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MEDITATION

De Heere Is Opgenomen

“De Heere dan nadat Hij tot hen gesproken had, is opgenomen in den hemel, en is gezeten aan de rechterhand Gods.”

—Markus 16:19.

Bethanië! Bethanië! Gij zijt getuige geweest van een hoogheerlijke geschiedenis!

Want nabij Uw vlek is de Heere Jezus Christus opgenomen in den hemel, terwijl zij het zagen.

Het vlek is nabij Jeruzalem, ongeveer twee-derde mijl van de stad des grooten Konings. En men zegt, dat het lieflijk gelegen is, op de helling van den Olijfberg. Hoe dit ook zij, de klank van Bethanië doet weldadig aan. Vele jaren geleden heugt het me, dat ik een versje hoorde van Bethanië. “Bracht hen naar Bethanië!” Meer weet ik er niet van. Maar de Christenheid kent U. In Amerika hebben vele kerken een voorliefde voor Uwen naam. Veel locale gemeenten noemen zich naar U. Men zegt dan: Bethany Church. En ik kan er in komen.

Want daar is een groot wonder geschied. Alles wat aan Jezus Christus is en alles wat met Hem geschiedt is wonderlijk. Jesaja zegt, dat Zijn Naam dan ook Wonderlijk is.

De tijd is veertig dagen na Zijn verrijzenis.

Gedurende die veertig dagen openbaarde Hij Zich aan Zijne discipelen. En Hij deed dat negen malen. En dan zal Hij weerkomen met de wolken, en alle oogen zullen Hem dan zien. En vele oogen zullen dan tranen, en men zal over Hem rouw bedrijven. Maar niet de godvruchtigen, want die zullen juichen en jubelen als Hij komt, als Hij komt om d'aard te richten, de wereld in gerechtigheid.

En gedurende die dagen, dat Hij nu en dan verscheen aan Zijne jongeren, toonde Hij gewisse ken-

tekenen. Hij at en dronk met hen en sprak tot hen aangaande de dingen van het groote Koninkrijk, dat snellijk kwam en nog komen moet. Het kwam centraal, historisch in Jezus; het kwam ook later, en dan geestelijk, in de uitstorting des Heiligen Geestes; doch de openbare komst is toch aan het eind der eeuwen, wanneer alle oogen Hem zullen zien, ook dergenen die Hem doorstoken hebben.

Wel, de veertig dagen zijn ten einde, en Hij leidde hen naar dat eerder genoemde vlek, Bethanië. En al gaande spreekt Hij tot de kleine schare. We komen op dat spreken nog wel terug.

En zoo wandelden zij verder en kwamen bij de glooiing van den berg der Olijven.

En dan gebeurt het! Voor hunne oogen werd Hij opgenomen. Het staat er. Zij hebben het gezien.

Jezus, ja, God vaart voor het oog; met gejuich omhoog! Ik denk de Engelen hebben gezongen.



Jezus!

Wie is Hij?

Er staat in den tekst, dat de Heere werd opgenomen.

Dat is passieve taal. Soms staat er, dat Hij opvoer, en dat is actief.

Hoe zit dat?

Hetzelfde phenomeen zien we bij Zijn opstanding. Er zijn teksten die spreken van het feit, dat Jezus verrees: dat is actief. Maar ook, dat Hij opgewekt is. En dat is passief. In mijn tekst van heden wordt passieve taal gebruikt.

Ik denk, dat het afhangt van het oogpunt waaruit de Heilige Geest onzen Heiland bezielt en beschrijft.

Immers, Jezus Christus, de Heere is beide een Mensch en ook God, te prijzen tot in eeuwigheid, Amen.

Hier in den tekst wordt Immanuel beschreven, den Middelaar Gods en der mensen, vanuit het oogpunt Zijner menselijke natuur. Hij was waarachtig mensch. En als Mensch wordt Hij ongenomen.

En toch we stamelen, want diezelfde Jezus is beide

God en mensch. Men twist nog over de verhouding der naturen, en vooral over de eenheid des Persoons van Jezus. Ik heb gelezen van het vraagstuk der hoofdletters: moet persoon met een hoofdletter of met een kleine letter, of moeten we beide gebruiken? Ik ben overtuigd, dat men met hoofdletters moet spreken ten overstaan van dien Persoon. En nooit van den Persoon des Middelaars kan spreken met de kleine letter.

Maar stamelen doen we. Alles is hier wonderlijk. Hij werd opgenomen.

En alhoewel er allerlei mysteriën liggen, toch kan ik zingen.

Jezus Christus, de Heere is onze Plaatsvervanger. Let er toch op, dat die Man daar, op de glooiing van den Olijfberg, onze natuur heeft. Dat is zeer duidelijk.

En ziet het toch: onze natuur gaat naar den hemel! Ik zou hier ontelbare uitroepsteekens achter willen zetten. Het is eenvoudig onuitsprekelijk.

Stelt het U voor: Jezus gaat met onze natuur naar den hemel. O God der eeuwige wonderen, hoe is dit gekomen? Hoe kunt Gij onze natuur dáár dulden?

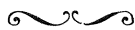
Onze natuur is zondig, schuldig, verdorven, en waard om verbrand te worden, al maar door, tot in alle eeuwen eeuwigheden. Dat heeft onze natuur verdiend.

De hemel is een gesloten terrein. Mt gloeiende letters staat het in de hemelen geschreven tegen het vleesch en bloed der menschenkinderen: Verboden toegang!

De deur van den hemel zit toch op 't eeuwig nachtslot? Hoe kan dan een mensch, eenig mensch, naar den hemel gaan?

En nog zingen we: Jezus is herrezen en is naar den hemel gegaan.

De tekst zegt het: De Heere. . . . is opgenomen in den hemel!



Ja, Jezus is naar den hemel gegaan. Dat herdenken we in deze dagen.

En men noemt het een vierdag, een feestdag. En terecht.

Ziet ge, Hij is de Koning der eere van Psalm 24. De Heere Jezus is geen gewoon mensch. En ook zoo zeg ik het niet goed. Want hij is wel een gewoon mensch, en de Heilige Schrift legt daar nadruk op. Maar ik moet het zóó zeggen: Hij is meer dan gewoon mensch. Hij is ook God te prijzen tot in eeuwigheid.

En daar ligt de oplossing van het probleem, dat onze oogen zien. Hier is het probleem: als het waar is, dat de deur van den hemel tegen den mensch op het eeuwig nachtslot zit, hoe kan dan deze Mensch in den hemel opgenomen worden? En dit opnemen is

geheel en al naar den wil Gods, die ergens anders van dit opnemen getuigd heeft, dat het een *wegrukken* was van voor den muil des draaks. God ging haastig te werk met de opneming van Jezus. En het is de haast der liefde. Als een klein kindje in doodsgevaar is, en als de moeder van dat wicht het gevaar ziet en ijlings toerent, hoe zal zij dit lieve kind opnemen? Langzaam aan? O neen. Zij zal het kind wegrukken van voor de gevaren die dreigen, en zij zal het kindeke aan haar boezem drukken. En ik verzeker U, dat het zoo gegaan is. God had haast met de opneming van Jezus. Hij is bij dien Olijfberg weggerukt naar den hemel.

Het was dan ook erg. En dat ziet op die gesloten deuren van den hemel. Ja, de deur op slot en wij er buiten. Zoo vinden we onszelf op deze gevloekte aarde. Maar Jezus is het hart Gods.

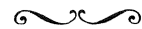
En dat hart van God is goed en lieflijk. Het hart van God wilde U en mij toch vinden in het moeras der zonde en der schuld en des dood. En om ons te vinden, is Hij gekomen met Zijn liefhebbend hart, en dat was Jezus in de kribbe. Of, indien ge een ander Bijbelsch beeld wilt hebben: Jezus Christus is de openbaring van eeuwige armen die naar U en mij uitgestrekt zijn, het zijn de armen van God die diep grijpen, zeer diep, tot in de eeuwige verdoemenis en tot in den eeuwigen vloek om U op te halen tot in den hemel toe.

Jezus is de Vertegenwoordiger van al het volk Gods.

En als hun Vertegenwoordiger zal Hij alles daarstellen wat noodig is om naar den hemel te mogen gaan met al de menschen die God Hem schonk.

En alles wat daargesteld moest worden concentreert zich om dit vreeselijke feit: dan moet Hij eerst naar de hel gaan. En Hij heeft het gedaan. Wij zagen Hem weggaan op dien verschrikkelijken Vrijdag, en het werd zeer donker rondom Hem.

Maar dat is nu alles, Goddank, achter den rug. Hij mocht weer uit den donker terugkeeren, want Hij gaf in den donker het antwoord der liefde en der gehoorzaamheid. God heeft het gehoord en Hij heeft Zijn goedkeuring daaraan gehecht. En daarom mag Jezus naar den hemel gaan. God wil Hem gaarne daar hebben. En zoo wordt Hij opgenomen.



Terwijl er vele getuigen zijn werd Jezus opgenomen. En een volk nam Hem weg uit hunne oogen. En toch weten we wat er verder geschied is.

Psalm 24 zal ons het antwoord geven, alswel onze tekst. In dien psalm wordt in dichterlijke trant van deze dingen gezongen.

Ik sprak een weinigje geleden van de deuren die op het eeuwig nachtslot zitten. Welnu, toen Jezus door de atmosfeer heengeleid werd door de Engelen Gods, kwam Hij bij de deuren van den hemel. En de schare van Engelen die Hem begeleidden riepen tot de wach-

ters der deuren: Heft Uwe hoofden op gij poorten, ja, heft op gij eeuwige deuren, opdat de Koning der eere inga!

En het wonder geschiedde: de deuren van den hemel hebben zich geopend, en een Mensch is binnengetreden. O, ik weet wel, dat als ge chronologisch wilt spreken, er andere menschen den hemel binnengetreden zijn vóór Hem. Maar naar de idee toch niet. Hij is vóór allen. Hij is de Eerstgeborene aller creaturen zelfs. En Hij is zekerlijk de Eerstgeborene uit de dooden. Als andere menschen eerder naar den hemel gingen, dan komt dat, omdat God vooruitzag op dit tafereel, hetwelk ik zooeven beschreef. In de Goddelijke orde is Jezus eerst.

Hallelujah! De deuren zijn opengegaan en de Mensch is binnengelaten. En hartelijk verwelkomd. Hij is door alle hemelen doorgestaan, en is gezeten aan Gods rechterhand. Daar straks meer over.

En let er nu op, dat als Jezus binnengelaten werd, dit een heuglijk feit is voor allen die in Jezus Christus zijn. Zijn binnengaan is Uw en mijn binnengaan. De Heilige Schrift zegt dat veelmalen. Toen Jezus stierf, stierf alle vijandschap die ons buiten den hemel sluit. Toen Hij opstond, stond de geheele gemeente op. En toen Jezus naar den hemel ging, ging de kerk naar den hemel. Want in den meest absoluten zin is Jezus onze Plaatsvervanger.

Juicht nu treurend Golgotha!

Jezus is opgenomen in den hemel!



En nu zullen wij reikhalzend wachten op het moment wanneer wij Hem zullen volgen in de eindelijke wedergeboorte.

Want waar Hij is zullen wij allen zijn.

En nu willen we nog even op een ander moment in den tekst letten. Hij ging naar den hemel "nadat Hij tot hen gesproken had".

God zij geloofd. Dat is maar goed ook. Hoe zouden we den weg naar den hemel weten, indien Hij daar niet van gesproken had?

Let op Jezus' spreken tot ons.

Ik geloof wel, dat dit spreken van Jezus waarvan de tekst spreekt slaat op het onmiddelijk voorafgaande gesprek tijdens Zijn tiende en laatste verschijning, maar toch mogen we het toepassen op het spreken van Jezus in het algemeen. In het algemeen is toch waar, dat al Jezus' spreken één is. Het was, ten tweede, een opsomming van het eerder gesprokene.

Hij had gesproken van God, Zichzelf, Zijn kerk en de wereld.

En alles concentreert zich om deze heerlijke gedachte: het eindelijke Koninkrijk komt! Dan zal God, Mijn God, alles zijn en in allen. Alles moet daartoe ondergeschikt gemaakt worden. Gaat over

Jeruzalem en Samaria tot naar de einden der aarde om Mijn volk te halen. Maar wacht eerst totdat ge den Heiligen Geest ontvangt.

En Zijn woorden zijn bij ons. Zij werden ons verteld als kinderen. En nooit is Jezus opgehouden om te spreken. Zegt Hij vandaag niet: Mijn schapen hooren Mijne stem?

En nadat Hij gesproken had werd Hij opgenomen in den hemel.

Er is een kleine trek in Lucas die ik U even moet schetsen: terwijl Hij hen zegende scheidde Hij van Zijn volk. Het murmelen van de lieflijke stem van Jezus in het zegenen is het laatste wat we van Hem gehoord hebben. En Zijn armen zijn nog uitgebreid over U en mij.

Wondere lieflijkheid van Jezus.

En zoo is Hij naar den hemel gegaan.



Nu zou ik terug komen op die onthaling in den hemel die Jezus te beurt gevallen is.

De tekst zegt, dat Hij gezeten is aan de rechterhand van God.

Hij is door al de hemelen doorgestaan, en zoo kwam Hij voor den troon van den DrieEenigen God.

En daar staande heeft Hij het van God gehoord: Hem viel te beurt een eer die aan geen ander ooit geschonken zal worden: Hij mag zitten aan des Vaders rechterhand.

Op aarde heeft Hij er al van getuigd: Mij is gegeven alle macht in den hemel en op de aarde.

De rechterhand van God? God heeft toch geen handen?

Dit is anthropomorf spreken om het eenigzins verstaanbaar te maken voor ons.

Eerst, het is de grootste eer die een schepsel kan ontvangen. Staat in verband met het feit, dat Jezus' naam in het nieuwe Koninkrijk de heerlijkste zal zijn.

Dan ook, dat Jezus in dit zitten aan de rechterhand van God een aanschouwbaar bewijs heeft, dat Hij den goeden strijd heeft gestreden in onkreukbare gerechtigheid. Dat is ook Zijn naam.

En, eindelijk, dat Hij door dit zitten het regiment heeft over alle dingen. Er is niets, dat niet aan Jezus onderworpen is.

Hij heeft het boekskes van Gods hand genomen: Hij verbreekt de zegelen, doet trompetten, en zal de fiolen uitgieten op alle goddeloozen.

Maar 't vrome volk in God verheugd, zal huppelen van zielevreugd als zij den Zoon aanschouwen!

Gelukkige, gezegende hemelvaart!

G. Vos.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION—	
De Heere Is Opgenomen	361
Rev. G. Vos	
EDITORIALS—	
As To Conditions	364
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE—	
An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism	368
Rev. H. Hoeksema	
OUR DOCTRINE—	
The Counsel Of God. (11)	371
Rev. H. Veldman	
Reply To Rev. Petter	375
Rev. G. M. Ophoff	
SION'S ZANGEN—	
De Lof Des Naams	378
Rev. G. Vos	
FROM HOLY WRIT—	
Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10	380
Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers	
IN HIS FEAR—	
Called To His Praise	382
Rev. J. A. Heys	

EDITORIALS

As To Conditions

Before I proceeds with my discussion of condition, I want to call the attention of our readers to something I wrote almost twenty years ago, and in which I *apparently* teach conditions myself. I refer the reader to Volume VI, page 90, ff., of the *Standard Bearer*. This passage occurs in a series of articles which have been published in pamphlet form under the title, *Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper*.

I call attention to this passage for the following reasons.

1. In that particular article I certainly speak of conditions and conditional. And I am surprised that the Rev. Petter did not call attention to this passage long ago. In fact, I have been waiting for him to do so, in order that then I might answer him and explain myself. Seeing, however, that he evidently overlooked it, I will for the sake of the truth call the attention of the readers to this passage myself.*

2. In the light of the present controversy that is disturbing our churches about conditions, I certainly would not use this same terminology today, as I did in the passage referred to above. The reader must remember that twenty years ago there was not a cloud of conditional theology in the Protestant Reformed sky. Hence, I wrote, following Calvin, rather freely, without having in mind the present controversy. And perhaps I wrote rather carelessly. I never believed in conditions. In my preaching and writing I never taught conditions. And, I can show very plainly from the very same articles in which the above-mentioned passage occurs that I condemn the idea of a conditional promise. Nevertheless in the passage referred to my pen must have slipped, so that I used the term *condition* and *conditional*. And therefore, I ask the reader to consider my use of the term an error.

3. In using the term I followed the exegesis which Calvin offers of Ezekiel 18:23, and that, too, over against Berkhof in his pamphlet on the Three Points. Berkhof explained the passages in Ezekiel as follows: "These passages teach us as clearly as words are able, that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (notice that he does not say: the elect wicked, but: the wicked, entirely in general, H.H.); and the tender calling to which we listen in them, witnesses of His great love for sinners and of His desire to save the ungodly." Now it is in opposition to this teaching of Prof. Berkhof that I quoted Calvin as follows:

"All this Pighius loudly denies, adducing that pas-

* But see the P. S. at the end of this article.

sage of the apostle (I Tim. 2:4): 'Who will have all men to be saved;' and referring to Ezekiel 18:23, he argues thus, 'That God willeth not the death of a sinner may be taken upon His own oath, where He says by that prophet: As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked that dieth, but rather that he should return from his ways and live.' Now we reply, that as the language of the prophet here is an exhortation to repentance, it is not at all marvellous in him to declare that God willeth all men to be saved. For the mutual relation between threats and promises shows that such forms of speaking are *conditional*. In this same manner God declared to the Ninevites, and to the kings of Gerar and Egypt, that He would do that which in reality He did not intend to do, for their repentance averted the punishment which He had threatened to inflict upon them. Whence it is evident that the punishment was announced on condition of their remaining obstinate and impenitent. And yet, the denunciation of the punishment was positive, as if it had been an irrevocable decree. But after God had terrified them with the apprehension of His wrath, and had fully humbled them as not being utterly desperate, He encouraged them with the hope of pardon, that they might feel that there was yet left open a space for remedy. Just so it is with the *conditional* promises of God, which invite all men to salvation. They do not positively prove that which God has decreed in His counsel, but *declare only* that which God is *ready to do* to all those who are brought to faith and repentance."

And again: "Wherefore, God is as much said to have pleasure in, and to will, this eternal life, as to have pleasure in the repentance; and He has pleasure in the repentance, because He invites all men to it by His Word. Now all this is in perfect harmony with His secret and eternal counsel, by which He decreed to convert none but His own elect. None but God's elect, therefore, ever turn from their wickedness. And yet, the adorable God is not, on these accounts, to be considered variable or capable of change, because as a Lawgiver He enlightens all men with the external doctrine of *conditional* life. In this primary sense He calls or invites *all men* to eternal life. But in the latter case, He brings to eternal life those whom He willed according to His eternal purpose, *regenerating* by His Spirit, as an eternal Father His own children only." Now it is in this connection that I wrote:

"This language is plain to all that will understand.

"In unmistakeable language the reformer denies, that there is, in the passage from Ezekiel a general offer of salvation to elect and reprobate promiscuously, a manifest desire to save them all, a revelation of a certain general or common grace.

"He affirms here, what we have always taught, as we have written often in the past, that, in as far

as the message is general and comes to all, it is conditional.

"The offer is eternal life.

"The condition, limiting this offer is: turn from your wicked ways.

"This condition makes the contents of the general message particular. Just as we have emphasized in the past, a contention our opponents have tried to laugh to scorn, there is a general proclamation of a conditional and particular gospel. He promises to all that believe peace and eternal life.

"Thus is the plain exposition of Calvin on this passage. He teaches all that hear *conditional doctrine*: if ye turn, ye shall live.

"And because it is conditional, it is also particular. And God in reality promises eternal life only to the elect. For it is quite certain, according to Calvin, that men do not turn from their wicked ways on their own accord, nor by any instinct of nature. It is equally certain that none turn from their wickedness but the elect. And, therefore, the contents of this externally general message is particular and applies only to the elect of God."

The controversy, therefore, at the time when I wrote this article was quite different from the present controversy on conditions in our churches. Over against Berkhof I quoted Calvin in defense of the proposition that in the preaching of the gospel we have the general proclamation of a particular promise. And although I am sorry that at the time I followed Calvin in his terminology, the truth of what I wrote at the time still stands for the simple reason that I used the term *conditional* in the sense of *particular*.

How far the idea of a conditional promise and of faith as a condition was from my mind when I wrote the above passage is evident from what I wrote in the same series of articles. On pp. 115, 116 of the same *Standard Bearer* I refer to another quotation from Calvin as follows:

"It is quite certain that men do not turn from their evil ways to the Lord of their own accord, nor by any instinct of nature. Equally certain it is that the gift of conversion is not common to all men; because this is that one of the two covenants which God promises that He will not make with any but His own children and His own elect people, concerning whom He has recorded this promise that 'He will *write* his law *in their hearts*' (Jer. 31:33). Now a man must be utterly beside himself to assert that this promise is made to all men generally and indiscriminately. God says expressly by Paul who refers to the prophet Jeremiah, 'For this is the covenant that I will make *with them*. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers: but I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.' (Heb. 8:9, 10). Surely, to apply this promise to those who were worthy of

this new covenant or to such as had prepared themselves by their own merits or endeavors to receive it, must be worse than the grossest ignorance and folly; and the more so as the Lord is speaking by the prophet to those who had before stony hearts. All this is plainly stated and fully explained by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. 36:26)."

On this quotation from Calvin I make the following comments in the same article.

"Now this passage is extremely interesting for our present purpose, for more than one reason.

"In the first place, because it raises the question: what do Berkhof and Kuiper mean, when they claim that in the promise of the gospel, as presented in the external calling, God earnestly reveals His willingness to save all men?

"What is the contents of their gospel, which they say is for all?

"Kuiper proclaimed loudly: the gospel I preach is a gospel for sinners, *for all sinners!*

"The question cannot be repressed: what gospel does he preach? Does he mean by the gospel merely the proclamation that Christ has died for sinners and arose again, and that now they are invited earnestly by God to come to Him, to believe and repent? Does he, in the preaching of the gospel, merely present to his hearers the work which Christ did objectively accomplish for us? Even if he should speak thus, he is presenting to his hearers only a half truth, which is more dangerous often than a plain lie. For it is not the entire truth, it is not the truth fully and correctly stated, if Kuiper should say, that Christ died for sinners. He certainly will at all times have to say, that He died and arose only for the elect sinner and for none other.

"Even so it is quite unintelligible, how Kuiper can say, that the gospel he preaches is for *all sinners*. For mark, that he did not say that he was preaching the gospel to all sinners that heard him, but that the very gospel he preached is a gospel for all sinners.

"And, surely, in this Berkhof agrees with him.

"But let us turn our attention to the question brought before us by the quotation from Calvin.

"Does not the gospel contain much more than the preaching of what the Lord did *for us*?

"And does it not also imply the preaching of the riches of His grace, whereby He applies this salvation to all His elect? Does this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ not belong to the promise of the gospel? I am now thinking of the grace of regeneration, whereby we become partakers of the life of the risen Lord in principle; of the grace of effectual calling, whereby we are translated from darkness into light; of the grace of faith, whereby we know that we are justified before God and have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ; of the grace of conversion and sanctifica-

tion, the mortification of the old man and the quickening of the new man; of the grace of perseverance, so that no one can pluck us out of Christ's hand. I say, do not all these blessings of grace belong to the promise of the gospel? Surely, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ does not come with a mere message that He *will* save us (of what avail would it be for us, poor, dead, miserable sinners?) but with the very positive glad tiding, that He did save us and does save us even unto the end."

And that I did not even in those articles teach the idea that faith is a condition and that the promise of God is conditional is plain from the following quotation:

"Neither is Calvin's language too strong. The folly of maintaining that God promises a new heart to everybody, is easily discovered. For why, pray, if God offers the blessing of a new heart to all, if the promises of grace are actually for all men indiscriminately, why does He not fulfill His promise? Surely, a new heart is entirely the work of God. Man can do nothing towards receiving it. He cannot make himself worthy of it. He cannot get himself into a state of receptivity for it. He cannot even make himself will to receive it. He is incapable to induce himself even to pray for it. This is true of all men by nature, of all indiscriminately. A new heart is God's work, His gift only, absolutely. Man cannot work for it if God does not bestow the blessing on him; neither can any man resist the operation of God whereby He renews the heart, if it pleases the Almighty to give him a new heart of flesh instead of the stony heart. Now, please, if the promise of the gospel concerning this new heart (not is preached to all that hear, this is self-evident) is given by God to all men without distinction, why does He not fulfill His promise?

Because some do not will to receive it? That is Arminianism. And even then a man must be utterly beside himself to speak thus, for no one is willing to receive a new heart before he possesses it.

"More mysteries, perhaps? I fear me, that Kuiper will answer thus. But we can say with Calvin: Nay, but more nonsense! A man must be utterly beside himself to assert that this promise of the gospel concerning a new heart is made by God to all men generally and indiscriminately!

"But again: if God promises this blessing, which He alone can bestow and bestows *unconditionally*, to all men, and does not fulfill the promise, where is God's truth? Is the promise of God brought to nought? Has His Word become of none effect? God forbid! Nay, but the promise was never made to all by Him, but only to the elect. And Kuiper has no right and no calling to present it differently."

In conclusion, therefore, I want to state briefly that

although in the light of our present controversy concerning faith as a condition and concerning a conditional promise I am sorry that I was tempted to follow Calvin in the use of the term *condition* and *conditional*, yet essentially I maintain in these articles nothing else than the simple truth that the preaching of the gospel is a proclamation of a particular promise, and that that promise is only for the elect.

H. H.

* P. S. to the Rev. A. Petter:

Dear brother:

1. I sincerely thank you for calling my attention and the attention of all our readers to the error in terminology (for it was no more than that) which I made almost twenty years ago. For an error it surely was. I should never have used the term *condition*, nor was there any need for it in the connection in which I wrote at the time. Therefore, for the sake of the truth which is more dear to me than any personal interest, and for the sake of the churches which I love, I humbly apologize for letting that thoroughly unreformed term slip out of my pen. This humble apology, together with my retraction and utter repudiation of the term, will make it impossible for you, of course, ever to refer to the matter again.

2. But, brother, I cannot thank neither praise you for the superficial way in which you quote me, without any regard to the context. You almost make the impression upon me that you gloat over my error, and that your purpose was to launch an attack upon me rather than get at the truth of the matter concerning *conditions*. If you had not written so superficially, and had made but a little study of the matter, you would have informed your readers as follows:

"a. The Rev. Hoeksema wrote this passage almost twenty years ago when the question of conditions was not an issue among us. The question, at that time, was whether the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear. This must be borne in mind when you consider his error in terminology.

"b. He inadvertently quoted and followed Calvin who used the term rather freely.

"c. The Rev. Hoeksema did not use the term, twenty years ago, with reference to the present controversy (faith as a condition, conditional promise, etc.), but clearly in the sense of *particular*. He merely meant to emphasize that the preaching of the gospel is the proclamation of a particular promise. This is so true that you can eliminate the term *condition* without changing the contents of the articles at all.

"d. That the Rev. Hoeksema, even twenty years ago, must have nothing of conditions is evident from the

fact that, in the same articles, he emphasizes that God fulfills His promise *unconditionally*."

You see, brother, if you had written in this strain you would have served the cause of the truth, instead of leaving the impression that you are rather elated to find a flaw in what I wrote twenty years ago. You may also consider, brother, that I had to write much more than you ever will write in your whole life, that often, in my very busy life, I had to write hurriedly, and that, considering all this, it certainly is no wonder that occasionally you can find a flaw in what I wrote. In other words, you might have assumed a more charitable attitude, even in regard to the error I made.

3. Nevertheless, brother, I once more sincerely thank you for calling the attention of our readers to this error in terminology, something which I already did myself, in the above editorial which was written before the last *Concordia* reached me. An error, even in terminology, is always dangerous, and should be rectified. I once more apologize for having used this term, which is Arminian and is clearly condemned in all our confessions. And if now, brother, you will make the same humble apology for having taught, not only the *term*, but *the actual error of conditions*, we can probably show a united front once more, and no longer create division in our churches. Otherwise I will continue to oppose you, not for any personal reasons, but for the sake of the truth and for the well-being of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Through your writing *Concordia* has placed itself in antithetical position to the *Standard Bearer*. You have attacked our covenant conception all along the line. You spoke of "the covenant of works", of "parties" in the covenant, and of "faith as a condition". You, therefore, not I, have started this controversy. That is, of course, your privilege. But I love our Protestant Reformed truth, and will try to expound and defend it as long as it pleases the Lord to leave me in this tabernacle. It is now up to you. My slate is clean.

H. H.

* * * *

YOUNG MEN, ATTENTION!

Young men, who desire to attend our Seminary in September to prepare themselves for the Ministry of the Word of God, are requested to be present at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee to be held in the basement of the Fuller Ave. Church, May 19. They should come with a statement of health from a reputed physician and a testimonial from their consistory as to their membership and walk of life.

The Theological School Comm.

per, Rev. J. Blankespoor, Sec'y.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXVIII.

4.

Bone Of His Bone.

The question therefore is: what does the Heidelberg Catechism mean when it instructs us "that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood," and that to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ means "to become more and more united with his sacred body, by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are notwithstanding 'flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone;' and that we live, and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul"?

In order to understand this we must remember that all our salvation is literally in Christ our Lord. We are saved by grace, not only in the sense that Christ merited all the blessings of salvation for us by His death and perfect obedience, but also in the sense that it is the power of grace that delivers us from all the power of sin and death and makes us actual partakers of righteousness and eternal life. Also this grace operates upon us from the God of our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is not only the Mediator of our redemption; He is also the Mediator of our deliverance. From Him we receive all the spiritual blessings of salvation. And in order to receive them we must be united with Christ, incorporated into Him, become one plant with Him. All the spiritual blessings of salvation we need to become and remain children of God, redeemed and delivered and sanctified and glorified, are in Him. Thus the apostle expresses it in I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." It is in Him that "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:14. And in the second chapter of the same epistle we read: "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Indeed, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Col. 1:19. And again: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2:9. Christ is the bread of life; and if any man come unto him, he shall never hunger. John

6:35, 48. He is the living bread which, if any man eat, he shall live forever. John 6:51. And He presents Himself as the water of life, and calls the thirsty to Him that they may drink. John 7:37. He is the resurrection and the life; and he that believeth in Him shall never die. John 11:25, 26. And He is the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6. Christ is the true vine; and "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:4, 5. Hence, we read: "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Hence, it is plain from Scripture that all the blessings of salvation are literally in Jesus Christ our Lord. He, therefore, must nourish our soul. And that with which He nourishes our soul to everlasting life is, in one word, grace.

What is the meaning of that term *grace* which so frequently occurs in Holy Writ?

The word *grace* has a variety of meaning in Scripture. In the Old Testament there occurs the word *CHEN*, which has the meaning of "bending, inclining, attraction, beauty, charm, favor". The word for grace in the New Testament is in the original *charis*; and it too has a great variety of meaning. It signifies "pleasantness, favor, forfeited favor, operation of grace and benefits of grace," and finally, "thankfulness". In the epistles of Paul the word is often used in contrast with merit and work. A comparison of many Scriptural passages where the word grace appears teaches us the following: in the first place, God is in the absolute sense the gracious One. He is gracious in Himself, irrespective of any relation to the creature. Grace is a virtue of God. He is in Himself gracious, for He is the absolute and infinite Good and glorious God, the implication of all perfection. Therefore He is also the charming, the attractive, the gracious God. At His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. And as the triune God He beholds and knows Himself perfectly: He is attracted to Himself, loves Himself, has pleasure in Himself. In this sense of the word God is absolutely gracious. But God also has pleasure in the creature. That creature, especially man, who is formed after the image of God, and in the highest sense of the word His church in Christ, He has conceived eternally and willed as beautiful. Therefore He has also pleasure in the creature for His name's sake, and it finds grace in His eyes. He lavishes upon this creature the evidence of His favor and draws it unto Himself with cords of love into His eternal covenant of friendship. When that creature lies in guilt and sin, so that in itself it cannot be the object of God's pleasure and favor, but on the contrary, of His wrath and aversion, and if that creature then in Christ is from eternity

beheld, elected, foreordained by God's sovereign grace, to become conformed to the image of the Son, justified, and glorified, found precious in His eyes, and engraved in both the palms of God's hands, God shows grace to that creature in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, when that eternal grace goes out to the creature, it is first of all forfeited favor, and it stands wholly in contrast with work and merit. By that grace all our transgressions are blotted out, and we are justified in the blood of the cross. In that grace we have the adoption unto children and the right to eternal life. But this is not all. For secondly, that grace is also a power and operation within us, whereby we are redeemed from the oppression and power and dominion of sin and become conformed unto the image of His Son. By the power of that grace we become pleasing to God, formed according to the very image which He has engraved of us in the palms of His hands. And it is especially of that grace we are thinking when the Catechism instructs us that Christ feeds our soul unto everlasting life. For, as we have said, all the power of grace is in Him alone. And out of His fulness we have received even grace for grace. Christ is our all. And all the spiritual blessings of salvation which we need to translate us from death into life, from darkness into light, from corruption into righteousness, and to raise us from lowest hell to highest heaven are in Him. For He did not only die that He might be our righteousness in the juridical sense. He also arose, and He also was exalted at the right hand of God and received the Spirit without measure, in order that as the quickening Spirit He might set us free and bestow upon us the grace of eternal life.

It stands to reason that in order to receive all these blessings of salvation out of Him we must be united with Him, or, as the Heidelberg Catechism has it, must be united with His sacred body.

We might, perhaps, employ a few simple and homely illustrations to elucidate the meaning of all this. You all know that in our towns and villages we receive the water in our homes from a central reservoir, or tank, or water-tower, into which it is pumped from some natural source in the first place. Or, to use another illustration, you are acquainted with the fact that the electric current that brings light into your home is generated in some central power plant in the city in which you live, and that the gas you use to cook your food or heat your home reaches you from huge storage tanks. From the one reservoir all the homes in your city are supplied with drinking water. That one plant generates all the electricity used in your town and illuminates all your homes. From the one central gas plant flows the gas that supplies the entire town. Now we might say that Christ is the spiritual power plant in the entire new Jerusalem from whom

the current of life and light flows into your soul. He is the one and only storage tank in the entire kingdom of God, the sole reservoir, out of whom flows continually all the water of life to quench the thirst of all the citizens of that kingdom. He is God's spiritual reservoir of salvation for all His people. From Him flows into the souls of all the elect grace for grace and all the spiritual blessings of salvation unto eternal life.

It is evident, therefore, that in order to receive grace and salvation from Christ we must be spiritually united with Him. If your home is not properly wired and connected with the central electric plant in your city, you turn the switch in your living-room quite in vain: you will have no light. If from the gas tanks in your town pipes do not conduct the gas into your home, it is of no avail that you put a beautiful gas stove in your kitchen or gas furnace in your basement: you will have no heat. And in vain you turn the faucet to draw water, if your home is not connected at all with that central reservoir in your town. The same is true of our relation to Christ: if our soul is not spiritually connected with Him, Who is our life, light, righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, sanctification, and redemption, we shall never have light, righteousness, and peace. It will remain dark and miserable in our soul. We must therefore be literally joined with Christ, united with Him: we must be in Him, even as He must be in us, in order that He may become our righteousness, holiness, and eternal life, and we may draw out of Him all the blessings of grace.

Such is the underlying truth which the Catechism teaches us when it tells us that we must be united with His sacred body and become flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. And this truth is clearly taught in all of Scripture. It is the meaning of the figure of the vine and the branches that must be in the vine in order to bear fruit. Christ is the vine, and believers are the branches. The branches are nothing except for their organic union with the vine. Even as it is the vine that bears fruit in and through the branches, so believers can bear fruit only because Christ lives and bears fruit in them. The same truth is taught us by the figure of the church as the body of Christ. Christ is the head; the church is His body. And it is only from and by the head that the body lives. And what is true of the body as a whole is equally true of the believers individually as members of that body. They have no life in themselves. Only in virtue of their organic union with the body do they live. For this reason the Bible speaks of believers as being in Christ. For of God they are in Christ Jesus, Who is made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. I Cor. 1:30. And "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II Cor. 5:17.

The saints are called "the faithful in Christ Jesus". Eph. 1:1. And they were sometimes darkness, but now they are light in the Lord. Eph. 4:8. And so we are admonished to abide in Him that we may bear much fruit. John 15:4; I John 2:28. Hence, a spiritual union must be established between Christ and our soul before we can receive any fruit of Christ's death and resurrection. This union is absolutely first. Unless that living connection is established between Christ and our inmost heart, we are outside of Him. And outside of Christ there is only guilt and damnation, corruption and death, darkness and desolation. Before there can be the faintest spark of new life in us, before there can appear even the faintest glimmer of light in our soul, before the simplest prayer can be uttered from our lips, before even the slightest longing can arise in our soul for God and His Christ, that union must be accomplished. It is an absolute prerequisite for the reception of all salvation. For Christ is our all. And our salvation is in Him. And we cannot begin to draw our life and light, our knowledge and wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification from Him until our inmost heart is joined in spiritual unity with Him Who is the revelation of the God of our salvation.

And how is this union accomplished? The answer of Scripture is: it is not accomplished by us but absolutely and unconditionally by God in Christ Jesus our Lord. For salvation is not of us, but of God alone. This must be emphasized over against all Arminianism, which teaches that ultimately man takes the initiative to come to Christ. According to it Christ is absolutely powerless to save the sinner unless he is first of all willing to open his heart and to come unto Him. The Arminian indeed admits that Christ is our salvation and the soul must be united with Christ in order to receive salvation. But if this union is to be accomplished, the sinner must come to Christ. The Saviour is willing to receive him, to come into his heart, to join that sinner unto Himself; but the sinner must first come. He must accept Christ, or, he must at least be willing to receive Him. But this is utterly absurd and impossible. If it were true, no man could ever be saved. For according to Scripture the natural man is in the flesh, and the mind of the flesh is death. It is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. He is dead in sin and misery. He can neither perform nor will that which is good. He loves iniquity and is a slave of sin. He loves darkness rather than light. He cannot see the kingdom of God. How then can such a man ever open his heart to Christ? How can he ever hunger and thirst after the bread and the water of life? I repeat: if this were the truth, no sinner could ever be saved. For before the sinner is united with Christ, he can neither come to Him nor long for Him nor seek Him

nor utter the weakest prayer beseeching Him to come into his heart. But thanks be to God, this is not the truth. Salvation is not of man, nor of the will of man. Nor does our union with Christ depend on man's consent: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw Him." John 6:44. And again: "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John 6:65. According to the Heidelberg Catechism we are united with Christ's sacred body by the Holy Ghost who dwells both in Christ and in us. The Father draws us with cords of love to Christ, and that, too, through Christ Himself, Who is exalted and draws all unto Him. And when we are so drawn and so united with Christ and He by His Spirit lives in us, we respond, we hunger and thirst, we long and pray, we come and embrace Him, we eat the bread of life and are satisfied, we drink the water of life and thirst nevermore, we draw from Him Who is the fulness of all the blessings of salvation even grace for grace.

For,—and this is the other aspect of our becoming united with the sacred body of Christ more and more,—we are united with Christ through faith. And that, too, is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. Through faith Christ indeed feeds and nourishes our souls unto everlasting life. But through the activity of that same faith we eat and drink Him. Also in nourishing our souls unto eternal life God in Christ does not treat us as stocks and blocks, but as rational, moral creatures. We are not so nourished unto everlasting life that we do not taste the wonder of the grace of God. It sometimes happens in our hospitals when a man is incapable of taking nourishment by eating and drinking that food is injected into his veins through needles. In that case a man is nourished entirely without any action on his part. He does not eat and drink; he does not even taste his food. He is wholly passive. But this is not the way in which Christ nourishes our soul unto everlasting life. On the contrary, He nourishes us through faith. And the activity of saving faith is such, that the sinner draws all the blessings of salvation out of Christ, eats His flesh and drinks His blood. Faith is that altogether mysterious and wonderful spiritual power whereby the soul strikes its roots into Christ to cling to Him, appropriate Him, and draw out of Him all the glorious blessings of salvation that are in Him, the forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness, and life. The difference between a believer and an unbeliever is not unlike that between a living young tree and a dead fence post. You can plant that fence post deep into the ground, but you do not expect that it will show signs of life, develop branches, and bear fruit. On the contrary, it will rot in the soil in which it is planted. But plant a young sapling in the same soil, and it will strike roots into the ground, draw nourishment from it, grow, and

bear fruit. The same is true of a living, saving faith in relation to Christ. Bring the unbelieving, dead sinner into contact with Christ as He is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and there will be no saving reaction. On the contrary, there is a reaction of unbelief unto damnation. But if the believer is led to Christ through the preaching of the Word, he will take hold of Him, cling to Him, strike the roots of his entire soul into Him, and draw out of Him all the spiritual nourishment necessary unto eternal life. What the roots are for the young tree saving faith is for the believer in Christ. By faith the believer is rooted in Him. And since Christ is revealed to us in the Scriptures, true faith always turns to them, has its delight in the Word of God, is called into activity through the Word preached, and constantly grows according as it increases in the knowledge and understanding of all that God has revealed to us in His Word. By faith the sinner knows the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely in the sense that he knows all about Him, but as the fulness of his own emptiness, as the righteousness of his own unrighteousness, as the light of his own darkness, as the life of his own death, as the bread of life for which he hungers, as the water of life for which he thirsts, as the way, the truth, and the life by which he longs to come to the Father. He recognizes Him as his own Saviour and Redeemer, longs for Him, eats and drinks Him unto righteousness and life. The believer knows Christ with the knowledge of love and delight.

These, then, are the two aspects of that wonder of grace whereby we become more and more united to the sacred body of Christ, become flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone. On the one hand, Christ imparts Himself to us by the Spirit of grace; on the other hand, by the activity of saving faith we eat and drink Him unto life eternal.

All this is of course effected by the preaching of the Word as a means of grace.

But this same wonder of grace is obnoxious in the supper of the Lord. For that supper, on the one hand, signifies and seals that Christ "feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with His crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ." And on the other hand it signifies that we eat and drink the crucified body and shed blood of Christ, so that we "become more and more united to his sacred body, by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us."

And thus it stimulates our faith, whereby we draw all our salvation out of Christ, Who died for us and rose again.

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Counsel Of God. (11)

Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism.

We were calling attention in our preceding article to the fact that the infralapsarian, in support of his view of the truth, will call attention also to the fact that the Scriptures give us this infralapsarian conception of salvation. And we had concluded that article by calling attention to the word "election". Besides the word "election", we are also told that Christ came in the "fulness of time". This expression occurs in Gal. 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law". The "common grace" theorists would have us believe that the "fulness of time" refers to that moment of time in history when the world had been prepared for the coming of the Christ. We are told that the pagan, heathen world was groping for the light. It is true, to be sure, that they still bowed the knee before idols of various kinds; but even this worshipping of gods of wood and stone must be viewed as a seeking by the heathens of the living God. Do we not read that an altar was dedicated, in the city of Athens, to the unknown God, and does this not imply that they sought this unknown God? Hence, the heathens are pictured as seeking for the truth, that this seeking for the truth is evidenced by such so-called noble personages as Pilate, Aristotle, Socrates, Cicero, etc., so that the heathens were striving, yearning for the higher light and were ready to receive the gospel when Christ finally arrived. Besides, had the world not made gigantic strides in development and culture? The beautiful Greek language had been developed. Law had been developed by Rome to an amazing degree. And tremendous had been the construction of roads and highways. Hence, by "common grace" the world had actually been prepared for the gospel. Groping for the light, it had progressed so far as to stand upon the point of receiving the gospel of salvation. However, the fallacy of this error must be apparent to all. How contrary is this theory to all fact! Why is it then, that the world did not receive Him? He came unto His own and they received Him not. And neither did the heathen world accept this Saviour of men. It is true that the Greek language had been developed, that Rome had attained unto an amazing efficiency in the knowledge of law, and that roads and highways had been developed. But this, we understand, had not been developed by the world because they were groping for the light. On the contrary the Lord simply used these developments by a wicked

world for the realization and advance of His own Church and Kingdom. Pontius Pilate, knowing Roman law and confronted by the innocent Christ, simply revealed by his sentencing of Jesus that he loved the darkness rather than the light—his knowledge of law simply served to reveal the darkness of his heart.

The expression, "fulness of time", refers to something else. Christ came at that moment in history when the spiritual bankruptcy of the world and of the church was fully apparent. He came at that moment when it had been fully revealed that all the blood of oxen and of goats could not redeem a single soul. He came at that moment when carnal Israel was ready to crucify the promised Messiah. He came at that moment when the world was constituted an empire so that His death could be the condemnation of the world. And, secondly, in connection with that world, two things must be true. Firstly, it must have attained unto a very high plane of development. The glimmerings of natural light must shine very brightly. The crucifixion of the Christ must not be ascribed, in any sense of the word, to ignorance, to lack of understanding. And, secondly, that world, notwithstanding all its natural light, must have descended to the depths of shame and debauchery and misery. In its forsaking of the living God it must have become perfectly plain that the natural man can only expect misery and shame, even to such an extent that mankind commits things which are unheard of even in the animal world. The "fulness of time" is therefore that moment in history when the entire church and heathen world, had attained unto complete and utter bankruptcy. Jesus comes when the darkness of sin is most complete and intense. But, is this not the infralapsarian presentation of salvation? Christ comes *after* the development of sin and darkness and death.

Finally, there are certain passages of Holy Writ to which I would briefly call attention in support of this infralapsarian presentation. We read in Matt. 11:25-26: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Notice in connection with this passage the following. We read, do we not, that the Father did "*hide* these things from the wise and prudent." Is this not Infralapsarianism? Does it not teach that the Lord simply left the wicked in their common misery into which they had plunged themselves? And do we not read in this text that the Lord simply hid these things from the wise and prudent, hence, simply did not reveal these things unto them? Moreover, does not the text also teach that "even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Hence, it was the Father's good pleasure to hide these things from the wicked. Consequently,

in God's eternal counsel He simply hid these things from the ungodly, left them in their spiritual ignorance. And in John 15:19 we read: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." This passage speaks for itself, does it not? Here we read literally that the Lord has chosen them out of the world. Is this not Infralapsarianism? This is exactly what they teach, namely, that the Lord elected His own out of a fallen, sinful, human race.

Besides, do not the Scriptures continually address the people of God from the aspect of their sinful and hopeless condition and their need of redeeming and saving grace? Well-known is the word of the Saviour in Matt. 11:28: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is also evident in a passage such as Rom. 9:15: "For He saith to Moses I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." The text speaks of mercy and of compassion, and these virtues of the Lord presuppose misery. And is it not true that the same underlying idea of our misery and death lies at the basis of a text as Eph. 1:4-6: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." And in 1 Peter 1:1-2 we read: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." These passages, and they can certainly be multiplied, clearly proceed from the point of procedure that the people of God lie in the midst of misery and death. Also the last passage of 1 Peter 1:1-2 is addressed to the elect as strangers and in need of grace and peace.

However, the infralapsarians do not merely claim support for their conception from the Confessions and the Scriptures, but they also have objections which they lodge against the supralapsarian conception. In the first place, they declare that it is absurd to speak of "election" as an election of "to be created and to fall" human beings. Such creatures, they say, do not exist. How can one speak of the election of such people? And, secondly, they point to the fact that Christ is, according to the Scriptures, the Mediator and he Head of the elect. But this implies, they say, that we need Him that we are lost in ourselves and saved only through our Lord Jesus Christ. To be

elected in Christ Jesus certainly must imply that God knew us as by nature lost in sin and as saved only through and in Christ.

Our Appraisal.

To refute the arguments against the supralapsarian conception, we would say, in the first place, that the infralapsarian does not avoid, by means of his conception, the charge that God is the Author of sin. It is true that this constitutes one of his chiefest objections against the supralapsarian conception. Yet, he himself does not succeed in evading this charge. Fact is, the Lord could surely have prevented the fall, could He not? We read in Mark 3:4: "And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace." This same incident, besides being recorded in the gospel of Luke, is also related in Matthew 12:9-14. And in the gospel according to Matthew Jesus tells of the man whose sheep had fallen into the pit on the sabbath day and who had rescued it on the day of the Lord. In this connection the Saviour asks the wicked leaders of the Jews whether it is lawful to do good on the sabbath days or to do evil, to save life or to kill. This, to be sure, refers primarily to these wicked Jews who had congregated in the synagogue that sabbath day with murder in their hearts against the Christ and who had therefore come together to kill Jesus. However, this word of the Saviour is also illustrated in the example of the man who rescues his sheep out of the pit on the day of the Lord. And notice that Christ asks whether it is lawful to do good or to do evil, to save or to kill. In other words, one does good or evil, saves or kills. Not to do good means to do evil, and not to save means to kill. Shall we also apply this to the infralapsarian conception that the Lord merely leaves the wicked in their common misery into which they had plunged themselves? Could the Lord not have prevented the sin and fall of man? Must we assume responsibility for the burning to death of a victim in a burning house when we could have delivered him out of the raging inferno? Does it satisfy us to say that the Lord simply saw the human race as fallen, permitted the sin and fall of man, whereas He could have prevented that tremendous catastrophe? It must be perfectly clear that we fail to escape the charge that the Lord is the Author of sin when we merely ascribe a certain permissiveness to the Lord, declare merely that He permitted the fall of man, and at the same time be compelled to admit that Jehovah could have prevented that calamity.

The argument which the infralapsarian draws from the fact that our Confessions are infralapsarian is surely weak. It is true that our Confessions bear this infralapsarian character. However, we may surely

assert that the supralapsarian conception, although not incorporated in our Confessions, has never been condemned. And this must not be overlooked. For it surely signifies that, although our Fathers, who composed, e.g., the Canons of Dordrecht, never had the courage to declare that the supralapsarian conception was contrary to Holy Writ. Supralapsarianism, therefore, has never been officially condemned. And Gomarus, a leading exponent of the supralapsarian view, challenged the Synod of Dordrecht to debate with him this infralapsarian-supralapsarian issue. We may, therefore, conclude that Supralapsarianism is not anti-confessional.

That the Scriptures are historically infralapsarian means little. It is true that the natural is first and then the spiritual, as also the apostle declares in 1 Cor. 15. But does this necessarily mean that the natural is also first in the counsel of God? How could, in time, the spiritual precede the natural, the heavenly the earthly? The earthly and the sin and corruption and death of mankind is the foundation upon which the Lord builds His Church, the ruins upon which the Lord erects His eternal and heavenly Kingdom. Is it then, strange that, historically, the foundation is laid before the building is erected? Does not an earthy builder always proceed in this fashion? He always lays the foundation first and then proceeds to build upon that foundation the edifice. However, this does not mean that that foundation also occupies the "number one spot" in his plans. On the contrary, what is first in his plans appears last in the execution, realization of that plan. The building is conceived first and then the foundation which must support that building. But, when the builder proceeds to carry out his plan, he first lays the foundation and what is first in his plan appears last in its execution. Besides, how else could the Saviour, as Saviour, be revealed unto us except as upon the background of our sin and death? He is Jesus, is He not? And Jesus means: Saviour. Jesus, as SAVIOUR, could, therefore, never be revealed unto us except through the fall and sin of the human race. But does this necessarily imply that this order also occurred thus in the eternal thoughts of the everlasting God? Not at all.

Besides, what must one conclude from the argument that the very names of the Saviour: Jesus and Christ, suggest the infralapsarian conception of things? It is said that Jesus is the Mediator and Head of the elect, that this implies that we need Him and are therefore of ourselves hopelessly lost in sin and guilt, and that, consequently, this eternal Headship of the Saviour implies that the Lord knew and elected us as fallen. But, if this be true, then we must also say that, strictly speaking, Christ is dependent upon the coming of sin, the new heavens are dependent upon

the collapse of the old, the coming of the Second Adam is contingent upon the failure of the first Adam. Is Christ, then, a mere after-thought in the counsel of the Lord? Would such a conception not be an impugning, an attack upon the sovereignty of the living God? But, do we not read in our Confessions that Jesus is our chief Prophet, our only High Priest, and our eternal King? And to me this means, that, also from before the foundation of the world, in the eternal thoughts of the everlasting God, Zion never had another Chief Prophet, Only High Priest, and Eternal King. In the light of the truth that God is the living God, that the whole universe, in comparison with Him, is less than a particle of dust on the balances and a drop of water on the bucket, we cannot ascribe to the theory that He would be dependent upon anything, that Christ is a mere remedy for sin because the first Adam failed, that the new heavens and the new earth owe their existence in the counsel of God to the collapse of the old, or that the phenomenon of sin and death must be viewed as something which the sovereign Lord permitted to happen. We will have more to say about this very shortly. However, in connection with the argument of the infralapsarian that the eternal Headship of Christ presupposes a fallen mankind, we should constantly bear in mind that there is no temporal order in God's decrees. In God's counsel everything is eternal. Nothing precedes anything. Whether one is a infralapsarian or a supralapsarian, the natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, sin and grace, the fall of man (permitted by God according to the infralapsarian and sovereignly willed by the Lord according to the supralapsarian) and the salvation in Christ;—in the counsel of the Lord everything is eternal. But, although there is no temporal order in the decrees of the living God, this does not necessarily mean that there is no logical order in the eternal thoughts of the Lord. Because all things are eternal all things are not necessarily of equal importance and significance. That Christ is the eternal Head of the elect, and, as the eternal Head of the elect, must assume their guilt and stand in their guilty relation to the law is true and according to the Scriptures. That, therefore, this eternal Headship of the Christ is the ground of our justification, that is, that because He is our eternal Head, and therefore can assume our guilt and blot out all our sin and merit for us everlasting life, His eternal Headship is the eternal ground of our justification because it explains why He can suffer and die for *our* sins and trespasses is surely the teaching of the Word of God. But, this does not necessarily mean that therefore this eternal Headship of Christ must also presuppose a fallen mankind, that this Headship of the Saviour is inconceivable without the reality of sin. Fact is, Christ will be our Head into all eternity; He will be the fulness of the God-

head everlastingly; yet, into all eternity sin will be a matter of the past, and the elect will serve the living God in heavenly perfection. In this same connection, it is not absurd to say that God has elected a "to be created and to fall" mankind. In other words, God has simply willed and sovereignly loved a people in Christ, and it has pleased Him for the sake of the greatest glory of His Name to lead that people, through sin and death and faith in Christ Jesus, into everlasting and heavenly glory. The Lord, in love to that people, eternally and sovereignly willed to save them in the way of sin and death, because that would result in the greatest glory of God's Name, and the greatest glory of the Name of God would surely also constitute the greatest possible salvation for the elect people of the Lord.

This is the supralapsarian conception of the counsel of God. The Lord's glorification of Himself in Christ Jesus in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead would dwell bodily is the supreme purpose of Jehovah. And the Lord willed, sovereignly, that that revelation of Himself in Christ Jesus, and through Christ Jesus in all the elect, should be served or realized along the lines of election and reprobation, and in the way of sin and death and grace. The supralapsarian does not begin with a fallen mankind. He does not proceed with the sin and death of the human race. He does not acknowledge any Divine permission of things. He simply proceeds from the principle that the Lord is God alone and does *all* things according to His sovereign good pleasure. He views his God as the supreme Lord not only of life but also of death, not only of the light but also of darkness, not only of the godly but also of the ungodly, not only of the angels but also of the devil and all his host. He excludes nothing from the sovereign counsel of the Almighty, and believes that, also everlastingly, "out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things" and that therefore all glory belongs unto the living God, now and forever. He cannot conceive of anything in the entire universe as simply coming into being; he regards his God as the supreme Potentate of potentates, as sitting upon the throne of the entire creation; he believes that nothing happens by chance, but that all things owe their existence and development to Him Who alone sitteth upon the throne. All things are means to an end, God's end, and Jehovah performs all His good pleasure; and all things in this world are and exist exactly because of this good pleasure of the Lord. And he also believes that this is indeed the Scriptural presentation of the truth, and that the Lord has thus revealed Himself in His holy and infallible Word. But to this we will call attention in our following article.

H. Veldman.

Reply To Rev. Petter

"As to Conditions" is the title of Rev. Petter's article in the *Concordia* for April 27. The writing contains also this statement, "We may recall here in parenthesis that Rev. Ophoff (*Standard Bearer*, Vol. 2, pp. 46, 47) defends the conditionality of the promise in Canons 11:5" The reference is to Vol. 2.

What Rev. Petter says here is not true. First, I do not in that volume and on the pages indicated defend the conditionality of the promise. Second, I do not defend the conditionality of the promise in Canons 11:5—mark you, in Canons 11:5. It would be utterly impossible for me or anyone else to do such a thing. The reason is quite simple. Canons 11:5 reads, "Moreover, the promise of the Gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the Gospel."

Let us take notice. The term "condition" does not even occur in this article. This being true, how can Rev. Petter be telling his readers that I defended the conditionality of the promise in Canons 11:5. I don't understand.

But Rev. Petter will reply that, though the term does not occur, the idea is plainly present. But that is not true. Attend to what the article declares. It is this, "Moreover, the promise of the Gospel is, that *whosoever believeth in Christ Crucified, shall not perish but have everlasting life.*" Take notice of the statement in italics. It is complete by itself. What does it affirm? Precisely this: that without exception everyone who believes shall be saved. To make this proclamation read, "God will save men on the condition that they believe," is to destroy the Gospel, the glad tidings, contained in it. Just because this Scripture—for a Scripture it is—is unconditional, it is unfailing. Such being its character, it is a word that God's believing people can build on. The promise as here set forth is conditional only if *we* make it so.

Second, I do not defend in that article the conditionality of the promise either in Canons 11:5 or apart from Canon 11:5. What I defend in that article (read it by all means and be convinced) is something quite different. I defend Rev. H. Hoeksema, H. Danhof and G. M. Ophoff and the rest of the Protestant Reformed against Prof. L. Berkhof, who at the time was telling the public by the printed word that we denied the general calling. Here is what he wrote (I translate): "The Arminians aver that the general offer of grace excludes the Reformed teaching of elec-

tion and particular atonement. And some Reformed (he means us) agree with them. But when they attempt to evade the difficulties confronting them, their ways part. The Remonstrants deny election and the particular atonement of Christ as taught in the Reformed churches. And the Reformed to whom we here have reference (the professor again means us, the Protestant Reformed) deny the general calling through the Gospel. They hold the view that the general calling through the Gospel implies that man in his own strength must convert himself and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can't see but that they proceed, either consciously or unconsciously from the basic Pelagian promise that the measure of responsibility is determined by man's ability, and that God does not demand of man anything that he cannot do; and in this case they themselves drift into Arminian waters. Further, they (the Protestant Reformed) opine that the general promise that "whoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life," implies, that Christ atoned for all head for head. But to maintain that reasoning they again will have to proceed from the Pelagian and Arminian idea that it depends upon the free will of man whether or not he will convert himself and believe. The objection falls away, if we only hold fast that faith and conversion are gifts of God." So far Prof. Berkhof. This whole quote is contained in that article from my pen to which Rev. Petter refers his readers. And I was quoting from some issue of the "Reformed Herald", a short-lived Christian Reformed magazine of that day.

We should take careful notice of what Prof. Berkhof was openly saying about us, Protestant Reformed, in those days, and, I presume, is still saying about us. Vainly imagining with the Arminians and Remonstrants that God cannot rightfully demand of his rational-moral creatures what they cannot perform, we concluded that the teaching to the effect that God commands the sinner to repent and believe must needs imply that man originates his own faith. But sovereign election implies that faith is God's gift in man. But faith cannot be a gift of God in man and at once be out of man. So there is conflict here. If the conflict is to be removed, either election or the calling to repentance—God's putting man by the command under the obligation to repent—must be declared non-existent. The Arminians repudiate election and hold fast the calling, and thereby take the stand that man originates his own faith. According to the professor, *we* in *our* desire to make straight paths for our thinking, repudiate the calling and hold fast sovereign election. Mark you well, according to the professor, we repudiate the calling, deny that God by His command places man under the necessity of repenting and believing, deny, in a word, human accountability in order

to free ourselves from the logical conflicts in which our distortions of the truth involve us. With the Arminians, we maintain, according to the professor, that the idea of God's commanding man to repent must needs imply that man believes in his own strength. So, as faith is not of man but is God's gift in man, there can be no such thing as God's commanding man to repent. That, according to the professor, used to be our teaching. And I suppose he will tell you that it still is our teaching. It was on the ground of such preposterous charges that we were deposed. And yet we go to wondering what it could have been that brought us into being as a communion of Protestant Reformed Churches, and what may be the difference between the Protestant Reformed and the Christian Reformed.

What then were we telling men and are still telling men. Not certainly that there is no such thing as God's commanding men to repent and believe; not certainly that God's putting men under such an obligation by His command, must needs imply that man must originate his own faith, and that therefore there can be no such thing as God's commanding man to repent. This is what we were telling men, and still tell men, namely, that in the light of the Scriptures there can be no such thing as a well-meaning offer of grace unto all indiscriminately. Was Prof. Berkhof aware of this? He certainly was as appears from that quote. The statement occurs in that quote: "And the Reformed to which we have reference (he means us) deny the general offer—mark you, general offer—through the Gospel." But what does the professor do? In the next line he identifies this "well-meaning offer of salvation" with the outward calling—with God's commanding man to repent and believe—and in this way makes it possible for himself to accuse us before his readers of denying the outward calling.

But this is not all. According to the professor what we also were telling men is that the promise of the Gospel "that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life," implies that Christ atoned for all head for head. Such, to our mind, being the implication of that promise, we repudiate it; we deny that whosoever believeth shall be saved, eliminate from the Scriptures John 3:16: "For God so loved the world. . . ." That used to be our sin, and, I suppose, is still our sin. That is what we used to be telling men, and, I suppose, are still telling men, our people, assembled about our Gospel.

But there is this question: How is our resentment to the promise that whosoever believeth has life everlasting, to be accounted for? The professor has the explanation. Also here we proceed from the Pelagian and Arminian tenet that it depends upon the free will of man whether or not he will convert himself and believe. But this is equivalent to accusing us of brand-

ing God an Arminian. For, mark you, it is God who says (John 3:16) that whosoever believeth. . . shall have everlasting life. It means that, according to the professor, our contention was and is, that, in saying to His people, "whosoever believeth. . . shall have everlasting life," God by implication is telling us that man must originate his own faith.

On what now does the professor base these astounding accusations? On statements occurring in our own publications? Not at all. The professor passed these by one and all to base his charges on a report of Rev. Hoeksema's lecture on the Three Points appearing in the "Holland City News". Yet, we can have no objection to that report. For it is true at least that part of it quoted by the professor (and contained in my article referred to by Rev. Petter). It reads, "That the contents of the Gospel are always particular, never general. 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' The promise is for believers. Thus we can understand: b. Canons III, IV, 8: Surely the external calling is unfeigned. There is nothing deceiving in the Gospel. But remember it is always particular. Those that believe have the promise. No one else.' So Rev. Hoeksema had spoken. The report is true.

The professor's comment reads as translated, "Though this is but a press-report, it nevertheless correctly reproduces the thought of the speaker, so it seems to me." Let us consider that the professor quoted these lines not with approval but with strong disapproval. It was precisely on these lines that the professor based all his accusations. It means that the thought conveyed by this quote is unpleasant to him. This speaks volumes. It tells us why we were expelled from the communion of Christian Reformed churches. The doctrine that the contents of the Gospel are always particular; that the Gospel promise is for believers only had become distasteful to the brethren. And not only these doctrines but of necessity all the related doctrines as well, such as total depravity and sovereign election and reprobation etc. Are not the Three Points in their totality and as including the grounds on which they were made to repose a flat denial of these doctrines? And were we not deposed because we refused to subscribe these points? Yet we are wondering what could have brought us into being as a communion of Protestant Reformed churches, and what may be the difference between the Protestant Reformed and the Christian Reformed, as if there is no difference? It is true, they still have those other doctrines on the books—the doctrines of total depravity, sovereign election and reprobation, etc. But it doesn't mean a thing as long as they hold fast those Three Points, and as long as they persist in justifying themselves in the wrong that they did to us.

The professor (Berkhof) accuses us of repudiating

the promise that whosoever believeth hath life everlasting. Yet that very report on which he bases his monstrous charges should have prevented him. For it tells him that Rev. Hoeksema in his lecture in Holland rose to the defence of that very promise. The statement occurs, does it not, "That the contents of the Gospel are always particular, never general. 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' What kind of a heretic would a man have to be to repudiate that promise? It's the very Gospel of God taken literally from the Scriptures. Did the professor forget that the Synod of 1924 pronounced the Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof fundamentally Reformed? The professor was present, better said, exceedingly active on that Synod as the father of the Three Points.

There were still other accusations lodged against us by the professor and this in connection with Canons 11:5. Allow me to quote this article in its entirety, "Moreover, the promise of the Gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. *This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the Gospel.*"

The professor was telling men that we denied also the thought conveyed by the section of the article italicized; that we held the position that the promise, together with the command to repent and believe ought *not* to be declared and published to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel. The professor's way of voicing this charge was his saying that in preaching the gospel we directed our discourse to the elect only and had no word for the reprobated. Over and over did we explain to the professor in the *Standard Bearer* that he was guilty of misrepresenting us and of distorting our views—guilty of ascribing to us views that were as hateful to us and to anyone. It was also to defend the Protestant Reformed against this attack of the professor that I wrote that article to which Rev. Petter refers. Hence, in that article we came also upon this statement, "We do declare unto all persons without distinction that the promise of the Gospel is that whosoever believeth hath eternal life. We do declare that all must believe and repent. We do declare that all are unfeignedly called."

We were also positive in our rebuttals, carefully explaining what we preach and teach, on this point. The Gospel, we explained to the professor, is always particular, its message being that whosoever believeth shall have eternal life; that, in other words, God will save believers, the contrite of heart, the elect. This particular Gospel, we explained further, must certainly be proclaimed unto all persons without distinction.

Every person, we insisted, to whom God sends the Gospel must be told that believers will surely be saved. Every person, we insisted, must be told also that he must believe and that believing he will be saved.

It was for the purpose of presenting these things to the professor anew that we wrote that article. The whole article from beginning to end bears out the truth of this statement; it clearly reveals, does that article, that it was certainly not my purpose to defend the conditional promise in Canons 11:5. Nor am I guilty of such a thing anywhere in that article. Rev. Petter should not have told the readers of the *Concordia* the contrary. It is not true. *Defending* a conditional promise was a thing farthest from my mind.

Yet the expression "conditionary promise" does occur five times in that article in as many sentences. I put to the professor the question: "We reject the conditional promise to the effect that all who believe are saved? And again in this sentence: "Berkhof first gives his readers to understand that we deny that the conditional promise to the effect, that all who believe will be saved, should be declared unto all without distinction". And once more: "We maintain most emphatically, that the conditional promise should be declared unto all without distinction."

But in the light of all that I have reproduced from that article, it ought to be as plain as the sun in the heavens that what I meant by conditional promise is the *particular promise* or Gospel.

But there is this question: Why did I use the term at all? To what was my using the term due? Here is my answer. It was due to plain ignorance of the evil meaning that the term has in all such sentences as: God saves His people *on the condition* that they believe. I had never made a study of the term as an element in the type of sentences of which I just gave a sample. As Rev. Petter himself very competently explains in one of his articles, it is the duty of the believers to search God's Word and understand and assimilate its contents in order that they may be fully armed spiritually in the spiritual contest to which they are called. Rev. Petter goes on to explain that to get His people to address themselves to that task, the Lord uses false doctrine as a spur. So it is indeed. Twenty five years ago that spur was lacking. That spur was not supplied until about three and a half years ago. That spur was the doctrine of the Liberated regarding promise and baptism, as I during the past three and a half years encountered it on the pages of various booklets and pamphlets on the subject and of Liberated authorship that came into my possession. Through my study of the content of those booklets I became thoroughly conversant with the covenant theology of the Liberated, and my eyes opened to the sad fact that it is not reformed.

As I stated in another article, liberated covenant-

theology receives adequate expression in four propositions.

1. The promises of God are given in the same sense to all the baptized—elect and non-elect alike.
2. And are sealed unto all by the sacrament of baptism.
3. By virtue thereof the fruits of the suffering and death of Christ are the legal possession of all—elect and non-elect alike. All have a right to be saved and in fact are saved objectively in Christ.
4. The promise comes to the baptized not otherwise than in a conditional form, "I will save thee on the condition that thou believest."

The whole thought-structure reposes on the idea set forth in that *forth proposition*. It forms the foundation of the structure. Remove it, and the whole structure collapses. It means that in this theology the term condition is in place and comes fully to its own as to its proper meaning—the meaning that it has through its uses loquendi.

And so I have need of asking: why should we as leaders be trying to win our people for the idea that God saves men on the condition that they believe? In other words, why should we be eulogizing "conditions" to our people, telling them such things as that conditions are necessary and desirable theologically; that this necessity lies in the fact that so God's glory is proclaimed; that the Lord had ordained that man should so come to the enjoyment of salvation and in no other way; that ascription of praise to God as the fountain of all that is good for the creature is exactly brought out in the conditional nature of the promises of God's covenant; that the very nature of the goods of the covenant require this conditional manner of receiving and enjoyment; and that the Bible is full of conditions. Why tell our people such things—things that are not true? Why try to win our people for the idea that God saves men *on the condition* that they believe? Don't we, as leaders, realize that, should our attempt prove successful, we shall have laid in our circles, laid in the minds and hearts of our people, the foundation of a heresy, and that, with the foundation laid, the rest will follow without fail—the rest. And by that I mean, rearing on that foundation the kind of superstructure for which it calls. And then we will be just another communion of Arminian churches. And then, of course, we will still have on the books and perhaps keep on the books for a long time all the right doctrine. But it won't mean a thing except that for a while at least we will be saying one thing out of the one corner of our mouth and the contrary thing out of the other corner of our mouth. But God doesn't like double talk, does he? No more than he likes a double-hearted man.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

De Lof Des Naams

(Psalm 113; Tweede Deel)

We gaan verder met onze overdenking en luisteren naar den zanger: "De Naam des Heeren zij geprezen van nu aan tot in eeuwigheid."

Hier hebt ge een kenmerk van genade.

Als ge dit vers na kunt zeggen van ganscher harte, dan zijt ge een kind van God en dan moet ge naar den hemel. Wat zeg ik? Dan hebt ge nu al den hemel in de ziel! Denkt ge, dat het er anders naar toe gaat in den hemel? Wat ben ik blij, dat we een beschrijving hebben van het doen en laten der hemelingen! O neen, niet tot in alle bijzonderheden, maar genoeg om te weten wat de drijfveer en de openbaring is van menschen en engelen in die plaats van geluk en blijdschap.

Het is opvallend hoe vaak we hooren, dat men het hallelujah zingt in den hemel. Men wordt het nooit zat om God te prijzen en te loven.

Wat is de lof des Heeren?

Het is dit: ge zegt het Hem aan hoe goed en hoe lieflijk Hij is in alle Zijne deugden. Ge laat Hem weten hoe ge over Hem denkt, dat Hij U vervult met blijdschap vanwege Zijn aangezicht, hetwelk in gunst tot ons is gericht.

En dat nu moet gedaan van nu aan. En tot in der eeuwigheid toe. Ziet ge wel, dat dit voortdurend is, en dat men het hemelleven hier aanvangt?

Van nu aan. Ja, maar ik ben druk! Dat maakt geen verschil. Ik moet slapen. Dat maakt geen verschil. Slaapt dan door het geloof in en loof God in den slaap. Uw slaap moet zoet zijn, en dat kan alleen als ge door het geloof slaapt. Ik mag er gaarne aan denken hoe we de kleintjes laten knielen en ons nazeggen: 'k Leg mij neder om te slapen: Goede God die altijd waakt! Wil mij in Uw gunst bewaren als het kwade mij genaakt. . . .

Dat is hemelwerk leeren.

Van nu aan.

Onverpoosd, voortdurend, in verband met allen en alles, God loven en prijzen.

O, ik weet het wel, ge behoeft het mij niet euvel te duiden om zoo te spreken: ik weet heel goed, dat wij dat nooit doen kunnen.

Maar, eerst, zoo zouden we het gaarne willen. Het willen is dan ook daadwerkelijk bij ons. En dat komt omdat ge wederomgeboren zijt.

En, ook zoo, dat er altijd een klein beginsel is dat

het ook doet. Er is een beginsel in U, dat zóó lieflijk is, dat ge den naam verdient van reinen van hart. Dat zeide Jezus.

En, eindelijk, de zucht en het verlangen, zoo vaak vertolkt door het klagen van David: Och, dat nu al wat in mij is Hem prees! zal eindelijk geschonken worden aan allen die God liefhebben, die naar Zijn voornemen daartoe geroepen zijn.

En dan verder: tot in der eeuwigheid.

Ja, wat zal ik daarvan zeggen?

Ik weet niet eens wat de eeuwigheid is. Het is zoo geheel anders dan de tijd. O, we kunnen het wel ietwat aanvoelen, maar zuiver en klaar zien doen we het niet. We dragen altijd ideeën van den tijd in de idee van de eeuwigheid. Alle woorden die voor de idee van de eeuwigheid gebruikt worden passen toch niet.

Ik zal er daarom niet veel van zeggen. Alleen dit: ik verlang naar dat onveranderlijke HEDEN van God. Dat voortdurende zingen en jubelen in den hemel trekt mij aan. Het zien en staren op het groote Mysterie is overweldigend. Ik kan er ietwat inkomen van wat het zeggen wil om verzadigd te worden met Zijn beeld. En hoe meer verzadigd daarmede, hoe meer we zullen uitbreken in het gezang dat door Johannes is gehoord en ons verteld.

“Van den opgang der zon af tot haren ondergang zij de naam des Heeren geloofd.”

Wel, dat zal nog wat moeten wachten. Tenminste, indien deze tekst beduidt, dat alle menschen in die uitgestrektheid met bewustheid den Naam zouden loven. Want verreweg het grootste getal der menschen doen het niet. Verreweg het grootste gedeelte van de oppervlakte der aarde is nog in totale duisternis aangaande den lof des Heeren.

Tenzij de tekst doelt op het onbewuste loven van God van alle andere dingen. Want in China, b.v., temidden van de vier-honderd millioen onwedergeborenen, loven de dieren en de elementen de deugden des Heeren.

Misschien, dat de geheele psalm slaat op het bewuste loven van God.

Maar er zijn ook nog andere mogelijkheden. En die zijn, dat de dichter de plicht om God te loven bezingt, of dat hij uiting geeft aan den drang zijner ziel die hoopt en verlangt naar de vervulling van een zeer vromen wensch: dat God overal geloofd wierd!

Ik ben geneigd om te besluiten, dat de plicht om God te loven bezongen wordt. En zelfs meer dan plicht. Het is zoo duidelijk voor den dichter, dat God overal en ten allen tijde geloofd moet worden, dat hij eenvoudig zegt: het zij zoo!

“De Heere is hoog boven alle heidenen, boven de hemelen is Zijne heerlijkheid.”

Ziet ge wel, dat het gaat om Zijn deugden?

Heerlijkheid is uitstraling van al hetgeen lieflijk is en welluidt. Heerlijkheid is radiatie van deugd.

En in dit vers wordt bezongen de hoogheid van Gods deugden.

Een andere psalm spreekt over het geweldige van Gods deugden. Het gaat hier over de ontzaglijkheid dier deugden. Zij zijn hoog verheven boven alle heidenen. Die denken, dat zij zeer belangrijk zijn. Ze snoeven en ze roemen er op los, maar meer dan een ademtocht is het niet. Jesaja zegt, dat alle menschen tezamen een niet en een ijdelheid zijn. Maar God heeft de wereld geschapen. Hij is het die daar zit in het hooge en het verhevene en Zijn naam is de Heilige.

Niets en niemand benadert Hem. Dat is de gedachte hier.

En dat wordt nog versterkt door het tweede lid van den tekst. Hij is boven de hemelen.

De hemelen zijn schoon en hoog verheven. Maar zelfs die hemelen zijn niets vergeleken bij God. Hij woont in 't ontoegankelijk licht!

G. Vos.



Contribution

April 24, 1950

Esteemed Editor:

If you will permit me a question, I would like to know what is meant in re your comments upon Dr. Schilder's remarks in the Reformatie. It may be that due to my lack of a complete understanding of the Holland language, I have missed the point in my own translation. As I understand it, you make this distinction: You say that Dr. Schilder understood you to say of him—"That is Reformed". Whereas you say that you stated—"He is Reformed". I do not grasp the difference. To me it is, to use a simple illustration, like hearing a man curse. Whereupon, I say "He is a blasphemer". No, someone objects, *he* is not a blasphemer, but *that* is blasphemy. I ask, can we make that distinction, viz., "That is not Reformed", but "He is Reformed".

Respectfully,

George Ten Elshof.

Reply:

Perhaps not in the abstract. But I wrote in a very concrete connection. And in the article I made sufficiently plain why I prefer to be correctly quoted.

H. H.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10

VI.

In our last article we quoted Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. We noticed, that he most emphatically takes the position that it is both grammatically and exegetically correct to explain the phrase "and that is not out of you, it is the gift of God" as referring to "faith" in the former clause and not to the entire sentence. Paul here, accordingly, singles out *faith* through which we are saved as being the gift of God.

We also promised that he would give the late Dr. S. Greydanus a hearing. Let us attend to the explanation from his pen, quoted from his *Korte Verklaring* on Ephesians. We translate it as follows:

"Opinions differ as to whether these words belong with faith or with the entire sentence, for by (the) grace are ye saved through faith. The argument, that the word in the Greek text translated "faith" is feminine in gender, and that, therefore, the neuter pronoun cannot refer to this has no force, since we more often meet with this usage and construction in good Greek authors. Yet, it is not easy to make a decision in this matter. However, since the apostle has repeatedly stated in the former verses that salvation is purely out of grace (compare 2:4, 5, 7), it really is no longer necessary to emphatically repeat, as if it were a newly added element: And that is not of you, it is the gift of God. But the "faith" or rather "by faith" is a new concept in verse 8a, which had not yet been mentioned in the verses 1-7. It is, therefore, most natural to assume, that the apostle will now state of this just mentioned element of salvation (heilgoed) that this is not out of the believers, but it is the gift of God. To this must be added, that the saying: gift (that which is given) being prefaced with the definite article in the Greek, brings to mind some definite gift, which is given to us, and that it does not merely suggest a general disposition or arrangement. (algemeene beschikking of regeling)."

Thus far Dr. Greydanus.

In the above excerpt the professor weighs the grammatical and exegetical evidence in the text very carefully in favor of the interpretation which refers "that" to the concept "faith".

We, too, believe that the apostle here singles out "faith" and states of this that it most definitely is the *gift of God*. In the text as we received it in the Greek the emphasis falls on *God*. It is the gift of *God*. It is in no sense out of man. It is, therefore, wholly gift.

But just what is this faith that is so very great, wonderful, that it is called *the* gift; that it is called the gift of God?

In trying to understand just what the apostle means with the term "faith" in the sentence: by grace are ye saved through faith, we must bear in mind that it is not safe to let our dogmatic construction rule the exegesis of the text. In this case the dogmatical construction of soteriology (applied salvation). We may not *first of all* try to make the text *fit* a given dogmatic construction. That does not mean to say that we must ignore sound dogmatics. But it does mean that we try to read the text in the light of the meaning of the context and the entire broader context of the whole book in which it is found, as well as in the light of the entire Scripture.

The dictum is and must remain: Dogmatics may not *govern* exegesis.

Attempting to adhere to this sound rule in exegesis, we notice the following in the text concerning the term "faith".

In the first place we notice, that the term faith is here taken very general. It is really employed as general as possible. There is not such addition as faith of *Jesus Christ*. (Compare Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16, 20). Not the faith of the *operation of God*, that is, the being what God had wrought. See Col. 2:12. The matter is left as general as possible. It is simply by faith. Nothing more. It should also be noticed concerning this point of the generalness of the term faith that the *article* is lacking. Paul does not even say: *the* faith. He merely says: faith. He speaks as general as possible. There is only one faith, to be sure, and that is the faith in Christ. Well, this is the faith here meant. But then it is meant in its full general scope. It is the faith as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It is the faith by which the saints of old obtained a good report, because by this faith they lived and died happily and blessedly. (Heb. 11).

To this must be added, that the term "faith" is here most definitely contrasted with the term "works". Also here with the term "works" no article is employed. It is evident, that the term "works" as contrasted with the term "faith" refers not to the works, which the believer performs by faith as taught in verse 10, but that it refers to the works of law. These works of law were the terms under which the Old Covenant was ratified. These are the works which cannot justify a man before God. It is impossible that a man be justified by works of law which he performs. For this contrast of faith and works we refer the reader to Gal. 2:16, where we read: "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not

by the works of the law: because by works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Hence, all works of the law, of whatever nature they might be. There are but two sources from which one may live. It is either works and then live out of self, or it is out of grace and then by *means of faith* (the term "through" in Greek is *dia*). The contrast in the text, therefore, not only gives the line of limitation but also that of the widest scope of faith. It is the whole of faith as distinguished from "works".

Then, too, we learn from the text, that the term faith must not be separated from the rest of the phrase "by the grace are ye saved through faith". We must not for one moment forget that Paul wrote the connection too between "faith" and the "grace by which ye are saved". We must, therefore, not simply begin to dogmatize concerning the term faith. Rather we must try to see the relationship between the gift of salvation generally and the gift of "faith" in particular as taught in the text. If we are saved by grace, and if grace is indeed grace, so that nothing is out of us in all of Salvation, then faith, too, is a part of this great work of salvation. Faith can, therefore, not be a part that man must perform in his own strength of free-will! When we thus leave the text stand in its unity of thought then we not only destroy all Arminianism and Pelagianism, but we also do not fall into the error of a pure abstraction. Rather do we thus leave faith as it is a living reality in the life of the called and believing saints.

Now it is true, that the text singles out faith as the gift of God. But faith is such a gift as *faith*, that is as a new knowledge and confidence which is energized by the love of God shed forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is true that there are certain terms that should be employed to designate what faith is. There is the term "ingrafting". Thus it is employed in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII, where we read: Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved in Christ? No; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits by a true faith. This term of ingrafting is very helpful to help us understand the reality of the constant and abiding relationship of the believers to Christ. The tie is not made by the believer but by Christ. He comes to make His abode in our hearts. Even as the twig being ingrafted into the tree begins to receive the life of the tree and thus is made to conform to the tree, so also we being ingrafted into Christ receive our all out of him by faith. And so it is true that we may speak of faith as the tie that binds us to Christ; but we should bear in mind that this does not exhaust the meaning of the term faith, as it manifests itself in the full-orbed life of the Christian in the world.

The Bible, too, speaks of the vine and the branches. But this is figure of speech which must not be mis-

understood in its point of comparison. The only point of comparison is this, that even as the branch cannot live without the Vine so also we cannot live without receiving our all out of Christ. All the spiritual blessings in heavenly places are in Him for us by faith. And we cannot receive these by faith unless we receive faith as a gift, not only in its *first being wrought* in our hearts, but also in its *constantly being given* to us in the renewing of our strength by the Holy Spirit of God. We must not only be ingrafted into Christ once in regeneration, but we must be preserved in this grace of God also. And that latter too is God's gift to us. This is taught us in the figure of the Vine and the branches as to its positive side, that is, as the figure relates to the good and fruitful branches. And of these we are speaking, of these Paul is speaking in the text.

But there is always something in the reality of the life of the believer which the figure of the vine as vine in nature cannot teach. What is this element that the figure of the vine does not teach us? It is the spiritual element, the ethical question of love. In a vine in nature the branch does not consciously receive from the fulness of the vine. There is no ethical seeking in love, nor is there a matter here of hatred. Here is the merely biological function. But in the believer there is the free-choice, conscious seeking, knowing and trusting, and that, too, by virtue of the love of God shed forth in our hearts.

But to return to the matter of leaving faith stand in that proper context where Paul places it in the text. Writes he: "for by the grace are ye saved through faith." We stated that we must not lose sight of the connection between faith the salvation as it is here spoken of.

What is this salvation? The apostle says: By grace *are ye saved*. And that through faith. When we look at the text we are of the conviction that faith must here be understood not only in the sense of the first impartation of new life, but in the actual, constant and conscious sense as it is wrought through the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It is faith as we accept the benefits of Christ with a believing heart. (See Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 20, 60). It is faith as we look in humble trust unto God in Christ, trust alone in Him, know Him more and more with a saving knowledge of love, and, therefore, count all of our own righteousness to be so much loss and refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

And such knowledge of faith is represented as a constant activity; a receiving from the fulness of Christ our Lord, yea, grace for grace. We believe this is corroborated by the following in the text: First of all this follows from the fact that the *being saved* spoken of here in the text is a *being saved completely up to the present moment*. The Greek is the perfect

passive tense in paraphrastic form. This tense does not merely refer to past time, or to a degree of action finished in the past, but it refers to action completed up to the present moment. And that action is completed up to the present moment *by faith*. And in faith we have all by simply trusting in the mercies of God in Christ which are new every morning. And in this faith we hope for His tender and loving-kindness in the morning and we tell of His faithfulness every night. (On this point of the tense in this verb compare the *Standard Bearer* of March 1, 1950, p. 264, article by G. L.)

Secondly this is underscored by the fact that Paul is writing to the living Church called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The church at Ephesus had heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of our Salvation, and had been sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of Christ. Paul had heard of her faith in the Lord Jesus and of her love to all of the Saints. And it is because of this fact that he prayerfully instructs the church that she may be filled with faith-knowledge and faith-activity. (1:15-19). And in our text Paul is simply writing the church to show her how she is made the heritage of God by faith, and, therefore, all boasting is *constantly* excluded. For this is a constant salvation of grace (preservation and persevering) and hence we daily have a new evidence of grace and we also constantly have new and renewed reason to break forth into thanksgiving in a new walk and of obedience in the fruit of our lips.

(to be continued)

Geo. C. Lubbers.

* * * *

ANNIVERSARY

On May 17th, 1950, the Lord willing, our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Korhorn

will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Heavenly Father that He has spared for us, our Christian parents, these many years.

It is our prayer that the Lord may continue to bless them and grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. M. Veenstra

Mr. and Mrs. G. Korhorn

Mr. and Mrs. B. Korhorn

Mr. and Mrs. J. Kuiper

Mr. and Mrs. H. Velthouse

Mr. and Mrs. R. Bloem

and 28 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN HIS FEAR

Called To His Praise

The Militant Prophet (continued).

"You must not be so conceited as to think that only those in your churches are going to heaven. If I stay in my own church, I'll get to heaven just as well as you will." Such speech the militant prophet often hears when he fights for the truth, as he is called of God to do for the praise of His name.

But such speech reveals several things about that individual who utters it. It reveals, first of all, that the one so speaking is not able to deny the truth of your words. He really sees the inconsistency of his own stand. He realizes that your arguments hold and he cannot overthrow them. Therefore he does not want to continue along that way and strikes out in a new direction in order still to have something to say. And if possible he will by this method strive to put you in a corner. Such speech is surely an admission of defeat on the point being discussed. Further it means that he does not want to see the truth, and although he says that he will get to heaven as well as you, he wants to insist that in heaven his view will be maintained, even though he is not able to defend it here upon this earth. It means likewise that he does not realize very deeply his calling to praise God and has a very superficial and incorrect conception of heaven.

If, as God Himself declared through the mouth of Isaiah, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise," (Isaiah 43:21) then heaven surely is the place where this is realized in perfection. Then heaven exists for the glory of God and not in the first instance for the glory of man. Indeed, life in heaven will be indescribably glorious. The language of Revelation 21 and 22 is such that we are dazzled by the beauty of what is prepared for us. But we must not forget that it will be so wonderful and glorious just exactly because God willed eternally to glorify HIMSELF in that way of making a people to show forth His praises. The deepest reason for our salvation is not God's great love and mercy according to which He desires to deliver us for our pains and death in order to make us blessed forever. Such a view surely puts the glory of God on the shelf, so to speak. At the very least it puts man's glory above and before God's glory. But, rather, the deepest thing in God's counsel, that which determines everything else in His decree (or rather that whereby He determined all the rest in His decree) is His sovereign de-

cree to glorify Himself. Our glory is the *means* whereby He realizes that glory. And His glory is the *end* that our glorification must reach. That is plainly taught in the text just quoted. God forms us to be His people in order that we may show forth His praises. It is further taught in the Law of God when He declares there that He is a "jealous" God. For He is God alone, and He has therefore the sovereign right to be jealous. He may not allow us to have another God besides Himself, and He may not allow any creature to have any glory unto itself. He decrees glory for the creature that He Himself may thereby be glorified. And, of course, since He is the Creator and we are the creatures of His hands, our glory can never be anything more than a reflection of His glory. Finally, this same idea that we are glorified for the glory of God is expressed by the Apostle Paul from a somewhat different viewpoint in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen, when he declares in connection with the return of Christ in glory that this all takes place in order that "God may be all in all".

Bearing all this in mind we can return to our opening remarks. Many outside our churches shall go to heaven? Of course, who would dare to deny that! But on the other hand, who dares to say that we are a separate denomination and have our own unique doctrine because we think that we are the only ones that are going to heaven? Yea, we know better than to maintain that every single member of our denomination shall enter heaven's Glory. We have had to excommunicate, and we do not excuse the sinful walk of our members and say, well, all our people are going to heaven. But if a man outside our churches is going to heaven or whether a man inside our churches is going to heaven, surely that man will believe the truth, and he will never get there by way of the lie. By way of the lie we plunged into death, and the lie can never be a ladder whereon we climb into heaven. There must, therefore, be militant prophets to fight for that truth, to preserve it for generations yet to be born. For if directly or indirectly we deny any one of the cardinal truths of Scripture and prefer our lie to the truth, we simply will not enter the portals of heaven regardless to what denomination we belong.

And even apart from this all, that man who must change the subject and tell you that people in his church are going to heaven too, surely does not realize that *for the glory of God* he must strive for the truth, promote it, maintain it, defend it, speak it, and be willing to cast aside his philosophy that cannot be defended by the Scripture. THE question always is and must be HOW IS GOD GLORIFIED? Need we take you back to that beautiful prayer that Christ taught His disciples to show this to you? Before we are

taught to utter so much as one word for ourselves, we are taught to pray for the hallowing of God's Name, the coming of His Kingdom and the execution of His will. Here again GOD is FIRST, and then we may pray for daily bread, the forgiveness of sin and deliverance from temptation in order that we may be instrumental in the hallowing of that name, in the coming of His kingdom and in executing His will.

Does the lie hallow His Name? Is the coming of His kingdom furthered by the promotion and defence of the lie? Is His will done where men are taught a false conception of God and His righteousness and love? You see the prophet of God will have to fight. No, he does not have to fight you, and that he must not do, but he must militate against your false doctrines and wrong teachings. He will have to heed God's word and that word tells us to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Dare we, may we overlook the fact that the devil is still seeking to make man believe the lie? Nay, even that is not correctly stated. The devil does not labor to make us believe the lie, he strives to keep us from believing the truth. By nature we do believe the lie. Every man born into this world is full of the lie, and the devil does not need to station one of his henchmen next to every child born into this world in order to teach him the lie from infancy. He is born with a mind entirely devoid of the truth. But once God has operated in us by His Spirit, regenerating us and giving us the truth in our hearts by His Word and Spirit, the devil strives to keep that child from believing it. If one method does not work, if he cannot attain his end by the philosophies of the world, he will stir up men in the church to spread false doctrines. That is why we are told in Revelation 3:11 to hold fast that which we have and in II Thessalonians 2:15 to stand fast and hold the traditions which we have been taught. That all calls for a militant prophet. We must strive for the truth. A Roman Catholic once said to the undersigned, "Why are you Protestants always writing and preaching against us? We do not do these things to you." What the speaker of these words forgot was that the pages of history are full of records where the Roman Catholic Church did far more than write and speak against the children of God. It is an undeniable fact of history that the Roman Catholic Church shed blood like water to maintain itself in its doctrine which strives to rob God of His glory. But even more than that, had there not been militant prophets as Luther and Calvin where would your faith in the Christ of the Scriptures be? And not only the great Reformers were called to God's praise, not only they were called therefore to preserve, maintain, defend and fight for that teaching which renders to God the praise and glory due unto

Him, but you, reader, every one of God's children must defend, sustain further the truth FOR THE GLORY OF GOD and not for the praise of man, nor even because you want to go to heaven. Listen, if you do not want to fight for the truth because that is to God's glory, you do not want to go to the heaven God has prepared. You want a heaven that exists for you, and you want God to exist for you. God has prepared a heaven that exists for His glory and has made and redeemed His people for Himself. We exist for Him!

Therefore, in conclusion, we must say a few words about all this increase in the clamor for undenominationalism. In the first place, of course, that is impossible and pure nonsense as the facts bear out. "No creed but Christ" is their creed. But go there and insist then on having your infant baptized. You will soon find that they have a very definite creed which states: "No infant baptism". But do you not see that if we continue in that way, if we unite on the things wherein we can agree and resolve to cease to agitate on those things upon which we cannot agree, pretty soon we can extend a call to the antichrist to be our pastor and teacher? You may be sure that he will be willing to preach for you. And why bar the Roman Catholic then from membership in your undenominational church? He will agree with you on many things. Strange, is it not, that when we cry of undenominationalism there are some groups we like to leave out of our circle. We do after all form a denomination. But why then be a militant prophet to fight Roman Catholicism, Seventh Day Adventism, Christian Science, Modernism and their cousins and nephews, and say to others that differences of opinion on some things can be overlooked and union can be made on the things wherein we agree?

Nay, we may not allow *any* essential point of doctrine to be denied to *any* degree. For in the degree it is denied, God's glory is denied. So, prophets of the Living God, *contend* for the faith once delivered; hold fast to that which thou hast and be assured that it is pleasing in God's sight. Men may ridicule you. You may be called a "critic" or "old fashioned". Men may tell you that in the Church of God there should be peace. And truly there should. But let no man deceive you into thinking that this means that you must not fight for the truth. There can be no peace with the lie! Remember that God—let men say what they will—said that there would be constant enmity between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. And when the serpent brings the lie into the church, the prophet of God must be a militant prophet for the glory of God's name.

J. A. Heys.

ATTENTION

Synodical Delegates: — If you have made no arrangements for lodging during your stay here at Hull, Iowa, please inform our pastor, Rev. J. D. de Jong, Box 208, Hull, Iowa.

By order of Consistory of calling church.

* * * *

NORMAL COURSE FOR TEACHERS

The Synod of 1949 has instructed the Theological School Committee to execute its decision to have a normal training course for teachers in Protestant Reformed Schools. Such a course has now become a possibility. It will be a six-weeks course, to be given in Grand Rapids, beginning on the week of July 9, 1950. There will be three evening classes per week, with two hours per evening. An enrollment fee of \$5.00 will be charged to cover costs of supplies, incidentals, etc. Anyone interested in this course will kindly contact the secretary of the Theological School Committee before May 17.

The Theological School Comm.
per, Rev. J. Blankespoor, Sec'y
1513 Godfrey Ave., S. W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

—:—

WE FOLLOW THEE

With enemies on ev'ry side,
We lean on thee, the Crucified;
Forsaking all on earth beside
We follow thee.

O Master, point thou out the way,
Nor suffer thou our steps to stray;
Then in that path that leads today
We follow thee.

Thou hast passed on before our face;
Thy footsteps on the way we trace;
O, keep us, aid us by thy grace:
We follow thee.

Whom have we in the heaven above,
Whom on this earth, save thee, to love?
Still in thy light we onward move;
We follow thee.