

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Zwijgt Niet!

"O Jeruzalem! Ik heb wachters op uwe muren besteld, die geduriglijk al den dag en al den nacht niet zullen zwijgen. O gij die des Heeren doet gedenken! laat geen stilzwijgen bij ulieden wezen, en zwijgt niet stil voor Hem, totdat Hij bevestige en totdat Hij Jeruzalem stelle tot een lof op aarde.

Jes. 62:6, 7.

Zwijgt niet stil!

Die uitroep doet mij denken aan een anderen tekst in dezelfde Jesaja. Daar zegt hij zelfs: Roep uit de keel! Houd niet in! Verhef uwe stem als een bazuin!

Dat is ook hier de gedachte.

Die hier aangesproken worden moeten dag en nacht spreken, getuigen, roepen! Er mag geen stilzwijgen gevonden worden.

De reden moet wel belangrijk zijn.

Aan het begin van dit hoofdstuk vindt ge dezelfde waarheid en daar wordt ook aangegeven waarom deze man niet zwijgt. Het is om Sions wil.

Om Sions wil zwijg ik niet, en zal ik niet zwijgen.

En de wachters die in mijn tekst aangesproken worden door den Heiligen Geest moeten blijven roepen, totdat het doel van al zulk gedurig roepen bereikt is: de schoonheid en de lieflijkheid van Sion en Jeruzalem!

En daarom: wachters! roept uit de keel! Houdt niet in! En blijft roepen, totdat het geroepene voor U staat in al zijn aantrekkelijke schoonheid.

De Bruid moet eenmaal tot den Bruidegom geleid worden in het fijnste goud van Ofir.

Sion moet verlost. Jeruzalem moet getoond worden zooals de profeten het gezien hebben: een lof der gansche aarde!

Zwijgt daarom niet!

Laat er toch geen stilzwijgen onder U gevonden worden!

Indien gij niet spraakt, zoo zouden de steenen monden ontvangen om te roepen, te roepen.



Soms zijn we bang om te spreken.

Soms zwijgen we omdat we bang zijn voor onzen naam, onze positie, onze welvaart. Men mocht soms eens wraak nemen tegenover ons getuigen.

En als de sprake Gods ten grondslag lag aan onze roeping tot getuigen, en als we dan toch zwegen, dan: werden onze beenderen verouderd vanwege ons brullen dag en nacht.

Ziet ge, God spreekt in het diepe hart van menschen, en daar in dat diepe hart past Hij Zijn geschreven Woord toe; en dan is er roeping Gods om op onze beurt te spreken.

Doet men het niet, dan wordt het benauwd. Ge kunt dat merken bij den oprechten Elihu in de gescheidenissen van Job. Hij schreeuwt zijn vrienden bijkans toe: Houdt op van spreken, en laat mij toch wat zeggen. Indien niet, dan zoude ik bersten. Laat mij toch spreken, opdat ik lucht krijgen mag.

Zoo is het, zo moet het zijn met de wachters van mijn tekst. Zij moeten geduriglijk spreken; zij moeten geduriglijk zekere dingen tot gedachtenis brengen, totdat een zeker doel bereikt is.

En zij mogen zich niet storen aan iets of iemand. Wat er ook gebeuren moge: zij moeten getuigen.

Dat maakt het wel wat moeilijk. Het gebeurt dan ook wel, dat een hard en wreed mensch klaar staat met een knuppel die alreede opgeheven wordt: en de mensch zegt: nog één woord en ik sla U dood! Zoo moet het geweest zijn bij Abel en Kaïn.

Welnu, Abel had de Godspraak in zijn diepste hart. Hij hoorde God zeggen: Abel, gij zijt een wachter op de muur van Jeruzalem, en er mag geen stilzwijgen bij U gevonden worden. Daarom: spreek! Hij sprak, en gij weet wat er geschiedde: Kaïn sloeg, en Abel wentelde zich in zijn bloed.

Maar nu is het eigenaardige, dat hij en zijn bloed en zijn getuigenis nog spreken nadat hij gestorven is.

Dat is óók een tekst.

Daarom, gij wachters die waarlijk door God besteld zijt op de muren van Jeruzalem: zwijgt niet!



De reden moet wel belangrijk zijn, als er menschenlevens aan opgeofferd moeten worden.

En zegt nu niet: wel, wel, zoo erg is het toch niet! want het is werkelijk zoo gesteld met deze zaak.

Ik kan U wel een geheel lijstje van sprekers, roepers, getuigen opnoemen die gesproken hebben, en dit getuigen moesten betalen met hun bloed en tranen. Sommige arme stakkerds zijn om hun getuigen op Gods bevel bespot, zijn gegeeseld, zijn gebonden met banden, en werden eenvoudig in de gevangenis gestopt. Zij werden gesteenigd (denkt hier aan Stefanus), werden in stukken gezaagd, net maar omdat zij Gode gehoorzaam waren en getuigden, werden gezocht, door het zwaard ter dood gebracht, hebben gewandeld in schaapsvellen en geitenvellen, zij werden verlaten, verdrukt en kwalijk behandeld. En gedurende al hun lijden heeft God van hen getuigd, dat de wereld niet waard was om hen in hun midden te hebben. Zij hebben soms gedoold in de woestijnen en op bergen (denkt aan David die vlood voor den goddeloozen Saul), in spelonken en in de hollen der aarde.

Ja, de reden moet wel heel belangrijk geweest zijn.

Waarom zegt God tegen hen: Zwijgt niet, maar spreekt?

Het antwoord is: Om Jeruzalem's wil! Jeruzalem moet bevestigd worden en een lof worden der gansche aarde.

Dat is nu nog niet zoo. Er is allerlei vuils en verkeerd aan Jeruzalem.

En het goddelooze rot ziet dat ook. En zij hebben ook van Gods doel gehoord. Zij hebben gehoord, dat God zelfs nu al van die stad zegt: Zij is een lof der gansche aarde. En Jeruzalem beschouwende, zeggen de goddeloozen: Is dat nu de stad waarvan gezegd werd, dat zij een lof was der aarde? En zij zijn aan 't lachen gegaan en ze lachen nog.

Al lachende zeggen de goddeloozen: Ziet het toch aan! Zij is een verlatene en haar land is het verwoeste!

Heeft men U nooit gevraagd: Hoe komt het toch, dat gij Uw kerk verdedigde? Waar is de kerk van God? Alles ligt verwoest uiteengeslagen. Hoeveel denominaties zijn er niet. En allen zeggen: Ik ben de ware kerk. Overal in Sion zien wij vuilheid, den hypocriet, het verlatene en het verwoeste. Hoe is die stad een glorie der aarde? En zij gaan door met lachen. En zij spotten ook met venijnigen spot, en zeggen: Waar is Uw God?

En nu moeten zekere wachters op de muren klimmen van die verlaten en verwoeste stad, en geduriglijk roepen, getuigen, spreken.

Zwijgt niet Gode!

Die wachters moeten niet zwijgen.

Zij moeten tegen beide de inwoners van de stad en tegen den goddeloozen uitwoner of inwoner zeggen: Deze stad, Jeruzalem, is het getrouwde, want de Heere heeft een lust aan haar, en het land van Jeruzalem zal getrouwd worden!

Die wachters moeten de lachers en de spotters in het aangezicht zien, en zeggen: Gij spot met God en met Zijn volk, maar we verzekeren U, dat er zal een dag komen waarin een ieder die de aarde bewoonde zien zal, dat de Heere vroolijk zal zijn over haar, evenals de bruidegom vroolijk is over zijn bruid.

En nu kon ik doorgaan en met lieflijke woorden zingen van al dat heil, zooals ge het vinden zult in het verband van mijn tekst, maar de tijd zoude mij ontbreken. Leest het toch voor U zelf in Jesaja 62.

Als dit maar vaststaat, dat den vijand toegeroepen moet worden, dat hij foutief is, dat hij niets van de kerk begreep, dat hij een vreeselijke flater beging al zijn goddelooze leven door in het benauwen van Sion en Jeruzalem, in het opeten van het koren dat bestemd was voor de stad Gods. Want God zag het en zal het zoeken.

En dezelfde wachters moeten zich gedurig keeren tot de inwoners van Jeruzalem en hen toeroepen: God komt! En Hij komt met heeling in Zijn vleugelen. Hij zal U nooit verlaten en Hij zal U nooit begeven. Hij zal U schooner maken dan Salomo in al zijn pracht. Hij zal U doen glinsteren gelijk de duif door 't zilverwit en 't goud dat op haar vederen zit, belonkt door zonnestralen.

Daarom, Mijn wachters, zwijgt niet, maar spreekt dag en nacht!

Spreekt Gode! Om Sions wil!



Spreekt, o wachters, op de muren van Jeruzalem!

Het is zoo hoog noodig, dat zij spreken!

Ziet ge, Sion zegt vaak: "De Heere heeft mij verlaten, en de Heere heeft mij vergeten!" Dat vindt ge ook in Jesaja.

En waarom zegt Sion en Jeruzalem dat?

Omdat zij de onlust van den Almachtige ervaart op wegen van zonde en ongerechtigheid. En ook omdat zij bemerkt hoe zij van den voetstool tot den kruin des hoofds onrein is. Omdat zij goed weet, hoe zij niet past in Gods heerlijken hemel. Zij gevoelt zich verlaten van God, ver van Zijn Huis, verstoken van Zijn gemeenschap.

Let er nu op, dat die toestand en dat ervaren in zichzelf alreede groote zaligheid spelt. De goddelooze ervaart dat nooit. De goddeloozen geven er eenvoudig niets om, dat God verre van hen is. Hoe verder God van hen verwijderd is, hoe beter het hun aanstaat.

Maar Sion heeft een beginsel van genade.

Dat beginsel is de liefde Gods die in hunne harten is uitgestort door den Heiligen Geest die hun is gegeven. Dat maakt het groote onderscheid tusschen menschen en menschen.

Nu dan, Sion heeft gesmaakt, dat de nabijheid Gods en Zijn gemeenschap goed is, dat zij zoeter is dan honing en meer waard dan 't fijnste goud op aard'. Maar het is slechts een beginsel, en dat beginsel wordt ervaren temidden van de zonde die ons aan alle zijden omringt. En dat maakt het zoo bang voor Sion. Let wel, zij becritiseert God niet in dit verlaten zijn van Hem. Zij rechtvaardigen God daarin. Zij beseffen, dat zij het verdiend hebben. Maar zij zijn er niet mee vereend. Zij zouden zoo gaarne hebben dat het anders was.

En zoo komen zij aan, met groote drommen, naar het Huis van God. Zij komen aan en naderen een eigenaardig soort menschen, die in den tekst wachters genoemd worden. Zij komen aan, al bevende en al sidderende en al vreezende. Zij komen aan al roepende: gena, o God! gena, hoor mijn gebed! Of zij roepen: Och, mocht ik in die heilige gebouwen Zijn lieflijk heil en schoonen dienst aanschouwen; hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwonderend oog! (Ik geef nu maar mijn editie.)

En dat eigenaardige soort menschen zijn ook naar dat Huis gekomen. En nu zegt God tot dat eigenaardige soort menschen, die ook bevende aankwamen: Wachters op Sion's muren! zwijgt niet Gode bij dag en bij nacht. Wanneer ge ook mocht staan temidden van die drommen Mijner kinderen, spreekt! Eigenlijk zijn al Gods volk wachters. En gij moet dit spreken: ge moet des Heren doen gedenken!

Blijft daar nu even bij staan, en zingt!

Des Heeren doen gedenken!

Ja, waarlijk, het staat er. Leest maar den tekst.

O, daar zit zooveel in.

Die wachters op Sions muren mogen niet spreken over allerlei mogelijke dingen: politiek, menschelijke opinies, valschelijk genaamde wetenschap, filosofie, of wat er meer van dat rot moge zijn. Zij moeten heel positief spreken over den Heere en Zijn gedachtenis.

Laat mij het nu eens zoo mogen zeggen, dat een kind het verstaan kan: ze moeten zoo spreken, dat de menschen bij den voortduur aan God denken. Zij moeten God bij het gehoor brengen.

Zij moeten op den kansel staan, en daar moeten zij gedurig getuigen van God.

Spreekt geduriglijk tot een gedurige herinnering van God!

Spreekt, wachters van Israel!



Zwijgt niet Gode, o wachters!

Laat er geen stilzwijgen gevonden worden.

Dat beteekent niet, dat sommige menschen die zich wachters van Sion noemen doodstil op den kansel staan.

Maar het beteekent, dat sommigen van die menschen spreken over verkeerde dingen, en van God zwijgen.

En dat is kwaad.

Zij moeten van God spreken.

En de sprake die zij spreken is tweeërlei.

Eerst, zij moeten wat zeggen tegen hen die Sion benauwen.

Dat volk is ten deele buiten de kerk, en ten deele in de kerk.

En die laatste soort is de ellendigste aller creaturen.

Er zijn geen ellendiger menschen dan de soort die den naam dragen van Sioniet en die toch kinderen van den duivel zijn. Ge kunt ze hierin het best onderkennen: zij hebben een soort van genot om Gods lievelingen te trijteren. Ze kennen geen groter schik dan om dat volk den voet dwars te zetten, het te plagen met woorden en daden, het te beschimpen en allerlei kwaad, al liegende, tegen dit volk te bedenken en uit te spreken. Het zijn menschen die buitengewoon boos zijn. Zij zijn boozter menschen dan de "gangsters" van Chicago. Zij zijn veel boozter menschen dan het volk dat opgesloten zit in Alcatraz. En hun oordeel is van voorlang opgeteekend door een rechtvaardig God.

En tegen dat volk moet de wachter op Sions muren getuigen, en hen toeroepen: God komt met Zijn heilige engelen om gericht te doen. God heeft Zijn volk nooit verlaten, en Jeruzalem is niet verwoest, en het zal blijken dat gij leugenaars zijt en dat Sion toch werkelijk de lof der aarde is. Zij moeten den goddeloozen aanzeggen dat het wee over hen komt.

En zij moeten het bevende en bevroesde volk toeroepen: O volk! Zou een moeder haar zuigeling verlaten? Zou een moeder zich niet ontfermen over de vrucht haars buiks? Indien zij vergate: Ik zal U nimmermeer verlaten of vergeten. Sion! Uw heilzon is aan 't dagen!

Tot die wachters zegt God: Spreekt naar het hart van Jeruzalem en roept haar toe, dat haar strijd vervuld is, dat zij de volkomen overwinning heeft over al de vijanden!

En wat mag dan toch wel de grond zijn voor zulk wonderlijk handelen van God met dit volk, dat toch ook schuldig was in zonden en misdaden?

Ja, hier zou ik lang over kunnen schrijven.

En dan moet ik getuigen van dienzelfden God van Sion. Die God heeft Zich vernederd en heeft de gestalte van een Slaaf aangenomen. En toen heeft Hij al Sions zonden en schulden, en daarom ook Sions vloek en verdoemenis op Zich geladen, en toen is Hij van God verlaten geweest en zeer droevig geworden, zelfs tot den dood toe. Ik zou moeten schrijven van de smarten van Jezus.

Dan wordt het spreken zingen, en het zingen jubelen.

Dat jubelende volk is de lof der hemelsche aarde!

We smachten er naar!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

As To Conditions

As the reader knows there has been, for the last year or so, a controversy in our papers about the question of conditions in the covenant of God. The question was really whether the term "condition" could be used properly in Reformed theology, and especially whether it could be used to express Protestant Reformed thought.

The controversy was introduced by the Rev. A. Petter who defended the use of the term, and, evidently conceived of the possibility of its being used in a sound Reformed sense. He even thinks that we need the term in order to express a necessary element in the Reformed conception of the covenant, the element of the responsibility of man.

Some of our ministers, especially the Rev. G. M. Ophoff and the Rev. H. Veldman, opposed his views. They were evidently afraid that the Rev. Petter was turning in a wrong direction, and that, following that direction, we would ultimately land in the Heynsian conception of the covenant. And others of our ministers had somewhat the same notion as I gathered from remarks made in some of their sermons. Besides, the Revs. J. De Jong and B. Kok, according to the letter of Prof. B. Holwerda to the immigrants in Chatham, reported that recently an entirely different sound was heard in our churches, and that they meant by this a sound in favor of the liberated conception of the covenant is evident from the fact that this report was meant for liberated ears. And also some ministers in the Netherlands who read *Concordia* received the same impression from the writings of the Rev. A. Petter, and they even gathered from the fact that no discipline was applied to him the idea that there was ample room in the Protestant Reformed Churches for the liberated view of the covenant.

Now, it cannot be denied that the Rev. Petter himself is the cause of all these impressions. In his articles on the covenant he wrote in a way that favored the covenant view of the liberated and certainly "emitted an entirely different sound" from what has generally been accepted among us as Protestant Reformed people. Nor did he develop anything new on the subject, but what he wrote appeared definitely to turn into the direction of the Heynsian view of the covenant, although I am far from saying that he is Heynsian. Thus, for instance, I seem to remember that quite a while ago he wrote about the "covenant of works" without criticism. More recently he favored the idea

of parties instead of parts in the covenant. And now he introduced the controversy about "conditions".

Yet I am not ready to believe that the Rev. Petter is ready to embrace the covenant conception of the liberated and discard our conception. It is not quite clear to me what he wants. Although he is quite an able writer and undoubtedly has literary ability, his ability is often somewhat obscure so that one is often at a loss to know exactly what he wants and in which direction he is moving. Perhaps, he tries to borrow some conceptions from the liberated, which he thinks we need, and introduce them into our view. But however this may be, I do not believe as yet that the Rev. Petter means fundamentally to disagree with us. And his more recent writing shows that he does not agree with the liberated view of the covenant.

Nevertheless, I do not agree with the brother on the question concerning conditions in the covenant, and I think, too, that this terminology is dangerous and is liable to convey a meaning that is foreign to the Reformed conception of the truth. Whatever meaning we may attach to certain terms, we must never forget that words have meaning in themselves, and that this fundamental meaning of the terms stands out in the minds of the people. And when it is said that God establishes His covenant with us, or that we are saved, "on condition of faith and obedience", the impression this expression makes upon the minds of the people (and not without reason) is that the will of man is one of the determining factors in the matter of salvation. And thus, on the wings of a term, one instills *volens volens* the Arminian heresy into the minds and hearts of the people. And for that reason I consider the term "condition" dangerous. Nor is the Rev. Petter justified in quoting me in support of the use of the term, as he did. If he will check up on his quotations, he will admit that I wrote quite the opposite from the way he quoted me.

Now, in order to have a fruitful discussion on the matter from a Reformed viewpoint, it seems but proper that we, first of all consult our confessions, the Three Forms of Unity, and the Reformed Confessions in general. Besides, we can also turn to our liturgical forms, such as the Form for the Administration of Baptism, etc., which must be used in our churches and which are often considered standards of secondary value and importance.

And then we discover, in the first place, that the term "condition" never even once occurs in any of our Reformed Standards.

Do not minimize the importance of this obvious fact by saying that this is a mere *argumentum e silentio*, an argument from silence, which has but little force. For this is not true. In the first place, consider that our fathers certainly were acquainted with the term *conditio* for already Calvin who had a

profound influence upon Reformed thinking at the time and upon the formulation of the Reformed symbols, used the term. Yet the Reformed fathers in the composition and formulation of our confessions studiously avoided the term condition, or at least had no room for it anywhere in the expression of Reformed thought.

Besides, in as far as this is, indeed, an *argumentum e silentio*, we must not overlook the fact that our own *Three Forms of Unity* together with our liturgical forms are rather elaborate expositions of all the fundamental doctrines of the Reformed Faith, treating of God and man, of the fall and original sin, of the covenant and man's original state of integrity, of election and reprobation, of the incarnation and the atonement, of faith and justification, of regeneration and sanctification, of the church and the means of grace, etc., etc. Surely if the term condition had represented an important element in Reformed thinking it would be met with more than once in this elaborate exposition of our truth as we confess it. Yet it is never once used.

I think this makes this *argumentum e silentio* rather weighty and valid. It proves definitely, if not that our Reformed fathers consciously rejected the term and purposely avoided it, yet that they had no need of it, and that they found no room for it in the system of Reformed truth.

But there is much more.

The question is, of course, whether faith may be presented as a condition of salvation, and whether the establishment and continuation of God's covenant with us is in any sense of the word contingent upon our fulfilling the conditions of faith and obedience. This, unless we juggle words, is the plain and simple meaning of the question, and in this simple form it certainly will stand before the minds of the people.

But I dare say that, in this sense, the term condition not only has no room in the Reformed system of doctrine, but is, as far as our Confessions are concerned, thoroughly unreformed.

For our Confessions uniformly present faith not as a condition which we must fulfill, but as a God-given means or instrument empowering the soul to cling to Christ and to receive all His benefits, and that is a radically different conception from that of condition. And as far as obedience or walking in the way of the covenant is concerned, also this is never presented as a condition but rather as the fruit, in fact, as the inevitable fruit, of our being ingrafted into Christ.

Let us consult our Confessions on these points.

In the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII, question and answer 20, we read: "Are all men, then, as they are perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith."

Notice that faith here is the spiritual means or, as it is often called, the instrument, whereby we are ingrafted, incorporated (ingelijfd, einverleibt) into Christ. This is an entirely passive notion. Man has nothing to do with it. Besides the Word of God plainly teaches us that this instrument is given us of God. Man does not have the power to believe in Christ of himself. This, too, is taught by the Heidelberg Catechism in the next question and answer, which reads as follows: "What is true faith? True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His word, but also an assured confidence which the Holy Ghost works, by the gospel, in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given me by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merit."

The point is, of course, that if faith is an instrument which God uses and works in the heart of man, it certainly cannot be, at the same time, a condition which man must fulfill in order to obtain salvation, or to enter into the covenant of God. How different the sense of question and answer 20 of the Catechism would become if we would read: "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No; but only those that comply with the condition of faith, and receive all his benefits." I am well aware, of course, that those Reformed theologians that favor the term "conditions", usually add that God Himself fulfills all conditions. But this is plainly camouflaging the truth that there are no conditions which man can or must fulfill to obtain salvation.

The same truth is implied in Lord's Day XX, which reads: "What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost? First, that he is the true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; secondly, that he is also given me, to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits, that he may comfort me and abide with me forever." Also here it is evident that faith is the instrument, not of man but of God, to make us partakers of Christ. And once more, the idea of condition is completely foreign to this Lord's Day.

It is true that in the Lord's Day that speaks of justification by faith, it is the activity of saving faith that is emphasized rather than faith as a power. It tells us that we are justified because God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ, "inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart." And in question 61 we read that we are righteous by faith only because "I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only." But also this is far from saying that faith is a condition unto justification. It only means that the believer is able to receive the grace of justification by faith as a means which is given the sinner by God.

Again the same truth is emphasized in question and answer 65: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence does this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." Also here, let me point out, there is no room for anything man can or must do. *We are made partakers* of Christ and all his benefits by a true faith and of that faith the Holy Ghost alone is the author. Where would there be any room for the notion that faith is a condition unto salvation? There is no room for it whatever.

(to be continued)

H. H.



ATTENTION, — Consistory of Creston!

I am still waiting for your apology.

H. H.



Van Boeken

De Opstanding, door Dr. C. Bouma. Uitgever J. H. Kok, Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f. 0.95.

Dit boekje van 44 paginas, behoort tot de series *Evangelie en Wereld*. Het is eigenlijk een apologetisch geschrift, zooals de titel, niet van dit boekje zelf, maar van de series, te verwachten geeft. In menig opzicht is het een mooi werkje, dat waardig is gelezen te worden ook door ons volk voorzoover als het nog Hollandsch leest. Het behandelt de opstanding van Christus en haar beteekenis voor ons leven zoowel als voor de hope der heerlijke opstanding in den dag van Christus. Het is geschreven in zeer heldere stijl, iets dat vooral van beteekenis is voor onze Yankee-Dutch.

Eén opmerking moet me uit de pen. Wie een apolo-gie (in den goeden zin van het woord) schrijft over de opstanding van den Heiland, moet niet voorbij zien, dat de opstandingsverhalen in de Evangelien zelf het onmiskenbaar stempel der waarheid dragen. Geen kunstenaar had die verhalen uit zijn duim kunnen zuigen, en vooral geen eenvoudige visscherlieden. De apostelen hebben kennelijk eenvoudig getuigd, wat ze gezien en gehoord en met de handen getast hebben van het woord des levens in de opstanding van Jezus Christus, beide uit het oogpunt van haar werkelijkheid en van haar wonder. Getuige: het ledige graf, de plaats, waar Jezus gelegen had, het wonder van de linnen doeken, de verschijningen in verschillende gedaanten, etc.

H. H.

Geloof en Heiliging, door Prof. Dr. G. C. Berkhouwer.
Uitgever J. H. Kok, Kampen, Nederl. Prijs f. 4.95.

Dr. Berkhouwer is als schrijver geen onbekende meer onder ons. Het boek, dat we thans bespreken en gaarne bij ons Hollandsch lezend publiek aanbevelen, althans bij degenen, die niet aarzelen om hun "thinking cap" op te zetten, behoort tot een series van dogmatistische studiën van denzelfden schrijver. Het boek beslaat 217 paginas, en is een vergelijkende studie over het verband tusschen geloof, rechtvaardiging en heiliging. Dr. Berkhouwer behandelt zijn onderwerp in acht hoofdstukken, en vergelijkt de Gereformeerde waarheid met en verdedigt haar tegenover Rome en mannen als Kohlbrugge, Barth, Althaus, Wesley, Kuiper, Bavinck, Haitjema, e.a.

Wie belang stelt in eene "up to date" en zuiver Gereformeerde studie over de heiliging of heiligmaking en niet bevreesd is, zoals ik zei, zijn "thinking cap" op te zetten, schaffe zich dit boek aan. Trouwens, de stijl is helder en het is niet moeilijk voor iemand, die zijn Hollandsch kent het boek te lezen.

Met de critiek op Kuiper's filosofie van het "ik" en de "kern van het ik" zijn we het volmaakt eens. Zie ons boek "Van Zonde en Genade". Ook met des schrijvers waardeering van Kohlbrugge.

Gaarne hadden we in het hoofdstuk over den "Voortgang der Heiliging" iets meer gelezen over Zondag 44, H. C. Dat de "*allerheiligsten*" nog maar een "*klein beginsel*" heeft beteekent, m.i., ook, dat voortgaande heiliging geen voortgaande wedergeboorte kan beteekenen.

H. H.

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Geschiedenis der Godsopenbaring, door Dr. J. H. Bavinck. Uitgever J. H. Kok, Kampen, Nederland.

Dit boek is geen *historia revelationis*, maar een "handboek voor de kennis van de Bijbelsche Geschiedenis". Het is een lijvig boekdeel, dat met de registers en de inhoudsopgave 700 bladzijden beslaat. Het dekt, na een inleidend hoofdstuk over "Israel in de dagen van Jezus", heel de Nieuw Testamentische geschiedenis zooals die vervat is in de vier evangeliën en de Handelingen der Apostelen.

De verdienste van dit boek is niet, dat het nieuwe gezichtspunten opent, maar dat het in zeer heldere taal en op uiterst eenvoudige wijze de bijbelsche geschiedenis weet te beschrijven.

Met de beschrijving van de opstanding van Jezus en van de netjes opgevouwen doeken in het graf ben ik het niet eens. Ook niet met des schrijvers oordeel over de verkiezing van Matthias tot apostel.

Wie een mooi en eenvoudig boek wil hebben over de Nieuw Testamentische geschiedenis, schaffe zich dit werk aan.

H. H.

Freedom Under Grace

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Rom. 6:14.

The sinner, apart from Christ, is under the law; and in that state sin has dominion over him. It is his master and lord, and he is its slave.

He that, through faith, is in Christ, is no longer under the law, but under grace; and in that state he is free from the dominion of sin. Grace is his lord, and exercises dominion over him.

The natural man, being under the law, is free *from* righteousness *unto* sin; the spiritual man, under grace, is free *from* sin *unto* righteousness.

Such is, in brief, the implication of the words of the Holy Scripture in Romans 6:14. The apostle is answering a question here. He had been expounding the doctrine of free justification, through faith in Christ. A man is justified, not by works, but freely, by grace, through the righteousness which God prepared for him in Christ Jesus, and of which he partakes by faith. But this might give rise, and frequently does give rise, to the objection that is expressed in the form of the question: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Superficially considered that would appear to be a quite logical inference from the doctrine of justification without works. If our works have no bearing upon God's judgment over us, so that our sins cannot be the ground of our condemnation before God, nor our good works be the basis upon which we are justified, does it not follow logically that we are now free to sin? In fact, is it not true that our sins must serve to bring into bold relief the glory of the grace of Christ, so that, the more we sin, the more grace will abound?

However, he who would thus argue would thereby reveal that he has no understanding of the mystery of grace whatsoever. And he that would act in accord with that argumentation would simply show that he is a total stranger to the power of that wondrous grace whereby he is freely justified before God. For exactly the opposite is true. The sinner, under the law, always says: "Let me continue in sin." He will not, and cannot will to say anything else, for sin has dominion over him. But the justified believer, exactly because he is no longer under the law, but under grace, cannot say this, still less act accordingly. He is free from the dominion of sin. And in that freedom he says: I hate sin, and love righteousness!

Putting it paradoxically, we might express it thus: under the law the sinner hates the law, and transgresses it; under grace, and no longer under the law, the sinner loves the law and keeps it. Now that seems

very strange. And we may well inquire a little more deeply into this matter. Why should a man without grace, under the law, trample that law under foot? And why should a man that is redeemed from the law, now love it, and keep it? What does it mean to be under the law? And what is it to be under grace? What does it imply that sin has dominion over a man? And what is freedom from that dominion?

Let us first try to understand the meaning of that term *law*. By law here is, of course, meant the law of God. But what is that law? Is it a mere code, such as some human ordinance, which a man may violate with impunity unless he is caught at it? Not at all. It is rather the living will of God that encompasses the creature on every side, within the sphere of which every creature is created to live, and to transgress which involves its inevitable destruction because God always maintains His own law. The law of God is never arbitrary, but is in harmony with the very nature of the creature. Thus there is a law for the tree to be rooted in the soil: pull up the tree, and it dies. It is the law of the fish to move in the water: draw it out of the sphere of its own law, and it perishes. So there is the law of God for man. He is a moral creature, formed to bear the image of God, and to live in true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. God's law for him is that he shall love the Lord his God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, that he might thus live in covenant fellowship of friendship with his Creator. The question is often asked to what law the apostle refers here in the epistle to the Romans. Does he mean the ceremonial law of Moses? Or has he in mind the moral law of the ten commandments? I would answer that principally, there is no difference. For the heart of the law of God, no matter what form its revelation may assume, is always the love of God.

But you ask: is not man always under this law? And we reply: indeed he is. There is only One that is not under, but above the law, that is a law unto Himself, and that is the sovereign Lawgiver Himself, the Lord of heaven and earth. Unto the everlasting ages of ages man remains under the law of love. And again you ask: how then can the apostle intimate that one who is under the law is necessarily under the dominion of sin; and, moreover, say that, if we are under grace, we are not under the law? The answer is that the apostle is speaking of the sinner. If that sinner is not under grace, the law condemns him to the bondage of sin. If he is under grace, he is no longer under the law at his own responsibility, and the law cannot condemn him.

Let us look at the state of the sinner a little more closely. He was created under the law, but also *in* the law. He was under the law in the sense that God demanded of him that he should love Him. And he

was *in* the law, for God had created him so that his whole nature was in harmony with that law of love. He was capable of keeping the law of love perfectly. That inner harmony of his nature with the law of the love of God was his freedom. And in that liberty he truly lived, walking in the light of God's blessed favor. But he transgressed. He trespassed the boundary of the law. The result was that he was still under the law, but no longer in it. Just as a fish in the water may be said to be both under and in the law of God, so man was created under and within the sphere of the law. And just as a fish that is washed on the break-water may be said to be still under, but no longer in the law, so man that transgressed was, indeed, still under the law, but outside of its sphere. Now, what does that imply? What is the state of a man under but not in the law? It is the state of death. For the law gives life to him that keeps it to all that live within its domain; but it curses and pronounces the death sentence upon all that transgress it: "cursed is every one that continueth not in all that is written!" Or, as it was revealed to man in the first paradise: "the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!" And this sentence cannot be postponed. It is immediately effective. As soon as man, who is under the law of love, trespasses, the sentence of death is executed upon him. Always the transgressor of the law of love lies in the midst of death. The sinner is dead through trespasses and sins.

Now this death of the sinner implies that he is under the dominion of sin. He is deprived of his true life. He lost his knowledge of God, and walks in the darkness of the lie. His mind is darkened. His will is perverted so that it is no longer in harmony with the will of God: he loves iniquity. Instead of being consecrated to the living God in true holiness, he has become defiled and impure in all his desires, and he indulges in the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Sin rules over him. And he is the slave of sin.

Let us understand clearly that this dominion of sin over him is his punishment. The law of God itself sentenced him to be a slave of sin. In this sense, we may, indeed, say that sin has the right to rule over him. And in this slavery of sin he must needs remain until the guilt of his sin is fully paid. He cannot be delivered from it, until he has paid the last farthing. And, on the other hand, we must not forget that this dominion of sin is not contrary to, but quite in harmony with his sinful nature. That dominion is not such that he longs to be delivered from it, but that sin keeps him bound and shackled, and presses him into its service against his will. On the contrary, he loves his lord, he is quite pleased with the service of sin, he is a willing and devoted slave. Nevertheless, sin rules very really over him. He cannot will to free

himself from its bondage. He hates righteousness, and loves iniquity, nor could he love righteousness and hate evil. He that commits sin is a slave of sin. Sin has dominion over the sinner.

This is a hard doctrine. The sinner will never admit it. Even if he admits that he does, indeed, sin, he rebels against the truth that he is a slave of sin, and that he cannot even will to do the good. Is he not free? Does he not freely choose to do the evil he commits? Is he, then, not his own master, and does he not rule also over sin? If he wills, can he not decide to quit the service of sin? O, especially some sins may be habit forming, but can he not even break these bad habits, if he sets his mind to it? And so, while sin sits enthroned in his heart, and keeps him shackled from within, in the blindness of his proud rebellion, he boasts of his own freedom in the words of the well-known poem:

"It matters not how strait the gate,
I am the master of my fate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the captain of my soul."

Yet, however humiliating for this proud sinner the truth may be, the fact is that Scripture pronounces him a slave of sin. And if he will but be honest with himself, he will discover that he is not the master of his own heart, that he cannot induce or compel that heart to love the living God, and that sin is very truly his lord, and has dominion over him.

Such is the state of the sinner under the law.

But we are not under the law, but under grace. That is, we are not under the law as sinners. The result is that the law cannot condemn us anymore, that the cursing sentence of the law does not concern us, and that, therefore, sin has lost its right to have dominion over us. We are redeemed from the curse of the law, and delivered from the bondage of sin. Under grace we are free!

To be under grace means that we are in Christ. We are in Christ, first of all, in the forensic or legal sense, so that He represents us, and His righteousness is reckoned to us. He paid the penalty for sin, and He paid it for us. He paid the last farthing, and thus satisfied fully the justice of God, and the demand of the law against the sinner. He was able to pay the price, for He was perfectly free: sin had no dominion over Him. He is the Son of God, coequal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God of God, Light of Light. He is the Lord of the law. And He assumed the human nature, and became one of us, like unto us in all things, sin excepted. In perfect freedom He came under the law, and took upon Him the burden of our sins, the full responsibility of our iniquity. In perfect freedom, it was His meat to do the Father's will, even unto the end. In perfect freedom, He became obedient unto

death, yea, unto the death of the cross. In the freedom of the love of God, He descended into lowest hell, where all the vials of the holy wrath of God were poured out over His head. Yet, even so, under the curse of the law, He remained free, and He willingly poured out His life, in love of the Father as a sacrifice for the sins of His people. And so He paid all. The curse of the law He removed, the sentence of the law against us He blotted out, and by His perfect obedience He obtained everlasting righteousness and life for all whom the Father had given Him from before the foundation of the world.

To be under grace means that we are reckoned in Him, that His perfect righteousness is imputed to us, so that God judges us righteous, even though our sins be as scarlet; and that, therefore, we are no longer the legal slaves of sin. We have the right to be delivered from the spiritual bondage of iniquity. Sin shall have no dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace!

But there is more.

To be under grace implies, not only that we are legally in Christ, and that His righteousness is graciously imputed unto us, so that we are perfectly justified before God; it also means that we are now placed under the dominion of grace, and that under the power of that dominion, we are also actually delivered from the slavery of sin, and liberated unto righteousness to serve the living God.

Grace is the power of the living Christ! And by that power we are delivered, actually set at liberty! If grace did no more than grant us remission of all our sins, and justify us, who are in ourselves worthy of condemnation; if it merely excused us from the punishment of hell, and gave us the right to some external place of glory; if, for the rest, it left us as we are, lovers of darkness and enemies of God, there would, indeed, be room for the conclusion: "Let us sin, that grace may abound." In human society it would be a dangerous practice simply to pardon criminals, and leave them at liberty to continue their life of crime. But under grace it is different. Grace means, to be sure, that sinners are freely pardoned; but this is done only in order that they may now also be set free from the prison of sin and death in which they were held. Grace means that Christ is raised from the dead, and that He is exalted in highest glory at the right hand of God. It means that He has received the Spirit, and that by that Spirit He returned to us to dwell in us, to apply to us His right of salvation, to dethrone the power of sin, and to enthrone Himself in our hearts. Grace means that we are regenerated, raised from our spiritual death; that we are called out of darkness into the marvellous light of God, that we are sanctized and quickened unto a life of new holiness. In other words, the wonder of grace is that we are

delivered from under the cursing sentence of the law, in order that we might once more be brought into the sphere of the law of the love of God, and find our delight in the service and praise of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord!

Sin shall not have dominion over you!

It no longer has the right, neither has it anymore the power to enslave us. We are free! Free we are, not to continue in sin, but to serve the living God; not with the false freedom of licentiousness, but with the true freedom of perfect harmony with the law of the Lord!

And we must hear this word of God: sin shall not have dominion over you. For fact is that, in this life, we have only a beginning, a principle of this new freedom. Till the day of our death, we carry our old and sinful nature with us. And that old nature is ever inclined to seek again the old bondage and service of sin. It would have us yield our members once more to the service of unrighteousness. Always, in alliance with the world and its lusts, it would draw us away from Christ, seduce us from the faith, and bring us into submission once more to our former lord. Hence, the life of the believer in this world is a battle. This battle, to be sure, he cannot possibly lose, for he is under grace; and grace is more powerful than all the forces of darkness. It will surely preserve him even unto the end. But in this battle, and unto this preservation, Christ brings unto us His Word, the Word of grace, in order that by the power of grace through faith we may fight the good fight, hate sin, have our delight in the law of our God, and hold fast that which we have, that no one may take our crown. When, therefore, the tempter approaches us with the false slogan: "the more you sin the more grace will abound," let us hear the Word of God, and answer Him: "Sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace!"

H. H.



ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, October 15, 1949, our beloved parents,

Mr. and Mrs. Peter De Vries

will celebrate their 35th Wedding Anniversary.

We thank God that He has sustained them through these years and pray that they may experience His grace in the years to come.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. John F. De Vries

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra

and one grandchild.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Veracity Of God

(continued)

We were busy, in our preceding article, with a discussion of the significance (for us) of the concept, "truth". We noted in that article that, generally speaking, we may speak of the truth in a metaphysical, ethical, and logical sense of the word. In this series of articles we are discussing the attributes of the Lord. Veracity, truth, is, therefore, also a virtue of the Lord. This implies that the Lord Himself is truth. Before calling attention to this attribute, however, as a specific attribute of God, we asked the question, "What is the significance of this concept for us?" What does it mean for us to speak and do the truth? And we concluded our preceding article by calling attention to the fact that for us the Lord is the truth in the objective, ontological sense of the word. He is Himself the Absolute Reality. In this connection we discussed the essence of sin, which is the lie, and noted that all men are liars. And, bearing in mind that God is the Truth in the absolute sense of the word, we ended our article by referring to Christ as the Truth and the Word of God, which is the Word of Truth. Hence, objectively, the truth for us in the living God, revealed in Christ and in His Holy Scriptures.

Besides speaking of Truth in the objective sense, we can also speak of it in the ethical, subjective sense. This also applies to us, to the question: What is the significance of the truth for us? Truth, then, is the harmony between our will and being and the only true God. We have already called attention, in our preceding article, to the fact that every man is a liar. He denies, in all his walk of life, the living God. On the other hand, we are children of the truth, live and do the truth, if in all that we do we reveal the only and absolute Reality, the living God. This aspect of the truth emphasizes the harmony between our spiritual, ethical, conduct and the living God. This is what the Scriptures mean when they declare that we must speak the truth *in our hearts*. That God is Absolute Reality, Who alone does all things for His Name's sake and to glorify Himself, must live in our hearts and minds, must control us in all our activity—we ourselves must *be* in agreement with Him of Whom and through Whom are all things. Indeed, this implies that the truth is far greater in scope than the mere telling of a few facts, or a superficial, intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures. The truth must be *in us*—the living God must be enthroned in our hearts, must direct us in all our thinking and willing, must prompt us in all we think and do.

And, finally, in connection with the significance of the truth for us, we can also speak of the truth in a logical sense. This is the harmony between our thinking and speaking and the truth of the living God. Of course, we understand that this logical truth must be subordinated to the truth in the ethical sense of the word. In our speaking and thinking of the truth we must be controlled by the truth in our hearts. Even so, it is important that we understand that also in our thinking and speaking, we must conform ourselves to the Word of the living God. If we may not divorce the logical truth from the spiritual, ethical truth (which would imply a dead intellectualism), neither can we divorce the ethical, spiritual truth from the logical truth. The two are inseparable. Without the inner, experiential operation of the Holy Spirit no true knowledge of the Lord is possible; however, without the knowledge of the word of the Lord all true spiritual life is impossible. The Scriptures, the Word of God, present to us the true knowledge of things. The Scriptural account of creation, the world, of sin, heaven and hell, etc., is true. The world continually speaks the lie, also in the sense that they constantly would oppose the Scriptural presentation of the reality of things. The worldly institutions of learning, throughout our land and the world, are constantly creating the lie, undermining the Word, substituting for the Word of God the word of man, rejecting the truth as it is in God and in Christ Jesus and embracing that which is conceived in the heart and mind of man. Also the logical truth must characterize us. We must understand, see, and know the things as they are presented to us in the Scriptures. We must study the Word constantly. We must conform ourselves to the Word of God in all our thinking and speaking. And, as we study that Word of God, we must embrace its truths with a believing heart; these truths must become part and parcel of our heart and soul; we must ever apply ourselves, through prayer and the knowledge of the Scriptures, to grow, spiritually, in all the grace of Christ Jesus, our Lord; and day by day it must be our striving that we reveal ourselves as the people and the party of the living God, that He may be glorified by us, and that we thus proclaim in all our walk and conduct, that God is the alone living God, worthy to receive all praise and adoration, now and forever. Then the truth, the truth of the living God will be in us, and God will be all in all, also in our own lives. And then the truth will have made us free. Believing the truth of the Scriptures, confessing our own sin and guilt and corruption, believing in and embracing the Lord Jesus Christ, experiencing in our hearts and minds, through the grace and Spirit of Christ, the love of the everlasting God, we shall be delivered from the shackles of sin and the lie and of darkness and be truly free, to experience, now in principle and soon in eternal

perfection, the unspeakable bliss of the liberty of the children of God, once more to move about in the sphere of the living God, to love Him with all our hearts and mind and soul and strength and live unto the glory of Him Who alone is the Absolute Reality and Whom to know, in love, is everlasting life.

God Is Truth.

We would finally call attention to the concept, "truth", as it is specifically an attribute of God. God Himself is the God of truth. He is that, first of all, in the metaphysical, ontological, objective sense of the word. The Scriptures abound in passages to this effect. As such the Lord constantly speaks of Himself as the only true God, and that over against all idols which are vanity of vanities. "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods."—Ps. 95:3; "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all ye gods."—Ps. 97:7; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."—Ps. 115:1-8; "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even My witnesses. Is there a God beside Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a God, or molten or graven image that is profitable for nothing?"—Isaiah 44:8-10; "They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Deut. 32:21; "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—Ex. 34:6-7; "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He."—Deut. 32:4;

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."—John 17:3; "And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."—I John 5:10.

Besides these several passages, which can easily be multiplied, the Names of God also reveal Him unto us as the only true God. He is Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, the in Himself sufficient God, Who owes His existence to nothing outside Himself, the Cause of all things yet Himself without cause, the Beginning of all things yet Himself without beginning, the Creator of all things but Himself uncreated. He is the I AM, Who possesses the fountain of His eternal and infinite existence within Himself, Who never increases or decreases because He is the God of infinite perfection. Moreover, He is the Rock, God, the Almighty, the Most High, the Lord God of hosts, etc. God is His Name; the Names of the Lord are expressions of His being, tell us not only who the Lord is but also what He is; and He alone is the Rock, Almighty, Most High, etc. He is the true God, because as God He is as He should be; He is exactly what His eternal and infinitely perfect Godhead implies; He is the Absolute Reality. All idols are vain; they have mouths but speak not, ears but hear not, noses but smell not, eyes but see not. Hence, they are vain, false, are not what they pretend to be or are purported to be. It is said of them that they can save, but they cannot save. God alone is God, the one only true God.

Secondly, God is the God of truth also in the logical sense. He knows all things, and, therefore, also from this point of view, lives continually in the reality of things. The reality of all things is constantly before Him. He knows, first of all, Himself. He knows Himself as the Triune God. He fathoms His unfathomable Being from eternity to eternity; He knows perfectly His own bottomless Self; nothing which pertains to His infinite perfection is hidden from the Lord. As the eternal and Absolute Reality in Himself, He is everlastingly conscious of Himself, is also from this point of view the God of truth—all of His own infinite reality is eternally before Him, and He rejoices in Himself forevermore. Moreover, the Lord also knows all things. To this we have already called attention when we discussed the Knowledge of the Lord. He knows all things, not because He knows them as they are, but because all things are exactly as He knows them. The existence of things does not determine His knowledge of them, but His eternal knowledge of all things determines their existence.

Thirdly, the Lord is the God of truth also in the ethical sense of the word. This is also everywhere taught in the Word of God. "God is not a man, that

He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall not make it good?"—Num. 23:19; "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent."—I Sam. 15:29; "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."—Rom. 3:4; "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."—Titus 1:2; "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."—Heb. 6:18. That God is the truth in the ethical sense implies that He always *reveals* Himself as He is, that there is perfect agreement between the Lord as the alone and absolutely good God and His revelation of Himself. This is true, for example, of all the works of His hands. The perfect creation at the dawn of creation proclaimed the fact that the Lord Himself is good, a Light and that there is no darkness or death in Him. And the subsequent curse which rests upon all the works of God's hands since and because of the fall of man loudly proclaims the truth that the Lord is the God of perfect and infinite goodness and righteousness. Besides this revelation of the living God in all the works of His hands, the Lord always manifests Himself in all His dealings with the children of men. Always He reveals Himself as the God Who loves Himself as the God of infinite and eternal perfections. It is for this reason that He comes to all men with the inexorable command that they love Him with all their heart and mind and soul and strength. Never can the Lord act differently or reveal Himself otherwise. He loves Himself and therefore demands this love of all men. And because He loves Himself He will bless them who bless Him and hate and curse those who hate Him. This wrath will, therefore, ever abide upon the sinner. It will abide upon the *sinner* because He is the holy Lord of infinite perfections and goodness. And it will *abide* upon the sinner because He is Jehovah, the I AM, the unchangeable God, with Whom is no variableness or shadow of turning. And because He is the unchangeable Jehovah He loves and will love unto all eternity the people whom He has known eternally in love in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as that unchangeable Jehovah He is also the faithful covenant God Who keepeth covenant forever, Whose faithfulness reaches unto the clouds and Whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear Him and are the called according to His purpose. Such is the blessed import of the truth that our God is the God of truth, Who is the I AM THAT I AM. In Him we may and can trust; unto Him we may and can flee for refuge; upon His word we may and can rely. He, Who is in

Himself the true God, will surely remain true unto His people whom He has known for His name's sake. To deny them would imply a denial of Himself. But, for God to lie is impossible. Blessed is the man who, therefore, trusteth in the Lord, who has that God of Jacob for his refuge. That man is blessed and shall be blessed forevermore.

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

The Omnipotence of God we would define as that perfection of the Lord whereby He can do all things in harmony with His being and will. His is all the power and might and the dominion. Consequently, nothing can resist or change Him in the execution of His sovereign will and counsel.

Beautiful is the presentation of the Lord's omnipotence by the late Dr. H. Bavinck in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 11, 222-224, and we translate: "The sovereignty of God reveals itself finally in His omnipotence . . . Scripture never and nowhere limits the power of God. Already in the names El, Elohim, El Shaddai, Adonai, the idea of power appears upon the foreground. Moreover, He is called "El gadhool wenoora," before Whose face no one can exist, Deut. 7:21 f.f., "Abhir yisrael", Is. 1:24, "hael chaggadhool hagebboor", Whose name is Jhvh Zebaoth, Jer. 32:18, "ammits suah", Job. 9:4, "kabbir", Job 36:5, "yezzuz wegibboor", Ps. 24:8, "adoon kurios" Matt. 11:25, Rev. 1:8, 22:5, i.e., the Lord, the Possessor, the Ruler, Who possesses authority and supreme majesty; the King Who into all eternity rules over all things, Ex. 15:18, 29:10, II Kings 29:15, Jer. 10:7, 10 etc., but is especially King over Israel and as such rules over it, defends and leads it unto salvation Num. 23:21, Deut. 33:5, Judges 8:23, I Sam. 8:7, Ps. 10:16, 24:7, 48:3, 74:12, Is. 33:22, 41:21, 43:15, etc., and likewise in the New Testament is the "megas Basileus", Matt. 5:33, I Tim. 6:15, cf. Rev. 19:16; "pantokratoor", II Cor. 6:18, Rev. 1:8, 4:8, 11:17; "monos dunastees", I Tim. 6:15; Who possesses both, the eksousia, archee, potestas, the right, authority, and the competence, Matt. 28:18, Rom. 9:21, and dunamis, kratos, potentia, the fitness and the power to act, Matt. 6:13, Rom. 1:20. But the omnipotence of God also appears from all His works. The creation, the preservation, and the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, nature with its ordinances, the history of Israel with its miracles preach loudly and plainly the omnipotence of God. Psalmists and prophets repeatedly return unto these great deeds and use them unto humiliation for the proud and comfort for the believer. He is strong in power, Is. 40:26; creates earth and heaven, Gen. 1, Is. 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 18, 48:13, 51:13, Zach. 12:1, maintains their ordin-

ances, Jer. 5:22, 10:10, 14:22, 27:5, 31:35, forms rain and wind, light and darkness, the good and the evil, Amos 3:6, 4:13, 5:8, Is. 45:5-7, 45:16. He renders dumb and enables one to speak, kills and makes alive, redeems and destroys, Ex. 4:11, Deut. 32:29, I Sam. 2:6, II Kings 5:7, Ex. 15, Deut. 26:8, 29:2, 32:12, I Sam. 14:6, Hosea 13:14, Matt. 10:28, Luke 12:20. He has exclusive power over all things, so that nothing can resist Him, Ps. 8, 18, 19, 24, 33, 104; etc.; Job 5:9-27, 9:4 ff., 12:14-21, 34:12-15, 36:37. Nothing is too wonderful for Him, all things are possible by Him, Gen. 18:14, Zach. 8:6, Jer. 32:27, Matt. 19:26, Luke 1:37, 18:27; He can make of stones children of Abraham, Matt. 3:9. He does all his good pleasure, Ps. 115:3, Is. 14:24, 27, 46:10, 55:10, and none can summon Him, Jer. 49:19, 50:44. And, above all, His dunamis (power) is revealed in the works of redemption, in the resurrection of Christ, Rom. 1:4, Eph. 1:20, in the operation and strengthening of faith, Rom. 16:25, Eph. 1:19, in the distributing of grace above what we pray and think, Eph. 3:20, II Cor. 9:8, II Pet. 1:3, in the resurrection at the last day, John 5:25 ff., etc. And this power of God is finally also the source of all might and authority, of all power and strength in the creatures. From Him is the dominion of men, Gen. 1:26, Ps. 8, the authority of the magistrate, Prov. 8:15, Rom. 13:1-16, the strength of His people, Deut. 8:17, 18, Ps. 68:36, Is. 40:26 f.f., the strength of the horse, Job 39:22, the violence of thunder, Ps. 29:4, 68:34, etc. In one word, His is the power, Ps. 62:12, and unto Him must be ascribed the power and the strength, Ps. 96:7, Rev. 4:11, 5:12, 7:12, 19:1."—thus far the quotation of Dr. H. Bavinck. The beauty of this passage lies exactly in the fact that this eminent theologian quotes so profusely from the Word of God. And this, by the way, characterizes the *Dogmatics* of Dr. Bavinck throughout. These passages from the Holy Scriptures certainly reveal unto us the scope and glory of the omnipotence, almighty power of the Lord. We will continue, the Lord willing, with our discussion of this virtue of God in our following article.

H. Veldman.



IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy with our pastor, Rev. G. Lubbers, in the loss of his mother,

Mrs. Aggie Lubbers

May the God of all grace give peace that passeth all understanding.

G. Fisher, Vice-Pres.
W. Huizenga, Sec'y.

Jesus, The Man Of Sorrows

We turn to the verses 3, 4, and 5 of Isaiah 53 and read the word of God as follows, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, our sickness he bore; our pains, he carried them. But we considered him plagued, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we were healed."

The substitutionary suffering of the Saviour, His atoning for our sins on the cross some nineteen hundred years ago, is a work of God, the Triune Jehovah, that stands out in the midst of God's believing people a blessed reality. But well do they realize, do God's people, that for their thinking there are depths here that they do not fathom. God alone comprehends His own work. We do not. Nor have we need. Hearing the Saviour groan, and seeing His agonies, as we stand by His cross, we are silent and worship. And we give thanks that by His mercy we may believe in His name and bear His reproach.

However, these observations should not lead us to conclude that the atonement of the Saviour cannot be known conceptionally. It can be certainly. A tree, let us say, being a creature of God, a handiwork of the Almighty, is on that account, a mystery. We do not comprehend a tree. The germination of its seed in the soil of the ground, its growth and fruitbearing defy our powers of penetration. But we do certainly know this creature of God conceptionally. We have in our mind a clear picture of its form, and are able accurately to describe its structure. It is no different with the work of Christ on the cross. Though a mystery, we can know it conceptionally; for God has revealed it to us in the Scriptures.

Christ bore our pains and sicknesses and sorrows, says the text, as quoted in the original. The pronoun *our* must not be overlooked. It includes only God's people, such whom the Father gave Him before the foundation of the world, thus includes, does this pronoun *our*, only such who do believe and will believe in His name. Our text makes this clear. Listen to it once more, "Surely, He hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we do esteem Him smitten of God and afflicted" for his own sins, such is the idea. This, you will notice, is a confession of sin on the part of God's own people, brought to the light by His Spirit and grace. Now confessing sin certainly is a good work to which only God's people are empowered. And as it comes, does this confession, from the same people

who say, "Surely, He hath born our griefs," it follows that this pronoun *our* includes not everybody but God's elect only. Thus it includes, does this pronoun *our*, also you and me, if in tears of true contrition of heart we confess that apart from the redeeming grace of God, we, too, as well as the others, despise and reject the man of sorrows, hide our faces from Him, and esteem Him not.

That He bore our sicknesses and pains and sorrows, what does it mean but that by nature we are sick and in pain and sorrowful. And what are these sicknesses and pains and sorrows of ours but the cursings of the law of God overwhelming us on account of our disobedience to God's law. How dreadfully the law curses us. Attend with me to just a few of these curses as presented in the 28th chapter of the book of Deut: "But it shall come to pass," says the law there, "if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he has consumed thee from the land. The Lord will smite thee with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation and with extreme burning. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt and with emerods, and with the scab and with the itch whereof thou canst not be healed. And the Lord will smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness. And the Lord shall smite thee in the knee, and in the legs, with sore botch that cannot be healed from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head. The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee. And the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing eyes and sorrow of mind."

Such are some of the dreadful curses of the law by which we by nature are being pursued. For there in Paradise at the dawn of history through our first parents we transgressed the commandment of life which we had received. Then all these dreadful curses of the law came upon us and in consequence thereof we are by nature sick and in pain and our sorrows are nameless. O, it is true that there in the book of Deut. the law curses in terms of a language that is typical. But let us not imagine that the reality typified is any milder than its typical, pictorial representation there in Moses' discourse. By nature we are dreadfully sick indeed; and our sicknesses are spiritual and not merely corporal. Spiritually we are with consumption. Our fever is our hatred to God that burns like a fire within us. Our inflammation is of the heart that seethes in rebellion against God's will. Figuratively speaking, all the plagues of Egypt do cleave unto us.

There is no soundness in us; but only wounds, and bruises and sores from head to foot. We are blind, and deaf and halt and maim and mad and vain and foolish. Yea, we are dead—dead in our trespasses and sins. And our sorrows are nameless, they being the sorrows of men consumed by God's wrath, thus the sorrows of the cursed and the damned. We have no peace but only trembling and despair. Such is our plight by nature. However, the phrase "by nature" must be added by all means.

For, wonderful to say, looking again into the Scriptures, we by faith behold a marvelous thing. We behold ourselves not sick, not in pain, not sorrowful but with Christ in heaven, justified and clothed with the perfection and glory of the heavenly. What has made that possible? It is precisely this: Christ bore all our sicknesses, pains and sorrows.

Let us attend to this wonder of grace. It must be rightly understood. Let us first of all be clear on what it does *not mean* that Christ suffered our sicknesses and sorrows.

First, it does not mean that He was born with a sickly, weak body, so that, as He advanced in years, He fell out of one sickness into the other and that thus during His lifetime He was smitten with all the physical diseases that plague mankind. We do not once read of Christ being sick-a-bed.

Second, that Christ bore our sicknesses, pains, and sorrows, does not mean that the spiritual, moral pollution that by nature is ours domesticated itself in His nature, so that, though born holy, He became, as He advanced in years, unholy and sinful. He was the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. "And such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. 7:26). Had he contracted our spiritual-moral diseases he could not have borne our sicknesses, pains, and sorrows, however paradoxical this may sound.

Third, that Christ bore our sicknesses and sorrows does not mean that He knew remorse. Remorse, what is remorse? It is that distress, gnawing pain, incited by the sense of guilt. "O that I had feared the Lord and believed in the name of His Christ," will be the wail of remorse of the doomed in hell. It will form one of the essential elements in their suffering. But Christ was at no time filled with regret at anything He had done. Always was it His meat and drink to do the will of the Father. Remorse must of necessity be strange to such a man.

Fourth, that Christ bore our sicknesses and sorrows does not mean that He knew the despair that is by nature ours. Despair, what is despair? It is loss of hope, hopelessness, thus lack of faith in God. At no time did Christ lose hope, not even in the most dread-

ful hours of His passion. Hopelessness is the portion of the lost in hell.

Again, that Christ bore our sicknesses and sorrows does not mean that He suffered the pangs of an evil conscience that is ours by nature. How could it be? He was a holy man with feet always swift to run the way of God's commands. Hence, His conscience before God was good always.

Finally, that Christ bore our sicknesses and sorrows does not mean that He lived in mortal dread of God, as we do by nature, so that at the approach of God He felt like crying to the hills to cover Him before God's face. This was not His sickness, His sorrow, His pain. So will the wicked cry in the day of judgment. But Christ was a man of perfect holiness. It was His meat and drink to do the will of the Father. Why should such a man be afraid of God?

Yet Christ was sick and in pain. And His sorrows were nameless. But they had to be and actually were, to be sure, pains and sorrows that God's holy Christ could be allowed to bear. Just what were those sicknesses, pains and sorrows of the Saviour? A distinction must be made between His sicknesses, pains, and sorrows that were physical-psychical and those that were strictly spiritual as to their nature. Of His spiritual sicknesses, pains and sorrows, His perfect hatred of sin and His love of God were the root and the principle. How He hated sin. How He *must have hated sin*, being, as He was, a man of perfect holiness. The thought of sin, the fact of sin, the rioting of sin and unbelief all about Him and against Him and His Father filled Him with a holy loathing. It horrified Him, every minute of the hour of the twenty-four hours of each day. It agonized His soul. It made Him sick at heart. How His pure soul already must have writhed in anguish at the thought that the Father laid all our iniquities upon Him and that it was the burden of His Father's wrath against our sins that He was bearing. Considering who He was—God's holy Son incarnate,—and considering what we are by nature—men dead in sin—what a prolific source of suffering His mere cohabiting with us on this earth for thirty-three long years must have been to Him. But for our sakes He endured that suffering. Nay, more, taking us, His people, to His bosom and with His people clasped against His heart, He gave Himself into the hands of wicked men, such as we by nature are, that He might be crucified and atone for our sins on the cross.

It is in the light of His being the Holy Son of God, that we can understand somewhat His agonies in the garden. In just a little while now all hell will come storming in upon Him. The menials of Satan will spitefully use Him. They will beat Him with their fists, spit in His face, plow His back with their scourge, mock and revile Him, and hang Him naked on the cross. That will be the most terrible eruption of sin

that heaven and earth had ever witnessed. For so it will be done to Him, mark you, to Him, God's Holy Son. And He knows. He anticipates all. No detail of that terrible ordeal but that it stands out clearly in His mind. And knowing all, how sick at heart it makes Him. "My soul is sorrowful unto death," we hear Him wail. His sweat falls from His brow in great drops of blood. For it is He, the Holy Son of God, upon whom we were about to empty the vials of our carnal wrath. But this was not all. While He hangs there on the cross, he must complain that even the Father has forsaken Him—His Father, whose favor to Him is better than life. How that must have moved Him to the core, cut Him to the quick. Here the man of sorrows comes as close to suffering the agonies and the sorrows of the doomed in hell as it is possible for a holy man to come. Such were Christ's pains, sicknesses, sorrows and agonies—His spiritual sorrows. Such was their character. They were pains and sorrows unspeakable. For they were pains and sorrows such as only a holy man can suffer.

To these spiritual sicknesses, pains, and sorrows of the Saviour must be added all the other pains and sorrows that He suffered—those that were physical-psychical as to their nature. Though, as was stated, Christ was not literally smitten with all the diseases that plague mankind, yet essentially He was. For He was mortal. He, too, lay in the midst of death, as is evidenced by the fact that He could suffer and die. But Christ's physical-psychical sufferings included more than that certainly. They included our whole vile treatment of Him. And what did we not do to Him? We despised and rejected Him. We hid our faces from Him. So says the text. He bore our griefs, yet we did esteem Him smitten of God for His own sins. We wounded Him. We bruised Him. We pulverized Him, to reproduce the sense of the original text. We crucified Him. The painfulness of death by crucifixion! The shame and the disgrace of dying such a death! Christ suffered it all for us and in our stead. What then were Christ's sicknesses, pains, and sorrows? All that He suffered in spirit, soul and body. And how sick He was, how wounded, how bruised, how sorrowful, how full of pain for our sakes! And all these sicknesses and sorrows and pains, what were they but the burden, operation and expression of God's wrath against our sins? Mark you, I say the burden of God's wrath against our sins, not against His person. For He was the beloved Son of the Father always. It was not against Him therefore that the Father's anger burned.

But how can it be said that it was our sicknesses and pains and sorrows that He was bearing? The answer is simple. In the language of our text, "He was bruised for our iniquities," namely, all that He suffered He suffered in punishment of our transgressions, that the

Lord laid upon Him, so that in truth it was our sicknesses and pains and sorrows that He bore in His body, soul and spirit, bore under the impulse of a perfect love of God; and therefore He also fully satisfied for all our sins, so that in Christ we are as righteous before God as though we had never committed any sin, and if righteous, then verily also healed, because in Christ we have the right to be healed, from all our sicknesses and pains, both physical and spiritual, and freed from all our sorrows—the sorrows of sin, the sorrows of this present time, the sorrows of death, grave and hell—in a word, the sorrows of the cursed and the damned. For it is with our healing and peace as accomplished facts that our text deals and not with a healing and a peace that are offered us and that can be ours only on the condition that we allow ourselves to be healed and accept the proffered peace.

But do we not still lie in the midst of death? I speak now of God's people. Is it not true that our obedience is still only a small principle? It is true. We are saved in hope; but then verily in hope, the living hope that our lives are hidden with Christ in God, and that when He shall appear, all such who love His appearance, will appear with Him in glory. Surely, He did bear our griefs. He was wounded for our transgressions. By His stripes we were healed indeed. I speak now of God's people. Do you believe in God's Christ? You must believe in Christ; and if by God's mercy you do, then this people includes also you.

G. M. Op hoff.

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COMMENTS ON REV. PETTER'S ARTICLE

You write (Concordia for Sept. 29): "In our previous article we ended by saying that the danger toward Arminianism in the Liberated presentation of the covenant lay in the fact that election is not given the proper place."

This is strange language, brother. If words have meaning, then the thrust of your statement is this: "The Liberated presentation of the covenant is *not* Arminian, but it *inclines* toward Arminianism."

But that is not true. The presentation is Arminian through and through. As I have over and over pointed out, its principal tenets are two in number: 1) The promise of the covenant is given unto all the baptized, reprobate and elect alike. 2) God places the benefits of Christ's cross in the actual possession of men (elect and non-elect) on the condition of (op voorwaarde van) faith and repentance.

This is unadulterated Arminianism, brother. For if the promise is given to all, all have a legal right to the benefits of Christ's cross. And if so, Christ died for all. And the word "condition" in such a thought

structure, must indicate a human will free in the Pelagian sense.

You continue, "Expressing this a little differently, we may say that the covenant (the Liberated presentation of the covenant, Rev. Petter means) is not seen to embrace and include also the elective elements."

I ask, How can it, if the promise is given to all (elect and non-elect)? Such a doctrine is a flat denial of election and reprobation.

You continue, "For us it should be worth a great amount of patience and good-will to find wherein exactly we differ and where their error lies." Do you mean to be telling us here that it is hard to see wherein we differ and where their error lies? But that is not hard to see.

They say, "The promise is given unto all the baptized, elect and non-elect alike."

We say, "The promise is given only to the elect."

They say, "The promises of God are conditional."

We say, "The promises of God are non-conditional and unailing."

Is it now so hard to see wherein the difference lies between what they say and what we say? Is it so hard to see wherein according to our firm belief they err? Is it so hard to see that the two expressions *conditional* and *non-conditional* are contraries? and that to say that the promises of God are given to elect and non-elect alike is not equivalent to saying that the promises of God are given to the elect only? Nothing is easier than seeing wherein we differ and wherein their error lies.

You write, "This inseparable correlation of promise and demand is always added with emphasis by the Liberated. The brethren often express this by calling it a conditional promise. Dr. Schilder writes, 'And thus in the unbreakable unity of promise and demand which God speaks to us in baptism, speaks in covenant language. Faith is indeed a gift of the covenant God, but it is at the same time a condition which he sets. A condition placed before us to arouse our sense of responsibility.'

But the Liberated maintain that the promise is given unto all. As was said, in union with the promise, so conceived, faith as a condition must imply a human will that is free in the Pelagian sense. Yet you go on to say, "Now this, taken in its narrow compass is indeed Biblical language. If this were all that the brethren meant by condition we could have no objection. We have before seen that the Bible speaks exactly that way."

Are you not really telling us here that the covenant theology of the Liberated is contained in the Scriptures? You put the question, 'If this is all that the brethren meant by condition . . .' But for us it is not a question of what the brethren mean but of what they say. And what they actually say and write, the

covenant-theology one encounters in their writings, is not contained in the Scriptures.

In the sequel of your article you make this very plain to us. You prove conclusively that the teaching to the effect that the promise is given unto all is contrary to the Scriptures. It means that you say conflicting things: 1) The covenant theology of the Liberated is according to the Scriptures; 2) The covenant theology of the Liberated is not according to the Scriptures.

I just made the statement that you prove so conclusively—prove from the Scriptures—that the promise is given only to the elect, you write, "For that promise is not merely given to believers, as believers. It is in the first place given to Christ, Ps. 89; John 17:24; Gal. 3:15, and in Him to and for the elect. And this promise is in no way conditional. . . ."

I would endorse this statement from your pen one hundred percent, were it not for the fact that it contains a loophole. What this loophole is we will see in an article to follow.

G. M. Ophoff.

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REPORT CLASSIS CONTRACTA (West)

Classis West met in special session September 28, at Doon, Iowa, with the purpose of examining Candidate Homer C. Hoeksema. Present were delegates from eight of our churches and three brethren from the East, deputaten ad examina. After the examination Classis unanimously decided to advise Doon to proceed with the ordination of the candidate. The President of Classis, Rev. A. Petter, addressed the brother with words of cheer and exhortation, after which Classis sang a psalm of benediction. The diploma was handed to the brother and congratulations were extended. Rev. P. De Boer closed this session with prayer and thanksgiving.

M. Gritters, Stated Clerk.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, 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 God of all grace and the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, comfort them as He alone can comfort.

The Priscilla Society:

Mrs. Cora Westra, Pres.

Mrs. Angie Swart, Sec'y.

SION'S ZANGEN

Een Vloekpsalm

(Psalm 109; Slot)

We waren toegekomen aan de beschrijving van het ellendige volk van God, dat hier klaagt in hun vertegenwoordiger David.

Ja, en ook van nog een anderen Vertegenwoordiger, en dat is Jezus. Daarom schreven we de vorige keer het woord sprinkhaan met een hoofdletter. En dan zooals die Sprinkhaan door de heete winden van Gods toorn op en neder geworpen werd. Smarten van Jezus!

Nu klaagt deze man verder: "Mijn knieën struikelen van vasten, en mijn vleesch is vermagerd, zoodat er geen vet aan is."

Het gaat hier immers over den man Gods die verlaten, verjaagd door zijn vijanden, klaagt tot God, en die de wijsheid Gods in praktijk brengt door zijn vijanden aan te klagen bij de goddelijke tribune. Dat is wijsheid. Het is dom om U te wreken, maar het is wijsheid om al Uw vijanden bij God te brengen, en ze aan te klagen voor de rechterstoel. En dan zal God wel de rest doen.

O, het is dom om Gods volk te benauwen.

Indien ge nu met alle geweld Uw venijn wilt uitspuwen, doet het dan tegenover den booze. Ik weet wel, dat zulk doen ook niet goed is, maar het is toch niet zoo gevaarlijk als wanneer ge den hamer en den spijker beetgrijpt om dan de hand van Jezus te doorboren. Dat is een gevaarlijk spel. Dat roept om den eeuwigen toorn Gods.

Vrage: Indien die soldaten bij het kruis nu eens niet bekeerd zijn geworden, doch indien zij in hunne zonden gestorven zijn, dan zou ik willen vragen: hoe denkt U dat zij nu te moede zijn? Hoe zullen nu hunne gedachten zich vermenigvuldigen in de aanvankelijke hel!

Nu dan, in verschillende graad, ik stem het van ganscher harte toe, maar dan toch in beginsel doet alle man hetzelfde die Gods volk benauwt.

Er is vanuit dat oogpunt een bange zang in den bundel van Davids liederen: Hun bloed, hun tranen, en hun lijden, zijn dierbaar in Zijn oog!

Als Uw bijten en wonden vervuld is in alle zuchting en tranen van Gods volk, dan komt God en Hij zegt tot hen, met een oog vol van gramschap tegenover de belagers: "Al Uw tranen zijn in Mijn flesschen, en Ik zal ze bewaren tot den jongsten dag! En dan zal Ik ze

eischen van al dat gebroed, dat U zoo gaarne wilde plagen!"

Wacht U voor een grimmigen Rechter die Zijn toorn zal uitstorten over allen die zulke dingen doen.

Maar dat volk is in zuchting en lijden voor tijd en wijle.

En zulk lijden laat zijn sporen achter.

Zij worden mager en struikelen.

Of dit beeldspraak is of niet kan ik niet zeggen.

Het kan in het geval van David wel beide zijn.

Vasten is heel natuurlijk voor den bedroefde van hart.

Hoe zullen we eten met genot als ons hart bitterlijk bedroefd is?

En dan zijn de gevolgen dat wij struikelen en vermageren. Dan gaat het niet goed met hen.

En dat is het lot van al Gods volk, hetzij in meerdere of in mindere graad. Door vele benauwdheden moeten we ingaan in het Koninkrijk der hemelen.

"Nog ben ik hun smaad; als zij mij zien, zoo schudden zij hun hoofd."

't Is alsof we het zien.

Smaad is het gevolg van negatieve waardeering. Als men een mensch niets waard acht, dan versmaadt men zoo eenen. Al hetgeen niets waard is werpen we weg, en we vinden het geheel niet vreemd om zulke dingen te vertrappen.

Welnu, als ge in de waarheid wandelt, zoodat de waarheid van God U omhult als een gewaad, dan kunt ge er op rekenen, dat het vleesch en de duivelen U niets waard achten, en dat zij U daarom zullen versmaden.

Er was niemand op aarde die zoo omhuld was met de waarheid als Jezus. Wat zeg ik? Jezus *was* de Waarheid. En daarom is Jezus minder geacht geweest dan een Zijner volgelingen. En daarom is er niemand geweest die meer versmaad is geworden dan Jezus.

Gaat met mij; we zullen even buiten Jeruzalem wandelen, en aankomen bij Hoofdschedelplaats. Ziet ge daar den tekst niet? Het is de tekst die we nu aan het beschrijven zijn, in woord en daad gebracht door God, en naar Zijn raad.

Let op die huilende, lachende, spottende massa. Ziet toch op dat hoofdschudden waar mijn tekst van spreekt. Het Evangelie heeft immers van dat hoofdschudden gesproken? Ze lachen schamper; zij steken de tong uit; zij smaden HET KIND VAN GOD! Vreeselijke zonde aller zonden!

En Hij!

Hij is vermagerd en Hij is gestrompeld naar Hoofdschedelplaats. De Roomschen zeggen, dat Hij driemaal gestruikeld is onder den last van het kruis, en dat zij het toen aan Simon van Cyrene gegeven hebben om het

achter Jezus aan te dragen. Het kan wel zijn: we weten het niet. Maar het past wel bij Jezus. Ik denk dat Hij wel vermagerd was.

De vermagerde, de struikelende Liefhebber Gods. Hij had God lief; getuigde van Hem al den dag en moest den prijs betalen. Daar hangt Hij aan het kruis!

En Hij klaagt tot God, ook vandag nog, maar in Zijn volk: Nog ben Ik hun smaad!

Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat wanneer Gods volk den eersten dag (?) in den hemel aankomt, zij klagen tot God over het feit, dat Hij dat smaden toelaat, en niet naar de aarde toegaat om al dien smaad en dat bloed der vertrapping te wreken?

Ja, zij moeten nog wat wachten, want nog is Jezus hun smaad, en Hij moet hun smaad zijn voor al de dagen totdat den laatsten dag ingeluid wordt!

Maar het gaat aan Zijn hart, en daarom bidt Hij tot God in al Zijn volk: "Help mij, Heere, mijn God, verlos mij naar Uwe goedertierenheid!"

Dat moogt ge dan toch doen, en dat doet ge metterdaad. Ge roept om hulp en heil. God stort uit over Zijn geplaagde volk den Geest des gebeds en der smeking. Ge beluistert het in den tekst. En ik weet, dat die tekst een echo erlangt in Uw diepe hart, waar diezelfde Geest bidt met onuitsprekelijke zuchtingen. O, het was goed voor Maria van Magdala om haar hart voor Jezus uit te storten, na al dien langen lijdensweg der zeven duivelen die haar zoo lang en zoo fel geplaagd hadden. Het is zalig om te bidden tot God!

Help mij, O Heere mijn God!

En Gods Naam is ook deze: Hoorder der gebeden.

En zij worden verlost door de goedertierenheid Gods.

Hoe zit dat?

Dat zit zoo: Gods goedertierenheid is de goedheid Gods die Hem eeuwiglijk dringt om goed te zijn voor Zijn volk, hen die goedheid te geven, om dan voorts Zelf hun deel te zijn tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Zoo wordt Gods volk verlost. Want verloren te zijn wil juist zeggen, dat wij God kwijt zijn. Ge kunt dat ook anders uitdrukken en ook wel op onderscheidene wijzen, maar het komt toch hierop neer, dat wij God kwijt zijn. Dat wij niet meer deelen in Zijn lieflijke nabijheid en gemeenschap. Verloren te zijn wil zeggen, dat wij "ver van God de weelde zoeken". En van Gods zijde, verloren te zijn wil zeggen, dat God "van verre met gramschap aanziet de trotsche zielen".

Maar als de goedertierenheid Gods over U is, dan strekt God Zijn eeuwige armen naar U uit, brengt die armen onder U, en trekt U op uit alle diepten der smarten totdat ge aankomt in Zijn uiteindelijke hemel, daarboven bij God. O, daar te zijn!

Als maar vaststaat nu, dat Gods goedertierenheid verlost.

Let wel, Hij biedt het niet aan, maar Hij doet het daadwerkelijk.

Dat is de zaligheid voor al Zijn gekende Davids, rondom den oorspronkelijken David. En dat is Jezus. Zooals Hij dien David uit de eeuwige hel optrok tot in Zijn armen, zoo zal Hij optrekken alle de Davids die in den Eersten David begrepen zijn.

"Opdat zij weten dat dit Uwe hand is, dat Gij het, Heere, gedaan hebt."

Hebt ge het gezien? Bemerktet gij, dat zelfs de goddeloozen theologie moeten leeren?

Gods volk moet uit zijn ellende en smart verlost worden door Gods goedertierenheid, opdat de goddelooze zien moge dat het altemaal Gods hand is, dat God het gedaan heeft.

Maar dan zal het er spannen. En heeft dan ook gespannd, al de eeuwen door.

Ja, de goddeloozen hebben het gehoord uit den mond van Gods volk. Maar ze zijn verbitterd geworden. Toen Abel zeide: Kaïn, mijn broeder, de zaligheid is des Heeren! Ge moet een klein schaapje den strot af snijden, en het onschuldig bloed van dit lammetje doen stroomen, doen stroomen . . . , toen heeft het gespannen. Kaïn heeft de theologie van Abel wel verstaan met zijn natuurlijk verstand. En hij is er ook door verbitterd geworden. O, voor zijn part had Abel kunnen leven totdat hij stierf aan verval van krachten, als hij zich maar stilhield over de gehate theologie van Gods verlossingen in het bloed, d.w.z., als hij maar zweeg over Gods goedertierenheid die alles doet.

Ja, dan spant het er.

Spanningen der eeuwen.

Het zal toch wel mooi zijn als die spanningen verdwijnen, als den roes uitheeft, als de schaduwen ophouden, als de nevelen opgeklaard worden, en als alles vrij en blij wordt. Als men kan ademen na zooveel bangen tegenspoed. Als men elkaar vertrouwen kan. Als Ephraïm Juda niet meer benauwt. Als de bange spanningen ophouden en er vrije blijmoedigheid zal heerschen. Ik verlang er naar.

"Laat ze vloeken, maar zegen Gij: laat ze zich opmaken, maar dat zij beschaamd worden; doch dat zich Uw knecht verblijde."

Het is bang als ge gevloekt wordt.

De schrik slaat U om 't hart als de mensch zich tegen U stelt met zijn van haat verwrongen aangezicht, om dan met verheffing van stem U te vervloeken. Dat is erg.

Maar het volk van God keert zich dan naar God heen en zegt, neen vraagt, Heere zegen mij, en laat die vloek gesmoord worden. Laat die vloek toch niet uitkomen, maar laat toch alle dingen meewerken ten goede. En de vloek is het tegenovergestelde: alle din-

gen zijn dan ten kwade voor U.

Laat ze zich opmaken, maar dat zij beschaamd worden!

Dat ziet op al de plannen van het goddelooze rot. Zij maken zich op. Ge weet wel, dat als ge iets heel bijzonders moet doen, als ge iets wilt doen, dat alle aandacht van Uw hart en verstand heeft, dan moet ge U opmaken. Men maakt zich niet op voor beuzelarijen.

Nu dan, laat ons heel voorzichtig zijn. Laat ons met alle eventualiteiten rekenen. We moeten onzen slag slaan, en zeker wezen van succes! En zoo maken ze zich op tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde. Want dat is het. Als men tegen Gods volk zich opmaakt ten strijde, dan doet men het eigenlijk tegen God. Want God is in hen.

Als zij dat doen, Heere, laat ze dan beschaamd worden.

Men wordt beschaamd als in al onze plannen geblazen wordt.

Als een mensch een zaak opzet, om zijn nooddrift te verdienen, en om een zekere som over te houden van jaar tot jaar, zoodat zijn toekomst geborgen is, en als men dan in zijn zaken faalt, failliet slaat, en alles verliest, met groote schulden op den koop toe, dan wordt men beschaamd en dan komt men beschaamd uit.

En zoo is het dan ook met de goddeloozen.

Ik denk hier aan een verschrikkelijken tekst.

Ge kunt hem vinden in den tweeden psalm. Daar ziet ge de volken die zich opmaken tegen God en Zijn gezalfde. Ge luistert in den psalm naar hun spreken: Laat ons hunne banden verscheuren, en hunne touwen van ons werpen!

En dan komt die verschrikkelijke tekst: "Die in den hemel woont, zal lachen . . ."

Kent ge iets verschrikkelijker dan een God die spottend over U zou lachen in den hemel, terwijl gij hier op aarde U aan 't opmaken zijt in een verkeerd werk?

Ik moet er niet inkomen.

"Laat mijne tegenstanders met schande bekleed worden, en dat zij met hunne beschaamdheid zich bedekken als met eenen mantel."

Dat is een beschrijving van de hel. Het is een onuitsprekelijke bangheid om een eeuwige openbaring te zijn van de idee van beschaamdheid.

En dan komt er ten slotte nog wat lovensstof: "Ik zal den Heere met mijnen mond zeer loven, en in het midden van velen zal ik Hem prijzen. Want Hij zal den nooddriftige ter rechterhand staan, om hem te verlossen van degenen die zijne ziel veroordeelen." Ik had dat laatste woordje "zijne" haast met een hoofdletter geschreven, want het is centraal toch Jezus!

G.Vos.

FROM HOLY WRIT

(Continuation of Exposition of Eph. 5:14)

In our consideration of the passage from Ephesians 5:14 we should bear in mind, that the context is very helpful in determining not only the proper relationship of the command and the promise which is here added, but that it is also helpful in understanding the implication of the terms here used.

At first glance the terms of the exhortation give reason to be a bit perplexed as to their meaning. The mold into which the apostle here casts his thought make us ask: What is to be understood in "awake thou that sleepest," and "arise from the dead". Immediately the thought arises whether Paul is telling the dead to rise from the dead; whether Paul is here probably not presupposing that the simple command would be sufficient to bring those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" to the activity here demanded.

Obviously such cannot be the meaning of the Word of God here.

In the first place, this is not thus stated in the text. Nor is this the implication. The text does not say: Arise ye that are dead, but it says: Awake ye that sleep, and arise from out of the dead ones. The text is by implication speaking to those who have life, but they are not living it as they should. For the text is here speaking of those who are in a spiritual stupor in regard to very definitely defined sins. It is an admonition to those who are not fully aware and alert to their situation in an evil world as the children of light, nor to the precious truth of the promise of the great power that fills the lives of those who walk in the ways of faith and godliness.

This is implied in the very terms of the text.

It is interesting and instructive to hear what the exegete Greijdanus has to say of these terms in his "Korte Verklaring" (1925). We translate: "*Awake thou that sleepest*, i.e., awaken out of your sin-sleep (zonde-slaap) and *arise out of the dead*, i.e., do not remain lying where you are, for your find yourself amongst the dead. Comp. 2:1-5, but rise up, show yourself to be living, and depart from the midst of the dead, among whom you lie sleeping in sin." A bit later in the same work, delineating on the implication of the terms, Greijdanus makes the following comment: "*In awakening* is spoken of coming to one's self, (tot inkeer) of the consciousness of perversity, and of the change of the inner attitude. The *arising* (from out of the dead, G.L.) points toward the actual change in the walk and life, a breaking with sin, and a walking in the way of the Lord's fear and Word."

According to the quotation from the pen of the just mentioned exegete the question here touched upon is that of our concrete, actual and conscious repentance. Jesus pictures this to us very graphically in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The latter having *come to himself* said "I will arise and go unto my father".

The situation is very serious in our text and in this whole chapter. The apostle is not satisfied in our saying: "Well, yes, I admit that there is something not right in my life; but, of course, we have only a small beginning of perfection, and I don't even belong to the most holy and then . . . just leave it at that! And then still remain lying amongst the dead! Perish the thought! The church, the believers must arise from the dead. Their must be a complete change in their life. To this must be added *conversion in life and in very deed*. Only thus might the lost son experience the love of his father. Luke 15:11 f.f." (cursives of us).

The question arises here: but can those who are dead in sins arise from the dead. As we have stated before this is not possible. But again we may ask: but do those who are believers in Christ have need of this admonition? Is such an admonition, such a command necessary for God's children?

It is very evident that such is the case, even though it is and remains true, that the apostle is here addressing God's church in the world.

Of this church Paul says some very wonderful things. Paul addresses them as "the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus" (1:1). They are those who, having heard the gospel of truth in Christ not only believed the same, but were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise unto the day of the final and glorious redemption. (1:3) That was their confession, and they have faith in Christ and love for all the brethren. (1:15) He is addressing the believers, who are the object of his prayer; he prays for them that they may have the eyes of their heart enlightened, in order that they might know the glory of God in all the saints, might know the hope unto which God calls them, and might experience the superabundant greatness of the power of God in Christ's resurrection and glorious ascension to their advantage. Yea, the apostle is here addressing the church for whom he prays, that they might dwell in their hearts by a living faith, and that so with all the saints they might know the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ that passeth all knowledge, and that so they might be filled in that fulness of God, which He had revealed and prepared in Christ Jesus.

The apostles point of departure is definitely that of speaking to the saints in Christ. These have been called by the Gospel, heard and learned the truth as it is in Jesus, and were still in need of admonitions and instruction; were in need of his prayers.

How can these be in need of the apostle's words and warnings. How can they be in need of being reminded of the words: *Awake ye that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light?*

The apostle has in mind the church of all ages as represented in this particular church here at Ephesus. This church is composed of the saints who already believed and walked in holiness. Others in the same church were not as vigilant as they ought to be, they were in need of being aroused to spiritual activity. Others again needed to be awakened out of a deep sinful stupor.

Thus it is ever in the church of God in this world at any given time. And sometimes the whole church needs to be awaked to a very particular sin, a very particular form of sin, that so easily besets us. They, the church, is not deeply aware of her grave peril due to the forces of evil from within and without.

So it seemed to be in this case.

The apostle is speaking of a very common evil in the church. An evil which the highest form of the culture of the Graeco-Roman world could not overcome. In fact it could have no power against it, for the evil cannot win over evil. The devil does not cast out the devil. His house is not divided against itself. And this evil is that of moral depravity in every form. In thoughts, words and deeds. From the thoughts this becomes manifest in subtle speech. Paul mentions three forms of speech. He speaks of three forms of fornicative speech: *filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting*. These must not even be mentioned in their midst. It is and should be below their spiritual dignity. Take for instance: filthiness. This refers to dirty talk, smutty stories of which the world is full in all stations of life. Do these befit the man who has died unto sin?! Or to speak of: foolish speech. This refers to empty speech, seemingly harmless jokes, but which do not have a content, tending to positive instruction in the way of godliness? Is this the speech of those who have learned the truth as it is in Jesus, of those whose speech should be seasoned with salt, that is, which should have a spiritual positive flavor? Or again, take: jesting. This is the subtle and nimble play of the thought, the nimble suggestion of evil and the corrupt without mentioning it. This is Satan's hellish power of suggestion of evil, the same being far worse even in the consciousness of evil men, and for that reason employed by them, than outside filthy speech. It is not only doing evil, but having a delight in them that do it.

Now the church is in need of admonitions to not be overcome of this evil, to have no part in it, but to keep herself unspotted from the world.

And to achieve this end God employs admonitions. For admonitions are a means of grace, being a part of the living preaching of the Gospel. They "give grace"

to the believing hearers. (Compare 4:29). God has in His infinite wisdom bound the working of His grace, the grace of sanctification to the means of exhortation, thus binding His Word upon the hearts and conscience of the believers, awakening them out of the stupor of spiritual slumber and perversity. Let it not be forgotten that "grace is conferred by means of admonitions". Canons of Dort, III, IV, Art. 17.

In this admonition Paul does not tell the church to become what she is not. She is told to show forth in her life what she really is. More and more and in every part and relationship of their lives the believers must walk in the light, as children of God.

Hence, they must not think that the evil speech and actions of the wicked in their moral perversity is harmless; that God does not seriously look down from heaven to behold these sins, and that His wrath is not as really over this sin now as what it was in the days of Abraham over Sodom and Gomorrah. For upon these things cometh the wrath of God against the children of wrath! And the only way not to have fellowship with this is to reprove it.

Then the light of Christ falls upon it.

And in this we must rise from the dead. We must awaken from sleep. This we do when we confess the sin in our life, walk no more in the same, arise from the deadness of sin, choose not to walk with the scornful, but have our delight in the law of the Lord. For whatsoever doth manifest, doth show the sinfulness of sin is light.

Here is a very practical calling in the world. Daily we come in contact with this world. It approaches us, winks at us with its adulterous eyes, and beckons us to follow her example in eating, drinking and being merry, for tomorrow we die. And Satan tempts us. And he and the world find a ready ally in our corrupt flesh, our flesh in which no good dwells, being sold under sin! And thus very concretely and in very actuality and deed, we have daily to fight against this sin, with a complete change in our life, in inner attitude of hatred for all sin and love for God. And to show that we love God in the confession of mouth by reproofing evil. He who does not reprove sin—has fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Let not any one deceive himself!

"*He saith*, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead! Is that not more than sufficient?

But "He" also adds: And Christ shall give you light (shine upon you). This reward is certain for all who heed His voice.

There are still two matters that here call for your and my attention:

1. That the implication of the phrase: "Christ shall give thee light", is, that the joy of salvation shall be ours in a rich measure when we arise from the dead; we shall be surrounded literally with songs of deliver-

ance. We will then sing from the heart through the Holy Spirit in Christ unto God the Father in wondrous strains of thankfulness. That is the light of Christ in the church, in the living members of it.

2. This is only for those who arise from the dead. Not that the rising from the dead is a "condition" limiting God, so that God cannot confer joy where this conversion is not present, but it is a condition in this sense, that God will not give, and cannot will to give His joy of salvation to be experienced where there is not a complete turning unto Him in repentance. The fulfillment of the promise is connected in our life with a godly walk. And the godly walk has in it the tasting of the light of God's face, and joy of His great salvation.

Is this merely food for thought? Something for theologians to write dissertations about?

Nay, although it is food for thought, it is much more. It is the call to action. It is the call to repentance, to turn to God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. It is a matter of believing struggle.

While we struggle we already taste the favor of God, and the beginning of the eternal joy in our hearts. And this latter not that we should be satisfied with our progress made, but that we should be encouraged to further advances, until we shall arrive at the perfection set before us in the life to come!

Geo. Lubbers.



PERISCOPE

Common Grace

In a previous connection it was stated, as you may recall, that the subject of "common grace" was also among those which was being discussed in the Netherlands before the war and concerning which there was difference of opinion. In 1942 the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, also made certain dogmatic expressions regarding this theory. Although the declarations which were delivered by this same Synod regarding the Covenant of Grace became the greater issue, many protests were also delivered against the decisions relative to "common grace".

The following is only one of many such protests. We have chosen it as representative and pass it on as a matter of interest and information. Even though we should never attempt to hide or camouflage the differences which separate us from the Liberated

Churches, it is always worthwhile to review the things which draw us together. In fact, it may well be, that upon the basis of what is mutually agreed various differences may be resolved. For example, it seems to us, that if one is to be logical and consequent, his denial of a favorable attitude of God towards the reprobate ungodly, as affirmed by "common grace", must necessarily also precludes any commonness of attitude on the part of God to all children of the covenant without distinction. More particularly, if one will maintain, on the one hand, that God is never graciously inclined to the reprobate, how can he, on the other hand, still infer a gracious dealing of God with the reprobate in the covenant; as seems to be the expression in the insistence that baptism seals the promise to all without distinction. It would seem that if it is affirmed that God is never gracious to the reprobate but only to the elect, that same sharp distinction must be applied to the covenant—and there first of all.

There are also a few considerations which have led us to choose this particular expression of protest against "common grace". In the first place, as far as we could determine, it is written by a lay-man, a certain Mr. D. Roorda, and hence, expresses "the voice of the people". In the second place, it attacks the theory itself and takes a positive stand over-against it. And finally, its argumentation touches upon several points which are so familiar to us from our own struggle, and its language is, therefore, very familiar to us. For these reasons, we found it especially interesting and worth passing on.

The entire protest of Mr. Roorda includes sections dealing with other expressions of the Synod but we limit ourselves to the first part dealing with "common grace". Against the conclusions that were reached he protests. The quotation is from the brochure entitled "Verklaring Van Gevoelen" pages 78-82.

"Hier betreffen de conclusies de interpretatie van een wetenschappelijke term. Zulk een interpretatie door een Synode onzer Kerken gegeven, zal nooit anders dan vaag kunnen zijn, daar de Heilige Schrift geen interpretatie van wetenschappelijke termen geeft, en er dus gezocht moeten worden naar een compromis tusschen de definities van de gangbare wetenschappelijke stelsels ten opzichte van zoo'n term. In de conclusies is een wetenschappelijke term tot leerstuk der kerk verheven; de Synode Sneek heeft daarmede voor een bepaalde interpretatie gekozen t.o.v. de wetenschappelijke term "algemeene genade", en wil aan die interpretatie de kerken binden, wat voor mij een bezwaar is. Ingaande op de conclusies wil ik mijn verdere bezwaren als volgt formuleeren.

"1e. Er wordt gezegd, dat onder ons met de naam "algemeene genade" wordt aangeduid, 'dat God . . . over de gevallen wereld in deze bedeeeling nog niet de

volle straf der zonde brengt'. Dan valt dus ook Satan onder de "Algemeene Genade", want volgens Openbaringen 20:10 komt eerst aan het eind over hem de volle straf zijner zonde. In zijn moeten vervullen van zij maandat is toch geen genadige gezindheid Gods over hem te bespeuren!

"2e. Het wordt "algemeene genade" genoemd, dat God de gevallen wereld (dat zijn blijkbaar de booze menschen) in Zijn lankmoedigheid verdraagt. Nu is de Heere lankmoedig over Zijn volk, d.i.: wachten ten hunnen aanzien vaak lang om hun recht te doen, Lukas 18:7. Hij verdraagt veel van Zijn volk, Ex. 34:6. Hij is ook lankmoedig over de goddeloozen, maar niet *ondanks* Zijn toorn, juist om Zijn *volle* toorn over hen uit te gieten, I Petrus 2:8: waartoe zij ook gezet zijn; Rom. 9:17: *opdat* Ik in u Mijn kracht bewijzen zou; Ps. 92:7 en 8: Een dwaas verstaat *dit* niet: dat de werkers der ongerechtigheid bloeien, opdat zij in der eeuwigheid verdelgd worden; Matth. 18:6: De Heere is een God, die ten allen dage toorn over de goddeloozen; Ps. 7:12: Hij heeft de vaten des toorns wel met veel lankmoedigheid verdragen, maar 't is om Zijn toorn te bewijzen en Zijn macht bekend te maken; Rom. 9:22; Ps. 73:10, 12, 17, 18: De goddeloozen *in* de Kerk, wier leeringen door bijna allen worden toegejuicht, zijn in eere en hebben voorspoed, maar de Heere zet ze op glibberigen bodem en laat ze als een ruïne ineenstorten; Matth. 5:45: Wel doet God Zijn zon opgaan over boozen en goeden en geeft vruchtbare tijden, goed doende van den hemel; Handel. 14:17: Wel is Zijn goedertierenheid over al Zijn werken; Ps. 145:9: Wel heeft Hij dus een behagen in Zijn schepping, maar Hij toorn over ieder menschenhart, dat Hem niet gehoorzaam is; Ps. 75:9, en door hun lange leven wordt het oordeel der goddeloozen verzwaard; zij vergaderen zich toorn als een schat, Rom. 2:5: zij hoopen Gods toorn op; Pred. 8:11: juist door het uitstel van Gods oordeel neemt hun goddeloosheid toe. Spr. 16:4: De Heere heeft alles gewrocht om Zijns zelfs wil, ja ook den goddelooze toe voor het verderf, de ontwikkeling van den goddelooze voert tot het verderf. Dit is toch geen genade, maar wel voortdurende toorn!

"3e. Verder krijgen de geloovigen wel regen en zonneschijn en een opwekkende kop koffie, net als de ongelooovigen, maar de geloovigen krijgen het alleen in Gods gunst, in Zijn genade als een goede gave van hun hemelschen Vader om Christus' wil. (Catechismus vr. en antwoord 1 en 27). Daarentegen spreekt Christus van het 'blijven van den toorn Gods over de goddeloozen', Joh. 3:36. Al wat de goddelooze dan ook ontvangt, is in Gods toorn.

"4e. Dat het algemeene genade is, dat God ook in den mensch nog 'eenig licht der natuur heeft doen overblijven' berust op Rom. 1:18-22 en 2:14, 15. Nu dient

Rom. 1:20 en 22 aldus gelezen: 'Want Zijn onzienlijkheden worden gezien sedert de schepping (het duurde voort!) als zij met het geestelijke oog gegrepen worden, uit de schepselen, beide Zijn eeuwige kracht en goddelijkheid, zoodat (en opdat) de menschen zich niet verontschuldigen kunnen, omdat zij, hoewel zij God opmerken (zij zien Zijn werken in de schepping) Hem als God niet hebben verheerlijkt en geprezen, maar (het is veeleer omgekeerd gegaan dan het had behooren te zijn) zij zijn verijdelde geworden in al hun denken en redeneeren (over God) en hun onverstandig hart is verduisterd geworden (zij zien den wezenlijken samenhang niet meer recht). Terwijl zij zich uitgaven voor wijzen, zijn zij dwaas geworden (juist met hun hoog beweren van wijs te zijn kwamen ze voor het licht als dwazen).

"En vers 18 en 19 zeggen: 'zij houden de waarheid, (alle waarheid) door ongerechtigheid onder, zoodat, hoewel het kenmerkende van God onder (in) hen openbaar wordt, Gods toorn vanuit den hemel geopenbaard wordt'. Dit is toch geen *genade*, maar *toorn*. Door het 'licht der natuur' zien ze juist *niet* en hun onverstandig hart is verduisterd geworden. In de Dordtsche Leerregels III en IV, art. 4 staat: '. . . ja, veel meer hetzelfde (d.i. dat 'eenig licht der nature') hoedanig het zoo zij, *geheel* op verscheidene wijze bezoedelt en in ingerechtigheid *ten onder houdt*, . . . '.

"5e. In Rom. 2:14 en 15 wordt gezegd: 'Want wanneer de heidenen, die de (Israelietische) wet niet hebben, van natuur (zonder opzettelijke bekendmaking) doen wat met de wet overeenkomt, deze hoewel zij de wet niet hebben, zijn zichzelf een wet, die betoonen (laten uitkomen) het *werk* der wet (een zoodanig handelen als met de wet overeenkomt) geschreven (ingegrift) in hun harten, medetuigende hun conscientie, de gedachten onder elkander hen beschuldigende of ook ontschuldigende'. Zij doen dus *werken der wet*, dat zit er in (m.i.) als nawerking van der oorspronkelijke vanaf Adam tot Noach en misschien geslachten nog daarna. Er is een zekere verbasterde, onzuivere traditie, waaraan hun conscientie zich gebonden voelt, en gedragen voor de publieke opinie ('de gedachten onder elkander'). Maar van een 'licht der natuur' in den zin van een soort ingeschapen wet, die God nog weer in elk opnieuw geboren kind legt, een 'drang eener algemeene religie' is hier geen sprake en leert ook de Heere ons in Zijn Woord nergens.

"6e. Volgens Dordtsche Leerregels III en IV art. 5 van de verwerping der dwalingen wordt het spreken van "algemeene genade" (waarmee daar bedoeld wordt 't licht der natuur) als Remonstrantsch gesignaleerd.

"7e. In conclusie 4 wordt onderscheid gemaakt tusschen de "algemeene genade" of "gemeene gratie", die den 'rechtvaardigen' 'in ongehouden goedheid' door God bewezen wordt en 'de zaligmakende genade', 'die

de Vader . . . hun geeft'. Ook hiertegen heb ik bezwaar. Want het is toch zoo, dat een geloovige *alle* dingen in zijn leven alleen ontvangt om Christus' wille van Zijn liefdevollen hemelschen Vader. Matth. 6:26, 39; in I Petr. 5:7 wordt tot de geloovigen gezegd: 'Werpt al uwe bekommernissen op Hem, want Hij zorgt voor U'. En in Phil. 4:19 roemt Paulus: Mijn God zal nu al uw nooddrift vervullen (d.i. overvloediglijk geven) naar Zijn rijkdom in heerlijkheid (op heerlijke wijze) *in* Christus Jezus, d.i. de vervulling is in Christus gegrond, geschiedt om Hem . . . en in gemeenschap met Hem, als door God gezonden en gezalfden Zaligmaker. En zonder levensgemeenschap met Hem kan deze vervulling van alle behoeften in heerlijkheid niet geschieden. Uit conclusie 4 spreekt een tegen de Schrift ingaande tweedeeling, een dualisme in het leven van den geloovige. Zie ook Titus 1:15.

"8e. De conclusies constateeren verder, dat de zonde in haar doorwerking tijdelijk wordt beteugeld. Het is volkomen waar, God houdt ook de duivelen in toom. (Wij belijden zulks reeds in Art. 13 Ned. Geloofsbel-). Maar, dat daardoor 'mogelijkheden in de oorspronkelijke schepping gegeven, nog in de zondige wereld tot ontwikkeling komen', is geen bewijs van genade, maar alleen daarvan, dat de duivelen en booze menschen moeten, de zweep ligt er bij hen op. De booze mensch, zoowel als de Satan is machinist op een machine; hij deraileert. Maar God zet hem er weer op en zegt: 'Gij zult!' Telkenmale deraileert hij weer, maar hij *moet*. Voorbeelden uit de Schrift: Farao, Saul, Achab, Nebuchadnezar. Eindelijk wordt hij in de eeuwige dood geworpen. Zie ook II Sam. 22:27; Ps. 18:27; Openb. 22:11. Is het nu genade, dat God hem dat werk, hoewel hij tegen 'Zijn schepping' onwillig is, geeft te doen? Rom. 9:22 zegt anders (zie ook II Tim. 3:13; II Petr. 2:1-15). Door genade wordt de oorspronkelijke natuur des menschen hersteld. Dat doet deze 'dwang' van God niet.

"9e. Is het geen 'genade' dat de wereld nog zoo be woonbaar is, en dat de menschen nog geen on-menschen zijn? Neen, voor het door God gewilde ontwikkelingsproces zijn zekere voorwaarden (mogelijkheid van huwelijk, arbeid, sociale ordening) noodig, en binnen dit raam uit zich zoowel Gods genade (over Zijn volk), als Zijn oordeel (over de booze wereld). Maar deze genade en dit oordeel worden enkel beheerscht door Gods gezindheid t.o.v. den mensch. Gods goede gaven zijn nog geen "genade" (gunstige gezindheid) t.o.v. den zondaar. Evenmin als het lijden van den Christen *oordeel* is: integendeel, het dient tot verheerlijking (Rom. 8:28; Col. 1:24; II Tim. 2:9, 10). De ongeloovige is louter instrument in Gods hand; de geloovigen zijn door Gods genade deelgenooten in het verbondsverkeer, in de heerlijke verbonds-gemeenschap."

W. Hofman.

A Report Of Classis East

WHICH MET IN SESSION, OCTOBER 5, 1949

Classis East met in the new church building of our congregation at Kalamazoo on the morning of October 5, 1949.

Classis was called to order by Rev. G. Vos, the president of our last Classical meeting. Classis sings No. 374:1, 5 from the Psalter. Rev. Vos then reads Eph. 4 and leads in prayer.

The credentials are read and received. According to rotation Rev. J. Blankespoor is called upon to preside. He speaks a few words of welcome to the delegates.

Those who are attending the Classis for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription.

Rev. G. Vos gave the report for the Church Visitors. All the churches had been visited except Hudsonville. This report was received and the committee was further instructed to finish its work.

Hamilton and Oak Lawn request Classical appointments. Classis grants these requests and decides to include preaching turns in Chatham also and to submit a schedule of the latter place to the Mission Committee for approval.

Later in the day the following schedule was presented by the committee and adopted by Classis.

Oak Lawn

Oct. 9 J. A. Heys; Oct. 16 J. Blankespoor; Oct. 23 M. Schipper; Oct. 30 H. Veldman. Nov. 6 G. Lubbers; Nov. 13 C. Hanko; Nov 20 J. De Jong; Nov. 27 G. Vanden Berg. Dec. 4 G. Lubbers; Dec. 11 M. Schipper; Dec. 18 G. Vanden Berg; Jan. 8 R. Veldman.

Hamilton

Oct. 9 G. Lubbers; Oct. 16 C. Hanko; Oct. 23 B. Kok; Oct. 30 J. De Jong.

Nov. 6 R. Veldman; Nov. 13 G. Vos; Nov. 20 J. Blankespoor; Nov. 27 J. A. Heys. Dec. 4 G. M. Ophoff; Dec 11 H. Veldman; Dec. 18 H. De Wolf; Jan. 8 B. Kok.

Chatham

Oct. 9 G. Vos; Oct. 16 H. Veldman; Oct. 23 H. De Wolf; Oct. 30 J. Blankespoor. Nov. 6 J. A. Heys; Nov. 13 G. M Ophoff; Nov 20 H. De Wolf; Nov. 27 B. Kok. Dec. 4 R. Veldman; Dec. 11 J. De Jong; Dec. 18 C. Hanko; Jan. 8 G. Vos.

A verbal request of Hamilton's Consistory for some extra labor of the ministers that preach there on Sunday. Hamilton is advised to approach the various consistories of the ministers that preach there, with the request that their minister spend a few days during the week in Hamilton if this is possible.

A notification from Classis West relative a possible day of Commemoration of the 25th year Jubilee of our Churches is referred to the various consistories of Classis East.

Rev. B. Kok was appointed to convey a word of thanks to the ladies of our Kalamazoo Church for their excellent catering services.

Classis designated the First Church of Grand Rapids as our next meeting place.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are asked and answered. The minutes are read and accepted. The president expresses his appreciation for the cooperation given him by Classis.

After the singing of Psalter No. 368:1, 3, 5 Rev. C. Hanko closes with prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.