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MEDITATION

Tot Weenen Geroepen

“En eene groote menigte van volk en van vrouwen volgde Hem, welke ook weenden en Hem beklagden. En Jezus Zich tot haar keerende, zeide: Gij dochters van Jeruzalem, weent niet over Mij, maar weent over uzelve en over uwe kinderen; want zie, daar komen dagen in welke men zeggē zal: Zalig zijn de onvruchbaren, en de buiken die niet gebaarde hebben, en de borsten die niet gezoogd hebben. Alsdan zullen zij beginnen te zeggen tot de bergen: Valt op ons; en tot de heuvelen: Bedekt ons! Want indien zij dit doen aan het groene hout, wat zal aan het dorre geschieden?”

Lukas 23:27-31.

't Was een heele opschudding geweest!

Als een loopend vuur was het van mond tot mond verteld: Jezus van Nazareth is in hechtenis genomen door het Sanhedrin, en Hij is naar Pilatus en naar Herodus gebracht, en toen weer naar Pilatus! En—Hij is veroordeeld om gekruist te worden!

Het volk was gekomen in groote drommen. Ze hadden elkaar verdrongen voor het rechthuis van Pilatus. *Vox populi* was in dit geval ook *Vox Dei* geweest: een schrikkelijk geheimenis! Het volk had rauwelings geschreeuwd: Kruist Hem! Kruist Hem! Ja, en dat had God ook geroepen, van alle eeuwigheid.

Ik noemde het zooeven een groot geheimenis.

God had geroepen: Kruist Hem! Petrus zou daar later een mooie editie van geven in het verhaal van Lucas. Hij zou spreken van “den raad en de hand Gods” die Jezus Christus naar het Kruis van Golgotha brachten.

Maar het zou door den volke Israels en door de Heidenen zijn. Pilatus en Herodus zijn de genoemde helden(!) onder die heidenen. En toch de volken Israels dragen grooter schuld dan die blinde(?) heidenen.

En daarom: ook *Vox populi*! Ook de stem van het volk.

Maar wat verschrikkelijk onderscheid in motieven!

God sprak, en Jezus wordt gekruist! Maar het is geschied vanuit het lieflijkst motief dat ge U maar denken kunt. God wil Zijn lieflijkheid en schoonheid, Zijn wijsheid en Zijn almachtige kracht om te verlossen openbaren.

Er is ook *Vox humana*, maar het motief van dien stem is de haat, de verschrikkelijke haat die haar oorsprong vindt in de hel. Men haat God, en daarom haatte men Jezus. Hij openbaarde te veel van dien grooten God. Hij had eenmaal gezegd: Die Mij gezien heeft, heeft den Vader gezien! Welnu, dat had men beaamd. Maar het was te erg. Men kon dien God niet uitstaan. Daarom: Weg met dezen van den aardbodem! Geeft ons veel liever Bar-abbas! Maar hij is een moordenaar en rebel! Dat geeft niet: geeft ons dien moordenaar, veel liever dan dien God!

Het scheen eerst alsof Hij vrij zou komen.

Tot drie of viermaal toe scheen het alsof de gouverneur van Rome Hem zou vrijlaten. Als een dolkstoot in de harten van ouderlingen en overpriesters had Pilatus telkens gezegd: Ik vind geen schuld in dezen Mensch!

En toen was dat hooge(?) college door de massa volks heengegaan om hen op te ruïen. En ze hadden succes gehad, duivelsch succes. Het volk had geschreeuwd: Kruist Hem! Kruist Hem!

En de zwakkeling van Rome had Hem overgegeven tot hunnen wil.

Eerst nog wat spel met den Christus ten overstaan van de soldaten.

Dat mag nu, want Hij is buiten alle bescherming van de Wet gezet.

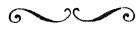
Maar eindelijk zet men den stoet in beweging. Hij moet buiten de stad gekruist worden. Op, naar Golgotha.

Jezus draagt Zijn kruis, en strompelt voort naar Hoofdschedelplaats.

En terwijl men al joelende voortschuift, wendt Jezus Zich om.

Hij heeft iets gehoord, dat Hem diep wondt!

Hij hoort het snikken van vrouwen.
 Weent niet! Tenminste niet voor Mij! Dat doet zeer!
 Maar weent! Weent over uzelve! En over Uwe
 kleine kinderen!



Weent niet over Mij!
 Want dat doet Mij zeer! En het is zoo gruwelijk
 misplaatst.

Eigenlijk is het niet dan een miskennen van alles
 wat Ik ben en waar Ik voor sta.

Ik lijd en Ik lijd vreeselijk. Maar het is niet voor
 Mijzelf! Ik lijd voor Mijn volk, Mij gegeven van den
 Vader.

Ik, Ik ben de Heilige, De Beminde van den Vader.
 Zelfs op dezen huidigen oogenblik ben Ik Zijn teeder-
 lijk beminden Zoon. Ook nu ben Ik in den boezem des
 Vaders. Hij, Ik en de Heilige Geest zijn een werk
 aan 't doen, dat de hemelen zullen doen ruischen van
 muziek die Goddelijk is. En de scharen zullen mee-
 zingen vanwege de schoonheid van dit Mijn lijden.

Weent niet over Mij!

Maar weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!

Wie waren die vrouwen, en waarom weenden zij?

Och, het waren heel gewone dochters van Jeruzalem.

Voor ditmaal konden zij hunne huishoudelijke bezig-
 heden wel voor tijd en voor wijle vaarwel zeggen. Dit
 was een buitengewone terechtstelling. Jezus van Naza-
 reth wordt terechtgesteld. We zullen ons maar niet
 bekommeren over de vraag: wat zullen we eten en
 wat zullen we drinken? We kunnen nu wel wat uren
 af nemen. Het waren maar doodgewone vrouwen van
 Jeruzalem.

En, zooals vrouwen gewoonlijk zijn, deze dochters
 van Jeruzalem konden het niet langer aanzien. Die
 arme Jezus!

Hij zal er dan ook wel vreeselijk uitgezien hebben.

Hij had den geheelen nacht niet gerust.

Men had Hem bespogen en geslagen. Men had
 Hem wreedelijk gegeeseld.

Hij droeg in steeds klimmende mate den toorn Gods.

Ik moet er niet inkomen Hij *moet* er vreeselijk
 uitgezien hebben.

O ja, men kan heel goed zien, dat deze vrouwen op
 den duur gaan weenen. Het zou onnatuurlijk geweest
 ja indien zij niet geweend hadden.

De vrouw is spoedig aangedaan bij zulke schouw-
 spelen. De vrouw leeft meer bij gevoel dan bij de rede.

Dat is haar kroon, maar ook haar zwakheid.

Hier is die Jezus van Nazareth die het land door-
 ging goeddoende.

En zie nu eens hoe zij Hem behandeld hebben!

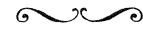
En voor die vrouwen het weten, zuchten zij om
 Hem en vloeien de tranen.

Nog wat later, als men ook zijn metgezellen ziet
 weenen, dan komt er de luide zucht bij. Straks een

snik. Nog wat later een ietwat luidere snik, en dan de
 geuite klacht. En het zal niet lang meer duren en de
 vrouwen weenen *en masse*. En dat brengt smart voor
 Jezus. Want dit gehuil miskent Zijn middelaarschap.
 Hij lijdt voor anderen en niet voor Zichzelf.

Weent niet over Mij!

Maar weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!



Weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!

Want hun weenen over Jezus is zonder geestelijke
 waardij. Jezus bestraft hun weenen.

Het klinkt wel vreemd, want bij den eersten oog-
 opslag zou men denken, dat Jezus dit geweene dank-
 baar aanvaren zou. En dat het Hem tot troost zou
 zijn. O, we waardeeren het zoo, als men om ons en
 over ons weent. Er is zooiets als sympathie. En zij
 is zoet voor den lijder.

Maar de fout hier is, dat die vrouwen geen oog
 hebben voor het particuliere, voor het bijzondere van
 dit lijden van Jezus.

Zij verstaan niets van het kruis en van den kruis-
 lijder. Daarom worden zij bestraft.

Hun weenen is oppervlakkig. Bij al zulk weenen
 kan het hart hard zijn. Kan van voorbijgaanden aard
 zijn. Kan zijn gelijk een morgenwolk. Is geestelijk
 krachteloos.

Zij zijn vertegenwoordigers van het Jeruzalem dat
 de profeten doodt. Straks klemmen zij de mannen aan
 hun hart die schuldig zijn aan het bloed van het Lam
 Gods.

Zij vertegenwoordigen de wereld aller eeuwen. Zij
 vertegenwoordigen de wreede wereld die alle profeten
 doodden, gedood hebben en nog doodden zullen.

Die wereld weent en klaagt over alles.

Daar is zooiets als de tragiek der wereld. En de
 wereld oefent zich zelfs in die tragiek.

Er zijn stroomen van tranen in die wereld die niet
 alleen zonder geestelijke waardij zijn, maar die de
 wereld schuldiger maken voor God. De droefheid der
 wereld werkt den dood.

Er zijn oceanen van droefheid in de wereld. Men
 vermenigvuldigt de klacht. Men oefent zich, zeide ik
 zooeven. Dat is correct. Men bouwt zijn theaters en
 vestigt een massale industrie van klagen en weenen.
 De glycerine moet er zelfs bij te pas komen, maar
 weenen zal men. En men zal ook doen weenen.

Ik denk hier weer aan die dochters van Jeruzalem.

Die weenende dochters hebben andere dochters ge-
 baard die de achtermiddagen geruiken zullen om eens
 heel gezellig te weenen in de schouwburgen. In de
 "matinee's" zullen ze "a good cry" hebben.

O, er is veel goddeloos geweest!

En Jezus bestraft het. Weent niet over Mij!

Want terwijl ge weent, kruisigt ge Mij!

Hebt ge wel eens gehoord van zeker dichter in

Nederland die ook dezen tekst bestudeerde? Welnu, die man zong later: "Ik was als Jeruzalem's dochters weleer, en weende om de smart van mijn lijdenden Heer! En ik dacht er niet aan, dat ik zelf door mijn schuld Zijn kroon had gevlochten, Zijn beker gevuld!"

Zoo is het, dochters van Jeruzalem! Ziet toe, dat ge Uw weenen verstaat! Weet waarover ge weent! Weenen kan U groote schuld geven. Weenen kan U een bestraffing van Jezus op de hals halen.

Went niet over Mij!



Maar weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!

Eerst, zij moeten weenen, want zij zijn zondaren voor God en voor Jezus. En zij behooren tot het Jeruzalem, dat profeten doodt. Er is zooiets als saamhoorigheid.

Tweedens, Jeruzalem had geroepen: Zijn bloed kome over ons en over onze kinderen! Nu kan een man dat heel makkelijk roepen, maar daar moeten toch de dochters van Jeruzalem bij te pas komen! Hoe zal het volgende geslacht die vreeselijke erfenis ontvangen zonder in de wereld geboren te worden? En daar hebt ge de dochters van Jeruzalem met hun vreeselijke taak. Ze moeten die kinderen ontvangen en baren en zoogen. Ze moeten de door het bloed van Jezus bedekte kinderen in de wereld brengen. Ziet ge de logika van Jezus?

Weent, dochters, die straks moeders wordt van een vreeselijk zaad!

Derdens, weent dochters! Want straks komt God met de groote "armee" van Rome. Hij komt een groote rekening brengen, en Hij gaat die rekening innen!

Jeruzalem, met hare dochters, wordt straks verwoest.

En dan zal er een onnatuurlijke wensch geuit worden. Dan zal men zeggen: Zalig zijn de buiken die niet gebaard hebben en de borsten die niet gezoogd hebben! Beter zal zijn dat twee mensen oud en leelijk worden, zonder kinderen. Zalig zullen geheeten worden de eenzamen, de verlatenen.

En dit moogt ge, dit moet ge toepassen op de geheele wereld. En vooral op de wereld die door alle eeuwen heen de profeten gedood hebben. Ik heb vooral het oog op de gekerstende wereld.

Eigenlijk moest de geheele wereld weenen!

Dat zou echt natuurlijk zijn.

Want er is de zonde. En de zonde wordt soms gekarakteriseerd in Gods Woord als het doorsteken van den Zoon. Zeker is, dat alle zonde haar hoogtepunt vindt in het verwerpen van den Zoon.

De wereld moet weenen want de straf komt. Ik ruik de vlammen van het oordeel alreeds. Het zand des tijds loopt snel ten einde.

Straks komen de drommen van de tien koningen, en zij zullen in het oprukken zeggen: komt laat ons opgaan naar de beminde stad, naar het Jeruzalem der

eeuwen. De stakkerds zullen niet verstaan, dat dit Jeruzalem langzaam aan geestelijk genaamd werd Sodom en Egypte. Ze zullen, die heidenen zullen niet begrijpen, dat het Christendom langzaam aan Anti-christ geworden is.

Maar wereld: weent over Uzelve en over Uwe kinderen!



Weent, huilt, schreeuwt in groote smart!

Het is op de autoriteit van Jezus, den Zoon van God, dat ge weenen moet.

En de profeten hebben het ons verteld. Die hebben de vervulling van dit gewezen gezien. Hebt ge wel eens gelezen in de profeten van dit gewezen der aarde? Zij zeiden: en dan zullen alle geslachten der aarde weenen en rouw bedrijven. Wanneer? Wanneer zij den Zoon des menschen zien komen op de wolken des hemels. Dus het zal altijd weer zijn om dien Zoon.

Het is ook alleszins ordentelijk, begrijpelijk, billijk en redelijk.

Want, als dit geschied aan het groene hout, wat zal aan het dorre geschieden?

Dit is een gelijkenis.

En zij is ook zeer doorzichtig.

Jezus is het groene hout. Er is leven in Hem. Hij is frisch en groen. Hij moest eigenlijk niet verwoest, verbrand worden. Dat wil zeggen, niet als men voor den aandacht houdt, dat Hij de Heilige, de Goede, de Rechtvaardige is. Met andere woorden, Hij had de straf niet verdiend. En toch wordt dit aan Hem gedaan.

En het wordt aan Hem gedaan alleen omdat God het zoo hebben wil. Er moet een Offer geplengd worden voor het uitverkoren volk van God. En daarom geeft God Jezus voor het leven van hunne zielen, en lichamen ook. Maar als dit gedaan wordt aan het groene hout, aan Jezus, aan Hem die zoo goed en lieflijk is, wat zal dan aan het dorre geschieden?

Dit dorre is de goddelooze wereld die hier vertegenwoordigd is.

Er zit iets vreeselijks in deze woorden.

En als ge kommentaar wilt hebben moet ge dit aan Uw hart vragen.

Gooit levende takken op het vuur, en het zal branden, maar het gaat o zoo moeilijk en o zoo langzaam.

Gooit dorre takken op het vuur, en ik verzeker U, dat ge het trotsche lachen van het vuur zult hooren in het kraken en loeien der vlammen!

Vraagt het aan Uw hart: past ge in de hel?

O God, wees ons zondaren genadig! We zijn zoo vreeselijk dor!

Toen hoorde God! En Hij gaf de groene Tak aan 't onuitblusschelijk vuur!

Die brand heeft een schoone uitkomst gehad. Hij redde vuurbranden tot eeuwig lof des Heeren!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Protestant Reformed

It is by no means with an unmixed feeling of joy that *The Standard Bearer* celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the existence of our churches.

Rather is our sentiment expressed in the text from Ezra 3:10-13, on which the Rev. C. Hanko preached on the occasion of this celebration, and while we are thankful to the Lord for what it pleased Him to do for and through our Protestant Reformed Churches in the past, nevertheless we feel like "many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers", who "wept with a loud voice", when they compared the foundation of the house of God that was then laid with the glory of Solomon's temple which they had seen.

The reason for this attitude on our part must be evident to all that read our papers.

As Protestant Reformed Churches we no longer present a united front as far as the truth is concerned.

And although it might probably be expected that no church in the world could stand for any length of time on the basis of such pure and strong Reformed truth as that which is represented by the Protestant Reformed Churches; and although, years ago, at an outing of our young people, I said that I conceived of the possibility that, if I lived long enough, I would be cast out once more; yet it cannot but be a cause of deep sorrow when, after so short a time, this departure from the pure basis of the Protestant Reformed truth becomes evident.

You probably consider me a pessimist.

But this I deny.

I am thoroughly convinced that God will preserve His Church through Jesus Christ our Lord even unto the end of the world, and that the gates of hell shall never overwhelm her. And in that faith no one can ever be a pessimist.

But, at the same time, I am also thoroughly convinced that Christ uses His Church as His battle host over against the powers of darkness, that His Church is where the Word of God is maintained and preached in all its purity, that the Protestant Reformed truth is the expression of that pure Word of God, and that exactly in the measure that we depart from the basis of that pure Protestant Reformed truth we lose our power as the battle host of Jehovah, and compromise with the enemy.

Recently there are indications of such compromise.

It is not necessary for me to point out those indications. You know as well as I do to what I am referring.

It is being said that some are emitting an *entirely*

different sound from that which is blasted from the trumpet of those men that always stood for the Protestant Reformed truth, that the conception of the latter is not the doctrine of our churches, and that most of the Protestant Reformed do not think as they. And a conditional theology is being introduced, the sound of which is surely foreign to our Protestant Reformed truth.

The statements to which I refer above have never been openly challenged, still less contradicted. And as long as they are not given the lie, I have no choice but accept them as true.

Are you surprised, then, that on this twenty-fifth anniversary, I rather mourn than celebrate with rejoicing?

But, I ask, what is the heritage of the Protestant Reformed Churches? Is there any part of the truth which they have emphasized and further developed in distinction from other Reformed Churches?

To this question some, perhaps most of us, will answer: the Protestant Reformed Churches deny the theory of common grace. And that is, of course, true. But that is a mere negative answer. And we must have something positive. No church can live by a mere negation.

Others will answer more positively: the Protestant Reformed Churches teach the doctrine of sovereign grace; and that is also true. But, after all, that is not their peculiar heritage and their particular contribution to Reformed theology. Do not all Reformed Churches believe, officially, at least, the same truth? Do not even some Baptist churches confess this? It may be true that the Protestant Reformed churches lay more emphasis upon this truth than other Reformed churches, but it cannot be said that the doctrine of sovereign grace is their peculiar heritage.

If you ask me what is the most peculiar treasure of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I answer without any hesitation: their peculiar view of the covenant.

And what is their particular conception?

It stands closely connected with their denial of common grace, and with their emphasis on the doctrine of election and reprobation.

Moreover, it emphasizes and carries out the organic idea.

Briefly stated it teaches that God realizes His eternal covenant of friendship, in Christ, the Firstborn of every creature and the Firstbegotten of the dead, organically, and antithetically along the lines of election and reprobation, and in connection with the organic development of all things.

That is, in a nutshell, the peculiar Protestant Reformed heritage.

He that has been captivated by this beautiful Reformed truth must have nothing of anything that smacks like Heynsian theology, nor will he ever retro-

gress into a traditional conditional theology.

But rather than go backward, he will go forward and continue to develop the pure Protestant Reformed truth of God's eternal covenant.

To do this is the specific calling of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Failure to do this is our death. It is the end of our distinctive existence.

And that is the reason why, under the present circumstances, I cannot wholeheartedly join in with the joy of celebration.

H. H.



As To Conditions

In our last article under this heading we referred to Canons III, IV, 12, which speaks of regeneration. And at the close of that article we had several questions which we now shall discuss.

The first question is whether, if faith is a condition, regeneration must not also be considered as conditional, as something which man must fulfill in order that God may give him the grace of regeneration. That would seem to be almost an impossible conception, but it is also a conception which seems to be implied in what the Rev. Petter writes in *Concordia* of Feb. 2, '50. For there he writes that the Spirit of regeneration, the Spirit of salvation, comes after repentance and is related to the latter as a condition. And that certainly is the preaching and teaching of many Arminian preachers. If the sinner will fulfill the condition of opening his heart and of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God will enter in and regenerate him and make him a new man. Also the grace of regeneration, according to them, is dependent upon an act of man and upon a condition which he must fulfill. But this is certainly not the Reformed truth. And it is quite contrary to the article which we quoted from the Canons. For there we read: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid." How absolutely unconditional is the grace of regeneration presented here in this article. It is sometimes alleged by those that do not understand the Reformed truth that Reformed theologian, and especially Protestant Reformed theologians, deny or do not sufficiently emphasize the responsibility of man. And it seems that one of the motives that actuates the Rev. Petter to speak of conditions is rooted in that same misunderstanding of the relation between God's sovereign grace and the responsibility of man. But let me ask the question: Is man responsible for his own regeneration? That is, indeed, an important question. For, mark you well, if he is not responsible for his own

regeneration, but if this is absolutely and unconditionally a work of God, he cannot be responsible for his faith, which is rooted in regeneration, nor for any other blessings of grace. But what does the article say? It tells us that regeneration is a new creation. That means, therefore, that it is a work of God absolutely and unconditionally, in which man has no part whatsoever. Just as it would be the height of absurdity to teach that the creation of man, the manner of his creation and the nature with which he was created, was conditioned upon anything in man himself, so it is also the height of folly that regeneration, which is a new creation, is at all contingent upon or conditioned by anything that man may do or will or desire. Just as Adam was not responsible for his own creation, so the elect are certainly not responsible for their own regeneration. Besides, the article tells us that regeneration is a resurrection from the dead, a making alive. And that presents the work of regeneration again as absolutely unconditional. The dead certainly cannot fulfill any conditions. Nor can God possibly require of the dead that they fulfill any conditions. Nor can the dead ever be held responsible for their own regeneration. Nor can the regenerated be held responsible for the fact that they ever were regenerated. And to this the article adds, to make it absolutely sure that regeneration is a work of God alone and that it is performed upon us and in us unconditionally: "which God works in us without our aid." We, therefore, have absolutely nothing to do with our own regeneration, which is the beginning, and at the same time the principle, of all our salvation as it is wrought within our hearts and as it is applied by the Holy Spirit to the elect.

The next question which we ask in connection with Article 12 of III and IV of the Canons is whether there is any part of the work of salvation left for man after God has accomplished His part. This is answered negatively by the article in the following words: "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." Now regeneration is in principle the whole of salvation as it is applied unto us. All the benefits of salvation are already implied in the one principal benefit of regeneration. I therefore put the question in this way, and ask whether there is any part of salvation left for man to do after God has accomplished His part of the work of salvation. Mark you, I do not deny that after that part of the salvation which God works within us there is a part which we do fulfill as the inevitable result and the fruit of God's part. But the question is simply whether there is any part of the work of salvation as God works it within us left to man, so that the work of God's salvation is

really not complete, or so that at any stage of that work of God in us His work is conditioned by and contingent upon anything that we must still do. And also this is most emphatically denied by Art. 12 of Canons III, IV. When God has wrought regeneration in the heart of man, which is the principle of subjective salvation, that work of God is entirely complete in itself. It is not in the power of man to be regenerated or not to be regenerated. The work of God is sure and absolutely unconditional as far as the application of salvation to the sinner is concerned.

Still more. The question is also whether it is in the power of man after God has regenerated him either to be converted or to remain unconverted, whether it is in his power after God has given him the principle of the new life either to believe in Christ or not to believe. Also on this question we find the answer in the article of the Canons. The article states that regeneration is not affected by such a mode of operation "that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man. . . . to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in that marvellous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe." From this it is very evident that neither regeneration, nor conversion, nor repentance, nor belief in Christ is in any sense conditional upon the work of man, upon his will, or desire. When God works His grace in a man, it is not in his power and it is not in his choice either to be converted or to remain unconverted. But he must be converted. When God works His grace in the heart of any man, it is not in his power either to repent or not to repent, which is an element of conversion. But he must and does actually repent. When God works His grace in the heart of any sinner, it is not up to him to decide whether he will believe or not believe in Christ. But he must believe in Christ and actually does believe. For the work of regeneration, and therefore, all the work which is implied in the application of salvation to the sinner is not inferior in efficacy to creation or to resurrection from the dead. And all in whose heart God works that marvellous grace are "certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe". Such is the marvellous work of grace which God performs sovereignly and unconditionally upon the sinner.

The question must still be asked: what is the proper conception of the relation between God's part and man's part, between the work of God and the activity of the regenerated sinner, between faith and believing?

But this we must leave till next time. H. H.

Faith A Condition According To Scripture?

The next passage to which the Rev. Petter appeals as proof that faith is a condition which man must fulfill before God will give him salvation is taken from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:21: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now also of this text the Rev. Petter offers no exegesis whatever. He merely makes the following remarks: "Though the future form often expresses also certainty, yet here it follows upon the calling upon the name of the Lord, and is future with respect to that calling action."

Now let us note:

1. That according to Rev. Petter not only faith but also calling upon the name of the Lord is a condition unto salvation. In other words, the order according to him is: faith—calling on the name of the Lord—salvation. Mark you well, according to Petter faith and that activity of faith which consists in calling upon the name of the Lord is not the way in which the Lord leads His people unto salvation, but is a condition which man must fulfill before God will ever save him. The fulfillment of this condition is, of course, before salvation. Before a man is saved at all he is able to call upon the name of the Lord. I get the impression that the Rev. Petter means by calling upon the name of the Lord simply the act of prayer. This must mean, if words mean anything at all, that before God regenerates a man, before God works grace in his heart, he is able to pray. I say again: if words are not empty, but mean anything at all, this must be the meaning of Petter's explanation. And this is simply Arminianism.

2. That Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost quotes from Joel 2:32: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Now we may remark that both in the sermon of Peter and in the context in which the passage occurs in Joel, the idea is entirely eschatological. It places us in "the day of the Lord". Hence, it does not refer to the work which God performs in the heart of man in time and, as Petter would have it, immediately upon man's calling upon the name of the Lord, but to future salvation, that is, to salvation in the end of time, in the parousia, in the coming of the Lord in the final kingdom of glory. That is the meaning of the future tense, connected with which is, of course, also the notion of certainty. That according to the context the entire new dispensation is included in the day of the Lord

does not alter the fact that salvation here refers to the final and future deliverance in the Messianic kingdom of glory. In other words, it does not mean salvation in the dogmatic sense, salvation in the sense that we are already saved through faith by grace. On the contrary, the future means, if I may paraphrase the text: "they that are saved by grace and through faith and call upon the name of the Lord shall surely be saved in the final day of the Lord." Hence, the text has nothing to do with faith as a condition.

3. That "to call upon the name of the Lord" certainly is not simply the same as prayer in its narrower sense, but refers to the entire act of public confession and worship which believers offer to God in the midst of the world and whereby they reveal themselves as of His party. It "signifies not only the public worship of God, but inward worship also, in which the confession of the mouth is also the expression of the heart." (Keil, *in loco*). It is, therefore, a very conscious and emphatic act of faith, of that faith which by grace God works in the hearts of the elect. And therefore, to say that faith is a condition unto calling on the name of the Lord, and that, in turn calling on the name of the Lord is a condition unto salvation is pure nonsense. They that call upon the name of the Lord already are saved and are consciously saved. Before they can ever call upon the name of the Lord, they are regenerated, they are called by the efficacious call of God through the gospel, and have come to the conscious act of believing.

4. That "the calling upon the name of the Lord" is the fruit of the calling of God according to the text in Joel. For we read: "That whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." The remnant here is undoubtedly the remnant according to the election of grace. And the calling is the efficacious calling of God which is rooted in and based upon that gracious election. Thus Calvin understands the text correctly: "But it is not enough to hold, that the church of God is only in the remnant; it must be also added, that the remnant abide in God's church for no other reason but that the Lord has called them. Whence then is it that there is a portion in the church which shall remain safe, while the whole world seems to be doomed to destruction? It is from the calling of God. And there is no doubt but that the prophet means by the word, call, gratuitous election. The Lord is indeed often said to call men, when He invites them by the voice of His gospel; but there is what surpasses that, a hidden call, when God destines for Himself those whom He purposes to save. There is then an inward call, which dwells in the secret counsel of God; and that follows the call, by which he makes us really the partakers of His adoption. Now the prophet

means, that those who will be the remnant shall not stand by their own power, but because they have been called from above, that is, elected. But that the election of God is not to be separated from the outward call I allow; and yet this order ought to be maintained, that God, before He testifies His election to men, adopts them first to Himself in His own secret counsel. The meaning is, that calling is here opposed to all human merits, and also to virtue and human efforts; as though he said, 'Men attain not to this for themselves, that they continue a remnant and are safe, when God visits the sins of the world; but they are preserved by His grace alone, because they have been chosen.' Paul also speaks of the remnant in Romans 11, and wisely considers that passage, 'I have kept for myself seven thousand.' " I conclude, therefore, that also in this passage there is no ground or proof for the proposition which the Rev. Petter tries to defend, that faith is a condition.

Again the Rev. Petter refers to a passage from the same chapter in Acts. And I quote him: "It is to be noticed also how Peter in this same connection speaks to these people. They ask, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Upon their question Peter tells them to act. He says, 'Repent and be baptized. . . for the remission of sin and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' It is remarkable that first is a question of the hearers; secondly, an arousing to response; and thirdly, thereupon the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now howsoever we understand this 'gift of the Holy Spirit', whether as a power-sign, such as the apostles were themselves using in their speaking of tongues, or whether we understand it as we use it today, the Spirit working regeneration and faith and love, it makes essentially no difference. It certainly is the Spirit of salvation revealing Himself in some of its stages. And the Spirit as so seen comes upon, after, related to repentance."

Now if words have their proper meaning, in the vocabulary of the Rev. Petter as well as in mine, as they should have, the above paragraph is Arminianism of the worst kind. Mark you well, I do not say that the Rev. Petter is Arminian. But I do emphatically state that his interpretation of the text is Arminian through and through. And it certainly cannot be deduced from the text itself. Consider what the Rev. Petter teaches here:

1. He begins very arbitrarily, without any regard to the context, with a question of the hearers. That, of course, leaves room for the false impression that salvation and its application begins with man. The question referred to is: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

2. Then Peter tells them to act and arouses them to repentance. Also here the divine factor is entirely left out of view. That it is not Peter, but the Holy Spirit

through the preaching of the gospel that arouses the hearers to act and repent is entirely forgotten.

3. After this response, according to the Rev. Petter, not according to the text, the hearers receive the Holy Spirit of salvation. It makes no difference to the Rev. Petter whether this is the Spirit of regeneration and sanctification or not. In other words, even the Spirit of regeneration is, according to the implication of Petter's reasoning, given on condition of faith and repentance. If you will believe, the Spirit will regenerate you. And this is exactly the stuff one may hear from many an Arminian preacher over the radio.

But all this is sheer dogmatism on the part of Rev. Petter and ignores all sound exegesis. Let us therefore carefully attend to the words of the text in its context.

The text does not begin with a question of the hearers, but with the announcement of the effect of the preaching of Peter upon them. Not to begin with this announcement is a very important omission on the part of Rev. Petter. For this announcement clearly shows that God's salvation and the application of that salvation is first and efficacious and absolutely unconditional. What is this important announcement? It is this: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart."

What did these men hear? A word of man? The word of Peter? Not at all. They heard the preaching of the Word of God, the preaching of the gospel. And therefore they heard Christ Himself. The preaching of the gospel is a means of grace, that is, it is a means whereby the Holy Spirit works grace and faith in our hearts. Thus it is according to the Heidelberg Catechism: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." Lord's Day XXV, qu. and ans. 65. And the same truth is taught in Scripture in Romans 10:13-15: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom (whom) they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Now here on the day of Pentecost there was a preacher that was sent, in the person of Peter, through whom it pleased Christ to speak His own efficacious Word to the hearers, and through whose words the hearers could hear Christ Himself speaking to them. That, therefore, was first. And that did not depend on any condition of man whatsoever. With this, and not with the ques-

tion of the hearers, the Rev. Petter ought to have begun his exegesis. For that is very important.

Now, what was the immediate effect upon the hearers of the Word that was spoken by the apostle Peter? We read that they were pricked in their hearts. The heart is the very center of our life from a spiritual, ethical viewpoint. From the heart are the issues of life. All our thoughts and desires and longings and aspirations are centered in the heart and are given ethical, spiritual direction by that heart. We read that the hearers were pricked in their hearts. Who was the author of this pricking? The answer is evidently: Christ, by His Spirit, through the preaching of Peter? And what does it mean that they were pricked in their hearts? It evidently means that the Spirit had already efficaciously regenerated them and called them to repentance principally: for the Spirit gives the grace of repentance, and the fruit of this grace is that we repent. That is also the interpretation of Calvin in his commentary on the book of Acts. And we quote:

"They were pricked in their heart. Luke doth now declare the fruit of the sermon, to the end we may know that the power of the Holy Ghost was not only showed forth in the diversity of tongues, but also in their hearts which heard. And he noteth a double fruit; first, that they were touched with the feeling of sorrow; and secondly, that they were obedient to Peter's counsel. This is the beginning of repentance, this is the entrance unto godliness, to be sorry for our sins, and to be wounded with the feeling of our miseries."

Now, note, that although the hearers on the day of Pentecost were pricked in their hearts by the Spirit of Christ through the preaching of the apostle Peter and that therefore they were already principally regenerated and had received the gift of grace that is called repentance, they must still be roused to the activity of faith and to the activity of repentance by the same Spirit of Christ and through the same preaching of the apostle Peter. Hence, when the hearers ask the question in amazement and perhaps somewhat even in despair because of the great sin which they had committed when by wicked hands they had taken the Lord of glory and crucified and slain Him, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" they receive the answer of God through the preaching of Peter: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." For, mark you well, it was not Peter that aroused them to activity and to repentance. His word could not possibly have that effect. But the Holy Spirit, Who first pricked them in their hearts, regenerated and called them, now through the same preaching of the apostle Peter rouses them into conscious activity of repentance and baptism. Mark you, in all this there is absolutely no con-

dition. The hearers do not take the initiative whatsoever. It is the Holy Spirit, that regenerated them and called them to faith, that now unconditionally rouses them to the activity of repentance. And when they thus repent, that repentance is not a condition unto salvation and unto the remission of sins, but is the active fruit in the hearers of the grace of God that wrought in them and that was first and unconditional.

This is proper exegesis of Scripture. And this is the teaching of our Reformed confessions. Let me call your attention once more to an article of the Canons which I quoted in another connection before, Canons III, IV, 12: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed His part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvellous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received."

All this is most beautifully taught in the words of the text from Acts from which the Rev. Petter tries to deduce conditions.

From all this it ought to be perfectly evident that the gift of the Holy Ghost to which the text refers is certainly not the Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, the Spirit that applies the salvation in Christ to us, but the Spirit that bestowed special gifts, such as the gift of tongues and the gifts of healing and the gifts of prophecy upon the church in the first stages of its existence in the world. How could they possibly receive the Spirit of regeneration upon condition of faith and repentance? And, in corroboration of this interpretation, let me quote once more from the commentary of Calvin, *in loco*:

"Ye shall receive the gift of the Spirit. Because they were touched with wondering when they saw the apostles suddenly begin to speak with strange tongues, Peter saith that they shall be partakers of the same gift if they will pass over unto Christ. Remission of sins and newness of life were the principal things, and this was, as it were, an addition, that Christ

should show forth unto them his power by some visible gift. Neither ought this place to be understood of the grace of sanctification, which is given generally to all the godly. Therefore he promiseth them the gift of the Spirit, whereof they saw a pattern in the diversity of tongues. Therefore this doth not properly appertain unto us. For because Christ meant to set forth the beginning of his kingdom with those miracles, they lasted but for a time; yet because the visible graces which the Lord did distribute to his did show, as it were in a glass, that Christ was the giver of the Spirit, therefore, that which Peter saith doth in some respect appertain unto the whole church: ye shall receive the gift of the Spirit. For although we do not receive it, that we may speak with tongues, that we may be prophets, that we may cure the sick, that we may work miracles; yet it is given us for the better use, that we may believe with the heart unto righteousness, that our tongues may be framed unto true confession, that we may pass from death to life, that we, which are poor and empty, may be made rich, that we may withstand Satan and the world stoutly. Therefore the grace of the Spirit shall always be annexed unto baptism, unless the let be in ourselves."

But it seems that the Rev. Petter after all finds some support for his theory that faith is a condition in our confessions. He refers to Lord's Day XLV, the first question and answer, and he writes: "Thus also the Heidelberg Catechism says, 'He gives His Holy Spirit only to those who ask Him.'" All explanation of this passage from the Heidelberg is wanting. But it seems that the Rev. Petter means to say that God gives His Holy Spirit to anyone only on condition of prayer.

Now let us try to explain this question and answer of the Heidelberg a little more in detail. They read as follows:

"Why is prayer necessary for Christians?"

"Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us: and also, because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them."

Now it seems to me that the Rev. Petter is a little off the track. He was going to prove the proposition that faith is a condition. And now it seems that everything becomes conditional. In the preceding he spoke of repentance as a condition. And now he implies that prayer is a condition which man must fulfill in order that God may give him His grace and Spirit. But perhaps that is the inevitable tendency of conditional theology. But I insist that this is not Reformed. Reformed it is to teach that God applies His salvation to us in the way of and through the instrument of faith which He implants in our hearts and which He causes to come to conscious activity through the preaching of

the gospel. Reformed it is to say that God gives His salvation to His people in the way of repentance, a grace which He by His Holy Spirit implants into our hearts, and, which again He brings into conscious activity through the preaching of the gospel. And so it is Reformed to teach that God unconditionally gives His Holy Spirit to the elect, works into their hearts by that Spirit through the preaching of the gospel the need, the hunger and thirst for His grace and Spirit, and thus causes them to acknowledge Him as the only Giver of that grace and Spirit through prayer, which is the highest expression of thankfulness. God gives His Holy Spirit and grace not on condition of prayer, but in the way of prayer, which He Himself works in their hearts.

That is Reformed.

Note, in the first place, that according to the Heidelberg Catechism prayer is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us. The question is: Of thankfulness for what? And the answer is, of course: For all the salvation which God has bestowed upon the one that prays. He is thankful for Christ and all His benefits, for the incarnation of the Son of God, for the cross and reconciliation in His blood, for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, for His exaltation, His intercession for His people in heaven, for the hope of His coming, for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the application of all the blessings of salvation through Him, for justification and the forgiveness of sins, for the adoption unto children and heirs, for regeneration and faith and sanctification, and for the hope of final glorification in the way of perseverance unto the end. This implies, therefore, that prayer is not a condition unto the reception of all these benefits, but that the one that prays and is thankful for them has the Holy Spirit and grace before he ever prays. Only one that possesses grace and the Holy Spirit of God in Christ Jesus can pray at all. It is the chief part of thankfulness. Now thankfulness does not imply that we can ever remunerate God. We can never do anything for Him. He does all for us. We can never add anything to the fountain of life, but only drink from it. And therefore, thankfulness is principally the act of faith whereby we acknowledge God as the Giver and as the overflowing Fountain of all good.

What does it mean, then, that according to the Catechism "God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them?"

It must be evident from all that we have said on prayer as the chief part of thankfulness that God is always first along the whole line of salvation and the application of salvation to us. Otherwise we could never be saved. Hence, the Catechism cannot and does not mean that God will not send His Spirit in your heart and regenerate you and call you and give you

faith and justify you and sanctify and glorify you unless you first ask Him. He does not bestow His Spirit and grace upon us on condition of prayer which we must first fulfill before He will bestow His grace upon us. But He will bestow His Spirit and grace in the way of prayer. And that means that all His salvation, His Spirit and grace, are bestowed upon us as rational and moral creatures. God never deals with us as with stocks and blocks. He wants us to be conscious and to taste His grace and to glorify Him with thankfulness. You know, it sometimes happens in the hospitals that a sick person is incapable of eating and of tasting his food and that he must be fed through his veins. In this fashion God does not and will not feed the grace of His Holy Spirit, feed the Bread of Life, to His elect. Then they would never taste His glorious grace. And we would never acknowledge them with thanksgiving as the Fountain of living waters, as the over-flowing Fountain of all good. And God would never be glorified. Hence, God first gives us His Holy Spirit and regenerates us unconditionally. He first brings that life of regeneration through the preaching of the gospel to conscious activity. And then we begin to feel the need of the grace and Spirit of God. We begin to hunger and thirst for righteousness. We begin to feel the need of the forgiveness of sins and justification in the blood of Christ. We begin to feel the need of being delivered from sin and of sanctification. We begin to feel the need to be preserved in the midst of the world in order that we may persevere in the faith. In other words, we begin to feel the need of the Holy Spirit and grace which God has already given to us before we ever felt the need of them. And in the profound sense of that need we pray, and in that prayer acknowledge God as the Giver of all good things, and glorify Him as the Fountain of all good. And then in the sure response of that true prayer He continually bestows His grace and Spirit upon us, we acknowledge Him once more for the very gift of prayer and are thankful to Him that we may give Him thanks.

That is the explanation of Question 116 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

That is truly Scriptural.

And that, and that only, is Reformed truth.

And in this Reformed truth there is neither room for nor need of the term *condition*.

H. H.

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CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church Wednesday, April 5, at 9:00 A. M.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

An Open Letter To Rev. A. Petter

First, brother, I wish to reflect upon your article which appeared in the *Concordia* of Feb. 16, 1950, page 4. I quote the following paragraph which appears at the beginning of this article: "The reader may recall that at one time the Rev. Veldman demanded that we ban the concept of conditions. And I showed with reference to writings from him and from the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff that such banning as heretical would also adversely effect the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff and himself." This paragraph, therefore, asserts that I, denying the concept, "conditions", contradict what I wrote in past writings. Will you please show me where I advocated this concept? I would appreciate it if you were to quote these statements which you declare that I made, fully and in their context, if they appear in numbers of *Concordia*? I ask this because I do not have all the past *Concordias*. If these statements can be found in the *Standard Bearer*, just refer me to the statements as such, if you please, and where they appear. I recall that you, in the past, referred to a paragraph in one of my *Standard Bearer* articles in which I quote a paragraph of Prof. Berkhof. But I also remember that I called your attention to the fact that you erred when you interpreted my quoting the professor as an indorsement of the use of "conditions".

Secondly, your implied charge that I do not preach a "full-orbed" gospel has remained unaltered until this day. You will recall that a "full-orbed" gospel, according to your opinion, must contain the element of conditions. I replied at the time by saying that my preaching has been devoid of the use of this terminology, presented to you a summary of my preaching, and asked you what I lacked in my preaching. Thereupon you discovered that the word "faith" did not appear in my summary, and this, you declared, might have been due to a vital lack of my preaching. I am sure that you realize that the element of faith is not lacking in my preaching. This is made plain to you. Fact is that I, in that summary, merely wished to call attention to the fact that we must hear and see and walk and talk, etc., but that all this is due to the fact that Christ makes us to hear and see and walk and talk etc. At the time I also asked you what you understood by faith, inasmuch as, evidently, it is exactly this element of faith which constitutes such a vital element in a "full-orbed" gospel preaching. Now I wish to set forth in this article, more elaborately, that the Scriptures deny the element of conditions. And I will do so with the question constantly before me, and which I now repeat to you: Brother, what do I lack? As a preacher of the gospel, I surely desire to preach

a "full-orbed" gospel. The question, therefore, concerns me.

From the Old Testament.

First, I would call your attention, and also the attention of all our readers, to the fact that several of the "if clauses" in the Old Testament have been explained in the Standard Bearer by the Rev. Ophoff. You have called attention to these clauses in the Bible without any explanation. You have not made a single attempt to refute the Rev. Ophoff's detailed explanation of these Scriptural passages. This I hardly consider ethical. We should certainly bear in mind that the Rev. Ophoff set himself unto the explanations of these texts after you referred to them in your Concordia articles. You should also bear in mind that these articles reveal much painstaking effort on the part of Rev. Ophoff. It certainly is your duty to refute these articles of Rev. Ophoff, at least, Rev. Ophoff's exegesis of these various passages, and not to continue to quote them (without any explanation) and simply ignore Rev. Ophoff's explanation of them. Until you refute Rev. Ophoff, our readers must surely accept his interpretation of them over against your complete lack of exegesis.

Secondly, I wish to call attention to a few passages from the Old Testament. We understand, of course, that these few passages can be multiplied, although I consider them of great importance. The first passage which I would quote is Gen. 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." I do not quote this passage, brother, or any other passage, because I proceed from the assumption that you deny these passages or have difficulty with them. It is merely my purpose to call attention to them and bring them sharply to your attention and that of our readers. This text is important. It is a key passage. It explains all of history. This text simply ascribes the struggle of all ages to the living God. It is the Lord Who sets enmity between the seed of the devil and that of the woman. He alone! I declare, therefore, brother Petter, that the spiritual struggle of the ages, as according to Gen. 3:15, has its sole cause in the everlasting God. He establishes His friendship in our hearts and lives, and He does it alone. He alone is sovereignly responsible for the continuous struggle between the forces of light and darkness, sets them in enmity over against each other, and He does it unconditionally! The desire to fight the good fight of faith, and the desire to fight that good fight of faith even until the end, is solely of the Lord. Or, if we may state this truth in New Testament language: It is given unto us, not only to believe in Him; but also to suffer for His Name's sake. You believe this, do you not? Hence, what do I lack?

Another truth of the Old Testament to which I would call attention is the introduction to the law of God as given to Israel from Mount Sinai. The Lord introduces the law with the statement: "I am the Lord thy God, Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage". Here you have the Lord's giving of His law to His people, Israel. And you may also regard this introduction as applying to the entire law, the ceremonial and civil included. And the Lord introduces His law by calling Israel's attention to their deliverance. And I expect to show that the New Testament does the very same thing. Hence, our obedience to the law rests upon our deliverance. And every Sabbath this same law is read in our churches, always introduced by these words. Consequently, our obedience is the fruit of God's deliverance, and therefore unconditional. Have you any objection?

Thirdly, I would call your attention to the Divine purpose of the law as held before us in Gal. 3:24. It is true that this text is found in the New Testament, but, then, it refers to the Old Dispensation. In this text we read: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith". This signifies, I am sure, that God gave Israel His law in order to impress upon His people the truth that salvation is solely in and through Christ. To be sure, the law as such led the people of God to Christ in the sense that the shadows and symbols pointed to the Christ. But it is just as true that the very contents of that law emphasized the truth that Israel's only hope lay exclusively in the blood of the coming Christ. Or, if you will: the purpose of the law was to emphasize the truth of the unconditionality of salvation.

Finally, not to quote any more passages from the Old Testament, I preach fully what we read in Is. 3:10-11: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him". We say to the righteous that it shall be well with him, and unto the wicked that it shall be ill with him. The righteous is he who has been rendered righteous by the Lord. This also implies that, *because he is righteous*, he must walk righteously, and that, therefore, only as in the way of righteousness he shall experience the good. The wicked we must command to repent in the Name of the Lord, and to him must be proclaimed nothing but ill. Will you please show us that, to do this text justice, I must preach "conditions". I preach this text without conditions, in fact, with the repudiation of conditions. Is my preaching a "full-orbed" gospel? I am serious about this, brother. Preaching this to the righteous and to the wicked, what do I lack? What would you say, in connection with a text such as Is. 3:10-11, which would be lacking in my presentation of the text?

Passages from the New Testament which stress the Truth that Our Calling is the Fruit of the Grace of God.

I Corinthians 15:58.

This passage reads: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the word of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

I am particularly interested now in the word, "therefore", which introduces this passage of God's Word. This word expresses the idea that this text is a conclusion based upon the preceding. We read in the preceding text: "But thanks be to God, Which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". Hence, our calling as expressed in verse 58 rests upon the fact that we have the victory in Christ Jesus. Our calling, therefore, to be stedfast, etc., is the fruit of this victory, and this victory is a pure gift, because for it we give thanks unto God Who gives us this victory. Hence, no conditionality here, but fruit.

II Corinthians 6:17.

We read: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you".

Again I am interested in the word, "wherefore", which introduces this text. Also in this text the apostle expresses a conclusion which is based upon the foregoing. And in that preceding text we read: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people". We should note the following. "Ye are the temple of the living God". Paul here expresses a fact. And they are the temple of the living God because the Lord has said that He would dwell in them and walk in them. This is a Divine speaking, an almighty speaking, a speaking whereby God irresistibly establishes His dwelling in them and with them. Therefore they are to come out from among them. Hence, our calling to come out from among them again rests upon the Lord's work in us. We repeat: no conditionality, but fruit.

Ephesians 2:8-10.

We read: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest, any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Surely, this text speaks for itself. Notice, please, that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Hence, these good works are the fruit of His creative work in us. Besides, these works

have been foreordained. And, to lay all possible emphasis upon this truth, the apostle declares that our faith is a gift of God. Upon this latter thought we will have something to say later. But again I have shown from the Scriptures that our calling, our walk in all good works is presented as the fruit of the work of God. Fruit, no conditions. To say that the Lord saves me upon the condition of faith, or gives me the enjoyment of salvation upon the condition of faith is the same, is it not, as to say that the Lord saves me on the condition that He does it alone? Permit me to shorten this by saying: God saves me all alone.

Ephesians 5:1-8.

We will not quote this somewhat lengthy passage. Attention could be called to many things in this Word of God. In this passage the Church of God is admonished not to walk as the children of disobedience, not to be partakers with them (verse 7). And, this admonition the apostle bases, in verse 8, upon the truth that, although we were sometimes darkness, we have become light in the Lord, and that, therefore, we must walk as children of light. In this text we have the complete gospel for the Church of the living God. We were sometimes darkness. We have become light in the Lord. We must walk as children of light. And we must walk as children of light because of the fact that we have become light in the Lord. Again we repeat: no conditionality, but fruit.

Phil. 2:12-13.

We read: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

I will have opportunity to return to this remarkable text. I just wish to quote it now, and call attention to the fact that it is the Lord Who works in us both to will and to do. And this He does of His good pleasure, that is, for the sake of His good pleasure, that the Lord's good pleasure may receive all the praise and the honour.

Romans 10:20.

We read: "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me".

Some time ago, brother Petter, I called your attention to this text, and asked you to harmonize the doctrine of conditions with it. Until now, you have not acceded to my request. But please notice, also in this text, that the work of the Lord is presented here unconditionally. Fact is, the Lord is found of them who sought Him not, and was made manifest unto them who asked not after Him.

I John 4:10.

We read in this text: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

This passage speaks for itself, does it not? Herein is not love that we loved God. But that He loved us. The line of salvation is always vertical, never runs from the bottom to the top, from man unto God, but always from the top to the bottom, from the living God to us. And we understand, I am sure, that God's love is always first, throughout our entire lives. The Lord always finds us as sinners, as people who hate Him. We hate Him, always and constantly. And He loves us, first, always and constantly. Conditions? Where?

These passages, brother, can easily be multiplied. This you know. Is it possible to preach on these passages conditionally? However, if these texts rule out the element of conditions, then this element is ruled out by the Scriptures, because the Word of God is not in conflict with itself.

The Line of Salvation, from the beginning to the end, presented in Holy Writ as Unconditional.

This is already emphasized in a text such as Romans 8:29-30: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

This, to be sure, is a striking passage. It is such because it presents to us the entire chain of salvation, from the foreknowledge of the Lord even unto our glorification. And it must be perfectly evident that this entire way of salvation is ascribed exclusively to the Lord. Please note the repetition of the pronoun, "He". And this, brother, includes everything. It includes our salvation, objectively and subjectively and consciously, everything. And it is attributed to the living God. Conditions? Where?

However, let us call attention to this fact somewhat in detail. First, our salvation is presented in Holy Writ as solely determined by the unchangeable and sovereign counsel of the Lord. That salvation is, therefore, rooted in God's eternal thoughts. I need not, of course, prove from Holy Writ the doctrine of election. Only, I wish to show at this time that the Scriptures emphasize the sovereignty and unconditionality of this counsel. We read, for example, in Isaiah 46:10: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." This is important. The Lord's counsel shall stand. Why? Because *He* will do all His pleasure. And He will do all His pleasure. This means everything. All our faith and hoping and loving, all our sorrowing and laughter, all our fighting and struggling, etc. And the Lord will do it, He alone. Besides,

the sovereignty of the counsel of the Lord is also emphasized by Romans 11:33-36. Who hath been the counsellor of the Lord? Or, who hath first given to the Lord, that it then should be recompensed unto him again? God is first, strictly and always. This would be enough to make the doctrine of conditions impossible. How can there be such a thing if the Lord does all His pleasure, and if He is solely responsible, therefore, for whatever takes place in the midst of this world?

Secondly, the doctrine of conditions is also impossible because of what the Scriptures teach us in connection with the suffering and death of our Lord. We are born, also conceived, hopelessly lost in misery and guilt. We read in Is. 59:16-17: "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastsplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." What a passage! Need we emphasize that the Scripture here presents our utter hopelessness, and that our salvation has been wrought solely by the arm of the Lord? However, this is not all. Scripture not only teaches us the truth of man's utter hopelessness and guilt. It does not merely teach us that we are by nature estranged from the living God, strangers with respect to the fellowship of the Lord. But, the unconditionality of our redemption through the cross receives further emphasis when we note that the Lord loved us while we were sinners. It is not only true that there was no man to effect deliverance, but we do not desire such deliverance. The Christ of God dwelt among us. He stood before us and proclaimed unto us, hopelessly lost sinners, that salvation is alone possible through His flesh and blood. And we killed Him! We spit in His face, scourged His back, put a crown of thorns upon His head, nailed Him to the accursed tree. And, He loved us. He did not merely love and save us in spite of our enmity, but through our enmity. But, the fact remains that our redemption upon the cross of Golgotha was affected by the living God, by the arm of Jehovah, not merely in spite of our enmity and hatred, but through that hatred and enmity. Conditions? I pray you, where are they? And I wish to state right now that if the work of redemption upon the cross is unconditional, then the entire way of salvation is unconditional. It is not true that one part of salvation is unconditional and that another part of that salvation is conditional. The salvation of the living God never reaches us except as condemnable, wicked, hopelessly lost and vile sinners. However, there is more, much more.

Thirdly, may I call attention to the fact that, when the Lord bestows that salvation of the cross upon us,

we always receive it as hopelessly corrupt and dead sinners. Surely, I need not dwell at length upon this point. In the past, I have called attention to the fact that the sicknesses which Christ's cures are striking because we always read of the dead, the blind, the deaf, the lame, etc. What this means we all understand. It means that by nature we are spiritually deaf, blind, lame, etc. We cannot hear, see, walk, etc. We are conceived and born dead in sins and trespasses. This also renders the doctrine of conditionality impossible. The remonstrants because of their theory that man can of himself will the good, feverishly clung to their theory of conditions. But we believe that man is of himself dead and blind and deaf. This means that salvation can never begin in him, that nothing can proceed from him upon which the Lord would begin His work. This also explains why the Scriptures emphasize that all our willing and doing is the fruit of the grace of the Lord, as we have shown from many passages. Consequently, I submit to you, brother Petter, the truth that also the beginning of the work of salvation is us is strictly unconditional, proceeds wholly from the Lord.

Fourthly, I would call attention to the fact that, according to Scripture, the means whereby we receive salvation is wholly of the Lord. I refer to the means of faith. I have already quoted Eph. 2:8-10. We are told in that passage that faith is a gift of God. And, intercepting the carnal objection that this faith should be ascribed, in some small measure, to man, we are told emphatically that it is not of works lest any man should boast. To be sure, we must believe. We must hope and love, etc. However, faith is a gift of God. To say that my conscious enjoyment of salvation is contingent upon faith is surely not the same as the doctrine of conditions. The doctrine of conditions does not refer to the way in which I enjoy the blessedness of salvation, but to the condition on which the Lord bestows that salvation. To say that God gives salvation on the condition of faith implies that we divorce that salvation from faith and render the work of God dependent upon faith. On the other hand, to declare that my enjoyment of salvation depends upon faith means that we can receive and enjoy salvation only as a sovereign gift from the living God. But, we should please bear in mind that also faith is presented in Holy Writ as the gift of God. This, however, is not yet all.

Fifthly, all our walk of life is presented in the Scriptures as the fruit of the Spirit of the Lord. We have already called attention to various passages in the Word of God. But, in this connection we would once more remind our readers of Phil. 2:12-13. Notice, please, that we read in that text that it is God Who works in us both the willing and the doing. Hence, our entire life, all our believing and hoping, etc., is

presented here as the fruit of the work of the Lord in us. Surely we must will and do. We must hope and believe and pray. We must fight the good fight of faith even unto the end. We must seek and knock and ask. We must hold fast to that which we have. We must run the race, seek the things which are above and not the things which are below. We must put off the old man and put on the new man. We must come to Jesus and seek all our salvation in Him. We must oppose the wicked world which lieth in darkness and manifest ourselves as children of the light. But, remember, it is God Who works in us both to will and to do. Hence, our entire conscious life is presented here as the fruit of the living God. Conditions? No, but fruit. And therefore an obligation which rests upon us as such reborn and changed children of the living God.

One more thing. So that there may not be a single stone unturned, not a single straw to which vain man may cling, the Scriptures also emphasize the truth that the entire way of the perseverance of the saints is ascribed to the living God. Listen! I read in Phil. 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And the same truth is held before us in John 6:39: "And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." This means that Christ has received the commission from the Father to save all those who have been given Him of the Father and to raise them up at the last day. In other words, the salvation of the elect is the work of God in Christ from the beginning even unto the end. And, finally, when life's journey has been completed, when we shall have fought the good fight, have run the course, have kept the faith, then also the Lord shall not fail us; then He will take us through that final valley of death and give us the crown of everlasting life and victory, as we read it in 2 Tim. 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." And in that day we shall realize, as we have never realized before, that the doctrine of conditions was a human invention, and that our salvation was purely the work of the Lord, from the beginning even unto the very end.

Some Concluding Remarks.

Brother Petter, I have not written this because you do not know these things. What I have done in this article you know. I have attempted, in brief, to follow, from the beginning to the end, the way of our salvation. I have referred to this salvation from the subjective as well as the objective point of view. And I have shown, upon the basis of Holy Writ, that this entire

way of salvation is presented in Holy Writ as the work of the Lord, for us and in us and through us. First, I would ask you: Why do you persist in saying that the Fathers made liberal use of the term "conditions", and ignore the pertinent observation of the late Professor Bavinck, which you may find in his Reformed Dogmatics, Volume III, page 225, and I quote: "In the first period the Reformed freely spoke of conditions of the covenant. But when the nature of the covenant was more deeply thought into and had to be defended against Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Remonstrants, many in their hearts objected to the usage of that language and avoided it." Does this observation of the late Professor mean nothing to you?

Secondly, you deny in your article in Concordia of February 16, 1950 that you ever wrote that the covenant is conditional. Yet, you did write, according to a quotation from your article, see Volume 25 of the Standard Bearer, page 350, of "conditions of the covenant". What do you mean?

Thirdly, you agree with me, do you not, on the following:

1. God's promise is unconditional.
2. God saves unconditionally as far as *His* work is concerned.
3. All our doing and willing is His work, and therefore the fruit of His grace and Spirit, and therefore unconditional.

Finally, you have stated in past articles that the element of "conditions" constitutes a vital part of a "full-orbed gospel". I have presented in this article the entire way of salvation as unconditional. Consequently, I lack something in my preaching, and, hence, my preaching falls short of a "full-orbed" gospel preaching. Will you please point out to me and to all our readers what we lack? For this question you must assume responsibility. I do not think that you will deny this. And, in this connection, I would also suggest to you that you give some consideration to Rev. Ophoff's painstaking explanation of the "if" clauses in Holy Writ.

H. Veldman.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Eastern League of Ladies Societies extends its sympathy to Mrs. R. Veldman (president of the League) in the loss of her mother

Mrs. H. Vander Vennen

May the Lord grant the necessary grace in this time of sorrow.

Mrs. Geo. Ten Elshof, Sec'y.

Rejoicing In Oak Lawn

As is well known in the circles of the Protestant Reformed Churches, there is a small struggling church in Oak Lawn, Illinois. Recently events of joy have transpired in her midst and it is of these that we would write at this time.

On October 12, 1948, we received the sad news from Rev. M. Gritters that he believed it was the will of God that he should leave us and take up his labors in Pella, Iowa. Although this saddened us, our efforts were at once put forth to procure another under-shepherd. This, however, proved to be a difficult thing for we sent out a call to nine different ministers and always received the answer that they did not feel free to come to Oak Lawn to labor as undershepherd in our midst. But thanks to our Covenant God that in response to our tenth call we received the glad tidings from Rev. G. Vanden Berg that he believed that it was the Lord's will that he should come over unto us and help us. This news we received with gladness on December 24, 1949. We were informed that due to family circumstances it would be some time in February before he would be able to come unto us. This was a period of expectation that did not seem too long for now we had something definite toward which to look forward. On the fifteenth of February the Rev. Vanden Berg and family arrived in our midst and on the seventeenth of February we came together to see the Rev. Vanden Berg installed. Our moderator, the Rev. M. Schipper, preached for us on this occasion and chose for his text II Timothy 4:1, 2. He pointed out that not only had we received a new undershepherd from the Lord but that required also that we as church of Jesus Christ must never desire anything else from him than the pure revelation of the Word of God, for if the congregation sought anything else it would be in error. He also charged our minister that his constant work must be that of preaching the Word in season and out of season. Thereafter, our moderator read the form for installation and installed our pastor in his office. Our new minister then pronounced the benediction.

On Sunday, February 19, Rev. Vanden Berg preached his inaugural sermons. In the morning service we were privileged to hear him preach the Word from Colossians 4:17, "Take heed to thy ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfill it". He took as his theme: "The Minister's Charge". He pointed out to us the calling that was his and again it was shown to us that not only the minister must bring the Word but the congregation must also be receptive to that Word. In the afternoon service, Rev. Vanden Berg brought out attention to Phillipians 2:14-16 and spoke on the theme: "The Wonderful Calling of the Faithful Church". Attention was called to the res-

sponsibility of the congregation to hold forth the Word of life and we were also reminded of the seriousness and greatness of the calling we have in the midst of this sinful world. In order to fulfill this we must see that we have nothing proclaimed from our pulpit at any time other than the full counsel of God. Then only will it be possible for pastor and congregation to go on and walk in the ways of Jehovah.

Thus Oak Lawn is again, after fifteen months of vacancy, privileged to have her own minister. May God richly bless us both.

On February 23, the congregation came together again to formally welcome her new pastor and family. A very enjoyable evening was spent in the house of God with various members and societies of the congregation favoring us with speech and song. At the close of the meeting Rev. Vanden Berg responded and led us in closing prayer.

We also wish to state here that it is our prayer that the Lord may keep our pastor's former charge and in His Own time may bring unto Grand Haven a new undershepherd. We, likewise, would extend a word of thanks to our moderator, the Rev. M. Schipper, who so willingly and ably always stood ready to serve and help us during our vacancy. We also gratefully express our thanks to the congregations who frequently loaned their ministers to us, and, finally, we are grateful to all the brethren who came to us to break the Bread of Life for us. We like to say yet, that there is besides the emptiness which a congregation feels during a vacancy a joy of heart as she receives proof of the love of the denomination and as we are one in Christ, so we may understand and carry each other's burdens. Oak Lawn was privileged to have almost uninterrupted pulpit supply from either the classis or the school and in this way we have had a very rich fifteen months having a wide variety of talent come to us to bring us the glad tidings of God's Word for which we thank our Covenant God.

Consistory of the Oak Lawn Prot. Ref. Church.

John Buiter, Clerk,

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THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David's Wars And Their Significance

We now pass on to the events narrated in chapter 8:1-14. As was stated, it is best to suppose that the wars and victories of which this section makes mention preceded the quiet at chapter 7:1, and David's decision to build the Lord a house. Here the text states that David dwelt in his house and that the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies. We must now have regard to David's victories over the heathen of which that rest was the crown.

The subjugation of the Philistines was first. David smote and subdued them; and he took *the bridle of ammah* out of their hands. The expression in italics is obscure. Doubtless it is a proper name—Matheggammah—of some city in the heart of the enemy territory perhaps Gath. For the Chronicler has for this, "And He took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines (I Chron. 28:1). So were the people of Israel finally delivered from an enemy that had afflicted them for centuries.

David's next campaign was against Moab. The relations here at one time had been friendly as when David had entrusted his father and mother into the care of Moab's king (I Sam. 22:3, 4). But Moab in some way had grossly offended as is indicated by the severity of the punishment inflicted upon the arms-bearing Moabites. "He smote Moab and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one line to keep alive." Usually in those days a defeated army was pursued by the victor and slain in the flight almost to the point of annihilation. But the army of Moab had been captured almost whole. The captives were ordered to lie down on the ground in rows and two-thirds were marked off for death and slain.

David's next encounter was with Hadadezer (Hadar-ezer as in Chronicles). "David smote also Hadarezer, the son of Rehob, the king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates". Zobah, the capital city of Syria, lay east of Israel's trans-jordanic territory and beyond the northern border thereof. The dominion of its powerful king, Hadadezer, included a great part of the desert between Palestine and the Euphrates and consequently the southern part of Syria.

Smarting under the defeat that as Ammon's ally he previously had suffered at the hand of Joab (10:13), Hadarezer brought out the Syrians that were beyond

the Euphrates for a new war with Israel (10:16). Hearing of it, David, in the language of the text "turned his hand at the river Euphrates". (So reads the Hebrew text and not as our English versions have it, "He went to recover his border at the river Euphrates". The subject of this Scripture-statement is David; it is not Hadadezer). David's victory was complete. He took from the adversary "a thousand chariots and seventeen hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen", perhaps the entire military force. A number of horses sufficient for 100 chariots were spared and the rest were lamed. What David did with the footmen and the horsemen is not stated. On his return David encountered an army of Syrians from Damascus coming to the aid of the vanquished Hadadezer. In the ensuing battle they suffered a severe defeat as is indicated by the fact that they lost 22,000 men. To hold all these peoples in subjection, David placed posts in their territory. They became his servants and paid tribute. "And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went". When all the king's tributary to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they sued for peace and served Israel (10:19).

The golden shields of Hadadezer's servants (that is, of his guard) David sent to Jerusalem. "And from Be'ah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much copper." The Chronicler adds a word in respect to the use of the booty, "therefrom Solomon made the copper sea and the pillars and the copper vessels."

"When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the hosts of Hadadezer he sent Joram his son to king David. . . ." (8:9, 10). Chronicles has Hadorum instead of Joram. The latter is perhaps Hebraization of a foreign name. The mission was to salute David and to bless him—speak words of praise and appreciation—for his victory over Hadadezer; in the words of the text, "because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him". Toi was grateful. "For Hadadezer had wars with Toi", wars of aggression that aimed at bringing Toi in his power. In Joram's hand was a present consisting of vessels of silver, of gold, and of brass, indicative of the desire to enter into a relation of friendship with the victor. David dedicated the present to the Lord as he had done with the booty of the conquered nations, thereby confirming that his wars and victories were of the Lord. The spoils were from Aram (Syria), Moab, the children of Ammon, the Philistines, Amalek and Hadadezer. In Chronicles the list includes also Edom. These were the nations that had been subdued (8:12). Ammon's name is also mentioned. The conflict with Ammon is told in chapter 10.

"And David made him a name when he returned from smiting the Syrians in the valley of salt, being

eighteen thousand men". He added to his stature as a warrior by another great military achievement. But the text here presents a difficulty. "The valley of salt" lies in the territory of Edom so that a battle with Syrians in this valley seems out of the question. The text here is manifestly corrupt. The parallel passage in Chron. 18:12 has Edom. "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand". The Hebrew words for Syria (arm) and Edom (edm) differ only by one letter. While David was far from home contending with the Syrians on the Euphrates, the Philistines saw their chance to gain possession of southern Canaan. On his return, David by his general, Abishai, inflicted on them terrible punishment. Garrisons were put throughout all their territory, and they became tributary to David.

Thus had David Overthrown all the nations that had been menacing Israel from the north to the south. On their ruins he founded a dominion equal to that of any of the great kings of the east. To these wars is affixed a description of David's government over his own people, "And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people" (8:15). "And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host", had supreme command over the army. "And Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder", writer of chronicles. "And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests." Seraiah was the scribe, that is, the secretary. "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites. . . ." These two names designate David's bodyguard. The origin of the names is unknown. In I Sam. 30:14 one of these words is the name of a tribe dwelling near Philistia. It seems to indicate that David had taken his bodyguard from foreign tribes. If so, the members of this guard were not heathen but foreigners who had been converted to the Lord and incorporated in the commonwealth of Israel. They were "strangers". The law made provision for them. As circumcised, they were privileged to eat the passover. "And David's sons were chief rulers", that is, princes.

So had the Lord given David rest round about from all his enemies. He was now decided to build the Lord a house.

To appreciate David's successes in war, regard must be had to the boundaries of the land that the people of Israel, in fulfillment of the promise, was made to inherit. The southern boundary was the wilderness of Zin. This southern line stretched by the side of Edom southward below the dead sea. The western border was the Mediterranean sea. The northern limit was a line drawn from the dead sea on the west to Mount Hor on the east. From that point the line descended from the mountains southwards to

Riblah to the east of Ain, and going down still further struck the east side of the sea of Chinereih. Still further it ran down to Jordan and thence along that river to the Dead Sea, Numbers 34.

In a word, the land that the Lord gave to His people extended southward to the wilderness of Zin, was bordered on the west by the Mediterranean sea, reached to the western crest of the Lebanon on the north, while its eastern border rested on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and then ran down to the Jordan. In this strip of land, approximately 160 miles in length and whose greatest width measured but 50 miles the Lord planted His people. (It did not include the territory occupied by the two and a half tribes east of the Jordan.) The land of Israel's abode was thus comparatively but a small region.

But according to Genesis 15:18; Exodus 23:31; Deuteronomy 1:7; and Joshua 1:3, 4, it was an immense region that extended to the Euphrates on the east and to the river Nile on the West. It thus included the whole of Arabia. Let us quote: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt (the Nile) to the great river (Euphrates)", Gen. 15:18. And afterwards to Moses, "And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even to the Sea of the Philistines (Mediterranean) and from the Arabian desert unto the river (Euphrates)", Ex. 23:31. And still later, "Every place whereupon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea (Mediterranean) shall your coast be", Deut. 11:24. And finally to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said to Moses. From your wilderness to this Lebanon even to the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea (Mediterranean) toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast", Joshua 1:3, 4.

The fact, then, is this. According to Numbers 34 Israel's inheritance was small. According to other Scripture passages, it was a vast region. There is no difficulty here. The smaller region was Israel's proper home as is proved by the fact that it was the only land divided among the twelve tribes by the lot of God. Its original inhabitants were Canaanite tribes, all of which were under the ban of God and thus marked for destruction. "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: when ye pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan then ye shall drive out the inhabitants of the land before you", Num. 30:50-56. And again at Deut. 7:2, "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them—the Canaanites—before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly

destroy them". The same command is repeated in Deut. 20:16, 17 in these words, "But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but shall utterly destroy them—the Canaanites—as the Lord thy God commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so shall ye sin against the Lord your god".

How the nations that inhabited the vast regions beyond the borders of Israel's proper home were to be dealt with is told us in Deut. 20:10-15, "When thou comest nigh unto a city (in that region beyond) to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if they will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God shall deliver it unto thy hands, thou shalt smite every man thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil therein, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities of these nations "who dwelt in that vast region beyond.

Let us take notice. The Canaanites had to be destroyed. No peace might be proclaimed to them. Nor did they desire peace with Israel. (The one exception was the Gibeonites). Hearing of Joshua's approach, they prepared for war and went forth to do battle with Israel's army. Thus they asked for the doom by which they were overtaken. "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses, "Joshua 11:18.

But now Israel's inheritance also included that vast region beyond and the nations that dwelt therein. The Lord had promised. These nations, therefore, were David's for the asking. "Ask of me", said the Lord in the first instance to David (and in the final instance to Christ. For David was a prophetic person), "and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession", Ps. 2:8. Now a different treatment had to be afforded these nations. Not being under the ban of God as were the Canaanites, peace had to be proclaimed unto them. If they made answer of peace, they were spared and became tributary unto David.

Completing this article will have to be done in the next article.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Zalig In Des Heeren Vrees

(Psalm 112; Vierde Deel)

Vanwege plaatsgebrek moest een gedeelte van wat we schreven over het vierde vers achterwege blijven. Dit volgt hier eerst:

En het licht dat kwam wordt beschreven: genadig, barmhartig en rechtvaardig. Ziedaar Uw goede werken en tegelijkertijd Uw loon.

Een genadig mensch, wat is hij?

Een genadig mensch is een mensch die temidden van de leelijkheid van deze bedeeïng de schoonheid Gods en de schoonheid des hemels doet zien.

Zal ik U een voorbeeld noemen?

Loopt dan even mee tot buiten de stad Jeruzalem, ten dage dat men Stephanus greep. Men heeft dien man naar buiten gesleurd. Men is bezig om zich van zijne bovenbleeren te ontdoen. Daar staat een jonge man die de kleeren bewaren zal. En dan? O groote God! Men begint dien armen Stephanus te steenigen. Vele steenen hebben hun doel getroffen. Het zal niet lang meer duren. Men mikt op zijn hoofd. Daar zinkt hij neer, en zijn martelaarsbloed verwt de aarde rood. Maar luistert! Hij roept nog wat: "Heere, reken hun deze zonde niet toe!"

Die daar vlak bij stonden hebben een stukje van den hemel gezien. Die dat hoorden hebben de genade Gods gehoord. Want dat is genade. En dat beteekent hetzelfde als te zeggen: dat is Goddelijke schoonheid en lieflijkheid.

Een oprecht mensch is lieflijk, want hij is genadig.

En hij is ook barmhartig.

Niet zooals de wereld barmhartig is. De barmhartigheden van de wereld zijn wreed. En als dan de wereld de tanden zou knersen als we dat zeggen, dan kan ik het verstaan; maar als de hedendaagsche kerk de tanden knerst als we dit zeggen, dan kan ik het niet verstaan, maar dan moet ik huiveren. Met een huivering bij het zien van de Sodomie. Het tegennatuurlijke wordt gevonden in de kerk van vandaag.

Mag ik U even duidelijk maken, dat de wereld niet barmhartig is, maar dat het ding wat zij barmhartigheid noemen letterlijk wreedheid is?

De heele wereld komt er soms aan te pas om een arme sterveling te helpen naar zijn lichaam. Men buigt zich over den lijder op de operatietafel, en met gefronste wenkbrouwen doet met het bijna onmogelijke in de kunde der chirurgie. Er zijn banken van bloed voor den bloedarmoedige of voor den verwonde; oogen zijn er en worden er gegeven voor die blind is of zijn

oog verloor. Men zal in 't water springen om een lichaam te redden. Maar hier is de wreedheid: men laat de ziel met rust. En die ziel is in veel grooter gevaar dan het lichaam.

Maar wacht nog wat. Het wordt nog erger.

Als dan de groote Medicijnmeester der zielen op aarde komt, en als Hij tracht om Zijn medisch en chirurgisch werk te doen; als Hij Zijn hospitalen opricht om "hun zielen van den dood te redden", dan komt die wereld en versmoort Zijn stem, verbrandt Zijn hospitalen en martelt den staf Zijner doctoren. Denkt hier aan Gottschalk vooral: die is jaren gemarteld door lieve(?) menschen.

O ja, de barmhartigheid der wereld is wreed.

En dat kan ik verstaan.

Maar als men dat zeide, dan kwam de kerk en die legde ons het zwijgen op. En zij zeiden: Ge moet het ons zóó nazeggen: de barmhartigheden der wereld zijn lieflijk, want zij zijn genade van God!

Ik sprak zooeven van Sodomie. Wel, de drie punten van Kalamazoo (onzaliger gedachtenis) zijn geestelijke sodomie! God heeft ze allang vervloekt!

Maar de oprechte is barmhartig.

Dat wil zeggen, dat hij van binnen ontroerd wordt met innerlijke ontferming bij het zien van groote ellende. En dan zal hij zich buigen tot hem die in ellende is en hij zal trachten om hem er uit te verlossen. En dat zal hij doen door hem zijn ziel te geven. Wee hem die zijn ziel den hongerige onthoudt!

En die man zal zijn lieflijkste barmhartigheid oefenen bij het zien van de grootste ellende: en dat is de zonde. Hij zal prediken het Woord, en door troostenredenen van dat Woord balsem gieten in verwonde harten.

En hij is ook rechtvaardig.

Dat is ook een deugd van God. En in Hem is die deugd origineel.

In God is de rechtvaardigheid, dat Hij in Zijn geheele leven beantwoordt aan den hoogsten en eenigsten maatstaf van het goede. En dat is Zijn Goddelijk Wezen.

Zóó loopt de lijn: Gods Wezen is goed. Dat goede Wezen is de hoogste en eenigste maatstaf van het goede. En Gods leven, d.w.z., Zijn wil, Zijn gedachten, Zijn werken, van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid, zijn steeds in overeenstemming met Zijn lieflijk Wezen. Dat is de rechtvaardigheid.

Brengt dit nu over op den mensch.

En dan is de rechtvaardige een mensch die in al zijn gedachten, woorden en werken in overeenstemming is met het Wezen Gods. In andere woorden, zulk een mensch wandelt in goede werken.

Let er op, dat de oprechte het licht opgaat. Tweedens, dat het licht ook mede de rechtvaardigheid is.

Herinnert ge U, dat we zooeven gezegd hebben, dat het loon Uwer goede werken in die werken zelf ligt?

Wel, ziet het hier: men is oprecht, en men ontvangt de deugd van rechtvaardigheid. Het is om bij te zingen.

Vraagt men ook hier weer: hoe verkrijgt men die deugden? Dan is ons antwoord weer: door Jezus in het hart te dragen. En in dit laatste geval kunt ge letterlijke woorden der Schrift citeeren: De Heere onze Gerechtigheid!

Hebt Jezus in het hart, en ge zijt oprecht.

Dan gaat het licht op in Uwe natuurlijke duisternis.

En dat opgaande licht is de wandel in goede werken: ge wordt dan genadig, barmhartig en rechtvaardig.

En zegt nu niet, dat zulke menschen nergens gevonden worden, want dan hebt ge het mis.

Elk kind van God behoort bij deze soort menschen, zooals ze in dit vers beschreven worden.

Men kan niet wederomgeboren en bekeerd zijn, en niet in het licht wandelen. Zeggen we de Schrift niet na: hij werd getrokken uit de duisternis tot Gods licht? In al zulke menschen woont Jezus Christus.

En zij smaken de kwaliteit van dat Licht: ze zijn vroolijk van harte!

“Wél dien man die zich ontfermt en uitleent; hij beschikt zijne zaken met recht.”

Het gaat nog steeds over den mensch die den Heere vreest. Zulk een mensch is zeer gelukkig en gezegend.

In dit vers wordt van hem gezegd, dat het hem wel zal gaan in den weg van barmhartigheid en rechtvaardigheid. Hier wordt zijn weg gezien zooals hij wandelt te midden van de ellendigen en nooddriftigen.

De Hollandsche vertaling is juist, en de Engelsche niet. Dat blijkt uit het oorspronkelijke Hebreeuwsch. Er staat met nadruk, dat het dien man wel zal gaan. Het woord voor “Wel” gaat voorop, en dat beteekent, dat er nadruk op gelegd wordt. Het gaat dien man zeker goed, die zich in barmhartigheid keert tot de nooddriftigen.

En beide het Duitsch en het Fransch hebben de zelfde vertaling, alswel het Latijnsch, en ook de geleerde Delitzsch vertaalt dit vers zooals we het in 't Hollandsch hebben.

Ziet ge, ge wandelt te midden van een door den toorn Gods gedrukte wereld. Het ziet er niet meer uit zooals in 't begin. Toen had ieder zijn deel en was men gelukkig. Doch als een gevolg van de zonde is er nu vaak gebrek en lijden. Sommige menschen missen de dingen die ze nodig hebben om te leven. Ik weet wel, dat we onze nooddrift op kunnen schroeven, en dan zoo hoog, dat er altijd wat te wenschen over blijft. Maar dat is niet goed. Evenwel, er is toch een zeker aantal van dingen die we volstrekt behoeven. Men moet wat eten hebben en onderdak. Ook wat kleding, en warmte in den winter.

En nu is het een feit, dat er menschen zijn die het minimum dier dingen missen moet. God kleedt hen

uit, en Hij zet die menschen op Uw pad. Denkt hier maar weer eens aan Lazarus. Die was op het pad van den rijken man gezet door God. En die man wordt dan ook de zonde van dien rijkraad.

En wat gaat ge dan doen?

Wel, als ge een vrek zijt, dan gaat ge zeggen: Ben ik mijns broeders hoeder? Dan zegt ge: wat moet die kerel? Ik heb gezwoegd en geslaafd om het mijne te vergaderen, en ik ben niet van plan om mijnzelf te ontkleeden voor een ander. En de arme klopt tevergeefs aan Uw deur. Evenwel, vergeet niet, dat hij een schuld achterlaat voor U. God heeft het gezien en zal het eischen.

Sommige menschen zien den nood, hooren den nood en geven, en leenen, en vragen niet terug. En toch stapelen zij toorn op. Het zijn de Filantropen, de menschenminnaars. Het zijn de humanisten. En die menschen hebben ook geen loon. En is niet “wel” met hen.

Vraagt ge dan: maar hoe heb ik het nu? Ge hebt eerst gezegd, dat we de nooddrift van onzen medemenschen moeten vervullen. Welnu, die menschen doen het, en dan zegt ge dat God op hen toorn?

Ja, dat zeide ik, en het is ook zoo.

Hier zit hun zonde: zij gaven van het hunne; zij eindigen met zichzelf, als zij slechts rentmeesters waren. Zij eindigen met zichzelf, als zij wat weg-gaven van de schatten die God hun gegeven had. En dat is ook zonde.

Het staat er niet bij, maar ik verzeker U, dat het een groot verschil maakt hoe gij gaaft, en leendet.

Denkt hier slechts aan het gezegde van Jezus, dat als gij geeft ge het moet doen in den naam eens discipels. Ge moet geven in het bewustzijn, dat het ge-gevene is van God. Ge moet geven en leenen vanuit het het beginsel des geloofs, naar Gods Wet en tot Zijn eer. En dan is het goed.

Dat doet de vrek niet. Hij houdt wat hij heeft. Hij is van “de behoudende” partij. En dat is zijn ellende. Zijn rijkdom zal hem verteeren in den dag des oordeels. Veel van wat hij bewaarde tot het laatste oogenblik van zijn leven, behoorde aan de wezen en weduwen.

Dat doet de humanist ook niet. Hij geeft millioenen en millioenen. Hij bouwt hospitalen en hij bouwt scholen, maar nooit uit het goede motief.

Maar deze man doet het wel. Hij is vervuld van “genade, barmhartigheid en rechtvaardigheid”. Ziet het vorige vers. Wat ge in dit vers beluistert is de vrucht van het voorgaande. Zalig die mensch!

En let er nu op: “hij beschikt zijne zaken met recht.”

Wat schoon licht werpt dit op al zijn werk!

Dat licht beschijnt al zijn barmhartigheid.

Eerst, hij is voorzichtig. Het is niet zoo, dat hij eenvoudig zijn hand in zijn zak steekt bij het hooren

van ellende, honger en kommer. O neen. Hij geeft in rechtvaardigheid en recht. Hij is rentmeester over de hoeveelheid goederen die de Heere hem gaf, en hij is zich bewust, dat hij eenmaal rekenschap zal moeten geven.

En dan zal hij eerst geven aan de huisgenooten des geloofs. Eerst moeten we goed doen aan de broederen, en dan aan degenen die buiten zijn.

Tweedens, hij zal goetdoen, maar hij zal niet dwase-lijk geven, in 't wilde weg. Hij zal geven, maar hij zal niet alles aan den eersten den besten geven die roept en klaagt.

Derdens, hij zal onderscheid maken tusschen die waarlijk gebrek heeft, en dien die valsch is in zijn klagen. O, er is zooveel bedrog in de wereld. En daarom zal hij zijn zaken met recht besturen en beschikken.

En, eindelijk, hij zal geven in 's Heeren naam. Want God moet de eer, al de eer, hebben van al zijn geven. Want God bezit alles. Het is niet goed, dat we de indruk achterlaten: wat een goed mensch is dat toch. We moeten den indruk achterlaten: hoe goed is God! En dan zullen de gever en de ontvanger tezamen God danken.

God geve ons dien geest in 't geven!

En we hebben een schoon voorbeeld.

Denkt hier aan Joh. 3:16. Want alzóó lief heeft God de wereld gehad, dat Hij Zijnen eeniggeboren Zoon gegeven heeft. . . .

Wat wondere gave!

En het motief van die gave is de liefde Gods!

Lat ons dan denken aan die gave in al ons geven.

En dan zal het ook wél zijn met ons!

Want dan zal God den lof ontvangen.

G. Vos.

* * * *

IN MEMORIAM

On the morning of February 16 it pleased our Heavenly Father to take suddenly from us and unto Himself our beloved husband father and grandfather,

ARTHUR VAN BAREN

at the age of 55 years.

In this sorrow into which He led us we are comforted by the truth of His Word, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord", and are assured that He will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Mrs. Arthur Van Baren

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

five grandchildren.

South Holland, Ill.

IN HIS FEAR

Called To His Praise

Lips that Praise. (cont.)

In our last instalment in this department we called your attention to the fact that the lips and tongue play an important part in the believer's prophetic calling. It is about this matter that we would call your attention somewhat more fully at this time. For the believer as a prophet of God is by no means one who simply receives revelation from God. He is the seer who has been caused to see things by God, but he is also one who reacts to what he sees. He is one who *speaks* concerning what he sees and hears.

We wish at this juncture to emphasize what we already stated before in a general passing remark. It is this, that man's praise of God with tongue and lips, with pen and ink, with confession and song is determined by and dependent upon that which enters his soul through his ears and eyes. What he sees and hears of God will determine what he says of God. Added to this, of course, is the mind and heart which interpret what is seen and heard. And man having a depraved mind and heart by nature has also a seriously distorted vision and a very faulty hearing. The Scriptures declare that he does see God's eternal power and Godhead. But so distorted is his vision in these things that seeing the power and Godhead he sees in these things a reason for hating God. And what he hears of God—as for example when he hears Him in the thunder and the tempest—only convinces him that he has added reasons for hating Him. We are not overlooking this fact when we state that what a man sees and hears determines whether he will praise God or not. When we speak of his seeing and hearing we mean the whole process including that activity of the mind and heart. For after all the physical eye does not see any more than your camera actually sees. That camera receives the light rays upon its delicate film with its chemical properties which respond to the light rays which fall upon them, but even then you still would not have a picture. You must place this film in various solutions to develop the film into a medium which you can use to print a picture. Similarly when our eye is open the light rays proceeding from the objects in front of us strike that delicate retina which only God can make—let us praise Him for it—and then, because that retina is connected with the brain by the optic nerve, that which falls upon that retina is interpreted by the mind and judged by the heart and mind as to whether it is pleasing or not, whether it is worth looking at or not and such similar things. Cut that

optic nevere that connects the retina with the brain and you are blind. Your eye may be open and the image may fall upon the retina but you still have no sight. Sight is the whole process. And when we speak here then of our praise being determined by what we see of God, we refer to that whole process.

And naturally we are speaking here of the regenerated child of God. What he sees and hears determines his praise unto God. For the unregenerated never praise God and cannot praise Him. They may go through the motions of praising Him. They may appear unto us to praise Him. They may have beautiful voices which God has given them, and they may sing the beautiful strains of such beautiful words and music as in Handel's Messiah or of many of our beautiful hymns, and *we* may then call it good and beautiful. But that does not mean that God says the same thing of these works of the unregenerated. In fact the Scriptures teach us that He says quite the opposite. We are reminded of such a passage as Psalm 50 where we read in verse 16, "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Their true nature is then pictured in verse 19 where God says to them, "Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit." And though they took God's covenant upon their lips God says to them, in verse 22, "Now consider ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." That is what God says of their beautiful singing. And denying that they do praise Him, though it may look that way to man, God says in the last verse, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." Note the Hebrew parallelism here. Only he who orders his conversation—his whole walk of life—aright does offer praise and glorify God. Then too we have the powerful word of God that defies all compromise in Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." That is final! Beautiful renditions of words that praise God! Men are swept off their feet by the vigor and power of the song or moved to tears by the compassionate singing of God's love and Christ's awful suffering! Beautiful and inspiring? Perhaps, according to man's judgment. But the Almighty One, the Holy One of Israel declares, "What hast thou to do . . . that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" And the whole thing has not pleased Him at all, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. It has pleased Him no more than Cain's sacrifice pleased Him, and positively stated Proverbs 15:8 declares, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." He abhors all these things of the natural man. And thus even the works of man in things natural and civil NEVER please Him, and are never called good by Him. Without faith it is not simply difficult to please Him.

It is IMPOSSIBLE. Let us be humble enough to allow God to have the last word.

But let us now get down to the matter at hand. Our introduction to it is getting far lengthier than we planned, but it is essential to a correct understanding of this matter. We desire to have you consider with us then that in the prophetic office of the christian there is a constant stream of eternal spiritual life according to which the Almighty Covenant God meets His child, comes into his life by causing him to see and to hear the things concerning Him, thus entering into his life, having fellowship with him, and according to which His child responds by the opening of his lips in praise to His Creator and Redeemer. Through our eye and ear and by means of His Word our Heavenly Father, Who has also come into our hearts through His Spirit, comes consciously into our life. And then through our lips there returns to Him our conscious and willing praise. Psalm 19 is beautiful in this respect. The Psalmist first speaks of the mighty works of God in creation, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth His handiwork." The Psalmist in his prophetic office plainly sees God as his Creator. Then he turns to the spiritual and speaks of the glories of God's Word and law. And in these he sees the Lord as his Redeemer. And significantly he cries out at the end of the Psalm, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." He had seen the glory of God in the heavens and in the firmament. He had seen the wisdom, the mercy and righteousness of God in His law. Through his eyes and ears the Lord Himself had come in to teach him and to show him His beauty, and forth from the mouth of the Psalmist flows a pure stream of praise. And realizing not only that he is called to His praise, but realizing also how far short he falls in this calling, he prays that the meditation of his heart and thus the words of his mouth may be acceptable to God Whom he sees and knows as his strength (creator and sustainer) and redeemer.

Notice that the Psalmist here states that the heavens *declare* the glory of God. In verse 3 he states that there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Yet this is of course a figure of speech. The sun, moon, and stars, the sky, the clouds do not speak. The idea is that through them God speaks. Every moment, every fraction of a moment God speaks through these and declares to us His power, wisdom and goodness, or as Paul states in Romans 1 His "eternal power and Godhead". Yet there is something more. God put these things there to reveal His eternal power and Godhead, His wisdom and His goodness so that *man* would speak. And through man as God's prophet these creatures which of themselves cannot speak will return to God in the form of praise. Turn once also

THE STANDARD BEARER

to Psalm 148 and notice all the things which the Psalmist mentions and which he commands to praise God. He speaks not only of the angels which like man are rational, moral creatures, but he speaks of the sun, moon, stars, dragons and deeps, fire, hail, snow and vapours, stormy winds, mountains, beasts, cattle, creeping things. And then he ends up with kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth. In all these irrational and inanimate things mentioned God reveals through the eye and ear of men and angels His virtues, and then through the lips and mouth of men and angels praise must rise to God on high. In that way all God's works return to Himself. And it is the calling of man as he is partaker of the anointing of Christ and becomes a prophet of God to live to His praise. That is why he was created at the pinnacle of the earthly creation. That is why he was created in the image of God. He fell and sought his own praise and today by nature lives only to praise men and to ascribe God's power, wisdom and goodness to men. They praise men for inventing the camera and yet they say nothing of that wonderful eye of man which God made and after which and according to whose principles of construction man fashions his camera. Or else he in his insane folly is ready to say that his wonderful eye came from the monkey. Hopeless folly! But praises be to God, He renewed His people after the image of Christ so that anointed with His Spirit we might see God, we might hear God and we might speak His praises. The heavens declare God's glory, but you, christian reader, are called by God to declare with your lips His praises consciously and willingly. You are called to confess His name before men. You are called to sing His praises. More of this next time, the Lord willing.

J. A. Heys.

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IN MEMORIAM

On February 27, 1950, it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

Mrs. H. Vander Vennen

at the age of 76 years. That she is now rejoicing in "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" is our comfort in this hour of sorrow.

Mr. and Mrs. John Vander Vennen
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Vander Vennen
Mr. and Mrs. Kreno Vander Vennen
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Vander Vennen
Miss Della Vander Vennen
Rev. and Mrs. Richard Veldman
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Vender Vennen
15 grandchildren
1 great-grandchild.

ANNIVERSARY

On March 5th, 1950, our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Lenting

commemorated their 40th 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. Ray Bruinsma

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Couwenhouen
and two grandchildren.

South Holland, Ill.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church at South Holland, Illinois, wishes hereby to express its sympathy to Mrs. A. Van Baren and her family in the loss of their husband and father.

Arthur Van Baren

May the God of all grace give them always the peace that surpasseth all understanding in this time of bereavement.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Mrs. E. Bruinsma, Sec'y.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, hereby expresses its sympathy with fellow members, Bysbert, Tunis and Frank, Gilbert, and John Van Baren in the loss of their father and brother

Arthur Van Baren

May the God of all grace comfort the relatives with His all-sufficient grace.

Rev. Marinus Schipper, Pres.

Michael Van Baren, Ass't Sec'y.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, mourn the loss of one of its members and hereby expresses its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to the family of Mr. M. Westrate in the sudden bereavement of their wife, mother and grandmother

Mrs. Gertrude Westrate

May our Heavenly Father comfort and sustain the bereaved family and give that peace that passeth all understanding.

Rev. E. Knott, Pres.

Mrs. L. De Koekkoek, Sec'y.

Report of Classis West

MET IN SESSION, MARCH 1, 1950 AT HULL, IOWA

Chairman of the previous Classis, Rev. A. Petter, calls the brethren together in the auditorium of the Hull Church, and after singing Psalter No. 240, and reading I John 2 he offers prayer.

The credentials are forwarded and the roll-call reveals that there are eleven congregations present with a delegation of eleven pastors and nine elders. Rev. J. Van Weelden is chairman of this meeting and Rev. A. Petter records the minutes. After a word of welcome to all and especially to the Revs. De Jong and H. C. Hoeksema, who are now residing in our Classis, the meeting hears the minutes of the two previous Classes and accepts them as recorded.

The first matter Classis considered was the matter of publication of a sermon book. It was reported that Classis East was publishing a sermon book covering the special occasions, hence our consistories were referred to Classis East for purchase of this book. Classis however went on record as favoring the making of an own sermon book. Instead of a book it decided that it will make punched copies. Each minister to send in one sermon, twelve pages long and the committee in charge, Revs. Howerzyl and Gritters, will make forty copies thereof.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema is appointed to fill in the vacancy in the Jubilee Committee caused by the departure of Rev. A. Cammenga; and the letter from Classis East concerning this matter of the Anniversary Booklet is referred to our committee: Revs. A. Petter, J. Van Weelden and H. C. Hoeksema.

The Edgerton church asks advice concerning the erasure of two delinquent baptized members. After the necessary light was shed Classis advises Edgerton to proceed with the censure.

Three instructions appeared at Classis. Two from Pella, one dealing with the matter of a separate Yearbook and one dealing with the distribution of the Year-

book were rejected. Doon's instruction concerning a Committee of Pre-advice in matters financial was accepted and forwarded to Synod. This Committee would function so that it would take note of all matters involving finance during the sessions of Synod, as well as such regular financial matters as subsidies, treasurer's reports, etc., and would then present to Synod an over-all financial picture toward the end of its session, giving its advice as to increase or decrease of various assessments or as to suspension of assessments for different funds.

A communication from the R. F. P. A. about cost of the supplements in the Standard Bearer is received and Classis decides to authorize our treasurer to defray the expenses involved of printing our reports in the Standard Bearer.

Three subsidy requests are received and forwarded to Synod. Doon asks for \$450.00 subsidy, Pella for \$800.00 and Orange City for \$3000.00.

Rev. P. De Boer, member of the Iowa-Minnesota church visitors committee reads his report on the church visiting done. This is followed by the reading of a report by Rev. Vermeer for church visiting done in the California-Montana sector of our churches. Encouraging reports.

The Anniversary Booklet Committee reads its report as does the Classical Committee. Both are received for information.

Classis chooses its delegation to Synod as follows: **Pastors** — Primi: Revs. P. De Boer, M. Gritters, J. De Jong and J. Howerzyl; Secundi: Revs. L. Vermeer, L. Doezema, A. Petter and S. Cammenga. **Elders** — Primi: N. Buyert Wm. Huiskens, W. C. De Vries, J. Dokter; Secundi: H. Leep, T. Kooima, J. Sietstra and E. Vander Werf.

Rev. J. De Jong is chosen for Classical

Committee member and his term is one year and a half.

Oskaloosa is the next place of meeting and the date is September 6.

Questions D.K.O. 41 are asked. One consistory asks for advice in the matter of five families in Lethbridge (from the Liberated brethren) who desire to become a branch of the Manhattan church. Classis advises that the matter be held in abeyance in view of the projected visit of our missionary, Rev. A. Cammenga there. Then if necessary to apply again at the next Classis.

Concept minutes are read and approved. Psalter No. 237 is sung and Rev. P. De Boer closes the meeting with prayer.

M. GRITTERS, Stated Clerk.