and Schilder of you: You are Reformed in spite of difference in points of view.

With hearty greetings,

Yours,  
Kees.

P. S.—You have, of course, no objection against my sending a copy of this letter to the Revs. De Jong and Kok, inasmuch as the letter treats their case and person.

#### NOTE BY EDITOR:

When I read the above letter, I felt, first of all, that, in justice to the Revs. De Jong and Kok, it should be published. At the same time, however, I felt that there was need, more than ever, for prof. Holwerda to speak. Hence I tried to get telephone connection with prof. Veenhof. I was informed that the professor was out of town, and was asked whether I would speak to his wife. I hesitated at first but finally I recalled that Mrs. Veenhof is a very bright lady, and that she, undoubtedly would know what to advise me. In this I was not disappointed, for when after almost four hours of waiting (prof. Veenhof has no phone at his house, and Mrs. Veenhof had to be called to another phone), I got contact with her, she managed somehow to have prof. Holwerda right with her at the phone.

I asked her whether I might publish the letter of prof. Veenhof, and she immediately gave her consent. Then I asked her whether she would ask prof. Holwerda to write me, and to my surprise she replied that the professor was standing right at the phone. I then asked him whether he would inform me exactly what was said at the conferences with the Revs. De Jong and Kok, and he promised me that he would.

To this we now look forward.

H. H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

On Friday, August 12, our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother,

MRS. DICK HEYS

was taken away from us by the Lord at the age of 58 years.

The knowledge that her life was Christ mellows our grief.

Mr. Dick Heys  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Veltkamp  
Mr. and Mrs. John Heys  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timmer  
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Heys  
Mr. and Mrs. George B. Kamps  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heys  
Mr. and Mrs. Sieger Heys  
Mr. and Mrs. Jake Dykema  
Mr. and Mrs. John Braaksma  
Richard Heys  
and 18 grandchildren.

Manhattan, Montana

\* \* \* \*

It pleased the Lord to take from us our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother,

MRS. AGGIE LUBBERS

at the age of 66 years.

The knowledge that her life was Christ and her death gain softens our grief.

Mr. Cornelius Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Berens  
Rev. and Mrs. George Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. John C. Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Jelsema  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. Bert Maring  
21 grandchildren and  
1 great-grandchild.

Hudsonville, Michigan

\* \* \*

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with their fellow members, Mrs. George Kamps, in the loss of her mother

MRS. MARIA NOBEL

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family with His wonderful grace.

The Hudsonville Ladies' Society,

Rev. G. Vos, Pres.

Mrs. C. Spoelman, Sec'y.

\* \* \* \*

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby expresses its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to the family of Mrs. J. Sjoerdsma in the sudden bereavement of their husband and father

MR. JOE SJOERDSMA

May the blessed assurance that their loved one is now forever with the Lord comfort them in the way they must go.

Mr. A. Van Tuinen, Pres.

Mr. O. Vander Woude, Sec'y.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### The Longsuffering and Forbearance of God

Continuing with our attempt to show the absurdity of the "Common Grace" definition of the longsuffering of God we would call attention to 2 Pet. 3:9. We must bear in mind that this "Common Grace" definition of God's longsuffering is that it is that aspect of the general goodness of the Lord whereby He spares the froward and the evil in spite of their long continued disobedience. In 2 Pet. 3:9 we read: "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." In connection with this text we note, in the first place, that if the expression, "to usward," refers to all men, head for head, Christ will never come. That this text refers to this coming of the Lord upon the clouds of heaven, and that this coming of the Lord is implied in the word "promise" is clear from the entire context, and particularly from the verse that follows, which reads: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." If, on the other hand, the expression, "to usward," refers to all the elect of all ages (and this is surely the correct interpretation of the text), then the "Common Grace" definition of the longsuffering of the Lord is quite impossible. In that case, applying this definition of the longsuffering of God, the text would read as follows: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but reveals that He is sparing in His goodness unto us who are worthy of punishment, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". And this interpretation of the text is obviously absurd. To teach that the Lord spares the elect in His goodness, who are worthy of punishment, while they continue long in their ungodliness and wickedness is clearly ridiculous.

#### *The Longsuffering Of God Has For Its Objects The Elect.*

That the longsuffering of the Lord has for its objects only the elect is surely evident from the following passages: 2 Cor. 6:6, Gal. 5:22, Eph. 4:2, Col. 1:11, 3:12, 1 Tim. 1:16, 2 Tim. 3:10, 4:2, Luke 18:7, 2 Pet. 3:9, 15. We need not quote all these passages again—This we did in our preceding article. However, let us look a little more closely at two of these passages,

namely, Luke 18:7 and 2 Pet. 3:9. Our comments on Luke 18:7 can be brief, inasmuch as we called attention to this passage in some detail in our preceding article. That text reads: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" That this passage does not teach a general "saving goodness" of God we have already seen. According to this context, the people of God are being oppressed; they cry day and night unto the Lord, and they might finally conclude that the Lord is neglecting them. However, the Lord's "failure" to deliver them is not neglect but He is longsuffering over them, "bears long with them (according to the text)." Hence, the Lord's longsuffering in this text signifies that He suffers long with them, restrains his desire to deliver them immediately, but checks His passion, love toward them, because the time of their final and complete deliverance has not yet arrived. And He will avenge His elect speedily, i.e., He will not delay their deliverance, but will cause as rapidly as possible all things to occur which are necessary for the salvation of all the elect of all the ages.

The second passage which we would discuss a little more in detail is 2 Pet. 3:9: "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." In connection with this passage, we would note that, according to the context, the church of God is again in tribulation. Verse 3 of this chapter speaks of scoffers, mockers. These mockers, according to verse 4, ridicule the promise of the Lord's coming. They say that since the fathers fell asleep all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. We must bear in mind that the Lord had given the Church the promise of His coming, and that this coming would be accompanied by the destruction of the world. The salvation of the Church and the destruction of the world always go together. The one demands the other. So it shall also be at the end of the world. And this promise of the Lord's coming which would herald the eternal salvation of the people of God and the eternal desolation of the ungodly was being ridiculed by wicked scoffers. They pointed to the fact that, since the creation of the world, everything has continued as they were, and laughed at the promise of the Lord. Besides, there is very reason to believe that the Church, in the early years of the New Dispensation, expected the coming of the Lord soon, in their day. Texts as: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. . . . Behold, the Judge standeth before the door," (James 5:8, 9) were interpreted in that literal sense of the word. However, His coming did not materialize. And now the world used this "failure" of the Lord to come as an added incentive to ridicule the Church, and the

people of God probably began to think that the Lord was slack concerning His promise. This fear of the people of God is answered by the apostle, Peter, in 2 Pet. 3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. His "failure" to come must not be ascribed to the fact that the Lord is slow as far as the fulfillment of His promise is concerned. To the contrary, the Lord is longsuffering to usward, the elect of God. That He "delays" His coming is not due to the fact that He is not interested in the afflictions of His people. Fact is, He is longsuffering to usward. He suffers long with the afflictions of His own. They vitally concern Him. As the Lord beholds His Church in distress, His love goes out unto them, and, if He were to "act according to His nature or passion", He would deliver them immediately. But the Lord restrains Himself, holds Himself in check, not willing that any should perish but that all (of course, the elect of all ages, even unto the end of time) should come to repentance.

I Pet. 3:20—Rom. 9:22—Rom. 2:4.

These passages, I am sure, are worthy of special consideration. First of all, we read in I Pet. 3:20: "Which sometime were disobedient, whence 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." This text has been quoted in support of a longsuffering of God toward the ungodly contemporaries of Noah. At first glance, this is understandable. The text speaks, does it not, of the disobedient in the days of Noah, and declares that the longsuffering of God waited in those days, while the ark was being prepared. Hence, it is affirmed, the Lord, because of His longsuffering, waited one hundred and twenty years, giving the wicked world time to repent. In connection with this "Common Grace" interpretation of the days of Noah we would make the observation that this "longsuffering" of the Lord suffered a complete failure. Fact is that, when this "period of probation" began, the Lord was already assured of the salvation of Noah's family. Fact is also that, when this period had come to an end, the Lord had exactly as many saved souls as when it began. Only eight souls were saved. Hence, this "longsuffering" of the Lord did not gain another soul. This, I must confess, is a quite ridiculous presentation of the Lord Who does all things according to His eternal counsel and will and Whom so the apostle, Paul, declares in Roman's 9:19, none can resist. Be this as it may, however, the Roman Catholic view of this text is that Christ, after His resurrection, descended into the portals of hell to deliver out of the portals of hell the believers of the Old Testament who were held captive therein. The Lutheran conception of this text is that Christ descended literally into hell, according to

His Godhead and humanity, announced His victory there, and deprived the devil of his power. A common Reformed explanation of this passage is that the spirits in prison (hell—see verse 19) are the ungodly of the time of Noah, that Christ preached unto them, not after His resurrection, but at the time of Noah, by His Spirit.

Our interpretation of this passage has been expressed by the Rev. H. Hoeksema several times, and is as follows. In the first place, there are weighty objections against the generally accepted Reformed view, which we mentioned in the preceding paragraph. There is, first of all, the time element of chronological order of the verses 19-20. These verses read: "By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 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." Sound exegesis certainly demands that verse 20 be understood as occurring after verse 19. Hence, Christ preached after His resurrection. Besides, this is also corroborated by the text itself. First, we read in verse 19 that He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, and literally: that are in prison, not were in prison. And in verse 20 we read of these spirits that they "sometime were" disobedient—hence, they were in prison now but had been disobedient. Consequently, we interpret this passage thus: Christ, after His resurrection, went and preached to the spirits in prison, by His Spirit, and condemned these spirits who had been disobedient at the time of Noah. That the apostle, Peter, mentions these ungodly of the days of Noah is undoubtedly because they are a striking type of the ungodly of the latter days, the days of the New Dispensation. They, at the time of Noah, ridiculed that man of God when he preached unto them the righteousness of God and proclaimed unto them that the Lord would destroy the wicked world and save His Church. This also occurs in the New Dispensation. We were reminded of this in our interpretation of 2 Pet. 3:9.

We have already observed how this text is quoted in support of a general longsuffering of God, that the Lord was longsuffering toward them, giving them time to repent. But we should notice that the text does not say that God was longsuffering toward the ungodly, but merely that the longsuffering of God waited. The Church of the living God of that day was being persecuted. The Lord did not immediately deliver them. His longsuffering, His love toward His people and desire to deliver them waited. Deliverance did not come as quickly as the Church of God expected.

Another passage which we would treat somewhat in detail is Romans 9:22. There we read: "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels

of wrath fitted to destruction." Also this passage of the Word of God has been quoted in support of a general longsuffering of the Lord toward the ungodly. This is easily understandable. Do we not read that the Lord endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? It is not plain, therefore, that the Lord is longsuffering toward these vessels of wrath, the ungodly? However, how different must be (and is) the interpretation of this text when considered in the light of its context! In the preceding verse, verse 21, the apostle declares that the potter makes not only vessels unto honour, but also vessels unto dishonour. Then, in verse 22, the apostle declares that they are vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction, and this means that God made them *in His wrath*, and fitted them for destruction, and therefore not to save them. Moreover, in verse 23 we read that God makes His glory known upon the vessels of mercy which He had from the foundation of the world prepared unto glory; hence, these are the vessels of mercy, made in His mercy, and they have been eternally prepared unto eternal glory. And, in addition to all this, the apostle tells us in verse 22 that God endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction because He was willing to shew His wrath and make His power known. How is it possible, in the light of all this, to maintain that the Lord shows favour or grace to these vessels of wrath, fitted unto destruction, concerning whom we read that the Lord willed to show His wrath and make His power known? Finally, is all this not corroborated by the example of the ungodly Pharaoh? Concerning this Pharaoh we read in verse 17: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." Mind you, the Lord had raised up Pharaoh, and that with the Divine purpose to show His power in him. This does not mean that the Lord simply put Pharaoh upon the Egyptian throne, and that He raised him up in that sense of the word. But the apostle refers to the ungodly Pharaoh. It is exactly as the ungodly Pharaoh that he was raised up by the Lord. The Lord sovereignly willed and "raised up" this ungodly monarch to reveal His power in him. This is surely in harmony with the rest of this chapter, and particularly with that portion which tells us that God is the Potter, and that as such He produces vessels of honour and of dishonour, producing the former by His mercy and the latter by His wrath. This also enables us to understand Rom. 9:22. It is true that we are told in this passage that "God endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction." However, this does not necessarily mean that the Lord's longsuffering had these vessels of wrath for its objects. The text does not purpose to inform us that the Lord was longsuffering toward

these ungodly. But this is what the Word of God would teach in this particular text: God endured with much longsuffering toward His people the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. In His love toward His own He endured these vessels of wrath. The ungodly are the objects here of the Lord's forbearance, and the godly are the objects of His longsuffering. And this is surely corroborated by the example of Pharaoh and the ungodly throughout the history of the Church of God in the midst of this world. He endures the wicked throughout the history of His Church because He is longsuffering toward His own, would save them and save them unto the uttermost. The most glorious example (or terrible example, if you will) is the example of the Christ Himself. He surely endured, "put up" with the wicked as they laid their vile hands upon the Son of His love, nailed Him to the accursed tree, not because He loved them and would give them additional time to repent, but only because He loved His Christ and His people, and would save them through the blood of His Son. And this characterizes the position and affliction of the people of God throughout the ages, particularly at the end of time. The only reason why He tolerates the wicked world is not because He loves that world, but is only because their cup of iniquity must be filled and all the elect saved, even unto the last child of the living God.

A final passage to which we would call attention somewhat in detail is Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." This text is also superficially quoted in support of a general goodness or longsuffering of God. Addressing the wicked, unrepentant Jews, concerning whom the apostle declares in the following verse that "after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," the apostle tells us in verse 4 that they despise the riches of God's goodness and longsuffering and forbearance, not realizing that this goodness of God leads unto repentance. We should notice, however, that the text does not teach that the goodness of the Lord *would* lead these wicked Jews unto repentance. It does teach us, however, that the goodness of God *leads* to repentance. Not that it would lead us, but that it actually leads us unto repentance. If, therefore, we take this text at its face value, and apply this particular Word of God to all men, head for head, then surely it declares too much. The apostle, then, would have us believe that the goodness actually leads these people to repentance; and, yet, in the following verse we are told that they are treasuring up for themselves wrath in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of the Lord. This "Common Grace" interpretation of the text is, therefore, obviously impossible.

The true interpretation of Rom. 2:4 must be as follows. The goodness of God leads men to repentance. This is an undeniable fact. However, these wicked Jews did not know this. This does not mean that they were not acquainted with this fact as such, but that they did not know this in the spiritual, experiential sense of the word. The riches of God's goodness, longsuffering and forbearance, they despised. We must bear in mind that these riches were revealed unto them. Organically they belonged to the Church of God in the midst of the world. Hence, they were fully acquainted with the riches of this goodness of the Lord. It had been proclaimed unto them time and again, and, besides, that the people of God were the objects of this goodness was known and observed by them. However, they despised this goodness of God, trampled it under foot, revealed in all their activity that they loved the darkness rather than the light, and trampled the goodness of God under foot as swine trample pearls under their feet. In this revelation of God the goodness of God reveals itself as longsuffering over His people and as forbearance toward the ungodly. But the carnal element comes organically into contact with this goodness of God, which leads unto repentance, despises it and tramples it under foot, and will be held accountable for their profane attitude toward this goodness of the Lord, which is only upon the elect, but is also revealed unto them.

#### Conclusion.

The longsuffering and forbearance of the Lord have this in common, that both refer to a Divine restraint, a Divine checking or holding of Himself in check. However, the longsuffering of God is an activity of Divine love; the forbearance of the Lord is an activity of Divine wrath. God is longsuffering toward His people, elected and loved in Christ Jesus. He restrains His desire to save them out of all the afflictions of their enemies because He seeks their welfare and would save all the elect even unto the end of time. And the Lord's forbearance is toward the reprobate wicked. He restrains His desire, His passion, to destroy them, because their full measure of iniquity must be filled, and also because they must serve the elect. Using them as instruments in His causing of all things to work together for the good and salvation of His people, He checks Himself, His inner passion, to consume them in His righteous anger and love for His own, until they shall have served His purpose and contributed their part in the eternal salvation and glory of His elect Church.

H. Veldman.

NOTE—Due to lack of space all the notices received do not appear in this issue.

## Rev. Petter Replies

Dear brother:— I am glad to receive another reply from you to my open letters. I will reproduce your article paragraph by paragraph and add my remarks as I go along.

You write, "Before we consider some of the Bible passages that speak of conditions. . . ."

Remark. I am glad that you are going to consider some of the Bible passages that speak of conditions. However, the term *condition* does not appear at all in the Bible passages to which you have reference. Fact is that the term appears once in the whole of the English version of the Scriptures, to wit, at I Sam. 11:2, "And Nahash the Ammonite answered and said, On this condition will I make a covenant with you . . ." But even here the term is written in italics, which indicates that it was added by the translators. How then is it going to be possible for you "to consider some of the Bible passages that *speak* of conditions?" The word that does appear in the Bible passages to which you have reference is the conjunctive "if", Hebrew *im* and *ki*, Greek *ei*. But as we have seen the particle "if" may have one of half a dozen meanings. And this also holds for its Hebrew and Greek equivalents. You therefore should have made your statement to read, "Before we consider some of the Bible passages containing the particle 'if'". Here, too, your manner of speech shows that you approach these "if" clauses of the type with which we are occupied with the fixed idea that the conjunctive "if" always means *condition*. What we therefore are going to get from you, I am afraid, is not exegesis but your very own notions read by you into the text. It shows that you still are failing to face the real issue, which is: Just what, precisely, is the meaning of that "if".

You write, "Some one has suggested to me that it might be better to use the term 'order', because of the odium and arminian flavor that attaches to the term 'condition'. On the other hand I can understand the concern, but I also believe that a living church does not live by empty words but also understands and remembers the content of them. And the actual content and denotation of the word is not odious."

Reply. You conceal the issue. The term is indeed odious not, of course, as standing alone, but—and this is the issue—as a sentence-element of the doctrinal tenet of the liberated to the effect *that God saves men—the covenant members, elect and non-elect—on the condition of (op voorwaarde van) faith and repentance*. As a sentence-element of that tenet (of the Liberated and Christian Reformed) the term stands for an abominable heresy.

You write, "In the second place, we must not act as



if the word does not have for us a rather definite usage. We must not in the midst of a theological discussion act as if the word has never been heard before except in the mouths of unbelievers. We must not act as if the fathers, who were the equal of any scholars of their days, have not for us poured a definite and legitimate meaning into it for over three hundred years."

Reply. What you write here is folly. I mean your telling us that the fathers poured meanings into words, definitely into the word *condition*. That is not true. Here is the proof. As we saw (see my previous article) in the first period the Reformed freely spoke of conditions in the covenant. But when the nature of the covenant was more deeply thought into and when the covenant had to be defended against Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Remonstrants, many felt the phraseology in question to be objectionable and avoided it. And Bavinck's personal stand was that *actually* there are no conditions in the covenant. It shows that the fathers used words according to their current and accepted meanings. They did not pour meanings into words. What a thing to say about the fathers!

You write. "John Stuart Mill may be able to think only of capricious contingency, but his word is certainly not law for the Christian who believes in the all pervading power and purpose of God."

Reply. You misrepresent Mill. The teaching is not his. Mill is the best known advocate of the doctrine of the plurality of causes—a doctrine that the same kind of effect can be produced in different cases by different causes; otherwise stated, that any one of several separate causes can produce the same kind of effect as another. (See J. S. Mill, *System of Logic*, 1875 etc). Besides, how can *contingency*—the fact that the expected result does not always follow when all the necessary conditions appear to be operative—exclude belief in the providence of God. According to the latter, God rules and governs all things according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment. Both are facts, aren't they? If so, how, as you intimate, must belief in the one exclude belief in the other.

You write, And finally, I want to say that I do not believe that because in *Logic* a condition is often a cause, that therefore in physics and metaphysics it is also that."

Reply. On the basis of what authority do you reject the idea that also in physics conditions are causes? On the basis of the authority of the "I don't believe," that is, on the basis of the "I, Rev. Petter have said". But who is Rev. Petter as an authority in logic and physics and metaphysics? Like Rev. G. M. Ophoff, he is a zero as *authority* in logic and physics. Aware of this, Rev. Ophoff turned to the specialists, the authorities, in those fields. He consulted his dictionaries and encyclopedias. And he learned from the

specialists that in physics, too, as well as in logic, the term *condition* is but another word for *cause*. But Rev. Petter says, "I don't believe". May I ask this question: How can anyone carry on a discussion with you, brother, if you won't allow the specialist to tell you the meaning of words in use in his own field; if you allow yourself to dispense with his instruction merely by apposing to it the "I don't believe" of Rev. Petter. In the sequel of your article you, too, use the term *condition* in the sense of *cause*, as for example when you state that a harvest is conditioned upon the fact that man plows and seeds. Certainly, there is a causal connection, isn't there? between plowing and seeding on the one hand and the harvesting on the other. To deny this is to be compelled to embrace the view that the ever-changing phenomenon of nature is a mere sequence of new happenings in which each successive stage is *in no sense* the outcome of the preceding stage, but strictly a *new creation*. But this is not your view, is it? If not, you are saying with me that conditions are causes. So your dictionary and my dictionary define them.

You write, "I believe we just get into deep water in this field (the fields of logic and physics, Rev. Petter means) and had better leave it to the specialists of the field."

Reply. That, precisely, is what I have done, brother—leave it to the specialists of the field. But you refuse to receive their expert testimony. You won't believe, and on that account you do indeed get yourself into deep water. The only voice to which you will hearken in the matter of definitions of words is the voice of Rev. Petter. And here is the proof.

You next write, "The simple dictionary definition is perfectly valid, namely, an event, fact, or the like that is necessary to the occurrence of some other, though not its cause; a prerequisite."

Reply. Does the philologist whose definition you quote mean to *deny* that a *condition* is a cause absolutely? He does not: but this is what he means: A condition is *not* a cause *only* in the sense that *alone* it is inadequate to the production of the effect. But it is a cause nevertheless as to its idea and working. The only reason of its impotency as an effect-producing circumstance is the absence of the other conditions indispensable to the production of the effect. This is what the philologist you quoted means. And here is the proof. Speaking of causes, he has this to say: "All true, that is, necessary conditions, are causes; but for the purpose of experience, or by reason of special interests, we distinguish a prime condition, or direct cause, from the secondary conditions or indirect cause."

You will find your definition and the exposition last quoted in Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Dictionary* of the English Language and in Webster's *New Inter-*

national Dictionary of the English Language. So you see, brother, how it is. Conditions are causes indeed according to any good dictionary that you may want to consult. You should therefore have refrained from letting the dictionary tell your readers that a condition is not a cause absolutely. A condition then is:

1) an event or fact that is necessary to the occurrence of another.

2) not a cause, that is, not a primary cause but a cause nevertheless.

3) A limiting or restricting circumstance.

You call the definition under 1) "the simple dictionary definition, perfectly valid. But the definitions under 2) and 3) are likewise simple dictionary definitions and just as valid certainly. Why then do you insist on disregarding the definitions under 2) and 3)? True, a condition is an event or fact that is necessary to the occurrence of another. But a condition is more than that; it is all that the definitions under 2) and 3) say that it is. Hence, to say that God saves men on the condition that they believe, is to say more than that faith is necessary to salvation; it is to say in addition that men's faith must induce God to save them; it is to say that faith is of man and therefore limits God. It is thus to give expression to an abominable heresy. You say that our Reformed fathers spake of conditions in the covenant. Indeed. But we saw that they stopped speaking of conditions in the covenant as soon as they would realize what they were saying.

You write: "This proper usage of the term may be illustrated by a few different instances."

Remark. "This proper usage of the term," you say. Your reference here is solely to the definition under 1). The implication of this statement from your pen is that the definition under 2) and 3) are not proper and thus fail to set forth the *proper* usages of the *term*. But what you say here is not true. What you say here again illustrates your arbitrary manner of dealing with definitions of words.

You give two illustrations of what you wrongfully insist is the *only* proper usage of the term.

Your first illustration reads, "We may say that the possession of a house depends on the condition of the timely payments."

Reply. So then, in other words, if I buy a house my paying for it is necessary to my possession of it. This is as true as can be, of course. Only, by your not saying any more you evade and conceal the real issue in this dispute. Had you set forth the issue, you would have added: 1) My paying for the house is the cause of my possessing it; and 2) My meeting my payments is a circumstance that limits the owner of the house. That is, if I default, he can't do anything about it except take back his house. This is the full meaning of the statement that the possession of the house depends *on the condition* of the timely payments.

You should have made this clear. You should have refrained from concealing the real issue.

Your next illustration reads, "We may also say that a harvest is conditioned upon the fact that the man ploughed and seeded. Here God has established the connection, and the prophet says that his God also doth instruct the farmer, and He has promised that while the earth remaineth seed time and harvest shall not fail. Here we see more clearly that the *connection* and the *effectuation* is in God's hands. Yet no one will deny that it is a conditional instance."

Reply. True it is, of course, that ploughing and seeding is necessary to the harvest, and that God has established the connection. No one among us denies this. But the trouble is that here, too, you evade and conceal the real issue. Had you set forth the issue you would have added: 1) the man's ploughing and seeding must induce God to crown his labors with the gift of the harvest; 2) man's ploughing and seeding is a circumstance that limits God; that is to say, if man refuses to plow, God can't do anything about it, except withhold the harvest. Or, it can also be stated this way: in deciding to plow, man is sovereignly free; his plowing is not the realization of a corresponding sovereign decree of God that he plow. This is the full meaning of the statement that a harvest is conditioned upon the fact that the man plowed and seeded. What have we here? An abominable heresy!

Now your application of these illustrations. It reads:

"And now we may take a third instance, and that in the spiritual realm. A man enjoys the fellowship of God on condition that he believes in him. Here the divinely established connection and *divine* effectuation is of the higher order. It is performed by a wonder of grace that is wholly alien to the natural man. Yet that does not make it unconditional any more than the above instances are. Also there it was God who worked the will and the act of timely payment, of plowing and seeding."

Remark. But that exactly is what you deny by your statement that the harvest is *conditioned* upon the fact that the man plowed and seeded,—deny according to the definitions of the term in question under 2), and 3). And now you may say a thousand times that you are not using the term according to its definitions under 2) and 3). It makes not a particle of difference. The meaning of your statements is determined not by what meaning you want the term in question to have, but by what meanings it has in the dictionary. Take your statement, "A man enjoys the fellowship of God *on the condition* that he believes in Him." You say that all you want the statement to mean is that faith is *necessary* to the enjoyment of God's fellowship. To be sure it is. But why can't you limit yourself to that way of stating the matter? Why must you say

that man enjoys the fellowship of God on the *condition* of faith," if the statement means in addition to what you want it to mean that man must *induce* God to fellowship with him, and that belief in God through Christ is a circumstance that limits God?

You say we must not be afraid of a term. But it stands to reason that we must be afraid of a term and are in duty bound to avoid it, if in our theological dissertations it stands also for heresy. What earthly reason can there be for our wanting to employ such a term? It is exactly by the use of terms of that character that heresies are smuggled into the church unawares. You know how difficult it is for a communion of churches such as ours to hold the true foundation. Should we needlessly increase that difficulty by the deliberate use of forbidden terms? Certainly not. You say that we have need of the term *condition*; that we cannot do without it. But that is not true. And you should know that it is not true.

Your next paragraph reads, "That does not change the matter. Both members of Phil. 2:12, 13 are equally true. God works in and we work out. God works faith and we believe. It is really our act but the grace of God."

Remark. Who, in our communion, would think of denying these things? Your reiteration of these truths simply beclouds the issue, which is whether the term *condition* is a safe term to use in our expositions of the truth.

Your next sentence reads, "And on that action—our act of believing—our enjoyment is conditioned very really." You mean here, "That action of ours is necessary to the enjoyment of God's fellowship." Of course it is. Who will want to deny it? But that is not the issue. It is this: Must our action—act of believing—induce God to cause us to enjoy Him? and, Do we originate that action? You reply: Surely not. Show then, that you mean what you say by avoiding the term *condition*.

In your recent articles including your latest installment, statements occur that are truly surprising and that cause one to wonder in what direction you are striving to lead our churches and our people. Allow me to explain. The covenant theology of the Liberated is Heynsian; it is, in a word, Pelagian. I made this clear in my previous article. The principal tenets of that theology, so I wrote, 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 Christ died for all men, elect and non-elect alike; thus the teaching that God called all men, elect and non-elect, His sons, and reconciled them to Himself through Christ's cross.

This doctrine, so I continued (in my previous article), involves those addicted to it in a problem. It is this: If God calls all His sons, if all have a right to Heaven, if, in a word, the promise is unto all, as the Liberated insist, 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 their covenant-theology) 2) God places the benefits of Christ's cross in the actual possession of man, 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 unbelief and that, if he is to be saved, he must originate faith in him. This is the covenant theology of the Liberated and the Christian Reformed. As a sentence-element in this thought-structure, the term *condition* — *voorwaarde* — can indicate but one thing, to wit, an action of man whereby he originates his own faith.

Now what are you saying, brother, of that thought-structure,—saying of the covenant-theology of the Liberated and the Christian Reformed here in the States? I shall quote your own words, "Now after all this I may say that we have serious objections to this presentation of the covenant (of the Liberated, you mean). *Not because it is Pelagian or Heynsian* (italics supplied). Neither because it is called conditional, with the above understanding. I still believe that the final glorious revelation of God's covenant is just as sure, and the efficacy of His grace is just as sovereign, as it is in the conception toward which we incline." Concordia for June 9, 1949, p. 3.

Here you indorse, as non-Pelagian, the thoroughly Pelagian covenant-theology of the Liberated. Here you indorse, as non-Pelagian, the term *condition* as a sentence-element in that thought-structure, where it certainly must indicate an action of man whereby he originates his own faith. And yet you want your readers to believe that you are using that term *condition* in a perfectly innocent sense; that all you mean by your statement that God saves His people on the condition that they believe is that faith is necessary to salvation. Can you blame me for wondering where you are trying to lead our people? Your latest article, too, causes me to wonder about that, especially the following statement from your pen occurring in it, "And now this their presentation may have this good element that it seeks the better to emphasize and maintain the responsibility of man away down to the roots of his relation to God in the covenant." Concordia for July 21, p. 3.

Brother, not one good element is to be found in the covenant-theology of the Liberated. In this theology the responsibility of man is made to root in a lie—the

lie that man in order to be responsible must be free as to his will—free in the Pelagian sense. Brother, if you want us to regard you as a truly Reformed man in all your thinking; if you want us to stop wondering where you are trying to lead our people, you must without any reservations pronounce that covenant-theology of the Liberated through and through heretical and ban that word *condition* from your theological vocabulary. You seem to be so very much in love with that covenant-theology of the Liberated that in reply to Rev. H. Veldman's question, "What have they (the Liberated) in re the covenant that is Scriptural that we lack," you said, "And I will add now that if we must all agree that there are no two parties in the covenant and that we may not speak of conditions in any sense whatever, *then they are on that point richer than we.*" Concordia for May 26, p. 3.

But you say, "Did I not emphatically state that I have serious objections to the covenant-theology of the Liberated?" You did so state more than once. A statement of that kind from your pen appears in the Concordia for June 9. There you say, "Now after all this I may say that we have serious objections to this presentation of the covenant." And further on in this same article you declare, "But it (the covenant-theology of the Liberated) involves inconsistencies and weaknesses." But I ask you, brother, what serious objections can you possibly have against the covenant-theology of the Liberated, if that theology is not Pelagian; if, as you state in the same article, you believe that, to quote your own words, "the final glorious revelation of God's covenant is just as sure, and the efficacy of His grace is just as sovereign, (in the covenant-theology of the Liberated, you mean) as it is in the conception toward which we incline." How can a covenant-theology of such virtue actually involve inconsistencies and weaknesses? Impossible!

But, of course, it is not true what you say here, namely, that the final glorious revelation of God's covenant is just as sure, and the efficacy of His grace just as sovereign in the covenant-theology of the Liberated as it is in the conception (the covenant-theology) to which we incline. Fact is that in the covenant-theology of the Liberated the efficacy of God's grace is not at all sovereign, if you mean thereby that this efficacy (of God's grace) is solely dependent on God's will. For the fact is that in the covenant-theology of the Liberated the efficacy of God's grace is solely dependent on the will of man. And the strange thing is that you admit this, be it in language so mild that it fails to impress. Here are your words, "And in the third place I do not think that they—the Liberated—succeed in explaining and keeping clear how the promises, the rights, the claims are the right of *all* those within the church and that equally to them all in the same sense exactly." Concordia for June 9. This,

according to your way of thinking, is one of the three inconsistencies in which the covenant-theology of the Liberated involve those addicted to it. And your way of thinking here is entirely correct. You here touch on the crux of the whole matter. It is true as you think: The Liberated do not succeed and never will succeed for that matter in explaining how they do not involve themselves in the heresy that the will of man is free in the Pelagian sense,—involve themselves in this heresy by their teaching that all—elect and non-elect alike—have the right to Christ and all His benefits. They can't explain it. It cannot be explained. It means that their covenant-theology is Pelagian indeed—through and through Pelagian. I said that you admit this. Yet, really you don't. For you say, "I don't think that they succeed." This can be taken to imply, "But they might succeed in the future and with a little more mental effort." You should say not "I think", but, "Certain it is that they do not succeed and that they never will succeed. For they attempt the impossible." That is the language you should use. But then, of course, you say contrary things: 1) The covenant-theology of the Liberated *is not* Pelagian; 2) The covenant-theology of the Liberated *is* Pelagian. As it is, you really say but one thing: The covenant-theology of the Liberated *is not* Pelagian. Brother, you must stop saying the latter and say instead, "The covenant-theology of the Liberated is through and through Pelagian. And it can't be anything else if the words of the Bible have meaning and if there is such a thing as logic in the world. And you must come out with a statement that you have freed your theological vocabulary of that word *condition*. Then all will know exactly where you stand.

But you say, I have already made clear my stand. I have stated over and over that: 1) God fulfills the conditions in the covenant; 2) Faith is God's gift in man; 3) God's election and reprobation are sovereign. Consider, brother, that the Liberated are just as emphatic in their assertion of these truths. But it doesn't mean a thing as far as the rightness or the wrongness of their covenant-theology is concerned. For, as I stated in my previous article, these beliefs have 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, and that election and reprobation are sovereign, doesn't it? And, so I wrote, 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. The Liberated hold the truths of sovereign election and reprobation etc., but at once do they hold their thoroughly Arminian covenant-theology. It simply means, sad to say, that in

one breath they say "yes" to the truth and "yes" to the lie. And the same thing is being done by the leaders in the communion of Christian Reformed Churches and also by the Synodicals in the Netherlands. Let us beware that we do not fall into the same evil, if already we have not fallen into it. Because the end will be that we will be saying "yes" only to the lie in our generations.

G. M. Ophoff.

## A Letter From Rev. W. Hofman

Dear brother Ophoff:

A few days ago we received the August issue of the Standard Bearer and are much concerned about the article you wrote concerning the Revs. J. De Jong and B. Kok. So much so that I felt I should write you and express my opinion and reaction since I also expect to do so publicly in the next issue of the Standard Bearer.

It is not my intention to go into the material but to express myself concerning the method in which you have publicized these things. I feel your course of action to be reprehensible since, to my mind, your article lacks the proper brotherly spirit. You also seemed to feel that something was not quite in order since you began with a rather long apology containing your various reasons for publicizing the matter.

However, my main objection has to do with the manner in which you attack your brethren and mine in the ministry of our Churches. In the first place, it seems strange to me, that you so treat your brethren upon the basis of hearsay. You have taken the word, which was not addressed to you, of one whom you consider to maintain "false doctrine", "damnable. . . . rotten heresy" and "Arminianism" to attack your brethren. Moreover you argue for his veracity while you seem to doubt that of your brethren. Now apart from the eventual determination of all the facts and establishment of the whole truth, to write as you did upon the word of one who is so far removed from you, both physically and theologically, overagainst those who are united with you in the ministry of our churches, fails, in my mind, to be a judgment of love.

In the second place, the implication which you make in the statement: "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 scrup(p)les about advising their people who come to these shores to affiliate with the Protestant Reformed?" is, to my mind, an unwarranted insinuation. It

is a judgment of motive and appears to me almost mephitic in intent. Once again, to my mind, it is an unkind treatment of our brethren.

To an extent at least, I also would object to your attitude over against the Liberated Churches as evidenced in your article. In the first place, the official position of our Churches is that these Churches are Reformed and that we should seek contact with them. (Cf. Acts of Synod, 1947, Art. 75, pp. 53 and 54. Also Acts of Synod 1948, Art. 51, pp. 53 and 54). That this was also your personal opinion is evident from the letter which appears over your signature in the Acts of Synod of 1948, pp. 38 and 39. It would appear that until the opposite is established, we should recognize them as such.

In the second place, I dislike the manner in which you have condemned these Churches before furnishing a warranted basis for your judgment of them. It would seem to me to be more proper, first to state the case and prove your allegations, rather than vice-versa.

Finally, if the position of the Liberated Churches is as heretical as you maintain, I feel that we as Churches have an even greater calling over against them. We have then the calling, with our greater light and superior knowledge which God has graciously given us, to attempt to do all in our power to save this last vestige of Reformed truth in the Netherlands, while there is still opportunity for communication with them. It is possible that we close the door to this opportunity and fail in realization of this calling if we proceed in an abusive manner. It would seem to me, that at least until a stand had been taken, this purpose can be advanced more properly by dignified communication between these two groups; upon the basis of Truth and in the spirit of love expressing one another's desire for our mutual spiritual welfare, rather than in the way of accusation and name-calling.

Rev. W. Hofman.

I shall reply to this missive in the next issue of the Standard Bearer.

G. M. Ophoff.

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### IN MEMORIAM

In Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of one of its members,

MRS. DICK HEYS

May the Lord comfort the sorrowing relatives and teach us all to labor while it is day.

Mrs. M. Vander Molen, Sec'y.  
Rev. P. Vis, Pres.



## SION'S ZANGEN

### Een Vloekpsalm

(Psalm 109; Derde Deel)

We zijn bezig met een vloekpsalm. De Heilige Geest in den dichter bidt tot God om den vloek over den verworpenen. Onze ziel huivert onder het lezen. Het is bang.

Maar het is waar.

Men heeft vaak geknoeid met dit soort psalmen. Men wilde de leugen handhaven, dat God alle menschen mint; en dan gevoelde men de moeilijkheid die dit soort psalmen geven. Immers, als het waar is, dat God alle menschen liefheeft met een soort algemeene liefde, dan weet men geen raad met deze vreeselijke vloekpsalmen. En zoo kwam men er toe om smalend te zeggen, dat hier de zondige David aan het woord is.

Maar dat kan niet.

Want in andere plaatsen van Gods Woord wordt aangehaald uit dezen psalm en toegepast op verworpenen.

Indien ge het verklaren wil, zult ge het moeten doen op het standpunt van de heiligheid Gods. Het is de Heilige Israels die alle dagen toornst op den goddelooze. Ze hebben alle vloeken Gods verdiend. Tot in der eeuwigheid.

Alle zonden is ook dwaasheid. Dat blijkt ook hier. Als men verlegen is met dezen psalm, omdat God zoo vreeselijk den goddeloozen laat vloeken, wat moet men dan doen met de waarheid, dat ontelbare duizenden nu in de aanvankelijke hel gemarteld worden. En wat moet men doen met de poel die brandt van vuur en sulfer, die zeker komt?

De psalm is waar.

“Dat de schuldeischer aansla al wat hij heeft, en dat de vreemden zijnen arbeid rooven.”

Ik heb dat gezien.

Tegenwoordig heeft men milder wetten dan vroeger. Ik weet van tijden waar men een huisgezin van bijna alles beroofde als men failliet sloeg. Er was een tijd, dat ik wist hoeveel men mocht behouden, maar het was weinig.

Dat is nu anders. Men mag veel meer behouden als men failliet slaat.

Dat is een bange toestand.

Ik zeide zooeven, dat ik het gezien heb.

De dienaars van het goevernement komen met de geteekende papieren, en ze wandelen in Uw huis rond alsof zij er thuis zijn. Er komen nommers op alle huisraad artikelen. Intusschen vergaderde het dorp rondom Uw woning.

En dan wordt alles te koop aangeboden, behalve dan het weinige wat men mocht houden.

Kunt ge U de schaamte en de schande voorstellen van hen die zulk een lot trof?

Dat wordt afgebeden over den man die God niet vreest en Zijn volk aanrandde.

De vreemden kwamen: dat zijn de omstanders die het aangeslagen goed kochten. En na afloop van het hart-verscheurende tafereel haastte ieder zich weg met zijn koopje of koopjes.

En de arme man en vrouw en kinderen bleven achter in het naakte huis.

Ik heb het gezien en inwendig geschreid.

“Dat hij niemand hebbe die weldadigheid over hem uitstrekke, en dat er niemand zij, die zijnen wezen genadig zij.”

Ik dacht daaraan toen ik U vertelde van wat mijn oogen gezien hebben.

Want ik heb toen ook gezien een buurman met geld die zich eenigzins ontfermde over den berooiden man. Die buurman kocht keer op keer stukken van het elendige huisraad. En hij kocht met verstand, zoodat er overal in het huis wat stukken en stukjes overbleven.

De dorpelingen dropen af: sommigen zeiden, dat zij genoten hadden!

Maar de goede buurman zeide, toen een ieder weg was: wat ik kocht is het Uwe! God zegene hem!

Die man was weldadig aan den berooide.

Maar dat mag hier niet, zegt de Heilige Geest. Niemand zij hem weldadig! Ze moeten hem geheel en al alleen laten, en niet helpen in zijn armoede! Het wordt steeds banger.

Merkt ge wel, dat als men niet theologisch denkt hier het niet te verklaren is? Ge moet het theologisch verklaren. Denkt er toch om, dat dit een Messiaansche psalm is. Het subject is Jezus, die haat ontving voor Zijn liefde. Die man heeft het verdiend. Dubbel en dwars. God is recht in al Zijn weg en werk. Ik weet wel, dat men dat vandaag niet ziet of niet zien wil. Maar de tijd komt wanneer de Heere het ordentelijk voor oogen zal stellen. En dan zal een ieder God rechtvaardigen in het vloeken van den verworpenen.

En dan die weezen!

Een wees is een armzalig schepsel.

Er is op aarde niets smartelijker dan een klein kind te zijn zonder vader en zonder moeder.

O, men krijgt wel een vader en moeder. Maar er zijn maar twee menschen op de geheele aarde die vader en moeder kunnen zijn, en dat zijn de twee menschen die U gegenereerd hebben. Zijn die weg, dan is er smart voor U.

Weet ge wat ge dan krijgt? Genade in de oogen der menschen. En dan zegt een goedig mensch: geeft mij toch dien stumper!

Maar, o geliefde lezer! dat is geen moeder en dat is geen vader.

En nu is deze man zoo vreeselijk goddeloos dat zijn weezen rond moeten dwalen zonder ergens genade te ontvangen. Ik moet er niet inkomen. Hier is een beginsel van hellesmart.

“Dat zijne nakomelingen uitgeroeid worden, hun naam worde uitgedelgd in het andere geslacht.”

Keer op keer komen er mannen naar mij toe en zeggen: Gister ben ik voor de eerste keer grootvader geworden. En dan is er een glans in de oogen, en ze staren U aan, en zij zien U in de oogen om te zien of er een weerschijn van vroolijk licht in Uw oog zal schitteren. Ze willen, dat ge blij zult zijn met hen.

En dat is heel natuurlijk.

De Heere heeft één bloede het geheele geslacht geschapen.

Er is iets jammerlijks in de gedachte dat men straks den laatsten adem uit zal blazen, en dat men nergens een zoon ziet staan, die een kleine jongen op zijn arm draagt. Er moest een zoon zijn die zich buigt over het sterfbed en zegt: “Jantje, geef Opa nog één kusje! Opa gaat heen!” O, het is zalig om rondom zijn sterfbed het volgende geslacht te zien, en nog een laatste gebod te geven aan zijn huis vooraleer men gaat sterven, en tot zijn vaderen vergaderd wordt.

Maar dat mag hier niet.

Het huis van den goddelooze wordt niet bestendigd.

Hun naam moet uitgeroeid.

Dat is het vreeselijke gevolg van de zonde. En het is recht. De zonde is het uiteenscheuren van datgene wat bij elkaar behoort. Men wilde dat in al zijn leven, en men zou toch God niet becritiseeren als Hij het loon op zulk werk uitkeert naar het zuiverste recht? We gelooven het nu, maar ik ben er van door-drongen, dat we straks duidelijk zullen zien, dat de geheele hel, dat de geheele eeuwige hel, past bij en op de misdaad! God is recht.

“Der ongerechtigheid zijner vaderen worde gedacht bij den Heere, en de zonde zijner moeder worde niet uitgedelgd; dat zij gedurig voor den Heere zijn; en Hij roeie hunne gedachten uit van de aarde.”

Er zit een onuitsprekelijke zegen in als ge Uw Vader en Moeder ziet bidden. Dat wil zeggen, als ge zelf ook den Heere mint.

Een biddende vader en moeder zeggen mij, dat de schuld en zonde weggedaan zijn, en dat ze mij niet plagen zullen, als ze heengingen. Er is iets zeer bangs in die uitdrukking van de Wet Gods: “tot in het derde en vierde geslacht.”

Ziet ge, als de zonde van Uw vader en de overtreding van Uw moeder gedurig voor het aangezicht van God staan, dan is het bang voor U. Want ge zult dan bezocht worden door God. Of liever, de zonde van Uw voorgeslacht wordt thuisgezocht bij U. En

daar komt dit bij, dat het dan van kwaad tot erger gaat. Dat heb ik ook gezen in mijn leven. Vader werd slordig in de kerk en in het kerkelijke leven. De zoon was erger en hij kwam niet meer in Gods Huis. Of-schoon hij wel een memorie had van de kerkelijke sprake. Maar het kleinkind is al zeer gerust in het midden der wolven. En het achterkleinkind *is een wolf!*

O God! Erbarm U over ons!

En waarom moet het zoo bang worden met dezen man en met zijn zaad?

Luistert naar het antwoord van den Heiligen Geest: “Omdat hij niet gedacht heeft weldadigheid te doen, maar heeft den ellendigen en den nooddruftigen man vervolgd, en den verslagene van hart, om hem te dooden.”

Bestudeert dit vers, en ge zult huiveren van zoo groote zonde.

Let er op: hij dacht niet alleen niet om weldadigheid te doen, maar hij deed het tegenovergestelde: hij wilde hem dooden!

Die ellendige, nooddruftige, verslagene van hart is historisch David. Een hoogst waarschijnlijk ten tijde van het verraad van Absalom en Achitofel.

Maar uiteindelijk is het bedoeld op Jezus.

O, wat zal het goddelooze volk moeten lijden omdat zij Jezus gefolterd hebben in al Zijn ellende.

Het is dan ook erg.

Het is jammerlijk genoeg als men ellendig, nooddruftig en verslagen is van hart. Ge kunt dus eenigzins verstaan hoe het Jezus te moede geweest is toen men Hem bespote aan het kruis.

Jezus was al ellendig: Hij was ver van Huis. Hij behoorde in den hemel, maar Hij was in de hel.

Jezus was al nooddruftig: Hij is eigenlijk de Eenige die geheel en al ontbloot werd van alles wat een mensch hebben moest.

Jezus was al verslagen van hart: al de striemen van Gods rechtvaardigen toorn waren op Hem neergekomen.

Maar de duivel bezielde de massa, en men deed daar aan toe. Smarten van Jezus.

Maar God heeft het alles gezien, en Hij zal het zoeken.

Men had den ellendige, verslagene en nooddruftige moeten helpen. Dat is plicht en voorrecht.

Er zit een les in.

Laat ons toch niet spotten met den ellendige, maar laat ons hem liever helpen. Laat ons toch het vleesch kruisigen en nooit toegeven aan die trek die in ons vuile vleesch zit. Hebt ge het niet gezien op het schoolplein toen ge nog heel klein waart? Om de een of andere reden huilt een kind. Hij of zij staat tegen een boom, op de arm leunend, en hij snikt alsof zijn kleine hartje zal breken. En daar staat een lachende groep om dat huilende kind, en zij sarren, spotten, treiteren

hem die ellendig is. Hebt ge het nooit gezien? Er aan mee gedaan? Het slachtoffer geweest?

Zijn we die duivelsche trek afgeleerd toen we opgroeiden? Ge weet wel beter. Luistert naar wat spreuken: Boontje komt om zijn loontje! "Serve you right!"

Die spreuken hebben een bange bekendheid.

Lenigt de smarten der ellendigen; brengt aan de dingen die Uw arme broeder behoeft; drupt balsem in het gewonde hart. Doet het in den naam eens discipels aan Jezus en Uw loon zal groot zijn in de hemelen. God zal U niet vloeken, maar Hij zal zegenen.

"Dewijl hij den vloek heeft liefgehad, dat die hem overkome; en hij geen lust gehad heeft tot den zegen, zoo zij die verre van hem."

Ziet ge nu wel, dat alles correct is wat God doet?

Hij had den vloek lief. Is dat niet bang? Hij wilde het gaarne hebben, dat alle dingen medewerken ten kwade voor zijn slachtoffer. Hij lachte in zijn verdriet. Welnu dan, is het dan niet correct, dat diezelfde vloek die hij zoo minde hem achterhale en dat hij nederdale in de put? Hij had een afschuw van den zegen. Hij walgde van God en Goddelijke zaken. Welnu dan, is het dan niet recht, dat die zegen verre van hem zij? (Wat blijft hier over van de waanzin die spreekt van een zegen die verworpenen ontvangen? Hier staat het dat die zegen verre van hem is.)

Neen, een ieder zal God verheerlijken. En zelfs de verworpenen zullen tegen God zeggen, dat zij de belverdiend hebben. Niemand zal in den dag der dagen God beschuldigen van onrecht. Denkt er toch om, dat Gods vloeken ook een deugd Gods is.

Vrage: wat hebt ge lief?

De vloek? Dan komt er vloeken over dezulken tot in eeuwigheid.

De zegen? Dan komt er zegen tot in eeuwigheid.

Dat 's Heeren zegen op ons daal, en dat Zijn gunst uit Sion ons eeuwig bestrale!

G. Vos.

#### ANNUAL R. F. P. A. MEETING

The annual R. F. P. A. membership meeting will be held D. V., Thursday, September 29 in the basement of the First Church. Pastor Blankespoor will honor us with an address. In addition to other business which may properly come before the meeting, there will be election of three new board members from the following nomination to replace three retiring brethren: G. Borduin, P. Dykema, C. Kregel, F. Tiesma, J. Oomkes J. Wiltjer.

All friends and readers of our paper are cordially invited to attend this meeting.

R. F. P. A. Board.

## IN HIS FEAR

### The Mixed Marriage

It has happened.

They are married.

One is a member of the church, the other is not, or rather, one is a member of the church and the other is a member by baptism of a church which has forsaken the reformed faith, but since baptism has had no reformed nurturing.

It is a marriage that has its beginning in disobedience. The Lord has ordained and permitted marriage, but He has commanded that we marry "in the Lord." This was not the case here, therefore it is a marriage contracted in disobedience. It is a marriage, the result of rebellion, because the young lady had been repeatedly warned against intering into marriage with an unbeliever, but she had done it nevertheless. It is a marriage which prefigures apostacy because the young lady has pledged fellowship with an unbeliever, and the arrow for her future life points to apostacy.

For all these reasons such a marriage is desperately sinful and warning against it cannot easily be overdone.

But now it happened.

*Now What?*

What will the fellow Christians and fellow members of her church do now?

Tongues are liable to wag. Naturally men will express their disgust with such a marriage. Men will lament over what our next generation is coming to and what terrible things our young people dare to do. Stories are liable to make the rounds. Others may mumble something about the corruption our young people are bringing into the church. People may look down on the young couple. And others will probably have their "church pride" injured.

Two things at once arise before us.

The young lady has fallen into sin. But if someone have fallen into sin others may not lash them with their tongues nor dagger them with their eyes. This will not help the matter. If a sinner hardens in her sin Scripture prescribes the "last remedy" but this young lady, although she has been disobedient, is not hardened in her sin. She will have to pay the penalty for her error, but she is at present a fallen sinner. One of the members of the church has stumbled into sin and has fallen into the clutches of the evil one. She now stands on a dangerous ledge.

The first duty of the church and the christian individually is "to restore such an one" if perhaps God

may give her the spirit of repentance. Just because she has fallen so miserably it is no sign that she should be given over to Satan. If we should despise her because she offended our pride as respectable church, we might learn from the event of the woman taken in adultery that sometimes there are sins which are greater than adultery. . . . pride for instance. But if we understand that we all offend daily and if we can learn to sorrow properly, we shall sympathize with her that has fallen and will seek to restore her.

The marriage cannot be undone. But perhaps she can be saved from the ruin of apostasy toward which her marriage points.

The devil is a sheep-scatterer, the church is a sheep gatherer. The church seeks to gather His sheep, also those who have set foot on the wrong way. The elders not only, and first, will give this young lady all assistance, but each one of the christians will do all in his power to gather the sheep of Christ.

We can pray for her. We can rejoice when we see her at the divine service, and show it; we can grieve for it when we miss her there and also show that. If she misses the services tell her what she missed by not being in church last Sunday. Tell her that you missed her, that God required that we attend His services diligently. The pulpit preaches repentance to her also and assures forgiveness to her too if she repents.

#### *The Young Man*

At present he is an unbeliever, opposed to the truth and existing in great ignorance.

But under the providence of God this young man has come very close to the things of the Kingdom. He has despised his baptism, and that is a heinous sin. But who can tell what the Lord will do for Him? Look what the Lord did for us, look what He made out of us, look at the raw material out of which God has built His Church throughout the centuries. The sons of Jacob out of which God built Israel were very raw material when we see them operating in Shechem and Dothan. Who shall say what the Lord will do for this young man who comes near to us from out of the sphere of the world.

If his wife can be made to see the error of her way, she will be a tremendous influence in the life of this young man. She will be the primary influence.

But we all shall be interested. For the church is engaged in church-gathering throughout the ages, and sometimes the sheep must be gathered from unexpected corners. The question is not first how promising is the material with which God gives us to work, but the first matter is that there is material here and we ought to work. As the work progresses God will discover to us what are His intentions.

The Word of God must be brought to him, and

that in a very particular way. The young man must be made to feel that we desire for him the knowledge of truth and salvation which we have. He must come to see the wretched condition in which he lies and be pointed to the Mediator. He must learn to know the reformed faith and be instructed in the true doctrine as the church confesses it. If this young man does enter the fold of the church he must not be a dangerous element, for it were better never to bring any into the fold than to bring in those who might prove dangerous for others. We must let the young man feel that we are engaged in church-gathering work and we desire that he too may enter the fold through Jesus Christ. How much it can mean for this young man if not only the minister but also the elders make it a point to call on him and, if possible, to arouse interest in him for things eternal.

While sin and the devil engage in scattering, Christ and His church are engaged in gathering, until the elect be gathered in and all be gathered into glory. In carrying forth God's truth we too are engaged in pulling the Dragnet through the Sea of History, until Christ Himself pulls the net upon the shores of eternity and makes the final separation.

M. Gritters.

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#### ANNIVERSARY

On September 11, 1949, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. and MRS. OTTO VANDER WOUDE hope to commemorate their 25th 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 leadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Redder  
Florence Louise  
Margaret Ruth  
John Herman  
and one grandchild.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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#### ANNIVERSARY

On August 14, 1949, our beloved parents

MR. and MRS. PETER ALPHENAAR celebrated there 30th wedding anniversary.

We thank God that He has spared them for each other and for us and pray that we may have many more years together.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Lemmer  
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence De Vries  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sportel  
Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Visser  
Nellie Alphenaar  
Carol Alphenaar

Kalamazoo, Michigan

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## PERISCOPE

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### Appeal \*

Review . . . .

We continue our translation and review of the Holland article with this title which was written by Prof. C. Veenhof. The first portion of this translation appeared in the previous issue of the Standard Bearer. In it we found that Prof. Veenhof emphasized especially three things. In the first place, he pointed out that the ecclesiastical controversy in the Netherlands concerns Holy Baptism. In the second place, he maintained that baptism is the very personal seal of God upon His promise. And finally, the author claimed that the position of the Synodical Churches, that baptism seals internal grace, is untenable.

"Baptism seals the full promise of God to all children of believers". . . .

This is the title of the next heading under which the professor continues. He argues this point as follows: "The Bible teaches us very clearly, that God presents His *one, unchangeable, always equally rich* promise, to *all* believers and to *all* their children.

"Simply read Acts 2:39!

"There the Lord Jesus says, by the Holy Spirit, and through the mouth of Peter: *'For unto you is the promise and to your children.* That promise I give to *you all, without any exception* and I give it also to *your children, also to all without any exception.*

"Can anyone think of a stronger proof for the glorious truth, that God's promise comes identically to all our children, than this word from the pentecostal proclamation, which the glorified Christ addresses to the New Testament congregation as His first message?

"Calvin declares by way of exposition as follows: it becomes clear that God also allows all children of believing parents *to participate in the right to adoption-as-His-child.* In the kingdom of heaven this rule is in force, that God includes with the fathers, also their children as His children, and that in that way the grace of salvation is extended to the as yet unborn children, and that without any distinction."

It is this "simple and glorious truth", as the author calls it, that they desire to believe and maintain while refusing to participate in any tampering with God's promise. Again he emphasizes this point as follows: "We maintain fully and firmly, that the LORD *says exactly the same thing to all* children of believing parents; *grants them exactly the same promise.* All hear precisely and clearly the trust-worthy word of His mouth: I am the LORD your God! You can de-

pend upon that! And this which is always the same, absolutely trust-worthy promise, is for us, the *foundation, the substance, the content and the power* of our faith."

The writer continues with his criticism of the Synodical teaching concerning baptism, maintaining that it is a teaching of a two-fold baptism. "Those who speak as the Synodicals speak, assume and teach a *distinctive baptism for the elect*: this is the real, full, true baptism, which seals the internal grace," the 'promise for the elect'—and there is *another, a lesser baptism*, which is nothing more than a sealing of an offer of grace, an external calling or something of that nature.

"*This teaching attacks the veracity of God!*

"If you faithfully watch and listen whenever the LORD baptizes the small children of the congregation, you see that immediately." In such a case the professor points out, the Lord speaks and acts exactly alike to all. "He says to all the children, head for head and very personally: I baptize you and you and you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And He *does* exactly the same thing with each child. He sprinkles the baptismal water upon each of these children, head for head, and very personally. God, the Lord, says and does exactly the same thing at each baptism and to each one being baptized.

"And now because God is upright and true, because whenever God does and says the same thing, whether it be 2 or 10 or 1000 times, He also always *means and gives and declares and seals exactly the same thing*—therefore each baptism which the LORD performs with the same words and the same sprinkling, has *exactly the same content and power.*

"If when God says exactly the same thing to a number of persons and His words would at one time promise something different and much more than at another time, then God would be equivocal and untruthful.

"You see, we will never assume that!

"And therefore we *reject* the Synodical teaching that only the elect, only the regenerated, receive the complete and true baptism.

"And we confess whole-heartedly and with profound joy that *every baptism administered by God possesses exactly the same content and power* and that every baptism performed by Him *is always a true baptism.*"

Continuing this argument the professor adds another objection. He states that if one maintains that only the elect are truly baptized, then we cannot know if we have that true baptism until we are certain of our election. The result is that our baptism means nothing except when our faith is strong. When, on the other hand, our faith is weak and the shadows come, we can never look to our baptism for comfort.

\*(Translated from the Holland brochure: *Appél.*



This, he claims, is contrary to the purpose of baptism, since God means it to be the firm ground of our faith. God purposes to lead us from the certainty of true baptism to full and strong faith and not vice-versa. Hence, the professor, concludes, the Synodical teaching is a caricature which must be rejected.

*"We teach nothing new". . . .*

Under this heading Professor Veenhof appeals to Calvin and Luther, and asserts that their conceptions are those of the Liberated Churches. This is a rather long section and we will quote only those parts of it in which the writer summarizes what he maintains to be the teaching of these Reformers. He begins by presenting what Calvin teaches. According to Professor Veenhof, Calvin also maintained that: "The Lord gives His promise to all children. In that promise He proclaims to them the whole of salvation. That salvation is, so to speak, 'wrapped-up' in the promise. And baptism is the seal upon that promise, in which the entirety of salvation is 'bound'. When, therefore, God baptizes a child that child receives, *in that baptism, in that sealed promise, the entire salvation*, which God gives to sinners! . . . Calvin here says nothing less than this, that to *all* those who are baptized there is presented the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life in that baptism."

And here the professor comes with the question for which you have undoubtedly been waiting: "If it is actually so, that to all those who are baptized according to the directive of the Lord and in conformity with the ordinances He gave, there is presented the forgiveness of sins and renewal of life with their baptism, how does it occur that many of those who are baptized are nevertheless not saved?"

Calvin, so writes the professor, also faced this question and puts it in this form: "Does this grace have its fulfillment in all those who are baptized, without distinction?" To which the writer adds: "Or in other words, *does this grace which is presented in baptism always lead to the full salvation of all those who are baptized?*

"And to this question Calvin answers. . . . *No, that is not the case!*

"And if we ask: Why not?—we receive this answer: Because a great many of those who are baptized, *through the depravity of their nature, block the way of this grace, making it to themselves but an empty form. Therefore only the believers receive the fruit of this baptism.*

"Mark you, if baptism does not come to its glorious salvatory effect, then—so says Calvin—that is alone the fault of the godlessness of the baptized! It never lies with God! It never lies in His Holy Baptism! The *unrighteousness of men* makes of God's baptism an empty form. Therefore only they who embrace and

use that baptism with child-like faith, receive the glorious fruit of it.

"When we read this we must not misinterpret it. When Calvin says, that the ungodly make of baptism an empty form, or, as he also says, make it powerless, he does not mean to assert thereby that that ungodly individual can actually change anything of the real, true baptism as God brings it into our life; thus being able to destroy or debase it! O, no, just as we can never reach out to deface the sun so also we can never destroy the reality of baptism!

"God's baptism always remains 'unimpaired'. It is simply inviolable by men. Through their unbelief they make it so that baptism does not have its glorious effect; does not bear its rich fruit unto eternal salvation. And they also actually do this very often! But they cannot impair the essentialness, the reality of baptism. *God's baptism always remains a real, true baptism, no matter what men may do with it!*"

Following this the professor adds a few paragraphs to show that Luther was of the same opinion in respect to the reality of each baptism. He then closes this section by declaring that in 1942 this truth was attacked and denied. "For", he writes, "many began to speak of a baptism which said more to the elect and which had more content and sealed and presented more to them than to the non-elect! . . . We have explained that we *might* not and *could* not accept this teaching of baptism!

"And we have also declared, that therefore, the Synodical theory, that baptized children must be considered as already regenerated children—or as participating in the regenerating grace of the Spirit—must be rejected." This stand became necessary, the writer concludes, because this theory, which according to him was a direct result of the Synodical teaching of baptism, was made binding upon the Churches by decision of Synod.

*Conclusion . . . .*

This is not yet the end of the article but it will not be necessary to quote further since no new development of the concepts are included in the remainder. In the closing sections of his article, Prof. Veenhof reviews the history that led up to the split and briefly touches upon the church-political aspects. He then closes with an appeal to those of like mind to liberate themselves and join in the reformation of the Church of Christ.

Once again space does not permit us to add comment this time. We close with the observation made last time. Also in what we have quoted above there are many amazing things which sound strange to us. But it certainly is true that the presentation has been clear and unambiguous. Next time we hope to express our opinion and criticism of this appeal. W. Hofman.