

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Heaven's Entrance

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Rev. 21:27.

There are people going to heaven!
The wonder of it!

The door to the New Jerusalem is opened to a countless throng!

John is almost at the end of the book which he wrote to the churches. One more chapter follows the one out of which we have taken one verse. And in that chapter he will paint the beauty of heaven. And then he will write *finis* to the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which *finis* is at the same time the end of the Bible. Nothing will be added; nothing may be subtracted: the Lord has spoken!

In the context he had written about the beauty of the New Jerusalem, which is the center of a new world. It shall be a city which will be glorious: the kings of the earth will bring their honor and their glory into it.

And the people of this city shall be happy for evermore.

And in the words of our text we hear the full story of entrance into that Jerusalem the golden.

It is at the same time beautiful and terrible.

Some will in no wise enter! And that is terrible. There is nothing more terrible than not to enter heaven. For such as cannot enter must go to the pit that burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death.

But it is also beautiful: some enter the city.

And who are these happy creatures? They are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Wondrous story of the sovereign grace of our Covenant God!

Wondrous story of joy unspeakable: we will enter the New Jerusalem!



There is an entrance into the city! It is a disclosure to glory!

But the same entrance is a bar to the night.

First: it is a disclosure of glory!

The subject matter is the New Jerusalem.

If we are to write about that subject, we would have to say many things, for that subject you will find throughout Holy Writ. From Genesis to Revelation you will hear about Jerusalem.

As to its historical meaning, we would have to begin with Paradise.

It may sound strange to you, but Jerusalem has its beginning in the Garden of Delight. In the midst of the garden we saw the Tree of Life. And that Tree of Life is really the historical and symbolical prefiguration of Jerusalem.

In order to see that, we must first ask: what is the meaning of Jerusalem. Well, the meaning of the word is: city of peace. And that brings us to Paradise. Man, eating of the Tree of Life, had communion with God, and the result was peace in his heart, peace in his soul, peace on his entire pathway.

But it did not last very long. He sinned, and God barred him from that tree. And being barred from the Tree of Life meant that he would taste of the unrest which characterizes the rebel.

But God remembered His eternal Covenant. At once after man's defaction, He called Him from darkness to light.

And although the historical and symbolical Jerusalem disappeared, the Lord gave Adam and Eve another, a better chapter to read in the history of the city of heavenly glory. He gave them the altar and the sacrifice. And that is Jerusalem regained and Jerusalem exalted. Really, dear reader, the altar and

its sacrifice was a more beautiful picture of Jerusalem than the Tree of Life in the first Paradise.

Did you ever note that every altar is an actual elevation of the earthy? Any altar, worthy the name, had to be a little heap of stones or of earth, and on it the saint of the Old Testament would offer his bloody sacrifice in obedience to God's command.

And that would be a little Jerusalem: a city of peace. Note how father Jacob called the place and the altar a House of God.

And it really did not change in all the long history of the Old Testament. Yes, I know that Moses built a tabernacle, and that Solomon built a temple unto the Lord, but essentially it was nothing new. Abel's altar and the bloody sacrifice on it was essentially the same as the costly Temple at Jerusalem.

Let us see.

What is the heart of Palestine? The land of Canaan. What was the heart of Canaan? The City of Jerusalem. What is the essential Thing in Jerusalem? A little child in that city would have pointed to the Temple of God. What was the heart of that Temple? The holy of holies. What was the core of that Most Holy Place? The ark of the covenant! And there we are. That ark of the covenant was also an altar, for once each year the High Priest would come into the Holiest Place and sprinkle the blood.

And so we come to the heart of the altar. It is the blood that is offered on that elevation of the earth: and that blood spoke of the Christ of God to come!

And I assure you that when that blood of the Christ is properly and fully explained by God Himself, you will see the glory of the New Jerusalem.

It is so glorious that it cannot be contained on the earth: God took it to Himself in heaven. That is the ascension of Christ. When Christ went to heaven, Jerusalem went to heaven. And it is there now: it is called the New Jerusalem.

And to see it is to see glory!



But it is barred against the night!

And that is terrible.

Listen to the text: that which defileth will in no wise enter therein.

What is that which defileth?

I could give you a very vivid picture of the throng that defileth if I took you to the Jerusalem of Jesus' sojourn on earth. There you would have seen a defilement that is abhorrible. There you would have seen a defilement which was worse than the foul scene in Sodom and Gomorrah. In the old Jerusalem you found floods of defilement.

What is defilement?

Defilement is made when the sinner takes the Holy Thing in his foul hands and besmirches its beauty and

splendour. It is when you take the holy things of Jehovah God and sin with them.

Could I point you to a clearer instance than when they reached for Jesus Christ at the place of the skull? They took Him and said: you are so unclean and so foul that neither the earth nor the heavens can bear with you any longer! We will hang you on a tree. And they crucified Him. And in order to make the picture more vivid, they hung a murderer on either side of Him.

That is defilement.

It is when they count the blood of the everlasting Covenant impure and when they trample under foot the Son of the living God.

That is defilement.

When God speaks and when He will have His word revered and obeyed, and when you or I then take that Word and cast it behind us, or if we use that Word in our low and evil lives for sport or for filthy lucre, then you see defilement.

And if you do that, and who does not? then you are barred from entrance into the New Jerusalem.

Neither will he enter heaven who worketh abomination.

What is that?

Abomination is a very descriptive term. It is used in the Septuagint for the detestable thing, for the foul thing which is detested because of its stench.

It is a man who works the sinful thing before the face of God. The point of view, therefore, is the sin of man as it is seen by God and the holy angels. And it tells us that holiness turns away from us in detestation and in disgust.

And the doors of heaven are closed against all those that work abomination.

And the greatest abomination is when man takes the earth and earthy things, falls on his knees before them, and says: Thou art my God! Unto thee I will sing my praises. Reason why this term in the Old Testament is often used for the sins of idolatry.

Be an idolater, and you cannot enter through the gates into the city.

Or who maketh the lie.

The lie is, as to its root, the raw cry: their is no God!

Therefore, the devil is the father of the lie.

And we all follow him in the making of that lie.

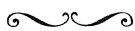
The lie is a fearful thing.

It is really that which does not exist. It is the nothing, the vain, the absolutely empty, the void thing. Live the life of the lie, and the end is that you fall into the pit that has no bottom. We cannot live there, we die eternally. We receive exactly that which fits the lie: we must be devoid of God. We must exist, but then without that which makes existence happiness, and that is God.

But when we have said during all our vain days on

earth: there is no God, and when all the manifestation of our lives has been conform to that lie, then we will reap that which conforms to that life of the lie: the desert of hell, the wilderness of desolation, the howling abyss.

At any rate: no entrance into the New Jerusalem!



Why not?

Because the New Jerusalem is glorious.

And that means that it is radiant with virtue, with the virtue of God in Jesus Christ the Lord. Heaven is full of His glory. You cannot travel anywhere into that wonderful new world, but you find the glory of God. And the radiance of that new world is such that it exceeds the earthy by far. In the present world we also see the glory of God, but it is dull compared to the glory of the new world. Sin and the earthy has made it dull. But in heaven everything shines and is radiantly brilliant. Did you note that whenever and wherever the heavenly beings and messengers appeared, that there we saw glory, and then a glory that caused us to weep, to fall down as dead, and to make us fear with a very great dread? It is because it was a heavenly glory.

Second, there is a bar against the night, for the New Jerusalem is spiritual overagainst the carnal, and it is eternal overagainst the temporal.

And, thirdly, and in close connection with the foregoing: the New Jerusalem is heavenly overagainst the earthy.

As you are by nature you cannot go to heaven.

Heaven is closed to us.

Woe is us unto all eternity.

We have followed the devil, and so we reap the reward of the devil: if nothing more happens, we will share his place which is prepared for Satan and hisimps.

In no wise enter. . . .!

Terrible truth!



And still. . . there are people going to heaven. The New Jerusalem is almost filled while I am writing at this moment. Many, many saints have gone before. And more will follow. Although I think that the end is in sight.

How is it possible?

The text will tell you in very plain and simple speech. Men have made it difficult to hear.

This is the simple truth: if your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life you may enter the gates into the city and be blest forevermore.

Just that simple.

Oh, how men have rebelled against this beautiful truth of God. They have no objection that men go to heaven. Oh no. They do not even object to it that

some go to hell. They would not even object if very few go to heaven. But, by all means, let those that go to heaven deserve to go there by their own merits. There you have the crux of the matter. It is the poison of the devil: the pride of life. That is at the root of all heresy.

Man does not like it when they hear of a Gospel that tells them how God chose His own people from all eternity, and that He decided from all eternity that they would go to heaven gratuitously, freely, gratis, only because God sovereignly willed it thus.

And yet, that is the way it is stated in my text.

The defilers and the abominable and the liars (and that includes every son and daughter of Adam) cannot enter and will in no wise enter through the gates into the city of God.

And yet people go to heaven.

Yes, and they are those whom God foreknew in His indescribable lovingkindness.

They are those that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

That Lamb is Jesus Christ, the Lord.

He is a Lamb, for He was sacrificed for all the defilement, and all the abominations and all the lies of the elect. And, mark you well, He cleansed them from all their sins by that one sacrifice which He brought on that solitary altar which we call the Cross.

And the names of the elect are all written in the book of the Lamb. God owned them. God gave them to Jesus. And they are all known to God and to Christ by their names.

And they enter the New Jerusalem.

And when you ask me: how do I know that I am written in the Lamb's book of life, then the answer is easy. You need not go far to read their description. Take, f.i., chapter 22:14: Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life (There is that old tree of life again. We heard of that tree in the first Paradise. But here it is infinitely more glorious.), and may enter in through the gates into the city.

There you have it. It is very plain.

All those that do His commandments.

You say the same thing when you repeat Paul in Rom. 5. All those that have the love of God spread abroad in their hearts through the Holy Ghost that is given unto them.

And do not say to me: I know not whether I have the Holy Ghost in me, and I know not whether or not I have the love of God in me.

You dare not express ignorance of the fact that you love God or that you hate Him?

Those written in that Lamb's book are the lovers of God!

And they enter now, in principle, but they long for its fulfillment.

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Faith A Condition According To Scripture?

"Het geloof is ook zelf geen conditie voor de andere weldaden (rechtvaardigmaking, heiligmaking)."

—Bavinck.

"De bondsbetrekking hing niet van die wetsonderhouding, als een voorafgaande voorwaarde af; zij was geen werkverbond, maar rustte alleen op Gods verkiezende liefde."

—Bavinck.

"Het (verbond) is van geen voorwaarde des menschen afhankelijk."

—Bavinck.

"Eigenlijk zijn er in het foedus gratiae (genadeverbond, H.H.), d.i., in het evangelie, hetwelk de bekendmaking van het genadeverbond is, geene eischen en geene voorwaarden."

—Bavinck.

"Voorwaardelijk is dit genadeverbond nooit. God geeft alles. Alles om niets. En niets van wat God geeft is afhankelijk gesteld van de contra-paestatie des menschen."

—Kuyper.

"Faith is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our righteousness."

—Netherland Confession.

"The Synod rejects the errors of those: Who teach: That God chose out of all possible conditions the act of faith as a condition of salvation."

—Canons of Dordrecht.

The above quotations are taken from Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, IV, 124; III, 236; III, 556; III, 242; and Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek* Locus de Foedere, p. 134. And translating these quotations in order, they run as follows:

"Faith itself is also no condition for the other benefits of salvation (justification, sanctification)."

"The covenant relation did not depend on the keeping of the law, as a preceding condition; it was no covenant of works, but rested only upon God's electing love."

"The (covenant) is not dependent on any condition of man."

"There are really in the *foedus gratiae* (covenant of grace, H.H.), i.e., in the gospel, which is the proclamation of the covenant of grace, no demands and no conditions."

"Conditional this covenant of grace is never. God gives everything. Everything for nothing. And nothing of what God gives is made dependent upon the contra-presentation of man."

That faith is a condition is now clearly and definitely expressed by the Rev. Petter in *Concordia* of February 2, 1950.

Heretofore he strongly suggested that this was his meaning, but he never definitely expressed it. Writes he:

"I may remind the readers that I have not before touched on this point. I have rather avoided it and confined myself to those expressions in Scripture that unquestionably speak of a conditional relationship in the life of the covenant, or in the process of salvation.

"If I have quoted or referred to others who spoke of faith as a condition, it was only to point to the prevalence of the concept in Reformed writers and history.

"But I was especially interested in the Scripture passages that teaches conditions in some way, howsoever. To argue against these would be to argue against Scripture, it would seem.

"But now the question of faith. Is that also a condition?"

And in the rest of his article he answers the question in the affirmative: faith is a condition unto salvation.

And the Rev. Petter appeals directly to Scripture to prove his point. This is, of course, in itself perfectly safe. No Reformed man can find fault with this. Scripture is our ultimate court of appeal. But it is not Reformed to pass by and ignore the confessions. As Reformed theologians we must either be able to point out that what we teach is in harmony with the confessions, or, if in our opinion Scripture teaches anything that is contrary to the three Forms of Unity, we must go the way of a *gravamen*.

Recently it has frequently been emphasized by different writers that we must regard nothing as binding but Scripture and the confessions.

With this I perfectly agree. Of course, we should never forget that in opposition to the Christian Reformed Church we reject the Three Points as interpretations of the confessions. And this means that according to the Protestant Reformed Churches the Heynsian as well as the Kuyperian conception of common grace is contrary to the confessions. In other words, we, and not the Christian Reformed churches adhere to the confessions pure and simple, without any additions. And the rejection of the so-called interpretations of the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church as embodied in the Three Points is binding too. And therefore it is certainly true that we regard nothing binding except the Scriptures and the confessions. The latter are for us the interpretation of the former.

This implies, of course, that we should always be able to show clearly that whatever we teach is in harmony with the Three Forms of Unity.

Now what if the situation arises that the confessions in our opinion appear to be in conflict with the Holy Scriptures. May we, in that case, simply appeal to the Scriptures and develop our own views and teach them in conflict with the confessions? God forbid.

If that were the case, no doctrinal basis could ever be established as a bond of union for any church. And therefore it is certainly the Reformed stand that within the Reformed churches the confessions are just as binding as the Scriptures, and that therefore we are not permitted to teach anything contrary to them. And if anyone has any objection against the confessions, he should refrain from publicly propagating his views, but brings his complaint, *gravamen*, in the way of consistory, classis, and synod to the attention of the churches.

This is what we have promised by signing the formula of subscription, which reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, professors of the Protestant Reformed Churches, ministers of the gospel, elders and deacons of the Protestant Reformed congregation of, of the classis of, do hereby sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this, our subscription, that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine, contained in the confession and catechism of the Reformed churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine, made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19, do fully agree with the Word of God."

"We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by our public preaching or writing.

"We declare, moreover, that we do not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis and synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis and synod, under the penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from our office.

"And further, if at any time the consistory, classis or synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, may deem it proper to require of us a further explanation of our sentiments respecting any particular article

of the Confession of Faith, the Catechism, or the explanation of the National Synod, we do hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under the penalty above mentioned, reserving for ourselves, however, the right of an appeal, whenever we shall believe ourselves aggrieved by the sentence of the consistory, the classis or the synod, and until a decision is made upon such an appeal, we will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed."

Now I do not mean to say or even to suggest that the Rev. Petter is in conflict with the confessions. But I cannot agree with his method of passing by the confessions to appeal directly to the Scriptures to defend his conditional theology.

On my part I have shown thus far, and I hope to show more clearly in the future, that the proposition: *Faith is a condition*, is confessionally un-Reformed. I have clearly pointed out for anyone that can read:

1) That according to the confessions faith is always presented as an instrument of God, part of salvation itself. And faith as an instrument which God works in our hearts certainly cannot be a condition at the same time.

2) That according to the confessions faith does not occur as a condition in the decree of election, and therefore cannot possibly appear as such in time.

3) That the very term *condition* is always put in the mouth of the Arminians by the Canons of Dordrecht.

Now when the Rev. Petter, in spite of what I wrote, does not even try to defend the proposition, *Faith is a condition*, on the basis of the confessions, but appeals directly to Scripture, I claim that he does not follow the Reformed method.

Nevertheless, I will examine the exegesis of the texts which the Rev. Petter offers in defense of his proposition. Before I do this, however, I want to call your attention to the introductory remarks of the Rev. Petter in the above-mentioned article of *Concordia*. Writes he:

"And now someone may immediately reply, 'There you have it, if you say A, you have to say B. If you begin on that path you have to arrive at the Arminianism condemned in Canon I of Dordt.'

"But this is not so. Dr. Schilder has said, 'What word could we mention that has not been misused by the slander-mouth of Satan?' This is a good question. For if we would let ourselves be guided by the misuse that can be made of a word or concept we would have to drop, we would have to ban from our vocabulary, such words as Trinity, Incarnation, Providence, Creation, Sanctification, Election, Hardening, Perfection. Yea, the list of words can be continued that have been

distorted into false doctrines. The safety of the church lies in walking carefully and finding the narrow path of orthodoxy by continually lighting each step with the Scriptures. If she begins to dogmatize she slips either to one side or to the other of the narrow path."

This paragraph is deceiving. I do not say intentionally, on the part of the Rev. Petter. But it is deceiving nevertheless. Terms like the Trinity, the incarnation, providence, creation, election, etc., have been clearly maintained and defined over against heretics. This certainly cannot be said of the term, *Faith is a condition*. In the second place, the paragraph is deceiving because the Rev. Petter draws a false contrast between what he calls dogmatizing and "lighting each step with the Scriptures." I claim that dogmatization in the true sense of the word is the same as constructing the truth on the basis of Holy Writ. And in the third place, I claim that the safety of the church certainly lies in adhering faithfully to the confessions and not in trying to light each step with the Scriptures, independently from those confessions. And in the Reformed confessions faith has clearly been circumscribed not as a condition, but as an instrument of God whereby He implants us and ingrafts us into Christ.

Further, the Rev. Petter writes: "And I would consider it very unwise for us as Protestant Reformed Churches, who are a part of the struggling, developing, storm-tossed church of our day, if we would simply by denial dispose of a whole question of this nature, when it is evident from the whole history of the concept of conditions that it cannot be so disposed of, and when such theologians as Dr. Schilder, Ridderbos, Berkhouwer, do not at all brush it away, but carefully explore the boundaries of its use and misuse. Certainly theology is in a stormy growing stage, and not a little even because of the stirring influence of the Barthians, or the dialectical, existential movement of theology."

My answer is that all the more because, as the Rev. Petter puts it, theology is in a stormy growing stage, we should all the more anchor the ship of our Protestant Reformed Churches into the safe ground of our confessions as they are the interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. And from that safe ground we should not try to go back, as the Rev. Petter does with his conditional theology, but rather proceed in developing the pure Reformed truth. And once more, according to our confessions faith is never presented as a condition, but always as an instrument of God whereby He implants us into Christ. And let me add, that although in the history of Reformed theology faith has indeed been presented as a condition, it is equally true that the best tradition of Reformed theology, especially as represented in our confessions, must have

nothing of the proposition, *Faith is a condition*. Finally, we want to call your attention to one more introductory remark of the Rev. Petter's:

"For we shall have to remember first of all that both the word salvation and the word faith are in Scripture used in a very flexible way. The aggrieved in the time of the controversy spoke of lively, moving, (bewegelijke) usage.

"Although it is perfectly justifiable to come to theological definition and subscription, yet we may not overlook this method of Scripture. And there is a very practical danger, the danger, namely, that we begin to preach dogma, instead of the gospel in connection with life in all its implications. I think we all know from experience how prone we all are to do this."

I claim that we can never do anything with so-called flexible terms. It is true, of course, that in Scripture many a term has more than one connotation. But if so, such terms should not remain flexible, but should be carefully defined. And in the second place, I want to remark once more that I do not like the attempt of the Rev. Petter to establish a false contrast between dogma and the gospel. When I preach the Heidelberg Catechism, I certainly preach dogma. But no one has ever accused me of preaching cold intellectualism and dead doctrine when I preach on the Heidelberg Catechism. To me the preaching of the Catechism or the preaching of doctrine is the same as the preaching of the gospel. True dogma is only systematized truth of the Scriptures and is absolutely indispensable. And also when the Rev. Petter tries to introduce his theory of faith as a condition into our churches, he simply introduces nothing but another dogma. And that other dogma is in my conviction not the gospel.

And now for the text's which the Rev. Petter tries to quote to prove his proposition, *Faith is a condition*.

It is deplorable that the Rev. Petter offers no thorough exegesis of the texts which he adduces.

The first Scriptural proof is contained in the following paragraph:

"Thus the simple words in the exhortation to baptism: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Here the salvation is in the future and is expressed as following upon, being related to, believing and being baptized."

It is evident that the Rev. Petter offers no exegesis at all of this text. Yet exegesis is sorely needed, especially if he wants to appeal to this passage of Scripture as a proof for his contention that faith is a condition unto salvation. All the Rev. Petter offers as a sort of an explanation is that "the salvation is in the future, and is expressed as following upon, being related to, believing and being baptized." But the question arises immediately: what is that future salvation

which the text mentions? That the future tense is used of the verb *to save* is very evident; but to what future salvation does the term refer? Does it merely refer to a future in time, so that salvation is presented as being future in relation to faith? That seems to be the interpretation of the Rev. Petter, although he does not literally express this. It is implied in the words, "salvation. . . is expressed as following upon . . . believing." Only on the basis of this exegesis does the Rev. Petter draw the conclusion from the text that faith is a condition unto salvation. His interpretation, therefore, would read somewhat as follows: "If one complies with the condition of faith, God will apply salvation to him, that is, give him regeneration, justify him, etc." If this is not his meaning let him explain himself. And according to this interpretation he does not conceive of faith as being a part of our salvation, but as preceding the latter. Both are in time, but salvation in all its implications follows upon faith as a condition which man must fulfill.

This, of course, is not true. Scripture never presents salvation as following immediately upon faith. In this sense, as salvation in time, it does not follow upon faith as a condition, but it includes faith. Faith is part of salvation itself.

Nor is this the meaning of the text. Whenever the future tense is used for salvation in Scripture, it either expresses the futurity of the eternal Messianic kingdom or certainty or both. And the text undoubtedly refers to the first meaning mentioned, although the third, (both the future glory and the certainly of salvation), is by no means excluded. Thus the text means: Whosoever believeth has the sure promise of future salvation in the kingdom of eternal glory." That this is the meaning is very evident from the contrast: "But he that believeth not shall be damned." Also this damnation to which the text refers denotes the damnation in eternal desolation, not in time. And therefore, the contrast of the text demands that also the future term "shall be saved" refers not to any salvation in the present time, but to the eternal Messianic glory in the kingdom of heaven. But if this be true, and it is true, then the text certainly offers no proof at all for the proposition which the Rev. Petter tries to prove, that faith is a condition unto salvation. For they that are saved by grace through faith, and that not of themselves, are certainly saved already in the present time and can never lose the salvation of eternal glory.

But we have no more room in the present issue to discuss the other texts which the Rev. Petter adduces as proof for his proposition that faith is a condition unto salvation.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXVIII.

1.

The Institution of the Holy Supper. (cont.)

But let us now attend to the contents of the Lord's Day we are discussing at present.

There are no less than three long chapters in our Heidelberg Catechism devoted to the explanation of the sacrament of communion. In Lord's Day 28 we have the general exposition of the meaning of this sacrament, together with a reference to the institution of the same. In Lord's Day 29 the relation between the sign and the thing signified is explained; while in Lord's Day 30 a comparison is drawn between the Lord's Supper and the popish mass.

In the present Lord's Day, therefore, we are called to discuss first of all the institution of the Lord's Supper.

We wish to remind you once again that it is essential for a sacrament to be definitely instituted as such,—instituted by God through our Lord Jesus Christ. A sacrament that is not definitely instituted by God for His church to receive and to observe would be a contradiction in terms. That institution is very important. Water as such does not constitute the sacrament of baptism; nor do bread and wine as such have any significance as sacramental signs in themselves. No more than any red light on the road which you may see has the significance for you that you must stop your car, no more has water and bread and wine as such the significance for you that it is a sacrament of God through which God will cleanse your soul from sin or feed your soul unto everlasting life. When you see a red light on the road, the question is whether that light is instituted. If it is not, you do not and do not have to stop. You may see all kinds of red lights on the road, and when you see them you ask the question whether they are private red lights or whether they are instituted and have the authority of the government. And only when that latter is the case, you stop; otherwise you simply travel on. It is true that red in itself is symbolic of danger. It is true that water in itself is symbolic of cleansing. And so it is also true that bread in itself is symbolic of spiritual nourishment and that wine is symbolic of heavenly

quickenings and refreshment. If this were not true, they could not possibly serve as signs. But although it is true that these natural elements are in themselves signs and are able to express in themselves certain symbolic significance, they thereby do not constitute sacraments. The institution, that is, the setting aside, the setting apart of the water in baptism from all other water, of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper from all other bread and wine, that setting apart, that pointing out by God of these signs, that divine act whereby He Himself connects His Word with those signs, that institution is essential in the constitution of a sacrament.

It is therefore perfectly proper and very important that the Heidelberg Catechism calls special attention to the institution of the Lord's Supper. It was, as you know, at the occasion of the last passover which the Lord ate with His disciples and which He had greatly desired to eat that the supper of holy communion was instituted.

It is hardly possible to explain the Scriptural record concerning the last passover of Jesus with His disciples in any other way than by assuming that it was on the regular day, that is, the fourteenth of Nisan, that the Lord celebrated it. Thus we read in Luke 22:7: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed." This, therefore, refers to the slaying of the paschal lamb, which was always done on the fourteenth of Nisan. And all the rest of the account in the gospel according to Luke is in accord with this assumption. For we read, vss. 8-14: "And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him." The same is true of the account in Matthew: "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." And the same account is found in Mark 14:12-17. Hence, it was undoubtedly on Thursday evening, the

fourteenth of Nisan, that the Lord celebrated this passover with His disciples. No further explanation can possibly be given to the accounts in the synoptics. The theory that in that year the paschal supper was eaten on the fifteenth of Nisan, instead of on the fourteenth, in order to maintain the view that Jesus died at the same time that the paschal lamb was slain, certainly can find no support in the Biblical record. Others claim that Jesus held the paschal supper on the thirteenth of Nisan, and therefore a day early. But also this is not in harmony with the account of the synoptic gospels; and besides, it would mean that the paschal lamb, which must needs be offered in the temple, could not have been eaten.

Now what was the significance of the passover? It was in the first place also a harvest feast, which was celebrated in the promised land, and therefore, the land of the covenant. On the sixteenth of Nisan the first sheaf of the harvest was waved before the Lord. Thus we read in Leviticus 23:9-11: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." However, it was above all a feast of commemoration, remembering that the Lord had passed over the dwellings of His people that were covered by the blood of the lamb in the night the Destroyer went through the house of bondage to kill all the firstborn of the land. And besides, on the passover the people commemorated that great deliverance from the house of bondage by the mighty hand of God. For thus we read in Ex. 12:3, ff.: "Speak unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household shall be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remain-

eth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." And so, finally, that Old Testament passover was in the third place a feast that had typical significance. We would not say that circumcision and the passover constituted two Old Testament sacraments. Circumcision, of course, was a sacrament. The passover was in itself no sacrament; but it closely approached to the New Testament conception of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Israel celebrated its deliverance accomplished, and at the same time looked forward to its deliverance as it was to be realized in the blood of the Lamb that was to be slain.

It was that passover which Christ Jesus changed into the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For that purpose He took not the lamb, but bread and wine. The lamb could not serve the purpose of a sign in the Lord's Supper. The paschal lamb was positively the very last lamb that could ever be eaten and that could ever be sacrificed. The lamb which was eaten by Christ and His apostles, that had been carried into the temple and sacrificed there before it was carried into the upper room, that lamb of the passover which Christ so greatly desired to eat with His apostles, was the last that was ever and that could ever be typically slain. For at that passover the Lamb of God stood ready to be sacrificed. And therefore, that lamb could not serve in the New Testament as the sign of the sacrament. It was typical of the sacrifice that was to be accomplished on the cross. And therefore it could not look backward to that accomplished sacrifice. But the Lord took bread, the bread that also was eaten at the passover and the wine that was drunken when the third cup, the cup of thanksgiving, was taken up at that supper. The bread and wine instead of the lamb Christ definitely instituted.

That they were so instituted to serve as a sacrament, and therefore as signs and seals, is evident from the words spoken by the Lord at this institution. The bread and wine were separated from all other bread and wine by those spoken words. We read in Matt. 26:26, 27: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave it to the disciples,

and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Cf. Mark 14:22-24. And the account in Luke 22:19, 20 is virtually the same: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." By these words therefore the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are definitely separated and instituted as sacramental signs and seals.

And notice, in the second place, that the Lord instituted this sacrament very definitely that it might be observed by the church. For it was instituted by a very definite command of Christ. When He gave the bread to the disciples, He said: "Take, eat; this is my body." And when He gave the cup to them, He said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And according to the account in Luke the Lord added: "This do in remembrance of me." From these words it is very evident that the Lord instituted a sacrament which was to be observed throughout the ages by His church in the world. And that the observance of this supper is of great significance is evident from the fact that the institution of it was repeated by special revelation to the apostle Paul, who tells us in I Cor. 11:23-26: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, 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 oft 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." There can be no doubt that when the apostle writes here that he had received this commandment concerning the Lord's Supper from the Lord, he means that he had received it by special revelation and not from the rest of the apostles. And this fact that the Lord from heaven gave a special revelation to the apostle Paul, who had not been personally with the Lord in His earthly sojourn, concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper certainly emphasizes the importance of this sacrament. And we are not surprised, therefore, that the church throughout the new dispensation, from the very earliest times, attached great significance to that institution of holy communion. The church guarded jealously that feast of commemoration which at the same time was a sacrament of nourishment. And we need not

be surprised, therefore, that also in the Heidelberg Catechism we find a detailed exposition of the Lord's Supper and its institution.

H. H.



Baptism Of Adopted Children

Brother M. K. from K. Mich., asks the following question:

Rev. H. Hoeksema, Editor
Standard Bearer
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Sir:

I am interested in the question regarding the baptism in our churches of adopted children.

The question more specifically put is as follows: Is it necessary for an adopted child to be in the line of the generations of the believers, as proven by the religious background of the child, in order that the child may be baptized?

I would like to ask that this question be discussed in the standard bearer so that we all may derive benefit from the discussion.

With brotherly regards,

M. K.

Reply:

There is much difference of opinion regarding this question in the Reformed Churches. My own consistory has always given a favorable answer to the question although never quite unanimously. I would, therefore, advise the brother, before he proceeds with the adoption of such a child, to consult his own consistory.

My own opinion is as follows:

1. That a child is adopted from a nominally Christian community most probably is guarantee that in the recent past it belonged to the generations of the people of God. It is true that those generations were cut off, and that, as a general rule, the branches cut off are not grafted in again. But exceptions to this rule are not excluded.

2. That it is under the providence of God that a child, that has lost its parents or has been abandoned by them, is adopted by Christians, by covenant parents that can and will vouch for the bringing up of the child "in the aforesaid doctrine."

3. When God established His covenant with Abraham and his seed and instituted the sign of circumcision he emphatically commanded that all that were in his house should be circumcised, even he that was

"bought with money of any stranger" that was not of his seed.

For the above reasons I am inclined to think that an adopted child such as is referred to by Mr. K. should be baptized.

But I gladly invite discussion.

H. H.



OUR DOCTRINE

The Counsel Of God. (8)

God's Counsel Exclusively Divine and Sovereign.

Over against the Arminians the Fathers of Dordrecht defended the sovereign and unconditional character of the counsel of God and set forth their findings in the well-known Canons of Dordrecht.

Before we call attention to these Canons we would remark that also our Confession of Faith maintains the unconditional character and sovereignty of the counsel and will of God. In the only article which directs us to the Lord's Eternal Election, Art. XVI, we read, and we underscore: "We believe that, all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is; that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since He delivers and preserves from this perdition *all whom* He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of *mere goodness* has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, *without any respect to their works*; just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves."

And in Art. XIV our Fathers emphasize the sovereignty of God's salvation by emphasizing our utter and complete depravity in these words: "And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: *The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not*; where St. John calls men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin, and *can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven*. For who may presume to boast that he of himself can do any good, since Christ says: *No man cometh to me, except the Father that sent Me draw Him*? Who will glory in

his own will, *who understands that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God*? Who can speak of his knowledge, *since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to account anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God*? And therefore what the apostle says ought justly to be held sure and firm, that *God worketh in us both to will and to work, for His good pleasure*. For there is no understanding nor will conformable to the Divine understanding and will but what Christ has wrought in man; which He teaches us, when He says: *Apart from Me ye can do nothing*."

And now let us call attention to the Canons of Dordrecht. That these Canons are infralapsarian is evident from their approach to the issue which confronted them. The very first statement declares that all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and are deserving of eternal death. Hence, the Fathers take their position in the midst of sin and death. They begin with fallen man. This is Infralapsarianism. However, this does not imply that they fail to emphasize the sovereign character of God's predestination, election and reprobation. In the first Head of doctrine, which deals with Divine Election and Reprobation, the sovereignty of the Lord's decree is beautifully emphasized and maintained.

Having established the utter misery of mankind in Art. I, and having set forth the love of God which the Lord has revealed in the sending of His only begotten Son into the world, Art. III gives expression to the means whereby some are brought to faith. Already in this article mention is made of the good pleasure of Jehovah, and we underscore: "And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings *to whom He will and at what time He pleases*; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. *How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?* (Rom. 10:14, 15)."

In Art. IV mention is made for the first time that not all men are saved. There the Fathers declare that the wrath of God abides upon those who believe not this gospel, whereas such as receive it and embrace Jesus the Saviour by a true and living faith are by Him delivered from the wrath of God and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them. Notice in this article that, in contrast to the arminians who did not dare to speak of the certain perseverance of the saints, we read of the *gift of eternal life which has been conferred upon us*. And in the following fifth article the question is asked:

Whence this faith and unbelief, to which our attention has been called in Art. IV? We are told that the cause or guilt of unbelief is in no wise in God, but in man himself. It must not escape our attention here that this article identifies "cause" with "guilt". The viewpoint is therefore subjective, that of man's sinning. The article explains why the sinner, from his subjective viewpoint, rejects the gospel, does not believe. And the answer is that the cause or guilt of this unbelief is in man. Unbelief is sin. Man sins, not because the Lord drives him to sin, but because he wants to sin. Once again, the viewpoint here is the subjective responsibility of the sinner. In this sense the cause of unbelief is never in God but in the sinner. In him is the desire to sin, to reject the gospel in unbelief; this desire is never in the Lord. To maintain the latter would make the Lord the Author of sin. But faith, according to this fifth article, is the free gift of God. Consequently, if faith is the free gift of God, it must be evident that the Lord then determines who believes or does not believe. And to this question which involves the Divine determination of all things, also of faith and unbelief, the Fathers give an answer in this first Head of doctrine.

Art. VI is the first article which mentions God's eternal decree. This article reads as follows: "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree. *For known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world* (Acts 15:18, A. V.) *Who worketh all things after the counsel of His will* (Eph. 1:11.) According to which decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe; while He leaves the non-elect in His just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which, though men of perverse, impure, and unstable minds wrest it to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation." It is true that also this article is infralapsarian (as are all the articles), but the fact remains that the Fathers ascribe both, the faith of some and the failure to believe on the part of others, to God's eternal decree. We read: "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree." Emphatically the Fathers in this article deny the arminian contention that the Lord has elected upon the basis of foreseen faith. Whereas, according to the arminians God elected those that believe so that God's election follows upon their believing, in this article we are explicitly told that the hearts of the elect (mind you, the "elect") are softened and that the Lord inclines them to believe

according to election, this eternal decree. Hence, God's eternal decree is the cause of our faith, not its fruit. And we should also note that this same Divine decree is the cause of the failure on the part of others to believe. Hence, it is not true that God reprobated them because they do not believe (reprobation on the basis of foreseen unbelief), but they do not believe because of the Lord's sovereign and righteous decree.

In Art. VII the same emphasis is laid upon the unconditional and sovereign character of God's counsel of election, and we quote: "Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He has *out of mere grace*, according to the *sovereign good pleasure of His own will*, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from their primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, Whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect and the foundation of salvation. This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God has decreed to give to Christ to be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace; as it is written: "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."—Eph. 1:4-6. And elsewhere: "Whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."—Rom. 8:30. We should note, in this article, how the Fathers combat the arminian notion that the election of God is based upon foreseen faith. This article emphasizes, in no uncertain manner, that the election of God is the cause, and not the fruit, of our faith, justification, and sanctification. We read that the Lord decreed to give the elect to Christ, that they should be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification, to preserve them powerfully in the fellowship of His Son, and finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy; and all this must occur for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace.

In Art. IX the error of the arminians, that election is based upon foreseen faith, is literally repudiated by

the Fathers, and we quote: "This election was not founded upon foreseen faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause, or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc. Therefore election is the fountain of every saving good, from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to the testimony of the apostle: "He hath chosen us (not because we were, but) that we should be holy, and without blemish before Him in love."—Eph. 1:4. This article certainly speaks for itself. Election is not based upon any foreseen good, but is the fountain of every saving good, from which proceed faith, holiness, etc.

And in Art. 10 we are told that the good pleasure of the Lord is the sole cause of this gracious election: "The good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election; which does not consist herein that out of all possible qualities and actions of men God has chosen some as a condition of salvation, but that He was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to Himself, as it is written: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, etc., it was said unto her (namely, to Rebekah), The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau I hated (Rom. 9:11, 12, 13). And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)." This article, too, is completely clear and needs no elucidation. The Fathers said the things they wanted to say in a language which people could not fail to understand. It is evident from these articles in the first Head of doctrine that they, in these Canons, emphasized the unconditional and sovereign character of God's decree of predestination, consisting of election and reprobation.

Also in the second Head of doctrine of these Canons this truth of God's sovereignty is beautifully expressed and maintained, as in Articles IX and X, and we quote: "For this was the *sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose* of God the Father that the *quickening and saving efficacy* of the *most precious death* of His Son should extend to *all the elect*, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation; that is, it was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He conformed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father; 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; 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 and blemish, to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever. . . . 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 its 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." Need we question where our Fathers stood in regard to the character of the Lord's eternal decrees? Need we wonder whether they believed that election is the "heart of the church"? And need we question their belief and conviction with respect to the absolute certainty of the eternal salvation of the elect?

We would conclude our quotations from the Canons by calling attention to Articles 10, 11, 12, and 15 of the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, and we quote: "But that others who are called by the gospel obey the call and are converted is *not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will*, whereby one distinguishes himself above others equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains); but it must be wholly ascribed to God, *Who, as He has chosen His own from eternity in Christ, so He calls them effectually in time, confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness and translates them into the kingdom of His own Son*; that they may show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light, and may glory not in themselves but in the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places. . . . But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit He pervades the inmost recesses of man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions. . . . And this is that regeneration so highly extolled in

Scripture, that renewal, new creation, resurrection from the dead, 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 Scriptures inspired by the Author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous 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 himself is rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received. . . . God is under no obligation to confer this grace upon any; for how can He be indebted to one who had no previous gifts to bestow as a foundation for such recompense? Nay, how can He be indebted to one who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He, therefore, who becomes the subject of this grace owes eternal gratitude to God, and gives Him thanks forever. Whoever is not made partaker thereof is either altogether regardless of these spiritual gifts and satisfied with his own condition, or is in no apprehension of danger, and vainly boasts the possession of that which he has not. Further, with respect to those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives, we are bound, after the example of the apostle, to judge and speak of them in the most favorable manner; for the secret recesses of the heart are unknown to us. And as to others who have not yet been called, it is our duty to pray for them to God, Who calls the things that are not as if they were. But we are in no wise to conduct ourselves towards them with haughtiness, as if we had made ourselves to differ."

The position of the Reformed Fathers is therefore unmistakably clear. Although the Canons are infralapsarian they maintain the absolute sovereignty of the Lord. The counsel of the Lord is strictly sovereign and unconditional. They maintain unconditional election. Also with respect to the doctrine of reprobation they declare that the Lord is God and He alone. That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it proceeds from God's eternal decree. They reject, therefore, the proposition that God's predestination rests upon foreseen faith or unbelief. The predestination of the Lord is absolutely sovereign.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David's Prayer

That the revelation to David by Nathan forms a prophecy that reached its final fulfillment in Christ and the realities founded on His atonement is plain from the use that the New Testament Scriptures make of that prediction. "To which of the angels said he at any time, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son (Heb. 1:5). Here the writer quotes Nathan literally (II Sam. 7:14), his purpose being to establish with the Old Testament Scriptures the pre-eminence of Christ as compared with the angels. The Modernists deny that the prophecy is Messianic. The Pre-millennialists, to be sure, see in it a reference to Christ; but they exclude from His kingdom the church; and so they end with Nathan's prophecy in the Jews.

As already has been stated, our revelation sheds a wonderful new light on the question of the identity of the "seed". It is all significant that in the prote-vangel—the Gospel as first proclaimed—the "seed", according to the language used, is a person—a personal seed—and only secondarily a seed in the collective sense. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and *he*—not they—shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel" (Gen. 3:15). The Lord's way of stating the matter did not escape the attention of Eve. For when she had brought forth her first-born child, she jubilantly exclaimed, "I have received *a man* with Jehovah". It may be assumed that the insight into the revealed mind of God of the saints of subsequent ages was not less profound than that of the first mother of our race. They as well as she must have perceived that it was a personal seed of which the Lord had spoken in the first instance.

The Confusion of Tongues was calculated to raise new questions bearing on the "seed",—questions that always must have been present to the minds of God's believing people. Of what nation was the "seed", the personal seed, to be born? Of what family and house? After so long a time, the Lord gave answer. Having first proclaimed him as the "seed" who should gain the ascendancy over the malice of the devil, having thereupon enclosed him first in the generations of Shem (Gen. 9:25-27), thereupon in the family of Abraham (Gen. 12 etc.), third in the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:9-12), the Lord ended in setting him forth as the prince of David's house, who should build a house for God's name. And that prince is Christ. That His kingdom and throne will be established forever must imply that He will atone the sins of His house—the church of the elect—and that thereupon

with His house He will be raised from the dead to a blessed immortality. That is the sign that it is He.

That David had understanding of these things is not an idle conjecture; it is a fact attested by the apostle Peter in Acts 11. "Men and brethren," said the apostle to the multitude, "let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in sheol, neither his flesh did see corruption."

Having received Nathan's prophecy, and having understanding of and tasting the blessedness of the hope that it held forth, David went in—in the tent that he had stretched for the ark of God—and sat before the Lord, and said. Let us closely attend to the words of his lips. Then we will know how God's believing people pray, when they sit before the Lord—*actually* sit before Him—in His holy temple.

"Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 'me a sinful man. Yet thou hast brought me on the wings of thy redeeming and pardoning love hitherto—me and my house!' David is humble and contrite. His glorying is in Christ. It can be explained. He stands in God's presence.

"And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house far away," 'hast said that his house and kingdom and throne will be established everlastingly before thee.' Marvelous mercy!

"Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" is the next statement in David's prayer. It is a difficult utterance. I silently pass by the many ways in which it has been interpreted to concentrate on what I believe to be the right explanation. The Hebrew text reveals that it is a positive statement and not a question; and further that the Hebrew word rendered "manner" in our versions is *torah* from the verb *jarah*, to teach. Torah, then, is properly *instruction, doctrine*. Therefore it is the Hebrew word also for *law*, e.g. the law of the sacrifices. "This is the law, instruction, doctrine, of or for man, O Lord God." So the statement must be translated. The pronoun "this" looks back to the Lord's promises to David and his house, that had just been communicated to him by the prophet Nathan, and by which the Lord had also instructed His servant. For the Lord's promises, being revelatory, are instruction. And by this promissory instruction the Lord in His boundless love had constituted man—David and his house, lost and undone apart from Christ's grace—a legal heir of salvation, and had obligated Himself to save man. And the Lord cannot lie. And to His power to save there are no limits. All will come to

pass. This is the instruction for man, God's believing people. And by this instruction, God's promise to them, which is the only ray of light that pierces the darkness of their night, they live.

So interpreted the utterance with little effort can be harmonized with what David is reported to have said at I Chron. 17:17, "and hast regarded me according to the order of a man of high degree". According to what David and his house are in Christ,—a house of men blameless and holy in love before God. The man of low degree is fallen man; he is man apart from Christ. He is the reprobated.

"And what can David say more unto thee? For thou Lord God knowest thy servant," 'knowest him with a knowledge that is determinative and creative. He is thus a sheep of thy pasture, thy workmanship. His seekings and askings, his praise and thanksgiving are thy work in him. Thou knowest them all even before they rise in his heart and are upon his lips. Yet thy servant shall say more unto thee, not to inform thee as to the state of his heart. He cannot, for thou knowest him. Nor does he prolong his prayer in thy ears in the vain imagining that by his words he must induce thee to be gracious unto him and his house. That, too, would be unutterable foolishness. Because (so David continues) "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things. . . ." 'according to thine own heart and not according to the heart of fallen and depraved man, who can only will to hate thee. Truly, according to thine own heart, and word and counsel. Thy love is self-motivated. Thy counsel stands. Thy Word is living and life-giving; it is faithful and true.

"According to thine own heart. . . . And to make thy servant know", 'that he may praise thee. And he shall praise thee evermore, prolong his prayer everlastingly. For Thy love constraineth him'.

"According to thine own heart. . . . Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God. . . .". 'Thou doest all thy good-pleasure. Thou workest all things according to the counsel of thy will. And thou hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy. For thou art great'.

'Verily, thou art great. "For there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee." 'Thou art God and none else'.

'Great thou art. . . . "according to all that we have heard with our ears," 'regarding thy people and all thy marvelous works which thou hast wrought in behalf of thy people.' "For what nation in the earth is like thy people Israel." 'No nation in the earth is like thy people, they being a people "Whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for thee great things and terrible, for thy land before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods." And this people is the church of the elect, the family

of redeemed in Christ; it is the true Israel,—a people that will abide everlastingly as a witness of God's greatness; of his great love, which is fathomless; of his great wisdom, which is unsearchable; and of His great might, which is infinite. For He went to redeem Israel for a people to Himself. He went to redeem Israel to make Him a name. He went to redeem Israel to do great things and terrible for Himself. Not that He was in need of redemption. But He wanted to make Him a name, which should be above every name. Wherefore He did great things for His land, before His people, which He redeemed to Himself from Egypt, from the nations and their gods, that His people as saved unto God might praise Him, and say, "Great is the Lord".

And His people shall praise Him evermore without end. "For" so David continues, "Thou hast established to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee forever: and thou Lord art become their God,"—established thy people immovably through the atonement of Christ on the new earth, where the Lord will be their God everlastingly. Yes, David's sanctified and enlightened mind had penetrated to the heart and core of the idea that God is God.

In the remainder of his prayer David appears as petitioner before God's face. If previously in humbleness of spirit and joyous amazement he had acknowledged the goodness that had been promised him, and had extolled God's greatness, he now as pleading on those promises beseeches the Lord to establish the word that He has spoken. "And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, establish it forever, and do as thou hast said." If God cannot lie, if His promises unto His elect are firm in Him, must David tell the Lord to do as he has said? He is not telling God, ordering Him. He is a penitent, who seeks and asks and knocks, doing so in the firm assurance that seeking he finds, asking he receives, and that knocking entrance will be given him, and this just because, having promised, God cannot lie. His very seeking, being as it is, God's work in him, is the promise already gone into initial fulfillment. And why should he ask? Because asking is praise; it is the chief work of praise, of gratitude.

And let us take notice, "do as thou hast said", 'promised to me and my house.' He seeks only what has been promised him. Should he seek anything else, anything in addition, anything besides, his seeking would be vanity and an abomination; should he seek in prayer the heavenly and the earthly besides; or the earthly in place of the heavenly. It is a mistake to say that in their prayers the Old Testament saints sought more or less the things on earth, and this in contradistinction to the saints of the New Dispensation, who seek the things heavenly. Besides, what is there to seek in addition to or beyond the things that are prom-

ised, if God has promised to His own all things.

"Do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel. . . ." Israel is a people of wonder. For, ideally viewed, it is a people redeemed of all its sins and clothed with heavenly perfection and beauty. And all credit belongs to Israel's Redeemer-God. To say, therefore, that the Lord of hosts is that God is to magnify the Lord's name.

"And let the house of thy servant be established forever." David does not say to the Lord that so far as he is concerned it is well that his house perish, if only the name of the Lord be magnified. He knows better than to give utterance to such a sentiment, considering, as he does, that, if the Lord's name is to be magnified—and magnified in love by his house—this house must be saved, established forever. So he prays for both.

But David is a sinful man. He and his house deserve to be driven by God's curse into everlasting desolation. He should be asking favors of God, even petitioning Him to establish his house forever? He couldn't ask for anything more. For what his petition really amounts to is that God give him all things—absolutely all things—including God Himself. How could he find it within himself—he, a sinful man—to direct to the Lord such a request? David has the solution of the difficulty. It is this, "For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee." The solution is this: The Lord has promised unreservedly and unconditionally and according to His own heart. And upon that promise he pleads.

But will the Lord hold Him to His promise? David again gives answer, "And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant." That settles the matter as far as David is concerned; and as far as every believer is concerned. The Lord God is that God—the very God before whose face David was seated and to whom he directs his prayer. And the words of that God are true. And He has promised this goodness unto "thy servant".

Mark you well, not unto all but unto "thy servant" and his house. And the servant is Christ and His house—David's house—the church of the elect. And His promise—unto this house—is true. For God cannot lie. "Therefore", 'this being true, Thou being God whose words are true,' be thou pleased to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue forever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever."

So a man prays, who is seated before the very face of God in His sanctuary.

G. M. Ophoff.

Correspondence

Rev. J. Howerzyl.

Dear Brother,

In my last installment I was occupied with your "little difficulty" regarding my statements on written and unwritten creeds. As you see it what I wrote on pages 62 and 63 of the *Standard Bearer* for Nov. 1, 1949, contains contradictory statements. The statements are these: 1) The Christian Reformed synod of 1924 officially declared in the first of the Three (famous) points that the preaching of the Gospel is grace for all including the reprobate, thus declared virtually that the promises of God are given to all, elect and reprobate alike. Our three original consistories officially decided to allow themselves to be deposed rather than subscribe that doctrine, and thereby certainly and this of necessity officially decided to adhere and maintain the logical contrary of that doctrine, which is, that the promises of God are given only to the elect. This decision was written in the official minutes of our three original consistories. 2) As yet no one—consistories or common members through their consistories—has appeared on our synod with a written statement to the effect that the promises of God are given only to the elect, and overture synod to adopt that written credal declaration. Nor is this necessary, I believe. *For virtually it already has been done, as I have just made plain.* This last sentence, the one written in italics has reference to the action of our original three consistories described under 1).

I can see no conflict between 1) and 2). And I don't see how there can be conflict. And the reason is simple. The statement under 1) sets forth a fact. Likewise the statement under 2). It sets forth a fact. How can there be conflict between two statements *each of which sets forth a fact.* This is impossible.

Perhaps the conflict that you discovered in my writing on the pages specified has reference to my saying almost in one breath that "this creed"—the doctrine that the promises of God are given only to the elect and are unconditional—is *written* and *unwritten*. I removed the conflict by explaining what I meant in stating that "this creed" is *unwritten* though written, namely 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 written declaration. And what I state here is true, isn't it?

Fact is, however, that it is better to refrain from speaking of "this creed" as unwritten. Such speaking can only lead to confusion. And the reason is obvious. "This creed" is written indeed,—*"this creed"*, the doctrine that the promises of God are given only to the

elect and are unconditional. This doctrine, creed is written. It is the literal teaching of our Confessions. It is *written* therefore. And the fundamental significance of the rejection of the Three Points by our original three consistories is exactly that implicit in their action is the declaration to the effect that "this doctrine" is the literal teaching of our Confessions and therefore written. And so these three consistories must not be accused of adding points of doctrine to our Confessions. For they did nothing of the kind. What they did, rightly considered, is to make a statement *about our confessions*. What they did is to declare that our Confessions teach "this doctrine". And so of necessity they declared that the logical contrary of "this doctrine" is in conflict with our Confessions.

Now upon that declaration of our original consistories we, as a communion of Protestant Reformed churches, take our stand, must take our stand. If we refuse, we thereby deny the very reason of our existence as a communion of Protestant Reformed churches. If we refuse, we find ourselves under the moral necessity of pronouncing our break with the Christian Reformed churches an act that took its rise in sinful flesh, also on our side.

And right here, I believe, I have hit upon the real issue in the present controversy. It is this: Is it true, as our three original consistories declared, that "this doctrine" is the literal teachings of our Confessions? One may deny that it is true and take an opposite position. But that one should then realize that the position he occupies is contrary to the official position of the Protestant Reformed churches; and second, that he must prove with the Confession that his stand is right and that the official stand of our churches is wrong. He must prove this with the Confessions, I say. Why do I not add: And also with the Scriptures. I do herewith add: And with the Scriptures. But let there be no misunderstanding. Certainly, in our disputations on points of doctrine it would be thoroughly unethical for us to by-pass our Confessions and make our appeal directly to the Scriptures. And this for two reasons. 1) Our Confessions are documents the doctrine of which we believe to be the truth of God's Word. That is what we as officebearers declare in subscribing the Formula of Subscription. Furthermore, we promise, by the aforesaid subscription, "diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by our public preaching or writing." We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above-named synod—synod of Dord—but that we are disposed to refute and contradict those, and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors."

So then, by-passing in our controversies our Con-

fessions we repudiate as unscriptural the very doctrine that we declared to be the doctrine of the Scriptures and that we promised to teach and to defend.

Here you have my more complete answer to the following question contained in your letter, "Is our covenant theology (that is, the teaching to the effect that the promises of God are given only to the elect and are unconditional. That is what I understand and we all understand by our covenant theology. G.M.O.) something additional to the Three Forms of Unity? Or do I correctly reproduce your thought when I state that which always has been my own personal position, 'that only Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity are binding in our churches and nothing more.' What is binding in our churches is the Scriptures and the Three Forms of Unity and what our three original confessions said about these Forms some 25 years ago. They said, let me remind, that these Forms teach that the promises of God are given only to the elect and are unconditional. Also this latter is our official stand.

You continue, "And therefore we exactly have nothing else that is binding, neither do we need anything further until it becomes evident that the Three Forms are capable of being interpreted in another, unscriptural manner. If this latter (which I do not believe possible) were ever done then we would need and obtain an additional creed interpreting officially the parts in our Three Forms not plain. I ask again, 'Do I reproduce your thought correctly?'" My reply to this is as follows. If I understand you aright, you bring up a matter here that I never once touched on in all my writings. It is this: What is to be done with an ambiguous, equivocal statement or statements that might be found in our Confessions? My answer is this. If all the people of the reformed world could get their heads together and agree on a clarifying statement, that would be fine. Producing such a statement, the Reformed would not be making a creed additional to our existing and official creeds, as you seem to imagine—the expression "additional creed" appears in this excerpt from your pen—all they would be doing is producing a clarifying statement.

Herewith, I believe, I have replied to all your questions.

Fraternally,
G. M. Ophoff.

* * * *

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The Board.

SION'S ZANGEN

Zalig In Des Heeren Vrees

(Psalm 112; Derde Deel)

Hoe verder ik in den psalmbundel kom, hoe langzamer wordt mijn gang. De psalmen Davids zijn kostelijk en schoon en rijk.

In den psalm die we nu behandelen was ik gekomen tot het vierde vers. Ik zal het afschrijven: "Den oprechten gaat het licht op in de duisternis; hij is genadig en barmhartig en rechtvaardig."

Naar de grammatica staat het woord "oprechten" in den derden naamval, dus zijn zij het belanghebbend voorwerp. En indien ergens, dan blijkt dat in dezen tekst. Stelt het U voor: ze ontvangen "licht". En het licht "gaat hun op". Wat dit mag beduiden?

Dit: het licht is eigenlijk Jehovah Zelf. God is mijn licht, mijn heil, wien zou ik vreezen? God is het eeuwig Licht!

In de Heilige Schrift is het licht, in den geestelijken zin van het woord, het inbegrip van alle deugd. Salomo zegt, dat de wet een licht is. Ook zegt hij zoo ongeveer hetzelfde als in dezen tekst staat: "Maar het pad des rechtvaardigen is gelijk een schijnend licht, voortgaande en lichtende tot den vollen dag toe." En ook vinden we dit, in psalm 97: "Het licht is voor den rechtvaardige gezaaid, en vroolijkheid voor de oprechten van hart."

Wat is een oprecht mensch?

Ik denk, dat de idee van het woord mooi uitgedrukt wordt door het woord zelf. In den letterlijken zin van het woord is een ding oprecht, als het recht op zijn voeten staat. Iets, dat verticaal staat. Evenzoo in den moreelen, ethischen zin van het woord. Een mensch is oprecht, als zijn geheele leven geestelijk verticaal staat. Ik zou het misschien zóó mogen uitdrukken: een oprecht mensch is iemand die de gerechtigheid in praktijk brengt. Het kromme is vervloekt.

Men zou de oprechtheid in een mensch ook nog wat anders kunnen kenschetsen. Een oprecht mensch valt altijd mee. Hij is van buiten juist zooals hij van binnen is. Want hij staat geheel en al "recht".

Zoo zult ge ook eenigzins begrijpen hoe zulken menschen het licht opgaat in de duisternis. Het gaat alleen zulken menschen wel, de anderen blijven in de duisternis. Zijt slecht, onoprecht, vals en boos, en ge kunt er staat op maken, dat ge in de duisternis blijft. De duisternis is geestelijk het tegenovergestelde van licht. Was licht alle deugd, zoo is duisternis alle boosheid. Nu dan, als ge homogeen met Uw natuurlijke sfeer zijt, namelijk, als ge boos zijt, zoo blijft ge ook zeker in die duisternis gekluisterd. Er is geen ontkoming aan.

Maar als ge goed en vriendelijk, rechtvaardig en oprecht zijt, zoo zult ge de waarheid van dezen tekst ervaren. Dan zal er een licht opgaan in Uwe duisternis. Het wordt ervaren door elk kind van God, zonder uitzondering.

Toen ik deze laatste gedachte neerschreef, aarzelde ik even. En ik moet U iets van die aarzelings vertellen. Want er is één UITZONDERING op die regel geweest. En die EENE is Jezus Christus. Hij is de Oprechte bij uitnemendheid. En wat ontving Hij voor Zijn oprechtheid? Hij ontving de duisternis. Net andersom als het in den tekst staat. O ja, ik weet wel, dat Hij uiteindelijk in het volle licht gekomen is. Wat zeg ik? Zijn naam is het Licht der wereld! Maar toch, voor een langen tijd betrachtte Hij de oprechtheid, en toch ontving Hij niet dan duisternis. Inplaats dat de zon opging voor Hem, ging die zon weg, werd die zon verduisterd, en moest Hij snikken in den bangen nacht: Mijn God, Mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten? Alles schijnt verdraaid te zijn. De goddeloozen lachen en spotten en de Oprechte is in duisternis. Maar dat is dan toch maar ééne uitzondering. De regel is zooals het in den tekst staat.

En het past.

De zon moet opgaan voor den oprechte van hart. Het hoort bij hem. Reden waarom Jezus zegt: Zalig zijn de reinen van hart, want zij zullen God zien. Dat is eigenlijk weer de tekst, maar dan in Nieuw Testamentische woorden.

En dat is ook de ervaring.

Als ge oprecht wandelt voor God en menschen, dan kan het niet anders, dan is er licht en vroolijkheid in Uw hart en tente. We zingen ervan: Gods vriend'lijk aangezicht geeft vroolijkheid en licht voor alle oprechte harten, ten troost verspreid in smarten.

O, het betaalt om oprecht te zijn!

En het is schadelijk om onoprecht te zijn. Als men geheimzinnig wandelt, als men van binnen anders is dan dien lieven glimlach van buiten, als men geheel anders is dan die honigzoete stem die paait en vleit, als men van harte eigenlijk niet is dan duisternis, en dat beteekent, dat men vuil en boos en vals is, dan is het treurig gesteld met ons. Dan is er geen vroolijkheid, maar dan is er zuchten en klagen van binnen. Dan kan men wel den ganschen nacht schreeuwen van smarten. De Heere verlosse ons van onoprechtheid.

Hoe bekomt men de heerlijke deugd van oprechtheid? Door Jezus in zijn hart te hebben. Dat is gauw gezegd en neergeschreven. Ik schrik er zelf van. En toch is het waar. Als Ge Jezus in het harte hebt, dan woont daar de oprechtheid. En dan komt het licht. Dan is het met U gesteld als er geschreven staat in de Spreuken: dan is Uw pad gelijk een schijnend licht, en let dan wat er op volgt: voortgaande en schijnende tot den vollen dag toe! En die volle dag is voor Gods Eigen aangezicht te staan in den hemel daarboven bij

God! Dat is de volle dag. O daar te staan!

En de tekst zal dat komende licht beschrijven voor U. Er volgt: "Hij is genadig en barmhartig en rechtvaardig."

Eenige dagen geleden spraken we ergens in eene vergadering over de goede werken en over het loon van goede werken. Toen kwam de vergadering tot de conclusie, dat de goede werken hun loon met zich dragen.

Laat ons eens zien.

Als ge boosaardig zijt tegenover Uw naaste, en als ge dan Uw stem verheft en ook zondigt met Uwe tong; en als ge dan de daad bij het woord voegt, en Uw naaste kwalijk behandelt; en als ge dan in al die goddeloosheid ook nog succes hebt, zoodat niemand U erover bestraft met woorden of met daden; en als ge dan voorts naar huis toewandelt, dan zal ik U zeggen hoe ge te moede zijt: dan zijt ge ellendig gestemd. Dan moogt ge wel misschien glimlachen bij Uzelven, dan kunt ge misschien lachen en grinniken van genot, maar in dat alles wordt de ware vroolijkheid gemist, en zijt ge ellendig gestemd. Hebt ge wel eens gelezen, dat met in zijn lachen nog smart zal hebben? Zoo is het met een iegelijk die in de duisternis wandelt.

Het tegenovergestelde is waar van den man die in de oprechtheid wandelt. Hem gaat het Licht op in de duisternis. Het kan zijn, dat men U wantrouwt. Misschien kunt ge Uw oprechtheid niet bewijzen voor menschen. Maar ik heb het over een mensch die oprechtheid heeft in 't diepste hart. Welnu, die man smaakt het licht. Het licht kan niet opgaan over U zonder het te smaken. O neen. Maar als ge goed zijt, dan is het goed met U. Dan ervaart ge de goedkeuring des Almachtigen. Dan wordt het stil in het hart, de stilte van vrede die alle verstand te boven gaat. Daar gaat het over in mijn tekst.

(Wordt Vervolgd)

G. Vos.

* * * *

ANNIVERSARY

On January 29, 1950, our beloved parents,

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Van Baren

commemorated their 35th wedding anniversary.

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

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. John Van Til

Rev. and Mrs. John A. Heys

Mr. and Mrs. Gysbert Van Baren

Mr. and Mrs. Tunis Van Baren

Agnes Van Baren

four grandchildren.

South Holland, Ill.

Wishful Thinking, Lies and Slander

A few days after these lines appear in print, our churches will, the Lord willing, celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our denomination. After twenty five years have come and gone, one might expect that among those who cast us out because we would not go the way of false doctrine with them by subscribing to the "Three Points" of Arminianism which they had composed, there would be those who still wished to see our denomination dissolve and that they could thus conveniently forget that sad period of their history when they cast out men whom they confessed were "reformed" and when they had corrupted reformed Church Polity in many ways.

There are also wild rumors as to what individuals in these churches have to say about us. The story gets around that one of their ministers had stated that our denomination was about to "blow up" any day now. Another congregation is said to be waiting to purchase that "desirable property on Fuller and Franklin", the location of our Fuller Ave. Church. The undersigned is not given to believe all the stories which come to his ears and is not writing this article because he heard such rumors. But the undersigned was exposed to a speech of lies and slander which do reflect a case of wishful thinking. The speaker was the Rev. M. M. Schans, a retired minister of the Christian Reformed Churches. The undersigned urged him to apologize for his slander and pointed out to him that as long as he does not, he is walking in that sin. But this retired pastor, who did so evilly in 1924 as minister of the Kellogsville Christian Reformed Church, refused even to answer the correspondence of the undersigned. We therefore publish the following letters which are self-explanatory, and we let our readers judge the matter for themselves. And you Christian Reformed readers, we urge you to demand an investigation of that illegal action of 1924 or write the Rev. Schans and urge him to make a denial in the Banner of this sinful and illegal act of his. In the light of that work in 1924, we are sure that our readers can also understand his absolute silence now on this matter. That can only be the reason, for from the letter below, it is also evident to him that the undersigned can expose much more evil which he so publicly spread abroad about ministers in his own churches and their wives, etc. etc.

The letters we sent him are as follows:

The Rev. M. Schans
West 21st St. Holland, Mich.

December 13, 1949

Dear Rev. Schans,

This letter, without a doubt, comes to you as a complete surprise. And yet the very audible and bold way in which you spoke so sneeringly and bitterly of the Prot. Ref. Churches and of what

you termed the "points of friction" in these churches last Monday morning should have wrought within you the expectation that it might not go unchallenged. You see, Rev. Schans, I was one of the passengers on that C & O train who rode directly behind you all the way from Detroit to Grand Rapids, and I could not help but overhear your attempts in clearly exposed and sinful glee to inform the pastor from Dutton (I do not know his name) of these "points of friction". So loudly did you speak of these things that sitting behind you I heard every word you spoke on this matter and many others without making any special effort. To hear the conversation of those who sit behind you in a train is often possible because then the voices of the speakers travels directly toward you. But when you were facing away from me and sitting ahead of me, and I was yet unable to get away from your words—and Mr. Sjoerdsma riding with me also heard all these things without any difficulty—I need not emphasize that your slanderous backbiting and malicious spreading of untruths, of which you also confessed to your fellow pastor that you do not know all the facts, was spoken loudly and publicly.

The purpose of this letter is not to call your attention to what Scripture says of such malicious evil speaking and lack of brotherly love except to remind you that you will have to answer for it before God's judgment seat. If you believe all these things to be true of which you spoke, and if things are as bad in our churches as you pictured them to be, why do you not pray for us and why did you not urge the pastor from Dutton to do so instead of spreading all the filth and dirt of distorted facts of which you are not sure and have only heard a few things from a Calvin student whom you confessed to be your source of information. And you sat there asking your fellow passenger if he knew any more dirt and whether he had heard of this dirt of which you had heard and yet did not know in its proper setting. Eager you were to spread more evil. But way not pray for us, if you think these things are true. That is your duty then. Your churches believe in praying for everyone, even the reprobate for whom Christ would not pray, and yet you will not pray for the Prot. Ref. Churches. Why not, especially when your Synod said in 1924 that our leaders were "reformed". Look up your own Acts. But the purpose of this letter is to give you the facts and to set you right on these "points of friction" which do not exist.

I will briefly give you the facts in the order in which you presented the lie. And I did not take notes while you spoke, but your slander was so vile that at this moment I can still hear it ring in my ears. Ask the pastor from Dutton whether my presentation is not true, and I have Mr. Sjoerdsma for my witness that I did not write a single thing down. But listen once:

1. The Rev. De Jong and the Rev. Kok were not suspended because the one or the other wrote a letter to Dr. Schilder or to anyone in the Netherlands stating that the differences in doctrine in our churches must not be emphasized. Please go to Hope College. I am sure that you can get all the Standard Bearer article on this matter there in the Library. Study the matter. Do not go by hearsay. The Rev. De Jong and the Rev. B. Kok are ministers in good standing in our congregations.

And on that conference with Dr. Schilder a few years ago our Rev. Hoeksema and Dr. Schilder did not come to a greater separation on the covenant doctrine than before. Look up the Standard Bearer, Vol. 24, numbers 5 and 8 before you ever say that again.

2. The Rev. Hoeksema's son was not a professor the Curatorium did not like or want. And that sneering remark of yours of "so-called professors" was not spoken either in love to God and His Church. The Rev. Hoeksema's son was appointed to a post-graduate course to our school by the Synod of 1947 with a view to an eventual and possible chair of professor in Pre-Seminary subjects. Then before he could take this course the Rev. Hoeksema became ill, and we asked his son to help us out with certain Pre-Seminary subjects. This he did even while taking his post-graduate course. Then in two years time the Rev. Hoeksema was restored remarkably and even unbelievably. And you people who maintain that material things are blessings in themselves will have to admit in this recovery of Rev. Hoeksema that God's grace rests abundantly upon him, and yet you continue to hate a man God continues to bless. What then of Genesis 27:29b . . . cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee. . . ? When it became evident that the Rev. Hoeksema, although greatly restored, could not bear the full burden of the load he formerly took upon himself, it was decided to call a third professor for Seminary subjects. The name of Rev. Hoeksema's son appeared on the nomination as our Acts will show. The Synod evidently was of the opinion that a man with experience in the congregation was more advisable for Seminary subjects. So your distortion of the truth fails miserably. And as to so-called professors, why is it that with your Calvin set-up the immigrants in Canada always complain of the light, superficial sermons delivered by your ministers and students with weak or lack of exegesis? That too is a fact. First fix up Calvin before casting reflections on our men.

3. Raleigh Huizinga—and I know the man, he was our neighbour for many years—may have heard and spread the rumor that the Rev. Ophoff is in "the dog-house". But this too is wishful thinking. And then what of the Rev. P. Vos formerly of Walker and the Rev. R. Veldman formerly of West Leonard, or the late Prof. Kromminga of whom you also spoke with his dangerous views? Why did you two not limit yourselves to those in the Christian Reformed Churches who are and were in the Chr. Ref. "dog-house"?

4. The Rev. Kok never wrote a catechism book and the Rev. Hoeksema has not written all our catechism books and was not in jealousy and envy starting friction to defend himself. The Rev. P. De Boer also wrote many of our books and if you would investigate instead of go by hearsay of things you like to hear, you would find that the Rev. Hoeksema approved fully of these books. But you see, Rev. Schans, that although you spoke so sneeringly of the Rev. Hoeksema as "the pope", we believe in doing things legally, decently and in order and do not lightly set the Consistory, Classis and Synod on a side track. Remember 1924? Where was the pope then? Where was he in Kellogsville when her minister sent in an overture to Classis which his consistory had not approved? That sounds like a pope to me.

5. Carl Reitsma, for that is his name, is not attending Kampen as sent by our churches on a scholarship. And again it is wishful thinking that the Rev. Hoeksema's son was passed by in this scholarship. Carl is going under his own arrangement with an immigrant in Canada. And our churches have given no scholarship to anyone. Besides your sneering remark as you leered at your fellow pastor that we have only one student in school this year is a gross lie. At present we have seven students and several students in Kampen are working hard to make arrangements to attend our school, even in January if possible. But if we did have only one student in school, do you rejoice and gloat over it? Why not pray for us that we may have more? You can work along and esteem those who put you out, the Reformed Churches in America, but those YOU put out may not even enjoy your pity and be the objects of your prayers. Is that brotherly? Is that Christian?

6. The school on Adams St. will open D. V. in September. Work has not been stopped because most of our people are against it. If you will look up the records you will find that our people are far more interested in Christian schools than the percentage your churches can claim. And this school on Adams St. is well supported by our people, also financially. You know of course—and that is for you a sore spot—that we have a congregation not only but also a school of our own in Redlands. But did you know that we have had one here too in Hope the last three years, that one is being built in Edgerton, Minn., to be opened D.V. in September, and that our churches are working toward providing a Normal training for our teachers? No, Mr. Schans, our churches are not as dead as you would like to see them. We hope D.V. to celebrate our 25th Anniversary in March, and you will have to admit that by God's grace we, have not gone backward but forward in these years. But did you ever stop to consider the truth of Scripture that if our churches are the work of God YOU cannot overthrow them? And in twenty five years you have not been able to do so. We are smaller than your denomination, but does Scripture not teach that the Church is always small?

Rev. Schans have you ever read The History of the Prot. Ref. Churches, by the Rev. H. Hoeksema? There is mention made there of a certain Rev. M. Schans of Kellogsville, and evil works are attributed to him. He has never denied them after the book has been published. Why not? Nothing in that book as far as the historical facts are concerned has ever been denied. Why not? Because it all can be proven. If what is stated there of you is not true, please publish a statement to that effect in the Banner or the Standard Bearer. I challenge you to do so. If you do not intend to do so, then by all means do not speak no slanderously of us with the record you have yourself there and in Redlands too. Did you ever—how many times have you—preached on Lord's Day 43? Look up what is stated there if you do not recall.

Perhaps you wonder why I did not identify myself on the train and set you straight right there. I assure you that I had to hold myself. But I did not think that it was wise to display before the unbelievers there present the struggle the church of Christ has here on this earth. I did not deem a public debate

and argument there either wise or proper. I believe God's Church to be too holy objectively in Christ to display before the unholy world the subjective weaknesses of the flesh wherewith we must contend all this life. You felt bold to spread before all the world and before any unbeliever who might listen, and I could tell several were listening, the imperfections and weaknesses of the Church of God. And you surely left the impression that you rejoiced in these imperfections.

And so, Rev. Schans, I am demanding of you that you apologize to me and to Mr. Andrew Sjoerdsma for these evil things of which you spoke. I demand that you inform the pastor of Dutton also of this letter and inform him of your apology and set him straight on those lies which you told him. And unless I receive such an apology from you I shall feel free to publish this matter, which after all you already published all through that train and made no attempt to keep secret. And there are other things you said about others I will not mention in this letter, but you surely felt free to air all your ideas loudly and publicly. And so I say again, unless you force me to do so by refusing to apologize, I will say no more. But if I do not receive such an apology for myself and Mr. Sjoerdsma and a testimony that you have also set the pastor of Dutton straight, this will have to be published so that these evil lies are spread no further and you churches may read what its leaders are saying and doing. For I seek the welfare of God's Church and seek neither your downfall nor that of your churches. But I am convinced that I may not allow you to continue to walk in this sinful way.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. J. A. Heys.

January 16, 1950

The Rev. M. Schans
West 21st St.
Holland, Michigan

Dear Rev. Schans,

It is now more than four weeks since I wrote you and informed you that if I did not receive an apology from you for your slanderous remarks in regard to our churches, I would have to publish the letter I sent to you.

I also sent a copy of that letter to the Rev. Handlogten of Dutton, and no doubt you too have corresponded concerning it. For that I gave you sufficient time. And as I stated in my closing remarks, I am not seeking your downfall nor that of your churches. For that reason I waited patiently. For that reason I am again writing you, for you know and I know that any sin not confessed is a sin in which we are walking. And I do not desire to see you walk in it any longer. But if no letter of apology is forthcoming from you, there is but one thing left for me to do. Your silence is also your answer then.

I will have to publish the matter unless an apology is made in the very near future. And our people and the many people of your churches who have begun to read the Standard Bearer of late will be able to judge for themselves what your silence means. For not only is there no confession, but significantly

also no denial. And how could there be such a denial. There are witnesses.

Of course, the matter now will have to be published with the added element of your absolute silence.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. J. A. Heys.

P. S. In regard to that school on Adams St., I was informed after I wrote you that it is nearly completed and is entirely PAID FOR as it stands, having no debt at all. That is amazing, and that speaks loudly of the interest and support of the thing by our people. There is also added information in re the matter of the Rev. De Jong and the Rev. Kok in the latest Standard Bearer, Jan. 15 copy. Please look it up.



FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10

(II)

In the last paragraph of our former article we were speaking of the fact, that grace, the grace of God is only experienced, seen and known by us as it is *historically* realized in Christ Jesus. This means that there is a definite date on the calendar in which this was realized, a time in history, a moment in time when grace had fully become a reality in Christ Jesus. At that moment the shadows and typical-levitical institutions were abolished, all righteousness fulfilled. That moment was when Christ said: *It is finished*. Nothing more needs to be added. It never can, or may, nor need be repeated. When Christ died He died once having offered Himself wholly through the eternal Spirit unto God.

That was the thrust of the former article, the concluding paragraph.

So strongly is this true that Jesus Himself has instituted the Lord's Supper that this His death should be remembered. Paul says that Christ instituted this Supper "in the night in which He was betrayed". There was only one such night. And this night and the crucifixion on the day following we remember till our Lord comes.

It was the night in which grace and the truth in Jesus became a reality. Christ became from God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption.

It is interesting and also comforting to note that Christ *became* this unto us. He, the Christ of God, the Son in our flesh, Who is not ashamed to call us brethren, He became or rather was made (egegeneethee)

righteousness of God for us. There was according to the idea expressed here, a time when this righteousness was *not yet* made to us. The Lamb had then *not yet* been slain. There was then always the *not yet*. And in close connection with this the cry of the saints: how long, O Lord, wilt thou wait in visiting Thy people! But when "grace and truth came" in Jesus then that element in the "how long" of the saints is no longer heard. We, the sons, obtain now the redemption, the adoption to sons.

And so when we read in the New Testament of "grace" it is the New Covenant in Christ's blood that is meant. Here is not abstract reasoning about grace, but it is the grace of God that liberates the captives, purifies the conscience, and gives a living hope unto the day of Christ's return. Then the full grace of God will be revealed in "the revelation of Jesus Christ". (I Peter 1:7, 13).

It is to this "grace" that Paul has reference here in our Scripture passage.

That Paul has this grace here in mind should be self-evident to any reader of Scripture who lives by faith in Jesus. For this is the fulness from which we receive; it is the cup of eternal bliss and joy from which we drink. In ever greater measure it is ours: grace for grace. Still it can do no harm but it will greatly strengthen our faith to notice the following in the text indicating that Paul has this great grace of God in mind.

1. That Paul here not only contrasts this entire section of the verses 4-10 with that of the verses 1-3, but that he inserts the very heart of the contrast into this section speaking of God's grace in Jesus. The core of the former section's instruction was that we were "dead by reason of our trespasses". Here this truth is contrasted with the grace of God. It is the truth of God's unsearchable wisdom and understanding that "where sin abounds grace may much more abound". Here Paul cannot wait to state all it implies to be made alive in Christ, but exclaims in the midst of this sentence in our text: *By grace are ye saved!* Here is the contrast of what "we are by nature" and what God has done for us in grace. Here we can only worship in the Lord. And how wonderful!

2. That it is also quite evident that, according to the presentation in the text, Paul here presents grace as the sum-total of salvation, in all its length and breadth, its height and depth! For the joyful exclamation of Paul in the text follows directly upon the statement: "made us alive together with Christ." And this being made alive with Christ means that we have been fully delivered from being dead by reason of our trespasses and sins; that we no longer walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, according to the spirit that now energizes the sons of disobedience. Grace is, there-

fore, the term which stands for the fulness of salvation as it is realized in Christ and by Him and as it flows to us from this our Rock.

3. The foregoing is corroborated by the consideration in the text, that this being made alive with Christ, is not simply a mighty act of God without consideration of Divine justice, but that this is a being made alive with Christ. This implies that we who were dead in sins died unto this very sin in the death of Christ. Now it may be conceded that the apostle does *here not mention* the death of Christ in this passage which is so very rich in meaning. The apostle does not speak here of Jesus' death but only of the resurrection and ascension. That is true, yet only in part. For in the first place Paul does here not merely speak of Christ's resurrection, but he speaks of *our* resurrection and ascension *with* Christ. And our resurrection with Christ does not merely *logically imply* (we must be careful with mere logical implications), our having been crucified and buried with Christ, but is the plain teaching of Scripture. In the Divine "must" of Salvation and in the satisfaction that must be rendered to the justice of God the resurrection and ascension of the believers with Christ is the *reward of Christ's labors*. This it is taught in Isaiah 53:10-11: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities." Wherefore what God hath joined together, namely, that atoning death of Christ and His glorious resurrection and ascension to be Head of the church. We must not separate, but we must confess them both in their wondrous unity as being our undoubted Christian faith.

Besides, it ought to be observed that Paul does speak of the death of Jesus very elaborately in this chapter. In the verses 13 ff. we read: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were far off have been made nigh by the blood of Christ." It is needless to say more. That we have been raised with Christ and exalted with Christ is according to God's own Word rooted in the satisfaction of Jesus' death. It is the reward for His meritorious labors.

And this salvation in Christ is all of grace. Yea, it is called grace itself. This is the grace of God *manifested and realized*. . . realized in the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus!

4. Finally, it is quite evident, that grace is here the very real historical grace in Christ's death and resurrection, that it is the all-inclusive grace of God in Christ once and forever performed on the Cross, which Paul has here in mind. Paul very clearly em-

phasizes this in the text. Twice he speaks here in the text of our being saved by grace. But he does not fall into mere needless repetition. In the first instance he shows us what he has in mind with salvation by grace, namely, to be made alive with Christ and to be raised and exalted with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places. But in the second instance (verse 8) the well-known text, Paul uses the definite article. Says he: For by *the* grace have ye been saved! R. T. Robertson has the following interesting note on the Greek Article: "It is not polite for children to point out objects with their finger. But that is what the Greek article does. It points out objects". So here the article points out, Paul by means of the article points out to us, calls our attention once more to the amazing and wondrous grace of God in Jesus: *the* grace. The well-known grace. Yes, it needed pointing out. The saints at Ephesus needed this. And we do too. Let it sink deep into our souls: by the grace of God we are saved. Nay, not by any man-conceived grace of God, but by the grace of God according to the eternal good pleasure of God.

This grace has indeed *saved* us.

About this too we need to say just a word. It is true, that we have mentioned this already in the foregoing paragraphs. However, there we were interested to focus all of our attention of the truth that grace has been concretely manifested and realized in Christ. We also emphasized that Paul has this in mind here. What still calls for a word is what really the *implication* of being saved by grace, that is, what Paul here so very emphatically places on the foreground.

First of all we notice that in the Greek original Paul employs a form of the perfect passive tense which by grammarians is known as the periphrastic perfect. It is a periphrased form of the regular perfect tense. And it is employed to denote that the degree of action in the verb is complete up to the very present, but also that it is completed once and for all. There is some dispute among the learned about this subject as to whether these perfects are employed to denote an intensive or an extensive idea. We will not enter into it. Suffice it to say that the well-established idea of the perfect tense is not that of point-action but rather of durative action, and then action completed up to the present. The meaning of the verb largely determines the exact rendering of the tense. And then, again, as in this case here in our text, the entire context sheds light on the meaning of the verb. Here the verb means to save. And salvation is here amply circumscribed by Paul. To that salvation we have alluded above and wish to call attention presently. For the present it is sufficient to say that Paul by the use of this perfect tense wished to underscore the completeness of salvation in Christ. It is a salvation which is once wrought

and now endures forever. And always it is complete salvation up to the present. The believer never needs to add anything. And thus the whole glad tidings of salvation is reflected in this wonderful form of the verb used here by Paul. If salvation is by grace then it is not of works, but then it is also complete, full, rich and ever enduring.

What does this spell for us who are by nature children of wrath? What does this mean for us who are "dead by reason of our trespasses and sins"?

That we are saved by grace means first of all that legally we are accounted by God as being righteous. That we are made alive with Christ means first of all that the guilt of our sin has been removed from us. It was the guilt of sin that came upon us in Adam's first transgression that is the legal basis for our condemnation to the servitude of sin. And on the transgressions that follows this first transgression in Adam always the verdict is more guilt and corruption. Dying we indeed die in our original as well as in our actual sins. To be made alive with Christ therefore means that the redemption price has been paid for us, that full satisfaction for sin has been made. That there is nothing to add. So very really we are righteous before God in Christ, that even though our conscience accuses us that we have kept none of God's commandments that yet for the sake of Christ's merits we are as really righteous before God as though we had never sinned, yea, as though we ourselves had fulfilled all righteousness. The basis of our being made alive is: the righteousness of God in Christ, without works that we have performed.

However, to be "made alive with Christ" legally also implies the right to be called the children of God, the place of saints in the light. It means that the Father's house with its many mansions we have a place prepared for us. We have the right to draw near unto God in faith, in the full assurance of faith and to lay humble claim to the rights of children. God we may call our Father and Christ our elder brother, and we may in hope look forward to the time when we shall be manifested heirs of all things. And that is the salvation by grace in Christ.

Legally we have our citizenship in heaven. Christ has entered into the capital city of the whole world, the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city of God, which He has prepared for us, for which sake He is not ashamed to be called our God. For Jesus' high-priestly prayer is for us: Lord I will that those whom Thou hast given me may be where I am. And this prayer will certainly be realized. He is able to realize this salvation to the uttermost for those who through Him go unto the Father, since He (Christ) ever lives to pray for us!

Geo. C. Lubbers.