

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Pentecostal Blessings

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

—Acts 2:1-4.

The glorious feast of Pentecost reveals the abject poverty of the world.

There is a show of feasting by the world when the Church of God celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. And also the Cross gathers the christianized (?) world in its gloomy shadows. There is even some celebration of Easter when they doff their new clothes and speak of the rebirth of nature. But they let Jesus ascend to heaven in a dark silence and they know nothing of Pentecost.

It is so severely spiritual!

If we are strangers to the Babe in the manger, we certainly are strangers to His return in the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing tangible in Pentecost. At Jesus' birth there is the manger and the wondering mother. When Jesus gave up the ghost He hung on a cross, and all external Christendom has talked and sung of that cross. But on Pentecost they see nothing but the fiery tongues and they hear the mystery of that rushing mighty wind. It is all so mysterious and strange. They can make nothing of it. And when they hear those fisherfolk speak in strange tongues, even as the Spirit gave them utterance, they turn away and say: They are drunken!

Natural man knows not the things of the Spirit.

How different is this with the real church of God! They understand for they are a spiritual people. They are born from above and have the firstfruit of that Spirit in their hearts. They are akin to that Spirit.

Let us meditate awhile on the first coming of that Holy Spirit of Christ.

Pentecost is for this dispensation the height of Divine Revelation.

Pentecost is the return of the beloved Lord. He fulfilled in its outpouring the promise that was given: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!



Pentecost!

Also the Old Testament knew it. It was the day when the harvest of the grain was reaped. After Easter they began to count. Easter, when the Lamb had been slaughtered and when the first sheave of the crop was moved before the face of God. And they would count until the feast of the seven weeks had come.

And so we read that Pentecost, the day of Pentecost was fully come. It means that the day of the Old Testament was fulfilled. And after its Old Testament fulfillment, the New Testament Pentecost did come. And that is our New Testament day of feasting, the fulfillment of the old.

And on that day the church of the New Testament had assembled. They had received an injunction from the mouth of Jesus just before His ascension. They should not depart from Jerusalem, but they should wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me!

They had waited.

No, there was nothing that would have induced them to remain in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had crucified the Lord of glory. And they abided in their rejection of the Redeemer of Israel. Time and again we read that they were behind locked doors for the fear of

the Jews. They realized their mortal danger in the wicked city of Jerusalem. But Jesus had forbidden them to leave. The fulfillment of the oft-repeated promise to the fathers would have to come in Jerusalem, and so they had waited.

The whole church is assembled in one place. That is emphasized. They are with one accord in one place.

It is so long ago, and yet we can somewhat imagine the sweet unity that bound these hundred and twenty souls together. They all loved the Lord. Oh, how glad they had been when finally they had all seen the Lord, and had all believed His wondrous resurrection. There was plenty to talk about! They must have rehearsed and rehearsed again the various appearances of the Lord and what He had said at these appearances.

The love of God and of His Christ bound them together, and that unity in the love of God would shine the more brightly after the promise of the Holy Spirit had been realized.

They are together with one accord in one place.  
And they wait.  
They wait for the New Testament Pentecost!



And suddenly!

Also note this: from heaven!

And: a rushing mighty wind!

There is something wonderful about that suddenness and that rushing act of Triune God.

God is in a hurry!

Again the fulness of time had come. There are many such fulnesses in the counsel of God. This was the fulness of time when God would send out His own love into the hearts of His beloved children. God had waited (?) 4000 years for this moment. And when it finally came God is in a great hurry to share His love with men, with men of His goodpleasure.

Do not read over that word: suddenly. You would miss one of the most wonderful characteristics of the day of Pentecost.

There is something indescribably beautiful in the sudden rush of a mother when she spies her lost child, the child that had been in mortal danger. When the child is seen by the loving eye of mother, she rushes suddenly forward to grasp the darling to her bosom and envelops it in the embrace of sweetest love. There is no love like the love of a mother. That is, on this earth.

But hold on!

There is a love that far transcends the love of all mothers, multiplied a million times. It is the love of God.

The fulness of time had come when the love of God

would be spread abroad in the hearts of His children as never before. And so there is that tender suddenness and that loving rush, even in the sound as of a mighty wind.

Neither is the Lord miserly when He comes to give Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ unto His church. Note that this mysterious and joyful sound as of a rushing mighty wind filled all the house where the church was gathered.

God gives and He gives plentifully. Even in the Old Testament we see glimpses of that overflowing grace. My cup is overflowing. And Joel sings of the veritable flood of the Holy Spirit that would come in "those days".

You see it also in nature.

Attend unto this wonderful fact: the Lord knows that His earthly creation needs the light of the sun. Well, He made a sun, and the scientists have figured out how much of the oceans of light of the sun are wasted (?). They have computed the amount of light that shines past the earth and that shines in other directions than toward the earth at all times. And the computed sums are staggering. You see, God is not niggardly when He blesses. He overloads us with His blessings.

It is in the very nature of the eternal.

When you go to a party to which you have looked forward with great eagerness, you are usually disappointed for the time comes altogether too fast when you must bid one another adieu. But God's party will last unto all eternity and the rivers of God's pleasures are full of water.

Pentecost is therefore the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit of grace.

Pentecost is beautifully plenteous!



But what do we see there?

There appeared upon them cloven tongues as of fire and it sat upon each of them.

And what do we hear?

These common fisherfolk begin to talk, and they speak strange languages.

And I am certain that no mistakes were made in grammar or pronunciation.

Pentecost is also God's grammar school.

Mighty wonders of God.

Let us look carefully on these several signs. They have a story to tell. A story of the love of God and its marvellous work unto the children of men.

First, there is the sound of that rushing mighty wind.

No, it was no wind. Nothing stirred on that day. I think that it belongs to the wonder, as people must have observed later, that Jerusalem enjoyed a great

calm in nature when this mysterious sound came down from heaven.

That wind! It is the Divine *ruach*, the sign of the Holy Ghost of God.

How fitting when God employs the natural and the earthy to reveal and teach the spiritual and the heavenly.

The wind, among us mortals, is the mysterious, that which is heard but not seen; it is the irresistible and the fitting symbol of almighty power. Ask this of the people that dwell in the middle West. They will tell you of the sudden cyclones and whirlwinds that come down from heaven upon them. And how the results of careful and long drawn-out labour is destroyed in a moment.

And so is the Holy Ghost which Jesus Christ received at His glorification in heaven, and which He is now pouring out upon His church.

That Spirit is the mysterious power which brings the Kingdom of heaven to fruition, which labors upon it and brings it to its final completion.

Christ spoke of that mysterious Wind to Nicodemus.

It is the power of God whereby the church is drawn from the depth of death and hell and damnation unto the loving arms of God.

It is through that Holy Ghost that we are born again.

The Holy Ghost is the Almighty Person, God out of God, who brings you all the blessings of God's eternal covenant.

That mysterious power dwells in your heart never to forsake you again.

He takes the Bible and whispers that Bible in your heart, and comforts you in deepest night.

And, oh, He is in a hurry to acquaint you with all the goodness and all the love of God.

A mysterious, a loving, a rushing power is the love of God.



And then that column of fire!

I conceive of it as an appearance of a great column of fire, above the heads of the 120 disciples, and darting downward were those cloven tongues, each pointing to an individual member of that first New Testament Church.

And what does it mean?

First, fire purges, cleanses. It does that in the natural. I remember the day when the physician would give his needles and other instruments a baptism of actual fire in order to destroy all bacterial life that might inhabit his tools and endanger the incision he was about to make.

And so the fire of God's love purges the church. It burns out all impurities and it heals. Did you ever hear of the effect of cauterizing?

Second, it sanctifies.

We speak of the fire of enthusiasm. And rightly so.

God's Holy Spirit of Christ sanctifies the Church. He sets us on fire with Divine and heavenly enthusiasm. And it is because of this heavenly visit of fire that the saints loved not their lives unto death. They had something in them that was more precious than the natural love a man has for his life on earth.

But fire also destroys, it burns and consumes.

Pentecost is loveable, glorious, heavenly. It sings of sweet strains of the music that is heavenly. But it also howls and roars of the wrath of God when by the Spirit of His mouth He will consume the wicked from off the face of the earth.



And, finally, there is that miracle of the tongues. It comes last, and that is fitting.

You have all heard of the confusion of the speech of man. It is the story of Babel. We have heard of it in our first catechism classes.

Well, this Babel is now healed.

Attend to the speakers of the first day of Pentecost.

They all speak in strange tongues. And their speech is about the wonderful works of God.

Babel is healed. For the whole multitude hears but one sermon: the praises of God Almighty.

O Pentecost, thou art wonderful to us that live in this day.

The Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus dwells in us, in the entire church of Jesus Christ.

It envelops the entire church, not one is missed. (Did you note that the controversy of "false" brethren does not even come up?)

They are all filled with the Holy Ghost. They are all purged by that Spirit and they are all sanctified by that Spirit.

And the whole church unites in the praises of God. His wonderful works are proclaimed throughout the earth.

Do you think that it is any different now?

Oh no, God knows them who are His.

A controversy as to who has the promise and who has not? Let us reduce it to this question: Who has the Holy Spirit of Pentecost?

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His!"

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

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### As To Conditions

Once more we meet with the term *condition* in the Canons of Dordrecht, and again the word is put in the mouth of the Remonstrants. It is found in Chapter V, Rejection of Errors, 1: "The true doctrine having been explained, the Synod rejects the errors of those:

"Who teach: That the perseverance of the true believers is not a fruit of election, or a gift of God, gained by the death of Christ, but a condition of the new covenant, which (as they declare) man before his decisive election and justification must fulfill through his free will. For the Holy Scripture testifies that this follows out of election, and is given the elect in virtue of the death, the resurrection and intercession of Christ: 'But the elect obtained it and the rest were hardened.' Rom. 11:7. Likewise: 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Rom. 8:32-35."

The question here, therefore, is whether the grace of perseverance is conditional or unconditional. We know that in Art. 5 of the well-known Remonstrance that was composed in Gouda, 1610, the Arminians made that grace of God unto the perseverance of the saints conditional and contingent upon the free-will of man. They did not say so in so many words, but nevertheless plainly suggested it in the following article: "Those who are grafted into Christ by a true faith, and therefore partake of his vivifying Spirit, have abundance of means by which they may fight against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and obtain the victory, always, however, by the aid of the grace of the Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ assists them by His Spirit in all temptations, and stretches out his hand; and provided they are ready for the contest, and seek his aid, and are not wanting to their duty, he strengthens them to such a degree that they cannot be seduced or snatched from the hands of Christ by any fraud of Satan or violence, according to that saying, John 10:28, 'No one shall pluck them out of my hand.' But whether these very persons cannot, by their own negligence, desert the commencement of their being in Christ, and embrace again the present world, fall back from the holy doctrine once committed to them, make shipwreck of their conscience, and fall

from grace; this must be more fully examined and weighed by the Holy Scriptures before men can teach it with full tranquility of mind and confidence." That already in this article itself the grace of perseverance is made contingent upon the will and the efforts of man is plain, for instance, from the words "provided they are ready for the contest, and seek his aid, and are not wanting to their duty, he strengthens them to such a degree that they cannot be seduced or snatched from the hands of Christ by any fraud of Satan or violence." And besides, at the close of this article they plainly suggest that before they can accept the Reformed truth of the perseverance of the saints, it must be made plain to them from Holy Scripture. The final result was that the followers of Arminius so modified this article that it asserted the possibility of falling away from grace. And in the article of the Canons which we quoted above it is plainly stated that according to the Arminians perseverance is not a fruit of election, but a condition of the new covenant, so perseverance is another condition in order to remain in the covenant of God.

Now in order to understand the question that here concerns us, we do well to distinguish between two aspects of what is usually simply called perseverance, the aspects, namely, of preservation and perseverance.

The first aspect refers to the divine factor, the second to the human factor in the perseverance of the saints. The first may be called that act of God whereby through His almighty power and efficient grace He keeps the elect in the midst of the world, in the midst of all temptations of Satan, the world, and their own sinful flesh, in such a way that they can never permanently and ultimately fall away from grace and fail to obtain the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that never fadeth away. The second aspect is the act of man, that is, of the regenerated child of God, of the believer, whereby he fights against sin and the devil and the world, keeps his garments clean, and has the ultimate victory.

The all-important question is, of course: what is the relation between these two aspects, between the act of God in preservation and the act of the believer in perseverance?

Is it such, that in the power of God the believer is utterly passive? Does God preserve him as a stock and block unto the final salvation? Does the act of preservation mean that God simply holds his hand, and that therefore he is perfectly safe? May the preservation of believers unto salvation be compared to a man that buys a ticket in a Pullman car and simply goes to sleep until the angels wake him up at the station called heaven? Some seem to think that this conception of preservation and perseverance is very Reformed indeed. God, they say, must do it all, and any conception as if man himself must put forth effort

in order to be saved and to persevere in the midst of the world is considered Arminianism. Yet this is not the case. The grace of preservation never works this way. God's part of the covenant, although He performs it alone and unconditionally, never excludes man's part, for the simple reason that the grace of God always works in and through man as a rational, moral agent.

On the other hand, the question may be asked whether in preservation and perseverance man is ever first. That, of course, is fundamentally the conception of all Arminians and Pelagians and also of all kinds of Synergists, that speak of a cooperation between God and man so that each does his share in the work of salvation. They present the work of preservation as wholly or in part contingent upon man's perseverance. The believer cannot persevere without the grace of God, they admit; but God will give that grace only on condition that man really wants it, asks for it, and earnestly strives to persevere. God helps those that help themselves. Hence, the will of man and his earnest effort unto perseverance is the prerequisite, or condition, unto God's act of preservation. In that case there is no real perseverance of the saints. A chain depends for its strength on its weakest link. And if, say, some forty-nine links of a chain consist of a strong steel, while the fiftieth link is a silk thread, the chain is useless. And if the preservation of God, no matter how strong it is in itself, is contingent upon the weak will of man, there is no perseverance of the saints whatever.

Hence, our Reformed fathers repudiated both of these views. They must have nothing of the stock-and-block theory, nor must they have anything of the Arminian error of man's perseverance as a condition unto God's preservation.

They proceeded, as always, from unconditional election, from that to unconditional preservation, and, on the basis of this, to perseverance as a fruit of preservation. Thus it is evidently in the article which we quoted above, and thus it is in all the articles on the perseverance of the saints as taught in the Canons of Dordrecht.

According to election God gives them the grace of preservation unconditionally and efficaciously. They are preserved in the power of God, according to I Pet. 1:4. He works within them to will and to do, according to Phil. 2:13. This work of God is absolutely first and unconditional. There can never be any conditions which man must fulfill as prerequisites for the work of God. Nevertheless, this power of God is not like a strong fortress in which man can afford to wait effortless and feel perfectly safe. On the contrary, the believer is preserved in the power of God, but also through faith. And that means that this power of God unto preservation works in and through him as

a rational, moral creature, so that he fights the good fight of faith even unto the end, that no one may take his crown. The grace of preservation is God's part in the covenant. But the grace of perseverance is man's part, which always is the fruit of God's part.

But these two parts are never so related that man's part is a condition which he must fulfill in order that God may fulfill His part.

The grace of God is always unconditional.

H. H.



## For Our Synod

Just two days ago, May 18, I received the following correspondence from the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (not those maintaining Art. 31).

Because it is addressed directly to our Synod, and, therefore, this assembly shall have to take some action, I hasten to publish it in *The Standard Bearer*, in order that we, and especially the delegates to Synod, may become acquainted with its contents.

I had no time to translate it. So here it follows in the Dutch language:

### A. THE LETTER.

Deputaten van De Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland voor de Herziening Kerkorde.

Aan de Synode van de  
Prot. Reformed Church of America,  
adres:  
Rev. H. Hoeksema  
1139 Franklin St., S. E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Weleerwaarde en Eerwaarde Heren en Broeders,

In opdracht van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, gehouden te 's-Gravenhage (1949), richten zich haar Deputaten voor de herziening van de Kerkorde tot U met het volgende:

De genoemde Synode heeft besloten de generale herziening van de Kerkorde ter hand te nemen. De tekst van het besluit evenals het rapport van de commissie, dat aan dit besluit ten grondslag ligt, vindt U als bijlagen aan dit schrijven toegevoegd.

Het is op grond daarvan, dat Deputaten U verzoeken Uw oordeel te willen uitspreken over een dergelijke herziening van de Kerkorde en te willen mededelen, of U bereid zijt over deze aangelegenheid met hen in nader overleg te treden.

Er is stellig een groot belang mede gediend, wan-

neer de Kerken, die de aloude Kerkorde van Dordrecht, hetzij gewijzigd hetzij ongewijzigd, nog altijd volgen, bij alle onvermijdelijk verschil voor wat betreft de bijzondere bepalingen, er naar streven ten opzichte van de voornaamste richtlijnen van kerkinrichting en kerkregering zooveel mogelijk de eenheid blijvend te bewaren.

Deputaten zullen het op prijs stellen eventuele suggesties, die aan de bedoelde zaak ten goede zouden kunnen komen, van U te mogen vernemen. In geval van een gunstig antwoord verwachten zij, dat U eveneens deputaten zult benoemen en instrueren. Zulks zou het nader overleg over deze gewichtige kwestie vergemakkelijken.

Het correspondentie-adres van deputaten is:

Prof. Dr. D. Nauta,  
Vondelstraat 182  
Amsterdam-W.

U in Uw arbeid te leiding des Geestes toebiddende,  
bijl: afschrift besluit  
afshr. rapport

Amsterdam, 10 Mei 1950.

Namens Deputaten:

(L. ten Kate), Secretaris.  
(D. Nauta), Voorzitter,

### B. DECISION OF SYNOD.

Besluit van de Generale Synode 's-Gravenhage 1949  
Inzake Herziening Kerkorde (art. 341).

De Synode, *overwegende*,

- a. dat verschillende artikelen der kerkenorde aanleiding hebben gegeven en ook metterdaad kunnen geven tot misverstand en verschil van mening;
- b. dat door de kerken allerlei arbeid van zending, van evangelisatie en van andere aard is ter hand genomen, die in overeenstemming moet geacht worden met de haar door Gods Woord toevertrouwde, taak, en waarvan toch in de kerkenorde vrijwel in 't geheel niet gerept wordt;

Besluit:

1. de generale herziening van de kerkenorde ter hand te nemen en daartoe de noodige voorbereidende maatregelen te treffen;
2. vijf deputaten aan te wijzen aan wie opgedragen wordt:
  - a. zich in verbinding te stellen met andere kerken, die de Dordtsche Kerkenorde, hetzij gewijzigd, hetzij ongewijzigd, onderhouden, in 't bijzonder die kerken met welke onze kerken in correspondentie staan om haar oordeel te vernemen over een generale herziening van de kerkenorde, speciaal ook over de



vraag in hoever zij zelf behoefte gevoelen aan een dergelijke herziening; en of zij bereid zijn over deze aangelegenheid met onze kerken in overleg te treden;

b. zich nader te beraden over de wijze waarop en de geest waarin een generale herziening van de kerkenorde tot stand gebracht moet worden; en

c. van hun bevindingen onder overlegging van nadere voorstellen, rapport uit te brengen aan de volgende Generale Synode, welke rapport zooveel mogelijk zes maanden van tevoren aan de kerken zal toegezonden worden.

### C. COPY OF REPORT.

Afschrift van het Rapport aan de Generale Synode 's-Gravenhage 1949, inzake Herziening Kerkorde.

#### COMMISSIE IV

Letter: Varia 29, 30 sub.

Rapporteur: Prof. D. Nauta.

In handen van Uw commissie werd gesteld een voorstel, ingediend door de Part. Synode van Zuid-Holland-N., aldus luidende:

“De Partic. Synode van de Geref. Kerken in Zuid-Holland (N.G.), gelezen hebbende de voorstellen:

a. van de Dep. Gen. Synode, “inzake de positie van predikanten, die in dienst staan van de Kerken in het algemeen” om art. 13 K.O. te wijzigen; en

b. van de Dep. Gen. Synode voor de armenverzorging om art. 41, 47 en 50 K.O. te wijzigen; overwegende, dat onderscheidene andere artikelen, of niet juist zijn (b.v. art. 2), of noodig duidelijker geformuleerd moeten worden (b.v. art. 31a en de artt. 79 en 80), of archaïstische uitdrukkingen bevatten (b.v. art. 8, 21, 26, enz.), stelt voor:

deputaten te benoemen, die tot taak hebben, aan de Gen. Synode een proeve van een herziening van de K.O. aan te bieden en het opstellen van deze proeve zoo mogelijk te verrichten in samenwerking met andere Kerken, die dezelfde K.O. hebben”.

Hiermede wordt een uiterst belangrijk onderwerp aan de orde gesteld, dat zonder eenige twijfel recht heeft op de volle belangstelling der Kerken. Wij werken nog altijd met een kerkorde, die in heel haar opzet en uitdrukkingwijze afkomstig is uit de 16e en 17e eeuw. Wel heeft er in 1905 een generale wijziging plaats gehad, maar deze droeg toch een zeer beperkt karakter. Ook daarna zijn er nog wel in sommige artikelen kleine veranderingen of aanvullingen aangebracht. En in 1933 heeft de Synode van Middelburg zelfs een geheel nieuw artikel tussengevoegd, dat betrekking heeft op een onderwerp, vreemd aan de struc-

tuur der oude kerkorde en dat handelt over de stoffelijke aangelegenheden aan de kerken gemeen. Maar steeds hebben de kerken in onze eeuw er tegen gewaakt ingrijpende wijzigingen aan te brengen. Meer dan eens werden voorstellen om bepaalde aangelegenheden in de kerkorde te regelen, terzijde geschoven op grond van de overweging, dat al mochten die zaken, op zichzelf genomen, aanbevelenswaardig of wenselijk zijn, het toch de voorkeur verdiende ze niet in de kerkorde op te nemen, doch hiermede geduld te oefenen tot tijd en wijle generale revisie der kerkorde aanhangig gemaakt mocht worden. Men heeft er angstvallig naar gestreefd den bestaanden tekst der oude kerkorde zooveel mogelijk intact te bewaren.

Het is in dit verband niet noodig naar de beweegredenen voor dit standpunt een omstandig onderzoek in te stellen. Uw commissie wil volstaan met een verwijzing naar wat dienomtrent eens door Prof. Rutgers werd opgemerkt (Verklaring van de Kerkenordening, dl. IV, Uitgeg. door J. de Jong, blz. 183 v). Hij wijst op het gevaar, dat de Synode, door al te spoedig en al te licht over te gaan tot het aanbrengen van wijzigingen, een belangrijk deel van haar taak zou gaan zoeken in het bijhouden van de kerkorde en dat zij min of meer bureaucratisch te werk zou gaan. Voorts draagt volgens hem een dergelijk streven er toe bij, dat de kerkorde een al te grote en onnodige uitbreiding ontvangt. Zij dreigt op die manier tot een omvangrijken bundel uit te dijen, zoodat de kerken in haar eigen kerkorde niet meer de weg zouden weten.

Naar de mening van Uw commissie is er bij de tegenzin om te geraken tot wijziging van de kerkorde nog wel een ander motief in het spel geweest. Op de achtergrond moeten wij stellig ook min of meer zien werken de vrees, dat door het op eenigszins ruime schaal aanbrengen van veranderingen in de kerkorde allerlei moeite veroorzaakt en de kloof met anderverwante kerkgenootschappen verbreed worden. Men wilde zich wapenen tegen het mogelijk postvatten van de gedachte, dat de kerken, door in de kerkorde belangrijke wijzigingen aan te brengen, feitelijk bezig zouden zijn een breuk met de erfenis der vaderen te werkstelligen.

Uit het aangehaalde moet men niet afleiden, dat Prof. Rutgers een volstrekt tegenstander zou zijn geweest van het wijzigen der kerkorde. Hij verzette zich tegen incidentele veranderingen. Een generale wijziging achtte hij echter te eniger tijd wel denkbaar: “Maar—zo verklaarde hij—voor een generale wijziging is nodig, dat er in de kerken zelve genoegzame kerkrechtelijke kennis is en dat er een genoegzaam aantal personen is, die met kennis van zaken er hun oordeel over kunnen uitbrengen. . . . Het is niet gemakkelijk om eene kerkordening, die een groot aantal beginselen stelt, en waarin eenheid is, en die de Geref. Lijn volgt, te wijzigen. Daarvoor is genoeg-

zaam kerkrechtelijk besef noodig. Men moet dan goed thuis zijn in de beginselen en in de geschiedenis der artikelen.

Het zal uit den aard de zaak nuttug zijn, aan de hier door Prof. Rutgers gegeven wenken volle aandacht te schenken. Dit moet evenwel ook niet in een al te sterke zin gebeuren. Want dan zou het wel eens kunnen zijn, dat de Kerken een generale revisie van de kerkorde nooit zouden aandurven. Wanneer toch zal men vrijmoedigheid hebben om met besliste overtuiging te verzekeren, dat er in de kerken een genoegzaam kerkrechtelijk besef aanwezig is?

Nu zijn er naar de mening van Uw commissie momenteel dringende redenen, die er toe moeten nopen de taak van een generale wijziging van de kerkorde ter hand te nemen. Wat de door Prof. Rutgers genoemde bezwaren betreft, deze zijn althans ten dele ondervangen door de omstandigheid, dat sedert hij in de aangehaalde zin zich uitgesproken heeft, op kerkrechtelijk gebied heel wat gepubliceerd werd, waardoor de kennis van de beginselen van het Gereformeerde kerkrecht en die van de geschiedenis van de artikelen der kerkorde aanmerkelijk verbeterd en bevorderd is.

Als eerste reden voor het aanvatten van een generale wijziging der kerkorde wil Uw commissie het volgende noemen. Er is in de laatste jaren een toenemende neiging aan de dag getreden om in bepaalde artikelen van de kerkorde verandering en aanvullingen op te nemen, die soms van vrij ingrijpende aard waren. Met een verwijziging naar een mogelijke generale revisie der kerkorde in de toekomst neemt men in de kerken niet meer genoegen.

De tweede reden, die evenals de vorige ook door de Particuliere Synode van Zuid-Holland (N.G.) aangevoerd wordt, betreft de formulering van verschillende artikelen der kerkorde. Deze is op veel punten niet zoo duidelijk voor de tegenwoordige lezer, als bij een dergelijk statuut van de kerk als onafwijsbare eis behoort gesteld te worden. Dat gemis aan duidelijkheid is een uitvloeisel van het gebruik van verouderde termen en uitdrukkingen of ook van een minder scherpe en preciese omschrijving, die telkens weer aanleiding geeft tot misverstand.

Speciaal moet in dit verband nog gememoreerd worden het punt, dat naar voren gebracht is in het schrijven van de kerk van Harlingen, dat door de Particuliere Synode van Friesland (N.G.) doorgezonden werd en dat is een ander rapport van Uw commissie reeds opzettelijke behandeling heeft gevonden (A. 14). Deze kerk heeft namelijk de aandacht gevestigd op de moeilijkheden, die men bij het voeren van processen voor de burgerlijke rechter heeft gevonden als gevolg van een onduidelijke en minder scherpe formulering van sommige artikelen der kerkorde.

Hierbij valt ook te vermelden, het punt, dat de kerkeraad van 's-Gravenhage West in zijn schrijven onder 20 aan uw Synode heeft voorgelegd. In dit schrijven verzoekt de kerkeraad te willen nagaan, of het mogelijk en gewenst is maatregelen tot veiligstelling der kerkelijke goederen te nemen voor die gevallen, waarin de kerkeraad mocht besluiten tot verbreking van het kerkelijk verband, doch de meerderheid der gemeente zich daarmede niet kan verenigen. Naar de mening van Uw commissie is het niet mogelijk voor een dergelijk geval terstond een oplossing aan de hand te doen. Maar wellicht zouden de deputaten die uw commissie wil voorstellen, te benoemen, zich over deze kwestie nader kunnen bezinnen. Zij zouden dan bij de generale revisie van de kerkorde, die mettertijd tot stand gebracht zal worden, ook met deze kwestie kunnen rekenen.

Uw commissie ontveinst zich niet, dat bij de bespreking van de hier bedoelde punten verschil van mening aan de dag zal treden en dat het niet altijd gemakkelijk zal blijken daarbij tot eenheid van overtuiging te komen. Maar deze overweging mag er naar haar oordeel niet toe leiden, van de revisie der kerkorde af te zien. Want ook zonder dat men daartoe overgaat, zijn de bedoelde geschilpunten aanwezig, zij het alleen op meer bedekte wijze. Door het verzwijgen der kwesties worden zij allerm minst opgeheven. Veel juister is het, ze ernstig onder ogen te zien en met elkander te bespreken, om langs deze weg naar een oplossing te streven, die bevredigend werkt.

Nog een derde reden, die in het voorstel van de Particuliere Synode van Zuid-Holland (N.G.) niet vermeld wordt, pleit ten gunste van het aanvatten eener generale revisie. Er heeft zich in de loop der jaren met betrekking tot de arbeid, die de kerken op zich nemen, een vrij belangrijke verandering voltrokken. Dit is reeds begonnen, toen de kerken zich met kracht gingen toeleggen op het volbrengen van haar zendings-taak. Hierbij is het evenwel niet gebleven. Want steeds meer is het besef doorgedrongen, dat de kerken ook op het gebied van de evangelisatie niet mochten stilzitten, maar een dure roeping in de wereld hebben te vervullen. Ook voor de geestelijke verzorging van allerlei categorieën onder de leden der kerk, die onder bijzondere omstandigheden verkeren, en voor de verzorging van verstrooide Gereformeerden, die naar het buitenland trokken, zijn door de kerken verschillende maatregelen getroffen. Er heeft zich dusdoende een veelzijdige kerkelijke arbeid ontwikkeld, waarvan in de kerkorde vrijwel met geen woord wordt gerept.

Natuurlijk heeft de kerk met het oog op dit alles wel bepalingen en regelingen gemaakt. Wat betreft de arbeid van de zending heeft men de oplossing gezocht in het ontwerpen van een afzonderlijke Zendings-orde, waarheen in de kerkorde slechts een formele verwijzing gegeven werd. Maar op de duur heeft



dit geen bevrediging geschonken. Onbedoeld werd op die manier de gedachte in de hand gewerkt, dat het zendingswerk een plaats zou innemen naast het gewone kerkelijke leven. De kerkorde zou zich kunnen beperken tot de regeling van dat gewone leven, waarmede allen in de kerken te maken hebben. In de zendingsorde vond men verwerkt wat misschien op zichzelf ook wel belangrijk was, maar toch geen aanspraak behoefde te maken op de belangstelling en het medeleven van allen in de kerken. In latere jaren is toen terecht de gedachte naar voren gekomen, of het niet overweging verdiende in de kerkorde zelve ook te noemen de algemene beginselen en richtlijnen, waardoor de arbeid der zending beheerscht wordt, en alleen de nadere uitwerking en toepassing daarvan te verwijzen naar bijzondere regelingen.

De Synode van Sneek (1939), art. 160, besloot daarom deputaten te benoemen met de opdracht te adviseren "inzake de wenselijkheid om de afzonderlijke zendingsorde te doen vervallen en de algemene bepalingen betreffende de zending in de Kerkenordening op te nemen".

De omstandigheden, die een geheel nieuwe oriëntering der zending noodzakelijk maakten, waren oorzaak, dat deze deputaten nog steeds niet hun opdracht hebben kunnen uitvoeren.

Reeds hier zij opgemerkt, dat, mocht de Synode op het voorstel van uw commissie ingaan, het aanbeveling verdient de bedoelde deputaten van hun taak te ontheffen en deze opdacht nu te leggen in handen van nieuwe deputaten, die een veel ruimere taak krijgen te volbrengen.

Heeft men in het verleden een afzonderlijke zendingsorde tot stand gebracht, iets dergelijks is daarna niet gebeurd ten opzichte van de arbeid der Evangelisatie en van het werk onder de verstrooiden en andere dergelijke arbeid. De kerken hebben dienomtrent allerlei uitspraken gedaan en bepalingen gemaakt, maar dat alles heeft men buiten de kerkorde gelaten en ook zijn er daarvoor geen afzonderlijke ordeningen ontworpen.

Natuurlijk kan het niet de bedoeling zijn al de regelingen, die op deze veelzijdige arbeid betrekking hebben in de kerkorde te doen opnemen. Zulks zou in strijd komen met het karakter van de kerkorde. Niettemin is het, naar de mening van uw commissie, onjuist, wanneer daarover geheel of vrijwel geheel gezwegen wordt. Die arbeid vormt een inhaerent bestanddeel van de taak, die de kerken te verrichten hebben. En daarom is het noodzakelijk, dat daarover in de kerkorde ook de voornaamste richtlijnen staan aangegeven.

Al het gezegde brengt er uw commissie toe de Synode te adviseren het voorstel van Zuid-Holland (N.G.) aan te nemen en deputaten te benoemen, die deze aangelegenheid verder zullen hebben voor te be-

reiden. Het zal echter voor deze deputaten niet wel doenlijk zijn reeds aan de volgende Synode een proeve van herziening der kerkorde aan te bieden. Een periode van drie jaren is daarvoor veel te kort, als men bedenkt, dat deputaten zich eerst in verbinding zullen moeten stellen met andere kerken, die eveneens de Dordtsche kerkorde, hetzij gewijzigd, hetzij ongewijzigd, volgen en met welke onze kerken in correspondentie staan. Zij zullen bij deze kerken moeten informeren, of wellicht ook door haar behoefte gevoeld wordt aan een grondige herziening van de kerkorde en of zij bereid zijn tezamen met onze kerken over deze materie te handelen.

Voorlopig zal de taak van deputaten er zich dan toe moeten bepalen om mede met behulp van de gegevens, die zij uit andere kerken ontvangen, zich een inzicht te vormen omtrent de geest, waarin de herziening der kerkorde tot stand gebracht behoort te worden, en omtrent de maatstaven die daarbij dienst zullen moeten doen. Eerst wanneer te dien aanzien voldoende helderheid is verkregen en de kerken tot overeenstemming zijn gekomen, kan het tijdstip aanbreken om een uitgewerkte proeve op te stellen en bij de kerken in te dienen. Als deputaten reeds in eerste instantie daartoe zouden overgaan, zouden zij de kans lopen allerlei vergeefse arbeid te verrichten.

H. H.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Counsel Of God. (12)

#### *Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism.*

In this article we were to call attention to the Scriptural proof for the supralapsarian presentation of the truth. Let us have this supralapsarian conception clearly in our minds. Infralapsarianism believes that the Lord elected and reprobated out of a fallen human race, and that the latter is that Divine decree whereby He sovereignly decided to leave men in their common misery into which they had wilfully plunged themselves. Supralapsarianism, however, declares that the Lord elected and reprobated a "to be created and to fall" human race. The supralapsarian definitely views the fall and sin as Divine means which the Lord sovereignly willed unto the greatest glory of His Name. He simply places the Lord at the helm of all things, declares that Jehovah is at the controls, always and with respect to everything.

The decisive question is, of course: Does Scripture teach the supralapsarian conception, bearing in mind that any order in the counsel of God must be conceived of not in the temporal sense but logically. And the answer is emphatically: It does!

However, before we turn to the Scriptures for this confirmation of the supralapsarian conception, I would make a few more remarks in connection with the Infralapsarian view. Firstly, a Divine permission of things is surely impossible. For the Lord to permit something to happen, to leave men in their common misery, to pass them by, to ignore them, is certainly impossible. The expression: Divine permission, is a contradiction in terms. There is no such thing, and such a thing is simply impossible. The Lord is never passive. Calvin and Augustine saw this very clearly. That a Divine permission is impossible is simply because the Lord is God. And as the living God He is omnipresent. And the omnipresence of the Lord also implies that he is imminent, in all things, that He is directly in touch with every living thing and also every part of each living thing. God, we understand, is always active, constantly executing His counsel, carrying out His will. The Scriptures are full of this truth. The entire passion history of our Lord Jesus Christ had been outlined in detail in the Old Testament, and this constituted for the Saviour a program which He must follow and fulfil. And the reason why such a program could have been given in the Old Testament is simply because the entire passion history (including the part of wicked men, we understand) had been sovereignly willed by the Lord in His eternal counsel

and would be realized by Him according to His determinate counsel and foreknowledge. And so we could go on. A Divine permission, a passive permitting of things, is a monstrosity, an impossibility, a denial of the truth that the Lord is God and He alone.

Secondly, the Infralapsarian conception of God's counsel must presuppose a certain foreknowledge on the part of God. This lies in the nature of the case. He begins, in the counsel of the Lord, with a fallen human race. But how did it happen that that human race fell? Not to teach that the fall and sin of man is the result of the sovereign will of Jehovah implies that the Lord must have foreknown that calamity. And, foreknowing the fall of the human race, the Lord proceeded accordingly, elected some out of that fallen human race unto glory and leaving others in their common misery into which they had filfully plunged themselves. This, we say, must be the inevitable teaching of Infralapsarianism. But, then one teaches a certain foreknowledge of God. And this the infralapsarian rejects as well as the suprasapsarian, i.e., a conception of Divine foreknowledge. Nevertheless, upon the infralapsarian standpoint, one must conclude that such a foreknowledge of the Lord exists.

Thirdly, we would briefly call attention in this connection to Matt. 11:25-26, where we read: "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." Reading the text hastily, one might conclude that this passage is a strong proof for the infralapsarian conception. We read, do we not, that the Lord has *hidden* (not revealed) these things from the wise and prudent, and that such was also the good pleasure of the Lord. But let us notice the following. We also read in this text that the Father has revealed them unto babes. These babes, we understand, the opposite of the wise and prudent, refer to the people of God who have become babes, the weary and heavy-laden of verse 28, those who in their own consciousness have become small, babes. But does this mean that these babes first existed and that the Lord then revealed the things of the Kingdom of Heaven unto them? This, however, would be the arminian doctrine of foreknowledge, of an action on the part of the living God which was determined by the fact that we first become spiritual babes. And; this is impossible. Also the infralapsarian knows that such a presentation of the truth can never be maintained. Is it not clear, then, that this act of the Father, *revealing these things unto them*, must have had something to do with their becoming babes? The relation here is that of cause and effect. God revealed these things unto them and they, as a result of this Divine action, became babes; and He continued to reveal these

things unto them with the result that they continued to be babes, and that they, as babes, received this revelation and could only as babes receive this Divine revelation. But, if this be true, then the same interpretation of the truth must also be applied to the foregoing part in the text: Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent. This "hiding" action of the Lord surely implies more than a mere negative action on the part of the living God. When the Lord "hides" things from the wise and prudent this does not merely signify that He fails to reveal these things unto them. The Lord's "hiding" of these things is surely a positive action, an action by the Lord whereby He blinds and darkens the hearts and minds of men, so that they indeed are hardened, become ever more wise and prudent in their knowledge and conceit. Do not the Scriptures abundantly teach us that such a hardening, blinding action by the Lord occurs in the hearts and minds of those whom He has not known from before the foundation of the world? The same causal relation exists between this "hiding" action by the Lord upon the wise and prudent as between the revealing action by God upon the spiritual babes. And all this happens because "so it seemed good in the sight of the Father". The infralapsarian may, therefore, find little consolation in Matt. 11:25, 26.

We began this article, however, with the remark that the decisive question is whether the Scriptures support the supralapsarian conception of the counsel of God. We may now proceed. In the first place, we call attention to the fact that the Scriptures ascribe all things, also the acts of all moral-rational creatures, to the sovereign God. To be sure, we must maintain the responsibility of man. However, we must never maintain man's responsibility at the cost of the Lord's sovereignty. The Lord never drives a man to do sin. Man always sins as a morally free agent, is always the subject, author of his own acts, sins because he delights therein. But, this must never be presented at the cost of the Lord's sovereignty, as though the Lord is ever dependent upon the actions of men. The Lord's counsel shall stand, and He shall accomplish all His good pleasure, also through the moral-rational acts of His moral-rational creatures. The Lord sovereignly realizes His counsel, also as including sin, but always through man's moral-rational nature, so that Jehovah is ever in sovereign control, but man remains the responsible author of his own sin, not because he sovereignly determines his course of action but only because he sins as a morally free agent, sins wilfully and consciously and will therefore be held responsible for all his actions. This is beautifully set forth in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Notice, in this text, that this most abominable of all wicked

acts, the wilful crucifixion, murder of the Christ is ascribed unto the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the Lord. He was delivered, we read, *by* the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Hence, the Lord's counsel actually caused man's wilful murder of the Christ. But, we must also understand that "ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Notice that they have "taken" Him. This, we understand, implies a wilful, conscious act on the part of these wicked men. Notice also that He was crucified and slain by *wicked* hands. This also implies a conscious act on their part. The text emphasizes that they were prompted by wickedness, hatred, when they laid hands on the Christ and nailed Him to the accursed tree. And, yet, this act of wickedness, for which they are held responsible, was controlled, completely, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the Lord.

Throughout the Scriptures this Divine control of all the acts of men is emphasized and clearly set forth. We have already called attention to the words of Joseph in which he declares that the wicked act of his brothers, selling him into Egypt, was an act of the Lord, and also to the cursing of Shimei which is attributed by David to the sovereign God. In Prov. 16:1 and 4 we read: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. The Lord hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." And in Prov. 21:1 we read: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." In Isaiah 45:7 we read the astonishing word: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." And who is not acquainted with Rom. 9? There we read in verses 17, 20, 21: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth . . . Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Let us understand this clearly. In the first place, the Lord raised up Pharaoh. This does not merely imply that the Lord set Pharaoh upon his throne. But the text signifies that the Lord raised him up as that wicked Pharaoh. From his conception and birth on the Lord raised him up. He caused him to be born, exactly as the wicked Pharaoh, and hardened him in all his dealing with His servant, Moses. This the Lord clearly reveals to Moses when He commands His servant to go to Pharaoh and accompanies His command with the statement that He will harden His heart so that he will not let His people go. Here

we have a direct action of the sovereign Lord upon the monarch of Egypt. And the same truth is emphasized in the figure of the clay and the potter. The "clay" of Romans 9:21 does not refer to fallen mankind. If this were the interpretation of verse 20-21 the wicked would not object as they do in the words: "Why hast Thou made me thus?" and: Why doth He yet find fault? If the Lord hates Esau because he was evil, rejects Pharaoh because of his wickedness, and makes vessels of dishonour of those already wicked and perverse, why, then, should anyone find fault with the Lord? None would accuse the Lord of unrighteousness, would he, if Jehovah merely hates those who hate Him, and rejects those who reject Him. Besides, what sense does it make, then, to say that the Lord *formed* these vessels of dishonour? They were already fallen and corrupt. But, then, the Lord did not form them as such. However, the emphasis falls in Romans 9 upon the sovereignty of the Lord. And may I say at this time that the wicked is thoroughly hypocritical when he replies as he does against the Lord. If it were true that the Lord might not sovereignly make vessels unto dishonour, then it would also be true that none might be a potter in that sense of the word. However, the wicked would not object if only the Lord were the clay and he the potter. The wicked objects as he does because, in hatred of the sovereign Lord, he refuses to ascribe sovereignty to the Almighty. Hence, the Scriptures clearly ascribe all the acts of men, everything to the living God.

Secondly, the Scriptures not only emphasize that all the acts of men, their condition and their acts, are to be ascribed to the living God, but they also declare that this occurs according to the sovereign counsel of the Lord. This is important. The infralapsarian hesitates to set forth the sovereign dealing of the Lord, also in time. But, we wish to emphasize in the second place, that what happens in time is also known unto the Lord. This is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. Acts 15:18 informs us that "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." This must be understood. The Lord knows eternally all things exactly as they occur. This does not imply that the Lord entertains a certain foreknowledge of them, that He saw before hand that they would occur. Besides, how would this be possible if the Lord merely foreknew the things? How could the Lord foreknow all things unless He had eternal and sovereign control of them? Also the infralapsarian will admit that such a foreknowledge on the part of God is inconceivable. This foreknowledge of the Lord is a sovereign foreknowledge, an eternal and creative foreknowledge, a *foreknowledge* of the things in the sense that He willed the existence of all things before they actually occurred in time. In other words, the Lord sovereignly willed the things exactly as they

happen. But this is surely the supralapsarian conception of the counsel of the Lord. This cannot mean anything else than that, also in the counsel of God, the Lord raised up Pharaoh, formed the vessels of dishonour, made even the wicked for the day of evil. But, if this be true, then it is impossible to begin in the counsel of God with a fallen human race. Then the human race is fallen exactly according to Jehovah's sovereign will. Known unto God are *all* His works from the beginning of the world.

Thirdly, the Lamb that was slain and now glorified and the heavenly renewal of all things are presented by the Scriptures as *first* in the counsel of God. This is clearly set forth, e.g., in Eph. 1:9-10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ Jesus, which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him". Here we are told that Christ must gather together in one all things that are in heaven and that are on the earth. The text refers to that glorious realization of eternal salvation when all things, in heaven and on earth, shall be united in one, under Jesus Christ our Lord. And this, mind you, is presented by the apostle as the mystery of His will, according to the Lord's good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. In other words, the Lord, in His eternal counsel, willed this renewal of all things in Christ Jesus. Hence, it was never the purpose of the Lord to realize the heavenly renewal of all things through Adam. Adam's place in the counsel of God, and also in time, is merely to prepare the way for the Christ Who realizes God's eternal covenant through the way of sin and grace. First in the counsel of God is, therefore, the gathering of all things in Christ Jesus. And, in that counsel, all things must sovereignly serve that purpose of the Lord, also the sin and fall of the human race. And in Colossians 1:17 we are told concerning the Christ that "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." The apostle is speaking in this context of the Christ, the glorified Head of the Church. And of Him we read that He is before all things, that he, therefore, occupies the first position, and that all things must consequently serve Him. He is before all things, to be sure, in the eternal counsel of the Lord. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, that He would be the revelation of the living God, and that the Church would be the eternal reflection of His glory and so the reflection of the glory of the alone adorable God. And because the Lord loved His people and would grant them the greatest possible salvation, He willed to glorify Himself in the highest possible manner, for the greatest glory of God's Name would surely constitute the greatest possible salvation for

the elect. Hence, in the eternal counsel of the Almighty sin does not appear as an accident, as something which merely happened to be, but indeed as willed by the sovereign Judge of all the earth. This is the Scriptural presentation of the truth. And then we can fully understand the majestic words of the apostle that "out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen," in Romans 11:36.

#### *A Wonderful Comfort.*

This supralapsarian conception of the counsel of God is supremely comforting for the Church of the living God. Then nothing is an accident. Never is the devil successful. He merely serves the fulfillment of the sovereign counsel of the Lord. Christ, then, is not a Divine remedy Who "is thrown into the breach", and accomplished that which Adam failed to do. And then the Lord does not merely try to save what He can, to bring as much order out of chaos as He possibly can, but all things occur according to His determinate counsel and sovereign knowledge. The phenomenon of sin and death is not the devil's work but the way of the Lord in which He sovereignly willed to glorify His Name in the highest possible manner. Then the Lord is always supreme, everything must serve us, and all things must work together for our good. Surely, the eternal end of all things must constitute the supreme purpose and goal of the everlasting God.

Moreover, these things must be preached and proclaimed in the Church of the living God. We need not and we must not hesitate to proclaim all the counsel of the Lord. Paul did not hesitate. He declares to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:26-27: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The Church of God must be instructed in the truth, in all the truth, must continually be given a glimpse into the amazing and unfathomable and sovereign love of the Lord by which He loved us and in which love He sovereignly willed all things to work together unto our eternal and heavenly salvation. Indeed, the hidden things are for the Lord our God (the things of the future, not as yet revealed unto us), but the revealed things are for us and for our children, according to Deut. 29:29. And Eph. 1, Col. 1, and Rom. 9, etc. etc., also belong to these revealed things of the Lord.

Finally, our discussion of the counsel of God has certainly emphasized the truth that that counsel is strictly unconditional. "My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all My good pleasure." If this counsel is unconditional then everything is unconditional. Fact is, the Lord accomplishes His own counsel, *all* His counsel. And, *He* accomplishes it, He alone. This rules out every conditional possibility, for then it is

the Lord alone Who does all things according to His sovereign will. And then the Church of God can be sure of victory, look forward to the crown of glory, yea, understand that we are more than victors, that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and that the world with all its sin and death and affliction is ours and must prepare us for the everlasting glory which the Lord has sovereignly prepared for those who love Him, who love Him only because they are loved by Him.

H. Veldman.




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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David and Hanun

David's war with Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, and with the Syrians, is twice narrated. First at 2 Samuel 8:3-8. Second at 2 Samuel 10:16-19.

The account of 2 Samuel 8:3-8 reads, "And David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed the chariot horses, but reserved of them a hundred chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass."

The account at 2 Samuel 10:16-19 reads, "And Hadadezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river (Euphrates); and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadadezer went before them. And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their hosts, who died there. And when all the kings that were servants of Hadadezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel



and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon anymore."

As was stated, both these accounts bear on the same war. As the circumstances related in the first account have already been treated under the caption "David's wars"; let us here take notice of the details contained in the second account that are not found in the first.

Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, it will be recalled, was the powerful king of Zobah, the capital of Syria, and situate east of Israel's transjordanic territory and beyond the northern border thereof. As was stated, the dominion of this king included a great part of the desert between Palestine and the Euphrates and accordingly the southern part of Syria. His jurisdiction extended even beyond the Euphrates far into Mesopotamia, as also from this region he called to his help (verse 19). Shobach was his field-marshal, but also general-in-chief of the whole Syrian army in this war (verse 18). At verse 17 Halem is designated as the place across the Jordan whither David brought his army and fought the Syrians. Here the whole Israelitish and Syrian armies stood apposed to one another in battle. David took command in person, not from any dissatisfaction with Joab, but because, being the Lord's anointed king, it was his calling to lead Israel's army in God's warfare with the heathen. Notice was also taken of David's victory. The Syrians in part took to flight, and in part were cut to pieces by the Israelites. Shobach was mortally wounded. The completeness of the victory is farther brought out by the mentioning *first* (verse 18) of the large number of slain: seven hundred chariot-soldiers and forty thousand horesmen. With this the statements in chapter 8:4 and 1 Chronicles 18:4, 5 do not agree. The numbers may have been corrupted by the copyist. The defeat was overwhelming, as is seen from the statement (verse 19) that all the kings tributary to Hadadezer sued for peace. They were accepted of David and became his servants, willingly placed themselves under his jurisdiction and thereby saving themselves from Israel's sword, though worthy to be slain because of their initial and inexcusable hostility to David and to David's God.

As we saw, so the cities that made Israel answer of peace had to be dealt with—the cities in that vast region beyond the borders of Israel's proper homeland.

Deuteronomy 20:10-15, "When thou camest nigh unto a city (in that vast region beyond) to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if they will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt be-

siege it; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every man thereof, with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil therein, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities of these nations" who dwell in that vast region beyond.

Let us understand this mandate of the Lord to Israel, definitely to David. It was not the Lord's will certainly that Israel without a cause initiate war against the heathen in that region beyond, and without any offence having been given depopulate every city that refused to confess David as lord. The nations in that region, not being under the ban of God like the Canaanites, had first to offend; they had first to show by their hostile attitude and warlike preparations that they were bent on Israel's destruction. And so they did in every instance. And so they had been doing throughout the ages of the judges, also the Moabites and the Ammonites and now the Syrians—Hadadezer and all the king's tributary to him as instigated, as we shall see, by the Ammonites. David's wars were thrust upon him by the heathen. He had to take up arms against them in defense of God's people. They wanted war with him, not he with them. Yet, even so, when he came nigh unto a city in that region to fight against it, because it had offended, he first proclaimed peace unto it; and if it made answer of peace, it was spared, only now to serve David. Many of these cities did so, they made answer of peace, as the surrender to David of the kings formerly tributary to Hadadezer testifies. But the city that refused to make answer of peace was destroyed as to its male population.

So God had commanded. And the command is as valid today in this dispensation of the Gospel as it ever was. Said not Christ to His disciples, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand . . . . And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10:7ff).

There were many cities that made answer of peace to David. There seems to have been no city in that vast region that made no answer of peace to Solomon during the golden years of his reign. He reigned over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates unto the land of



the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt; they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life. And all the kings of the earth sought his presence, to hear his wisdom, that God had put into his heart. And they brought every man his present.

Such was the glory of Solomon and the peace of his kingdom; it was the glory of Christ and the peace of the kingdom of Christ in type—a peace and glory of which David, speaking by the Spirit of prophecy, had already shown in his prayer for Solomon.

“In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall like the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

And he shall live, and to him shall be given the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

And blessed be his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.” Psalm 72:7-20.

For the reception of this prophecy David must have been prepared by the contemplation of Nathan’s prophecy, of his successes in war and of the extension and the growing peace of the Israelitish kingdom during his own reign. It is a wonderful prophecy that could reach its final fulfillment only in Christ.

David was “a man of blood”. So the Lord characterizes him. But he was also a proclama-tor of peace ready to show mercy to every city in his vast empire

that made him answer of peace and was willing to come under his jurisdiction. And every war that he fought was provoked by the heathen. He did not love war for war’s sake. He was not constrained as a warrior by lust of power but by the love of Christ and His people. He did no violence. God was his expectation. He belonged to the meek who inherit the earth.

As was stated, it was the Ammonites who had hired the Syrians against David. The war with Ammon is only mentioned in 8:12. In chapter 10 it is described in its full course, together with the Syrian wars occasioned by it. The king of the children of Ammon died. In verse 2 his name is given as Nahash. Though possible, it is neither certain nor very probable that this Nahash is he of 1 Samuel 11:1. The deceased king had shown kindness to David. What kindness is unknown. At all events his relation with David had been friendly. David accordingly sent an embassy of condolence to *Hanun* the son of Nahash. The Ammonite princes counsel the king to adopt a hostile policy that would be a challenge to war. They say to Hanun their lord: Is David in thine eyes an honorer of thy father? The question implies a negation. It contains a reproach against the king, that he would allow himself to be deceived by David’s conduct. They express to him the suspicion, that David sent this consolatory embassy merely for the purpose of spying out and then destroying the city, of the country, that is Rabbah. The king subjected them to the indignity of cutting off the half, that is, one side of their beards. That was the grossest insult that could be offered an oriental. Besides, he cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks. Hearing of the double insult offered his messengers, David directs them not to return, but to stay in Jericho until their beards were grown.

The Ammonites plainly desired war with David. They must have been jealous of the mighty growth of his kingdom. They knew that by their treatment of the messengers they had made themselves hateful to David. The Ammonites now hired the Syrians to help them in their war with David,—the Syrians of Bethrehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of the king of Maacah, a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand. The accounts of Sam. and Chron. differ in some details.

Against these hostile troops David sends his general, Joab, and the whole host of mighty men. The Ammonites came out of their capitol city, and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, that is Rabbah. The Syrians had taken their position in the field, on the broad plain. Joab could be attacked on both sides, by the Ammonites in the rear, by the Syrians in front. So he selected some of all the chosen men of Israel, which he set against the Syrians. The rest of the army he placed under the command of his

brother, Abishai, against the Ammonites. Either was to come to the help of the other, if there was danger of being overpowered by the enemy. Joab then uttered a warlike exhortation, brief but full of meaning: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Joab attacks the Syrians, and they flee. The rout of the Syrians occasioned the flight of the Ammonites. They retreat into their city. After the exploit, Joab brought the war to an end and returned to Jerusalem.

As shamed by his defeat and also as alarmed by David's growing power, Hadadezer, as we have seen, collected new forces for the continuation of his war on David—a war the circumstances of which are related in Scripture passages (2 Sam. 8:3-6 and 2 Sam. 10:16-19) already treated. If for this second effort Hadadezer called to his aid also the Ammonites, his summons went unheeded. The Ammonites were keeping themselves to their stronghold—the city of Rabbah—whither the remnant of their forces, cut in pieces by Joab, had fled.

As to Hadadezer, as we have also seen, the outcome of his new venture was for him a defeat so disastrous that his power was permanently broken. As forsaken by his vassal kings, all of whom made peace with Israel, the only choice remaining to him was to be still and quietly submit himself to David's rule. And it must be assumed that he did so. For we do not read of him again making trouble for David.

But the defeated Ammonites continued hostile. Having defeated them in battle, Joab, as was stated, had returned from them and come to Jerusalem. He had ended the war without capturing their city. It would not have been wise to prolong the war at that time. For the season was late. But no sooner was Joab with his troops departed than the Ammonites began negotiating with the Syrians—definitely with Hadadezer. It must be assumed—for a new war on David. This is plainly implied in the statement at 10:19b, "So the Syrians feared to help the children of Israel any more." Hadadezer, as the account of the further developments reveal (8:3-9; 10:16-18), had been exceedingly willing. He had immediately become active collecting new forces. But the attempt ended in dismal failure. With his fresh army vanguarded by David, his power was permanently gone, and he could help the children of Ammon no more.

So had the Ammonites not alone refused to make answer of peace to David; even after their overwhelming defeat at the hands of Joab before the gates of their city, they had continued to add insult to injury.

David was fully cognizant of the new alliance against him in process of formation. He received tidings of Hadadezer's collecting other forces. It was

an immense host that was gathered. The plan was the invasion of Canaan. On the way the Syrian forces were to be joined by the troops of the Ammonites. But before the campaign could get under way, David had hastened to the Euphrates. Before his onrushing troops the Syrian army had scattered like chaff before the wind.

But there were yet the Ammonites to be dealt with. Rabbah was still defiant and threatening war. So after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel against Rabbah. The city was besieged. When about to surrender, David appeared on the scene in person with additional troops; and under his direct command the war was brought to completion. So Joab had wanted it to prevent the city being called after his name, which would have happened, had he taken it.

A severe punishment was now inflicted upon the inhabitants of the fallen city. First the crown was taken from off the head of the Ammonite king and set on David's head. It was a costly thing of a talent of gold with precious stones. There was also a great abundance of spoil. All was carried off to Jerusalem. It included doubtless the women and children. The male population was led out of the city. As lying prone on the ground, they were run over with saws and harrows of iron, while others were made to pass through the brickkiln. So it was literally done. And so it was done to all the cities of Ammon. The punishment inflicted was as horrible as it was terrible. But the Ammonites had asked for the doom by which they were overtaken. They would make no answer of peace to David. (2 Sam. 12:26-31).

G. M. Ophoff.

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#### CALL TO SYNOD:

The Consistory of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church being designated the calling church by the last Synod, hereby notifies the churches that Synod will convene on June 7, 1950.

The pre-synodical prayer service will be held in the auditorium of our church on June 6, beginning at 7:45 P. M. Rev. C. Hanko, president of the 1949 Synod will lead us in this hour of worship.

Requests for lodging will kindly be forwarded to the undersigned.

Consistory of Hull Prot. Ref. Church

Rev. John D. de Jong  
Box 208  
Hull, Iowa.

## Christ Sees His Seed

We now turn to the 9th and 10th verses of Isaiah 53 and, as quoting the original text, read the Word of God as follows: "But they assigned him his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich man in his death, because he had done no wrong nor was guilt in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. When his soul shall make a guilt offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall live long; and the purpose of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Though they had assigned him a grave with the wicked, Christ was with a rich man in His death. This man was Joseph, a resident of Arimathea. He is described to us in the Gospel narratives as a counsellor, a member of the Sanhedrin. He was thus a man of position in Israel. The Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of Isaiah, classifies him with the rich. The Gospel narratives tell us still more about this man. He was a good man and a just. He waited for the kingdom of God. Being such a man he had not concurred in the sentence of death pronounced upon Jesus by his colleagues. With Christ's body on the cross, this man's love of the Saviour waxes exceptionally bold. He goes to Pilate and begs the body of Jesus. The Gospel narratives state that he goes in secret for fear of the Jews. The fear of the man is well-grounded. To add to Christ's disgrace, the hostile Jews had assigned Him a grave with the two criminals with whom He was crucified. Hence, it could be expected that they would be on hand to dissuade Pilate from granting the man his request, should they learn his intention. That was the fear of this disciple of Jesus. And therefore he acted in secret, as unbeknown to the Jews. Going to Golgotha, he takes down the body of Jesus, wraps it in linen, and lays it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein man never was lain.

That was God's work. Necessarily so, as it had been foretold as much as 600 years beforehand by the Lord Himself certainly. For He alone knows the end from the beginning in that He doeth all things. Christ's body in a rich man's tomb has great significance therefore. It is a definite Word of God, a sign of the Lord to His people, telling us that Christ did no violence; and that in His mouth there was no deceit; thus telling us that the crucified Jesus was the Lamb of God indeed,—the Lord's spotless Lamb bearing away our sins by the travail of His soul.

It was a great work that Christ was performing on that terrible cross; but, as the prophet points out in the verse that precedes, a work as little understood by His contemporaries—enemies and disciples alike—as the love that inspired Him to make that sacrifice

was deep and enduring. But soon His people would understand, when the resurrected and glorified Christ will have sent the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, to teach them all things. And there will also be a most remarkable sign to which Christ's Spirit will be directing their attention and the attention of us all—Christ's body in a rich man's tomb. In the light of the consideration that the hostile world had selected for him a grave in a cemetery where criminals were buried, what a remarkable token of the fact that the Man of sorrows was bruised for our iniquities indeed.

Christ did no wrong; yet, so the prophet continues, it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief. Mark you well, the text asserts that *God* bruised Christ, bruised Him, namely, for our iniquities. The natural man, we by nature, has no objection at all to the assertion that the *Lord* was the one to afflict the Man of sorrows. By nature we want it that way. But what the natural man objects to is the idea, the truth and face, that the Lord afflicted Him for *our* sins. We don't want it *that* way. Apart from grace we welcome the thought that God smote Him for His *own* sins. That was the contention of Christ's contemporaries. It is only when the virtues of His cross are realized in men by His Spirit that they confess with the prophet, "Surely he hath borne our griefs; he was wounded for our transgressions."

Just why the idea of God's bruising the Man of Sorrows for our sins is so utterly distasteful to the natural man is not hard to explain. Firstly, the idea spells a Christ, holy, undefiled and separate from sinners. Such a Christ can only be the object of the fear and scorn of the natural man. Secondly, if the Lord bruised Him for *our* iniquities, it follows that we ourselves are lost and undone sinners whose only hope is the crucified Christ. Man's sinful pride rebels against such a conception.

It is the Lord who bruised the Man of Sorrows for our sins. That the Lord bruised him is an element of truth that now for the first time received a direct statement in the prophet's discourse. O, certainly, Satan and men bruised Him, too. But men enter in here only as the rod in the hand of God by which He smote the Man of Sorrows for our sins. And it cannot well be otherwise. Those wicked men were God's creatures. They lived and moved and had their being in God. By His power did they exist, as do all things creatural. They crucified the Christ as men raised up by God and sovereignly hardened by Him. To end with Christ's travail in men is a fatal error. Sin is an offense against God, a violation of His majesty, the transgression of His commands. It is God's righteous anger, therefore, that had to be appeased; it is His righteousness that had to be satisfied; it was unto Him that His people had to be reconciled. To end with

the travail of Christ's soul in men, is to affirm that He was delivered according to men's counsel and not according to the sovereign counsel of God, as the Scriptures teach; it is to affirm that the Saviour was a victim of men's wrath; it is thus to deny that He was the Christ of God, through whose cross God was reconciling the world—God's world—unto Himself, not imputing unto them their sins.

But we know that Christ was the Christ of God. God bruised Him; His nameless sorrows in their totality were the burden of God's wrath against our sin sustained by Him in soul and body. Not that the Father was angry with His Son. It could not be; He was the beloved Son of the Father bringing under the impulse of a perfect love to God the supreme sacrifice. It was against our sins that the Father's anger burned.

However the work of God whereby He bruised, crushed, His servants—the Man of Sorrows—was not properly the atonement. The atonement was that work whereby He by His grace empowered His servant to offer Himself, namely, willingly to bear in His soul the sufferings and sorrows, the pains and agonies of God's strokes and willingly to die the death that God inflicted on Him. And by the power of God, the Lord's servant did just that. In the words of the sacred text, His *soul made an offering*—an offering for sin. What does it mean? It means just that, namely, that Christ willed to be bruised by the Father, and to die; that He truly wanted those sorrows and deaths and accordingly prayed for them. And we know from the Scriptures just how he prayed, "Sacrifices and offerings," such was His prayer, "thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is written in my heart." Ps. 40:6-8. So the Lord's servant prayed. He willed God's strokes indeed—willed them in a love to God and His people that claimed all His heart, all His soul, all His mind and all His strength. Sustaining in His soul God's wrath against our sins, laying down His life for His sheep, tasting death for His people, was with Him a voluntary act in the supreme sense; a work of undying love to God into which He threw Himself with every fibre of His being; thus a perfect consecration of the whole man to God. As bowed down under the weight of the transgressions of us all that the Father had laid upon Him, and with the Father smiting, bruising, and afflicting Him for our sins, thus with all the billows of God's wrath gong over Him, He still cried from the depth of His sorrows, "Father, I love thee in all the pain of thy strokes." That, let us understand, was His atoning our sins — that heart cry. That was Christ's sustaining the burden of God's wrath

against our sin. How plain then that if it had not been the Father who smote Him, there could have been no atonement. So did His soul make an offering for sins—our sins. Whose soul but His could have done that! Could the soul of any of us have made an offering? We are men by nature dead in sin. Apart from His grace, the only response that the pains and sorrows of God's strokes draws out of us is a curse. The writer of the Hebrews presents to us this truth, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourges every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Yet, apart from His grace, how we despise God's rod. How far we are from thanking Him in love for the pain of His strokes. Christ did just that. His soul made an offering—an offering for our sins acceptable to God. Our sins therefore are cancelled, blotted out as fully covered by the offering of His soul. For by that offering God's anger was appeased, His justice satisfied, and we reconciled to God.

And therefore the prophet, speaking of this servant, can go on to say of Him, "He shall see his seed; He shall live long; and the purpose of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

"He shall see His seed." This is truly a remarkable statement. For it is the Man of Sorrows of whom this is said—the Man cut off from the land of the living at the early age of 33 years, cut off therefore in the midst of His days as unmarried and childless—that Man sees seed, offspring. And he *sees* seed; it necessarily implies that though He was dead, He now liveth, He and His seed with Him. It is evident that God has performed a wonder—the wonder of the resurrection of Christ and His people. The Man of sorrows arose, He and His seed, with Him, as raised up by the Father and received thereby the Father's seal of approval upon His expiratory sacrifice of self for the sins of His people. And He now sees His seed; it is, to be sure, the very seed that God chose in Him before the foundation of the world unto life everlasting, and predestinated unto the adoption by this servant—Christ Jesus—according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise and the glory of His grace; it is the very seed that with Christ was crucified and buried. Thus, it is the very seed whose sins the Man of Sorrows expiated on the cross and that God made acceptable in Him by vesting it—this seed—with His righteousness. For certainly God has not two seeds, the one whom He chose in Christ in His counsel and the other upon whom He reveals His mercies and thereby actually saves. He has but one seed, one people, one church of the elect, according as there is also but one Christ, one Christ, one Spirit, one pro-

mise, one inheritance for all God's people. And this one seed Christ now sees as a seed for whose sins He atoned, sees therefore a seed raised up with Him from the dead. So the Scriptures literally teach. In the light of the Scriptures, then, how erroneous the view according to which Christ prepared salvation for all men indiscriminately but that it is contingent on every man's will whether this prepared good will be accepted or rejected. In the light of our very text, how erroneous the view according to which God's believing people can fall from grace, so that time only can tell whether they will persevere and ultimately be saved. The risen Christ sees His seed.

My text next states that the Man of Sorrows, having atoned for the sins of His seed, will live long. Indeed! He is the everlasting Mediator of an eternal covenant, and with reason. This seed, the church of the elect, is in need of Him, the Christ now and ever, for He is the sanctification, the justification, and the redemption of this seed, the true bread, the living water, yea, the very life of His people now and ever, so that without Him they can do nothing ever.

My text states finally that the good-pleasure, the purpose of the Lord, will prosper in His hand. What may be the good-pleasure of God? Briefly stated, it is this: that the church of the elect, God's people, be led through sin and death to its heavenly destination, which is the Father's house with its many mansions; be lifted up out of her fall and clothed with the perfection and glory of the heavenly. This purpose prospers in Christ's hand,—the hand of the risen and glorified Saviour. He brings it to pass quickly. For all power in heaven and on earth is now His; and all things are in His hand as put there by His Father. His kingdom comes therefore; the church is being gathered verily, so that without fail the day is fast approaching when Zion's righteousness will go forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burneth and the sinners shall be destroyed out of the earth.

Do you believe in the crucified and risen Saviour? Then you are risen with Him and are saved now and for ever.

G. M. Ophoff.

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The glory of His kingdom  
Proclaimed abroad shall be,  
That all may know His mighty deeds  
And glorious majesty;  
His kingdom is eternal,  
His throne shall stand secure,  
And his dominion without end  
Through ages shall endure.

## SION'S ZANGEN

### De Lof Des Naams

(Psalm 113; Slot)

De laatste klank die we opvingen uit dezen lof-psalm was de waarheid, dat des Heeren heerlijkheid boven de hemelen is.

Die gedachte wordt verder uitgebreid in het zesde vers waar we lezen: "Wie is gelijk de Heere onze God, die zeer hoog woont."

Er zijn menschen met lieflijke namen. We denken hier vooral aan Micha. Die naam beteekent: Wie is den Heere gelijk?

Er zijn engelen Gods die ook schoone namen hebben. Michael, de naam van een aartsengel, en die naam beteekent: Wie is den Heere God gelijk? Wat een naam om mee rond te wandelen tot in alle eeuwigheid!

Ge hebt in onzen tekst dezelfde gedachte als uitgedrukt in die namen. Het is een vraag die haar antwoord suggereert. Het antwoord is: Niemand! Niemand is gelijk de Heere onze God!

Hoe zou het ook!

De Heere is de VerbondsGod die van eeuwigheid af aan bestaan heeft, en die Zijn Wezen in Zichzelf heeft. Niemand heeft Hem gemaakt. Ik kan er niet bij. Ik kan slechts aanbidden.

En Hij is de eeuwig Getrouwe. Dat behoort bij Zijn Heere-zijn. Hij laat nooit varen de werken Zijner handen. Als Hij U bemind heeft van eeuwigheid af aan, dan zal Hij U minnen totdat geen maan meer schijnt, en tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Die Heere is onze God.

Dat beteekent eerst, dat die Heere ons bezit als Zijn Eigendom.

Dan ook, dat Hij daarom ons bestuurt en leidt tot over dood en graf tot de erfenis die voor ons wacht.

En, eindelijk, dat die God over ons te zeggen heeft, en dat wij Zijn bevelen en geboden opvolgen zullen.

En die Heere God woont zeer hoog.

Men woont waar men zich thuis gevoelt.

En God gevoelt Zich thuis in het hoge.

Wat dit mag beduiden?

Het hoge is figuurlijke taal voor datgene wat onovertreffelijk is. Jesaja mag daar gaarne van spreken. God woont in het hoge en het heilige. Zie: Jesaja 57:15.

Er is een hoogte die wij niet kunnen benaderen, zelfs niet met onze gedachten. De Bijbel spreekt van het ontoegankelijk licht. En zoo is God het heerlijk Wezen die in alle Zijne deugden hoog en verheven is. Niemand kan nog mag met Hem vergeleken worden.

God wil dit gaarne van Uwe lippen hooren. Dat is het eenigste doel van het Heelal, dat nu is; en van het Heelal, dat een vernieuwing is van het oude.

Hebt ge er wel eens aan gedacht, dat als straks de Heere God op Zijn troon zal zitten in het Nieuwe Koninkrijk, dat dan zelfs de Heere Zich nederbuigt? Ook dát Koninkrijk is openbaring, en we zullen nooit toegelaten worden in het hooge, eeuwige en schitterende Licht, hetwelk het eigenlijke Huis Gods is. De Schrift spreekt daarvan als wij zegt: Niemand heeft ooit God gezien. En ook, niemand kan God zien en leven.

Hij is zoo geheel anders. Ik kan er niet bij. Bij Hem is een verschrikkelijke majesteit.

“die zeer laag ziet, in den hemel en op de aarde.”

Zooeven hebben we er al van gewaagd: God buigt Zich neder om Zich te laten zien in den hemel.

Hij is veel, oneindig veel groter, heerlijker en glorieuzer dan wij ooit kunnen bevatten.

En toch! Toch ziet Hij neer, zeer laag, in den hemel en op de aarde.

En dat is Zijn glorie. Vroeger dacht ik wel eens, dat het toch wel vernederend voor God moet zijn om alle onze haren te tellen, maar dat denk ik nu niet meer. Dat maakt God groot. Hij telt de starren, de microben, de grasscheutjes, de stofjes. Hij ziet alles. En Hij buigt Zich om zeer laag neer te zien op alle schepselen.

Ik heb juist een artikel gelezen dat deze waarheid komt te bevestigen. Wetenschappelijke mannen hier in Amerika bestudeeren een vingerhoed grond en verbazen een ieder door hetgeen ze in die vingerhoed gevonden hebben. Ontelbare kolonies van kleine wezens die allerlei veranderingen ondergaan, en die bestudeerd worden voor mogelijke medicijnen die zij vervaardigen. Men heeft al heel wat van die soorten medicijn gevonden.

Maar God maakte hen. En God ziet zeer laag neer om die wezentjes en hunne onderzoekers te onderhouden.

En zoo doet God in den hemel en op de aarde.

Doch er is een zaligmakend zien van God, en door dit lieflijk zien van God is er een volk dat naar den hemel gaat. Hij ziet in gunst op die Hem vreezen.

Dat dit de gedachte is, kunt ge wel zien uit wat volgt: “Die den geringe uit het stof opricht, en den nooddruftige uit den drek verhoogt.”

De geringe is iemand die geheel ontbloot is. Die gedachte wordt nog versterkt door den tweeden naam van dezen mensch: den nooddruftige. Het is een mensch die zijn nooddruft niet ontvangt.

Nu is de Geringe bij uitnemendheid de Heere Jezus Christus. En Hij is ook de Nooddruftige. Zoo werd Hij vaak gezien in het Oude Testament. Gedenkt

slechts aan de preek, die Jezus zelf preekte toen Hij uit de dooden opstond, ten overstaan van de Emmaüs-gangers. Hij zag Zich zelf in alle boeken van het Oude Testament.

En Paulus spreekt van Hem die Zichzelven vernietigde voor ons.

O, Jezus was de Geringe bij uitnemendheid. De groote Nooddruftige.

Hij was van alles ontbloot. Er is nooit iemand geweest en er zal ook tot in alle eeuwigheid nooit iemand zijn die zoo gering zal zijn als Jezus. Niemand is zoo vernederd als Hij.

Maar God zag op Hem neer.

En Hij richtte den geringen Jezus uit het stof op, en Hij verhoogde den Nooddruftige uit den drek! Hallelujah! Dat is de opstanding uit de dooden.

En na Jezus, in onze orde, doet God dat ook voor ons.

Elken dag worden Gods kinderen verhoofd door God uit het stof. En Hij zorgt lieflijk voor de nooddruftigen. Er zijn Hollandsche Psalmen die daar van jubelen. Nooddruftigen zal Hij verschoonen; aan armen uit gena!

O, God zorgt voor Zijn volk in Christus Jezus!

“om te doen zitten bij de Prinsen, bij de Prinsen zijns volks.”

Er zijn altijd Prinsen geweest onder het volk van God. Er zijn standen en rangen in het Koninkrijk Gods. Zoo is het op aarde, en zoo zal het tot in alle eeuwigheid in den hemel zijn.

En het zit alles vast op de genade die de Heere verscheidenlijk uitdeelt onder Zijn volk. Hebt ge veel genade, dan zijt ge een Prins onder degenen die Hem kennen.

En te zitten bij de Prinsen, wil zeggen, dat God eer en glorie geeft aan Zijn kinderen. Ge ziet daar iets van als Lazarus in den schoot van Abraham geleid wordt.

“die de onvruchtbare doet wonen met een huisgezin, eene blijde moeder van kinderen. Hallelujah!”

Van nature zijn we allen onvruchtbaar. Dat wil zeggen, dat er niet één is die van nature er aan denken zal om den Heere te loven. Want daar gaat het over in dezen psalm.

Welnu, de Heere maakt de onvruchtbare een blijde moeder. En dat geschiedt met elk kind van God bij zijn wederkeboorte en bekeering. Dan gaat hij aan 't voortbrengen. Dan breekt hij uit in loven en prijzen van God.

En zoo sluit de geïnspireerde zanger zijn lied zooals hij begon: Hallelujah!

En dat is: Looft den Heere onzen God!

En ons hart zegt: Amen. Hallelujah!

G. Vos.



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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10

#### VII.

That faith is a gift of God not only in the first impartation of the same in regeneration, but that it is also gift of God in its constant activity as it is worked in us by the Holy Spirit though the Gospel we have shown in our former article. What we there wrote concerning faith as the constant gift of God does not mean that God works an endless series of regenerative acts in us, that he constantly creates anew. Such is no more the case with God's constant preservation of us in the faith than what it is with God's almighty and omnipresent power whereby He upholds all things that he once created in the six day creation-week in the beginning. Providence is not continued creation; it is the preserving of what God has once brought into existence by His mighty Word. To be sure it is by the Word of the Lord that the heavens are made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth. And it is by this same Word of God that the heavens are upheld. Heb. 1:1-3; Col. 1:18. But this does not make these two acts identical. Creation and Providence are two acts that must not be confused into one; where the former ends the latter begins. Just so too it is with the elect-sinner who is regenerated by God and called a new creation. The first impartation of the new life in Christ is first: the preserving in the faith and in the state and condition of grace is a subsequent act of God. Yet, even so, both are gift of God. Faith as it is implanted into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and called forth by the Word is both gift of God.

That we must not think of faith in a rather deistic, static sense, but that we must bear in mind that faith is always manifested as the power of the love of God shed forth in our hearts as clearly implied here in Ephesians 2:8 and 9. But, what is more, it is clearly taught to be a constant gift of God, so very constant as God upholds all things by the Word of His power. This is the plain teaching of the Word of God in chapter 3:14-19, where we read: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, to the end that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be stong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that passeth

knowledge, that ye may be filled into all the fulness of God."

We would call your attention, dear reader, to the following elements here in this marvelous paragraph from the apostle's pen. They are:

1. That the apostle is here addressing the saints, who *do* have faith in Christ Jesus and who have love unto all the saints. He is not addressing heathen, who had not yet heard the gospel nor believed unto salvation. On the contrary he writes to those who having believed in the Gospel were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the final possession of the salvation in Christ. Yea, they had been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ accordingly as they had been elected.

2. Still the apostle travails in prayer for them to the end that they may constantly be *given* power and might in the inward man. And this must all be according to the riches of His glory—that is—according to the riches of the glory of God from whom every family (fatherhood) is named in heaven and on earth. No-where does the apostle rise to such heights of spiritual emotion nor to such depths of spiritual passion as here. All is coloured with "the riches of His grace". The reader will remember, that in our passage under consideration in chapter 2, the riches of grace, yea, the exceeding riches of grace is so very overwhelmingly on the foreground. To show this riches is the grand motive of God in all things in view of the ages to come.

3. And the specific content of the apostle's prayer is that God may give the believers so to be filled with spiritual power, to be overcome with power and might in their mind and heart, to be strengthened in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in them, may make His abode in their hearts.

4. And by virtue of this indwelling of Christ we may with all the saints be able to understand, to apprehend the love wherewith we have been apprehended in Christ, to know with all saints what is the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love that passeth all knowledge. And in this apprehending of the love that passeth knowledge to be filled into all the fulness of God, that is, into the fulness that God has *prepared* for us in Christ Jesus.

5. This all must be *given* us. And this all must be received by faith, by the faith as it is given to us in regeneration and through the preaching of the Gospel. It is gift, free-gift, constantly given to us. Nothing of this is ever out of us. The salvation is not of us, nor is the impartation of this salvation out of us. It is all out of God, Who is exceedingly able to do far above all that we ask or think.

In all of our salvation there is nothing in which man may boast. Salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end.

Thus it should be to the glory of God's grace.

That there is nothing in all of our salvation of which we can say: that is of us, is further made abundantly clear in verse 10 of Ephesians 2. We read here: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (unto) good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

It is very clear from the particle "for" (*gar* in the Greek) that in this verse the apostle assigns the *reason* for the fact, that we as Christians are not at all saved out of the works that we perform. We are not saved out of law works. We are saved by grace. We did not so much as raise a finger toward the bringing about of our salvation. Works that we perform under law are simply transgressions that we perform under the curse and wrath of God. In these works we are still dead. They are dead works. They do not glorify God. The strict Pharisee is no nearer to life than the harlot and the adulterer. Both are children of wrath, walking in sin. Neither has life, nor the love of God abiding in him.

Salvation is not out of us.

It is not out of us lest any man should boast.

Nay, salvation is never out of works. It is out of grace through faith. And since it is out of faith that is energized by the love of God shed forth in our hearts salvation must not be explained out of works, but works, that are really good, must be interpreted as springing forth from faith. For good works are those that *proceed* from a true faith, are performed according to God's law and unto His glory!

Salvation is the free-gift of God.

Well, that is the teaching here of Paul in Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship", writes Paul. And in the Greek the emphasis falls on the pronoun *His*... And this "his" refers not merely to God as the creator of the world, but it refers to God as spoken of by Paul in the preceding verses where God is emphatically stated to be the *Giver* of faith. *He* whose gift is faith, the apostle would say, *His* workmanship we are. *He* made us. And, oh, yes, *He* made us originally in Adam's loins and *He* brought us forth wondrously from our mother's womb, but to that the apostle does not here refer. He is here rather speaking of our being the "workmanship" as God has brought us forth from the darkness of sin and death by the working of the power of His might in Christ Jesus, calling us out of darkness into His marvellous light. And in all that we are by faith in Christ there is nothing that is not His workmanship. It is all rooted in His everlasting love and boundless mercy.

Our actually being saved by grace through faith is His wondrous workmanship. He that is thus in Christ is a new creature; old things have passed away and all things have become new.

And because God's gift of faith is ours we are

new creatures. We are in this faith created unto good works. True faith in us is such that it necessarily issues forth in good works, yea, in a conscious and glad walking in the same. Light shines and reflects in the spectrum of colors. Water is wet and flows, freezes in cold temperatures and again melts under the warming sun. Fire burns and consumes all that is adapted to being fuel. So faith cannot but issue forth into good works according to the good law of God. Yea, all that is not out of faith is sin. And this last is not merely relatively true, that is, it does not merely hold in certain aspects of life and morals, but it is absolutely true over the whole life. *All* that is not out of faith is sin!

In this faith we are justified with Christ we very really die through law unto law. And we are accounted righteous before God. And so what we thus live we live by the faith of the Son of God. By faith we appropriate Christ. And this whole appropriation is for us an entering into the grace of adoption. And this entering into the grace of adoption is: Walking in good works first of all. He who does not begin in faith does not begin. He who does not appropriate Christ's righteousness by faith is still dead in trespasses and sin.

In this same faith we also walk in good works of sanctification. We are thus by faith zealous unto all good works. For we are "created unto good works". Well, that creation is unto good works *by faith*. Apart from this faith all is still sin, all is pure self-righteousness, Romanism! There is no conscious delight in all good works apart from faith. The short definition of the Heidelberg Catechism that "good works are only those that proceed from a true faith, are done according to God's law and thus unto God's glory" is no trite and commonplace saying, that we may easily gloss over. It is startling, wondrous reality. It alone fits in with the plan and purpose of God that no flesh should boast before God, and that he that glories shall glory in the Lord. And, so let it be understood once and for all, that there is no walking in good works apart from faith.

This truth that we are saved by grace alone, therefore, does not make men remiss, does not make men careless and profane. The new creature in Christ Jesus under the operation of the Holy Spirit cannot sin. Faith is energized by love. And faith cannot sin. It can only be victorious over sin and death and the grave and all of hell. For faith is clinging to Christ Jesus the Lord.

And so in faith we are new creatures in Christ, we are "created unto good works". It is thus so very true what the Heidelberg Catechism says "that it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

The apostle also teaches very definitely, that there are certain "good works" which God has before prepared that we should walk in them.

What these works are we hope to see in the next issue of the Standard Bearer, in which we plan to write our final article on this beautiful and instructive passage from Ephesians.

(to be continued)

Geo. C. Lubbers.



## IN HIS FEAR

### We Go To Church

I'll never forget the farmer who brings his busy day's work to a close early on Saturday afternoons, so he has ample time to prepare for the Sabbath. Perhaps not everyone can do that, and life is far too complicated to put it into alphabetical files, but most of us can adopt some system which gives us time to prepare for the Sabbath. Some of us were discussing the other days how come that we, with a world full of conveniences, seem to have less time than when these conveniences were unknown. No doubt the book of Ecclesiastes holds an answer. One of us remarked that they used to go to church with horses, but some people had to whip their horses into a fast trot to get to church on time; but the other remarked that today they have to "step on the gas" to get there on time. So the score is about even. And perhaps in both instances it is a matter of attitude and system, more than a matter of whether we have conveniences.

And so comes the Sabbath. Sunday is not a very appropriate name. Teutonic peoples named this day after the Sun. Sabbath is a day devoted to the worship of God and in that worship we are to find our rest. Hence the word Sabbath.

The Sabbath bells ring.

And we go to church.

Isaiah one time said to some people, "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts", and he told them that their new moons and sabbaths were wearying to God, and God could not bear it. In the last two words of verse 13, Isaiah 1 (in the Hebrew) Isaiah complains that they have "iniquitous assemblies" and God abhors their coming together. The merely formal coming together on Sabbath morning does not please God. Jesus had reprimanded the Jews for drawing near unto God with their mouth and honoring God with their lips but their heart is far from God, and con-

cludes, "IN VAIN do they worship me . . ." So we must not content ourselves with the merely formal operation of getting into our cars and driving to church, imagining that thereby we have done what God requires. God requires that the heart be in it. All worship shall be a matter of the heart, of love to God, of loving Him because He first loved us, and now we return to worship Him. Faith and worship belong together. Fruits of God's election. We should see them in our lives and convince ourselves of them as we go to worship. "Worship" without faith, confession, love and theodicy in it is VAIN, on any Sabbath morning, and every Sabbath morning.

The Sabbath bells ring.

And we go to church.

#### *The Building.*

There is the building.

Men have argued sometimes how many angels could dance on the point of a needle. We are not angels . . . if we were, most probably we would not need a meeting place. We are human beings, we have bodies, we need a place to stand, a place to sit, to sing, to pray, a place where we can come together. The Church is not the building for the Church is made of living stones, laid by the Master Architect and Builder. When people say: you should see our new church once, they are speaking of the stones concerning which Christ said that not one will be left upon the other, but all shall be thrown down. The Church is not the building. I wouldn't have to repeat that so often if it were not for the fact that somehow people always confuse those two entirely different things.

Is God concerned about what kind of building? During the days of Nymphas (Coll. 4:15) the Church met in his house, and the house of Aquilla and Priscilla was also the meeting place of the Church once upon a time (I Cor. 16:19). So the building could be a house, that would please God. Sometimes the callers-upon-the-Name met in places that could not even be called buildings, they met in caves and dens of the earth, and sometimes they met in the open field.

But since the worship of God is a matter of the heart, of devotion, consecration and love, the callers-upon-the-Name would insult God very grievously if they had money and goods enough to fix themselves fine homes with all modern conveniences, but if they had no money to set up an equally nice building as a Church meeting place. Haggai one time loudly protested against the Jews who came back to Jerusalem. He accused them that they themselves built plastered houses, but the House of God lay in ruin and waste. That was highly displeasing to God and the prophet assured them that until they changed their ways their daily wages would go into a bag with holes, that is, they labor in vain. The days of shadows are past but

their heart-attitudes remain until this very day. God IS concerned about the building, because the building may reflect the attitude of the hearts. If men boast about the beautiful stones, Christ is there to remind them that the stones shall all be overthrown; if they build plastered houses for themselves and neglect the demonstration of love for the Cause of God, God is there to remind them that He will punish them. So God is concerned about the building.

As any business man sets up a building that will serve the purpose he has in mind, so the children of God will provide a building that will answer to the reason why God has His Church in this world. Whatever we build here shall eventually be overthrown. That will urge us to regard our building as very secondary. Build worthy of the great calling we have, build soberly lest we glory in stones that are dead. As clothes were made for the man and not man for the clothes, so the building is made for the Church and not the Church for the building.

### *The Pulpit.*

It must be the first, the important thing we see. Around that pulpit (figuratively speaking) everything centers. What that pulpit does (still speaking figuratively) and what proceeds from that pulpit, around it the entire significance of the Church centers.

So the pulpit must remain the important thing. If the pulpit (not speaking figuratively) is made of cedar, oak or plywood, that would not make too much difference, for God rejoices in all kinds of wood. But, whatever the pulpit is made of, it should hold a commanding position, even in the building scheme. Its placement in the structure as a whole must bespeak what place it holds in the hearts of those that come together there. Its placement must bespeak how aware we are of the reason why God had even placed a Church in this world.

Our Fathers of olden days watched this rather carefully. When the organ and the piano, the choir-loft, pictures, etc., came knocking at the door of the church, seeking admission, the Fathers insisted that the Pulpit would hold the central place, and no organ, no piano, nor anything would take its place.

Hence the organ or the pipe-organ or the electric organ must not be the conspicuous thing. In many churches the organ exactly overshadows the pulpit, and in the minds of the people the organ soon becomes far more important than the pulpit. And the organists were quick to detect this shift of emphasis and proceeded to build a little service around the organ. This had its effect on the function of the Church. Neither may the choir loft take the place of the pulpit (speaking figuratively yet). Sometimes when one comes into churches one sees the Communion Table

holding the conspicuous place and the pulpit off in a corner. All little telltales, betraying a basically wrong principle. When we come into God's house the predominant thing is the pulpit and the very building should bespeak this. Whether the building committee can work this out architecturally is less important than that this matter be worked out spiritually. Perhaps the latter is the more difficult.

The pulpit, that is, the preaching of the Gospel, is the center of all that the Church does, that it lives of, hopes for, has in mind when it buys an organ, labors for, in which it prays and sings, etc. As soon as the pulpit turns away from the Word of God, the tunes which the organ plays, the songs which are sung, the coins which are collected threaten to become idolatry . . . and the building . . . a temple to some god. The Pulpit, the preaching, the living testimony from the Word of God, that is the life of the Church, and the only cause for its existence.

When you take your place in church on the Sabbath Day, keep the pulpit before your mind as the center of everything.

### *You Pray Before Service.*

You cannot do this very well if you come late. There could be an exception now and then, for life is complicated and there are things beyond our control every day. But isn't it insulting to God and disturbing to the people when you shuffle your way down the aisle while worship is in progress? I'd rather, of course, you come late than not at all, but why adopt a pattern of life in which you have to choose between two evils?

You will be at church on time.

You take your place in church.

You bow your head in silent prayer as soon as you have taken your place.

M. Gritters.

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### ANNIVERSARY

On June 9, 1950, our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. A. Van Tuinen

will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace  
whose mind is stayed on Thee."—Is. 26:3.

We thank God with them for having kept them together through the years and pray their remaining years may know the blessedness of His peace.

Their devoted children:

Mr. and Mrs. G. Van Tuinen

Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Van Tuinen

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Piersma

Mr. and Mrs. R. Van Tuinen

and 7 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.