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MEDITATION

God Die Psalmen Geeft

"Maar niemand zegt: "Waar is God, mijn Maker,
die de psalmen geeft in den nacht?"

Job. 35:10.

O God!

Geef psalmen in den nacht!

Volgens het getuigenis van Elihu is er een volk,
dat schreewt vanwege den arm des grooten.

Daar zijn menschenkinderen die, wanneer de schrik-
wekkende schaduwen van den nacht zich samenpakken
over hun arm hoofd, in wanhoop en vertwijfeling ter-
neer zitten; die den Naam des Allerhoogsten uitdruk-
kelijk lasteren vanwege de plage die hunne tent na-
derde; mensen, die al kermende den adem uit-
blazen.

Ze zeggen niet: "Waar is God, mijn Maker, die
psalmen geeft in den nacht?"

Neen, die mensen, dat geslacht vraagt veel liever
naar redders en hulpbetoon van beneden. God, hun
Maker, zijn ze vreemd. Vreemdeling voor God en
hun hart.

Daartegenover staat een particulier volk, dat wel
zegt: "Waar is God, mijn Maker, die psalmen geeft in
den nacht?"

Allerlei soort van gezang wordt evenmin bedoeld.
Ook de wereld heeft zijn zangen in den nacht. Want
hoewel de nacht eigenlijk niet de tijd is om te zingen,
bralt men daar toch zijn liederen uit. Eigenlijk hoorde
dat zoo niet. Naar de scheppingsordonnatien is de
nacht duister en de tijd voor slaap, opdat de mensch
rusten mag van den arbeid zijner handen.

Toch zingt de wereld, die naar God niet vraagt,
haar liederen in den nacht.

We gedenken aan de twee uitersten. Beiden heb-
ben we gehoord.

Daar is dan eerstens het gebral en getier van het
openbaar goddelooze volk, dat in brooddrunkenheid en
verregaande liederlijkheid zijn lusten botviert en zegt:
"Komt herwaarts, zeggen zij, ik zal wijn halen, en
wij zullen sterken drank zuipen; en de dag van mor-
gen zal zijn als deze, ja groter, veel treffelijker."

En dat doen ze in den nacht het liefst.

Voorbijgaande hoort ge die vergaderplaatsen weer-
galmen van hun gezang. De tong slaat dan dubbel;
harmonie is er niet in hun zang; de keel wordt al
heescher: ja, al walgelijker, tot in den diepen nacht
toe, bralt men zijn liederen uit.



Doch er is ook een ander uiterste.

Het zijn de vergaderplaatsen van dezelfde wereld,
doch het is de nette wereld. Het zijn de heeren en
dames van fatsoen.

O, neen, wel foei toch, hier wil men niet zoo on-
harmonieus doen. Het verfijnde menschdom trekt
zich met walging terug van gindsch donker drinkhol,
waar men wel zingt, doch waar men zich niet stoort
aan het lieflijke en datgene wat welluidt.

De fatsoenlijke mensch wendt zich met walging
van gindschen zanger, die zijn dronkemansliederen
uitschreewt, terwijl het speeksel door zijn baard sij-
fert.

Neen, er is nog een ander soort gezang dat weer-
klinkt in den nacht. Het zijn de gehoorzalen, waar
de grote artisten hun verrukkelijke minneliederken
zingen, waar men kwinkleert als het vogelken of
waar men wegsmelt in tranen bij het hooren van on-
eindigen weedom en tragische smart.

We hebben de theaters op het oog, waar kunst-
gevoel bekoort, waar de zinnen gestreeld worden, waar
de mensch spreekt van verheffen der ziel. Plaatsen,
waar men voor veel gelds het beste kan beluisteren van
de harmonie der muziek en het gezang.

En tusschen die twee uitersten ligt veel en veler-
lei. Allerlei gezang der wereld.

In huis en op den weg, in de theaters van allerlei
rang, in gehoorzaal en vergaderplaats, uit de geheele

wereld stijgt er een gezang op, dat nacht op nacht gezongen wordt.

Toch zijn het geen psalmen die God, onze Maker, geeft in den nacht.



Allereerst niet, omdat God er niet in is. Als God psalmen en zangen geeft, dan geeft Hij Zichzelf. En geheel aan de oppervlakte kan men het zien, dat in het dronkemansgetier alles wat zweemt naar God afwezig is.

God is goed, is lieflijk, is volmaakt welluidend, harmonieus. Verre is de Almachtige van het vuile, valsche, goddelooze.

Neen, de geluidsgolven van allerlei drinkholen en vergaderplaatsen der ruwe godvergetenen is gespeend aan alle godsrvucht. Zijn dan ook geen psalmen die God geeft in den nacht.

Iets anders is het met de liefelijke toonaard der gezangen van virtuosen en opera-sterren?

Neen, mijn broeder, ook die zijn gespeend aan alle godsrvucht.

Het groote thema der gezangen der verfijnde wereld is de mensch in zijne weemoed en tragiek of ook diezelfde menschheid in haar grootheid en praal.

Het gezang is het gezang eens mensen tot den mensch. Hooger dan de aarde klimt het niet.

En dat mag niet. Aleen God is Al- en Zelfgenoegzaam. Alleen God kan met Zichzelf beginnen en ook eindigen.

God looft Zichzelf eeuwigelijk en dat is goed. Daarom is dan ook alle gezang der wereld booze zonde. Want het is een gezang den mensen en niet Gode.

In de tweede plaats, is het ook eigenlijk geen gezang. Juist omdat God er niet in is, daarom is het gezang der wereld in al zijn verschillende toonaarden niet dan ijdelheid.

Men kan boven het zingen der kroegloopers, zowel als het kwinkelen der virtuosen schrijven eenzelfde thema: IJdelheid der ijdelheden, het is al ijdelheid.

Daar komt nog bij, dat het zoogenaamde zingen der wereld veel droeviger uiting is dan het akeligste kermen en schreien.

Want gezang is naar zijn aard uiting van blijdschap. Het is veel natuurlijker, dat de wereld brult en schreewt in oneindigen weedom, dan dat diezelfde wereld zingen zou.

Ze kan ten eenenmale niet zingen. Langs een glibberig pad stort immers de wereld van den top van eer in eeuwige verwoesting neer.

Welaan dan, gij rijke en verrijkte wereld der zangers, huilt en weent over de ellendigheden die over u komen zullen!

Uw lachen en liefelijke minnezangen worde veranderd in huilen. Wanneer ge al sidderende gilt van

smart; en droefheid uitgiet als water, dan beantwoordt ge veel beter aan de vreeselike toestand waarin ge verkeert en tegemoet vliegt.

O! dat men veel meer leerde te weenen over het wangedrocht der zonde; zich aanwende tot den hemel te schreeuwen vanwege eeuwige zondeschuld.

Neen, het zijn geen psalmen in den nacht, door God gegeven.



Wat dan?

Men hoort der vromen ten weergalmen van hulp en heil hen aangebracht! Daar zingt men blij met dankbare psalmen. Gods rechterhand doet groote kracht.

Daar is een volk, dat door den Heiligen Geest van onzen Heiland geleerd is om te vragen naar God, onzen Maker. Dat volk is het volk van God.

En dat volk verkeert tijdelijk in den nacht.

De nacht is naar zijn symbolische sprake bang!

Niet zooals hij naar de scheppingsordonnantien ons gegeven is. Neen, dan is de nacht ook lieflijk. Dan toont de nacht aan den nacht wetenschap. Gedenk slechts aan dien schoonen zweelen zomernacht! Die nacht, toen ge uw venster opwierpt en luisterdet naar het melancholieke, doch roerend-schoone trillen van den nachtegaal. Neen, dan is de nacht niet bang, maar wanneer we dan luisteren mogen door Gods Woord en Geest onderwezen, dan beluisteren we in dat zoete slaan van den nachtegaal een lied der hope. En glimlachen we door de tranen heen. Dan slaat en dan trilt hij verrukkelijk en vertelt ons in schoonen zang, dat straks de eeuwige morgen zal dagen. Dat straks al het bange en benauwde voor eeuwig zal weggedaan worden. Dan kwinkleert hij van oneindig geluk.

Ga met mij naar het strand in den nacht. En dan zullen de brekende golven u vertellen, dat God groot is en sterk van vermogen; dan is het gemurmel der baren u een boodschap van God die kan troosten en streelen.

Ja, overal is God! En de nacht is ook licht voor Hem.

Doch die nacht is ook een boodschapper van het lijden des tegenwoordigen tijds.

Luister slechts: "ten tijde des avonds, zie zoo is er verschrikking: eer het morgen is, is hij er niet meer; dit is het deel dergenen die ons berooven en het lot dergenen die ons plunderen."

De nacht komt ons altijd weer vertellen, dat we zondaars zijn voor God. Die nacht zegt ons, dat indien we geen Verlosser vonden voor onze zondeschuld, hij ons tegenbuldert, dat er straks een eeuwige nacht zal gebaard worden. Een eeuwige nacht der stikdonkere duisternissen. De nacht der hel; de nacht der uitstorting van de eeuwige grimmigheid Gods.

O! wat een nacht!



En Gods volk proeft dien nacht en weet, dat het vreeselijk is te vallen in de handen des levenden Gods. Ze proeven de hellesmarten.

Hoor: ze kermen: Ik lag gekneld in banden van den dood, daar de angst der hel mij allen troost deed missen. Duizend zorgen, duizend dooden, kwellen mijn angstvallig hart!

Ver van dom-driest te tieren in zulk een nacht, schreien ze hun weedom uit tot God die hoort.

O God! wees mij, de zondaar, genadig!

En God, hun Maker, hoort!

Hij hoort, want Hij leide dat schreien hun in de ziel. Hij versmelt hun het wezen. Hij schildert hun de zondeschuld voor. Hij doet hen eerst weenen.

En dan, ja dan, komen de zangers, de hemelsche zangers van boven om het volk van God te onderwijzen. Dan legt de hemelsche wijsheid hun een lied op de lippen. Dan breekt de duisternis des nachts en moet plaats maken voor het morgengloren der verlossing.

"Het volk dat in duisternis zit zal een groot licht zien."

Kom, ga met mij, naar Efrata's velden. Het is nacht. En de herders, de godvruchtige herders, hielden de wacht bij de kudde.

Veertig eeuwen was het duister geweest.

O! ja, het is wel waar, dat er enige lichtstralen van uit den hemel gezonden waren. Er was een gezang geweest der nachtegalen der Goddelijke profetie. Doch *het Licht der wereld* toefde te komen.

Zoo scheen het.

En ook in die eeuw zongen de herders Gods: Zou God Zijn gena vergeten? Nimmer van ontferming weten?

Zal de nacht dan eeuwig aanhouden? Geslacht na geslacht strompelde daarheen, rimpelde en hinkende stortten ze in de duistere doodskuil. Zou 't menschdom dan vergeefs op aarde zijn geschapen?

Het was stil in dien nacht!

Doch plotseling omscheen hen een hemelsch licht. En een Engel stond bij hen.

Die Engel zong eerst niet; hij sprak en bracht de blijde boodschap. Doch hoort ge niet die nauwinge-houden trilling zijner stem? Hij kan, die bode des hemels, hij kan bijna niet spreken. Hij wil zingen.

Daar komen de heirscharren des hemels aan. Wat een geklapwiek der hemelsche vleugelen.

En, verrukkelijk, klinkt het harmonieuze gezang. Daar is er niet een die verkeert zingt. Daar in Efrata viel niet een dissonant.

Wat is het thema?

Jezus, de Zoon van God, het hart van den Vader, is gekomen.

De duisternis der zonde en der schuld is gebroken,

voor eeuwig gebroken.

En hoor: Ge wordt hemelsch zingen geleerd.

Zing het toch na, het is zoo lieflijk!

Het is een psalm der verlossing in den nacht. Jezus is geboren!

En dat geslacht der kinderen Gods hebben hunne lofpsalmen der verlossing van der Engelen lippen overgenomen. Het hapert wel, we kunnen nog niet zóó schoon zingen als de hemelboden, doch worden door den Eigen Geest van Jezus geleerd. En van geslachte tot geslacht zingen de kinderen de liederen des Hemels.

Het moet wel toegestemd, dat hun stem vaak breekt onder 't zingen. Want er is nog zoo veel van dien nacht die ons verontrust. We wandelen nog vaak door de valleiën des doods. Het hatelijk gevogelte en de duiven roepen hunne metgezellen toe rondom ons.

Daar is de Booze die bespringt. Want hij haat ons gezang; hij walgt van de lieflijkste accorden.

Doch God, onze Maker, blijft Zijn psalmen geven. De psalmen in den nacht.

Dan jubelt Paulus in het kerkerhol; dan snikt Luther, en, toch, *al zingende*, snikt hij.

De hemel leert ons zingen, broeder; God leert ons een hemelsche harmonie; want het lied der verlossing zal gezongen.

En al zingt dan de nachtegaal in droeve accorden in den nacht: zijn trillers en slaan is zoet.

Want hij zingt het lied der hope.

Der eeuwige hope.

G. Vos.

* * * *

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 18, 1950, our parents

Mr. and Mrs. Riner Doezeema

hope to celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our gracious covenant Father for the years they might spend together, and above all for the training, instruction, and example they have given us.

May their remaining time together be filled with the peace that passeth all understanding.

The grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Doezeema

Rev. and Mrs. Lambert Doezeema

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Vander Wal

Rev. and Mrs. Edward Knott

Mr. and Mrs. William Doezeema

Dr. and Mrs. Edward R. Doezeema

Dr. and Mrs. Herman Hoeksema Jr.

Miss Katherine Doezeema

and 19 grandchildren.

25th ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing

Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Woudenberg

hope to celebrate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary on Saturday, August 12, 1950.

Open house for relatives and friends, 7 to 10 o'clock, P. M.

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As is customary *The Standard Bearer* will not appear on the 15th of August.

EDITORIALS

Een Belangrijk Besluit

Onze laatste Synode heeft het volgende aangenomen:

KORTE VERKLARING VAN BEGINSELEN

VAN DE

PROTESTANTSCHÉ GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN

De Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken staan op den grondslag van de Heilige Schrift als het onfeilbare Woord van God en van de Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid. Ook aanvaarden ze de Liturgische Formulieren gebruikt in den publieken eeredienst van hunne kerken, zooals het Formulier voor den Heiligen Doop, *et alii*, als belijdenisschriften van een lageren rank.

Op den grondslag van dit Woord van God en deze belijdenisschriften:

I. Verwerpen zij de dwalingen van de Drie Punten aangenomen door de Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Kalamazoo, 1924, welke handhaven:

A. Dat er een genade Gods voor alle mensen is, de verworpenen ingesloten, geopenbaard in de gemeene gaven voor alle mensen.

B. Dat de belofte des Evangelies een welmeenend en genadig aanbod van heil van Godsweghe is aan allen die uitwendig dat Evangelie horen.

C. Dat de natuurlijke mensch door den invloed van de gemeene genade goed kan doen in deze wereld.

D. Tegenover dit alles handhaven zij:

1. Dat de genade Gods altijd particulier is, i.e., alleen voor de uitverkorenen, nooit voor de verworpenen.

2. Dat de belofte des Evangelies niet is een genadige aanbieding van heil van Godsweghe aan alle mensen, noch ook een voorwaardelijk aanbod aan allen die geboren worden in de historische lijn des verbonds, dat is, aan allen die gedoopt zijn, maar een eed Gods dat Hij onfeilbaar al de uitverkorenen wil leiden tot zaligheid en eeuwige heerlijkheid door het geloof.

3. Dat de onwedergeborene mensch geheel onbekwaam is tot eenig goed, geheel bedorven, en dat hij daarom alleen zondigen kan.

II. Zij leeren op den grondslag van dezelfde confessies:

A. Dat de verkiezing, welke is het onvoorwaardelike en onveranderlijke besluit Gods om in Christus

te verlossen een zeker aantal van personen, de enige oorzaak en bron is van al ons heil, waaruit vloeien al de genade gaven, het geloof inbegrepen. Dit is de duidelijke leer van onze belijdenis in de Dordtsche Canones, I, A, 6, 7.

“Artikel 6. Dat God sommigen in den tijd met het geloof begiftigt, sommigen niet begiftigt, komt voort van zijn eeuwig besluit. ‘Want al zijne werken zijn Hem van eeuwigheid bekend’ (Hand. 15:18), en: ‘Hij werkt alle dingen naar den raad zijns willens (Efeze 1:11). Naar welk besluit Hij de harten der uitverkorenen, hoewel zij hard zijn, genadiglijk vermurwt en buigt om te gelooven; maar degenen, die niet zijn verkoren, naar zijn rechtvaardig oordeel, in hunne boosheid en hardigheid laat. En hier is het, dat zich voornamelijk voor ons ontsluit die diepe, barmhartige en evenzeer rechtvaardige onderscheiding der menschen, zijnde in even gelijke staat des verderfs, of het besluit van verkiezing en verwerping, in het Woord Gods geopenbaard. Hetwelk, even als het de verkeerde, onreine en onvaste menschen verdraaien tot hun verderf, alzoo den heiligen en godvreezenden zielen eenen onuitsprekelijken troost geeft.”

“Artikel 7. Deze verkiezing is een onveranderlijk voornemen Gods, door hetwelk Hij voor de grondlegging der wereld eene zekere menigte van menschen, niet beter of waardiger zijnde dan anderen, maar in de gemeene ellende met anderen liggende, uit het geheele menschelijk geslacht, van de eerste rechtheid door hunne eigene schuld vervallen in de zonde en het verderf, naar het vrije welbehagen zijns willens, tot de zaligheid louter uit genade, uitverkoren heeft in Christus, denwelken Hij ook van eeuwigheid tot een Middelaar en Hoofd van alle uitverkorenen, en tot een fundament der zaligheid gesteld heeft. En opdat zij door Hem zouden zalig gemaakt worden, heeft Hij ook besloten, hen aan Hem te geven, en krachtiglijk tot zijne gemeenschap door zijn Woord en Geest te roepen en te trekken, of, met het ware geloof in Hem te begiftigen, te rechtvaardigen, te heiligen, en, in de gemeenschap zijns Zoons krachtiglijk bewaard zijnde, ten laatste te verheerlijken, tot bewijzing van zijne barmhartigheid, en tot prijs van de rijkdommen zijner heerlijke genade. Gelijk geschreven is: ‘God heeft ons uitverkoren in Christus, voor de grondlegging der wereld, opdat wij zouden heilig en onberispelijker zijn voor Hem in de liefde. Die ons te voren verordineerd heeft tot aanneming tot kinderen, door Jezus Christus, in zichzelven, naar het welbehagen zijns willens; tot prijs der heerlijkheid zijner genade, door welke Hij ons begenadigd heeft in den Geliefde’ (Efeze 1:4, 5, 6); en elders: ‘Die Hij te voren verordineerd heeft, dezen heeft Hij ook geroepen; en die Hij geroepen heeft, dezen heeft Hij ook gerechtvaardigd; en die Hij gerechtvaardigd heeft, dezen heeft Hij ook verheerljkt’ (Rom. 8:30).

In den Heidelbergischen Catechismus, Zondag XXI, Vr. en Ant. 54, lezen we:

“Wat gelooft gij van de heilige algemeene Christelijke Kerk?

“Dat de Zone Gods uit het gansche menschelijke geslacht zich eene gemeente, tot het eeuwige leven uitverkoren, door Zijn Geest en Woord, in eenigheid des waren geloofs, van den beginne der wereld tot aan het einde, vergadert, beschermt en onderhoudt; en dat ik daarvan een levend lidmaat ben, en eeuwig zal blijven.”

Dit is ook duidelijk uit het leerstellige gedeelte van het Formulier voor den Heiligen Doop, waar we lezen:

“Want als wij gedoopt worden in den naam des Vaders, zoo betuigt en verzegelt ons God de Vader, dat Hij met ons een eeuwig verbond der genade opricht, ons tot zijn kinderen en erfgenamen aanneemt, en daarom van alle goed ons verzorgen, en alle kwaad van ons weren, of ten onzen beste keeren wil. En als wij in den naam des Zoons gedoopt worden, zoo verzegelt ons de Zoon, dat Hij ons wascht in zijn bloed van al onze zonden, ons in de gemeenschap zijns doods en zijner wederopstanding inlijvende, alzoo dat wij van onze zonden bevrijd, en rechtvaardig voor God gerekend worden. Desgelijks als wij gedoopt worden in den naam des Heiligen Geestes, zoo verzekert ons de Heilige Geest door dit Heilig Sacrament, dat Hij in ons wonen, en ons tot lidmaten van Christus heiligen wil, ons toeëigenende hetgeen wij in Christus hebben, namelijk, de afwassching onzer zonden, en de dagelijksche vernieuwing onzes levens, totdat wij eindelijk onder de gemeente der uitverkorenen in het eeuwige leven onbevlekt zullen gesteld worden.”

B. Dat Christus alleen voor de uitverkorenen gestorven is, en dat de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus zich uitstrekkt alleen tot hen. Dit is duidelijk uit de Canones, II, A, 8:

“Want dit is geweest de gansch vrije raad, de genadige wil en het voornemen Gods des Vaders, dat de levendmakende en zaligmakende kracht van den dierbaren dood Zijns Zoons, zich uitstrekken zou tot alle uitverkorenen, om die alleen met het rechtvaardigmakend geloof te begiftigen, en door ditzelve onfeilbaar tot de zaligheid te brengen; dat is: God heeft gewild, dat Christus door het bloed Zijns kruises (waarmede Hij het nieuwe Verbond bevestigd heeft) uit alle volken, stammen, geslachten en tongen, diegenen alle, en die alleen, krachtiglijk zou verlossen, die van eeuwigheid tot Hem gegeven zijn; hen zou begiftigen met het geloof, hetwelk Hij hun, gelijk ook andere zaligmakende gaven des Heiligen Geestes, door zijnen dood heeft verworven; en hen van al hunne zonden, zoowel de aangeborene als de werkelijke, zoowel na als voor het geloof begaan, door zijn bloed zou reinigen, tot den einde toe getrouwelijc bewaren, en ten

laatste zonder eenige vlek en rimpel heerlijk voor zich stellen."

Dit artikel leert zeer duidelijk:

1. Dat al de zegeningen des verbonds alleen voor de uitverkorenen zijn.
2. Dat de belofte Gods onvoorwaardelijk voor hen alleen is; want God kan niet beloven datgene wat niet in objectieven zin door Christus verdiend is.
3. Dat de belofte Gods het objectieve recht op het heil niet schenkt aan al de kinderen die geboren worden in de historische lijn van het verbond, dat is, niet aan alle gedoopten, maar alleen aan het geestelijke zaad.

Dit is ook duidelijk uit andere gedeelten van onze belijdenis, zooals, b.v.:

Heidelbergse Catechismus, Vr. 65: "Aangezien dan alleen het geloof ons Christus en al zijne weldaden deelachtig maakt, vanwaar komt zulk geloof? Van den Heiligen Geest, die het geloof in onze harten werkt door de verkondiging des heiligen Evangelies, en het sterkt door het gebruik van de Sacramenten."

En in Vr. 66 lezen we: "Wat zijn Sacramenten? De Sacramenten zijn heilige zichtbare waarteken en zegelen, van God ingezet, opdat Hij ons door het gebruik daarvan de belofte des Evangelies des te beter te verstaan geve en verzegele; namelijk, dat Hij ons vanwege het eenige slachtoffer van Christus, aan het kruis volbracht, vergeving der zonden en het eeuwige leven uit genade schenkt."

Als we deze uitdrukkingen uit den Heidelberger vergelijken met wat geleerd was aangaande de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus in Canones II, A, 8, zal het duidelijk zijn, dat de belofte des Evangelies, welke door de Sacramenten versegelt wordt, alleen den geloovigen geldt, i.e., den uitverkorenen.

Dit is ook duidelijk uit den Heidelbergse Catechismus, Vr. 74: "Zal men ook de jonge kinderen doopen? Ja het; want mitsdien zij, alsoowel als de volwassenen in het verbond Gods en in zijne gemeente begrepen zijn, en dat hun door Christus' bloed de verlossing van de zonden en de Heilige Geest, die het geloof werkt, niet minder dan den volwassenen toegezegd wordt, zoo moeten zij ook door den Doop, als door het teeken des Verbonds, der Christelijke Kerk, ingelijfd en van de kinderen der ongeloovigen onderscheiden worden, gelijk in het oude Verbond of testament door de Besnijdenis geschied is, voor dewelke in het nieuwe Verbond de Doop ingezet is."

Dat in deze vraag en dit antwoord van den Heidelbergse Catechismus niet alle kinderen die gedoopt worden bedoeld worden, maar alleen het geestelijk zaad, i.e., de uitverkorenen, is duidelijk. Want:

1. Kleine kinderen kunnen zeker geen voorwaarden vervullen. Als dus de belofte Gods hun geldt, dan moet die belofte onfeilbaar en onvoor-

waardelijk zijn, en kan daarom alleen den uitverkorenen gelden.

2. Volgens Canones II, A, 8, die we boven aanhaalden, is de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus voor de uitverkorenen alleen.
3. Volgens dit antwoord van den Heidelbergse Catechismus wordt de Heilige Geest, die het geloof werkt, niet minder aan de kleine kinderen belooft dan aan de volwassenen. En God vervult zekerlijk Zijn belofte. Het volgt dus, dat de belofte voor de uitverkorenen alleen is.

Hetzelfde wordt geleerd in de Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis, Artikelen 33-35.

In Artikel 33 lezen we: "Wij gelooven, dat onze goede God, acht hebbende op onze grovigheid en zwakheid, ons heeft verordend de Sacramenten, om aan ons zijne beloften te verzegelen, en om panden te zijn der goedwilligheid en genade God te onswaarts, en ook om ons geloof te voeden en te onderhouden; dewelke Hij gevoegd heeft bij het woord des Evangelies, om te beter aan onze uiterlijke zinnen voor te stellen, zoowel hetgene Hij ons te verstaan geeft door zijn Woord, als hetgene Hij inwendig doet in onze harten, bondig en vast makende in ons de zaligheid, die Hij ons mededeelt. Want het zijn zichtbare waarteken en zegelen van eene inwendige en onzienlijke zaak, door middel waarvan God in ons werkt door de kracht des Heiligen Geestes. Zoo zijn dan de teekenen niet ijdel noch ledig, om ons te bedriegen; want Jezus Christus is hunne waarheid, zonder wien zij niet met al zijn zouden."

En uit Artikel 34, hetwelk spreekt van den Heiligen Doop, halen we het volgende aan: "Wij gelooven en belijden, dat Jezus Christus, die het einde der wet is, door zijn vergoten bloed een einde gemaakt heeft aan alle andere bloedstortingen, die men zou kunnen of willen doen tot verzoening en voldoening der zonden; en dat Hij, afgedaan hebbende de Besnijding, die met bloed geschiedde, in de plaats daarvan heeft verordend het Sacrament des Doops, door hetwelk wij in de Kerke Gods ontvangen en van alle andere volken en vreemde religiën afgezonderd worden om geheellijk Hem toegeëigend te zijn, zijn merk- en veldteeken dragende; en het dient ons tot een getuigenis, dat Hij in eeuwigheid onze God zijn zal, ons zijnde een genadig Vader. Zoo heeft Hij dan bevolen te doopen al degenen, die de zijnen zijn, 'in den Naam des Vaders, en des Zoons, en des Heiligen Geestes,' alleen met rein water; ons daarmede te verstaan gevende, dat, gelijk het water de vuilheid des lichaams afwascht, wanneer wij daarmede begoten worden, hetwelk op het lichaam desgenen, die den Doop ontvangt, gezien wordt, en hem besprengt, alsoo het bloed van Christus hetzelfde van binnen in de ziel doet, door den Heiligen Geest, haar besprengende en zuiverende van hare zonden, en ons we-

derbarende uit kinderen des toorns tot kinderen Gods. Niet dat zulks door het uiterlijke water geschiedt, maar door de besprenging des dierbaren bloeds des Zoons Gods; die onze Roode Zee is, door welke wij moeten doorgaan, om te ontgaan de tirannieën van Farao, welke is de duivel, en in te gaan in het geestelijke land Kanaän. Alzoo geven ons de Dienaars van hunne zijde het Sacrament, en hetgene dat zichtbaar is; maar onze Heere geeft hetgene door het Sacrament beduid wordt, te weten, de gaven en onzienlijke genaden, wasschende, zuiverende en reinigende onze zielen van alle vuiligheden en ongerechtigheden, en onze harten vernieuwende en die vervullende met alle vertroosting, ons gevende eene ware verzekerdheid zijner vaderlijke goedheid, ons den neuen mensch aanndoende, en den ouden uittrekende met al zijne werken."

Dat dit alles, het wasschen en zuiveren en reinigen onze zielen van alle vuiligheden en ongerechtigheden, en het vernieuwen van onze harten, alleen de vrucht is van de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus, en daarom alleen kan zijn voor de uitverkorenen, is zeer duidelijk. Hetzelfde geldt van wat we lezen in hetzelfde artikel aangaande den doop van kleine kinderen: "En voorwaar, Christus heeft zijn bloed niet minder vergoten om de kinderkens der geloovigen te wasschen, dan Hij gedaan heeft om de volwassenen. En daarom behooren zij het teeken te ontvangen en het sacrament van hetgene dat Christus voor hen gedaan heeft; gelijk de Heere in de wet beval, hun mede te deelen het Sacrament des lijdens en stervens van Christus, kort nadat zij geboren waren, offerende voor hen een lammekken, hetwelk was een Sacrament van Jezus Christus. Daarenboven, hetgene de Besnijdenis deed aan het Joodsche volk, hetzelfde doet de Doop aan onze kinderen; welke de oorzaak is, waarom de heilige Paulus den Doop noemt de Besnijdenis van Christus. Col. 2:11." Indien, naar Artikel 8 van Canones II, A, de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus zich uitstrekkt alleen tot de uitverkorenen, dan moet het volgen datwanneer in dit artikel van de Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis gezegd wordt, dat "Christus heeft zijn bloed niet minder vergoten om de kinderkens der geloovigen te wasschen dan Hij gedaan heeft om de volwassenen," ook hier de uitverkorene kinderen bedoeld worden.

Bovendien, dat de belofte des Evangelies, welke God beteekent en verzegeilt in de Sacramenten niet is voor allen, is ook overvloediglijk duidelijk uit Artikel 35 van de Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis, hetwelk spreekt van het Heilig Avondmaal van onzen Heere Jezus Christus. Want daar belijden we: "Wij gelooven en belijden, dat onze Zaligmaker Jezus Christus het Sacrament des Heiligen Avondmaals verordend en ingesteld heeft, om te voeden en te onderhouden degenen, die Hij alreede wedergeboren, en in zijn huis-

gezin, hetwelk is zijne Kerk, ingelijfd heeft." En in hetzelfde artikel lezen we: "Voorts, hoewel de Sacramenten met de beteekenende zaken te zamen gevoegd zijn, zoo worden zij nochtans met deze twee zaken door allen niet ontvangen. De goddelooze ontvangt wel het Sacrament tot zijne verdoemenis, maar hij ontvangt niet de waarheid des Sacraments; gelijk als Judas en Simon, de tovenaar, beide wel het Sacrament ontvingen, maar niet Christus, die door datzelve beteekend wordt, welke den geloovigen alleen medegedeeld wordt."

Hieruit volgt dat beide Sacramenten, zoowel als de prediking van het Evangelie, een reuke des doods ten doode zijn voor de verworpenen, zoowel als een reuke des levens ten leven voor de uitverkorenen. Ergo, de belofte Gods, die gepredikt wordt in het Evangelie, en die beteekend en verzegeild wordt in de beide sacramenten, is niet voor allen, maar voor de uitverkorenen alleen.

En dat de uitverkiezing Gods, en bij gevolg de zaligmakende kracht van den dood van Christus en de belofte des Evangelies, niet voorwaardelijk is, is overvloediglijk duidelijk uit de hiervolgende artikelen van de Canones van Dordrecht.

Canones I, A, 10: "De oorzaak van deze genadige verkiezing is eeniglijk het welbehagen Gods, niet daarin bestaande, dat Hij enige hoedanigheden of werken der mensen, uit alle mogelijke voorwaarden, tot eene voorwaarde der zaligheid heeft uitgekozen; maar hierin, dat Hij enige bepaalde personen, uit de gemeene menigte der zondaren, zich tot een eigendom heeft aangenomen. Gelijk geschreven is: 'Als de kinderen nog niet geboren waren, noch iets goeds of kwaads gedaan hadden' enz., 'werd tot haar (namelijk Rebekkah) gezegd: De meerdere zal den mindere dienen; gelijk geschreven is: Jakob heb Ik liefgehad, en Ezau heb Ik gehaat' (Rom. 9:11, 12, 13); en: 'Daar geloofden zoo velen, als er geordineerd waren ten eeuwigen leven' (Hand. 13:48)."

In Canones I, B, 2, worden de dwalingen verworpen van degenen die leeren: "Dat de Verkiezing Gods ten eeuwigen leven velerlei is: de eene algemeen en onbepaald, de andere bijzonder en bepaald; en dat deze wederom of onvolkomen, herroepelijk, niet-beslissend en voorwaardelijk is, of volkomen, onherroepelijk, beslissend en volstrekt."

En in hetzelfde hoofdstuk van de Canones, B, 3, worden de dwalingen verworpen van degenen die leeren: "Dat het welbehagen en voornemen Gods, van hetwelk de Schrift in de leer van de Verkiezing gewag maakt, niet daarin bestaat, dat God enige bijzondere mensen boven anderen heeft uitverkoren; maar daarin, dat God uit alle mogelijke voorwaarden (onder welke ook zijn de werken der Wet), of uit de geheele orde van alle dingen, de uit haren aard onverdienstelijke daad des geloofs en zijne onvolmaakte gehoorzaamheid deszelven tot eene voorwaarde der zaligheid

heeft uitgekozen, welke Hij voor eene volkomene gehoorzaamheid genadiglijk zou hebben willen houden, en der belooning des eeuwigen levens waardig achtend.”

En nog eens weer, in hetzelfde hoofdstuk van de Canones, B, 5, worden de dwalingen verworpen van degenen die leeren: “dat het geloof, de gehoorzaamheid des geloofs, heiligeheid, godzaligheid en volharding niet zijn vruchten van de onveranderlijke Verkiezing ter heiligeheid, maar dat het zijn voorwaarden, die te voren vereischt, en als volbracht wezende, voorzien zijn in degenen, die ten volle verkoren zullen worden, en oorzaken, zonder welke de onveranderlijke verkiezing ter heiligeheid niet geschieht.”

Eindelijk verwijzen we nog naar de uitdrukking in het Doopsformulier: “En hoewel onze kinderen deze dingen niet verstaan, zoo mag men ze nochtans daarom van den Doop niet uitsluiten, aangezien zij ook zonder hun weten der verdoemenis in Adam deelachtig zijn, en alzoo ook weder in Christus tot genade aangenomen worden.” Dat hier niemand anders dan de uitverkorene kinderen des verbond bedoeld kunnen zijn, en dat deze onvoorwaardelijk, zonder hun weten, aangenomen worden tot genade in Christus, op dezelfde wijze als ze liggen onder de verdoemenis van Adam, is overvloedig duidelijk.

C. Dat het geloof geen voorafgaande vordering of voorwaarde tot de zaligheid is, maar een gave Gods en een door God gegeven instrument, waardoor we het heil in Christus ons toeëigenen. Dit wordt zeer duidelijk geleerd in de hiervolgende gedeelten van onze belijdenis.

Heidelbergse Catechismus, Vr. 20: “Worden dan alle mensen wederom door Christus zalig, gelijk zij door Adam zijn verdoemd geworden? Nee zij, maar alleen degenen, die Hem door een waar geloof worden ingelijfd en al zijne weldaden aannemen.”

Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis, Artikel 22: “Wij gelooven, dat, om ware kennis dezer groote verborgenheid te bekomen, de Heilige Geest in onze harthen ontsteekt een oprecht geloof, hetwelk Jezus Christus met al zijne verdiensten omhelst, Hem eigen maakt, en niets anders meer buiten Hem zoekt. Want het moet noodzakelijk volgen, of, dat niet al wat tot onze zaligheid van noode is, in Jezus Christus zij; of, zoo het alles in Hem is, dat degene die Jezus Christus door het geloof bezit, zijne geheele zaligheid heeft. Nu, dat men zeggen zou, dat Christus niet genoegzaam is, maar dat er nog benevens Hem iets meer toe behoeft, ware eene al te ongeschikte godslastering; want daaruit zou volgen, dat Christus maar een halve Zaligmaker ware. Daarom zeggen wij terecht met Paulus, Rom. 3:28, ‘dat wij door het geloof alleen’, of ‘door het geloof zonder de werken gerechtvaardigd worden’. Doch wij verstaan niet, dat het, om eigenlijk te spreken, het geloof zelf is, dat ons rechtvaardigt; want het is maar een instrument, waarmede wij Christus, onze

rechtvaardigheid, omhelzen. Maar Jezus Christus, ons toerekenende al zijne verdiensten en zoo vele heilige werken, die hij voor ons en in onze plaats heeft gedaan, is onze rechtvaardigheid; en het geloof is een instrument, dat ons met Hem in de gemeenschap van al zijne goederen houdt; dewelke, de onze geworden zijnde, ons meer dan genoegzaam zijn tot onze vrijsprekung van onze zonden.”

Vergelijk ook Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis, Artikelen 33-35, boven aangehaald.

Vergelijk tevens Dordtsche Canones, II, A, 8, boven aangehaald.

In Canones III, IV, A, 10, lezen we: “Maar dat anderen, door de bediening des Evangelies geroepen zijnde, komen, en bekeerd worden, dat moet men den mensch niet toeschrijven, alsof hij zichzelven door zijnen vrijen wil zou onderscheiden van anderen, die met even groote of genoegzame genade tot het geloof en de bekeering voorzien zijn (hetwelk de hoovaardige ketterij van Pelagius stelt); maar men moet het Gode toeschrijven, die, gelijk Hij de zijnen van eeuwigheid uitverkoren heeft in Christus, alzoo ook diezelfden in den tijd krachtiglijk roept, met het geloof en de bekeering begiftigt, en, uit de macht der duisternis verlost zijnde, tot het rijk zijns Zoons overbrengt, opdat zij zouden verkondigen de deugden Desgenen, die hen uit de duisternis geroepen heeft tot zijn wonderbaar licht, en opdat zij niet in zichzelven, maar in den Heere zouden roemen, gelijk de Apostolische schriften doorgaans getuigen.”

En in hetzelfde hoofdstuk van de Canones, Art. 14, lezen we: “Zoo is dan het geloof eene gave Gods; niet omdat het aan den vrijen wil des menschen van God wordt aangeboden, maar omdat het den mensch metterdaad wordt medegedeeld, ingegeven, en ingestort; ook niet daarom, dat God alleenlijk de macht om te gelooven zou geven, en daarna de toestemming of het metterdaad gelooven van den vrijen wil des menschen verwachten; maar omdat Hij, die daar werkt het willen en het werken, ja, alles werkt in allen, in den mensch teweeg brengt beide, den wil om te gelooven en het geloof zelf.”

III. Aangezien dus dit de duidelijke leer is van onze belijdenis,

A. Verwerpen wij:

1. De leer:

- Dat de belofte des verbonds voorwaardelijk is en voor allen, die gedoopt worden.
- Dat we mogen veronderstellen dat al de gedoopte kinderen wedergeboren zijn, want we weten op grond van de Heilige Schrift, zoowel als in het licht van heel de historie en de ervaring, dat het tegendeel waar is.

2. De leer dat de belofte des verbonds een objectieve schenking is van Godswegen, die aan ieder

gedoopt kind het recht geeft op Christus en op al de zegeningen des heils.

B. En wij handhaven:

1. Dat God zekerlijk en onfeilbaar Zijn belofte vervult aan de uitverkorenen.
2. Dat wanneer Hij zoo Zijn belofte vervult en Zijn verbond bevestigt, de uitverkorenen geen stokken en blokken worden, maar dat ze verplicht zijn en gewillig om hun deel van het verbond te vervullen, dat is, om den Heere hunnen God lief te hebben met geheel hun hart, met geheel hun verstand, met geheel hunne ziel en al hunne krachten, de wereld te verzaken, hun oude natuur te dooden, en in een nieuw godzalig leven te wandelen.
3. Dat de grond voor den kinderdoop het bevel Gods is en het feit dat naar de Schrift Hij Zijn verbond opricht in de lijn van opeenvolgende geslachten.

IV. Bovendien spreken de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken uit:

A. Dat ze geen genoegen kunnen nemen met de handelingen van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland waardoor:

1. Zij van synodale zijde zekere leerstellige besluiten aan de kerken oplegden, en deze besluiten bindend maakten voor de kerken voordat deze gebruik konden maken van het recht van protest.
2. En waardoor ze vele plaatselijke ambtsdragers hebben afgezet.

B. En zij gelooven en handhaven de autonomie van de plaatselijke kerk.

* * *

Indien de synode de hierboven genoemde proposities aanneemt, dan adviseeren wij:

1. Dat de synode dit geheele document onderwerpt aan de goedkeuring der kerken.
2. Indien geen bezwaar wordt ingediend, dit aan te nemen op onze volgende synode.
3. Dit in den tussentijd aan te nemen als een werk-hypothese voor onze Zendingscommissie en voor onze zendelingen als grondslag voor de organisatie van kerken.

Met eerbied onderworpen,

Uwe Commissie:

Ds. R. Veldman
Ds. Gerrit Vos.

Ouderlingen: J. Docter, en
Wm. Huisken.

Adviseuren: Prof. H. Hoeksema
Prof. G. M. Ophoff.

The Change At The Last Moment

Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Cor. 15:51, 52.

Christ is raised. And therefore, our faith is not vain, we are no more in our sins, and we are not the most miserable of all men. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross for our sins, is the central fact of salvation, the assurance of our justification, the sure ground of our hope of final glory. For He arose as the firstfruits, and the harvest is sure to be gathered in. This, in general, is the contents of the Word of God in that glorious chapter on the resurrection-gospel in I Cor. 15. And in the last part of that chapter, the Word of God through the apostle explains the nature of the resurrection, and of the change that shall take place through that final wonder of salvation, as well as the necessity of that change. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality, weakness must be replaced by power, dishonour by glory, the natural body is to be changed into the spiritual body, and as we have borne the image of the earthly, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. "Behold", so the apostle writes, "I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." And it is especially to this change of the last moment that I would like to call your attention.

It is well that we remember from the outset that the change of which the apostle speaks, and which is to take place at the last trump, is called a mystery. And a mystery is a truth that is related to the kingdom of God, that cannot be ascertained from the things that are seen, that is not discovered from anything in this present world, that transcends all our present experience that can only be known by revelation through the Spirit of Christ, and apprehended by faith through the same Spirit. That there will be such a moment, a final moment, in which the dead shall be changed incorruptible, and the living shall be changed into immortal glory, is a truth that, although it does not and could not possibly contradict our present experience, certainly lies far beyond our reach and scope of our present knowledge, and transcends it. Philosophy can never conceive of such a moment. Evolutionism cannot attain to it. The natural mind cannot grasp it. It is a mystery that could only be revealed to the apostle by the Spirit of Christ,

and that we can apprehend only by faith in Christ. It is the final wonder of grace. We can see nothing but death, corruption, desolation. No wisdom of man can ever reach beyond the dark despair of the grave. But Christ is raised. And the Spirit of the risen Lord revealed also this mystery, that the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.

What is the change of which the apostle here speaks? From the context it is evident that he refers to the change of our bodies, and in connection with that change, of the complete transformation of our whole mortal, corruptible, earthly existence. Through the transformation of the last moment, our bodies shall not be annihilated, but they shall be raised to glory. Essentially they shall remain. Even as the body that is laid in the grave is material, so the body of the resurrection shall be material. Even as our present body is human, distinct from the bodies of the animals, so the future body shall be human, a perfect instrument for the reflection of the image of God in man. And even as our present bodies are individual, personal, all different from one another, adapted unto the individual souls that dwell in them, and express themselves through them, so through the change of that last moment we shall each receive his own body. The seed that is sown in the earth and dies, and sprouts up again, does not lose its identity. When wheat is sown it is wheat that is harvested. The same is true of the resurrection of the dead. Through the transformation of the last moment we shall remain essentially the same, and retain our personal identity.

Yet, we shall be changed. This transformation shall, no doubt, consist first of all in this that death and all its effects shall be swallowed up and completely removed. Our present bodies are mortal, through the change of the last moment they shall become immortal, for this mortal must put on immortality. Because our earthly bodies are subject to and under the dominion of death, they are corruptible. They exist in the sphere of corruption, and to the power of corruption they are exposed. All through our earthly existence this corruption reveals itself, in every form of disease and disorder, until the complete disintegration of our bodies is an accomplished fact in death and the grave. Dust we are, and to dust we return in the most literal sense of the word. But through the transformation of the last moment this corruptible shall put on incorruption. On the other side of death, after the last moment, there will be no more forces of corruption that eat into our bodies to destroy them. Corruption shall have no more dominion over them. Our present bodies are weak. In them our days are numbered within the span of three score and ten, or four score years. Even without any special disease, they wither and die, as the flower of the field. But the bodies of the resurrection will be strong. In them we shall renew

our youth like the eagle's, and in unfading strength we shall stand for ever. And our present bodies are in dishonour. Sin has covered them with shame. But after the transformation of which the apostle speaks, they shall be glorious, perfectly reflecting the pure knowledge, the righteousness, and holiness of the image of God in heavenly beauty.

But the transformation of the last moment shall bring about still other changes. In the chapter the apostle speaks of this when he makes the distinction between a natural or psychical and a spiritual body, and between the image of the earthly, which we now bear, and the image of the heavenly, which we shall bear after the last moment. It is true, also our resurrection body shall be material, but we must remember that all matter is not the same. The seed of the flower you sow, that dies in the earth, is presently revealed in the beautiful flower that grows on its stem. The tulip seed ultimately yields the bulb, yet it is the same body. Ice melts into the fluid water, and water evaporates into invisible steam, and yet the material is the same. Thus it is also with respect to the transformation of the last moment. Our present bodies are of flesh and blood. They are taken out of the earth, and they are natural and earthly. With them we belong to the present world, and to no other. We belong to the sphere of things that are seen, and that are temporal. To the earth we are bound with a thousand ties, on the earth we are dependent, from the earth we are sustained in our present existence, we have earthly senses, earthly sensations and perceptions, earthly experiences, and the scope and limits of earthly things we can never transcend. The heavenly things we cannot see or perceive in any way. To give us some idea of these they must be revealed to us in earthly forms and symbols.

Hence, we *must* be changed. For God has prepared for us a kingdom, a city, a heavenly house. And that kingdom we could never inherit, that city, the New Jerusalem we could never inhabit, that house we could never enter in our present body. The apostle expresses this necessity of a radical transformation of our bodies in the preceding verse where he writes: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." That kingdom is spiritual, but we are natural; it is incorruptible and everlasting, we are corruptible and temporal and mortal; that kingdom is heavenly, we are earthly. If, say this were possible, we would be placed right in the midst of that heavenly and everlasting kingdom, we would not be able to function in it. We could not see it, hear it, have fellowship with it, inherit it, possess it. How could we ever perceive and have contact with the things that are heavenly through our earthly senses? With them I have no contact with the heavenly spirits, I

cannot see the risen Lord, I cannot behold God face to face. And how could I possess and inherit an everlasting kingdom in my present body that can hardly last the span of three score years and ten? We *must* be changed.

It is, in our present condition, of course, impossible to conceive in detail exactly of the form and properties of our resurrection body. When we think of the various appearances of the risen Lord to His disciples in that marvellous period of forty days before His ascension from Mount Olivet, we realize that His glorious body was quite different from that which He assumed in the likeness of sinful flesh. The disciples realized it, and they were amazed. Sometimes, when He appeared to them, as they were gathered and the doors were shut, they thought that they saw a ghost. At other times they wondered, and some even doubted whether it were He. Yet, it was the same Lord, and the signs of His suffering might be seen in His body. And we shall be made like Him. Our present bodies of humiliation shall be made like His glorious body. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality, the image of the earthly shall be transformed into the image of the heavenly, our natural bodies shall be changed into spiritual bodies. We shall have heavenly eyes to behold the things that are heavenly, and heavenly ears to hear heavenly things. We shall have bodies, to be sure, but they shall not be of flesh and blood, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Bodies they shall be in which we shall be able to function in the everlasting and heavenly tabernacle of God, and in which we shall be able to see Him face to face!

This transformation of the last moment will assume a twofold form, that of the resurrection of the dead, and that of the sudden change of the then living.

We shall not all sleep, the apostle writes, referring to the sleep of physical death. And when in this passage, and in other texts, the Word of God speaks of death as a sleep, it may not be understood as teaching that there is a sleep of the soul, or of the human spirit. For, it is plain from other parts of Scripture that the soul of the believer shall enter into the glory of the heavenly house of God immediately after death. The believer's exit from his present, earthly house, is at the same time an entrance into heavenly glory. Besides, it should be plain to all that in First Corinthians the Word of God is not speaking of the soul at all, but throughout of the body of believers. Nor is it possible for the spirit of man to sleep. Even our earthly rest at night is only a sleep of the body, during which our spirit may be, and often is, very busy. Thus also it is with the sleep of death. The spirit of the believer passes on to the heavenly house, but the body sleeps, until it shall be awakened and reunited with the glorified soul in the last moment, that of the resurrection

of the dead.

But at the moment of the last trump we shall not all sleep. Some shall still be living their earthly life. The Church may be comparatively small, but it shall never be completely destroyed, not even through the fierce persecution of Antichrist, and the final tribulation through which, according to the plain teaching of Scripture, it must pass. Hence, not all the believers shall sleep the sleep of physical death.

However, whether asleep or alive at the moment of the last trump, we must all be changed. The dead saints shall not be left behind, the living saints shall not enter in as they are: we must all be changed. For those that fall asleep the necessary change will be accomplished through death and resurrection. Physical death is the negative part of the transformation. When we die, flesh and blood, that can never inherit the kingdom of God, have their end. Corruptibility then is accomplished in complete corruption. All that remains of the organism of our natural and mortal bodies is their dust. And the positive part of the transformation will take place in the resurrection, for the dead shall be raised incorruptible at the sound of the last trumpet, and the dust of our dead bodies shall be changed into the glorious organism of incorruptible and immortal beings, that bear the image of the heavenly Lord. But for those that shall not sleep, this transformation shall take place without death, all at once, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Perhaps, as a reward of their special battle and tribulation in those last days, they shall not see death, but suddenly be transformed into glory, and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.

The moment of which the Word of God here speaks as the twinkling of an eye, shall definitely be the last moment of history, and, at the same time, the beginning of everlasting glory. Even as the "beginning" of Gen. 1:1 denotes the first moment, the *alpha* of history, so the moment of the last trumpet denotes the end, the *omega* of the present age, but also the beginning of the age to come, the everlasting kingdom of God. I say this advisedly, and in opposition to those who would place this moment some time before the end, and before the tribulation of the latter days. There is no ground in Scripture to assume that the faithful will be taken out of the earth before the final coming of Christ, or before the tribulation that must still be expected. On the contrary, Scripture warns us everywhere that exactly the faithful must expect that tribulation, and that they must watch and pray, and be prepared.

And surely, the words of I Cor. 15:52 place this moment at the very end. For, first of all, let us not overlook that the necessity of the change of which the apostle speaks must be found in the fact that the saints

must inherit the kingdom of God. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Hence, we must be changed. And the kingdom of God is not a certain temporal and earthly millenium, but the everlasting kingdom of glory, in which all things shall be united in Christ, and God shall be all in all. Secondly, the text tells us definitely that this moment shall come at the sound of the last trumpet. And without thinking of a literal trumpet, we may find two ideas in this figure of speech. First of all, there is the notice that it is the last, the final call convoking all the saints for everlasting worship in the heavenly tabernacle of God in the New Jerusalem. And, secondly, it will not be something secret, that will not be noticed by men, but a public and universal call, like a loud trumpet blast, like the voice of an archangel. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. It is the final moment, the moment of the public justification of all the saints in everlasting glory.

To that moment we look forward in hope! With a view to that moment we suffer patiently, and die in peace. Looking forward to that blessed hope, we will keep ourselves unspotted in and from the world through the grace of Him that called us into the fellowship of His dear Son.

H. H.



Contributions

June 3, 1950

Rev. Herman Hoeksema, Editor
1139 Franklin Street, S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Editor:

Permit me a small space in our *Standard Bearer* to make a few remarks concerning our Transfer of Baptized Members form, which can be found on page 69 of our Church Order.

I have no objection against the form itself but I do have against the appendage or addition. The form proper states, "At . . . request we hereby transfer . . ." Now "hereby" can never mean "thereby" or "upon condition of" or "after acceptance of". "Hereby" simply means "right here and right now". But when we look at the appendage or addition the matter becomes ambiguous. The addition states, "The above mentioned shall be considered still a member of the . . ." To me this notice states exactly the opposite of what the certificate itself states. Now, most any dictionary will state that something joined to constitutes no real part of the thing or system to which it

is joined. An appendage is not an essential part of that with which it is connected, but most everyone thinks it is and the result is confusion. Practically, of course, the transfer is considered complete when it is made out, and is usually so announced to the congregation. Further, few receipts of acceptance are received within a reasonable time, if ever. When they are received I doubt if they are ever officially recorded.

Incidentally, I can not understand how one Protestant Reformed Church can refuse or hesitate to accept a transfer from another Protestant Reformed Church if the transfer has been properly executed.

I think we should find out what we mean to say and then say what we mean. Therefore, I was very happy to learn that the Synodical churches of the Netherlands intend to seek revision of the Church Order. Of course, I was even more happy to learn that we were invited to participate in this revision.

Fraternally,
Arie De Borst.

July 7, 1950

Rev. H. Hoeksema, Editor
The Standard Bearer

Dear Brother Editor:

Will you kindly place the following in the Standard Bearer?

I am sorry to note that the contribution of Mr. Feenstra in the July 1st issue of the Standard Bearer was approved for publication without any comment. Certainly the brother's insinuations are of too serious a nature for mere publication without anything more. For it is evident that the author's sole purpose is to attack a minister of the gospel, an officebearer in good standing, in order to expose him to the churches as being heretical and in need of disciplinary attention.

Mr. Feenstra may accuse the undersigned of judging motives or of driving the matter to absurd extremes, but if the Rev. Andrew Petter is guilty of unsound doctrine to the degree that Mr. Feenstra insinuates then no one will deny that the disciplining of Rev. Petter is past due. Mr. Feenstra not only concluded his article with a passionate and sentimental prayer for Brother Petter's conversion from the error of a conditional theology, but he boldly states that the brother has no longer so much as the right to write under the heading of "Among Our Treasures". And to bolster or prove this bold assertion Mr. Feenstra not only insinuates that the Rev. Petter denies what is the peculiar doctrine of our Protestant Reformed Churches, but what is the very heart and content of all that is Reformed. And if Brother Petter may no longer as much as write under the heading "Among

"Our Treasures", he certainly may not and should not stand in the midst of the church posing as a minister of Christ who "brings forth things old and new" from the treasure of God's Word.

If Mr. Feenstra is convinced of what he writes he certainly has grievously erred in not following the God-ordained and Scripture-taught method of treating an office bearer of Christ who is in error. And the Standard Bearer, on the other hand, has erred in that Mr. Feenstra's accusations were published without comment. For accusations they are—and that of the worst kind.

However, the undersigned would kindly advise Mr. Feenstra to definitely ascertain whether his evaluation of the Rev. Petter is as correct as he fanatically assumes. We personally want to assure brother Feenstra that, both through Rev. Petter's writings and our personal discussions with him about these matters, the Rev. Petter endorses, preaches and teaches all that the Reformed Church, as represented by our Protestant Reformed Churches, stands for. And we challenge brother Feenstra to prove by a product of his own sincere study of Rev. Petter's writings that the Rev. Petter is the man portrayed to us by the insinuations in Mr. Feenstra's article of July 1, last.

In closing we wish too express our conviction that articles so lightly attacking office-bearers in good standing ought not to be published without a public apology. Besides, rather than so soon rushing into print with accusations we would do better to rush to the erring brother personally with a good measure of the love of Christ.

Yours in the cause of Christ,
A. Cammenga.

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ANNIVERSARY

We take pleasure in announcing the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents,

Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Yonker
on Tuesday, August 8, 1950.

We are thankful to the Lord for giving us the privilege of enjoying the fellowship of our Christian parents these many years. We pray that they may enjoy the Lord's blessing in the climbing of the years.

The grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. John Yonker
Mr. and Mrs. James Arnold
and five grandchildren:
Nicholas, Stanley, Carol, and
Joyce Yonker and Catherine
Arnold.

Open house at the home of their son,
John Yonker, 1758 Acorn Street,
from 7:00 to 10:00 in the evening.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Idea Of Creation

How Corrupted By The World.

We were busy in our previous article with the absurd attempt to explain the origin of the world without the revelation of the Word of God. And we concluded that article with the statement that we must therefore reject any conception of the origin of the universe which would seek that beginning in a principle of Materialism, be it in the Monastic or Dualistic sense of the word. Besides the theory of Materialism the theories of Pantheism and Evolution have also been advanced to explain the origin of the universe.

The theory of Pantheism.

Pantheism is also called the "Emanation Theory". The world is a necessary emanation, a proceeding out of the Divine Being, is God as He comes unto Self-manifestation and consciousness. Pantheism means literally: All is God, and identifies God with the world. God and the world are essentially one. This conception does not teach that God is in the world but that He is the world. The world is God as He attains unto Self-consciousness.

This conception of the origin of the universe must, of course, be rejected. First, it is contrary to all that the Word of God teaches us of the living God. On the one hand, it is a denial of the Lord's transcendency. The transcendency of the Lord is that Divine perfection which proclaims the truth that He is highly exalted, above all things. This virtue of the Lord must not be understood in the local sense of the word, as if He, in that local sense of the word, is exalted above this world. We, then, conceive of the Lord's transcendency in the sense that God begins where the world ends. We, then, are upon the earth and He is in heaven. The world, being created and therefore finite, has a boundary, and above that boundary line sits the Ancient of Days, the living God of heaven and earth. Thus we have understood the transcendency of Jehovah in a local sense of the world. However, the Scriptures teach us that also the heaven of heavens cannot contain the Lord. God is not "shut up in heaven". He cannot be confined to time and space. He is not a creature but the Creator. That the Lord is the Transcendent One signifies, however, that He is *essentially* exalted above all things, also the heaven of heavens, that he is *essentially* to be distinguished from the creature, that He is the Wholly-Other, the absolute and infinite God, that, whereas all things, being created, are characterized by the laws of time and of space, He,

the Creator also of time and space is eternal and infinite. That the theory of Pantheism is a denial of the truth of God's transcendency must be self-evident. It simply identifies the living God with the creature. And, on the other hand, the theory of Pantheism is a denial of the Lord's Immanency. God's immanency signifies that the Lord is *in* all things. In the Lord we move, live, and have our being. Or, as we may read in Ps. 139:7-12: "Whither shall I flee from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Speaking of God's immanency we must bear in mind that *God* is *in* all things. This surely implies that He is in all things *as God*. This means that we must constantly bear in mind that He is the Transcendent One, the absolute and infinite and eternal God, the Wholly-Other, the living God Who is to be distinguished from the creature, never to be identified with that creature, that therefore, *as God*, He is in all things. And we must also remember, in connection with this truth, that He is *in* all things. This does not mean that He is all things, as the pantheist would have us believe, but that He is *in* all things, and then as the living God. Hence, the truth of God's transcendency teaches us that the Lord is in all things by His Spirit, that He constantly upholds and sustains all things by His almighty power, that He is constantly "in touch" with the universe and every part of that universe. That Pantheism is a denial of this truth of the Lord's immanency must also be self-evident. Pantheism declares that God is the world and therefore not *in* the world. Pantheism identifies God with the world; the truth of God's immanency emphasizes that the Lord is in the world, *as God*, and therefore to be distinguished from that world.

Secondly, the theory of Pantheism must be rejected because it is a denial of God's infinite goodness and perfection. This conception of the origin of the universe would have us believe that the world is God as He attains unto Self-consciousness. If this be true then it would follow inexorably that the world is needed by God, that the Lord without the world is incomplete. God, then, needs the world to come unto Self-consciousness. To teach by implication, however, that the Lord needs the world is an evident denial of the Scriptural truth that He is the God of infinite goodness and perfection, the eternally Self-sufficient God, eternally blessed in Himself and surely not in need of any creature. Indeed, according to Ps. 16, at His right

hand there are pleasures forever more. And in Acts 17:24-25 we read: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

Thirdly, we must reject the theory of Pantheism because it impugns, is an attack upon the holiness of the Lord. If God be the world He must be morally responsible for all the evil and corruption in the world. Fact is, to identify Him with the world must imply that we also identify Him with the evil and corruption in the world. Unless we divorce Him completely from the world's corruption, advance the theory that there is apart from the "good God" also an "evil god", and thereby teach a dualism which is fully as hopeless as Pantheism. We need not show, I am sure, that to identify the living God also with the evil and corruption in the world, is contrary to all that Holy Writ teaches us in regard to the holiness, truth, righteousness of the Lord, Who is too pure of eyes than that He should behold iniquity.

Finally, the theory of Pantheism must be rejected because it destroys all religion. If the Lord be the world then there is no God but only the world. This should be a self-evident truth. Then there is no God exalted above this world. God is the world. Hence, there is no God, only the world. But, this is the destruction of all religion. If this be true, one shudders because of the inevitable consequences. All prayer-life will be impossible. There will not be such a thing as the responsibility of man. The element of sin will have been ruled out of the universe. This lies in the nature of the case. There will be no life of prayer. To whom shall we pray? There is no God. Hence, there is none to whom prayer can be made. The same thing applies to the truth of the responsibility of man. If the living God be ruled out of the universe to whom will the creature then be responsible? We certainly cannot and will not be responsible to one another. This implies that all control and restraint of the actions of men and devils will have been removed out of this world. And, of course, Pantheism also denies the element of sin. Sin is transgression against the Lord. The removal of the living God out of the universe necessarily implies the removal of sin. This, we say, lies in the nature of the case. For all these reasons we must reject the pantheistic conception of the origin of the world.

The theory of Evolution.

We need not enter into a detailed discussion of the theory of Evolution at this time. We intend to return, the Lord willing, to this conception of the origin of things when we discuss the creation of man. We may

say at this time, however, that Evolution is the theory which has attempted to trace the origin of man to its very beginning, and has set forth the conception that man developed from an animal, the higher animal from the lower, the animal from the plant, the organic from the inorganic, and has traced the inorganic finally to something which flew off the sun. We would observe at this moment that the theory of Evolution clearly demonstrates that man, when attempting to explain and attain unto the origin of things, can never arise above the creature, that which is finite. He must constantly move about in the sphere of that which has been made, and must always find the origin of the things in the things themselves.

All these attempts of the world a clear demonstration of the foolishness of the world.

Finally, all these attempts of the wisdom of the world to ascertain the origin of the universe clearly demonstrate that, once we have forsaken the God of the Scriptures, we must descend into the very depths of the absurd and the ridiculous.

The world does not reject the Divine origin of the universe because this scriptural conception contradicts the human mind. Because something transcends the human mind, cannot be understood, comprehended by that human mind does not necessarily mean that it also therefore is contradictory to our understanding. It cannot comprehend the Divine creation of the universe, that He by the Word of His almighty power called the heavens and all their host into being, called them by name. It is surely beyond my finite understanding that the living God created the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, that He did so in the space of six days, yea, simply by His Divine speaking. However, just because this mighty fact cannot be comprehended by the human mind does not necessarily imply that it contradicts my understanding. I may not understand the fact of creation, but it is surely not contradictory to my thinking that an almighty Creator created the heavens and the earth. I may not, e.g., understand the resurrection of the dead, but it does not contradict my human mind that the living and almighty God can and does resurrect the dead. That I cannot comprehend the fact of creation simply verifies the thought or fact that the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, the temporal, the Eternal.

Neither does the world reject the Divine origin of the universe because they would be "scientific", believe only in "facts" and in the things which they can "know". It is simply a fact that the world itself resorts to theories instead of facts. Nowhere has anyone succeeded to explain or prove the various transitions from the inorganic, the plant to the animal, the animal to man. And, in connection with this, we

may also observe that the world does not reject the Scriptural account of creation because they cannot understand Scripture's account of the Divine beginning of things. Nowhere does the Word require of us that we understand the Divine account of the world's creation. Besides, the world cannot understand the creature and its own absurd attempts to ascertain the origin of the universe.

There is only one explanation for all the attempts of the world to disregard the account of Holy Writ and seek the origin of the things in the things themselves. The world's wisdom is foolishness, spiritual foolishness. The world is ever prompted by unbelief. And unbelief is not ignorance but the wilful rejection of the living God. The world does not accept the Scriptural record of creation because it hates the living God and refuses to acknowledge the Sovereign Creator of the universe.

* * * *

The Creation Of The World, An Act Of God's Omnipotent Will.

The creation of the world in time presents an interesting problem.

The Scriptures declare, in amazing simplicity, that the things that are and develop had a beginning. We read in the Word of God of "before the mountains were," and "before the ages began," etc. And we, in our thinking, cannot liberate ourselves from this idea of time.

It is exactly because of this element of time, and also because of the fact that we ourselves are creatures of time, that the fact of creation presents itself to us as such a difficult and unfathomable problem. Going back in our thoughts we must, of course, finally arrive at that first moment when all things received their being. And then, before that first moment in time, lies for us nothing but the mysterious, the hidden, the quiet depths of eternity. But it is exactly then that many questions press themselves upon us. How must we conceive of that eternity, and wherewith shall we fill it; what activity occurred then, before the creation and Divine providence went into effect? What did God do before creation? Do not the Scriptures teach us in John 5:17 that the Lord of heaven and earth is Purest Action, never characterized by a moment of idleness? We read in John 5:17: "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Did the Lord, when He called the heavens and the earth into being, change from idleness to activity, from rest to labour and activity? How can we harmonize the creation of the universe, the change from "nothingness" into an act of creation, with the immutability,

the unchangeableness of Jehovah? How can we conceive, in that time transcending eternity, of a moment, in which the Lord proceeded unto the act of creating? And why is it that He chose exactly that moment? Why is it that the creation of the universe did not occur ages before? Thus writes the late Dr. H. Ba-vinck in his Reformed Dogmatics.

All these questions, we may readily understand, thus the professor continues, have evoked various answers. The Pantheist seeks to identify God with the world. According to him God and the world are identical. God is the world, time and eternity are essentially the same. However, this is impossible. Time is created, is itself a creature. Eternity never began, is therefore not created. To identify God with the world, time with eternity is simply impossible. To this we have already called attention. Others taught that matter is eternal, that God is not a Creator but that creation itself is eternal. The world, then, had no beginning. It is eternal, the eternal self-revelation of the Lord. Against this conception, principally pantheistic, we have already expressed our objections. To declare that matter is eternal is absurd. It is simply a fact that nothing in this world exists of itself and also that nothing in this world can perpetuate its own existence. There is simply no creature that owes its existence to itself and there is no creature that can maintain its own existence. All things or creatures die and no creature controls its own life. To declare, therefore, that matter is eternal contradicts reality. To counter with the remark that, although the creature may die, matter is nevertheless eternal, so that that creature passes on into another creature leads to countless absurdities. The fact remains that, even if this were true, no creature can control or maintain itself. A third attempt to solve the enigma declared that, although it is true that the world is created out of nothing, God began to create from eternity, that, although the present world is not eternal, innumerable worlds have preceded our present world. This, we understand, is no solution. It simply ignores the problem, moves it infinitely forward and ahead. One always remains before the question: But how long ago was it that the first world began? And all these "solutions" again verify the truth that man will teach nonsense and absurdities rather than recognize the simple but also majestic presentation of the Word of God.

The question relative the beginning of the world knows but one answer: the universe is the product of God's sovereign and omnipotent will. To be sure, from our point of view, the world could have begun ages before its actual beginning. Also, in connection with the question concerning that which may have existed and what the Lord may have done before He made the world, we must bear in mind the fundamental idea that time and eternity are not to be confused or identi-

fied. We involuntarily think that, at the time the world was called into being, God was already countless, endless ages old. Yet, the Scriptures declare in Ps. 90:2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." We do not read in this text that before the mountains were brought forth. . . . God *was*, but: Thou *art* God. Time, as we shall presently see in connection with Genesis 1:1, is itself a creature, brought forth by the living God. God, however, is eternal. With Him there is no past, present, or future. He never waits until a certain moment to do something; to say that the Lord waited until the first day of creation is impossible because, prior to the world's beginning there was no time, no succession of days and weeks and months and years.

Besides, as we have noted in previous articles, God's work is eternal, and that always implies that it is always perfect. It is true that the world was created in six days and that on each of those days something new was brought forth. Yet, as far as the living God is concerned, His work is always eternal, perfect and complete, never characterized by a succession of events. The Lord never works piecemeal. That we do not understand this lies in the nature of the case; however, we should not forget that neither does the godless philosophy of the world certainly have a solution of the problem. As far as the Lord's own life is concerned, therefore, it is not true that He once created but rather that His work of creation is eternally perfect and complete. Hence, in God's eternal thoughts and counsel, the beginning of the universe and also the end of all things, everything is constantly eternal, perfect, complete. As God knows Himself, perfectly and completely, He also knows eternally all things, is constantly beholding and rejoicing in His eternal and perfect "blue print" of all things.

And the question: why, then, did God create the world when He did, can be answered, as far as the undersigned is concerned, by one one answer: God's sovereign will. This is the clear teaching of Holy Writ, which emphasizes throughout the sovereign will of the living God, as in Ps. 33:6, 115:3, 135:6, Isaiah 46:10, Matt. 11:25, Romans 9:15 f.f., Eph. 1:4 f.f., Rev. 4:11, etc. We will quote only Psalm 115:3 and Psalm 135:6: "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." For the rest it does not behoove us to concern ourselves with questions merely to satisfy our personal curiosity and for the sake of our own personal entertainment. The Lord does all things as He pleases and according to sovereign and unfathomable wisdom.

H. Veldman.

Prof. K. Schilder Replies

Some time ago, the readers will recall, I sent Prof. K. Schilder a list of questions for him to answer in "De Reformatie",—questions bearing on the Heynsian conception of such matters as the promise, the covenant, and the sacrament of baptism. The professor has replied not to my questions but to my friendly and earnest petition that he answer them as he had promised to do some two and a half years ago. He lets it be known (De Reformatie, June 10) that he is decided not to grant the request—decided, in a word, not to answer my questions. And he advances several reasons. Let us hear the professor.

POLEMIEK AMERIKA

Van Rev. Ophoff uit Grand Rapids ontving ik twee lange artikelen met een reeks van vragen en nog eens vragen over verbond en doop en zoo meer. Met verzoek, die artikelen op te nemen en de vragen te beantwoorden.

Ik heb er eens over nagedacht. Maar ik kan er niet aan beginnen. Ik geloof ook niet ertoe verplicht te zijn, ook niet van wege de vriendschap. Wij hebben in Nederland tegenwoordig zoo onze eigene kwestie-tjes die behandeling vragen. Ze hebben ons eerst gebonden aan formules. Toen zijn ze gaan zeuren over beschouwingen achter de formules. En vandaag zetten ze heele boomen op over de beroemde kwestie of je van Godswegen verplicht bent, een kat in den zak te koopen voor de kerk.

En nu kan ik niet laat ons zeggen: 20 nummers volschrijven over kwesties, die al lang behandeld zijn. Want al de vragen, die Rev. Ophoff stelt, zijn door mij uitvoerig besproken. Ook waar hij bij was in Grand Rapids. Hij had daarna nog een vraag. Ik zei—'t was na de conferentie: stuur die maar op. Het gebeurde nooit. En nu krijg ik ineens een legio andere, en al lang beantwoorde vragen.

Een opmerking. Rev. Ophoff stelt mij de vraag: leeren de vrijgemaakte kerken niet dit en dat? En dan volgen enkele door hem geredigeerde formules.

Mijn antwoord is: neen! Onze kerken hebben niets anders dan wat in de belijdenis staat.

Overigens: indien er nog vragen zijn, dan zouden we, stel dat Rev. Hoeksema naar Nederland zou kunnen komen, ze nog eens weer grondig kunnen "doornemen". We hebben met de predikanten Kok en De Jong gesproken; en die hebben alleen maar goede dingen van Rev. Hoeksema en hunne kerken gezegd. Het zou prettig zijn, als Rev. Hoeksema ook eens kon komen. Tot mijn blijdschap lees ik, dat hij weer geregelde kan arbeiden. Is een rustig gesprek niet beter dan honderd artikelen? Wil men schrijven—ook goed. Ik denk er in dit geval anders over: wij hebben officieel dezelfde belijdenis over en weer en staan dus anders tegenover elkaar dan b.v. het geval is tusschen de synodocraten en ons. Want die hebben een vierde formulier van eenigheid plus een valsche kerkrecht. Daar moet dus geschreven worden. Hier (in de relatie tot de Prot. Ref. Churches) mag dat wel, maar behoeft het niet.

Thus far the professor. What we have here is his entire reply. Allow me to translate and insert my remarks as I proceed.

POLEMICS AMERICA

From Rev. Ophoff out of Grand Rapids I received two long articles with a series of questions and still more questions on

the covenant and on baptism and more such. With the request to publish these articles and answer the questions.

Remark. This is not altogether correct. What I sent the professor is one (dutch) article—not two—and two batches of questions (likewise written in dutch). The article was not long; it was short. It filled but a sheet and a half 8 by 11 in. in size. The material was typewritten and unspaced. That, to my mind, is not a long article. The professor continues:

I thought it over once. But I can't begin with it. Too, I do not believe that I am obligated, also not because of friendship.

Remark. Whether the professor was obligated to publish and answer my questions is a matter to which I shall attend presently. But as I see it, he was certainly under the moral necessity of publishing my article. And the reason is obvious. That article corrects a wrong statement of the professor about me; and it thereby removes the wrong impressions that the statements must have made upon the readers of "De Reformatie." (The professor stated that after our conference with him two and a half years ago I had but one question left).

The statement of the professor was objectionable especially because it could not help but leave on the readers of "De Reformatie" the impression that on the meetings of the conference I had put many questions to the professor, and that he had come so wonderfully close to convincing me of the rightness of his views that after the conference I had but one question left. All the others had been satisfactorily answered. Now this is not true. The professor therefore should have cooperated with me in correcting his wrong statement and in removing the wrong impressions that it left—cooperated with me toward this end by publishing my article. The professor continues:

We have in the Netherlands at this time our own questions, that call for treatment. They (the synodicals) first binded us to credal formulas. Then they went to harping on views back of the formulas. And today they chat about the famous question whether for God's sake you are obligated to buy a cat in the bag for the church.

And now I can't fill let us say 20 numbers (of "De Reformatie") writing about matters that have long ago been treated. For I have elaborately discussed all the questions that Rev. Ophoff puts to me. Also in his presence in Grand Rapids.

Here the professor states his reasons for his refusal to answer my questions. First he has a controversy with the synodicals to wage in his paper. It therefore would not do for him to devote say 20 numbers of his paper to answering questions already treated in full in my hearing. That would be an unjustifiable interruption.

But let us pause here for a few remarks. Would the professor need twenty numbers of his paper for answering my questions? Twenty numbers of "De Reformatie" is a lot of space; filled, it would form a book of some three hundred and forty-five thousand

and six hundred words (35600). Does the professor mean to say that he would need that many words to answer my questions? I can't believe it. Let me explain why I can't believe it. The time consumed by the total of the meetings of our conference with the professor was not more than 30 hours (3 days of 8 hours and one day—the last—of 6 hours. Total: 30 hours). At the most 20 of these hours went to the professor for the exposition of his views. Speaking rapidly he may have uttered during the total of these hours not more than 144000 words. He tells us that on the meetings of our conference he elaborately discussed all my questions but one. If so, that discussion could not have exceeded 144000 words, even if he did nothing but discuss my questions. Why then should he need 345000 words to answer these same questions in "De Reformatie"? Perhaps the professor does not want me to take him too literal here.

But is it true that on the meetings of the conference the professor fully discussed all my questions—the ones I sent him recently—save one? It is not true, as all who were present well know. I can show that it is not true. Consider with me that in all my questions I approach the matters of the covenant and the promise etc. from a legal angle—a thing that was not done on the meetings. Underlying all my questions is the one basic question: how can the non-elect baptized have a legal right to Christ and the benefits of His atonement? In other words, how can there be a promise of God to the non-elect baptized bestowing on them the right to be saved, if Christ died not for them? It can also be stated this way: how can it be said that the non-elect baptized are objectively saved in Christ, if Christ atoned not for their sins. Neither with this question nor with any of the rest of my questions were we, including Prof. Schilder, occupied on our meetings. And here is the proof. Rev. G. Lubbers has supplied me with an elaborate written report of all that was spoken by the professor on the one hand and by Rev. Hoeksema and the rest of us on the other. What the report reveals is that at no juncture in the discussion were any of my questions even touched upon. Fact is that I had received no opportunity to put any of them to the professor on the meetings of the conference. I shall enable the professor to check on this statement of mine by sending him a copy of that report. The professor continues:

Thereafter (after the conference) he still had one question.

Remark. I do wish that henceforth the professor would refrain from repeating this. It simply is not true. Now back to the professor:

I said—it was after the conference: just send it up (that one question). It never happened. And now all at once I receive a legion of different questions already answered long ago.

Remark. The questions I recently sent are not

different. They are the very questions I put to the professor after the conference with some related questions added. As was just stated, none of them had been discussed on the meetings. After the conference I put them to the professor for the first time. Fact is, I read them to him, for I had written them down. Instead of discussing them with me he advised me to send them to him, at once promising to publish and answer them in "De Reformatie". These are the facts. Rev. Lubbers, who was present in the auto, is my witness. And another thing. Let me concede for the sake of argument that the questions I recently sent the professor were different, why should that have deterred him from answering them? The question is pertinent seeing that all these questions bear on the matters in dispute between the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed. And why should my questions remain unanswered because I waited two years and a half with sending them? Besides, that I finally did come to it is really the professor's fault. He said that after the conference I had but one question left. To prove the statement wrong I sent him a legion of questions, to use one of the professor's own expressions. Yet he refuses even to *publish* my questions, let alone answering them.

The professor once more:

One remark. Rev. Ophoff puts to me the question: do the Liberated Churches teach this and that?

Remark. I purposely refrained from asking: do the *Liberated Churches*—mark you, churches—teach this or that? I knew better than to ask such a question, seeing that the Liberated *churches*—the institute—take no stand regarding the matters in dispute between us. But every individual Liberated does. And so, having in four propositions set forth in my communication to the professor the views on the promises and baptism that, according to my recollections, he had defended on the meetings of our conference, I put to him the following questions:

1. Is this now the doctrine that the professor set before us as his own?
2. Is this not the doctrine of Heyns?
3. Are in general the leaders among the Liberated addicted to this doctrine of Heyns?

I proved by a quotation that Ds. H. Meulink, Liberated, is of the conviction that such is indeed the case. Quoting Heyns as quoted with approval by Meulink, I concluded with the statement: This is the doctrine of Heyns. Also of the Liberated? Also of Dr. Schilder?

And the professor replies:

My answer is: no! Our Churches teach nothing else than what is contained in the confession.

Remark. That, it seems to me, is not an answer to these questions of mine. It is rather an evasion of these questions. Besides, that the Liberated churches

teach nothing else than what is contained in the confession does not necessarily imply that they do not teach that Heynsian doctrine. They do necessarily teach that doctrine, if it is their conviction that it is—is contained in—the confession.

The professor continues:

For the rest: if there are still questions, then we could, suppose that Rev. Hoeksema at some time or other were able to come to the Netherlands, once again thoroughly treat them. We have spoken with the ministers Kok and DeJong; and they have said nothing but good about Rev. Hoeksema and his churches. It would be nice if Rev. Hoeksema could come once. To my joy I read that he can regularly do his work again. Is not a peaceful discussion better than a hundred articles?

Remark. We certainly still have questions. As many as we ever had. And the reason is obvious. Our questions are not being answered. I can see that a peaceful discussion by word of mouth has its advantages. But what I can't see is that this should have stood in the professor's way of answering some simple questions. Yes, a peaceful discussion has its advantages providing, of course, the parties to the discussion refrain from treating each other's questions as the professor treated mine. For no justifiable reason, as far as I can see, he refused to answer them.

The professor finally:

If they want to write—good. In this case I am of a different opinion. We, Liberated and Protestant Reformed, have the same official confession, and thus stand over against each other differently than for example is the case between the synodicals and us. For they have a fourth form of unity and a false church Polity. There, writing is a necessity. Here (in the relation to the Protestant Reformed churches) it is permissible but not necessary.

Remark. So then, if two communion of churches have the same confession, debate or discussion by the written word is permissible but not necessary. But if one of these communions have a fourth form of unity plus a false church polity, debate by the written word is a necessity. I don't grasp this either.

Another remark. The professor does not believe that also friendship obliged him to answer my questions. But I wonder whether he would deny that friendship should have *constrained* him to answer my questions and especially publish my article.

In conclusion. I am very sorry that the professor refused to answer my questions. My main purpose was to have the professor cooperate with me in removing misunderstandings between Liberated and Protestant Reformed in the matter of doctrine. That was a good purpose, wasn't it?

I shall put forth another effort. I myself shall answer my questions and then put to the professor one question, just one, namely, whether he can conceive of my questions being answered differently, if answered correctly.

G. M. Ophoff.

A Call For Help

Some time ago we were asked to organize a society of those who would be willing to underwrite the expenses of ministers who came to us from the Reformed Episcopal Church in response to our radio broadcasting, and who are planning to study in our Seminary.

Letters and pledge cards were sent to the ministers or clerks of our Churches with the request that they distribute them among their constituency. Several of our people it appears have wholly or in part misunderstood the idea and purpose of this project. Hence, we are publishing this brief explanation.

In February, 1948, in response to a broadcast on the Reformed Truth Hour sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Churches of Oaklawn and South Holland, a minister by the name of Rev. James A. McCollam, rector in the St. Andrews Reformed Episcopal Church of Chicago, corresponded with the undersigned relative to the truth heard on our program. We answered him by sending much of our literature, which he read and which persuaded him to inquire more perfectly concerning the truth. He became so interested that we soon came into personal contact with him, and since then have had regular weekly meetings in which he was instructed in our Protestant Reformed truth. He also became instrumental in spreading abroad our doctrines to others of his fellow ministers in his Church. With the result that shortly after the Revs. Emanuel Emanuel of Chicago and Robert C. Harbach of Somerville, New Jersey, also became vitally interested. These men became so convinced that they have decided to leave their Churches, and have sought entrance into our school with the Theological School Committee. The Committee has accepted them. They hope to begin their studies next September, D. V. The truth has made such an impact that they no longer can stay in their own Churches. They feel themselves called of God to minister in our Churches should the Lord be pleased to use them. All three of these ministers are young married men, and two of them have families.

Naturally this raises a problem for us as Protestant Reformed people. None of the three have any material resources enabling them to study for three years with no source of income. And our Churches have a ruling that no married student may receive help from the E. B. P. (Student) Fund. So the Theological School Committee asked us to organize a society composed of all our people who are willing to help these men through the three years required for study in our School. Some of you will remember that a similar procedure was followed to help the late Rev. W. Verhil through our School. So we have precedent to follow in this case.

Those of our people who have met these men or

have heard them speak have been greatly elated over the fact that the Lord has given us the evidences of blessing in them. For years we have been in contact with ministers of the Christian Reformed Churches, but with no response. Now unexpectedly the Lord opened the door to these men who are willing to make great sacrifices, leave their Churches and every source of income to become ministers of our Protestant Reformed heritage. The Lord has shown to us that His truth is not only the possession of those of Dutch descent, but He has His children also among other nationalities and other denominations.

We believe there is room in our Churches for all those who will subscribe to our doctrines no matter what their nationality may be. These brethren have told me that they would desire to preach these doctrines, but if the Lord does not open the way to the pulpit in our Churches, they are still convinced that they cannot remain in their Churches. They would rather die for the truth's sake.

So there we have it, my brethren! The Lord is giving us not only to see the fruit on our labors, but He is laying on us the responsibility of providing for those in need. At the beginning of this movement we were told that these men would be required to spend all their time in study. Naturally, therefore, we figured that \$8,000.00 a year would be necessary for their upkeep. They will have to rent homes, pay moving expenses to Grand Rapids, pay Christian School tuition and their own tuition to our School, buy books, and consider the normal expenses of any family. Now, however, we learn that opportunity will be given them to work a little in spare time. This ought to cut down somewhat the proposed \$8,000.00 we set as our goal. We are asking therefore that our people who are willing and able, send us their contribution before the first of September so that these brethren will have no worldly avocations to weary them while they devote their time to study.

Here follows some of the questions which arose in the minds of some of our people not acquainted with this project. Perhaps you have other questions which we shall be happy to answer if we can. Have these men left their respective Churches, or are they waiting to see whether our people will support them? They are in the process of leaving their Churches. You must not forget that they are in a different position than ordinary members who can just ask for their papers. They are ministers who are leaving the Churches they served. This takes more time since it would be unethical to leave without a strong testimony and they must abide by the rules of order to which they subscribed when they became ministers in their Churches, also the rules for leaving. By the middle of August they all will have severed completely their connections. They are determined to come to us regardless whether

we support them or not. Of course, their training in our School will be impossible unless they receive aid.

What is the nationality of these brethren? One is Irish, another is Greek, and the third is part Dutch and Scotch. However, when you talk with them it does not take you long to discover that they are sincere children of God who love the same truth we love.

Will these men be able to work with our Dutch people? If the fellowship that our two Churches in Illinois have had with them is an indication, we have no fear that they will not fit in with any of our Churches and our people. All who have met them of our Churches have been greatly attracted to them.

Are their wives in perfect agreement with the stand of these ministers? Their wives are not only in perfect agreement, but they urge their husbands to make these great sacrifices for the truth's sake.

Are these men leaving their Churches because they see they can better themselves financially or obtain larger congregations in our Churches? They are well aware that they can expect no rosy future in our Churches from a material point of view. They have no material interests at all in joining our Churches. We have painted the picture as black as we could to test them.

What will happen to these brethren after they finish their study, and they should receive no call from our Churches? This is a question we cannot answer because we do not know what the Lord has in store for them. We do believe though that should there be no call they will then serve our Churches in another capacity. On the other hand, we believe that the Lord first calls His servants to prepare by giving them the talents etc., and the final call is also from Him through His Church. We can safely leave this matter in His hand to dispose of it as He wishes.

Do these brethren intend to return to their Churches after they finish their schooling with us? No! They have no such intention. Should our Churches be inclined to use them in a missionary sense elsewhere, that is something to be considered later.

And now, brethren, let us get back of this thing and do our best to make it possible for these brethren to study in our School. If you have not the ready cash to contribute, may we at least have your pledge so that we may have some assurance you will help them? We have received cash gifts and pledges ranging from \$5.00 to \$500.00 so far. Approximately \$1200.00 in cash and pledges has been received already, and there are several of our Churches which as yet have made no contribution.

Please send your pledges and contributions to the undersigned:

Rev. M. Schipper
Box 121
South Holland, Illinois.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition Of John 11:5, 6

The text here reads literally as follows: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore He heard that he was sick, he abode at that time two days in the place where He was."

It is not very probable that there is anyone of the readers of these lines who is not acquainted with the account of John, as given here in this chapter, concerning the sickness, death and raising of Lazarus from the dead. Who has not been told this account repeatedly from the days of his childhood? To ask this question is to answer it.

However, not all will immediately perceive, that the chief point of the Holy Spirit through John is not at all to give us a mere human account of the raising of a man from the dead, but that we here are dealing with the *revelation of the Son of God* in our flesh and blood. Not all will immediately perceive this, I say. Yet, this is the very evident intention of the writer.

This is perfectly clear in the first place from the fact that John gives us the entire message of his Gospel in the well-known "Prologue", the first 18 verses of chapter 1. In this section it is clear, that John is speaking of the Son of God, the Eternal Word in the flesh, whose glory he had seen, glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. As such this Son is He in whom grace and truth have become a reality for all of God's people, whether Jew or Gentile. We all have received from His fulness, yea, grace for grace. The fact that John places this so emphatically on the foreground in his Gospel, which he writes to the believers out of the Gentiles, should tell us to look for this truth in each chapter of the Gospel-account. Does John not write in the last chapter "but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life in His name"?

If such is the case, then John gives us the key to understand the point of his Gospel account. It is: 1. That we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God. 2. That believing in Him we might have life in His name.

Surely we do well therefore in seeking to see this also in the words of our text; in our text as it stands in the immediate and in the more remote context. We shall, therefore, insist that our text reveals to us the Son of God in our flesh, as He came into this world to save His people from their sins. None of us shall He lose, but He will perform the will of God to the very utmost, namely, raise us from the dead in the last day.

In our text we see Jesus performing the will of the Father, that is, Jesus is performing the will of the Father *while* He tarries beyond Jordan, while He tarries He is hastening to the help of Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

Let us read the text. John writes: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore He heard that he was sick, He abode at *that time* two days in the place where He was."

It is quite evident that the reason for Jesus' *tarrying at that time* is to be seen, (not merely *sought*) as told us by the evangelist, in His *great love*.

In the first place this is evident from the construction in the original Greek of this sentence. The particle "now" is explanatory. It explains why Jesus abode still at *that time* in Perea, the place where He was. This is for us a very conclusive and revealing detail. Did we say: detail? Well, that will pass if we only remember that this is not seriously meant. It really is not a detail, but a fine touch of John as we so often find in his Gospel-account. In these fine points John always lets the light of heaven fall on the event he is speaking of. And then, what we call details, are nothing less than the fundamental pattern of the work of Christ in which He brings all things in heaven and on earth to their Divinely appointed end. The motive, that moves Christ here to abide still at that time in the place where He was, is: *Jesus' love*.

This is the love of Christ that passes all understanding. It will take eternity to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and breadth, the height and depth of it. Of this love John speaks and again gives us a "fine touch" in chapter 13:1, where we read the meaningful verse, "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, *having loved His own He loved them to the end.*" This is the love of God in Jesus, it is the law of God in His inward parts, as He comes to perform the will of God for all of His own. Compare Psalm 40:6-8 and Hebrews 10:1 f.f.

If we bear this in mind, namely, that it is the love of the Son of God in our flesh, that we here see in operation in our text, then *many* matters come to stand before our eye in bold relief. In the first place, a new light falls on the seeming great disappointment of Martha and Mary. When we read this account of the sickness and of the subsequent death and burial of Lazarus, the thought will not down, that somehow the saying "a friend is born in the hour of need" in this case is not true. Here we would then be inclined to say: This friend left his friends in the lurch in their extreme moment. Is that not the natural yet sinful and wicked speech of the Jews at the grave: "Could not this man that opened the eyes of him that was born blind, have caused that this man also should not die?"

Oh, to be sure, there is disappointment and grief in the hearts of Martha and Mary. Had they not in the moment of their trial at the sick-bed of Lazarus thought of Jesus? Had they not put all their confidence and hope in Him, who was wont to meet at their home. Yes, He is now not in Judea for the fury of the Jews' sake, but if He does come to Jerusalem, does He not lodge under their friendly, hospitable and believing roof. Surely they trusted in Him in this hour. Mary who loved to sit at Jesus' feet, and who understood *so very much* of the Gospel, that she even anointed Jesus in view of His burial—this Mary surely set all her hope in Him. Ah, there was also Martha, who, indeed, had been reprimanded by Jesus for being concerned about many things. But this Martha too believed in Jesus. Just listen to her when Jesus asks her the well-known question recorded in verse 26 “believest thou this”. Hear her confession of faith. Says she, “Lord I *have* believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world.” There had never been any doubt in her soul concerning His being the Christ, Messiah, the Anointed of God. She believed, had always believed that He was the Chief Prophet, our only High Priest and Eternal King.

And so at the bed-side of Lazarus they look unto Jesus for help. They send a messenger unto Him, saying: Lord, He whom thou befriendest (lovest) is sick. An appeal is made to the tie of the love that friends have for each other. And what friend does not under similar circumstances hasten to the aid of his friend. But Jesus remained yet at *that time*—at the time of Lazarus illness—in the place where He was! He did not hasten to Bethany. Nor does He speak His word of authority to heal Lazarus as He had done in the case of the son of the Centurian. Compare John 4:46-50. He does nothing of the kind.

However, Jesus *does do something!*

He performs the will of the Father as Prophet, Priest and King in obedience, in the state of humiliation even unto the death of the Cross.

Listen! Jesus opens His mouth to speak. And what He says is not a detail that we may gloss over with impunity. It is the highest wisdom that is spoken. The light of the more sure prophetic word falls into the “dark place” of the sick-room in Bethany. This sickness is not unto death, but in behalf of the glory of God. . . . Heaven's light falls in the darkness of earth. It is the beacon light of prophecy shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Let us try to understand this a little better.

When Jesus thus stands here and opens His mouth surely He is the Prophet spoken of by Moses in Deut. 18:15. He is the Prophet by whose Spirit the prophets of old were anointed so that they searched out the time and the manner of the time of the suffering that would come upon Jesus and the glory to follow

afterward. And now He, who had spoken His own word of old through the prophets, stands on earth to bring this word to realization as the Christ, the great office-Bearer. He is the prophet who receives the Spirit not with measure, so that He fully understands the will of God and is able to perfectly read the will of God, and each step of the way consciously walks the way prophetically to the Cross. And the way to the Cross is connected with the sickness of Lazarus. The chain of events will be: Lazarus' sickness, Lazarus' death, Jesus' return to Judea, His raising of Lazarus from the dead, the final and ripened outburst of the hatred of the Jews, which will lead to their ripened and unmoved determination to kill Him. Yes, Caiphas will speak of the expedience of one man dying for the *people* (*laos* in Greek) and not the whole nation perish by the hand of the Romans. These steps Jesus sees as the Prophet.

His still remaining at this time is therefore, the “time” of Lazarus' death as this again is taken up into the times and seasons that the Father has put into the prophetic agenda of the Son in humiliation. And Jesus will read these steps in the agenda of the Father and die according to the Scriptures.

Yes, He is here too the High-Priest. He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. He saw them not as some friends at a lodging place in Bethany, but rather did He behold them as engraven in the palms of God's hand, as being ever before the Lord as His “own”. And thus He *loves* them. It is the love here of the merciful High Priest, who bears all His own in love upon His heart. He loves them as the Anointed of God. Surely, this will necessitate the momentary disappointment of all *appeal to the friend*. But this is necessary to lay the eternal and new foundation of the Testament in His blood. And so momentary disappointment is eternal gain. The “friend” is proven to be a complete Saviour!

Here we see in golden letters: Greater love hath no man, than that a man lay down his life for his friends. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet, peradventure for the good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

But Jesus is here also the King. He is King-Priest in humiliation. He is not merely King of glory. He is also King when He possesses His soul in patience, when He speaks the Word authoritatively. In so doing He is King in subjection, the perfect Candidate for the King in glory. Faithful in all things He is set over all things.

Jesus saw all things. He knew when the hour had come, but also *knows* what leads to this hour. And this knowledge is the perfect sacrifice of Christ. The Prophet, Priest and King are one!

Now it is clear what John means when he says:

"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When *therefore* He heard that he was sick, he abode at that time two days in the place where He was."

Jesus tarries. It is true. But He does this simply because He loved them so.

Here are the thoughts that are deeper than our thoughts and the ways that are higher than our ways. Christ works our complete salvation. He brings about the complete salvation of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. All things work together for their salvation here.

Yes, while tarrying here in Perea, Jesus lays the new and eternal foundation of our salvation. And the reason: Simly because He loved us with the love where-with He also loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus.

Geo. Lubbers.

IN HIS FEAR

We Go To Church

(continued)

You Pray Before Service.

I have seen people come to church, hurry to the pews, tumble into a vacant place and then sit and look around as if they had entered some kind of museum. Some enter the church as if it were a sales pavilion. Judging by the way some examine the suits and dresses and hats of the others one would think they mistook the church for a style shop. All this is unworthy of our approach to the divine service.

When we take our place in church we see that pulpit, we realize where we are and what we do there. We offer a silent prayer. This is a custom, yes, but it is a custom motivated by a real principle. Your prayer is a spontaneous response to your God. It is the necessary approach to your God. Holv ground. Take off your shoes. That is, come humbly. We have not come here to buy or to sell, to laugh or to shout, we have come here to worship and to confess our sins. We have come here to bow our necks under the yoke of Christ Jesus. We have come to drink of the water of life. Or did we come with some other purpose? Remember the Parable of the Sower. Some heard the Word and did not understand, some heard and understood. Don't forget that the Word of God breaks down, plucks up, hardens, destroys, blinds, uncovers sin and condemns iniquity wherever it is found. Will you come proudly? Will you come as the Pharisee one time came into the Temple? No, but you will come as the Publican came and you will pray his prayer for God taught it to him.

Pray for the Word and for ears to hear it, for a heart that will receive it and eyes that can perceive

the things of the Kingdom of heaven. The Church handles spiritual things and we are so carnal. Pray for the speaking and no less for the hearing of the Word of God. Your pastor is a mere human being, having all the weaknesses which characterize also you. Pray for him. And what a wonderful thing it is if, before the minister has come in, hundreds and perhaps more hundreds of prayers have been offered for him and for one another. Do our services sometimes fail because there has been no praying? Does the minister sometimes fail because there have been no prayers and do you come away from the service barren and untouched because you have stood too near the Pharisee?

In some churches the prayer before service is postponed until the members have all taken their places, and then there is a moment of silent prayer on the part of the entire congregation. This probably arose from the practical difficulty which develops when one member is engaged in the pre-service prayer and another member is trying to get past him to the vacant seat beyond, and a third is standing in the aisle, waiting. This does not make for good order. I prefer the individual, spontaneous prayer, but in either case let us come to God, believing that He IS and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

And if there is time left before the service begins, what shall you do? Read the bulletin? Of course. There is news in the church that is vital to you. There is a touch of the communion of saints in reading a well written bulletin. Someone is sick, someone has died, a baby is born, someone is needing help, a new family has joined the church, that is all vital to you, since the congregation is a Body and you are one of its many members. Is there still time after you have read the bulletin, why not read the Catechism Lord's Day which your pastor will treat this morning or the portion of Scripture which he has chosen for his text. It's listed on the bulletin and it's there for your advantage. And now you still have time to read an article or two from the Canons or the Belgic Confession. And did you ever read the Form for Excommunication or the Form for the Re-admission of excommunicated members? It's worth our while to read them.

The Organ Is Heard.

"Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs" (Psalm 150:4). Therefore we have organs and pianos in our churches. The organist is aware of Psalm 150:4 and therefore commences to praise God with the instrument off to the right of the platform.

Our Church Fathers, who accorded the pulpit the central place in church, were quite suspicious of the organ at first. They were cautious lest the pipe organ should vie with the pulpit for the place of honor. And how could the organ serve the pulpit? If the organ institutes a service of its own, it were better to have

no organ at all. Concerning the piano Dr. A. Kuiper did not hesitate to call it the "worldly piano" (E Voto III, 368). Today we use both, because we believe that stringed instruments can help to tell the praises of God and can sustain the singing of the congregation. I remember the days when one of the men of the church who had knowledge of song would conduct the singing, and that without benefit of any instrument. I can still see him standing up in front, with a big psalm-book before him. He would give the pitch and at once his voice could be heard throughout the entire church. Just that quick all joined in the singing. If a certain section of the congregation would sing too slowly or begin to flat, you could hear his voice boom out above all the others and he never failed to keep them on their course. But those days are gone. We now have the organ to sustain us in our singing. A worshipping church is a singing church. Some churches perhaps make too much of singing, but singing is a proper part of the worship and it ought to remain that by everyone taking part in the singing. But now I ought to get back to the organ again. It has just started playing.

The organ lets its notes be heard and the sweet cadences fill the auditorium. The organist holds an important place, don't let's overlook that. I don't know how much you take the organist for granted (we take so much for granted), but we should not take him or her for granted. They hold an important place in our service. We probably do not consider the organist and her importance very much and likely we never speak a word of appreciation or encouragement to them, but they fill an important place in the whole of the Sabbath service. How important their place is can best be felt if the people should come to church some Lord's Day and there were no organist. Perhaps, to appreciate the work of these artists, the church should worship once without the benefit of the organ.

The task of the organist is not to provide a little service of its own, their task is rather to prepare the people for and to support the people in the service which will shortly begin. The tones of the organ must call forth the: awake, awake, awake my soul to praise, let us come bowing down before God and let us bring Him our worship. Everybody get ready for the Consistory to come in. It may be a pensive tone which the organ raises, a confessional perhaps, a shout of triumph, a call to repentance, or any such tone. It would be good if the organist knew what the pulpit is going to bring that morning so that the organ may sustain the pulpit from the very beginning. Unless the pulpit is going to preach about moonlight and roses, the organ must not play it; the pulpit will not preach about a home on the range, therefore the organ will not play that either. Personally I don't appreciate

highly classical music so you will have to take what I am going to say next with a grain of salt. If the pulpit is going to preach something classical, perhaps the organ could help it along best by playing something classical also. But we don't have classical pulpits do we? I won't quibble with you about classical music, although I fear that it does not edify. The most edifying for the common worshippers is that the organist plays something which the man in the pew can appreciate and interpret spiritually. Something which is familiar, something which lifts up his heart to God and prepares him for the Word of God which is shortly to be preached unto him. What is played is important, how it is played is important also. In the Netherlands there are guide-books for organists in the Reformed Churches. Do we have them in this country also? Perhaps so, but I've never seen one yet. A beautiful rendition of a beautiful song does so much to prepare us for the service of God.

Service Begins.

At the sound of the organ the Consistory prepares itself to commence the service. One of its members offers a short prayer. This prayer should not be long, to make it long is often to destroy its effectiveness.

The door opens. The Consistory enters the church. The organ decreases its volume, it dimenuendos until its tones die away in a hush . . . a calm, and the Mystery has come again. God's people meets its God. In the presence of God. All is hushed and quiet.

The service proper begins.

M. Gritters.

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IN MEMORIAM

Den 1sten Juli behaagde het de Heere om onze geliefde moeder en groetmoeder

MRS. KLAASJE KOOIKER

in den ouderdom van 84 jaar, 4 maanden en 12 dagen, door den dood uit ons midden weg te nemen.

Zwaar valt ons dit verlies maar wij treuren niet als degenen die geene hope hebben, daar zij ons die blije verzekering heeft achtergelaten, dat ook zij meer dan overwinnaar is door Hem, Die ons liefgehad heeft.

Namens de bedroefde familie:

Mr. Herman Kooiker

Miss Mary Kooiker

Mr. en Mrs. Klaas Kooiker

Mr. en Mrs. John Kroze

Mr. en Mrs. John Kooiker

Mr. en Mrs. Arie Van de Weide

Mr. en Mrs. Peter Van Kalsbeek

Vier en dertig kleinkinderen
en zeven achter-kleinkinderen.

NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches meets Wednesday, September 6, at Oskaloosa, Iowa, at 9:00 A. M. Lodging reservations to be arranged with P. T. Kelderman, R. R. 2, Oskaloosa, Iowa.

M. Gritters, S. C.

Report of Classis East

MET IN SESSION, JULY 12, 1950, AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

This meeting of Classis was held in Grand Rapids in the parlors of the First Church. Rev. H. De Wolf calls the meeting to order, leads the devotional exercises and presides at this session of Classis.

The credentials reveal that all the churches are represented at this Classis. After the credentials are accepted, the president speaks a few words of welcome especially remembering the delegates from our newly organized church at Chatham.

Rev. R. Veldman is asked to serve as clerk.

The brethren delegated to Classis for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription.

The minutes of the previous meeting of Classis are read and approved.

Advisory vote is given to the visiting ministers and to the Stated Clerk.

Classis decided to appoint a Committee who should investigate the status of the Stated Clerk and determine if possible whether or not he shall be an officebearer. This Committee was also instructed to investigate as to who is entitled to an advisory vote at a classical meeting.

A committee is appointed to arrange a schedule for classical appointments. Later in the day the following schedule was presented by the committee and adopted by Classis:

Grand Haven

July 16, M. Schipper
 July 23, G. Lubbers
 July 30, R. Veldman
 Aug. 6, J. Blankespoor
 Aug. 13, J. Heys
 Aug. 20, C. Hanko
 Aug. 27, E. Knott
 Sept. 3, G. Vos
 Sept. 10, G. Vanden Berg
 Sept. 17, B. Kok
 Sept. 24, M. Schipper
 Oct. 1, H. De Wolf
 Oct. 8, E. Knott

Chatham

Aug. 6, B. Kok
 Aug. 13, G. Vos
 Aug. 20, G. Lubbers
 Aug. 27, J. Blankespoor
 Sept. 3, H. Veldman
 Sept. 10, H. De Wolf
 Sept. 17, J. Heys
 Sept. 24, J. Blankespoor
 Oct. 1, R. Veldman
 Oct. 8, C. Hanko

Randolph

Aug. 6, M. Schipper
 Aug. 13, G. Vanden Berg
 Aug. 20, B. Kok
 Aug. 27, J. Heys
 Sept. 3, R. Veldman
 Sept. 10, J. Blankespoor
 Sept. 17, E. Knott
 Sept. 24, G. Vos
 Oct. 1, G. Vanden Berg
 Oct. 8, H. Veldman

Classis decides that the Church Visitors shall be given an additional three months to finish their work.

Classis also decides to reimburse the Standard Bearer for the extra postage due to the fact that the report of the classis is mailed out with the Standard Bearer and that this shall be retroactive to the beginning of the year.

The Consistory of Creston thanks Classis for the Classical appointments granted them during their vacancy.

Hamilton asks for Holland sermons that can be used for reading services. Rev. J. Blankespoor will send them a few that will take care of their immediate needs. And for the future needs a committee is appointed, consisting of Rev. Blankespoor and Rev. Vos, who will gather sermons from the various ministers of the Classis.

A consistory requests advice in re the erasure of a baptized member. After the necessary information is given by the consistory, Classis advises to proceed with the erasure.

A request from Fuller Ave. for clarification of the decisions in re the

protest of Mr. Jonker, taken at our last meeting of Classis is placed in the hands of a committee, who shall study this matter and draw up a concept answer. Later in the day the committee came with the following advice:

"We advise Classis to answer the consistory referred to as follows:

1. It is contrary to established Reformed Church Political procedure for one Classis to clarify the decisions of a former Classis upon a mere request for such clarification. The consistory of the First Church has the same information the Classis has, in the minutes and the archives.

2. The decisions referred to are considered settled and binding unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order. See Art. 31, D.K.O.

3. If the consistory referred to has any complaint versus the decisions referred to, the established and orderly way to bring such complaint to Classis is by way of a grounded protest against the decisions referred to."

Classis adopts point 1. Classis adopts point 2 as the motivation for point 1. Classis adopts point 3.

The Classical Committee reported that they had approved the credentials of Rev. G. Lubbers and that they had transferred the Classical appointments of Creston to Randolph.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are read and answered satisfactorily by the Consistories.

The next meeting of Classis will be held at the First Church of Grand Rapids on the first Wednesday in Oct.

Elder Koster of Chatham briefly addresses Classis for the purpose of expressing the gratitude of Chatham to the Classis for everything that has been done for them.

The concept minutes are read and approved. The Holland Psalm 89:7 is sung. Rev. M. Schipper leads in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.