

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVI

June 15, 1950 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 18

MEDITATION

De Begnadigden Des Heeren

“Die in het Huis des Heeren geplant zijn, dien zal gegeven worden te groeien in de voorhoven onzes Gods. In den grijzen ouderdom zullen zij nog vruchten dragen; zij zullen vet en groen zijn, om te verkondigen dat de Heere recht is: Hij is mijn Rotssteen, en in Hem is geen onrecht.”—Psalm 92:14-16.

Men zal dezen tekst hoogstwaarschijnlijk vaak aanhalen of bepreken ter gelegenheid van jubileums en dergelijke gelegenheden. Het past mooi.

Wel, indien iemand niet begnadigd is, is het moeilijk, indien niet onmogelijk, om zoo iemand te feliciteeren, in den zin van gelukwensen.

En indien iemand wel begnadigd is, feliciteer er dan maar op los, want dan werken alle dingen hem mede ten goede. Daarom maakten die vrienden van Job zulk een grove fout. Zij waren met elkaar te rade gegaan en overeengekomen om Job te beklagen en te vertroosten. Dat nu kan niet. Een goddelooze moet altijd beklaagd en nooit vertroost, en een begnadigde moet altijd vertroost worden, doch nooit beklaagd.

O, ik weet wel, dat ons oog vaak beneveld is, en dat we daarom vaak zotte dingen doen. De lijnen liggen wel scherp voor het Goddelijk oog, maar wij verdoezelen de lijnen vaak. Er worden zelfs duizende kerken gevonden die de lijnen zóo verdoezeld hebben, dat zij den goddelooze gezegend achten. En die onzin wordt den menschen voorgehouden als Goddelijke waarheid.

Maar het is niet waar.

Alléén de begnadigden gaat het wel.

Voor de anderen is er niet dan een akelig wee.

De Heilige Schrift is niet onduidelijk in het trekken van de lijnen.

Let op dezen tekst. Bestudeer hem en ge zult zien, dat het alles wel is met den man die den Heere vreest.

Alle heerlijkheid waarvan de tekst spreekt zit vast op dat eene *sine qua non*: deze man is geplant in het Huis des Heeren.

En dan is alles goed; goed nu, en goed tot in alle eeuwigheden.

Hij is de begnadigde des Heeren!



De tekst is vol van beeldspraak.

Er is sprake van een geplant zijn in het Huis des Heeren: hier is een mengsel van twee beelden. Dan verder hooren we van een groeien in voorhoven, van vruchten dragen in den grijzen ouderdom, van een vet en groen zijn. Later hooren we ook nog van een Rotssteen: altemaal beeldspraak.

Hebt ge er op gelet hoe de Heere ons zoo vaak verootmoedigt?

Hoe passief is de klank van het Goddelijk Woord! Gij *werd* geplant!

U wordt *gegeven* te groeien!

Dan moet de vrucht toch wel terdege uit God gevonden worden!

En waarom ook niet?

Wie en wat zijn we?

Wanneer ik over deze dingen nadenk, dan komt me altijd dat onvergetelijke veertigste hoofdstuk van Jesaja voor de aandacht, en dan vooral dit vers: “alle volken zijn als niets voor Hem, en zij worden bij Hem minder geacht dan niet en ijdelheid.”

Wie van ons Gereformeerden heeft niet van zijn prilste jeugd af aan gehoord van dien druppel aan eenen emmer, en van dat stofje van de weegschaal?

Waar blijft dan de Pelagiaan? Hoe ter wereld is het toch mogelijk, dat “verstandige” menschen bazelen van des menschen deel in het wonder der trekking naar de hoogte? Hoe kan men, als men God kent, spreken van eene zaligheid die vrucht is van synergisme? Er is een trilling van genot als men leest: Het heil is des Heeren!

Dus als ge blijft vragen aangaande dien passieven vorm van den tekst, dan luidt mijn antwoord: God plant Zijn volk in het Huis des Heeren, en God geeft

te groeien in Zijn voorhoven, eerst, omdat Hij God is! Ik moet hier wel met uitroepetekens werken, en ook dan is het zwak. God is zoo groot en wij begrijpen het niet! Die alle dingen werkt naar het welbehagen van Zijn wil. Ik ben verzekerd, dat als we straks komen aan het einde der eeuwen, we veel duidelijker zullen zien, dat God waarlijk alle dingen wrocht. We falen hier allemaal.

En, tweedens, God doet alles in het eeuwig Evangelie, omdat wij slechts menschen zijn. God dacht, dat het noodig was om die waarheid te accentueeren, en zoo liet Hij Ezechiël die woorden eens heel apart zeggen. Luistert: "Gij nu, o Mijne schapen, schapen Mijner weide! gij zijt menschen, maar Ik ben uw God, spreekt de Heere HEERE." Ez. 34:31. Daalt nu eens af tot in de diepste diepte van Uw hart, en ge zult zien hoe vreeselijk afhankelijk ge zijt. Vrage: beslist gij wat ge denken zoudt? Tot in de diepste roerselen van Uw bestaan, hangt ge af van leidingen, van invloeden. Het staat alles onder het groote beheer van God. O, ik weet wel, dat de mensch in zijn waanwijsheid en in zijn rebellie spreekt van den machtigen wil des menschen. Doch luistert naar Hem wiens Wezen waarheid is: "het willen en het werken komt door Mijn inwerking daar in de diepte van Uw hart!" Dat zegt Paulus van het Evangelie. En de wijze Salomo zegt van het hart van alle menschen, dat het wel schikken kan, maar dat de Heere zijn gangen stuurt. In mijn prilste jeugd hoorde ik godzalige menschen spreken van onze stijle afhankelijkheid. Laat het mij U zeggen: indien ge naar den hemel wilt, dan is het eerste abc het besef van Uw afhankelijkheid. Want ge zijt slechts mensch!

Derdens, er is passieve taal hier en op duizend andere plaatsen in den Bijbel, omdat wij zondaren zijn. Daar werd het erger door.

Een zondaar is een schutter die misschiet. Het doel is de lof des Heeren, en het is juist het Evangelie dat het gezet heeft op een lof die den lof van het Paradijs verre overtreft. Indien ge dan met alle geweld spreken wilt van den menschen factor, dan moet ge het toch verliezen, want die gave mensch van het Paradijs is zondaar geworden. En zoo kwam het, dat onze vaderen een stijl ontwierpen die zegt: zoo verre is het er vandaan, dat de mensch met zijn natuurlijke gaven God zou vinden, dat hij die gaven, wat zij dan ook mogen zijn (ik heb schik van dien stijl), geheel en al bezoedelt, etc.

Dat zijn drie zware redenen. God doet alles wat tot onze zaligheid noodig is, want Hij is die groote God die wonderen doet op wonderen hooren; want gij zijt bloot mensch, creatuur, stijl afhankelijk van den grootten Schepper van 't Heelal; want gij zijt een vuile zondaar die onbekwaam is tot eenig goed en geneigd tot alle kwaad.

Daarom is er passieve taal in dezen tekst.

Maar indien ge begenadigd zijt, dan is er heil, een heil, dat U zal doen zingen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid.



Die genade schuilt allereerst hierin: gij wordt in Gods Huis geplant.

Daar zal de zanger wel den tabernakel of den tempel mee bedoeld hebben.

De tabernakel, de tempel zijn zoo lieflijk. Ik kan er inkomen, dat men duizende jaren geleden besloot en zeide: Hier wordt de rust geschonken; hier 't vette van Uw Huis gesmaakt, een volle beek van wellust maakt hier elk in liefde dronken!

De Tempel is zoo lieflijk!

Hij is de aanraking Gods, waarmede Hij de aarde aanraakt. De Tempel, en dan vooral die openslaande deuren of gordijnen, zijn de armen van God, die eeuwige armen van God waarvan Mozes spreekt, waarmede Hij reikt en reikt, totdat Hij U omvat en opheft uit het slijk der zonde en des doods, en zet op dien Rotssteen waarmee de tekst besluit.

De Tempel, het Huis Gods is de aanraking Gods, maar denkt er om, dat die aanraking verschrikkelijke dingen spreekt.

De Tempel, het Huis Gods werd eindelijk vervuld in Christus Jezus en dan aan het Kruis. Dat Kruis, die stervende Jezus, is de aanraking Gods waarmede Hij de aarde aanraakt. En die aanraking is voor Jezus het storten van Zijn hartebloed.

Maar het willen storten en het daadwerkelijk storten van dat bloed was zoo schoon en zoo lieflijk, dat God er een hemel der gezaligden op bouwt.

Het Huis is klaar. Het wacht op zijn inwoners.

En het zal vol zijn.

Want God plant menschen in dat Huis, in dien Jezus. Luistert slechts: "Indien wij met Hem ééne plante geworden zijn in de gelijkmaking. . ." Rom. 6:5.

En keer op keer spreekt de Heilige Geest van dat geplant zijn in het Huis Gods, in Jezus.

En: vergeet het nooit: het is God en God alléén die plant!

Luistert naar dezen tekst: "Alle plant die Mijn hemelsche Vader niet gepant heeft zal uitgeroeid worden."

En: Er was een Heer die een wijngaard plantte!

In het Oude Testament heeft de Heilige Geest het zelfde beeld gebruikt: "De Heere der Heirscharen, die heeft u geplant." Jer. 11:17.

En: "Gij hebt de heidenen met Uwe hand uit de bezitting verdreven, maar henlieden (Israel) geplant." Psalm 44.

En de beteekenis? Wel, als ge het beeld voor oogen houdt, kan de beteekenis U niet ontgaan: een plant die in den grond gezet wordt ontvangt haar levenssappen uit dien grond. De grond is Christus Jezus en als ge

in Hem geplant zijn, dan is die planting de wedergeboorte.

Dan leeft ge in het Huis des Heeren.

En dan is er nog een andere sprake in dat beeld van Huis. In het Huis is de gezelligheid der zamenleving.

O, het zal *gezellig* zijn in dat eeuwig TeHuis. Het is de gezelligheid der genieting van verbondsgemeenschap met den Eeuwige.



De begenadigde gaat *groeien*.

Het welbehagen des Heeren is voortgaande, gelukkiglijk voortgaande, door Jezus' hand.

De geplante menschen gaan groeien, en dat is de bekeering, de dagelijksche bekeering.

Ze groeien in de voorhoven van God.

En dat is, om het nu eens heel eenvoudig te zeggen, Uw gaan naar de kerk op den Sabbat. O ja, ik weet het wel, het houdt veel meer in. Maar ik kan alles niet zeggen in zeven getypte bladzijden. Daarom neem ik de kroon van de dagelijksche bekeering. Ik zou kunnen spreken van de negatieve zijde, en met U snikken vanwege de zonde in groete droefenis. Ik zou kunnen spreken van de genietingen der goede werken, en er zijn er vele. Doch laat ons slechts spreken van haar kroon, van de kroon der bekeering. En die is deze:

Ge zegt: Vrouw, kinderen! het is tijd! laat ons opgaan tezamen naar Gods Huis!

Ze trekken op: hier Benjamin, schoon klein hij mocht regeeren; daar Juda's stam die glorie won; ginds Nafthalie en Zebulon; om God, hun Koning, t' eeren!

Nu zitten ze stil, neen, ze zingen, ze bidden, hun aangezicht vertoont eens glans van geheiligd genieten. Ze hooren de groote werken Gods verkondigen.

O ja, ge hebt het gezien: ze *groeien* in de voorhoven.

Straks worden ze grijs; zij zijn bijna afgeleefd. Doch ik zou U willen smeeiken om toch aandachtig naar die grijsaards te zien: o Goddelijk wonder! ze zijn nog groen en frisch! Het gaat er wonderlijk naar toe in de voorhoven Gods.

Dat volk draagt heerlijke vruchten in grooten ouderdom.

De stervende Jakob zegt: Op Uwe zaligheid wacht ik, o Heere!

En twaalf zonen en één dochter buigen het hoofd om dienzelfden God te aanbidden. Ze hebben het van Jakob geleerd.

Ja, waarlijk, het is goed, eeuwig goed, om begenadigd te zijn. Stoot U toch niet aan den passieven leetrant van den Heiligen Geest. Want alleen door dien trant te willen en te leeren zult ge in groote blijdschap verschijnen voor God.

Wat onuitsprekelijk gelukkig volk zijn toch die begenadigden des Heeren!



En nu nog een weinig spreken van de vruchten die de begenadigden des Heeren dragen.

De grond moet wel goed en vet geweest zijn, want de vruchten zijn zeer schoon en lieflijk.

Hier zijn de vruchten: ze verkondigen dat de Heere recht is: Hij is mijn Rotssteen, en in Hem is geen onrecht!

Het klinkt hemelsch. We beluisteren denzelfden stijl en het zelfde klankgeslacht als Johannes ons laat luisteren naar hemelsche glorie.

Ge kunt de kinderen Gods herkennen aan hun spraak. Hun spraak maakt hun openbaar. Als de ware kindergeest in hen is zeggen ze al maar door: Abba, lieve Vader! Ze hebben het geheim van Gods verbond gezien, verstaan, opgelost. Dat geheim is dit: God moet geprezen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid.

Dat is dan ook het eenigste doel van deze schepping en de komende herschepping.

Merktet ge wel hoe persoonlijk het er naar toe gaat in de voorhoven Gods? O ja, we komen met de feesthoudende menigte tezamen. We zingen tezamen en tezamen bidden we. En toch, er is een zeer persoonlijke klank in den Godsdienst.

Er is slechts één hart, dat ge kent, en dat is uw eigen hart.

Voegt daarbij, dat de godsdienst een zaak des harten is, en ge zult eenigzins verstaan waarom deze tekst eindigt in een zeer persoonlijke klank.

Hij is mijn Rotssteen!

Hoe zullen we die belijdenis uitputten?!

Eigenaardig, dat de idee van recht en gerechtigheid verbonden wordt aan het beeld van de rots. Hetzelfde vindt ge in dien klassieken tekst in Deut. 32:4. Daar staat: "Hij is de rotssteen, wiens werk volkomen is, want alle Zijne wegen zijn gerichten; God is Waarheid en is geen onrecht, rechtvaardig en recht is Hij."

En hier hebt ge hetzelfde: God is de Rotssteen en Hij is recht, en in Hem is geen onrecht.

God is de Rots, want Hij is recht.

Ik zie er niet veel van, want ik ben geestelijk kortzichtig. Ik heb andere menschen er over hooren praten. En ik heb er zelf een weinigje van gezien: God is in Zijn eeuwige volmaakte Wezen altijd in harmonie met het Hoogste Goed, en dat is Hijzelf.

Ik denk, dat de schoonste commentaar op dit vraagstuk de psalm is waar ge een telkens wederkeerend thema ontmoet: Zijn goedheid gaat het al te boven; Zijn goedheid duurt in eeuwigheid!

Hij is mijn Rotssteen! Commentaar? "Zijn goedertierenheid is geweldig over degenen die Hem vreezen!" Och, dat nu al wat in mij is Hem prees!

G. Vos.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

Box 124, Sta. C., Grand Rapids, Mich.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Contributing Editors: — Rev. G. M. Ophoff, Rev. G. Vos, Rev. R. Veldman, Rev. H. Veldman, Rev. H. De Wolf, Rev. B. Kok, Rev. J. D. De Jong, Rev. A. Petter, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. L. Vermeer, Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. M. Gritters, Rev. J. A. Heys, Rev. W. Hofman.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to Mr. J. BOUWMAN, 832 Reynard St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

Renewals:—Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes his subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| MEDITATION— | |
| De Begenadigden Des Heeren | 409 |
| Rev. G. Vos | |
| EDITORIALS— | |
| An Answer To Rev. A. Petter | 412 |
| Rev. H. Veldman | |
| THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE— | |
| An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism | 415 |
| Rev. H. Hoeksema | |
| OUR DOCTRINE— | |
| The Idea Of Creation. (1) | 417 |
| Rev. H. Veldman | |
| THE DAY OF SHADOWS— | |
| David's Victories, His faith | 420 |
| The Arm Of The Lord Revealed | 424 |
| Rev. G. M. Ophoff | |
| SION'S ZANGEN— | |
| Verlost Uit Het Diensthuis | 426 |
| Rev. G. Vos | |
| FROM HOLY WRIT— | |
| Exposition Of Ephesians 2:4-10 | 429 |
| Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers | |
| IN HIS FEAR— | |
| Called To His Praise | 431 |
| Rev. J. A. Heys | |

EDITORIALS

An Answer To Rev. A. Petter

In the Concordia number of May 11 the Rev. A. Petter gives his answer to the open letter which I wrote him in the Standard Bearer of March 15. Frankly, I have very little desire to continue this discussion. Hence, I consider this article the last which I will write in connection with this matter. The reason for this article is that I cannot permit Rev. Petter's answer to remain unanswered. And I write this, not primarily for the sake of Rev. Petter, but for the sake of our readers whose patience, I am afraid, is certainly being taxed.

My Quotation from Prof. Berkhof.

The Rev. Petter quotes from an article which I wrote in the Standard Bearer of March 1, 1948, pages 247-248. Permit me, first of all to quote what I wrote in that article.

My quotation from the book of Prof. Berkhof, in which article the professor maintains that the covenant is also conditional, is as follows: "On the other hand the covenant may be called conditional. There is a sense in which the covenant is conditional. If we consider the basis of the covenant, it is clearly conditional on the suretyship of Jesus Christ. In order to introduce the covenant of grace, Christ had to, and actually did, meet the conditions originally laid down in the covenant of works, by His active and passive obedience. Again, it may be said that the covenant is conditional as far as the first entrance into the covenant as a real communion of life is concerned. This entrance is contingent on faith, a faith, however, which is a gift of God. When we speak of faith as a condition here we naturally refer to faith as a spiritual activity of the mind. It is only through faith that we can obtain a conscious enjoyment of the blessings of the covenant. Our experimental knowledge of the covenant life is entirely dependent on the exercise of faith. He who does not live a life of faith is, as far as his consciousness is concerned, practically outside of the covenant. If in our purview we include not only the beginning, but also the gradual unfolding and completion of the covenant life, we may regard sanctification as a condition in addition to faith. Both are conditions, however, within the covenant."—thus far the quotation from Prof. Berkhof.

My comments on this quotation were as follows, and again we quote in full: "This none can dispute. It is surely true that the surety of Jesus Christ is basis

for God's fellowship with us, that the justice of the Lord must be satisfied before we can again be received into Divine favour (Lord's Day 5). And it is actually true that to enjoy experimentally, experientially, consciously the blessings of the covenant, we must consciously enter into the covenant of faith. But does this give us the right to speak of the covenant in a conditional sense? Faith itself is a gift of God. And we surely agree with the last sentence of the above quotation: "Both are conditions, however, *within the covenant*." How can something, which belongs to the covenant and constitutes essentially a part of that covenant, be a condition of that covenant? It must be plain, also from this paragraph, that God's covenant with man is not conditional. Man cannot merit anything. Man cannot do anything. Faith itself is a gift of God. Where, then, is the condition of the covenant?"—thus far my comments.

From these remarks the Rev. Petter concludes that I, too, in the past have advocated "conditions". All we ask in this article is that our readers judge whether the brother's conclusion is justified. Brother Petter might also conclude from this quotation which I quoted that I believe in the covenant of works. Does my quotation of this article imply that I endorse everything which the professor writes here? Do I endorse his use of the word "conditional"? Are not the conditions of the professor in this quotation the requirements which are absolutely necessary shall the Christian receive and enjoy the salvation of God, such as, e.g., the suretyship of Jesus Christ, the perfect satisfaction of the Mediator, the act of believing, which act of believing is an gift of God? This explains why I underscore the words: "within the covenant," in the expression: Both are conditions, however, within the covenant. Moreover, the very heading of the article which I wrote in that number of the Standard Bearer is: God's Covenant, Unilateral and Unconditional." Besides, we begin our paragraph on page 246 with the remark: Nevertheless, we would rather maintain that God's covenant is unilateral throughout and therefore wholly unconditional. And, in my comments on the paragraph which I quoted of Prof. Berkhof, I write the following: "But does this give us the right to speak of the covenant in a conditional sense? How can something, which belongs to the covenant, be a condition of that covenant? It must be plain, also from the paragraph, that God's covenant with man is not conditional. Man cannot merit anything. Man cannot do anything. Faith itself is a gift of God. Where, then, is the condition of the covenant." From the statement, "Man cannot do anything," Rev. Petter might also conclude that I have reduced man to a stock and block. However, this is enough. I ask our readers to judge whether Rev. Petter has shown that I have advocated the concept of conditions.

*Rev. Petter's Reference To My Scriptural
Passages.*

The reader will recall that in my lengthy article of March 15 I quoted several passages of the Word of God to show that salvation is wholly unconditional. I deliberately set out to show that the Scriptures present the *entire way* of salvation as wholly the work of God and therefore wholly unconditional. These passages speak for themselves and permit no other interpretation. And what is Rev. Petter's reaction to this proof from the Scriptures? He simply brushes them aside. He writes that we cannot settle the question simply by all those passages, that it is a question what I do with the other texts which I do not consider here, and that we must have the whole Bible. And then he refers to passages such as Ezek. 18:23, 33:11, the Fifth Petition, and the Canons of Dordt, II, 5, and also III and IV, 8.

In connection with these remarks of Rev. Petter I would make a few remarks. First does it not sound somewhat strange to read: It is a question what he does with the other texts which he does not consider here, and: We must have the whole Bible. To be sure, we must have the whole Bible. However, the Bible does not contradict itself. It is not a question of placing one group of texts over against another group. Besides, if the passages which I quoted maintain the truth that salvation is wholly unconditional, then the Bible cannot teach in other passages that it is conditional. I simply quoted these passages to show that the Word of God, in no uncertain terms, presents the *entire way of salvation, from the beginning to the end*, as exclusively the work of the Lord. Moreover, the Rev. Petter himself has referred to the Old Testament, as the dispensation of the law, in support of his conditional theory. And, in my article of March 15, I purposely referred to a text as Gal. 3:24 to show that the Old Testament dispensation of the law cannot be interpreted in a conditional sense in any sense of the word. And does Rev. Petter forget my reference to Is. 3:10-11 whereby I tried to show that one of "Rev. Petter's texts" cannot be interpreted in a conditional sense? And yet the brother boldly writes: No, but it is a question what he does with the other texts which he does not consider here. And he underscores in this statement the words: *other* and *not*.

Finally, I do not know whether Rev. Petter's reference to Col. 3:1 is a reflection on the passages which I quoted from Holy Writ. In connection with that text the brother writes that the "if" in that text cannot simply be read as "since". I would like to know, if that word does not have the meaning of "since" in that text, what meaning, then, does it have? What does Paul mean to say if not that we must seek

the things above because we have been risen with Christ?

Those "If" Clauses.

Rev. Petter refers briefly to these "if" clauses in the middle column on page 3. I would like to remind the brother of the following. He began by referring the readers of Concordia to the many "if" clauses in Holy Writ. Thereupon Rev. Ophoff made a painstaking effort to explain these "if" clauses. Thereupon the brother simply ignored this explanation of Rev. Ophoff and again in a subsequent article, referred the readers of Concordia to these "if" clauses. This is the way Rev. Petter treated the efforts of Rev. Ophoff. This I do not consider ethical, and surely not brotherly and charitable.

What Do We Lack?

In the rest of the article, beginning in the middle of page 3, where we read: "In closing let me say. . . ." I fail to see what bearing these remarks have on the issue now being discussed. The Rev. Petter warns against the danger of the wreckage of Anabaptism, fatalism, anominianism, of the glorious sovereignty being an offense to the flesh, not only to the Arminian flesh, but equally so to the fatalistic, passivistic flesh. I have no objection to this warning as such, but fail to see the point. Does the Rev. Petter detect this danger in our Churches? Where? Besides, in a paragraph in the third column the brother writes: "Unto that purpose the Lord uses an almost unclassifiable variety of address, approach, instruction. And those forms are so various just because the salvation of man is such a manysided moral ethical process. His will is changed in the things and ways it wills, his intellect is changed as mind, his emotions are changed as emotions, his affections, his desires, etc. And they are changed in respect to God and His goodness and His virtues." And later the brother writes that the Lord uses various forms of address. This, of course, we do not dispute. But, have we, as Protestant Reformed Churches not maintained this truth for years already? Permit me in this connection to quote from Rev. Hoeksema's book: *The Gospel*, where I read on pages 152, and we translate: "We understand very well that the contents of salvation, that the salvation of God's covenant and kingdom bears a spiritual-ethical character and that we have been taken up into the entire work of Divine salvation as rational-ethical being. If the work of salvation were merely a deliverance from hell and a being taken up into heaven, then it could finally occur round about us, in the sense that our inner soul-life, our ethical consciousness would have nothing to do with the salvation. But now it is different. Through the work of salvation we are translated out of dark-

ness into the light, out of death into life. Through that work a change occurs which takes hold of us into the root of our life and of our person. A change in our judicial and spiritual-ethical relation to God! Thereby that spiritual salvation comes to us as rational ethical creatures. Therefore it comes to us through the Word of God. And through that Word God speaks to us. He carries through the Word that salvation into our consciousness. He speaks to us. He addresses our mind through the Word. And He places Himself with that Word before our will. He instructs, enlightens, teaches, reveals, warns, demands, admonishes, calls unto obedience of the Gospel, invites, even beseeches, encourages and comforts, calls unto the struggle of faith unto the end. Never are we stocks and blocks. Also the proclamation of the Gospel always places us before the inevitable: Yes or No! And whereas that proclamation of the Gospel comes, through men, unto far more persons than the elect, the ungodly reprobates must also say Yes and No, sin is revealed to be sin, and God is justified when He judges." Is this, Rev. Petter, not the doctrine of our churches and has it not been such already since their beginning? You know, of course, that these quotations can easily be multiplied. Fact is, nowhere do the truths of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility receive the proper emphasis as in our churches.

A "Full-Orbed" Gospel.

Rev. Petter, you still owe me an answer to my question to you whether I preach a full-orbed gospel. You make a distinction between the *term* "conditions", and the *concept* "conditions". I do not want the term and I do not want the concept. Is my gospel then "full-orbed"? If it is not, what do I lack? And, if I do preach a "full-orbed" gospel, then will you please explain why the concept, "conditions", is vital and necessary? I did not begin with this discussion in connection with a "full-gospel". You did, brother. And I am still awaiting your explanation.

Finally, with this I take my leave of you as far as this discussion is concerned. It is my personal conviction that this discussion need not continue. This correspondence has been quite disappointing to me. I have tried to be brotherly in this discussion. It may be that, as you write, I failed, in connection with the quotation of Prof. Berkhof, to express myself clearly. I am confident, however, that our people in general, have no doubt as to my stand, and that I have stated my position very clearly. I honestly wish that I could say the same thing of you. I know that many people are constantly asking themselves the question: What does the Rev. Petter mean, what does he want?

H. Veldman.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXIX.

Qu. 78. Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?

A. Not at all: but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God; so the bread in the Lord's supper is not changed into the very body of Christ; though agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

Qu. 79. Why then doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood; and Paul the "communion of the body and blood of Christ?"

A. Christ speaks thus, not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us, that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink, whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us, that we are as really partakers of this true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God.

Chapter I.

The Fearful Error Of The Romanists.

In the preceding Lord's Day the Catechism treated of the institution of the Lord's Supper and of its significance in general. There it taught us, among other things, that by means of eating and drinking the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper we become more and more united to the sacred body of Christ, so that we become flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. In this present Lord's Day the Catechism treats of the sacramental operation. This is indeed a very important question, and it should not lightly be passed by. Preachers sometimes complain of the fact that the Heidelberg Catechism devotes no less than three long chapters to the question of the Lord's Supper; and many are of the opinion that if the Catechism were written in our day, these long chapters could be considerably shortened and probably comprised into one Lord's Day. There are other matters that demand our attention in our modern age, and our controversy, especially with Rome, certainly does not occupy the

center of our interest as it did in the time of the Reformation. But this is undoubtedly a mistake. The question concerning the mode of operation in the sacraments, and especially in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is just as important as it ever was. Fundamentally it is a question that concerns the grace of God. The question is, namely: how are the sacraments, and how is the Lord's Supper especially, a means of grace? How does this second sacrament work? In what way am I nourished with the body and blood of Christ through the Lord's Supper? And this question the Catechism introduces by asking: "Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?" And it instructs us that our being nourished by the body and blood of Christ is not effected by a magical operation on the signs as such, but by an operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts through the signs of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. By these signs Christ through His Spirit instructs us and assures us that He really nourishes us with the bread of life.

It is evident that in this Lord's Day the Catechism opposes especially the Romish error of transubstantiation, although at the same time it denies the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. According to the Romanists Christ is present in the Lord's Supper not simply in the spiritual sense, as taught by the Reformed, nor simply by the real presence of His body and blood in and with and under the bread and wine, as is taught by the Lutherans, but by the bread and wine being changed into His body and blood. The question may indeed be asked whether the Romish Church really teaches this fearful error of transubstantiation. And the answer is, without doubt, that it not only teaches this false doctrine, but that it pronounces its curse upon all that deny it. This is very evident from *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*. In its thirteenth session, held October 11, 1551, that Council set forth its doctrine concerning the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist.

In Chapter I the Council declared: "In the first place, the holy synod teaches, and openly and simply professes, that, in the august sacrament of the holy eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things, (*Dominus nostrum Jesum Christum, verum Deum atque hominem, vere, realiter, ac substantialiter sub specie illarum rerum sensibilibus contineri*)."

Again, in Chapter III the same Council declared: "And this faith has ever been in the church of God, that, immediately after the consecration, the veritable body of our Lord, and His veritable blood, together with His soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine; but the body indeed under the species

of bread, and the blood under the species of wine, by the force of the words; but the body itself under the species of wine, and the blood under the species of bread, and the soul under both, by the force of that natural connection and concomitancy whereby the parts of Christ our Lord, *who hath now risen from the dead, to die no more, are united together*; and the divinity, furthermore, on account of the admirable hypostatical union thereof with His body and soul. Wherefore it is most true, that as much is contained under either species as under both; for Christ whole an entire is under the species of bread and under any part whatsoever of that species; likewise the whole Christ is under the species of wine, and under the parts thereof."

The Romish Church therefore teaches that the whole Christ is in the bread and the whole Christ is in the wine. And what is more, the whole Christ is in each and every particle of both species. Moreover, it teaches that the effect accomplished by transsubstantiation is permanent. And from this fact, namely, that the change of the substance of the elements into the substance of the body and blood of Christ remains permanently, the Romish Church concludes that the host, or wafer, may be preserved, that therefore it may be brought to the sick, that it may be carried about in possessions, and that it is but proper that it should be worshipped. The Romanists make a distinction between *douleia* and *latreia*. The former may be rendered to the saints and to angels, but the latter is due to God alone. Now Christ is God manifested in the flesh. And therefore worship may be paid to Him. And as after the consecration of the bread and wine Christ is present in the wafer, or the host, both as to His divine and as to His human nature, the Romanists pay homage and worship to that wafer. The propriety of worshipping the wafer as it represents the Christ is also taught in the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Chapter V, where we read: "Wherefore, there is no room left for doubt, that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render in veneration the worship of *latreia*, which is due to the true God, to this most holy sacrament. For not therefore is it the less to be adored on this account, that it was instituted by Christ, the Lord, in order to be received; for we believe that same God to be present therein, of whom the eternal Father, when introducing Him into the world, says: *And let all the angels of God adore him*; whom the magi, *falling down, adored*; who, in fine, as the Scripture testifies was adored by the apostles in Galilee.

"The holy synod declares, moreover, that very piously and religiously was this custom introduced into the church, that this sublime and venerable sacrament be, with special veneration and solemnity, celebrated,

every year, on a certain day and that a festival; and that it be borne reverently and with honor in processions through the streets and public places."

And the Romish Church declared in Chapter IV of the same *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, the doctrine of transubstantiation as follows:

"And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the church of God, and this holy synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy catholic church, suitably and properly called transubstantiation."

And the same Thirteenth Session of the Council of Trent anathemize everyone that denies this doctrine of transubstantiation.

In Canon I we read: "If anyone denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most holy eucharist, are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but saith that He is only therein as a sign, or in a figure, or virtue: let him be anathema."

And in the second Canon: "If anyone saith, that, in the sacred and holy sacrament of the eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood—the species only of the bread and wine remaining—which conversion indeed the catholic church most aptly calls transubstantiation: let him be anathema."

And in Canon III we read: "If anyone denieth that, in the venerable sacrament of the eucharist, the whole Christ is contained under each species, and under every part of each species, when separated: let him be anathema."

And as to the substance of the bread and wine being changed permanently into the substance of the body and blood of Christ Canon IV teaches as follows: "If anyone saith, that, after the consecration is completed, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are not in the admirable sacrament of the eucharist, but are there only during the use, whilst it is being taken, and not either reserved or after; and that, in the hosts, or consecrated particles, which are reserved or which remain after communion, the true body of the Lord remaineth not: let him be anathema."

(to be continued)

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Idea Of Creation. (1)

Why We Treat This Subject Now.

The subject of "Creation" constitutes a part of what is commonly known as Anthropology (the doctrine of or concerning Man).

Until now we have been discussing Theology, the doctrine concerning God, and specifically the doctrine concerning God as the Lord is in Himself. We understand, I am sure, that, strictly speaking, everything is Theology. This lies in the nature of the case. Jehovah is the living God. He is All in all. Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. The history of the world, which includes and centers in and revolves about the gathering of the Church of the Lord out of all nations and tribes and lands and tongues, is nothing but the unfolding of the counsel of the Lord and His revelation of Himself as the alone living God. Everything is and should be knowledge of God; all things lead and should lead us unto Jehovah. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge"—Ps. 19:1-2.

However, that which is commonly known as Theology, in distinction, e.g., from Anthropology, Christology, etc., refers to the knowledge of the Lord as He is in Himself. And under this heading, namely that of Theology, we have called attention to such matters as: God's Being, the Trinity, His Names, Attributes, the Counsel of the Lord. We have just concluded a somewhat detailed discussion of the counsel of God.

In Anthropology, the doctrine of or concerning Man, we expect to discuss, the Lord willing: Creation, Providence, Sin.

One can readily understand why the subject of Anthropology should be discussed at this time.

This must not be interpreted in the sense that, fundamentally, in the counsel and eternal thoughts of Jehovah, the subject of the creation of the world and of man, of sin and the Providence of God, precedes the truth as it involves Christ and His Church and the eternal renewal of all things. That Anthropology precedes the doctrine of Christ and His Church does not imply that the creation of the world and of man is also first in the eternal counsel of God. We have already called attention to these things when we busied ourselves with the subjects of Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism. Although it is true that, historically, the natural is first and the heavenly is preceded

by the earthly, this does not necessarily mean that such is also the case in the eternal wisdom of the Lord. This is impossible, and we should also understand this at all times. The infralapsarian conception of things cannot give full and complete satisfaction to the soul of the child of God. It does not explain things. One can hardly deny that the phenomenon of sin and death in this world is tremendous. That this world is a shadow of the valley of death is an awful reality. To declare that the Lord merely "permitted" this awful phenomenon cannot satisfy the spiritually inquiring child of God. I say: the spiritually inquiring child of God: One can hardly be condemned, can he, when, in the light of the Scriptural truth that the Lord is God and He alone, he seeks an answer in connection with the reality of sin and death which will be in harmony with the truth of the sovereignty and transcendent majesty of the living God? The desire to maintain the sovereignty of the Lord is not carnal and should certainly fill the heart and mind of every child of God. Fundamentally, according to the eternal counsel and wisdom of the Lord, Christ did not come because of sin but sin came because of Christ. The heavenly does not follow, fundamentally, upon the collapse of the earthly, but the collapse of the first Paradise occurs, according to Divine sovereignty, with a view to the heavenly. The darkness serves the light, sin serves grace, our guilt occurs because of our eternal justification. The Lord, Who forms the light and creates the darkness, Who makes peace and creates evil, Whose works are known unto Him (sovereignly known) from before the foundation of the world, is therefore surely the sovereign and creative Cause of all things also in His eternal counsel and wisdom. Any other view which must present sin and the fall of man as a Divinely foreseen but unavoidable accident, is an injustice to and a travesty upon the Lord, and fundamentally a denial of the truth that Jehovah performs always all His good pleasure and that He is God alone. And it is indeed of fundamental significance for the comfort of the Church of the living God, that all things be regarded as constantly under Divine control, that nothing happens by chance, and that the Cause of the living God is always victorious also then when the night of sin and guilt and darkness is introduced by the sin and fall of Adam.

Historically, however, Anthropology follows the locus of Theology. What is not necessarily first in the counsel of God is first in time, in the historical realization of that counsel. We concluded our series of articles on Theology with a somewhat detailed discussion of the Counsel of God. When we now busy ourselves with the realization of this counsel of the Lord in time, the first subject which demands our attention is the creation of the world and the entrance of sin into the works of God's hands. This readily

explains why the subject of Creation is treated at this time. We also purpose to devote a little space to the creation and existence of the world of angels.

As According To The Confessions.

The truth that God is the Creator of the world appears, as we might expect, in all our Confessions.

The first article of our Twelve Articles of Faith reads: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of this truth in Lord's Days 9 and 34. In Lord's Day 9, in answer to the question, "What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?", we read: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that is in them, Who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father; in Whom I so trust as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this vale of tears, He will turn to my good; for He is able to do it, being almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father." And in Lord's Day 34 the authors of the Catechism quote the fourth commandment.

Art. 12 of our Confession of Faith speaks of the creation of the world as follows: "We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, when it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He also still upholds and governs them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God. He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency in which God created them into everlasting perdition, and the others have by the grace of God remained steadfast and continued in their first state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing; to the utmost of their power as murderers watching to ruin the Church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness adjusted to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments. Therefore we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked by their own nature, without having been corrupted."

The Westminster Confession also speaks, of course, of the Divine creation of the world. We read in chap-

ter 4 of that Confession: "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image, having the law of God written in their hearts and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgression, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures." In connection with this article of the Westminster Confession we would briefly call attention to the following points of interest. First, God is presented in this article as the Creator of the world and all things therein. Also, the Lord is the Creator of the universe as the Triune God. Thirdly, the Lord created all things in the space of six days—hence, this article does not advocate the theory that the days of creation were periods. Fourthly, the Lord created all things very good. This, we understand, contradicts the heresy of Materialism, in either the Monistic or Dualistic sense, to which we will subsequently call attention. And finally we would note that God created man after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, yet as under a possibility of transgression.

As According To The Scriptures.

Generally speaking:

The Scriptural presentation of the origin of all things is surely of a very highly exalted and majestic character. It is surely true what the late Dr. H. Bavinck observes that the true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions at the very outset by presenting the relation in which God stands to the world and to man as that of the Creator to His creature.

Majestic is already the opening verse of the Holy Scriptures. And throughout the Word of God the presentation of the origin of all things is not philosophic in character, not mysteriously deep and profound which cannot be grasped by the mind of man, but simple. God does not prove Himself to be the Creator of the world, but simply postulates it as a fact. And although it is true that the act of creation as such defies all human understanding, the fact remains that the revelation of it is held before us in such a clear and simple manner that a child can grasp it, and that all the efforts of the world to ascribe the world's

existence to any other source are clearly to be discerned as the efforts of the wilful hatred and rejection of the living God.

Besides, no other Name describes God's absolute existence or being as does the Name, Creator. To say that a fountain is the source of water implies that the water is out of that fountain, and that the two are essentially one; to declare that I am the father of my son clearly suggests that there is an essential affinity between us. To declare, however, that God is the Creator of heaven and earth implies, and this we must understand, that there is an essential distinction between God and the world, the Creator and His creature. To be sure, the Lord is the Father of all men and of the world in the sense that mankind and the world owe their existence to Him, that all things are of Him. But we must ever bear in mind that He is, in this sense, their Father because He is their Maker, their Creator, that all things do not flow essentially out of His being, but that they have been called into existence by an act of the Lord's omnipotent and irresistible will. This essential distinction is clearly and beautifully emphasized and set forth by the word or name, Creator. A creator is surely to be distinguished, essentially, from that which he creates.

Specifically speaking:

God alone is the absolute and creative source of all that exists. He has created all things by His Word and Spirit. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light"—Gen. 1:1-3; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth . . . Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created."—Ps. 33:6, 104:29, 148:5; "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."—Job 33:4; "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? . . . Mind hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together."—Is. 40:12-13, 48:13; "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, Which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him"—Zech. 12:1; "In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."—John 1:1-3; "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:"—Col. 1:16; "Hath in these days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds;"—Hebrews 1:2.

Nothing stands over against Him; there was no matter which bound Him and no power which limited Him. He speaks and it is. Gen. 1:3—see above; "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."—Ps. 33:9; "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him Who he believed, even God, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."—Romans 4:17.

God is the unlimited Possessor of heaven and earth. "And blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: . . . And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth."—Gen. 14:19, 22; "For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. . . The north and the south Thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name . . . In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land."—Ps. 24:2, 1, 89:12, 95:45.

There is no boundary to His power; He does all His good pleasure. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand . . . For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"—Is. 14:24, 27; "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: . . . For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:"—Is. 46:10, 55:10; "But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased . . . Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."—Ps. 115:3, 135:6.

All things are out of Him and through Him and unto Him. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen.

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, By Whom are all things, and we by Him . . . Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."—Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 8:6, Hebrews 11:3.

The world is the product of His will. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth . . . Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created"—Ps. 33:6, Rev. 4:11; it is the revelation of His virtues—"Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty,"—Ps. 104:1; see also Prov. 8:23 f.f., Ps. 136:5 f.f. More-over, the world has its purpose in His glory. "Even every one that is called by My Name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him"—Is. 43:7; "The Lord hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."—Prov. 16:4; "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who that been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."—Rom. 11:33-36; "But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion."—Jer. 10:10-12. And beautifully the glory of the Divine Creator is expressed in Nehemiah 9:6: "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee."

Indeed, all of creation speaks of the omnipotence, the wisdom, the greatness and majesty of the living God, and it inspires us unto praise and thanksgiving, renders us small and causes us to feel our smallness and nothingness. We may well conclude with the words of Revelation 4:11 and quote them once more: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David's Victories, His Faith

We have seen how villianous David's messengers, sent to comfort Hanun for his father, had been treated. Realizing full well that David would avenge the insult, the Ammonites hired the Syrians for the impending conflict. But, as we saw, at the approach of Israel's armies under the leadership of Joab the Syrians fled the field, and the Ammonites at the sight of the fleeing Syrians hastily retreated into their stronghold. Thereupon Joab returned to Jerusalem, 10:1-14 (of 2 Sam.) But the battle had been but half won. The Ammonite cities had still to be taken. When the year was expired, Joab returned and completed his task. All the cities of the Ammonites including Rabbah were captured and depopulated, 11:1; 12:26-31.

The time that intervened between the first of these two military campaigns of Joab and the completion of the second must have been of about a year duration at the least. It included the time consumed by the first campaign; second, the time intervening between the first and the second; and lastly, the time consumed by the second. It was a year filled with momentous happenings. Some of them were sad and shameful and of far-reaching effect for David.

First in order of time was Joab's first conflict with the combined armies of the Ammonites and the Syrians 10:1-14 (of 2 Sam.). This was followed by David's battle with the powerful Hadadezer and his Syrian vassal kings in the Euphrates valley, 8:3-8; 10:15-19. During the process of this war, while David was far from home, the Edomites gained possession of southern Canaan. On his return David inflicted on them terrible punishment, 8:13, 14.

David had now overthrown all the nations that had been menacing Israel from the river Nile on the west to the Euphrates on the east. The narrative in the sequel makes mention of but one people, and this people the Philistines, that continued openly defiant, 21:15-22. The Lord had given David rest round about from all his enemies, 7:1. For the first time he was reigning over all Israel; judgment and justice was being executed unto all the people, 8:15. No longer occupied with war, David decided to build the Lord a house, 7:1-3. But he was prevented by a special revelation from God communicated by Nathan and from which he learned that the Lord's house would be built by his seed that the Lord would set up after him, 7:4-17. David's response was a prayer of thanksgiving, 7:19-29. All these events must be included in the happenings of that year. They must have taken place

shortly after David's return to Jerusalem from the battle with the coalition of the Syrian kings in the Euphrates valley. For that victory marked the beginning of the rest from all the enemies.

Next in order of time, it must be, was David's conference with Mephibosheth recorded in chapter 9. He sent for Mephibosheth. He entertained him at his table permanently, restored him all that was Saul's, and made Ziba his farmer. It must have been about this time or shortly thereafter that Joab as commanded by David returned to the Ammonites to seize their rebellious cities, 11:1. While Joab layed siege to Ammon's capital city, Rabbah, David, who had tarried at Jerusalem, fell into grievous sin. He committed adultery with Bethsheba and had Uriah slain in battle. As rebuked by Nathan, he was contrite. Though forgiven, he must reap what he sowed—murder in his own house, 11:1-27; 12:1-14. Next, at the request of Joab, he rejoined his army at Rabbah and took charge of the Ammonite war for the rest of its duration, 12:26-31. Either during his absence from Jerusalem or shortly after his return, Uriah's wife bore him a son. But God smote the child, and it died, as the Lord had said, 12:15-25. Such were the events of that year in their chronological order.

That the narrative in our book (2 Samuel) is not strictly chronological is undeniably clear in the chapters 8-10. The insult offered David's messengers by Hanun, narrated in 10:1-6, preceded and indirectly occasioned David's conflict with the Syrian kings in the Euphrates valley, an event narrated in chapter 8. Hanun's insult must have preceded also David's elevation of Mephibosheth, an event narrated in chapter 9.

Were the order chronological, the sequel in the narrative of the section beginning with chapter 6 would be as follows:

- 1) Chap. 6, David fetches the ark from Kirjath-jearim.
- 2) Chap. 8:1-2, David's wars with the Philistines and Moabites.
- 3) Chap. 10:1-5, Hanun's villianous treatment of David's messengers.
- 4) Chap. 10:6, The Ammonites hired the Syrians for the pending conflict.
- 5) Chap. 10:7-14, Joab's first campaign against the combined forces of the Ammonites and the Syrians.
- 6) Chap. 8:3-8; 10:15-19, David's conflict with Hadadezer and his confederate vassal kings in the valley of the Euphrates.
- 7) Chap. 8:14, His subjugation of the Edomites on his return to Jerusalem.
- 8) Chap. 7:1, Having now rest round about from all his enemies, he dwelt in his house, (8:15) and reigned over all Israel.
- 9) Chap. 8:11-12, His dedication of the spoils of war to the Lord.
- 10) Chap. 7:1-29, His decision to build the Lord a house; Nathan's prophecy, and David's prayer of thanksgiving.
- 11) Chap. 9:1-13, His kindness toward Mephibosheth.
- 12) Chap. 11:1, Joab's second campaign against the Ammonites; he beseiged Rabbah.
- 13) Chap. 11:2-27, David's adultery; death of Uriah.
- 14) Chap. 12:1-14, David censured by Nathan; his repentance and forgiveness.

15) Chap. 12:26-31, He rejoined his army at Rabbah, and took charge of the Ammonite war for the rest of its duration. His return to Jerusalem.

16) Chap. 12:15-25, The Lord struck the child. David besought the Lord for it; its death seven days thereafter.

The reason of this abandoning of the strictly chronological sequel is that the events were factually related. So David's transportation of the ark of the covenant and his determination to build the Lord a house. So, too, Hanun's insult offered David's messengers, the Ammonite wars, David's adultery, and Uriah's death.

The time consumed by David's wars, particularly by the subjugation of Rabbah and the rest of the Ammonite cities, must remain a matter of conjecture. Certain it is that these wars were not of years duration. Doubtless the time required for the seisure of Rabbah could be measured by months and perhaps by weeks. This is not an idle conjecture. These conflicts do not belong in the category of common wars between the nations. They were wars of God that the saints in Israel were privileged to wage by His mercy. The victories were God's gifts of grace to His believing people, the manifestations and the pledge of His love of them, and therefore properly wonders, marvellous works of the Lord, also on account of the speed with which they were performed always in the way of the prayers of the saints. Among the psalm are found such prayers—psalms of David—heart-cries of the saints, of David himself, uttered in the stress of his wars with the heathen:

Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, which hast cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man. Through God we will do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies. Ps. 60:9-12.

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Ps. 61:1-4.

When on the way to the theatre of war, the prayers of God's people, who remained at home, went with David. Then they would speak in their hearts and jointly on their meetings for public worship:

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob set thee on a high place;

Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;

Remember all thy offerings and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all thy counsel.

Who will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfill all thy petitions.

Now I know that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will

hear him from his holy heaven by the strength of the salvation of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call.

We should study in this connection especially Ps. 18. It appears also at the close of our book (2 Sam.), forming the 22nd chapter thereof. It is prefaced by the statement, "And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul" (verse 1). Accordingly, the song is one of thanksgiving for God's mighty deliverances.

The opening words of Ps. 18—"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength"—are lacking here; but they may be supplied. Loving the Lord, David had put his trust in the Lord, and was not put to shame. Recalling God's marvellous mercies, he was overwhelmed. In profoundest gratitude he rapturously exclaimed:

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer;
The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield,
and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my
refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.
I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised:
so shall I be saved from my enemies. (vers. 2-4).

The reference here is to David's deliverances from the hand of his internal enemies—Saul and his sympathizers. He was reminiscent of the anguish of soul that he suffered in the dark days of the Sauline persecutions:

When the pangs of death compassed me, the floods of
ungodly men made me afraid; the sorrows of hell com-
passed me about; the snares of death prevented me
(vers. 5-7).

In his distress he called upon the Lord and was heard. The Lord came in judgment, delivered him from his enemies—Saul and his following—and brought him forth also in a large place. Implied in this statement is the mercy of God whereby He set His servant at His own right hand as king over Israel. (vss. 7-20).

So did the Lord reward him according to his righteousness, He being a God who shews Himself merciful with the merciful, upright with the upright, and pure with the pure, but unsavory with the froward, (vers. 21-27).

By the hand of His servant, thus delivered and exalted, the Lord saved His afflicted people by which is to be understood the Israel according to the election, the people of God who put their trust in Him. For the song continues, "But thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down" (vers. 28). It was a deliverance from the tyranny, oppression, and threats of conquest of the heathen nations that dwelt on Israel's borders in that vast region beyond.

By the hand of his exalted servant—king David—

the Lord performed these wonders. For the Lord is his lamp, who lightens his darkness. For by his God he scattered a troop. By his God he leaped over a wall,—God, whose way is perfect, whose word is tried, and who is a buckler to all them that trust in Him. For none is God, save the Lord; and none is a rock save his God, vers. 29-32.

Enlarging upon this thought in the sequel, David continues:

God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.

He maketh my feet like hinds' feet: and setteth me upon my high places.

He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of salvation; and thy gentleness hath made me great.

Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip, (vers. 33-37).

These statements, too, apply particularly to the mercy of God whereby He qualified David for his wars with the heathen physically, mentally, and spiritually.

In the sequel of his song he dwells upon his amazing successes in these wars and gives all the glory to God:

I have pursued my enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them.

And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise; yea, they are fallen under my feet.

For thou hast girded me with strength to battle; them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.

Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.

They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.

Then I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad (vers. 38-42).

The next line must have reference to the Lord's goodness to David whereby He delivered him from his internal enemies as headed by Absalom:

Thou hast also delivered me from the strivings of my people (vers. 44a).

In the sequel down through verse 49 David is occupied with the exalted position which he occupies as the Lord's anointed and with his security in that position. Again he gives all credit to God:

Thou hast kept me to be the head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.

Strangers shall submit themselves unto me; as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.

Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their closed places.

The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation.

It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me.

And that bringeth me forth from my enemies; thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me; thou hast delivered me from the violent man (vers. 44b-49).

Let us take notice of the line, "Thou hast kept me to be the head of the heathen." It applies to the heathen nations that dwelt within Israel's ideal boundaries, that vast region beyond the proper borders of Canaan. The Lord subdued them one and all under David, brought them under his jurisdiction through his wonderful military accomplishments in that region as God's warrior. As the Song states, they submitted themselves to David, rendered him obedience, and paid him tribute as his vassals with him as their head. To this height of glory and power did the Lord raise David as king of Israel. And in this exalted position the Lord maintained him all the rest of the days of his life on earth. And what was the Lord's purpose in exalting His servant thus mightily? David tells us:

Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name (vers. 50).

This is the character of all true Gospel preaching also to be sure, among the heathen:—giving thanks to the Lord; singing praises unto His name.

The closing verse of this Song is significant:

He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and his seed forever more (vers. 51).

The thought here expressed proves with undeniable clarity that David ended with this song not in himself but in Christ. In the final instance David is Christ and his seed the people included in Christ—the church of the elect. For the mercies of God are to David and this seed *forever*.

That the Song is messianic is proved by the use that Paul makes of it. In Romans 15:8, 9 he argues the point that "Jesus Christ was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth to God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy." And to prove his point he quotes from Ps. 18 and thus from our Song these words uttered by David, "For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." So now vows the incarnate and glorified Christ—vows that He will sing unto God's name among all the nations of the earth, calling thereby His church and so confirming the promises made unto Abraham that in Him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. For it is evident that the apostle applies the lines that he quotes to Christ.

Here then, the Song is messianic, and not only at this place but in every one of its sections. The incarnate Christ is the speaking subject of its entire content. And this can be expected seeing that He as the anointed of God was compassed about by the sorrows of hell on account of the guilt of our sins the burden of which He had shouldered; seeing, further, that He was delivered out of all His troubles by His God in response to His cry, set in the highest heavens

at God's own right hand, vested with all power in heaven and on earth with the nations as his inheritance, and set over all things in the church, so that He reigns in the midst of His enemies all of whom have been made His footstool, breaks in pieces like a potter's vessel kings and judges of the earth who will not serve Him and simultaneously gathers His church by His Spirit and His Word, by His thanksgiving unto God among the nations, and His praises which He sings unto God's name by the mouth of His servants.

It is these facts and truths that our Song sets before us in the final instance. For in his sufferings and trials in the days of the Sauline persecutions, in the deliverance from his troubles, in his exaltation, in his power and glory and military achievements, in his singing praises unto God's name among the heathen, David was a type of Christ. G. M. Ophoff.

PLAN TO ATTEND

The 25th Anniversary Field Day

at the

JAMESTOWN GROVE

Wednesday — June 21

AFTERNOON & EVENING

GOOD SPEAKERS

GOOD PROGRAM

Meet Old Friends — Make New Acquaintances

Jamestown Grove is located two miles South
and 1½ miles East of Hudsonville.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 25, our dear parents

Mr. and Mrs. John Bouwman

will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our covenant God Who through them has showered upon us Christian love and devotion, and given us a home where we may know the fear of God.

Our prayer is that the Lord may richly bless them with His grace in the way that lies ahead, and that in all their experiences they may enjoy that blessed peace which is found in the blood of Christ.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Kieth Kuipers
Betty
Norma
Carol

Open House, Tuesday, June 27
afternoon 3:00 to 5:00; evening 7:00 to 10:00.
832 Reynard S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Arm Of The Lord Revealed

To preach the Christ in His sufferings is to preach the Gospel, the promise of the Gospel. Now, the Gospel, certainly, is not shut up between the two covers of the New Testament Bible. All the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation is Gospel. There is just as good a reason to speak of the Gospel of Genesis or of Exodus or of Amos as there is reason to speak of the Gospel of Matthew, of Mark, Luke and John. The Gospel, Christ crucified and resurrected, began to be preached immediately after the fall and disobedience of our first parents. What the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel"—this proclamation to our first parents is verily Gospel. It is the seed, the germ, of all the Gospel contained in all the Scriptures. And it is God who by His own voice revealed it in paradise,—revealed the Gospel of the Christ; and afterwards He published it by the patriarchs and the prophets; represented, pictured, typified it by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law, and lastly has fulfilled it by His own begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact of the matter is then that every book of the Bible is Gospel. The prophetic discourse of Isaiah is thus gospel. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is gospel in the strictest sense. Here the prophet is occupied exclusively and directly with the suffering and the glorified Christ.

I direct your attention to the first verse of the aforesaid chapter—the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. It reads, does this verse, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed."

The word "report" demands our attention first of all. The word that appears in the original text signifies that which the prophet heard or received by infallible revelation from God, to wit, the Gospel of Christ.

Just what elements of truth did Isaiah's Gospel include? What redemption facts does it set forth? We learn this from the very chapter from which my text is taken. In this chapter alone the following sacred facts and truths receive statement. The virgin birth of Christ and thus by implication the incarnation of the Son of God in the first part of verse two, a scripture that reads, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground." Further, the lowly estate of Christ in the second half of the same verse and in language that reads, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Next the substitutionary atonement of Christ, His suffering and dying on the cross for the sins of His people is plainly set forth in the verses 3 to 6 of this chapter. Here statements such as these occur. "Surely, he hath

born our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all." Verse 8 of this chapter is a clear reference to the terrible miscarriage of justice in Christ's trial before Israel's magistrates and before Pilate. Verse 9 discloses with whom Christ will make His grave. He will make His grave with the wicked and with the rich, says the text. According to verse ten, Christ, though He dies an untimely death at the hands of wicked men, and leaves this life without any natural offspring, will nevertheless sow seed, and prolong His days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Also by His knowledge shall He justify many; and God will divide him a portion with the great; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong. This is a plain statement of the resurrection of Christ unto the justification of His people and of their being set in heaven with Him to share in all the fruits of His cross. Verse 13 of the preceding chapter proclaims in unmistakable language the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God to the supreme position of King of kings and Lord of lords and of head over all things in the church. The text reads, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high."

This, then, is the gospel as it was proclaimed by Isaiah to the church of his day. It is the full gospel of Christ that the prophet was proclaiming. That approximately 600 years beforehand he could give to the church this remarkable survey of the cross, presents no difficulty to us, who believe and know by the mercy of God that all prophecy originated with the eternal God and with Christ our chief prophet, and that it was by His infallible inspiration and guidance that the prophets of the Old Dispensation spake and wrote.

Assuredly, of this Gospel of Christ Isaiah was a faithful preacher. There is indication in the next text that he preached his gospel before he gave it permanency by putting it to writing for future generations.

Now there is this question: What fruit did the prophet see upon his labors? It is a question in which the true church and every true preacher of the gospel naturally is interested. And it is not a forbidden interest. The Lord wants us to know. For He inspired Isaiah to reveal just what fruit He made the prophet's preaching of God's gospel to bear; to reveal what attitude men took to the Christ that the prophet preached and with what arguments they countered his gospel preaching. Says the prophet, "Who hath believed our report," our gospel, that which we heard, received by infallible inspiration from God! Our English translators of the Bible placed a question mark behind this utterance. But they should have marked off the sentence by an exclamation point instead. For it isn't really a question that the prophet here puts, but rather an exclamation expressive of amazement and grief at

the reactions of unbelief to the prophets preaching of the gospel. The contemporaries of Isaiah did not believe his "report". They rejected and despised the Christ that it set forth. Quotations from Jewish writings that go back to a long time before the birth of Christ show that the ancient rabbis turned and distorted Isaiah's discourse on the suffering servant until it ceased to be recognizable. The substitutionary sufferings of Christ were transformed by these Jewish authorities into intercession and the Christ Himself into a victorious, triumphant Messiah, who sacrificed the strong in the nation like sheep, without anyone daring to open his mouth before Him. So did men react to Isaiah's "report", gospel of the Christ. They did not believe it.

Was Isaiah at fault? Did he not know how to preach? Was he lacking in speaking talent? His discourses reveal that he was a man of true oratory. For the love of God burned like a fire in his soul. But supposing he had been what men call a dull and uninteresting preacher, that could not have accounted for the reception that men gave his gospel. For Christ spake as no man spake. Yet, he, too, cried, as Isaiah had cried, "who hath believed our report!" though not in just these words, it may be. There is that familiar lamentation from His lips; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under wings, and ye would not." John speaks of this unbelief of the Jews of Christ's day in the 12th chapter of his gospel. Verse 37 of this chapter reads, "But though He, the Christ, had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not in Him."

"Who hath believed our report!" It is a cry that has been uttered by every true preacher of the Gospel through all the ages of the past almost since the very days that the Gospel began to be preached on the earth. Enoch uttered that cry; and Noah, and all the prophets in Israel; and Christ, and Paul, and the apostles. There never lived a preacher of God's Gospel of the Christ who did not utter that cry. Mark you well, I speak now of the preachers of God's Gospel; not of the preachers of man's gospel.

For men do not believe God's Gospel. You do not. I do not. Nobody does; that is, believe the Gospel apart from God's grace. And there is reason. To believe God's Gospel is to want Christ's God and His heavenly kingdom and its righteousness. Men do not want God's heavenly kingdom and its righteousness. For by nature men are dead in sin. All men are without a single exception. What this means you may read in the third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. "There is none righteous, says the Spirit through Paul, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out

of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongue they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Mark you well, I am still quoting Paul, "Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. The way of peace they have not known. And there is no fear of God before their eye." End of quote. In a word, there is not an atom of grace in the natural man; no kind of grace, either special or common. I know, we have to do here with an appraisal of fallen man's moral nature that could not be more horribly severe. But it is true to life is it not. What can be expected of such men in the way of believing the Gospel of Christ! Indeed, no amount of eloquence and power of persuasion on the part of a human preacher brought to bear on such men could get even one of them to utter the faintest cry for forgiveness and salvation. By nature all men without a single exception are dead in sin. How then can there be in such men the will, the smallest desire, to believe the Gospel? Man's will must be as spiritually dead as man is dead, must it not? Hence, the only will, the only desire that stirs in this man's bosom, as far as the Christ of God's gospel is concerned, is the will, the desire to despise the Gospel and to crucify the Christ that sets it forth. And that precisely is what men did with the Christ approximately nineteen hundred years ago now. They compassed Him about like ravening, roaring lions; they gaped upon Him with their mouths, thirsting after His blood. They mocked Him; they spit in His face; they beat Him with their fists; and they ended with affixing His body to the accursed tree. What earthly sense does it have to offer such men the Gospel, as though they have in themselves the power to take it?

Yet the exclamation, "Who hath believed our report!" is not one of despair. For it is not meant to convey the thought that the gospel was and is being disbelieved by all. Obviously, this is not the case. There was the prophet himself and the spiritual Israel—the true church of the living God—that he represented and for whom he spake. They believed. But according to the word that God put into the prophet's mouth, the faith of the spiritual Israel is God's gift in them. For to the exclamation, "who hath believed our report!" the prophet adds, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed!" The two exclamations taken together set forth the truth and fact that men believe or disbelieve the Gospel of Christ according as God reveals or refrains from revealing to them His arm, the Christ, in His power and majesty. What does this mean, what can it possibly mean but that man does not have faith, is devoid even of the faintest desire to believe, so that, if he is going to believe, God must put faith in him by

revealing to him His arm, by magnifying in him the life and grace of Christ. How can it be otherwise if, as the Scriptures over and over affirm, man, being dead in sin, is an enemy of the cross? Does it not again all come down to this that it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that sheweth mercy.

The faith of the spiritual Israel is of God. All that is of them is unbelief and spiritual darkness. And such is also the confession of the prophet and the spiritual Israel for whom he speaks. We have their confession right here before us in the sequence of the prophet's discourse. These are his words, "When we shall see Him, the Christ, the suffering servant, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows; and we, as it were, hid our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not—we, too, God's people did that in our spiritual blindness. He bore our griefs, yet we did esteem Him smitten of God for His own sins.

Such was the treatment afforded Christ even by His own friends. Didn't Peter deny Him thrice? And were not all His disciples offended of Him in that night of the trial when they saw Him apparently helpless in the hands of His adversaries? Did they not all forsake Him to a man?

So then, who hath, who do, who will, believe our report? Who? They to whom Jehovah, the triune Jehovah, reveals His arm. Jehovah's arm is His power to save—His power to save as revealed, as magnified in and through the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of His people, wherefore He, the Lord Jesus, is the arm of Jehovah, God's power unto salvation. He saves, does Christ—saves His people from all their sins. Saves, does He, His people, those given Him by the Father before the foundation of the world. He paid for all their sins by His suffering and death on the cross. Unto their justification He was raised. And they with Him were set in heaven and blessed with all spiritual blessings approximately nineteen hundred years ago now. Unto these, His people, Jehovah reveals the Christ, the arm of the Lord. His revealing unto them His arm, the Christ, is a work on His part according to which He, Jehovah, through Christ in His Spirit, raises them from their spiritual death, and thus brings them into being as new creatures with the power of spiritual perception, discernment, and understanding, and with new and holy desires, hungers, thirsts and loves, attitudes and dispositions, so that as a people endowed, and thus graced, they see Him, the Christ, with a spiritual eye, as a Christ altogether lovely, hear Him with a spiritual ear, love Him in the love that He their redeemer God sheds abroad in their heart, eat and drink His flesh and blood, abide in Him, believe in Him and through Him in God, and thus taste that the Lord is good. So does He reveal His arm unto His people.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Verlost Uit Het Diensthuis

(Psalm 114; Eerste Deel)

Er is iets historisch in dezen psalm en ook iets typisch. Deze psalm wil niet slechts de verlossing van Israel uit Egypte verhalen en bezingen, maar een ieder Bijbelstudent weet, dat Israel zelf en al zijn historie type is van de kerk aller eeuwen.

Dat dit zoo is valt in het oog bij het bestudeeren van de eerste verzen: "Toen Israel uit Egypte toog, het huis Jacobs van een volk dat eene vreemde taal had, zoo werd Juda tot Zijn heiligdom, Israel Zijne volkomene heerschappij."

Immers, dat is niet alleen waar van Israel. Dat is ook waar van de kerk van het Nieuwe Testament. We willen zelfs een stap verder gaan: Israel is niet de eerste die werd tot Gods heiligdom, noch ook is het huis Jakobs de eerste die tot Zijn volkomene heerschappij werd.

Dat is allereerst, en, fundamenteel, waar van Jezus Christus, die was vóór Abraham, en vóór zijn zaad gezien werd. Dat blijkt wel uit Colossensen 1:14-19. Het was niet des Vaders welbehagen, dat de volheid in Israel wonen zou, noch ook in Adam voor hem. Die eer is bestemd voor Jezus Christus. Er staat zelfs in dat schoone gedeelte van Gods Woord, dat *tot Hem* alle dingen geschapen zijn. Israel is daar in de historie om Jezus' wil, en ten slotte om Gods wil. Daarom is Jezus niet alleen de Eerstgeborene aller creaturen, doch ook de Eerstgeborene uit de dooden. Bij het bestudeeren van Gods Woord wordt het ons al duidelijker, dat alles zich groepeerd rondom den Zone Gods, het afschijnsel van Gods heerlijkheid en het uitgedrukte beeld van Zijn zelfstandigheid.

Neen, Israel was slechts type, en een zwak type. Let er op, dat vers twee ons zegt hoe Israel en het huis Jakobs Gode werd tot Zijn heiligdom en Zijn volkomene heerschappij. Hoe zullen we dat vast kunnen houden bij het zien van de groote zonde en afhoereering van Israel door alle eeuwen heen.

Toen Israel uit Egypte toog. . . .

Leest daarbij Hosea 11:1. Daar staat: "Toen Israel een kind was, toen heb Ik heb liefgehad, en Ik heb Mijnen Zoon uit Egypte geroepen."

Nu weten we, dat dit allereerst plaatsgreep toen Israel uit Egypte toog, maar de Heilige Geest zegt in Matt. 2:15, dat deze profetie *vervuld* werd toen het kindeke Jezus door Jozef teruggebracht werd naar Palestina, na den dood van Herodes.

Indien de Heilige Geest ons niet onderwezen had aangaande deze dingen, zoo zouden we nooit geweten

hebben, dat toen Israel uit Egypte uittoog, dit een voorspel was van den eigenlijken uittocht, en dat was Christus. O ja, Christus is er altijd geweest, en zoo kon Paulus zelfs zeggen, dat Israel Christus verzocht had in de woestijn, en dat zij desnietteenstaande gedrenkt werden uit den Rotssteen, en de Rots was Christus.

Maar Israel is uit het diensthuis uitgeleid.

Dat zien we eerst.

Het was bang geweest en de jaren waren lang. Israel was zwart geworden van dienstbaarheid. Hunne rug ging gekromd onder het juk en de slagen, de slagen.

En Israel was het huis Jakobs. Hier hebt ge de geestelijke saamhoorigheid van het volk Gods. God heeft Zijn volk verkoren en heeft dat volk in de voorkennis Zijner liefde gezien en gewild als een volk, een eenheid. Aan het einde der eeuwen zal dit schoon gezien worden, want dan is dat ééne en eenige volk geworden tot een lieflijke Bruid van Christus.

Voor tijd en wijle was dat volk temidden van een volk, dat een vreemde spraak had. Dat waren de Egyptenaren. Dat was letterlijk zoo. Israel sprak Hebreeuwsch. Misschien is dat wel de Paradijstaal geweest. In elk geval, Abraham sprak Hebreeuwsch, en hij leefde voor eenigen tijd met een der zonen van Noach, en Noach op zijn beurt was niet ver verwijderd van de eerste geslachten der menschen.

Hoe dit dan ook zij, Israel leefde voor vierhonderd jaren tusschen de vreemdelingen.

Dat is ook zoo ten overstaan van de Kerk van Christus. Daar wordt nadruk op gelegd door heel Gods Woord. Wij zijn vreemdelingen en bijwoners. Dat was alreede zoo geweest met de voorvaderen van het volk Israels. Dat wordt ons geleerd onder anderen in den brief aan de Hebreërs.

En elken Zondag hooren we het bij het lezen der Wet: we zijn een volk dat verlost is uit "het diensthuis". En dat is het diensthuis der zonde. Farao is type van den duivel. De Egyptenaren zijn de wereldlingen, en het land Egypte is de wereld. En wij moeten er uit verlost worden, evenzooals Israel.

En Israel is uitgetogen. Ze zijn zingende door de Roode Zee gegaan. En ook daar hooren we vaak van. Wanneer een kind gedoopt wordt hooren we het geduriglijk: "door hetwelk den doop beduid wierd." En de doop is symbool van het bad der wedergeboorte.

Maar die uittocht is in den diepsten zin des woords de uittocht van Jezus Christus uit Egypte. Er is nooit iemand dienstbaar gemaakt gelijk Uw Heiland. Hij kwam in Egypte om U daaruit te verlossen. En de doortocht door het Roode Meer is voor Hem geweest de doortocht door den eeuwigen dood. God heeft Zijn Zoon uit Egypte geroepen. Dat zal waar zijn. En die roeping is zoo krachtadig geweest, dat Christus Jezus

uit den eeuwigen dood opgewekt is tot de genietingen des eeuwigen levens.

En zijt ge van Christus, dan wordt gij ook uit het diensthuis der zonde geroepen tot de genietingen van een land dat overvloedig van melk en honing. Paulus merkt op, dat indien ge gedoopt zijt met den doop van Christus, ge in Zijn dood gedoopt zijt. En in dat waterbad verliest ge alle schuld, alle vuil der zonde, en wordt ge ook met Hem opgewekt om van dien stonde af aan te leven Gode en Zijne gerechtigheid.

Meer en meer beginnen we er iets van te verstaan wat het zeggen wil als de Schrift telkens zegt bij de geschiedenissen van Jezus: het moest zóó, en niet anders, tot vervulling der Schriften. En bedenk hierbij, dat toen Jezus tot de Emmaüsangers preekte, Hij de geheele Heilige Schrift koos tot tekst, en dat Hij overal in de Heilige Schrift Zichzelf zag in Zijn lijden en de heerlijkheid daarna volgende.

En zoo werd Juda tot Zijn heiligdom en Israel tot Zijne volkomene heerschappij.

Staat hier aandachtiglijk bij stil, en vraag Uzelven dan af: wanneer is dit werkelijk vervuld.

Is dit vervuld in Israel en Juda persoonlijk? Ge weet beter. Israel was een zeer zondig mensch. De Schrift heeft zijn beeld ons nagelaten. En Juda was ook een hoereerder. Hoe kan de Heilige Schrift spreken van het heuglijke feit, dat Juda Gods heiligdom was, en Israel Gods *volkomene* heerschappij? Wij zeggen vaak als we spreken van de heiligmaking: we hebben nog slechts een zeer klein beginsel van die nieuwe gehoorzaamheid. Hoe was dat met Israel en Juda, persoonlijk? Het antwoord hebt ge al gegeven: ook zij waren zondige kinderen Gods. O ja, er was een lieflijk beginsel bij beiden. We kunnen de glooring van heerlijk licht zien in het leven der aartsvaders. Maar een *heilighdom*, en een *volkomene heerschappij* Gods? O, het bleef er zoo angstig ver van daan. Wat zullen die twee aartsvaders vaak geklaagd hebben voor God: Neem weg alle mijne zonden!

En dan de volkeren Juda en Israel? Wanneer zijn zij den Heere tot een heiligdom geweest en tot een volkomene heerschappij?

Het scheen wel zoo voor een korten tijd toen David en Salomo op den troon zaten. Juda werd Gode een heiligdom toen Salomo den Heere een Tempel bouwde, maar hoe gebrekkig, hoe arm, hoe ellendig! Zelfs ten tijde van dien vroemen Koning stond het er vaak treurig bij. Ziet op den Tempel in Jeruzalem en ziet dan tegelijkertijd op Salomo die met vele wijven hoereerde en op de hoogten rookte!

Israel tot een volkomene heerschappij?

Ge weet beter.

Men wordt o zoo moede bij het lezen van de hardnekkige rebellie van het volk, dat naar Gods naam genoemd was. Sommigen van de Koningen in Israel en Juda deden het bloed der ware Profeten Gods vloeien,

en maakten de straten van Jeruzalem tot rivieren van bloed.

Ja, ik stem het toe, er was een beginsel van Gods heerschappij in Juda en Israel. Er was ook een begin van heiligheid in het diepe hart en in het leven van de ware Israelieten. Maar meer dan begin is het nooit geweest.

Neen, maar alles riep om vervulling. En de Heilige Geest in dezen psalm zingt van die vervulling.

Het is ten volle vervuld toen Jezus op aarde wandelde en Zijn vreeselijke taak verrichtte.

Hij is de fundamentele Juda en Israel.

En al de taak van heiligheid en gehoorzaamheid nam Hij op Zich, en geheel alleen heeft Hij gewrocht totdat al het werk gedaan was. Toen riep Hij het uit op het Kruis: HET IS VOLBRACHT! En toen was het volbracht.

Christus Jezus is het voorwerp in den psalm. En door Zijn vleeschwoording, door Zijn lijden en sterven, door Zijn opstanding en hemelvaart, is Hij geworden Gode tot een heiligdom en een volkomene heerschappij.

Dit is zoo absoluut waar, dat men zelfs voor de aandacht moet houden, dat alle ware Godsdienst vóór Zijn komst in de ware Sionieten, voor vierduizend jaren, uit Hem voortvloeit. Laat mij het nog eens zeggen: alles is geschapen tot Hem: Hij is de Eerstgeborene aller creaturen. En toen alles reddeloos verloren scheen, is Hij het weer die op den voorgrond treedt: Hij is de Eerstgeborene uit de dooden! En deze laatste zin is hetzelfde als onze psalm bezingt: Hij kwam uit Egypte te voorschijn en werd Gode tot een Heiligdom en den Heere tot een volkomene heerschappij.

Zoo moeten we de Heilige Schrift lezen en waardeeren.

Dat nu heeft groote beteekenis voor ons als Nieuw Testamentische Kerk van Christus.

Het is vervuld in Christus toen Hij op aarde kwam en weer naar den hemel terugging na Zijn volbrachte werk.

Maar het wordt verder vervuld in allen die van Jezus Christus zijn.

En dat zijn de uitverkorenen van alle Nieuw Testamentische eeuwen.

Als gij van Jezus zijt, dan trekt Hij U totdat ge met Hem wordt den Heere tot een heiligdom en Gode eene volkomene heerschappij. En ge kunt het weten, ge kunt het zekerlijk weten.

Den Heere een heiligdom te zijn beteekent, dat ge het kwade haat en het goede bemint, en geheel en al toegewijd zijt aan God en Zijn Koninkrijk.

Den Heere een volkomene heerschappij te zijn beteekent, dat ge met al de heiligen van alle eeuwen leert zeggen en beleven: Spreek, Heere, Uw dienstknecht of Uw dienstmaagd hoort!

Er blijft een volk, dat naar Zijn klanken hoort.

En er blijft een volk, dat geduriglijk uitgeleid wordt uit het diensthuis van Egypte. Vergeet echter het land dat ten Zuiden van de Middellandsche Zee ligt. En denkt aan de wereld der zonde waarin ge Uwe wandeling hebt. Vergeet ook Farao die allang dood is en wiens stof onder ons is tot op dezen dag. Misschien ligt hij wel in een onzer musea. En denkt dan aan den duivel, want hij is de vervulling van Farao.

En God zendt Zijn Mozes, maar deze Mozes is beter dan de eerste. Hij is Jezus Christus die U opzoekt door het Woord van God en door den Heiligen Geest die uitgestort is op den Pinksterdag.

Die Goddelijke Mozes zoekt U op met Zijn Woord en Zijn Geest, en Hij trekt U uit de wereld waar Satan rondwaart als een brieschende leeuw, of lieflijk lonkt en vleit en zachtkens fluistert als een Engel des lichts.

En Hij trekt U totdat ge aankomt in het Kanaan der ruste.

En Hij leert U op deze reis om den Heere een heiligdom te worden en te zijn. Hij leert U door Woord en Geest om het kwade te haten, en te vlieden alle kwade paan, en ijvig op Zijn wegen te gaan.

Die Goddelijke Mozes als de Middelaar des Nieuwen Verbonds, leert U door Woord en Geest om den Heere te worden en te zijn eene volkomene heerschappij.

Hij leert U om het zwijgen op te leggen aan alle rebellie die van nature opwelt in Uw goddelooze hart, het hart, dat door Zijne genade, Geest en Woord wedergeboren werd.

Ge gaat aan 't snoeien in Uw hart, in Uw verstand, in Uw leven en in Uw geheele wandeling. De Bijbel noemt dat: het afleggen van den ouden mensch met zijn begeerlijkheden.

En door hetzelfde Woord en door denzelfden Heiligen Geest leert Hij U om gehoorzaam te worden en te zijn.

En ik verzeker U, vrienden, dat het een optocht is die ons doet jubelen. O ja, ik weet dat we soms weenen moeten. We zijn nog niet in den hemel. Maar dit is óók waar: op weg naar onzen God: ze juichen, ook zingen ze!

G. Vos.

* * * *

ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Bernard Woudenberg

and

Mrs. Lucy Woudenberg (nee Hanco)

Being grateful to our covenant God for His manifold blessings, and promises in our Lord Jesus Christ as found in Hebrews 13:5

"I will never leave nor forsake thee".

We hope to celebrate our 25th anniversary, June 24th.

Their grateful children:

Fred
Jeane
Bernard Jr.
Herm

Open House: 3-5 P. M.—7-10 P. M.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Ephesians 2:4-10

VIII.

It has by this time become abundantly evident, that we are not at all saved by works of law that we perform, but that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We are saved in Him alone. It is God Who saves us because of His great love where-with He loved us, in order that in the ages to come He might exhibit the exceeding greatness of His grace in loving kindness to us. No man may ever boast in self, nor in the awful agonies of hell, nor in the joys of heaven. From the former God takes His own glory and the latter He receives the praise and honor and glory due to His name as the thankful fruit of the lips.

Such is the grand theme of the Apostle here in this rich Scripture passage. I know that in saying this we are repeating just a bit; pray, does this great theme not bear repeating, and should not hearts, our hearts burn and our anthems ring? And should not we as the people of God be very willing to walk in all good works in this day of God's power to us who believe?

Yes, we who believe, who are constantly walking in humble trust, we who walk by faith and not by sight, believing that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Since such we are let us give attention to the teaching of Paul here in the latter part of Ephesians 2:10, where we read: "in good works, which God hath before prepared that we might walk in them".

What does the apostle here mean by speaking of "good works, which God hath before prepared"? And what does it mean to "walk in them"?

We will first of all try to give an answer to the former of these two questions. We will seek to establish what these good works are. We note the following:

1. That they are such works, which have their motive and power in the love of God shed forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. These works indeed do not have their starting point, their origin, in our will, but they have their origin in faith as it is the gift of God. And this faith as the gift of God is the workmanship in us of God by virtue of His having thus created us once for all anew. Yes, then *we do* believe, but we believe by the grace of God, whereby He works in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

2. They are also works, that have the law of God as their standard. This law is that we love God above all and our neighbor as our self. He that loveth keepeth the commandments. And this love energized, gives

power and spiritual constancy to faith. Without this love no living faith, and without faith no doing, therefore, of good works.

3. Only he who thus loves and trusts God lives to His glory in Christ Jesus.

Employing this as the infallible rule of life and faith, we are in a position to ask more particularly into the meaning of the term "good works" in our text as to their scope. We are thus in a position to give an answer to the question *which* good work we must walk in, whether or not we must divide lives and morals into compartments. This dividing life into sections is the error of all Phariseeism, Roman Catholicism, all mysticism, in a word, of all those who do not apply the rule and standard of faith.

There is no dividing of life into the dualistic division of the natural and the supernatural. All life is placed under the law of faith in Christ and the law of God and the *new obedience*. Whether we eat or whether we drink we are the Lord's. All things are then by faith ours, we are of Christ and Christ is God's. Thus the orb of good works is as broad as life itself. All falls under the ten commandments, all is controlled by grace through faith and according to the rule of the law of God. And so, indeed, *all* that is not out of faith is sin. Rom. 14:23. But according to the rule of faith we are, indeed, some firstfruits of God's creation. Something new amidst the old. We are the new man as the Church, a beginning now by faith of the reuniting of all things in Christ Jesus, a pledge of the perfected manhood in Christ in the ages to come.

Good works thus as broad as God's Fatherly and providential care over all things and over us. For these good works are brought to us, set before us every day in God's providential care over us. There is no relationship in life where we do not meet with these good works. We need not sift them first. We need not hesitate. We have but to walk in our calling where God by His providence sets us, and there walk in faith and love. Never may we ask any questions. The whole field is ours.

In the home and in the church, in the school and in the civil affairs. And everywhere we are called to walk in faith, according to God's law and to His glory. Thus we are the salt of the earth, the city on a hill-tip which cannot be hid. In our business, in the shop, on the farm and in the kitchen. Everywhere it is the calling of God to walk in good works.

Now these good works are not just simply the creation of man. Nor do they just happen to be there so that we stumble upon them by chance. They are set before us in such a way every day, that we can never explain the things out of things, but rather that we receive them from the hand of God in providence. It is all the Father's daily provision to us from His storehouse, yes, the storehouse of His eternal counsel. Every

morning the day is filled not merely with possibilities, but with definitely recognizable duties, handed down to us from God's eternal Counsel, the book of the seven seals, which was in the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne. And always the rules are walk in faith, according to the law of God's love and to His glory. Thus the apostle speaks of these good works. They were before prepared, before prepared by God.

There are those who would change this just a bit and who would rather speak of foreordained by God. Now this too is certainly true in itself. These works were foreordained. But if the apostle has meant merely to express this thought he surely would have stated it thus. He knew the word for foreordained very well. But he does not use that word, but writes literally: prepared before. (*Proeetoimasen*). And he employs a tense, which emphasizes that this act was finished *once for all*. The works are therefore ready. They are ready according to the plan and purpose of God in the highest exaltation of self and the glory of His grace. Salvation by grace calls for such works which God prepared before hand. They are prepared under the foreordination and design of the Chief Builder and Architect. In the whole of God's design they so fit that human hand cannot add to nor detract from the glory of God, the Maker of us His workmanship.

And so according to this plan these good works are placed before us throughout the whole of our life's calling, for each in that respective place where God places him. And the purpose is: that we *walk* in them!

This does not mean that we merely go through the motions. But it means that with delight and love these good works we claim as our own, walk in them. It means that we do them, that we make them our works, duties and privileges which we consciously take from the hand of God. Just as we formerly walked in sin, and felt that the day was not full unless we had revealed in some form of sin, so now the day is not lived in unless we claim the whole of the day's duties from the hand of God in faith. That is walking in them. That is liberty of conscience. And in this there is nothing grievous; it is the light burden of Christ and the easy yoke to bear.

Besides, this has a great recompense of reward.

Yes, it has reward! Not the reward of works. Not in the sense, that the grace of God sets us to work, so that now we receive in the way of merit from the hands of God. The grace would not be grace in the matter of reward. Surely then the salvation would be out of grace, and the reward out of works of law.

Nay, such it is not. That is the lie of Romanism.

But, that, too, is the erroneous interpretation of some Reformed theologians. It is then put in the form that the reward of grace is something which we receive apart and above from our regular fruits of good deeds. The illustration of the late Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. is

quite well known. To illustrate this point he uses the case of a father who rewards his son. This son owes obedience to his father, and the father does him no wrong if he gives him nothing for performing an errand for him. But now the father gives the son, who promptly obeyed, a token of appreciation. He rewards him with a gift. This gift is extra. It is a reward not of merit, but of grace. This illustration hardly holds. We have nothing to bring to God. Yet, we walk in good works by grace. And these good works are really ours. We perform them. That we perform them is God's gift of grace to us. That is not true in the illustration. There the son does not receive from his father what we receive from God. He really had a little to offer. But we have nothing to offer but thankfulness. We give nothing that we had not first received. And we do not will to act and speak as though we had not received it. Nor do we in any way will to contract a theological view that would in any way give man the credit which belongs alone to God.

And so we rather conceive of the reward of God for good works as the reward which God in His strict justice has appended to obedience. These two are so joined by God, that no man can ever separate them. It is the law of the kingdom, that he who has shall receive more, and he who has not from him shall be taken even what he thinketh to have. So that the reward in heaven's glory is still the exhibition of the exceeding greatness of the riches of God's grace to us, and of the tender and loving kindness. It is the reward to presently be set over much, since we here have been found faithful servants over a very little. And so the reward is ever before our eyes while we here walk faithfully in the good works, knowing that God has joined works and reward, works of grace and reward of grace. Here is the tension of grace in our lives as we walk in faith looking for the city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

Thus walking in faith in Christ and love to all the saints we will know what is the hope of our calling, and that is the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of the power of His might in raising Jesus, our Lord, from the death, and exalting Him at His own right hand, far above all principalities and powers and might, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in the age to come!

Walking in the good works which He has before prepared. That is our calling. Onward we go through life's way. Marching and pressing forward, not accounting that we are already perfect, but forgetting that which lies behind, we press forward toward the mark, the prize of the high and upward calling in Christ Jesus.

Geo. C. Lubbers.

IN HIS FEAR

Called To His Praise

Living Sacrifices.

The human body is a wonderful piece of workmanship whose existence must be ascribed only to the All-wise and Almighty God. And the more a believer considers the members of that body in their amazing construction and astoundingly harmonious working together of the several parts the more he sees that wherefor he owes praise to his God. Man constructs some marvellous machines and mechanisms and receives praise and honor for it. And yet when we examine the things he has so ingeniously made we find that he has only found the principle according to which God has made things. Very frequently we find that the thing which he has made has already existed for six thousand years in his own body and that to a far more perfect degree, or if not in his body then in that of other creatures of God's hand.

The camera is a wonderful device which through the ages has been perfected to a remarkable degree. Shutter speeds up to 1/1000 of a second are possible, and lenses capable of receiving sufficient light during that amazingly small period of time in order to have the equally marvellously fast film receive a reaction to that light are now constructed by man. Of comparatively recent invention, too, is the color film which is able to preserve the exact color of the object which you photograph, if your exposure is correct and your picture is neither under-exposed nor over-exposed. But Adam was created with an eye that has a shutter speed even more rapid. The rapidly moving film and shutter of the "movie camera" was necessary in order to record and photograph actions of men. But Adam from the moment he was brought to conscious life had an eye able to watch the swiftest movements about him without blurring. And Adam's eye caught all the full beauty of the colors about him and never worried about over-exposure or under-exposure. Men have made microscopes to see minute things hidden from man's eye. Indeed, but many of the smaller creatures such as the ant and even certain birds can see things hidden from our eyes. Here again men have simply followed in very crude ways what God made in His creatures. What radio, telephone or telegraph can compare with the ear God made? And what good would these be and what good are they when God takes away the hearing of that ear? Think of the amazing system of nerves and blood vessels which are properly placed and serve such important functions in the body. What maze of pipes and telephone and

power lines can compare with them? Think of the marvelous digestive system in the body. Think of whatever member you will, what praise does not the Almighty deserve for all these works of His hands?

But the above we simply penned down as an introduction to a new phase in our consideration of our being called to His praise. That body is indeed a wonderful workmanship of God. In it He gives us invaluable tools wherewith to serve Him. He enables us to see, to hear, to touch, to taste and to smell the world about us and to use all that we see and can handle in His service. But our bodies are even more than that. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that we have done certain things "through" (that is the original, not "in" as the English translation has it) the body. We do these things through the instrumentality of our bodies. But our bodies are more than mere instruments of the soul, more than merely the house and tabernacle in which our person dwells. They are also temples of the Holy Spirit. Of that Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 6:19. And you are the priest in that temple! You are prophets of God, and you are also His priests. The apostle Peter testifies in 1 Peter 2:9 that we are a "royal priesthood" of God. We are kingly priests and priestly kings. What is more, Paul tells us in Romans 12:1 that our bodies must be presented to God as living sacrifices. Here again the idea is emphasized as well as presented that we are priests of God. Our bodies are temples. We live in these bodies, and are therefore the priests who function for God in those temples. Our bodies are also to be living sacrifices and hence we are the priests who offer them up to God daily. And so we now turn our thoughts to our calling to praise God in the capacity of priest.

When we think of the priest in the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple we think of a man who killed the animals brought there and sacrificed them for God's people. Anything that he does besides this is considered to be incidental to his chief work of sacrificing. This is not quite the right picture. For, in the first place, if you follow the line of reasoning in such a presentation you must come to the conclusion that there were priests only because sin entered the world. Then Adam as he came forth from the hand of God was not a priest. But this is not a true presentation of the matter. Adam was both prophet, priest and king on that sixth day of Creation Week. As we pointed out before, he was created with a mind, with a heart or will and with strength. With the mind he was God's prophet and had a perfect knowledge of God. A perfect knowledge does not mean here a complete knowledge in that he knew all there is to be known of God. That knowledge man will never have. Man is a creature and has a finite mind. He can only know that which God reveals to him, and



God Who is Infinite cannot reveal to a finite creature all that which He knows of Himself and of all things. God made man to be a finite creature with a finite, limited knowledge of his God and creation. But that he had a perfect knowledge means that he had a true knowledge of all that which God had decreed that in the state of righteousness he would know. But even then, he did not know anything of the angel world. He knew nothing of the Fall of the Devil. And he could not know what the counsel of God contained for his future. He did not know that he would be brought to glory in the way of sin and grace, the way of the Fall and the Cross. But he had a mind and therewith he became by the work of God His prophet. But he also had a will and by virtue of the fact that God created him with a moral, ethical will—not a mere fountain of desires, for all living creatures have a will in that respect—God made him to be His priest. And that priest in Paradise before the Fall never sacrificed to God. He was placed by God in a temple but his work was not that of sacrificing in the accepted sense of the word. There was no sin for which to bring his sacrifice. When Adam came into the Holy of Holies of the first world he came not with an offering in his hand. But he was priest there. It is worthy of consideration to note that also the first world before the Fall was divided by God into an outer court, a holy place and a holy of holies. Scripture speaks of the broad expanse of the Land of Eden, the whole continent which God created in the beginning. Then besides this outer court—into which the fallen priest was sent after he became a priest of the devil in God's holy place—there was the beautiful Garden called Paradise in the New Testament. This corresponds to the Holy Place in Solomon's Temple and Moses' Tabernacle. And Scripture makes the third distinction of the "midst of the Garden", which then corresponds to the most inner part of the Temple, the Holy of Holies. For, not only were both of these the inmost parts, the one of the first creation before the flood and the other the inmost part of the Tabernacle and Temple, but the Holy of Holies was that place where God revealed Himself. He dwelt symbolically in this Holy of Holies between the Cherubim which sat upon the Mercy Seat, and the "midst of the garden" was where the tree of life was placed by God and where He met Adam in the cool of the day. That now then was the temple in which Adam in the state of righteousness functioned as priest of the Most High God. And it is evident that he did not as priest go about slaying animals and bring them to God at the tree of life. Nor did he go to the tree of life to bring something unto God. Rather did he go there to receive something from Him. Let us understand that correctly also then of the Temple in the Old Dispensation. The chief thing even there was

not to bring something to God. God did not give Moses the pattern of the Tabernacle so that Israel might have a place to come to bring Him things. God in His grace gave Israel that tabernacle that Israel might *receive* something. Israel had to come in a divinely prescribed way. Only by the merit of Christ's obedience and death could they receive any grace from God. Only for those for whom Christ died was there anything the priest could give from out the temple. And therefore as an evidence of their being chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world there had to be the demand of outward evidence of inner contrition and sorrow for sin. Therefore Israel had to come in the prescribed way of confession of sin and contrition and with that which was a type of Christ and His cross. But the fact remains that he came to the temple to *receive* something, namely, the testimony of God through the instrumentality of His priest that his sins are forgiven and that he was justified before God. But then our contention stands that Adam was before he fell a priest of God and had a very necessary function to perform even apart from any sin.

Were that not the case then today after Christ has redeemed us by His blood there would of necessity again cease to be a priesthood among God's people. And then we could not understand that verse of Paul in Romans 12:1 which demands of us that we present our bodies a living sacrifice. Understand well, then, not that we bring a sacrifice with the idea of enriching God thereby, but surely in order that we may praise Him even as He has formed us for Himself, also as priests, that we might show forth His praises.

This we plan to treat next time, but we desire in these closing remarks to remind you of what we wrote in the past, that unless we know God as His prophets we cannot function before His face as His priests. And we hope in a later instalment also to point out to you that he who knows God as His prophet and functions before His face as priest will surely rule himself and all things as His king.

J. A. Heys.

* * * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, on June 16, 1950 our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. George Spruyt

will celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary.

As each year unfolds we, their children, realize more fully the blessing that is ours in having devoted Christian parents.

It is our earnest prayer that the Lord will spare them together for many years so that we may follow in our lives the example they set in theirs.

Their loving children:

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Campbell

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Jansma

Miss Jacquelyn Spruyt

and five grandchildren.