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MEDITATION

De Eigengerechte Veroordeeld

“Daarom zijt gij niet te verontschuldigen, O mensch! wie gij zijt, die anderen oordeelt, want waarin gij een ander oordeelt, veroordeelt gij uzelf; want gij die anderen oordeelt, doet dezelfde dingen. En wij weten dat het oordeel Gods naar waarheid is over degenen die zulke dingen doen. —Rom. 2:1, 2.

Want indien wij onszelf oordeelen, zoo zouden wij niet geoordeeld worden. — I Cor. 11:31.

Paulus had vreeselijke dingen gezegd.

Hij had zijn blik laten gaan over de heidenen die uitbraken in alle soorten van goddeloosheid. Het lijstje in het vorige hoofdstuk is om van te gruwen.

De heiden stond temidden van de Godsspraak, en in plaats van te buigen en te knielen voor den levenden God, had hij de heerlijkheid Gods veranderd in de gelijkenis eens beelds van een verderfelijk mensch, en van gevogelte, en van viervoetige en kruipende gedierten!

En toen had God hen overgegeven aan de lust van hunne booze harten.

En de geschiedenis van het Griekenland en van Rome vertelt U op vele en vuile bladen de onuitsprekelijke zonden die die oude beschaving (?) kenmerkten.

En terwijl Paulus aan 't schrijven was, stond naast en achter hem de Jood. En die Jood stond te knikken en te glimlachen. Ja, ja, Paulus, zoo is het: die buiten zijn, zijn honden! Het heidendom is vervloekt!

Maar dan keert Paulus zich tot den Jood, en zegt: Wacht even! Hebt ge niet gelet op wat ik het laatste zeide in het voorgaande hoofdstuk? Niet alleen zijn de daders van die gruwelijkheden vervloekt en veroordeeld, maar ook die mede een welgevallen hebben in degenen die ze doen! Het is best mogelijk, dat ge niet uitgebroken zijt in de actueele daad, maar hetzelfde vuil, dat we veroordeelen in den heiden woont ook in Uw hart. En daarom, o gij eigengerechte Jood, gij,

en allen die zoo zijn als gij zijt, zijn ook te veroordelen!

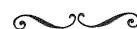
Inplaats van die vuile eigengerechtigheid, moest ge knielen in het stof, en doen hetgeen ik aanprijs in een anderen brief, namelijk, gij moest Uzelf vernederen, en Uzelf veroordeelen. Ge moest uitroepen door het geloof in Jezus: O God, wees mij, den zondaar, genadig! Want dan zoudt ge niet geoordeeld worden!

De eigengerechtigheid is vervloekt.

De eigengerechte is veroordeeld.

En dat tot drie keeren toe: door zijn werken; door zijn oordeel; en door God oordeel.

O God! verlos ons van eigengerechtigheid!



De eigengerechtigheid is vervloekt!

Ze is valsch!

Want in het oordeel waarmede ik anderen veroordeel, veroordeel ik mijzelf. Want ik, die anderen veroordeel, doe dezelfde werken. Ai mij! Want ik verga!

Zoo behoorden we allen te spreken, in groote nederigheid.

Want zoo staat het er bij.

O, het mag anders schijnen, maar meer dan schijn is het niet.

Neemt het geval met de Joden die hem gedurig opzij stonden.

Ik stem toe, dat het schijnt alsof Paulus het mis heeft.

Eerst in den tekst. Zij zijn zóó goed, dat zij het kwade veroordeelen. Dat staat in den tekst. Zij proeven oogenschijnlijk het kwade. En na het kwade beproefd te hebben, oordeelen zij dat het veroordeeld moet worden. Dat geeft direkt een goeden indruk.

Ook elders lezen we zoo iets van den Jood. In Coll. 2:21 en 23 lezen we, dat zij niet raakten, noch smaakten uit vrees zeker van te zondigen. Zij waren nederig en in het lichaam niet te sparen. In Tim. 4:3 en 8 lezen we, dat sommigen verboden mannen te huwen, en verboden sommige spijzen te eten uit een godsdienstig motief. Zij hadden vele lichamelijke oefeningen die ook al godsdienstig heetten.

En leest het verband eens. Het is een heele lijst van schoone dingen die we van dit soort volk lezen. Zij rusten op de wet en roemen in God, Gods wil weten ze en beproeven de dingen die daarvan verschilden, ze zijn onderwijzers der wet. Ze zijn de leidsmannen der blinden, lichten dergenen die in duisternis zijn. Ze zijn onderrichters en leidsmannen der onwijzen en onwetenden. Ze hebben een gedaante van kennis en van waarheid. Ze prediken de wet Gods, en wat de deur schijnt toe te doen: ze hebben een gruwel aan de afgoden.

Wat wilt ge nog meer?

Luistert naar hun eigen getuigenis: We hebben Abraham tot een vader. En als dat niet bevredigt, dan zeggen ze: We hebben God tot een Vader.

En toch was het niet dan schijn. O ja, ze hadden de gedaante van godsvrucht, maar ze verloochenden het wezen. Het waren mensen die er uitzagen als schapen, maar van binnen waren zij grijpende wolven.

Ze waren het ellendigste soort mensen op Gods aardbodem: ze waren eigengerechtig! Dat is een vreeselijk soort mensen.

En de eigengerechtigheid is vervloekt!



De eigengerechtigheid is zoo afschuwelijk, omdat men aan de buitenkant er schoon uitziet, terwijl men van binnen leelijk en vuil is.

Dat nu, is gruwelijk. Zelfs de natuurlijke mensch heeft een afschuw van een vijnzwaard.

En zoo is die mensch dien Paulus aanspreekt in den tekst.

Want terwijl hij een ander oordeelt, doet hij dezelfde dingen.

Welke dingen? Dezelfde dingen, d.w.z., de dingen die Paulus opgesomd had in het voorgaande hoofdstuk. En wat een vreeselijke lijst. Leest het van het 29ste tot het 32ste vers.

Dit toont aan, dat die mensen, alhoewel levende in uitwendige gerechtigheid, inwendiglijk een vreeselijk beeld vertoonden aan God die alles ziet en weet.

Dit toont aan, dat bij den Heere de gedachte evenzo goed voor zonde gerekend wordt als de daad. Dit toont aan, dat beide de heiden en de Jood uit denzelfden verkankerden wortel leefden: Adamskinderen, gansch en al verdorven in hunne natuur.

En dan kwam daar dit bij, dat terwijl de heiden die dingen deed in het openbaar, dit gruwelijk soort mensen een schoon gelaat toonden, en toch in hun binnenste net eender waren.

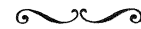
En leest nu maar weer het verband. Ze stelen, doen overspel, berooven het heilige, onteeren God en om hunnentwil wordt den naam Gods gelasterd. En door de overtreding der wet valt de Jood uit de besnijdenis terug in den voorhuid der heidenen. Hun naam is

zondaar ook met alle schitterenden schijn van godzaligheid.

Ze zijn mooi en witgepleisterd, maar graven. Van buiten schoon, maar van binnen vol doodsbeenderen. Ze zegenen met den mond, maar vloeken met het hart.

Jezus noemt hen kinderen der hel en kinderen des duivels.

Want eigengerechtig!



Eigengerechtigheid is vuil en daarom vervloekt.

De Heere verlosse ons!

Deze mensen deden dezelfde werken, die ze in een ander veroordeelden.

Maar ze worden ook veroordeeld door hun oordeel over anderen.

Let wel, deze mensen spreken een oordeel uit over hunne medemensen.

En ge moet er ook op letten, dat hoe meer men zichzelf rechtvaardigt ten onrechte, hoe meer men gereed is om zijn broeder te verdoemen.

Dat was zoo met dit volk, met dezen mensch die Paulus toespreekt.

Hij heeft een oordeel. Hij is een oordeelend mensch.

Dat wordt eenvoudig als een feit geconstateerd. Tot driemaal toe in vers 1; en driemaal in de verzen 21 en 22. En bij implicatie in de verzen 18-20. Dus het ligt er dik op.

De Jood verhoogde zich boven alle volken der aarde en stelde zich als Rechter over de daden der heidenen.

En hij oordeelde in den zin van veroordeelen.

Dat oordeel der eigengerechtige Joden rustte op hun door God geopenbaarde kennis. Dat ziet terug op wat we lezen in het 32ste vers van het vorige hoofdstuk. Ze kenden het recht Gods. Er was een soort analogie tusschen de kennis der heidenen en dat der Joden. Beiden kenden zij het recht Gods, namelijk, dat die zulke dingen doen des doods waardig zijn.

Dat recht Gods was den heiden geopenbaard door God uit de natuur. Overal, tot in de hoogste hemelen, en tot in de laagste diepten lazen zij van het recht Gods. Een klein kind openbaart het al heel spoedig. Tot in de diepste diepten van het vreeselijke heelal leest Einstein in vurige woorden: Ik ben God en Ik ben goed! En daarom straf ik den kwade, en beloon Ik den goede!

En de Jood wist dat recht Gods ook. Met dit verschil: hij wist het veel beter.

Daarom had hij zijn goddeloozen mond dicht moeten houden, toen hij Paulus hoorde oordeelen. Toen hij Paulus hoorde oordeelen den goddelooze had hij moeten zeggen: O God! Wees mij zondaar genadig!

Maar wat deed hij? Hij ging aan 't oordeelen.

Hij zeide: maar buiten zijn de honden! En dat zijn de heidenen.

Ziet ge het beeld in al zijn gruwelijkheid, lezer?

Hier staat de Jood op de grens van Palestina. Hij kijkt naar buiten, naar den heiden. Hij ziet den heiden gruwelijke dingen doen. Hij hoort in de verte dat de heiden, omdat hij het recht Gods eenigzins kent, de zonde verdoemt. En dan begint de Jood ook te veroordeelen, en te verdoemen.

En dat is zijn ellende. Dat is zijn groote schuld.

Want zijn oordeel over den heiden veroordeelt zijn eigen leven. God zal het ook ordentelijk voor oogen stellen. O, ik kan er inkomen, dat we geen woord te zeggen hebben in den dag des oordeels.

Herinnert ge U, lezer, hoe ge zoo vaak gezegd hebt: "Vreeselijk toch! Het is toch niet waar? Dat zou ik niet doen!" Gevaarlijke woorden.

Ziet ge, God zal in den dag des oordeels Uw en mijn hart openbaren. Dan zal de heele wereld zien hoe we de goddeloosheid en de zonde van een ander altijd vervloekt hebben. En dan zal God zeggen: Uw eigen oordeel over anderen veroordeelt Uzelf, want gij hebt dezelfde dingen gedaan!

En de heele wereld zal dan stemmeloos zijn, stom voor 't Alwetend oog van God.

De eigengerechtigheid is vervloekt!



Onze werken veroordeelen ons.

Dat is eenvoudig. Een ieder kan dat zien. Eens ieders conscientie veroordeelt hem als hij gedenkt aan alle zijne zonden. We schrijven dan door genade den dood onder en boven alle onze werken.

Zijn we echter ook nog eigengerechtig, dan wordt het erger en banger. Want dan verheffen we onze stem en dan beginnen we den broeder te vervloeken. En dan beseffen we niet, dat alle oordeelen van anderen van wege hunne groote zonden, terzelfder tijd een veroordeelen van ons zelven is, want wij die anderen oordeelen doen dezelfde dingen. Dus niet alleen onze werken veroordeelen ons, maar ons oordeel over anderen veroordeelt ons ook. Het is erg.

Mogen we dan niet de goddeloosheid van onzen medemensch veroordeelen?

Ja, dat moogt ge, en dat moet ge.

Maar als we daarover spreken zullen, dan moesten we eigenlijk vele dingen zeggen. En ik heb er noch tijd noch ruimte voor. Maar iets wil ik wel zeggen.

Eerst, zult ge voorzichtig zijn in Uw oordeel over anderen. We kennen ten deele. O zoo vaak wordt den onschuldige veroordeeld en den schuldige vrijgesproken, juist omdat we ten deele kennen.

Tweedens, weest zeer hard voor Uzelven. Want gij kent Uw hart veel beter dan Uw naaste. Doet zooals Paulus zegt in een van onze teksten: veroordeelt Uzelven! Dan wordt ge niet veroordeeld.

Derdens als ge dan ten slotte toch geroepen wordt om te oordeelen over Uw broeder, doet het dan met vreeze en beven.

Ten slotte, als ge dan toch moet oordeelen, doet het dan in 's Heeren naam. Laat het goed uitkomen voor God en voor menschen, dat ge wel oordeelt, maar dat ge het doet om Godswil. Zegt het door Uw geheele houding: Mijn broeder, mijn zuster, ik zit hier in het rechtergestoelte en ik moet in Gods naam oordeelen, maar ik behoor daar in het stof, naast U, voor Gods aangezicht.

O, het is zoo moeilijk om recht te spreken en te oordeelen, en te veroordeelen.

Is het daarom, dat de rechters onder Israel goden genaamd werden?

Moeilijk om te oordeelen, want voor wij het weten komt de eigengerechtigheid om het hoekje turen, en dan worden we verfoeilijke menschen.



O God, verlos ons van alle eigengerechtigheid, en van alle veinzen.

Want die dag des oordeels zal zoo vreeselijk zijn.

En van het oordeel van dien dag spreekt onze tekst ten slotte: "En wij weten, dat het oordeel Gods naar waarheid is over degenen die zulke dingen doen."

Ik kan er van sidderen. Want mijn naam is zondaar. Dit oordeel spant de kroon.

Het is erg om veroordeeld te worden hier op aarde, hetzij door ons geweten, hetzij door het oordeel van onzen broeder. Niemand zit gaarne in het bankje van den beklaagde.

Evenwel, we kunnen ons geweten sussen met bedriegelijke overdenkingen. En we kunnen onzen broeder bedriegen. En zoo geschiedt het vaak. En dan loopt de beklaagde het rechthuis uit, al grinnikende. Hij heeft de victorie.

Maar o wee! God oordeelt ten slotte. En dat oordeel is finaal.

En dat oordeel is er alle dagen. God oordeelt mij terwijl ik voor mijn schrijfmachine zit. En Hij zegt het ook in mijn geweten. Hij laat mij weten wat Hij denkt van alle mijne daden. En zoo kom ik er toe om mijzelven te veroordeelen. En zoo komt het, dat ook gij allen met mij knielt elken avond weer aan, om dan te roepen tot God: O God! Ik veroordeel mijzelf! Ik heb geen pleitgrond, anders dan het Middelbaarsbloed van het Goddelijk Lam! Ontferm U mijner!

Toen hoorde God, Hij is mijn liefde waardig.

Maar het volk, dat tot het einde toe eigengerechtig voor God en menschen blijft? Die zal God oordeelen in het einde der eeuwen. En dan zeg ik het niet goed.

God oordeelt alle dagen. En Hij veroordeelt alle dagen. En zal dat blijven doen tot aan den dag der dagen. En dan zal hij alle menschen dagen voor den troon. En dan zal Hij Zijn oordeel openbaren.

En dat oordeel is *naar waarheid*.

Wie zou niet sidderen, en tot het Kruis vlieden?

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

As To Conditions

It may be expedient, at this stage of our discussion, briefly to recapitulate what we have developed thus far in regard to the question of conditions.

We based our arguments entirely on our Reformed Confessions which constitute the basis of our common faith as Protestant Reformed Churches, and which are binding for all of us.

First of all, I appealed to the *argumentum esilentio*, the argument from silence, which means in this case that in none of our confessions the term is used in a sound sense. This proves, at least, that in a Reformed system of doctrine there is no need for the term *condition*, for our confessions are a rather elaborate expression of all the basic principles of the Reformed truth, yet, in a positive sense, the term is never employed in them.

Secondly, I showed that, in our confessions, faith is always presented as a means or instrument of salvation, and that, too, as an instrument, not of man, but of God. Never is faith explained as a condition. And to be sure, *instrument* and *condition* are two entirely different conceptions.

Further I based my argument against the use of the term *condition* on the fundamentally Reformed truth of election, and showed that, according to our confessions, the gift of faith flows from God's unconditional decree of election. It follows that, if faith does not appear as a condition unto salvation in God's eternal decree, it cannot appear as such in time.

Finally, we showed that in our confessions the term *condition* does, indeed, occur, but always as a term that is employed by the Arminians and Pelagians. In their presentation of the truth (which is the lie) there was not only ample room for, but also need of the term *condition*.

In my last article on this subject (cf. The Standard Bearer of Dec. 15, 1949) I was discussing the Canons, II, A, 8, an article of our confessions which completely covers the entire truth of our salvation from election to eternal glory. Yet, this article not only fails to speak of conditions but leaves no room for the notion at all.

It speaks of the sovereign decree of election as the unconditional source of our salvation. It emphasizes that the gift of faith is bestowed by God only upon the elect, so that faith is presented as belonging to salvation itself. Moreover, by this God-given means of faith, the elect are infallibly led unto salvation. And how can a gift possibly be, at the same time, a condition unto that gift?

But there is still more in this article of the Canons.

First, the article continues to emphasize God's unconditional election in the words: "it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation and language, all those and those only, who were from eternity chosen unto salvation, and given him by the Father." Note the expression "*effectually redeem*". When Christ effectually redeems the elect that redemption cannot possibly be conditioned upon anything in the elect themselves.

But there is still more.

Note especially the following: "that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death". Notice especially: 1. that faith is presented here as belonging to the gifts of salvation by the Holy Spirit; 2. that Christ confers this gift upon the elect alone; 3. that He purchased this gift of faith for them by His death. Now, how could one possibly introduce the element of condition here. Shall we say that the gift of faith is conditioned by faith? This is absurd. It is, therefore, unconditional. Shall we say that Christ works faith in the heart of the sinner on condition that he believe? Again, this is equally absurd. Besides, it would imply the thoroughly Arminian conception that Christ stands knocking at the door of the heart of the sinner, the key of which is on the inside. Shall we say that the death of Christ, by which He purchased the gift of faith for the elect, is conditioned by faith on the part of the sinner? But that would mean that He did not *effectually* redeem the elect at all. It would really imply a denial of sovereign election.

The rest of the article speaks in equally unconditional terms. We read there: "should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot or blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever." All this belongs to God's part of the covenant. We have no part in it whatsoever. He redeems us. He bestows upon the elect the gift of faith. He delivers us from the dominion of sin, and sanctifies us. He preserves us, and leads us on to eternal glory. And this entire work of God is absolutely unconditional. If it were not, no sinner could possibly be saved.

Only on the basis of the truth that the entire work of God concerning our salvation is sovereign and, therefore, unconditional, can the Canons close this chapter with the following beautiful confession: "This purpose proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, has, from the beginning of the world to this day, been powerfully accomplished, and will henceforward still

continue to be accomplished, notwithstanding all the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell, so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one, and that there never may be wanting a church composed of believers, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of Christ, which may steadfastly love, and faithfully serve him as their Saviour, who as a bridegroom for his bride, laid down his life for them upon the cross, and which may celebrate his praises here and through all eternity."

Of course, the Arminians deny this unconditional work of God concerning our salvation. But the Canons insist upon it, and deny the errors of those "Who teach: That Christ by his satisfaction merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ is effectually appropriated; but that he merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as he might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions. For these adjudge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, do in no wise acknowledge the most important fruit or benefit thereby gained, and bring again out of hell the Pelagian error."

This is strong language.

But it is the truth, nevertheless.

And into this Pelagian error, which has its origin in hell, we must needs fall, as soon as we teach that faith is a condition unto salvation. For then we must necessarily deny that "faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ is effectually appropriated", is merited by the satisfaction of Christ and is wrought in our hearts efficaciously by the Holy Spirit. In other words, one must choose between the error that salvation is, wholly or in part, which means the same thing, dependent upon the free will of man, or he must deny that there is a conditional element in salvation, and confess that salvation is of the Lord alone.

You say, perhaps, that you believe that salvation is of the Lord alone, but that one can, nevertheless, speak of faith as a condition in such a way that the free will of man has nothing to do with it? I answer: 1. that our confessions never speak that language, but, on the contrary, uniformly repudiate the term *conditions* and all its implications. I am, therefore, in good company when I deny that faith may ever be presented as a condition, while those that like to lay stress on the conditional element are certainly not confessionally Reformed; and, 2. that I challenge anyone to make plain that the proposition "faith is a condition" can be used in a truly Reformed sense. If he takes up this challenge, I promise that I will make plain to all that can read that either he camouflages the term *condition*

or somehow he tries to make salvation dependent on the free will of man.

That faith can in no wise be presented as a condition which in some way must be fulfilled by man, and is, therefore, in some way dependent on the will of man, is also evident from those articles of the Canons that speak of regeneration and faith. Note the following:

"And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in that marvellous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe.—Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received."

This beautiful article has an important bearing upon our discussion of conditions.

There are several questions implied in the subject of conditions that receive a rather clear answer in this article.

If faith is a condition is not regeneration also to be presented as a condition? But why not, if both are the work of God, and if, moreover, faith is rooted in and a fruit of regeneration?

Is there any part of the work of salvation left for man after God has accomplished His part?

Is it in the power of man to remain unconverted after God has regenerated him?

What is the proper conception of the relation between God's "part" and man's "part", between the work of God and the activity of the regenerated sinner, between faith and believing?

All these questions are related to our subject, and receive a Reformed answer in this article.

Look for the answers in the next issue, D. V.

H. H.

* * * *

"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My Word shall not pass away."—Mark 13:31.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXVIII.

Qu. 75. How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?

Ans. Thus: That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

Qu. 76. What is it then to eat the crucified body, and drink the shed blood of Christ?

Ans. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body, by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are notwithstanding "Flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone"; and that we live, and are governed forever by one spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

Qu. 77. Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread, and drink of this cup?

Ans. In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed: "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: this cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; because we are all partakers of that one bread."

1.

The Institution Of The Holy Supper.

Two sacraments there are, and only two: for these were instituted in the church to be observed by her

as long as she is in the world. These two sacraments are Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

And they are clearly related to each other. Together they form, as it were, one whole. For while both concentrate the attention of the believers upon the death of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, yet there is a clear distinction between the two. The sacrament of baptism signifies the incorporation into Christ Jesus, and therefore can never be repeated. While the sacrament of the Holy Supper rather emphasizes our being nourished by the body and blood of Christ, and therefore must be repeatedly celebrated.

This idea of the Lord's Supper is also plainly indicated in the *Netherland Confession*, Art. XXXV, which for its significance we wish to quote here:

"We believe and confess, that our Saviour Jesus Christ did ordain and institute the sacrament of the holy supper, to nourish and support those whom he hath already regenerated, and incorporated into his family, which is his Church. Now those, who are regenerated, have in them a two-fold life, the one corporal and temporal, which they have from the first birth, and is common to all men: the other spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth, which is effected by the word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect. In like manner God hath given us, for the support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread, which is subservient thereto, and is common to all men, even as life itself. But for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life, which believers have, he hath sent a living bread, which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of believers, when they eat him, that is to say, when they apply and receive him by faith in the spirit. Christ, that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, hath instituted an earthly and visible bread, as a sacrament of his body, and wine as a sacrament of his blood, to testify by them unto us, that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands, and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Saviour in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life. Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ hath not enjoined to us the use of his sacraments in vain, so he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding, and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible. In the meantime we err not, when we say, that what is eaten and drunk by us is the proper and natural body, and the proper blood of

Christ. But the manner of our partaking of the same, is not by the mouth, but by the spirit through faith. Thus then, though Christ always sits at the right hand of his Father in the heavens, yet doth he not therefore cease to make us partakers of himself by faith. This feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates himself with all his benefits to us, and gives us there to enjoy both himself, and the merits of his sufferings and death, nourishing, strengthening and comforting our poor comfortless souls by the eating of his flesh, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of his blood. Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers. Lastly, we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up amongst us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour, with thanksgiving: making there confession of our faith, and of the Christian religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself; lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are excited by the use of this holy sacrament, to a fervent love towards God and our neighbour. Therefore we reject all mixtures and damnable inventions, which men have added unto, and blended with the sacraments, as profanations of them: and affirm that we ought to rest satisfied with the ordinance which Christ and his apostles have taught us, and that we must speak of them in the same manner as they have spoken."

Now because of the inseparable connection and close relation between the two sacraments, it stands to reason that they cannot and may not be separated. He that is baptized is obligated to partake of the table of communion, as soon as he is able to discern the Lord's body.

This follows too from the article which we quoted above. Baptism, according to it, is the sacrament of regeneration and of incorporation into Christ's body. And the article informs us that they "who are regenerated, have in them a two-fold life, the one corporal and temporal, which they have from the first birth, and is common to all men: the other spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in the second birth, which is effected by the word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect." But, as the article continues to explain, even as the natural life of man must be nourished, so the spiritual life of regeneration must be fed by spiritual bread. And that

spiritual food and drink is symbolized in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. And therefore, we maintain that as soon as the children can discern the Lord's body, they must partake of the table of communion.

The custom, therefore, prevailing in some churches, that allow a separation between the sacraments, is to be condemned. I have often come into contact with members of the churches which I have in mind. They are taught to make a distinction between baptism and the Lord's Supper which does not and cannot exist. The Lord's Supper in their opinion is evidently a sacrament that is much holier than that of baptism. The former is only for those that have far advanced on the way of life. They are the deeply spiritual, that can speak of a profound experience of sin and grace. Often in those churches very few partake of communion. Many of those members remain baptized their life-long days. Or if they make confession, they make a distinction between confession of the truth and confession of faith. By maintaining this distinction they can be full members of the church and have their children baptized without ever approaching the Lord's table. This is certainly an untenable position. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is certainly not one whit holier than the sacrament of baptism. And those in the church that come to years of discretion and are instructed in the way of God's covenant must either celebrate the Lord's Supper with the congregation or repudiate their baptism and reveal themselves as profane. The church consists of believers and their children. Other members there are not in the church in the world. In the church, therefore, one is either a professing believer or a child that has not yet come to years of discretion. But one who remains a baptized member and never confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a monstrosity that certainly should be eliminated by proper disciplinary measures. In the Church of the Refugees in London it was customary to demand of its members to make confession of faith and come to the Lord's table when they reached the age of 18 or 20 years. After this age they were no longer considered as members of the church of Christ in the world. Now it may be true that this rule was too stringent. Various factors may have to be taken into consideration that make it impossible always to apply a rule of this nature. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that this practice was based upon a principally sound conception of the church as the gathering of believers and their children.

For the same reason I often wonder whether the practice of our churches not to administer the Lord's Supper to children before they have reached the age of adolescence is not an error. Surely, long before they reach this age, they are able to discern the Lord's body. There is, it seems to me, not sufficient reason to

withhold from them this sacrament, by which they are nourished with the body and blood of Christ and in which they commemorate Christ's death, until they have finished the course in catechetical instruction that is required in our churches and are capable of making a complete confession of faith. Let it rather be demanded of them that they continue to attend catechism until they have finished the course, but in the meantime let them partake of the Lord's Supper at least at a much earlier age than is usually the custom in our churches.

H. H.



Of Books

Genesis, Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, by John Peter Lange, D.D. Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.95.

The reissuing of Lange's Commentary by the Zondervan Publ. House will, no doubt, be welcomed, not only by theologians, but also by many a general Bible student.

I have in my library a set of Lange's *Bibelwerk* in German, and although I cannot agree with his theological views, I nevertheless find that he is quite a thorough and conservative exegete.

The present volume on *Genesis* is, besides, enriched by many valuable notes by the translators, especially by Prof. Lewis Taylor, who also wrote an introduction in this volume to the First Chapter, in which he discusses such subjects as "The Essential Ideas of Creation", "the Hexaëmeron in its Order", etc. Together with these notes this first volume covers 665 pages, more than one-fourth more than the original work.

I gladly recommend this commentary on the book of Genesis to all that are interested in the study of Holy Scripture.

* * * *

The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament, by Thomas D. Bernard, M. A. Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$1.75.

This book contains a series of eight lectures, delivered at the University of Oxford in 1864. It offers very good Christian literature to all that are willing to put on their thinking cap. The author proceeds from the profound conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, and, besides, his lectures are the fruit of thorough scholarship.

As to the scope and purpose of these lectures, the

author writes in a preface: "It may appear to some to announce the intention of drawing from the New Testament materials for a historical inquiry into the growth of Christian doctrine, as it took place in the minds and under the hands of the apostles. To others it may indicate a purpose of showing that the New Testament itself exhibits a scheme of progressive doctrine. . . ." The last mentioned is the purpose of the author.

Although I seriously doubt whether such a purpose is attainable, nevertheless there is much worthwhile reading material in the book, and I gladly recommend it to our readers.

H. H.



Hamilton's Request for a Collection

The consistories of our churches of Classis East are kindly requested to take note of this article in connection with Hamilton's request for a collection. Due to a misunderstanding, the clerk of our consistory did not acquaint our consistories with the necessary information relative this request to the various consistories. He proceeded from the assumption that the Classis of January 4 had been properly informed, and that he therefore was merely expected to send the request as such to the consistories. This article purposes to enlighten the consistories with the financial needs of Hamilton, and the consistories are kindly requested to consider it as such.

Rev. H. Veldman's letter of the acceptance of the call to Hamilton was received by our congregation the Sunday of November 13. Already before November 6 we had been looking for a parsonage. At that time we were convinced that a house could be purchased for the sum of eight to nine thousand dollars. In this, however, we were disappointed. And until December 11 we combed the vicinity of Hamilton, within and outside the city. To rent a house was impossible. That we finally bought our present parsonage for the sum of \$14,000 is only because we were convinced that this was the most economical thing we could do.

The consistories are kindly asked to bear in mind the following. As already stated, we combed the vicinity of Hamilton. We saw several homes which could be bought for ten to eleven thousand dollars. However, none of these compares with the home which we ultimately bought. We saw a house, for example, which could have been purchased for the sum of \$10,500, a new home. This home did not have a garage, a drive-way, sidewalks, or street pavement. And the same thing applies to other homes we saw.

To buy an old house was out of the question, for this would involve us in an expense greater than what we paid for the parsonage we now own. The house which we finally bought is in wonderful condition, admirably suited to serve as a parsonage, and has all the modern improvements and conveniences. Only, the consistory of Hamilton wishes to impress upon our various consistories that we purchased this home because we believed this to be the best and most economical thing we could do.

Incidentally, the consistory of Hamilton was represented at a meeting of our Mission Committee during the month of December, and there presented that committee with all the details relative the purchase of this house. This committee was impressed with the information which they received, and expressed the opinion that Hamilton's decision to purchase this home was the only thing we could have done.

And now, brethren, we ask you to help us to the very best of your ability. Consider that our decision, as Protestant Reformed Churches, to set foot in Canada and organize the church at Hamilton was rooted in the conviction that the Lord has given us an open door here in Canada. Rev. Veldman accepted the call to Hamilton in that conviction. But, we need help. Especially now, inasmuch as we have purchased this home. Come to our aid and may the Lord impress upon all our consistories and our people this need of Hamilton.

J. Ton, Sec'y.



Nieuws Uit Hamilton, Canada

Hooggeachte Redacteur!

Hiermede bieden wij aan een verslag van de bevestiging en intrede van Ds. H. Veldman in de Eerste Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk van Hamilton, waarvan wij vriendelijk plaatsing verzoeken, en U daarvoor bij voorbaat hartelijk danken.

Het was een rijke dag voor de Eerste Prot. Gerëf. Kerk van Hamilton, Zondag, 29 Januari, waar zij haar eigen herder en leeraar mocht ontvangen in Ds. H. Veldman, gekomen van Kalamazoo.

Prof. Hoeksema, welke de leiding van dezen dienst op zich had genomen, sprak votum en zegengroet uit, verzocht de gemeente te zingen Ps. 116:1-3, las daarna Jes. 40:1-11, vervolgens de Wet des Heeren, waarop de gemeente antwoordde met het zingen van Ps. 32:5. Hierna ging de consulente der gemeente, Ds. C. Hanko, de gemeente voor in gebed.

Prof. Hoeksema andermaal het woord verkrijgende

verzocht de gemeente te zingen Ps. 63:4, 5, waarna hij het Woord bediende uit Jes. 40:1, 2, waarin spreker wees op de troostinhoud van den tekst, ten 1ste, dat de tekst spreekt van troost voor Gods volk; en ten 2de, en dus niet van troost voor allen, en ten 3de, daarom die troost heerlijk voor Zijn volk.

Prof. Hoeksema teekende Gods volk in Babel zooals het daar leefde, dat was een kwaad voor Gods volk. In Kanaan woonde de Heere eertijds bij Zijn volk, daar was de Tempel, de priesters, kortom, Gods Verbond was daar, en ver van Kanaan moest dat volk alles missen, waaraan eigenlijk ten grondslag ligt de verbondswraak. En in die ellende zegt de Heere tot Zijn profeet: Troost, troost Mijn volk. Zoo ook in deze bedeeing, met dit verschil, dat Zijn volk nu ziet naar het Jeruzalem dat boven is, zegt de Heere tot Zijn dienstknechten: Troost, troost Mijn volk, en dat niet met een menschenwoord, maar door het levende Woord van God. En die troost is, dat Christus' offerande de ongerechtigheid verzoend heeft, en dat dit volk dubbel ontvangen heeft voor al haar zonden. Deze troost moet Ds. Veldman brengen, dat is troost voor het wedergeboren hart, dat is troost bij alle afval van den Heere, dat is de troost der prediking tot geloof en bekeering.

Na deze predikatie las Ds. Hanco het formulier tot bevestiging van dienaren des Woords, waarna Ds. Veldman door de gemeente Ps. 134:3 werd toegezeggen. Ds. Veldman beëindigde dezen dienst met het uitspreken van den zegen.

Er werden geen toespraken gehouden.

Des middags deed Ds. Veldman intrede in zijn nieuwe gemeente, het Woord bedienende uit Ef. 6:19, waarin hij zeide, dat de kerk van alle eeuwen in dit hoofdstuk vermaand wordt sterk te zijn in den Heere, en gezegd wordt de wapenrusting aan te doen, en te volharden in het gebed, ook en juist het gebed om de opening van den mond des dienaars, om met vrijmoedigheid de verborgenheid van het Evangelie bekend te maken.

Bij drie punten stond Ds. Veldman nader stil: eerst, de inhoud; tweedens, de noodzakelijkheid; en, derdens, de vrucht van dat gebed.

Na deze predikatie werd gezongen Ps. 130:3 en Ps. 134:3, waarna Ds. Veldman dezen dienst beëindigde met het uitspreken van den zegen.

Ook nu volgden geen toespraken.

Moge de Heere de gemeente van Hamilton met haren leeraar rijkelijk zegenen, tot de eere Zijns Nams, de bevestiging van Zijn verbond, en de komst van Zijn koninkrijk.

J. Ton, Scriba.

211 James St., South,
Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Counsel Of God. (7)

God's Counsel Exclusively Divine and Sovereign.

We may now call attention to the conception of the counsel of God as entertained by the Reformers. And we may immediately remark that the Reformers returned to Paul and Augustine. This movement found in the confession of God's sovereign election the power to fight the pelagianism of the Roman Catholic Church. All the reformers were, at the beginning of their careers, unanimous in this respect. Luther taught and defended, at the beginning of his career as a reformer, the truth of Divine predestination as strongly as did Zwingli and Calvin. Melancthon at first taught the same, but since 1527 he gradually departed from the truth of predestination and approached openly a confession of synergism. Luther did not continue to emphasize the doctrine of sovereign and unconditional election because the fundamental issue, in his heart and mind, was anthropological—he emphasized the corruption of sin and the impotence of man. The German reformer was satisfied as long as these truths were proclaimed, and therefore avoided more and more the doctrine of predestination, did not concern himself too much with these things of God, but was content to confine himself to the administration of the Word and the sacraments. The result was that he began to place more and more upon the foreground God's universal will of salvation. He beheld the change in Melancthon and did nothing about it; he limited himself to the doctrine of justification out of faith; he did not attribute to predestination an independent theological significance. To him the doctrine of predestination was of secondary importance. And history verifies that the Lutherans began to depart more and more from the original stand of the Reformation, proclaiming the corruption that God would save all men, seek no one's death, wills to save all men, but consequently decided to save only those whose faith and salvation He foresaw and foreknew.

This sad state of affairs in the life of Martin Luther and among the Lutherans should teach us a lesson. It is not sufficient to emphasize the Scriptural doctrine of man's depravity and the need of Divine grace. We must also maintain the absolute sovereignty of the alone living God. And we will never be able to maintain the former if we do not continue to emphasize the latter. Heresy does not enter the Church of God through the door of man's depravity and need of salvation. It always enters the Church through the door of God's sovereign and unconditional election.

The attempt to undermine the truth of God's Word does not begin with the denial of man's corruption but with the truth that God is God alone and that His grace is sovereign and unconditional. And, once we have begun to undermine the truth of God's sovereignty, the denial of man's depravity must follow. It is impossible to maintain a universal desire on God's part to save men and also to give due prominence to the truth that we are conceived and born in sin and death. To maintain that the Lord would save all men and that He offers His salvation to all the hearers of the gospel must lead to the denial of our incapability to do any good before Him. If God seriously offers salvation to all men then it must follow that there is salvation for all men. The Lord would not offer something He does not possess. Such an offer on the part of God could never be serious and well-meaning. And, to maintain that God *offers* salvation to all the hearers of the gospel must imply that man is also able to accept that offer. This connection between a universal desire on the part of the Lord to save all and the denial of man's complete depravity is verified by history. The late Prof. Heyns, e.g., who realized that the Scriptures teach that we are conceived and born in sin and death, therefore proclaimed the theory that, at baptism, the child receives from God, not a regenerating grace, but a certain qualifying grace which renders him able to accept the offer of salvation which will be extended unto him through the preaching of the gospel. The history of the development of the truth in the life of Luther and among the Lutherans surely verifies this truth. We cannot tamper with the truth of the Lord's sovereign and unconditional election and predestination and remain unscathed. Indeed, this must be a lesson to us.

John Calvin firmly maintained the Augustinian doctrine of an absolute predestination, and that as applied to both phases of it: election and reprobation. Whereas Luther weakened as the years rolled on, Calvin became stronger. Everywhere he defended the sovereignty of the living God. His book, *Calvinism*, is a striking example of this fact. Fact is, God's sovereignty and Calvinism go hand in hand, are synonymous.

Striking is the following quotation from Dr. H. Bavinck's "Reformed Dogmatics," Vol. 2, pages 336-338, and we translate: "The changes which the Reformers introduced in the doctrine of Augustine and Thomas are, besides the doctrine of the assurance of salvation, of secondary importance and do not touch upon the essence of the issue. With them (Augustine and Thomas—H.V.) they taught that election did not occur upon merit, but was the source of faith and good works; that the predestination unto glory infallibly included predestination unto grace; that the reprobatio negativa (the negative predestination—God passed

some by, did not choose to save them) was not to be explained as an act of righteousness but as an act of sovereignty, preceding; that this reprobatio negativa necessarily included the decree to permit sin and leave some in their fall; and that the reprobatio positiva (positive reprobation—God's decree positively to condemn) reckoned with that sin. But to this they often added that the concepts of foreknowledge and permission, although not wrong in themselves, could or might not be understood purely passively, and if this occurred, did not offer the slightest solution, and that the distinction of reprobatio negativa and positiva had little value. Thereby all three Reformers came to the so-called supralapsarian conception of the doctrine of predestination, according to which both decrees of election and reprobation are to be regarded as acts of God's sovereignty, preceding the decree concerning the fall, sin, and redemption in Christ. Especially Calvin confines himself often to the nearest causes of salvation and destruction and reasons them along infralapsarian lines. A reprobate must not seek the cause of his punishment in God's decree but in the corruption of his nature which is his own fault, *Institutes* III, 23, 9. Elect and reprobates were both equally guilty, but God is merciful unto the one, and righteous toward the others, *ib.* III, 23, 11. The clay of Rom. 9:21 must be viewed as fallen men, of whom God elects some and passes others by. . . . This, however, does not satisfy Calvin. Sin may be the nearest cause of reprobation, it is not the last cause. Indeed it may not be presented, as if God without a preceding plan decided to create, then watched and awaited what man would do, and then, knowing this beforehand, proceeded unto election and reprobation. Foreknowledge and permission give no solution, for God, knowing the fall beforehand, could have prevented the fall; He therefore sovereignly permitted it because He judged it good, *Inst.* I, 18, 1; II, 4, 3; III, 23, 6-8. C.R. *ib.* 359, 291, 294. Therefore the fall of Adam, sin in general, and all the evil are not merely foreseen by God but also in certain sense willed and determined by Him, *ib.* There must be therefore, although hid from us, a reason why God willed the fall; there is still a high counsel of God, which preceded the fall, C.R. XXXVI 288. When Pighius objects to this view, then Calvin does answer that Pighius confuses the proximate and the remote cause, that every reprobate must seek the proximate cause in his own sin and that objections remain also upon the other standpoint, but he does not deny the conclusion of Pighius. Reprobation as well as election has its final and deepest cause in God's will, *Inst.* I, 18, 2; III, 22, 11; III, 23, 1, 2, 7, 8. C.R. XXXVI 278, 317, etc. Calvin alternates, therefore, between the supralapsarian and infralapsarian conceptions."—end of quote.

This quotation is striking because, in the first

place, it shows that Calvin and Augustine maintained, first, the sovereign view of election. And it also shows that they maintained an equally sovereign view of reprobation. To be sure, they speak of a Divine permission, permitting the fall, because they are most careful in their definition of reprobation, would not make God the Author of sin. Yet, even so, they declare that a mere permission is impossible with God, that God is active even when He permits the fall, and that both, election and reprobation, are sovereignly willed by God.

Finally, we would conclude our brief historical review of the concept, "Counsel of God", by calling attention to the stand taken by the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-1619. The arminians and (or) remonstrants had taught: conditional predestination, foreknowledge, universal atonement, resistible grace. Of this doctrine, as taught in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Arminius was the father. Arminius was born in the Netherlands in 1560 and died in 1609. Arminius had personally developed the views, first, that God determined to accept in Christ all penitent and believing sinners, and to condemn all that remained impenitent and unbelieving, and, secondly, that God, foreknowing who would believe and repent and who would not believe in Christ, foreordained particular persons unto salvation. It is evident from these statements that Arminius taught a conditional election and reprobation, an election and a reprobation which rested upon foreseen faith and unbelief. Arminius, as stated above, died in 1609, but his followers carried on and developed his views and conceptions. This doctrine, developed by Arminius and his followers, is known as Arminianism, and is embodied or contained for us in the Five Points of the Remonstrants, drawn up in the Netherlands in 1610.

The first of these Five Points reads as follows: "That God by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Christ Jesus, His Son, hath determined out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake and through Christ, those, who, through the grace of the Holy Spirit shall believe in this His Son, Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even unto the end; and on the other hand to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath and to condemn them as alienate from Christ; according to the word of the gospel in John 3:36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, the wrath of God abideth on him; and according to other passages of Scripture also". In this first of the Five Points the remonstrants clearly declare that God's predestination is conditional and based upon Divine foreknowledge. Taken by itself, it is, of course, true that God elected the believers and reprobated the un-

believers, that the believers are the elect and the unbelievers the reprobates. However, it is evident, also from the stand taken by Arminius himself, that they declared that God *elected* them *as* believers and *reprobated* the others *as* unbelievers. God saw beforehand that some would believe and that others would not believe, hence elected the believers and reprobated the others. This is the doctrine of conditional predestination, election and reprobation as based upon foreseen faith and unbelief.

The second proposition of the arminians or remonstrants reads as follows: "That agreeably thereto Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that He has obtained for them all, by His death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet so, that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the gospel in John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life; and in the first epistle of John 2:2; And He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." In this second of the Five Points of the remonstrants the arminians clearly set forth and declare their doctrine of universal atonement. Here we read that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, dies for all men and for every man, so that He has obtained for them all, by His death on the cross redemption and the forgiveness of sins. It is true that not every man enjoys this forgiveness of sin and this redemption. But this is not due to the death of Christ on the cross. This is merely and exclusively due to his unbelief and refusal to accept this merited and proffered salvation. As far as Christ is concerned, He is the Saviour of the world, mind you, and He died for all men and for every man. And this conception of the death of Christ must follow. To maintain a conditional view of God's view of election and reprobation and a particular conception of the cross is impossible. If, in God's counsel predestination is conditional, based on foreknowledge, so that the Lord saw beforehand who would believe or not believe and be determined in His election and reprobation by the act of the sinner whether that act be an act of faith or unbelief, then one must also entertain a universal conception of the cross of Christ. If the Lord would have all men be saved, then one cannot entertain a conception of the cross which would limit that salvation to a few.

The fourth proposition of the arminians reads as follows: "That the grace of God is the beginning, continuance and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent that the regenerate man himself without prevenient, assisting, awakening, following and co-operative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor

withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds and movements that can be conceived must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, in as much as it is written concerning many that they have resisted the Holy Ghost,—Acts 7 and elsewhere in many places". In this article the remonstrants teach the heresy of resistible grace. In this article we have an outstanding example of heresy's subtle way of creeping into the bosom of the Church of God. Imagine what these arminians declare here: "That the grace of God is the beginning, continuance and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent that the regenerate man himself without prevent, assisting, awakening, following and co-operative grace, can neither think, will nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds and movement that can be conceived must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ." Isn't that wonderful? Who would ever dare, after reading such a wonderful testimony to the truth, of accusing the authors of it as heretical? And, yet, they also declare that this grace of God is not irresistible. This implies that the natural man is able to resist or not resist the grace of God, that he can either accept or reject it. This means that the greater part of this fourth proposition is merely camouflage. They do not mean what they say in that first part. Any man who can either accept or reject the salvation offered in the gospel is not totally depraved; the clear implication of this proposition is that man can of himself accept God's salvation, permit within himself the operation of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the fourth point of the Five Points of the remonstrants denies the irresistible character of grace and maintains the heresy that the natural man is not wholly depraved.

And also this heresy must follow when once we have declared that God's predestination is not unconditional and that the sufferings and death of our Lord is not atoning and particular. To maintain that salvation is offered to all men must result in the setting of the truth (?) that man can accept that grace of God. Why offer something to a man who cannot accept it?

And in the fifth and final article of the arminians the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the saints is denied, and we quote: "That those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of His life-giving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh, and to win the victory, it being well understood, that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand; and if only they are ready for the conflict and desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they by no craft or power

of Satan can be misled, nor plucked out of Christ's hand, according to the word of Christ, John 10:28: No man can pluck them out of My hand. But whether they are capable through negligence or forsaking again the first beginning of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scriptures, before we ourselves can teach it with full persuasion of our minds."

This article denies the perseverance of the saints. Indeed, apart from the concluding sentence of this fourth proposition, the entire article is characterized by strange and questionable statements. Thus we are told, e.g., that we can strive against Satan, sin, and the world and gain the victory through the *assisting* grace of the Holy Spirit; that Jesus Christ *assists* them through His Spirit in all temptations, *extends to them* His hand; and if only *they are ready for the conflict and desire His help*, and are not inactive, they will be kept from falling so that by no craft or power of Satan shall they be misled, nor plucked out of His hand. And the article concludes with the assertion that the question of the ultimate perseverance of the saints must as yet be determined out of the Holy Scriptures and that they are not able to state this with full persuasion of their minds. In other words, they cannot profess that the salvation of the believer is sure.

And this, too, lies in the nature of the case. Having departed from the eternal and unchangeable counsel of the Lord they have deserted the only sure and certain anchor of their salvation. Having declared that the decree of Jehovah is conditional and based upon foreseen faith, that the sufferings and death of our Lord are not particular but universal, that man can either accept or reject the salvation of God, can either permit or refuse to permit the operation of the Holy Spirit within his heart, it must follow that none can be sure of his ultimate salvation. Fact is, upon the standpoint of the arminians everything depends upon the free will of man. The question of his eternal life and glory is not determined by the living God but by a miserable man, who is even less than a worm compared with the living God, inasmuch as the entire universe is less than a drop on the bucket and a particle of dust on the balances. We may well bear in mind, therefore, that the arminians or remonstrants taught: conditional predestination, foreknowledge, universal atonement, resistible grace. In our following article we will note the answer of the Synod of Dordrecht to these arminian declarations and also note their stand on the conditional or unconditional character of the counsel of God.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David's Decision To Build the Lord a House

The Ark of the covenant had been taken from the house of Abinadab and carried to Mt. Zion, the city of David, where it was set in its place in a tent that David had stretched for it, chap. 6 of 2 Samuel. The fetching of the Ark from Kirjath-Jearim soon was followed by three wars, 8:15. (This section must be put chronologically immediately after chap. 6). The enemies successively subdued were the Philistines over whom David already had gained a double victory (5:22-25), further the Moabites and the Syrians. In addition garrisons were put in Edom "and all they of Edom became tributary to David (8:14). It is best to assume that these victories were followed by the quiet described at 7:1. Here the text states that David dwelt in his house in that the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies. The absoluteness of this language is fully justified. For all the pressing enemies had been overcome. By the victories already gained the kingdom had been securely established. For the present not occupied with war, David decided to build a fixed abode for the Ark. He was confident that it was the Lord's will. The need of a portable tent for the Ark of God used to be actual. It was actual in the period of Israel's wanderings in the desert, when the people went from place to place with the Ark as their companion. It was actual in the period of the judges, when God's people were driven hither and thither within Canaan's borders by the heathen. In that period the place of residence of the tabernacle had changed four times (Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon).

But the condition of things had changed. All the pressing enemies had been subdued. In hardly any quarter of the land were the heathen disquieting anymore. This is indicated by the statement (8:15) that David's reign "extended over all Israel"; and that "he executed judgment and justice to all the people." Truly, the kingdom had been securely founded. How plain then, that the tent, which was comparable to the tabernacle of Moses, had served its usefulness and that the time was at hand for the building of a house for the Lord, that, as David's house of Cedar, could stand as the symbol of the stability of the kingdom. Such was David's belief.

And in this belief he, doubtless, was strengthened by the Lord's failure to sanctify the tent that he had stretched for the Ark on Mt. Zion. When Moses and Aaron had gone into the tabernacle (the erection of

which had just been completed) and had come out again, and had blessed the people, the glory of the Lord—the pillar of cloud in its glory—appeared unto the people (Lev. 9:23, 24). The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, so we read, and transformed it into a house of glory; and the people saw it. What is more, fire went out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering; and the people shouted and fell on their faces. There was a recurrence of these same wonders in connection with the dedication of Solomon's temple. "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house (2 Chron. 7:11). Shortly thereafter the Lord appeared to Solomon, and revealed to him that he had heard his prayer and had chosen that place to himself for a house of sacrifice.

But the glory of the Lord had not filled the tent that David had stretched. No fire had come down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices. What is more, the Lord continued to communicate with His people at Gibeon where the tabernacle had been erected. Solomon and all the congregation went to the highplace that was at Gibeon and offered there a thousand burnt offerings. And in that night God appeared unto him, there in Gibeon, and said to him, Ask what I shall give thee (2 Chron. 1:3-7). Yet it was certain that the Lord had chosen Zion, which He loved (Ps. 132:11).

These apparent inconsistencies in the divine working must have struck David as perplexing. As coupled with the fact of the stabilization of his kingdom, they caused him to conclude that the fault lay with that tent. The Lord wanted Him a house built. David decided to build the Lord that house and to restore in connection with it the whole symbolical-typical service, a service that had largely ceased with the capture of the Ark by the Philistines 21 years ago and this to teach the people of Israel that obedience is better than sacrifice.

David communicated his resolution to Nathan. Said he to the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in curtains." The incongruity of it was too painful for words. Action must be taken. That incongruity must be removed without delay. Nathan was in full accord with David. No command had been received by special revelation; but the prophet was certain that the king had correctly discerned the will of God. Said he to David, "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee".

Nathan's counsel was essentially right. The Lord's house had to be built. But like David he erred in concluding that the task was the king's. Neither the prophet nor the king made any mention of the tabernacle

of Moses. As compared with the tent that David had stretched, it was a beautiful structure, designed by the Lord Himself especially for His ark. It could have been removed to Jerusalem and the ark set in his place in it. But that, too, would have been contrary to the will of the Lord. So we learn from Ps. 132, which states that the Lord "refused the tabernacle of Joseph, the sanctuary of Shiloh," by which is meant the tabernacle of Moses. Both David and Nathan perceived that the Lord had done with that structure, that the time was at hand for the erection of the Lord's temple. As was said, their only error was their concluding that it was to be the task of David. God had other thoughts that they could not know except by divine revelation, which now was given.

The Lord instructed Nathan and David that same night; and thereby He shed a wonderful new light on the promise. The readiness of Nathan to make the revelation of God his own and to communicate it to the king was not a small thing, considering that previously he with such confidence had approved the king's plan. He must admit that he erred at least in one important aspect and reverse his counsel. That required grace—the grace to mortify his pride and not to mind the injury that he might be doing his prestige. He was endowed with that grace. He now spake God's word to the king. His prefacing his discourse with the utterance, "Thus saith the Lord," only indicates how fully and clearly conscious he was of the fact that the sentences now passing over his lips originated not in his own heart but in the mind and heart of God; and he thus gave strongest proof that he was God's prophet indeed who knew how to distinguish between his own thoughts and the thoughts of God and how to deny his own reasonings when it appeared that they went contrary to the mind and purpose of God.

"And it came to pass that same night that the Word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying Go tell to my servant, to David, Thus saith the Lord, shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in?" The thrust of this utterance of God is given at 1 Kings 8:18, where Solomon is represented as saying, "and the Lord said to David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless, thou shalt not build the house." Though the task was not to be David's, the Lord commends His servant for having conceived of the idea. The Lord now motivated His prohibition. He presented the reasons for His, "not thou. . . ."

Said the Lord to David, "For I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent or tabernacle." Not that the Lord

preferred that type of dwelling *as such*; but He wanted His Presence, as symbolized by the Ark (and the Pillar of Cloud) always in attendance to His wandering, harassed and afflicted people in order that they might be able to see with their eyes that He was with them as their sun, and shield and fortress, their guide and deliverer. It explains His keeping Him to a portable tabernacle through all those years. It explains, too, His unwillingness to abandon that tent for a fixed abode at this time. There was as yet peace and quiet only in a measure. Children of wickedness were still menacing the Lord's heritage. Not until the ideal state of things, characteristic of the reign of Solomon, of the reign of Christ on the New Earth, has been inaugurated, will that tent have served its purpose—that tent, in the final instance every congregation of saints in every place on this earth. When the last enemy will have been overcome, and not before, will the temple of the Lord rise, will the church of the elect—the true temple of God—appear with Christ in glory.

Hence, "Not thou. . . ." David was not the builder of the Lord's temple. He was a man of blood. His task was to war God's warfare, to reign in the midst of his enemies until one and all they be made his footstool. Hence, let him again take the field and fight the good fight of faith toward the victory that is his in the Lord.

Next David must be given to understand that in deciding to build the Lord a house he was following his own understanding; he was not reacting to a divine command communicated by special revelation. For no such a command had ever been given either to David or to the leading tribes. Accordingly the Lord said to him, "In all the places wherein I have walked with the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar?"

The Lord now tells His servant when and by whom the house of the Lord will be built. The revelation that follows speaks of great new mercies. For this reason and also to sustain in David the lively awareness that Nathan speaks God's word and not his own, the prophet must preface also this last section of his message with, "Now therefore so shalt thou say unto David my servant, Thus saith the Lord of hosts. . . ." The Lord by Nathan leads up to the main points in His discourse by briefly passing in review kindnesses already shown. And with reason. They form the pledge of the favors that are to follow.

Said the Lord to His servant, "I took thee from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel." By a miracle of His grace the Lord had lifted him out of deepest obscurity, and elevated him to a throne. The Lord continues, "And

I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of my sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are upon the earth." Yet, despite the absoluteness of this language, neighbouring godless nations still were seizing every opportunity to distress and terrify the people of Israel. But the Lord will give victory until the last foe be subdued. And so David's fame will continue to grow.

And so the Lord by Nathan continues, "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as beforetime". This is a prophecy that will have gone into fulfillment when the Lord will have made all David's enemies his footstool. Then quiet will prevail,—the perfect quiet that characterized the golden years of Solomon's reign. He was the typical king of glory who "had dominion over all the region on this side of the river. . . . over all the kings on this side of the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him" (1 Kings 4:24). Then Judah and Israel were firmly planted and dwelt in a place of their own, meaning that they "dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" (vs. 25).

But the final fulfillment of this prophecy is the redeemed family of God, clothed with heavenly perfection and glory in Christ and dwelling with God in His holy temple on the new earth, where His tabernacle will be with them. Then God's persecuted people will move no more, nor shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as before time.

"As before time, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people, *and to the time that I have caused thee and will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies.*" During all this time the people of Israel were afflicted by their enemies. But the Lord by the hand of David has sent deliverance and will continue to send deliverance in always larger measure until the prevailing quiet and peace will be such that the Lord's temple can be built.

Nathan continues, "And the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee a house." The promised house is that family of men of which David was the first father. Passing again from the type to the reality, from the shadow to the body, we must say that in the final instance the "house" that is here promised is the church of the elect, the entire family of redeemed of which Christ is head and king and priest and prophet, and in that capacity Saviour and Redeemer.

But this is not all. "And when thy days be fulfilled," so the Lord continues, "and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels". That "seed"

is Solomon and ultimately Christ who was in the loins of David. The Lord continues, "and I will establish his kingdom." As we have just seen, during the reign of Solomon the typical kingdom of Israel was established on an unprecedented scale through the wars of David that had preceded. Solomon had peace on all sides about him. But the peace was not enduring, for it was but a shadow, the body of which is the everlasting and heavenly peace and quiet that will characterize the reign of Christ on the new earth. Then also this element in Nathan's prophecy will go into final and true fulfillment. The kingdom of God is even now immovably established through Christ's atonement, yet not apparently so. For God's saints on earth are being driven hither and thither by the children of wickedness. And there is the apostate church. And the saints themselves have but a small beginning of true obedience. The immovable character of Christ's kingdom is obscured. But it shall appear in its full reality when the church of the elect, whose life is hidden with Christ, will appear with Christ in glory.

The Lord once more, "He shall build a house for my name." Having peace on all sides around about him, Solomon built the Lord a house, that stood for a time as the prophetic type of the church of the elect, the true house of God. Hence, also this element in the discourse of the prophet is progressively fulfilled. The builder of the church is Christ. It is necessarily of Christ that the Lord speaks in the final instance. For he adds, "And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. That can have reference only to the throne of Christ.

"And I will be his father, and he shall be my son," father, not only in the creatural but also in the spiritual ethical sense as well. That is to say, Solomon, of which the Lord here again speaks in the first instance, was the object of God's eternal love. For the Lord adds, "If he commit iniquity—and Solomon did so—I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." As to Saul, in the light of the Scriptures it will not do to say that the Lord hated Saul though He formerly loved him. The love of God is unchangeable and abiding. It has as little a beginning and end as God has beginning and end. As God it is eternal. That is the only kind of love that God's believing and sinful people can build on. God's mercy was not upon Saul personally but upon the elect in his house, among whom the most noteworthy was Jonathan. The passing of this elect nucleus was the withdrawing of God's mercy from Saul's house. For His mercy is only upon them that fear Him. But David and his house, definitely the seed that the Lord will set up after his decease, and

whose kingdom He will establish, will not be overtaken by a like calamity. Upon that seed the Lord's mercy will abide everlastingly. And that seed in the final instance is again Christ. True He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief; but He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed, Isa. 53.

That the Lord in this part of His discourse refers not only to individuals—Solomon and Saul—but to houses as well, is evident from His concluding statement to David, "But thine house and thine kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever",—David's house and kingdom, the house or church of the elect and the kingdom of Christ. They will be established forever and this in contradistinction to Saul's house and kingdom. The latter God destroyed in the way of its wickedness.

"According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David."

G. M. Ophoff.



Correspondence

Rev. J. Howerzyl.

Dear Brother,

I was occupied with your question under 5), the one that pertains to the writings of Rev. H. Hoeksema officially adopted by Synod for distribution. You ask, "What does officially adopted by Synod for distribution mean? Does this mean that when our Synod decides to publish or to print, or to underwrite the publishing of a work of Rev. Hoeksema the entire content of such publication becomes Church Doctrine, Creed, and therefore binding on all our churches? If this were actually the implication of 'adopted for distribution' then I for one would never favor such distribution, etc."

Reply.

Why do you speak of the "entire" content of such a publication? It seems to me that implicit in your question with the word "entire" in it is the statement, "I do believe that, let us say, nine-tenths of the content of such a publication becomes church doctrine and therefore binding in all our churches but not the one-tenth." But I ask then, Why not also the one-tenth? And, What one-tenth? And, Who will decide what one-tenth? Or shall every member be free to reject whatever such portion he pleases? And why should I mind being put in a strait-jacket by one-tenth if I have no objection to being binded by nine-tenths? Because I

fear that one-tenth might prove to be heretical?

Why not put the question as follows: Does the doctrine contained in such a publication become by synod's action Church doctrine and therefore binding on all the churches? Allow me to answer the question so put. No, the doctrine contained in such a publication does not by Synod's action in question become the official doctrine of the churches binding on their officebearers and members in the sense that any officebearer opposing that doctrine by the written or spoken word is by that very act deposed in his office. Yet, certainly, no stand is possible but the stand that in adopting the publication for distribution Synod officially sanctioned the doctrine contained in it. One who openly attacks such doctrine on the grounds of its being heretical, must therefore realize that he assails not Rev. Hoeksema alone as to his teachings, but Synod and in Synod the entire communion of Protestant Reformed Churches assembled at the time in Synod. Further, such a one must realize that he accuses Synod of having approved heresy. That one must realize, finally, that he is in duty bound to prove his accusation with the Scriptures and the Confessions. Certainly, if he is not of a mind to do that, he must not accuse.

I believe I should add something. It is this: To my mind, anyone attempting such a thing would find that he had addressed himself to an impossible task. For the "publications" in question turn on two propositions: 1) the promises of God are given only to the elect; 2) the promises of God are unconditional and therefore unfailing. The teaching contained in these two propositions is the literal doctrine of the Scriptures and our Confessions. This is also your conviction. For you write, "Allow me to begin by saying that I am fully in agreement with what you (Ophoff) write, 'that the promises of God are given only to the elect is, according to our firm conviction, the plain teaching of our Three Forms of Unity.' Then also this statement from your pen, 'When you (Ophoff) say elsewhere that this truth is written in our hearts I also fully agree.'" Here you by implication declare that "this truth" is written also in your heart. If so, why worry about being put in a theological strait-jacket by Synod's action with regard to those "publications" of Rev. H. Hoeksema. If the doctrine contained in those "publications" is written in our hearts, we are even apart from Synod's action in a theological strait-jacket—the strait-jacket of the voice of our consciences. We therefore feel ourselves conscience-bound to defend "that truth" in opposition to anyone in our midst publicly denying and attacking it. That, certainly, would be our solemn duty.

Finally, you state that you also have a little difficulty in understanding this matter of written and unwritten creeds about which I was writing. Does what I wrote in connection with this matter involve

me in a contradiction. I can't see that. Isn't it true that as yet no one has appeared on our synod with a written statement to the effect that the promises of God are given only to the elect and overtured Synod to adopt that credal statement and to make it binding? That has never happened. But I really can't go into this here for lack of space. I will give this difficulty of yours full attention in the next issue of our paper.

G. M. Ophoff.



SION'S ZANGEN

Zalig In Des Heeren Vrees

(Psalm 112; Tweede Deel)

We waren toegekomen aan de beschrijving van dien man die den Heere vreest: we hebben twee verzen aan dat thema gewijd. De laatste klank die we opvingen vanuit dit gezang was, dat het geslacht der oprechten gezegend zal worden.

Nu gaan we verder.

En het eerste wat ons ditmaal in het lied toespreekt brengt ons voor een moeilijkheid. Er staat in het derde vers: "In zijn huis zal have en rijkdom wezen; en zijne gerechtigheid bestaat in eeuwigheid."

De vraag rijst onmiddellijk: Hoe zit dat? Ik heb al zoo vaak arme kinderen Gods gezien! En is er niet die geschiedenis van Lazarus? Die man lag aan de poort des rijken vol zweren. En Asaf schetst ons de schrille tegenstelling van goddeloozen dien het welgaat, terwijl Zijn volk in smart en ellende is den ganschen dag! Hoe zit dit?

Wel, geliefde lezer, ik zal trachten om iets tot verklaring te schrijven.

Eerst moeten we voor de aandacht houden, dat in het Oude Testament, onder de bedeeeling der schaduwen en typen, aardsche voorspoed een bewijs was van Gods gunst over een mensch, dat wil zeggen, indien in gerechtigheid verkregen. Keer op keer lezen we in de Wet Gods (nu in den breeden zin genomen), dat als Israel den Heeren vreesde, zij zekerlijk gezegend zouden worden. Lezen we niet, dat als het volk naar den Heere zou luisteren, de Heere de vensteren des hemels zou openen om hen te zegenen met aardsche schatten? vergunt me, dat ik eenige verzen afschrijf uit de profetiën van Maleachi. Ik vond ze in Mal. 3:8-10. "Zal een mensch God berooven? Maar gij berooft Mij, en zegt: Waarin berooven wij U? In de tienden en het hefoffer. Met eenen vloek zijt gij vervloekt, omdat gij Mij berooft, zelfs het gansche volk. Brengt alle de tienden in het schathuis, opdat er spijze zij in Mijn Huis; en beproeft Mij nu daarin, zegt de Heere der

heirscharen, of Ik u dan niet zal open doen de vensteren des hemels, en u zegen afgie'en, zoodat er geen schuren genoeg zullen wezen."

Daar hebt ge het bewijs, dat onder de Oude Bedeeeling de godsvrucht beloond werd door den Heere met welvaart op natuurlijk gebied.

Maar hier moeten twee dingen niet vergeten worden. Eerstens, dat die regeling van Godswege bedoeld werd om een beeld te zijn van de geestelijke welvaart die gevonden wordt in den weg der gehoorzaamheid. Vandaag geldt niet meer, dat de Heere ons zegenen zal op natuurlijk gebied als we wandelen in Zijne wegen. Ik behoef dat zeker niet te bewijzen. Deze positie wordt gestaafd door de ondervinding. En ook Gods Woord leert het ons. Er staat zelfs in de Heilige Schrift, dat de Heere het arme verloor om het rijke te beschamen. Niet vele rijken. . . is regel vandaag.

En, tweedens, dat zelfs onder de Oude Bedeeeling er uitzonderingen waren in dezen door God bestenden regel. Denkt aan Job. Er was geen beter man dan Job. En toch maakte de Heere hem zoo arm, dat hij ten slotte terecht komt op een mesthoop. Alles verliet hem, tot zijn eigen vrouw toe. De Heere had ie's met Satan te vereffen en daarom moet Job zonder oorzaak van groote zonden of afwijkingen doodarm gemaakt worden. En ook dit nog: God wilde in het Oude Testament een schoone type toonen van Zijn Zoon Jezus, die zonder oorzaak verlaten en onuitsprekelijke armoede moest lijden. Job is een type van Jezus, beide in zijn armoede, en ook in zijn dubbelen rijkdom.

Daar zou ik nog bij kunnen voegen, dat zelfs het kind Gods in de Oude Bedeeeling beseftte, dat die stroom van aardsche zegeningen, dien hij ontving in den weg van gehoorzaamheid, slechts beeld en symbool waren van den stroom der geestelijke zegeningen in den te komen Middelaar. Denkt hier, b.v., aan Abraham. Hij was zeer rijk, en toch? Hij zag uit, verlangend en hunkerend, naar de schatten van het Koninkrijk Gods. "Have en rijkdom".

Ja, dat zal waar zijn. Dat is waar van alle kinderen Gods. Of gij nu eeuwen geleden in Naftali woonde, of dat ge hier in Amerika verkeert in de twintigste eeuw. . . het maakt eigenlijk, wezenlijk, geen verschil. Gij zijt een man of vrouw die veel "have en rijkdom" hebt. Luistert naar een arme stakkerd. Zijn naam is Paulus. Hij had bijna niets op aarde. Ik zal hem het woord geven: "als armen, doch velen rijk makende, als niets hebbende, en nochtans alles bezittende."

Is het niet om van te zingen?

Gij die dit leest?

Ge moogt, ge moet gerust Psalm 112 zingen, ook dan en daar, wanneer het spreekt van "have en rijkdom". Het maakt geen verschil al zijt ge nog zoo arm in aardsche schatten. Want Uwe have en rijkdom is in God. Denkt hier aan: ge zijt erfgenamen

van God en mede-erfgenamen van Christus! En de Heilige Geest van God roept U toe: als ge Christus hebt tot Uw deel, dan zal Hij U met Hem alle dingen schenken! En Paulus verstout zich en zegt: . . . alles is uwe: hetzij Paulus, hetzij Apollos, hetzij Cefas, he' zij de wereld, hetzij leven, hetzij dood, hetzij tegenwoordige hetzij toekomstige dingen, zij zijn alle uwe; doch gij zijt van Christus en Christus is Gods.

Wat zullen we nog meer zeggen?

Ja, nog dit eene: stelt het U voor, ge hebt de liefde van den grooten God in het diepste hart! Wat wilt ge nog meer? En ge hebt die liefde Gods in den meest intensieven zin. Er is geen Engel van Jehovah die de liefde Gods bezit zooals Christus die heeft. En gij zijt van Christus, meer dan alle engelen des hemels!

Wie zou niet zingen?

En let nu op de fontein van al die zaligheden. Zij zit op de gerechtigheid die eeuwig is.

Want er staat, en dan in zeer sterk en nauw verband: "en zijne gerechtigheid bestaat in eeuwigheid."

Denkt Uzelf niet, dat we die "have en rijkdom" niet mogen verklaren, dan enkel en alleen in verband met de gerechtigheid die Gods volk kenmerkt?

Er is eene tot in der eeuwigheid bestaande gerechtigheid voor en in het volk des Heeren.

Daar spreekt Gods Woord van op duizend bladzijden. Soms denk ik, dat er geen waarheid is die zoo schoon is als deze. Soms, zeg ik. Want ze is toch niet de grootste, de diepste waarheid. Waarom ze dan zoo bemind wordt door Gods volk? Och, dat zit hierin: we zijn zoo vreeselijk ongerecht van nature. En als we dan vat krijgen aan de gerechtigheid die bestaat tot in der eeuwigheid, dan dorsten we, dan dorsten we. . . .

Het is zoo ontzettend om gerechtigheid te proeven te midden van de ongerechtigheid! Stelt het U voor: in het diepste van ons wezen schreeuwen we het uit: O God! Ik ken geen groter zaligheid dan U te mogen zien! O, dat ik verzadigd mocht worden met Uw Goddelijk Beeld! En tegelijkertijd is daar de wet der zonde en des doods die woedt in mijne leden, en die mij gevangen neemt, zoodat ik niet doe hetgeen ik toch zoo gaarne zou willen. En dan komt er die kreet van Paulus: "Wie zal mij verlossen uit het lichaam dezes doods!"

Zoo zult ge het beginnen te verstaan, dat overal in de Heilige Schrift de gekenden Gods dorsten, verlangen, rijkhalzend uitzien naar God in den Heere Jezus Christus. En dat dorsten is naar de deugd van de gerechtigheid, dezelfde gerechtigheid waarvan mijn tekst spreekt.

We moeten nog wat wachten.

Die gerechtigheid heeft een lange en ook een bange geschiedenis.

Hare oorsprongen zijn van eeuwigheid.

God heeft van eeuwigheid die gerechtigheid uit-

gedacht, gewild, gezien. En toen Hij die gerechtigheid zag, zooals zij alle gekenden lieflijk zou maken, toen heeft God Zich verblijd in Zijn menschenkinderen. Leest en herleest, en leert van buiten Spreuken 8.

O ja, God zag die gerechtigheid en die gerechtigen van alle eeuwigheid. Hij heeft eeuwiglijk gewild om Zich te verheerlijken in menschenkinderen. En dan zoo, dat alle die menschen het tot in alle eeuwigheid zouden beseffen, dat al dat mooie, al dat lieflijke, al dat onuitsprekelijk heerlijke hun toekwam uit genade, voor niets, als een pure gave van God.

En daar hebt ge het bange, het vreeselijke van die gerechtigheid!

Zoo zou ik moeten spreken van dat kruis van Golgotha. O, wordt toch nooit moede van dat kruis! Ik stem U toe, dat het vreeselijke dingen spelt. Maar hebt ge wel eens geluisterd naar het Goddelijk Woord, dat ook spreekt van die vreeselijke dingen? Maar dan komt er wat bij. Dan zegt God: Ik zal U vreeselijke dingen antwoorden *in gerechtigheid!*

Let toch op Golgotha! Woont onder de schaduw van dat Kruis. Want daar, op dat kruis, ziet ge de gerechtigheid die aan 't komen is voor U en voor mij. Boven, achter en in dat kruis hoor ik een stemme van den Drie-Eenigen God die tot ons allen zegt: Hier ben Ik aan 't leggen het fundament voor de gerechtigheid die U zal doen zingen tot in alle eeuwigheid. Die gerechtigheid is zoo intiem aan Christus Jezus verbonden, dat de Heilige Geest Hem noemt: De Heere onze gerechtigheid. Jehovah Tsidkenu!

Vreeselijk en bang!

Ziet ge, de kinderen Gods hadden o zoo veel ongerechtigheid gedaan. Nu dan, die vracht van zonde en schuld ligt daar op het groote Offer, het eenige Offer, dat de wereld ooit zag. En luister nu naar een regel van een oud gedicht; ik verander het een beetje: "Daar zag ik wat eischen Gods heiligheid deed!"

Wilt ge den prijs weten van die schoone en lieflijke gerechtigheid die U tot in alle eeuwigheid zal tooien? Luistert dan. Het is donker, stikdonker geworden. Ik hoor een kreet die uitgestooten wordt in vreeselijk klankgeslacht: "Mijn God, Mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten?" Dat is de prijs voor al Uw zingen en jubelen.

En zoo zijn we aangekomen bij den tekst.

Want al die eeuwige liefde welke de gerechtigheid uitdacht, wilde en zag; en al de eeuwige liefde die deze gerechtigheid wrocht in den tijd aan het kruis, komt naar U toe door het geloof. Het geloof is middel Gods om U die gerechtigheid te schenken. Dat geloof is de gave Gods aan Zijn volk. Ge loopt daarhenen in al Uw goddeloosheid, totdat die gave Uw bewustzijn bereikt, en niet eerder. Duizend malen mag men U aanspreken en bekend maken met den eisch tot geloof—maar als God het niet geeft, dan lacht ge, en spot ge met al de gerechtigheid des Heeren. Rauwelings brult

de mensch van nature: Wijk van mij: aan de kennis Uwer wegen (en dat is gerechtigheid in actie) heb ik geen lust!

Maar o, als het geloof in Uw bewustzijn geschonken wordt en komt, dan wordt het anders. Dan *kent* ge God en Goddelijke zaken. Dan proeft ge de gerechtigheid, en dorst.

En door dat geloof krijgt ge vat aan al de gerechtigheid die Christus wrocht, neen, die God wrocht door Christus aan het kruis. Ge wordt door het geloof gerechtvaardigd voor God!

Dikke boeken zijn er over geschreven. Ik zou U willen zeggen, wat het beteekent in zeer eenvoudige termen.

Gerechtvaardigd te zijn voor God beteekent dit: God glimlacht U tegen. God bemint U. God spreekt U vrij van alle schuld. God doet U ervaren in het diepe hart dat alles wel is met U tot in alle eeuwigheid. Hij zegt tot U; Gij zijt mijn kind! Ik heb U tot zoon of dochter aangenomen. Zwig nu, mijn kind, en droog Uw tranen. Zijt nu stille in het bewogen en stormende hart. Uw hart worde niet ontroerd. Laat stille, aangename, eeuwige vrede in Uw hart neerdalen. Alles is wel, is eeuwig wel. Dat is de rechtvaardigmaking.

De rechtvaardigmaking is dit: Als ge straks sterft en daarhenen vliegt, dan komt ge bij God aan. En als ge dan bij de poorten van het nieuwe Jeruzalem aankomt, dan bewerkt die rechtvaardigmaking in U deze wondere moed: dan gaat ge zingen bij die poorten, en dan zegt ge zingende: Ontsluit, ontsluit voor mijne schreden, de poorten der gerechtigheid!

De rechtvaardigmaking is dit: als ge met alle miljariden menschenkinderen voor den troon van God komt te staan in den dag des oordeels, dan zal God U aanzien, Uw levensboek nazien, en dan zal Hij ook in het boek des levens Uw naam lezen, en dan zal Hij tot U zeggen: Mijn kind, Ik vind geen schuld in U! Mijn Zoon, Jezus, heeft alle schuld voor U betaald! Ga heen, neem Uw plaats in onder het zalige volk in de stad die fundamenten heeft.

En al zingende zult ge Uw plaats vinden. En ge zult vele anderen zien.

En ze begonnen vroolijk te zijn.

G. Vos.

* * * *

CLASSIS WEST

meets in Hull, Iowa, March 1, 1950. Consistories, propose a delegate to Synod from among your elders. Remember also the commemoration meeting on the evening before Classis.

M. Gritters, Stated Clerk.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10

To the former verses of this chapter, the verses 1-3, we have allotted four articles. At the beginning of the last of the just mentioned series of articles we told you, that this was all we would write on these verses. At that time we contemplated writing on some other subject at this time. However, after thinking about the matter, and also after studying this passage a little more, we are of the conviction that we ought to also write on the verses 4-10. It is true, that in our former articles allusion was made from time to time to these verses here in question, but we did not give a thetical exposition of these verses in that series of four articles. And, therefore, a more thorough treatment of these verses we deem to be in order. We trust that the thoughtful reader will share this our conviction.

Before we enter upon the detailed discussion of the implication of these verses, we shall endeavor to gain somewhat of a bird's-eye view of this passage. And so doing we shall at least endeavor to preclude the very common error of presenting so many trees that the forest is lost out of view.

It is our conviction that it ought to be clear to any careful reader of this passage, also to the reader who has no scientific knowledge of the rules of interpretation of Scripture, that in it Paul teaches us the three parts that a Christian must know to live and die happily in the fulness which is in Christ Jesus, our Saviour. These three parts lie at the very surface. Permit us to call your attention to the following observations:

1. That in the verses 1-3 Paul calls our attention to the greatness of our sin and guilt as we are by nature, as we are apart from the redemptive work of God in Christ.

2. That in the verses 4-8 Paul illucidates upon the great redemption that is ours in Christ, in His death and resurrection; it is the greatness and the riches of the grace of God, the exhibition of His rich mercy as this latter is rooted in sovereign love.

3. That in the verses 9-10 Paul is speaking of our gratitude to God, as this *must needs follow* by the very nature of the great grace of God and our salvation from sin by a *living* faith.

Of course it should also be evident to the thoughtful reader that Paul is here not giving us the Heidelberg Catechism pure and simple. Putting it that way would be an oversimplification. However, in the very warp and woof of the theme *saved by grace* these three elements are present. Paul is here not writing for a

group of people who are merely interested in a theological *system* of thought for the sake of the *system*, but he is addressing the people of God's choosing, who have heard the Gospel of salvation, the word of truth and have believed it, who have been sealed unto the day of redemption by the Holy Spirit with a living and an abiding hope of the return of Christ in His day. Wherefore Paul can and does address them in this letter, giving the motive of his writing to them as being, that "he has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of their love to all the saints". And Paul's prayer is, that these believing and loving saints, who have a faith in Christ that is energized by love, may come to know and experience all that God has prepared for them in this hope of their calling. And, therefore, surely the elements given in the Heidelberg Catechism are taken as to the body of their truth from all the Scriptures, also from this passage.

We do well to keep this practical intent of the Word of God in mind. To give some line of thought to these articles on this passage; to prevent us from falling into needless and wearying repetition; to make our discussion fruitful with the least possible effort, (at least "possible" for this writer) we will call attention to the following elements in these verses:

1. That we are *saved by grace*. That is the great theme in these verses. It is the scarlet thread running through every element.

2. That the Divine purpose of this salvation by grace is: the display of *the riches* of His grace—to the praise of the glory of His grace. It is the great purpose: *Soli Deo Gloria!*

3. That we become partaker of this great salvation *by faith* and *by means* of faith only; that not only is *salvation* a free gift of grace, but that also *faith* is *gift of God*. By this *law of faith* all boasting on the part of man before God is silenced in humble and grateful confession and praise.

4. That by virtue of this faith *working by love* we are indeed a new creature, old things have passed away, and we are constituted fit unto every good work—the good work which God hath *before prepared* in order that thus we should walk in them.

We begin with the proposition under 1. It is the truth here uttered by Paul: that we are *saved by grace*.

When we place ourselves before the question what this implies we see ourselves confronted, first of all, with the matter of the Biblical implication of the term "grace". What is "grace" in Holy Writ.

It has often been alleged, and that not without a great deal of truth, that "grace is *unmerited* favor of God". Now this need not surprise us. For surely grace is never merited by the believer. It is always merited for him, at least grace is as we see it, as we *taste* it. Now it has been said that prior to man's

fall he also tasted God's grace. It was God's great goodness to man that he was created as he was. At least thus various Reformed theologians have spoken of God's grace in relationship to Adam prior to the fall and to his subsequent receiving of the Prot-Evangel. And our Confession, the Belgica, says that the good angels remained standing by the grace of God. Thus we read in Article XII, which speaks of "Creation". We quote: ". . . He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have *by the grace of God*, remained steadfast and continued in their primitive state."

How are we to judge of this quotation from the Confessions, particularly as it touches upon the "*grace of God manifested to angels*" so that they, the angels, did not fall from their own estate? Was this a certain creation grace to them? Or was this the grace of God in Christ unto whom, as Col. 1:16 teaches us, all things were made in heaven and on earth? Thus also the angels were made in view of God's redemptive work in Christ, that He be in all things pre-eminent? For amongst all things Paul explicitly mentions: the angels. We quote: "because in Him were created (Aorist tense-point-action: Upon God's one time speaking in the beginning. Not after the fall) all things in heaven and on earth, whether seen or unseen things, whether thrones or lords or principalities or powers". This is the angel world. Now this includes the evil angels "who fell from that excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition", but Paul here also speaks of those angels, who by *the grace of God reemained standing*. They remained standing how? By the grace of God in Christ, or by the grace of God in virtue of their creation and subsequent preservation in the favor of God *immediately* from the throne?

We believe that there was a grace of God revealed in the Protevangel prior to Christ's actual coming into the world in the fulness of time; it was revealed through the ceremonies and shadows. So, too, I believe, there was a grace of God shown to the angels who remained in their original excellency, a grace *by virtue of which* (Belgic Confession) they remained standing. And although this grace of God was not *merited* for them by Christ, yet when God sent His Son and made Him an heir higher than the angels, saying: Let all the angels of God worship him (Heb. 1:6; Ps. 97:7) then also the angels were *taken up* into the great work of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. These angels needed not *be redeemed from sin*, but they did need to be *unified under the summing up of all things* under one Head in Christ. Eph. 1:10.

We here touch on a fine point. We do not want to wander too far from our subject, namely, the implica-

tion of grace. But that is then, too, exactly the point we are considering here in respect to the angels. What is the grace they receive. And this is a fine point in theology. It touches the question of Christ being the Mediator of His people, or whether as Mediator He also is the all and all in creation. To our mind it is here a matter of explaining what one means with the term "Mediator". That Christ's mediatorship as to His people finds its setting in the midst of God's eternal purpose over all things is so clearly the teaching of the books of Ephesians and Colosians (yes, where not in Scripture?) that it is simply folly to deny it.

Just how the Belgic Confession conceives of the grace of God in Christ's redemption to the angels is not explicitly stated. What the Belgic Confession does state is, that the "angels were created" to be His messengers, and to serve His elect". This does suggest that the tendency, the intent of the *preserving grace* of God to the angels, who fell not from their excellency, was *to have messengers for the elect*, who will become partakers of the grace in Christ Jesus. I say that the Confession does not say that this is the intent of the grace to the angels, but it surely is the only logical conclusion possible, and also a conclusion, that fits with the pattern of sound doctrine given in all of the Scriptures.

Whether this grace for the angels is merited in Christ is a matter which lies beyond the scope of this article. Fact is that the Belgic Confession speaks of grace to the angels, but it is equally a fact, that, whereas the Holy Scriptures were written for men, for us, the believing Israel of God, it would from the very nature speak little of the grace of God to angels, but rather of the grace of God to *redeemed* sinners. In either case grace, as all of God's gifts to the creatures are never merited by the creature. They are always *gifts*.

But our text, as does all of Scripture, speaks of *our being saved by grace*. And then it may be remarked, that we are certain that grace is first of all a perfection of God, not prepared for us *as favor*, but that it is a perfection of God's own being. God is the gracious God. He is this in His simplicity, that is, God is His virtues and all His virtues are one. But God is the God of all grace, that is, there is no grace that is not from Him. He is beautiful in all His perfections. He is gracious in His justice, equity as well as in His love and mercy. And all the gracious beauty of God's holiness is reflected also in His almighty and omnipresent unchangeableness. But the fundamental notion of the term grace seems to be beauty.

When God is gracious to His people in Christ He restores them to the beauty of true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He then in grace removes from

us all of our sins, and gives us beauty for ashes, and the oil of gladness in the stead of all of our sorrows.

Yet, this grace of God we never taste except as God has concretely made His grace appear in Jesus Christ. I don't know just how the angels receive the upholding grace of God, but I do know that they are very much interested in the grace as it is manifested in history, even so that they come to understand the manifest wisdom of God in the manifesting of this grace in the church, *through* the church. The grace in its richness is not for the angels, but it is thus for us. It is the grace which *became a reality* (John 1:17) through Jesus Christ. The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth became a reality through Jesus Christ. And only as it became (*egeneto*) do we receive it. It came to us by the Son of God sent in the fulness of time made (having become) from a woman made (having become) under law, that He might redeem us from law in order that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. 4:4. We call attention to this verse from Gal. 4:4 as well as that of John 1:17 because of the verbs employed. In Gal. 4:4 the term in the Greek stands for that which *became*. The participial is "ginomenon". Hence, there was a *time* on the calendar in God's time and appointed seasons in history when this grace of God was not yet *revealed* because it was *not yet realized*.

(to be continued)

Geo. C. Lubbers.

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IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its heartfelt sympathy with a fellow-member in the loss of his father

MR. C. KLAVER

May the God of all grace comfort the relatives in their sorrow.

A. Van Tuinen, Pres.

H. Korhorn, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan hereby expresses its sympathy with our fellow officebearer, deacon Maurice Klap Jr., in the loss of his father

MAURICE KLAP, SR.

May the God of all grace comfort him in his loss and sanctify this experience to his heart.

Homer G. Kuiper, Clerk.

IN HIS FEAR

Called To His Praise

Lips That Praise.

If our eyes are the windows of our souls through which we look out into the world round about us and through which others look in to read what is in our souls, then our ears are doors through which the world comes in to our souls. And then we may go one step further and say that our tongues are means whereby we project our thoughts and desires into the souls of others. By means of our tongues we come in through that door of the ear and that window of the eye to bring into the souls of others our thoughts, our opinions and judgments, our desires and aspirations.

That we have a tremendous responsibility with these three faculties of sight, hearing and speech is evident to all. All three are servants of the mind. With all three we are called to God's praise. For what the eye sees and the ear hears the tongue must speak praise. That may be said in general. And to this fact we have briefly called your attention. The eye and the ear must not only be kept open for God's Word and interpret all that is seen and heard in the light of that Word, but we definitely must guide these members so that they are not exposed to that which would enter the soul through them and pollute the mind. That is essential for every prophet of God. That was true of the prophets in the old dispensation. They had to see and hear God's Word in order to instruct God's people. No wonder then that the prophet in the days of Samuel and before was called a Seer. He saw the truth being caused to see it by God in a vision or else to hear it in a spoken word. And it is still true today that the prophet of God who is called and formed to show forth His praises must use these members aright. So much in recapitulation that we may once again pick up the line in our former articles.

When we now come to that third member of our body which is so active and serves such an important role in our prophetic office, namely, our tongue, we ought immediately to be confronted with the power of that member and to appreciate that which it makes possible. If we would appreciate the power of our tongue only half as much as the devil does, we would be far more careful than we are. Speech is wonderful, but because our tongues are rooted in a totally depraved mind and heart, speech can also be tremendously dangerous and explosive. Let us be sobered by the Word of God in James 3, "The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our

members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God". And again remember those words of Jesus, "Do ye not yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth in to the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man". When we open our mouths we reveal what is in our hearts. This thought ought to underscore what we have written above. Since out of the mouth of man come such evils, since these things are the fruit the tongue brings forth because it is rooted in a totally depraved heart, we should indeed be careful what speech of man, whether spoken or written, will enter into our souls through our eyes and through our ears. Keep the windows and the doors closed! And teach your children to pull down the shades and lock the doors when they are exposed to these things by the clever tactics of the devil! Had Eve done this when the devil spoke in Paradise, and had Adam done so when Eve opened her lips to let her tongue repeat the lie, the world would have had an entirely different history. Scripture says, "Remember Lot's wife". We can add, "Remember Eve". And we repeat, if we appreciated the power of our tongues only half as much as the devil does, we would be far more careful of what we say and write. And we would also be far more careful in respect to that which we allow to enter in and to make its impression upon the minds of our children.

For speech is the expression of thought. What a marvelous faculty this is which God created in man! Whatever thought arises in our minds whether a righteous thought or a devilish plan, we are able to convey this thought to other rational moral creatures by means of speech. And of course, all that we say here in regard to spoken expression of our thoughts applies also to the printed page upon which man may record his speech. Let it then also be stated at this juncture that the devil has far more numerous tools for his evil works today than he did in the days of Adam and Eve and for many ages afterwards. Before the flood men lived hundreds of years and were able to hand down their evil thoughts and ways to countless generations, but the ability to preserve these thoughts and hand them down for longer periods than their own life was very limited. Now with printing press, radio, television and movie camera, the devil has at his disposal means to propagate the evil doctrines of the lie which she has taught man far and wide not

only but also more clearly and in more detail. The lust of Hollywood's immoral pictures does not satisfy the flesh of man on the television black and white "screen". Under the power of the law of sin and spurred on by the devil, man must perfect a television "screen" that will reproduce the color of the actors on the broadcast side of the production. The better to get more deeply into the soul of man the works of darkness!

On the other hand we ought to consider that man was created with this marvelous faculty of speech in order to realize praise for Himself. We must also take into account the fact that He gave us the faculties of sight and hearing in order that we might enjoy the fellowship of His covenant. The Lord God Himself speaks. And He speaks unto His covenant child whom He had created in His own image just exactly in order that there might be this fellowship between the Covenant God and His covenant child. The tongue of the child of God then is an important member of his body. It is a homely mass of muscle and flesh, but under the power of God's grace and Spirit, it certainly can utter some beautiful things. We read that when Jesus spoke in His own home town of Nazareth the people all "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Think of that message and song of songs which the heavenly host sang at Jesus' birth. Recall all the beautiful things in Scripture which men spoke (and wrote) under the power of the Spirit of God. Lips that praise God! By God's grace there are such lips. By God's grace there are lips which when they open allow the praise of God to flow forth and which as faithful guards prevent the tongue from uttering the things of darkness. The tongue can no man tame, James says. Indeed, but the Spirit of Christ can.

But your lips then. . . ? Thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty fall easily from your lips? Your heart is full of it, and as God's prophet you are busy with God's praise day in day out? And as prophet you use that tongue to *teach* the truth to others? Would to God that we could say that this is our life. Rather must we all say that we fall far short of this our calling to God's praise. And how often do not our children reveal how lax we are. The songs our children sing around the home—and they will surely sing them elsewhere too—what do they reveal? In that joyous season through which the church has just passed, what were the songs your child sang? Were they about the Christ-Child, the Prince of Peace or that monstrosity of man's invention they call Santa Claus? And you did not by any chance take your child away from Christ during that season to let him have a look at an antichrist, did you? Sad to say, we know of parents who do that every year. Their child

must be kept out of the catechism class, they must suffer their children not to come to Christ, in order to show them this antichrist which is called Santa Claus! And of him they are taught to sing and of his "red nosed reindeer". Indeed, covenant children singing of the antichrist! Covenant children's tongues and lips devoted to the praise of men! A double tragedy. The child's tongue reveals a polluted mind, and it reveals parents who have behaved as prophets of the devil. You say that this criticism is too severe? My Bible says that Christ is coming quickly and adds significantly in Rev. 22:12, "and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his works". Shall we ascribe that giving of rewards for works to another? If we do, we make Him an anti- and false-christ. The world may see the need of coaxing and deceiving their children for a few weeks before Christmas to get them to behave outwardly. They need an antichrist because they have rejected The Christ. But must you, the prophet of God, adopt their false-christ and fail to function in your office of prophet to teach them of The Christ. You make of Christmas a Santa-Clausmas. Is that not anti-christian? To whom do we give account, whom must we serve, Christ and God or a monstrosity in red and white. Do we put our trust in the red blood of Christ and teach our children to do so, or do we teach them to look for a man in a coat of red? I know, you do not teach your children that he gives the presents on Christmas. But you did take them down to *see* him. You did *not* condemn him as standing in opposition to Christ. And you did take them away from Christ in the catechism class. Think it over prophets of the Most High God!

J. A. Heys.

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IN MEMORIAM

On Tuesday, January 24, my beloved wife, our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother

MRS. GRACE KOOISTRA

fell asleep in Jesus, at the age of 79 years.

We have the blessed assurance that our loved one is now forever with the Lord, which is our great comfort.

Mr. Peter Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bosscher

Getrude Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Menno P. Kooistra

Hilda Kooistra

Dr. and Mrs. Henry P. Kooistra

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kooistra

7 grandchildren and

5 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan