

# THE STANDARD

*Banner*

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## MEDITATION

### Sion Is Zeer Lieflijk

"Ik zal Rahab en Babel vermelden onder degenen die Mij kennen; zie, de Filistijn en de Tyriërs met den Moor, deze is aldaar geboren. En van Sion zal gezegd worden: Die en die is daarin geboren, en de Allerhoogste Zelf zal ze bevestigen. De Heere zal ze rekenen in het opschrijven der volkeren, zeggende: Deze is aldaar geboren. Sela."

—Psalm 87:4-6.

De dichter profeteert van het Sion Gods zoals het eenmaal pronken zal hiernamaals. Maar hij zingt ook van dezelfde glorie die nu al in beginsel het eigendom van het ware Sion is.

En toch is het eerste op den voorgrond.

Deze psalm is profetisch, en moet nog vervuld worden. Dat wil zeggen, ten volle vervuld.

Het is alles lieflijk in dezen psalm.

De oorsprong van dit Sion zijn de bergen van Gods heiligeid.

Daarom bemint God dit Sion.

En die liefde Gods verklaart ook zijn lieflijkheid. Als God iets of iemand aanziet met den glimlach der eeuwige liefde, dan is zooiets of zoo iemand lieflijk. Als de stralen van de zon op de duif vallen, dan schittert alles van goudglansen. Als Gods oog U vindt en als dat oog goedkeurend op U valt, zoo ziet ge lieflijk en schoon en waard om genoemd te worden: Welgelukzalig!

O God, geef ons dien blik!

Al het volk nu, dat naar Gods raads in de stad Sions zal wonen, eeuwiglijk en altoos, is een lieflijk volk.

En die lieflijkheid van dat volk wordt opgesomd in de verzen die we uitkozen tot onze overdenking.

Ze beschrijven ons het Sion, de geboorteplaats der volkeren.

En zij zijn lieflijk!



Sion is lieflijk!

Want zij zijn "genoemden" Gods.

Daar zit herinnering in dat woord.

God herinnert Zich de inwoners van Sion.

En dat brengt ons weer bij den Raadslag Gods.

In dien Raadslag vonden allen een plaats. Alle uitverkorenen zijn opgenomen van eeuwigheid in dien Raad Gods.

Dat mocht ge ook zóó zeggen: Alle uitverkorenen, want dat zijn de Sionieten, vonden een plaats in het hart van God. Onze vaderen hebben het altijd gezegd: De Raad Gods is de radende God! Als ge in den raad opgeschreven staat, dan ziet ge opgenomen tot in het harte Gods. Dan dacht God aan U toen ge nog niet eens geboren waart. Dan waart gj een Goddelijke gedachte ook toen er nog geen bergen waren, geen fonteinen zwaar van water. Wat wondere, wat lieflijke gedachte.

En dan wil men, dat God Zich lieflijk buigt tot sommige verworpenen die in de sfeer van het verbond geboren worden. Dan wil men, dat God bij het doopvont tot die verworpen kinderen zegt: Ik wil gaarne, o zoo gaarne, ook Uw God zijn, en ik geef van dat gaarne-willen een blijk, een teeken, een zegel, in Uw doop! Het kan niet! Want het is niet zoo. Er zijn net zóó velen in dat hart van God, en de oude Gereformeerde vaderen hebben het zeer precies en zeer voorzichtig gezegd: Hun getal kan niet met één vermeerderd worden. En ook niet verminderd. Het getal der verkorene Sionieten is vol!

En als nu die herinnering Gods naar buiten treedt, als die herinnering Gods uitkomt, dan hoort ge namen noemen.

En dat uitkomsten van de namen is de wedergeboorte in Sion. Merkt het op, hoe dat naar buiten treden van die herinneringen in het Goddelijke Wezen hier op den voorgrond staat: Deze en die is daar geboren!

God noemt de uitverkorenen bij name.

En zoo is Sion een welgelukzalig en een lieflijk volk.  
Sion is lieflijk!



Sion is zeer lieflijk!  
Want genoemd door God.

En als God U noemt, en als het noemen Gods van Uw naam doordrong tot in Uw binnenste hart, dan zegt God van U: Gij zijt een menschenkind dat zeer gelukkig is, want gij behoort en wordt genoemd "onder degenen die Mij kennen"! Leest het in den tekst.

Neemt het alles tezamen, en dan heet het: zij zijn de "vermelden" Gods.

O, als God U vermeldt onder degenen die Hem kennen, dan is het goed, dan is het eeuwig goed met U! Laat dan de stroomen zingen en juichen, want Hij zal dan ten finale komen om U te redden. Dan is het goed met U, al is het ook, dat ge voor tijd en wijle moet weenen, moet weenen.

Dan werken alle dingen U ten goede, want ge zijt door God bemind.

En die wondere dingen waarvan ik sprak, die dingen van den Raad, en van het Hart Gods, van Zijn kennen en van Zijn roepen en noemen, alle die dingen komen tot openbaring in Uw kennen van de Fontein aller goeden.

Ge gaat God kennen.

Ge gaat weten. En het is een weten door zien.

Ge ontvangt een geestelijk hart, oor, oog, wil, verstand! Ge wordt door de wedergeboorte een geestelijk mensch die alle grootheden van het geestelijke Koninkrijk Gods kan zien, hooren, proeven en smaken.

En het resultaat is, dat ge onbeschrijfelijk gelukkig wordt, en in steeds klimmende mate begint de liederen van dat Sion te zingen, uiting gevende aan den jubel des geluks die in Uwe ziel woont.

En het einde is de hemel der zaligheden, daarboven bij God.

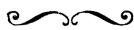
O ja, Sion is zeer gelukkig. Mozes zag het op den berg, vlak voor hij zelf naar den hemel ging. De man Gods zag de vrucht van de inwoning Gods in het verkoren Israel, en zong zijn zwanelied.

De vrucht van de inwoning Gods is eerst, dat ge een zacht hart ontvangt. Ge gaat schreien vanwege Uw zonde en schuld.

Voorst gaat ge een lust hebben in de godsvrucht. Ge gaat trachten om Hem behaaglijk te zijn.

Er wordt een ijver in Uw hart geboren, en steeds gevoed, om Hem te loven en te prijzen. Hij, die God Uwer zaligheden, wordt meer en meer de maatstaf waarnaar ge gaat denken, spreken en wandelen.

Sion is heel gelukkig!



Sion is gelukkig! Hij is welgelukzalig!  
Dat wordt duidelijker, al naarmate ge ziet wie Sion

was. En dan moet ik gaan spreken van vreemde namen, van vreemde volken, van uitwoners.

Ik hoor spreken van Rahab.

Rahab is the poëtische naam voor Egypte.

En Egypte is de trotsche, degene die Gods volk knechtte.

Ik hoor ook van Babel.

En Babel is de vertegenwoordiger van al wat wereldsch is. Daar ziet men de lust des vleesches, de lust der oogen en de trotschheid des levens, dat zijn leven brutaal uitleeft tegenover God en Zijn Wet.

Ik hoor den naam van Filistia. En dat is dezelfde wereld, maar nu uit het oogpunt van haar wredeheid, haar hardheid, haar boosheid en kwaadheid. Vraagt het aan het historische Israel. Zij zullen U snikkend vertellen van de wredeheden door dit Filistia begaan. Stroomen van tranen zijn geschreid in het arme Israel vanwege die godvergeten Filistijnen.

En dan is daar de Tyrië, en dat zijn de weelderige, de vuile, de begeerde menschheid. Tyrië was rijk en verrijkt: ze hadden geen dings gebrek, en dan wordt men vuil en walgelijk voor het aangezicht van God en mensen.

Maar ook de Moor wordt genoemd in Sion. En dat is de domme, de aartsdomme. Dat is het platte, alledaagsche, vlak-bij-den-grond volk. En uit dat Moorenland komen de drommen om ook ingeschreven te worden op de lijst waarop God de uitverkorenen schrijft. Ze zijn er als God Zijn appél blaast. Gelukkige Mooren!

Neemt ze allen te zamen en ge ziet het menschdom in al de zonden der geslachten. Dan ziet ge een bange variatie van zonden en vuilheden.

En dit mocht ge gerust van deze schare zeggen: ze hebben nooit God gezocht.

Maar wacht: deze reeks van volkeren treden ons tegemoet vanuit Gods Raad en dat is Zijn hart. Zij zijn tezamen het lieflijke en het heerlijke, dat in Sion gezien en gehoord wordt. En van die heerlijkheid gaat men spreken en zingen.

Herinnert ge die lange noot in het versje? Ik merkte die lange noot al toen ik nog maar heel klein was: Men spreekt van U zeer heerlijke dingen!

Daar wordt gesproken van vergevende zondaarsliefde, van het verkoren zijn toen we nog niets waren. Daar hoort ge van het grote wonder: we werden gemaakt tot kinderen van dien grooten en lieflijken God.

O ja, Sion, samengesteld uit de afzichtelijke menschenkinderen, is zeer lieflijk als Gods lieflijk oogen bestraalt.

Sion is zeer lieflijk!



Sion is de lieflijke bij uitnemendheid!

Want hij wordt door God Zelf bevestigd.

Luistert maar: De Allerhoogste Zelf zal ze bevestigen.

Als er niet meer geschiedde dan dat zij geboren werden in Sion, dan was het erg. Wat mag men verwachten van een pasgeboren wicht?

Vooral als ge voor de aandacht houdt, dat Sion altijd omringd is door vijanden die een doodelijke haat koesteren voor alles wat Sion heet. Dat hebben zij van den duivel die God en Zijn kinderen haat.

En daarom hebben die pas-geborenen-van-Sion versterking van noode.

En die versterking gewordt hen. God zal hen bevestigen.

Bevestigen kan Sion zichzelf niet. Dat wordt wel anders geleeraard. Maar het is niet waar. Jezus heeft het ons twee duizend jaren geleden gezegd: zonder Mij kunt gij niets doen! Schrijft dat in Uw boekje en kijkt er elken dag naar. Het zal U op het goede spoor houden, en het zal U nederig doen zijn. Hoe meer ge in dat boekje zult lezen, hoe meer ge zult zingen met volle borst: Welzalig hij die al zijn kracht en hulp alleen van Hem verwacht!

En andere mensen kunnen het ook niet. En dat is zoo, al lezen we keer op keer, dat apostelen de gemeenten versterkten en bevestigden. Dat deden ze niet anders dan als een instrument Gods. God is het die bevestigt. En dat bevestigen is zulk een groot en ontzaglijk werk, dat God er bijschrijft: De Almachtige Zelf zal het doen! Het neemt de Almacht Gods om een mensch te bevestigen.

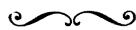
Wij kunnen spreken en vermanen: we zullen het doen en we moeten het doen. Maar het is God die wijsdom en versterking geeft.

En dan gaat het goed. Bevestigen is vast zetten, schratten, in orde stellen.

Hetgeen los zweeft moet stuur gegeven. Wat zwak is moet bekraftigd. Wat hulpeloos is moet een schild ontvangen. En dit bevestigen nu van het losse, het zwakte en het hulpeloze ziet op Jezus Christus, den grooten Herder.

Daar komt Hij met Zijn Woord en Sacramenten. Daar komt Hij, en dat zeer snelijk, door Zijn Geest en genade. En dan volgen geloof, hoop en liefde. En dan schijnt het alsof gij het zelf doet. Maar meer dan schijn is het niet.

Ziet ge, God is niet een muur rondom dit zwakte Sion, zonder meer. Zoo werkt de genade niet. Neen, maar Hij is een muur en een schuld *door* Sion. Sion wordt in de kracht Gods bewaard en bevestigd, *door het geloof*. En zoo staan de zaken recht. En loopt alles los in Sion. En daar hoort men der vromen tent weer-galmien van hulp en van heil. En is Sion zeer gelukkig!



Sion is lieflijk en zeer blijde in zijn God.  
Want hij gaat veel eer ontvangen.  
Ziet ge, zoolang als Sion hier op aarde gevast is,  
zoolang wordt Sion grootelijks onteerd door allen en

iedereen. De geheele wereld en de geheele hel met alle duivelsche machten en heerschappijen hebben het verzion op Sion. Dit is zoo erg, dat Paulus ons zegt hoe Sion gerekend wordt te zijn het uitvaagsel en het afschrapsel der wereld.

Wat deed men met de lieflijkste openbaring van Sion? En dan bedoel ik natuurlijk Jezus Christus. Wel, men luisterde naar Hem, men bestudeerde Hem, men smakte Hem, en toen zeide deze wereld: Als ik kiezen moet tusschen Hem en een rebel en een moordenaar, dan geef mij Bar-abbas!

Hier op aarde ontvangt Sion niet dan oneer.

En ge stemt het mij volmondig toe. Zoo zijn eenvoudig de feiten der geschiedenis.

De Heilige Geest werd vaardig over een zekeren mensch en hij schreef: "en anderen hebben bespottingen en geeselingen geleden, en ook banden en gevangenis; zijn gesteend geworden, in stukken gezaagd, verzocht, door het zwaard ter dood gebracht, hebben gewandeld in schaapsvelen en in geitenvelen, verlaten, verdrukt, kwalijk behandeld zijnde (welker de wereld niet waardig was), hebben in woestijnen gedoold en op bergen en in spelijken en in de holen der aarde."

O ja, Sion heeft veel oneer geleden.

Maar, Goddank, zoo zal het niet blijven.

Er komt groote eer voor Sion.

Straks zullen zij eervol vermeld worden voor alle Goddelijke heirscharen.

Luistert maar: De Heere zal ze rekenen in het op-schrijven der volkeren! En dan zegt God: Deze en die is daar (in Sion, en dat is in Christus) geboren!

Dat zal heerlijk zijn.

Het woord "rekenen" bedoelt eigenlijk: met eere afroepen!

Zoals de held voor de troepen verschijnt en zijn naam afgeroepen wordt in groote onderscheiding.

En zoo zal God de namen afroepen van al Zijn uitverkorenen.

Dat ziet op de eindelijke glorie voor het volk.

Paulus sprak daar ook van, toen hij zeide, dat God straks Zijn bruid zonder vlek en zonder rimpel voor Zich zal stellen, en voor allen die haar op aarde onteerd hadden.

Dan zal die Bruid schitteren met een schoonheid die ongekend was hier op aarde. O ja, we hebben de dichters wel gehoord die haar bezongen hebben ook toen ze nog gesmaad werd: denkt an Psalm 45. Maar dan zal het geheele heelal Amen zeggen op de roeping Gods, die dan Zijn volk ten finale roept.

Geen wonder dat deze psalm zoo schoon sluit:

"En de zangers gelijk de speellieden, mitsgaders alle Mijne fonteinen zullen binnen U zijn!"

Het schijnt me toe alsof ik dien jubbel in de verten der tijden hoor.

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

## Antwoord Aan Ds. Blankespoor

Hier volgt een vertaling van het antwoord, dat door mij gegeven werd aan Ds. Blankespoor, en hetwelk in het Engelsch verscheen in het vorig nummer van onzen Standard Bearer. Ik meende dit te moeten doen, ten gerieve van degenen onder ons die niet genoeg op de hoogte zijn met de taal des lands, en toch zoo gaarne met ons medeleven. Doch ook doe ik met het oog beide op de immigranten in Canada die natuurlijk zeer veel interesse koesteren voor deze dingen, maar ook met het oog op de broeders in Nederland die studie maakten van onze Verklaring van Beginselen. Want het ligt voor de hand, dat ook zij sommigen der vragen die hier verwerkt worden zich afgevraagd hebben.

Hier volgt dan de vertaling van het geheele stuk:

Ofschoon Ds. Blankespoor mij niet persoonlijk vroeg zijn vragen te beantwoorden, die in het vorig nummer van de *Standard Bearer* verschenen, wil ik evenwel trachten een begin te maken met de discussie.

In de eerste plaats, gevoel ik natuurlijk medeverantwoordelijk voor deze Verklaring van Beginselen als afgevaardigde naar onze laatste synode. Ten tweede, gevoel ik mijn verantwoordelijkheid te meer, daar de synode mij toevoegde aan de commissie, die deze Verklaring opstelde en de synode adviseerde dezelve aan te nemen. En ten derde, vroeg de commissie mij het eerste Concept dezer Verklaring van Beginselen op te stellen, hetgeen daarna door hen besproken werd, door hen voorgesteld werd op den vloer der synode, en ten slotte door dit lichaam aangenomen werd. Dit houdt niet in, dat ik de enige verantwoordelijke partij ben, of zelfs, dat ik meer verantwoordelijkheid draag voor deze Verklaring van Beginselen dan eenig ander lid der synode. Want na haar aanname door de synode is de synode als een geheel verantwoordelijk. En als ik een woord van uiteenzetting schrijf als antwoord op de vragen van Ds. Blankespoor, dan probeer ik evenvoudig om het gevoelen onzer laatste synode te vertolken. Daar ik, evenwel, zoo direct en intiem bekend ben met den oorsprong, beteekenis, en doel van deze verklaring, gevoel ik, dat ik op zijn minst in even goede positie ben als wie dan ook om de vragen van Ds. Blankespoor te beantwoorden.

Eenig ander lid der commissie *ad hoc* of enige andere afgevaardigde, uitgezonderd den persoon die, naar ik vernam, tegen het voorstel stemde (ofschoon ik het zelf niet hoorde toentertijd), mag natuurlijk zijn uiteenzetting er aan toe doen, of mijn uiteenzetting van het gevoelen der synode becritiseeren.

Iedereen heeft, natuurlijk, het recht om de Ver-

klaring zelf te becritiseeren. Maar dat behoort niet tot het juiste bestek van dit huidige schrijven, sindsdien Ds. Blankespoor niet critiseert, maar eenvoudig eenige vragen stelt.

De eerste vraag luidt als volgt: "Er is mij vermeld, dat het Zendings-Comité de synode verzocht een formule op te stellen aangaande onze beginselen ten nutte van hen (vooral in Canada) die kerk-organisatie aanvragen. Op grond hiervan stelde de synode deze Verklaring op. Nu is mijn vraag als volgt: Is het kerkrechtelijk correct om zulk een verklaring op te stellen op grond van een vraag van een commissie? Schendt dit den regel niet van Gereformeerde kerkrecht, dat alle zaken ter synode moeten gebracht worden via kerkenraad, classis, enz.?"

#### *Antwoord:*

Naar mijn inzicht heeft de synode niet één regel van Gereformeerde kerkrecht geschonden door in te stemmen met de aanvraag der Zendingscommissie om een formule of verklaring welke gebruikt kon worden in de organisatie van kerken. Het is niet waar, dat het een regel van Gereformeerde kerkrecht is, dat alle zaken ter synode moeten gebracht worden via kerkenraad en classis. Het artikel der kerkenorde aangaande deze kwestie is artikel 30, hetwelk luidt als volgt: "In deze samenkomsten zullen geen andere dan kerkelijke zaken, en dezelve op kerkelijke wijze verhandeld worden. In meerdere vergaderingen zal men niet handelen, dan 't gene dat in mindere niet heeft afgehandeld kunnen worden, of dat tot de Kerken der meerdere vergadering in 't gemeen behoort." De laatste clausule van dit artikel is van toepassing op de zaak in kwestie. Het Zendingswerk, zooals ook de Theologische School, is zeker een zaak die tot de Kerken in 't gemeen behoort. Bovendien, behoort wellicht artikel 51 der Kerkenorde tot dezelfde zaak: "De arbeid der kerkeijke Zending wordt door de Generale Synode in eene Zendingsorde geregeld." Het Zendings-Comité had daarom zeer zeker het volmaakste recht aanvraage te doen bij de synode om een formule die kon dienen als een basis voor de organisatie van kerken. En de synode heeft niets gedaan, dat kerkrechtelijk buiten orde was toen zij de verklaring van beginselen opstelde.

Laat mij, echter, deze zaak een weinig meer in bijzonderheden toelichten, vooral om aan te tonen wat het Zendings-Comité bewoog om met zulk een aanvraag ter synode te komen.

Het Zendings-Comité is een synodale commissie welke de synode en alle onze kerken dient in het belang van ons Zendingswerk. Zijn doel is om, door onze zendelingen en in samenwerking met de roepende kerk, de zuivere gereformeerde waarheid (hetwelk voor ons hetzelfde is als de Protestantsche Gereformeerde waarheid) ingang te doen vinden en te verspreiden buiten de grens onzer kerken, en om tot openbaring te bren-

gen de zuiverste openbaring van het lichaam van Christus in de wereld (en dat is voor ons de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk). Ze hebben daarom de roeping niet om eenige groep volks te organiseren, afgedacht van hunne leerstellige overtuigingen, maar alleen dezulken die voldoende op de hoogte zijn met onze Protestantsche Gereformeerde waarheid en die gewillig zijn hare grondstellingen te onderschrijven.

We waren gewoon dit soort zendingswerk hoofdzakelijk te verrichten in de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. En dit werk concentreerde zich hoofdzakelijk rondom de kwestie der algemeene genade, zooals zij aangenomen was door de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in 1924, en hare belichaming vond in de welbekende Drie Punten. Met dit werk ben ik persoonlijk door en door op de hoogte, daar ik gewoon was om op reis te gaan voor weken aaneen, en de dwalingen der Drie Punten uit een te zetten, en dan vooral onder het Christelijke Gereformeerde volk in de staten Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, en zelfs in California. Het was nooit ons doel om eenvoudig onze kerken te vermeedieren en gemeenten te organiseren. Het volk werd altijd eerst bekend gemaakt met ons standpunt en met onze Protestantsche Gereformeerde waarheid in onderscheiding van de dwalingen der Drie Punten. En het was eerst nadat zij overtuigd waren van deze dwalingen en als een resultaat van deze arbeid een groep volks vergaderd werd die gewillig waren om onze Protestantsche Gereformeerde beginselen te onderschrijven, dat zij georganiseerd werden tot een gemeente.

Onlangs, echter, kwam het Zendings-Comité in aanraking met wat werkelijk hetzelfde probleem was, maar vanuit een verschillend gezichtspunt. Zij en onze zendelingen kwamen in contact met mensen, die schijnbaar gewillig waren om onze verwerping der algemeene genade te onderschrijven, en de Drie Punten te verwerpen, maar die volhouden, dat de belofte geldt voor alle kinderen die geboren worden onder de historische bedeeling van het verbond. Met andere woorden, zij wenschten de algemeene genade te handhaven binnen de historische lijn des verbonds. Deze mensen hadden hun oorsprong in de Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland. Historisch, zoowel als leerstellig, verschilden zij van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Amerika, maar zij verschilden ook van de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. In Nederland werd er bij hen op aan gedrongen zich te voegen bij de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken en niet bij de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk. Geen wonder daarom, dat zij onder den indruk verkeerden, dat zij zoo maar, zonder verdere onderrichting, georganiseerd konden worden als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. Maar terzelfder tijd wenschten zij vast te houden aan hun eigen bijzondere opvatting van het verbond. Zij zonden zelfs een aanvraag tot het Zendings-Comité om op hun eigen basis georganiseerd

te worden. Dat was de moeilijkheid waarmede het Zendings-Comité te worstelen had.

En daarom had het Zendings-Comité behoefte aan een definitieve formule als een basis tot de organisatie van kerken, een formule die ook kon dienen als basis voor onze zendelingen in de arbeid onder deze mensen, en welke zij zelf konden bestudeeren, opdat zij niet alleen op de hoogte zouden komen ten overstaan van onze beschouwing, maar ook zouden mogen weten wat zij deden wanneer zij aanklopten bij het Zendings-Comité om georganiseerd te worden in Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. Het is meer dan een jaar geleden, dat het Zendings-Comité mij verzocht zulk een formule op te stellen, doch ik maakte er geen werk van, om de eenvoudige reden, dat het Zendings-Comité zelf bekwaam was om zulk een formule op te stellen, of ook, omdat zij de synode konden verzoeken hun zulk een formule voor de organisatie van kerken te verschaffen. Dit laatste verkozen zij te doen. Zij kwamen met hun probleem tot de synode van dit jaar. En de synode luisterde naar hun aanvraag en nam de verklaring van beginselen aan. Er was zekerlijk niets kerkelijk verkeerds ten overstaan van het Comité om met zulk een aanvraag tot de synode te komen, noch ook ten overstaan van de synode om die aanvraag te bevredigen.

Maar, per slot van rekening, laat Ds. Blankespoor een verkeerden indruk achter als hij schrijft dat de synode zulk een verklaring vervaardigde op de basis van een aanvraag van een commissie. En het is een feit, dat de synode, om aan den schijn zelfs van hiërarchie te ontkomen, de verklaring van beginselen niet afvaardigde noch aannam, maar dezelve voorsloeg aan de kerken, opdat de verklaring tot de volgende synode gebracht mag, en dan langs den weg van kerkeraad en classis. En zij opperden, dat het Zendings-Comité en de zendelingen deze verklaring in den tusschentijd zouden gebruiken als een werk-hypothese. De synode besefte, dat deze verklaring ten slotte een zaak betreffende de leer was. En ofschoon het niet bedoeld is als een soort "Vierde Formulier", de kerken bindend (zie hier beneden), zoo dacht de synode, dat het niet tegenstaande veiliger zou zijn zoo deze zaak van onderen op tot rijpheid kwam. En daarom werd deze verklaring in het geheel niet aangenomen, doch bestaat slechts in een voorstel, die bespreken moet door al onze kerken, en die tot onze volgende synode komen moet langs den weg van kerkeraad en classis. En het zal ongetwijfeld zeer heilzaam zijn voor al onze kerkeraden, zoowel als voor al ons volk, om deze verklaring door en door te bestudeeren, en om hun critiek en hunne wenken tot verbetering of voor revisie ter synode aan te bieden, zoodat onze volgende synode rijp zij tot eene finale aanname van de bewuste verklaring van beginselen.

De volgende vrag van Ds. Blankespoor is als volgt:

"Is deze verklaring uitsluitend voor hen die buiten onze kerken zijn, of ook voor ons eigen volk?"

#### *Antwoord:*

Als deze verklaring finaal door onze synode aangenomen wordt, nadat zij grondig besproken is door onze kerkeraden en door ons volk, dan is het niet *voor* ons volk, maar dan is het *door* hen als een verklaring van datgene wat zij gelooven de waarheid te zijn aangaande het verbond Gods, de belofte des Evangelies, tegenover hen die van ons verschillen als Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. Onze eigen kerken hebben geen behoefte aan zulk een verklaring voor zichzelven, of ten minste, zoo behoorde de zaak te staan. Het is daarom bedoeld als een werk-basis voor het Zendings-Comité en voor de zendelingen in de organisatie van kerken.

Dit betekent echter niet, dat ons volk geen voordeel zou kunnen trekken van deze verklaring van beginselen, en dat zij er niet zeer profijtelijk uit onderwezen zouden kunnen worden. Het zou, zonder twijfel, zeer heilzaam werken indien deze verklaring van beginselen het voorwerp gemaakt werd van onderricht en studie door een catechisatie klas van belijdende jonggelieden.

De derde vraag van Ds. Blankespoor luidt als volgt: "Het schijnt mij toe, dat de verklaring wijst in de richting der Vrijgemaakte Kerken. Slechts een klein gedeelte wordt ingeruimd voor de verwerping der algemeene genade theorie, kerkelijke hiërarchie, enz., terwijl een groot gedeelte, direkt en indirekt, gewijd is aan de verwerping der Vrijgemaakte beschouwingen aangaande het verbond en den doop. Ben ik correct in het trekken van deze conclusie?"

#### *Antwoord:*

De verklaring van beginselen kan met geen mogelijkheid gericht zijn tegen de *Vrijgemaakte Kerken* om de eenvoudige reden, dat zij beweren als kerken geen verbondsbeschouwing te hebben. Ze beweren, dat in hunne kerken er niets bindends is aangaande het verbond.

Het is, natuurlijk, de vraag in hoeverre dit opgaat. Ik besprak onze moeilijkheden met Mijnheer en Mevrouw A. Schilder, broeder en schoonzuster van den professor. Zij waren verleden zomer (over den oceaan) gekomen, en wij smaakten het voorrecht hen in ons huis te mogen ontvangen voor eenige dagen. Zij bewezen zichzelf zeer beminneijke mensen te zijn, en in den korten tijd, dat zij bij ons vertoefden, leerden wij hen te beminnen als een broeder en zuster in Christus. Maar ik verwittigde hem, dat het voor ons geen kwestie was om sommige individueele gezinnen of leden der *Vrijgemaakte Kerken* te ontvangen, maar een zaak van het organiseren van groepen *Vrijgemaakte* mensen in Protestantsche Gereformeerde

Kerken. En ik vroeg hem of in Nederland, onderstelende dat er een groep Gereformeerd volk was, die nadruk zouden leggen op de theorie van de veronderstelde wedergeboorte, en wenschten georganiseerd te worden tot Gereformeerde Kerken (onderhoudende art. 31), de Vrijgemaakte Kerken hen organiseren en ontvangen zouden in hunne gemeenschap op die basis. En beide hij en Mevrouw Schilder antwoordden, dat zij dat nooit zouden doen. En ik vertelde hen, dat wij hier voor hetzelfde probleem stonden ten overstaan van den Heynsiaansche conceptie, dat het wezen des verbonds de belofte is, en dat de belofte voor allen is die geboren worden in de historische lijn van het verbond.

En toch kan het niet gezegd worden, dat de verklaring van beginselen als zoodanig gericht is tegen de Vrijgemaakte Kerken, want zij hebben geen officiële conceptie van het verbond aangenomen. En daarom kan men op zijn hoogst zeggen, dat het gericht is tot sommigen der Vrijgemaakten, die leeren, dat de belofte Gods objectief voor al de gedoopte kinderen is, en dat God, in deze belofte, genadig is aan die allen.

Het is, natuurlijk, waar, dat vanwege de huidige omstandigheden de verklaring van beginselen oogenschijnlijk het leeuwenaandeel van haar inhoud bevesteert aan de vraag der belofte Gods voor alle kinderen die onder het verbond geboren worden. En toch is dat slechts oogenschijnlijk zoo. De verklaring ontkent even nadrukkelijk de theorie der algemeene genade, zooals die aangenomen werd door de Synode van Kalamazoo, in 1924. Zij ontkent, dat er een genade Gods is voor alle mensen, den verworpene ingesloten, in de gemeene gaven van alle mensen. Zij ontkent, dat de belofte des Evangelies een genadig aanbod van zaligheid van Godswegen is voor allen die uitwendig het Evangelie hooren. En zij ontkent, dat de natuurlijke mensch, door invloed der algemeene genade, het goede kan doen (voor God) in deze wereld. En tegenover deze punten handhaaft zij, dat de genade Gods altijd particulier is en alleen voor de uitverkorenen, en nooit voor de verworpenen. Zij handhaaft, dat de belofte des Evangelies geen genadig aanbod van zaligheid van Godswegen is aan alle mensen, noch ook een voorwaardelijk aanbod aan allen die geboren worden in de historische bedeeling des verbonds, maar een eed Gods, dat Hij alle verkorenen onfeilbaar zal leiden tot de zaligheid en eindelijke glorie door het geloof. En zij handhaaft, dat de onwedergeborene mensch geheel en al onbekwaam is tot het doen van eenig goed, dat hij door en door verdorven is, en daarom alleen zondigen kan. Bovendien verwerpt zij de theorie der veronderstelde wedergeboorte, en zij verklaart, dat ze niets moet hebben van de hiërarchische actie der Gereformeerde Synode van Nederland, uit de jaren 1939-'44, waardoor zij sommige leerstellige besluiten den kerken synodaal oplegden. En waardoor zij plaatselijke ambts-

dragers afzetten. Het enigste verschil is, dat, terwijl voor de stelling, dat de belofte niet voor alle kinderen is die onder het verbond geboren worden, doch alleen voor de uitverkorene (kinderen), uitvoerig bewijs geleverd werd uit de belijdenisschriften, het niet noodig geoordeeld werd hetzelfde uitvoerige bewijs te leveren voor de stelling, dat de Drie Punten ongerefommeerd zijn, om de eenvoudige reden, dat ook de Vrijgemaakte mensen verondersteld worden met ons overeen te stemmen ten overstaan van de loochening der gemeene gratie, alswel ten overstaan van de inhoud der Drie Punten. Als er echter confessioneel bewijs geleverd moet worden, dan kan dit gemakkelijk geschieden. En als dit metterdaad zou geschieden, dan zou blijken, dat de verklaring van beginselen even uitvoerig is ten overstaan van de theorie der gemeene gratie, als zij is over de vraag aangaande de belofte des verbonds.

De vierde vraag van Ds. Blankepoor luidt als volgt: "Ik ontving den indruk, dat deze beginselen een verklaring der belijdenisschriften beoogen, en niet een ander belijdenisschrift. Houdt dit in, dat onze belijdenisschriften dubbelzinnig zijn op deze punten, zoodat deze waarheden niet duidelijk bewezen kunnen worden uit de belijdenisschriften zonder deze verklaring van beginselen? Houdt dit dan ook in, dat onze zendelingen, leeraars, en ons volk niet in staat zijn dezelve (waarheden) te constateeren zonder hen?"

#### *Antwoord:*

Dat onze belijdenisschriften niet dubbelzinnig zijn aangaande de hoofdvraag, dat, namelijk, de belofte niet voor allen is, is onze vaste overtuiging. Dat dit waar is, is juist het punt in de verklaring van beginselen. U zult merken, dat de verklaring opzettelijk zeer weinig argumentatie biedt, doch in den breede, uitvoerig en letterlijk de belijdenisschriften aanhaalt. In dit opzicht is er een groot verschil tusschen een document zooals de conclusies van Utrecht van 1905 en deze verklaring van beginselen. Gene nam synodaal enige zeer algemeene uitspraken aan over de eeuwige rechtvaardigmaking, de onmiddellijke wedergeboorte, de veronderstelde wedergeboorte, de belofte des verbonds, enz., zonder eenig uitvoerig bewijs uit de Schrift of uit de belijdenisschriften. Maar de verklaring van beginselen biedt zeer weinige uitspraken van zichzelf, doch wijst nadrukkelijk en uitvoerig naar de confessie en haalt die aan. Dat, in mijn overtuiging, is de kracht van deze verklaring. En daarom juist rust zij op de onderstelling, dat de confessies zeker niet dubbelzinnig zijn.

Daarom kunnen onze zendelingen en leeraars, alswel ons eigen volk, mits zij grondig onderlegd zijn, zeer wel de fundamentele beginselen dezer verklaring in onze confessies lezen.

Evenwel, zooals reeds gezegd onder "2", deze verklaring dient om anderen, die beweren, dat de theorie

der gemeene gratie, van de veronderstelde wedergeboorte, en van de belofte voor allen die leven onder de historische bedeeling des verbonds de leer der confessies is, te laten lezen en te laten weten wat confessio-nel Gereformeerde is aangaande deze punten. Het is niet een vraag van dubbelzinnigheid in de confessies als zoodanig, noch is het een vraag wat onze zendelingen en leeraars en volk van noode zijn. Maar het is veel liever een vraag hoe sommigen de confessies foutief uit leggen en lezen. En om hen aan te toonen, dat zij inderdaad foutief lezen is juist het doel van deze verklaring van beginselen. En naar mijn opinie wordt dat doel bewonderenswaardig gediend door deze verklaring.

De laatste vraag van Ds. Blankepoor luidt als volgt: "Wat is het verschil tusschen een verklaring en een formule? Ik heb een paar menschen dit een vierde formulier hooren noemen. Wat is technisch een formulier of confessie? Wat zijn historisch de toestanden die de formulatie van confessies noodzaakten? Hebben de Gereformeerde Kerken ooit een precedent gesteld in het maken van een verklaring der confessies? Indien ja, onder welke toestanden deden zij zulks?

#### *Antwoord:*

Dit is geen vierde Formulier of een vierde confessie. Daar hebben we geen behoefte aan, want wij staan uitsluitend op de basis der Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid. En deze basis is voor ons voldoende. Maar het bedoelt een verklaring van beginselen te zijn, welke alreeds in de confessies begrepen zijn. Het verschil is duidelijk. Een vierde formulier of confessie, óf voegt een nieuwe leerling toe, dewelke voorheen extra-confessie-nel was; óf het voegt ook een uitvoerige verklaring toe aan wat principieel in de confessie begrepen lag, doch niet uitvoerig en duidelijk uitgedrukt. En, ten slotte, een vierde formulier kan ook dienen om de confessies te bederven. Als een voorbeeld van de tweede instantie mogen we wijzen op de Canones van Dordrecht. Zij waren, inderdaad, gebaseerd op de beginselen der toen bestaande confessie. Maar zij werkten die beginselen uit in de huidige vijf artikelen tegen de Remonstranten. Zij doen een beroep op de Schrift als hun basis, maar niet op de bestaande confessie. En als een voorbeeld van de bedervende toevoeging aan de belijdenis mogen we wijzen op de Drie Punten van 1924. Het is waar, dat de Synode van 1924 ook een beroep deed op de belijdenisschriften, en dat zij probeerde den indruk achter te laten, dat de Drie Punten niets anders waren dan een verklaring der Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid. Het kan, evenwel, gemakkelijk aangetoond worden, en we hebben het keer op keer bewezen, dat dit niet waar is, en dat de theorie der gemeene gratie zooals die in de Drie Punten begrepen is zekerlijk strijd tegen de confessies die door de Gereformeerde Kerken aangenomen zijn. Maar

deze verklaring van beginselen beoogt niet een vierde formulier te zijn of een toevoeging aan de confessies, doch eenvoudig een uiteenzetting van beginselen die alreeds klaarlijk in de confessies uitgesproken zijn. Als dit niet waar is, is de verklaring ontvankelijk voor critiek. Dat is de reden waarom de Synode van 1950 de finale aanname van deze verklaring opschortte of uitstelde totdat al de kerken een grondige studie ervan gemaakt hebben. Bovendien, een formulier of confessie of zelfs een toevoeging tot de belijdenis wordt opgesteld voor de kerken zelve, en nadat zij officieel door de kerken zijn aangenomen, wordt het van allen verwacht zich te houden aan dat formulier of die toevoeging. Evenwel is deze verklaring van beginselen niet *voor* de kerken, maar *door* de kerken, en wordt voorgesteld als een basis voor de organisatie van kerken. En daarom kan in niet één zin des woords deze verklaring van beginselen genoemd worden een vierde formulier of een vierde confessie.

Ds. Blankepoor vraagt verder: "Wat zijn de historische toestanden die de formulatie van confessies noodzaakten?" Wij antwoorden kortelijks dat historisch de formulatie van confessies doorgaans veroorzaakt werden vanwege den aanval der valsche filosofie en valsche leer op de waarheid zooals die is in Jezus Christus onzen Heere. Indien ik mag aanhalen uit mijn eigen werk op den Heidelberg-schen Catechismus, Vol. II, p. 113: "En dit is vooral waar in dezen tijd. Het is een welbekend feit, dat degenen die zoeken het fundament te ondermijnen van de ware kerk, waarop de kerk gebouwd is, en die trachten om valsche leer in te voeren, bijna nooit hun kwade bedoeling openbaren door hun onverholen oppositie tegenover de leerlingen, zooals die door de kerk in het verleden geformuleerd zijn. Integendeel, geven zij de voorkeur aan het gebruik van dezelfde termen die de Kerk gebruikte ter uitdrukking van haar geloof, ofschoon zij er een geheel en al vreemde inhoud aan geven. Indien het hun bedoeling is om de Kerk de waarheid der souvereine genade te ontrooven, en om de valsche leer des vrijen wils in te voeren, dan gebruiken zij niettemin de Schriftuurlijke termen van voorverordineering, verkiezing, en verwerping, evenwel verklaren zij, dat God verkoren heeft degenen die gelooven, en verworpen heeft degenen die in hun ongeloof blijven. Of zij spreken van een "dubbele rail", en houden vol dat, terwijl zij volstandig gelooven in de waarheid der absolute voorverordineering, zij tegelijkertijd ook het tegenovergestelde gelooven, namelijk, dat God wil dat alle mensen zalig worden. En zoo doen zij ten overstaan van elke fundamenteele waarheid des Bijbels. Zelfs het huidige Modernisme, alhoewel het alle fundamenteele waarheden van het historisch Christendom verwerpt, is vaak zeer bekwaam in het gebruik van bijna alle termen die gebezigd worden ter uitdrukking van het voorwerp van het Christe-

lijk geloof. Ook zij spreken van Christus als den Zoon Gods, maar in hun mond wordt de term geheel en al geledigd van zijn ware beteekenis, zoodat het in genen deele de wezenlijke Godheid van den Zaligmaker uitdrukt. Ook mogen zijn gaarne spreken van het Koninkrijk Gods en zijn gerechtigheid, terwijl zij daarmede een koninkrijk van den blooten mensch bedoelen, en van deze wereld. En zoo zouden we door kunnen gaan. Het toont, dat naarmate de Kerk toe-neemt in de kennis der waarheid, zij niet alleen van noode heeft een meer uitvoerige belijdenis om haar geloof positief uit tedrukken, maar zij moet ook meer bepaald en ten volle haar waarheden definieeren, opdat zij niet open komen te liggen tegenover den aanval der tegensprekers vanwege hun dubbelzinnigheid."

En wat de laatste vraag aangaat, namelijk, of de Gereformeerde kerken ooit een precedent gesteld hebben in het maken van een verklaring der confessies, en onder wat omstandigheden zij dit gedaan hebben, zou ik willen antwoorden, dat de kerken, inderdaad, vaak zulke verklaringen opgesteld hebben. Zij stelden zulk een verklaring op in 1918, toen de Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken een beroep deden op de confessies met het doel om de valsche leer van het dispensationalisme en premillenialisme te bestrijden. Toentertijd wezen zij eenvoudig op de waarheid van het koningschap van Christus, die duidelijk in de confessies uitgedrukt was; en ook op de andere waarheid, ook definitief in de confessies uitgesproken, van de eenheid der kerk aller eeuwen. En op deze basis veroordeelden zij principieel de dwaling van het premillenialisme. De poging om zulk een verklaring op te stellen werd ook in 1905 gemaakt, toen de Conclusies van Utrecht werden aangenomen door de Synode der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. Ik zeg, dat in deze Conclusies een poging gemaakt werd om een verklaring van beginselen op te stellen die gebaseerd was op de confessies. Want wezenlijk deden deze conclusies in het geheel geen beroep op de confessies. In de veroordeeling van het onderwijs van Dr. Jansen door de Synode van Orange City in 1922 worden geduriglijk zulke verklaringen gemaakt uit de confessies. Zoo lezen we in "Rapporten en Besluiten in de Zaak Van Dr. Jansen", hetwelk gepubliceerd werd door de Synode van Orange City, 1922: "We merken op aangaande deze vijf passages, dat in elk van hen, in de eene meer, in de andere minder, een menschelijk, feilbaar element in de Goddelijke openbaring ingelascht wordt. Dit komt niet overeen met wat wij belijden in Artikel 3 en 7 der Belgische Confessie des geloofs:

"Artikel 3 luidt als volgt: 'Wij belijden, dat dit Woord Gods niet is gezonden noch voortgebracht door den wil eens mensen, maar de heilige mensen Gods, van den Heiligen Geest gedreven zijnde, hebben het gesproken, gelijk de H. Petrus zegt. Daarna heeft

God, door eene bijzondere zorg, die Hij voor ons en onze zaligheid draagt, zijne knechten de Profeten en Apostelen geboden, zijn geopenbaarde Woord bij geschrift te stellen; en Hijzelf heeft met zijnen vinger de Twee Tafelen der Wet geschreven. Hierom noemen wij zulke schriften: Heilige en Goddelijke Schriften.'

"In artikel 7 belijden we als volgt:

"Wij gelooven dat deze Heilige Schrifture den wille Gods volkommen vervat, en dat al hetgene de mensch schuldig is te gelooven om zalig te worden, daarin genoegzaam geleerd wordt. Want overmits de geheele wijze des dienstes, dien God van ons eischt, aldaar in het lange beschreven is, zoo is het den menschen al ware het zelfs, Apostelen niet geoorloefd anders te leeren, dan ons nu geleerd is door de Heilige Schriften: ja al ware het ook een engel uit den hemel, gelijk de Apostel Paulus zegt. Want dewijl het verboden is den Woerde Gods iets toe of iets af te doen, zoo blijkt daaruit wel, dat de leere daarvan zeer volmaakt en in alle manieren volkommen is."

Aangaande de vraag onder welke omstandigheden de kerken zulke verklaringen gemaakt hebben, mogen we antwoorden, dat toevoegingen of verminderingen der belijdenisschriften vaak door de kerken gemaakt zijn uit onreine en zondige, vleeschelijke motieven, motieven van haat en afgunst, zoals zonder twijfel het geval was met de aanneming der Drie Punten door de Synode van 1924. Of het kan ook zijn de begeerte der kerken om te ontkomen aan de bindende kracht der waarheid. Of, nog eens, het kan de begeerte zijn om de kerk te vereenigen in een uitspraak van een compromis, zoals het geval was met de conclusies van Utrecht. Doch indien de kerk werkelijk begeert om de waarheid der confessie te handhaven, dan is het doel gewoonlijk om de waarheid te verdedigen tegenover dwalingen, en om de kerk te beschermen tegen valsche leerlingen.

En nu heb ik naar mijn beste vermogen de inhoud en het doel en de beteekenis van de verklaring der beginselen, die door onze Synode van 1950 aan de kerken voorgesteld werd, toegelicht en uiteengezet.

En ik wil nog eens weer met nadruk zeggen, dat enige afgevaardigde naar de Synode van 1950 hieraan toe mag voegen of mijne uiteenzetting critiseeren.

H. H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sympathy to one of our fellow-members, John Vander Wal, in the passing of his brother,

Nick Vander Wal

May our God comfort the bereaved in the assurance that "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord".

Rev. G. Vos, Pres.

Teunis Dykstra, Sec'y.

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## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

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### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

##### Of Man's Redemption LORD'S DAY XXIX.

###### 3.

###### Spiritual Eating and Drinking.

We now confront the question whether the body and blood of Jesus Christ is present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and if so, in what sense. In other words the question is: what is the connection between the signs of the Lord's Supper and the thing signified?

This question is not a simple one, and it is not easy to answer.

The theory of transubstantiation and also that of consubstantiation are rejected by the Reformed churches. Those theories concerning the Lord's Supper really identify the signs with the thing signified. Christ is corporeally present in the eucharist, and His real body and blood are eaten and drunk by the mouth.

But if these theories are repudiated, what then is the Reformed conception of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Is Christ not present in the signs of the broken bread and of the wine that is poured out at all? If He is, in what sense is He present? Can the Reformed really maintain that Christ's body and blood are eaten at the Lord's table? If so, how? That is the question that must now be answered.

Before we do so, we may still call attention to the Zwinglian view.

According to the traditional and generally accepted representation of the Zwinglian view, that reformer really saw no sacrament at all in the eucharist. According to him the Lord's Supper was a mere feast of commemoration. In the Lord's Supper there was really no operation of God in Christ, but rather an act on the part of the church.

It is doubtful whether this representation of the view of that reformer does justice to him. It is true that he seems to belittle the supernatural element in the sacrament. Sometimes he rather stresses the act of believers rather than the work of God and the operation of Christ through His Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper.<sup>307</sup> And he leaves the impression that to him the supper mainly serves the purpose to commemorate the death of Christ.<sup>308</sup>

Yet there are also expressions in his writings that

seem to prove the contrary. Writes he: "The Lord's Supper is nothing else than the food of the soul, and Christ instituted the ordinance as a memorial of Himself. When a man commits himself to the sufferings and redemption of Christ he is saved. Of this He has left as a certain visible sign of His flesh and blood, both of which He has commanded us to eat and drink in remembrance of Him." Cf. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, III, 626-627. In the First Helvetic Confession, which is supposed to conform to the Zwinglian view, we read in Article 21 about the power and efficacy of the sacraments as follows: "Signa, quae in ecclesia Christi et sacramenta vocantur, duo sunt, baptismus, et eucharistia. Haec rerum arvanarum symbola nun nudis signis, sed signis simul et rebus constant. . . . In eucharistia panis et vinum signa sunt, res autem communicatio corporis Domini, parta salus, et peccatorum remissio. Quae quidem, ut ora corporis signa, sic fide spiritus percipiuntur. Nam in rebus ipsis totus fructus sacramentorum est." That is, freely translated: "The signs which in the church of Christ are also called sacraments are two, baptism and the eucharist. These symbols of holy and mysterious things are not mere signs, but consist of the signs and the things themselves. . . . In the eucharist bread and wine are the signs, but the thing itself is the communion of the body of Christ, the acquired salvation, and the forgiveness of sins. Which indeed, as by the mouth of the body the signs are received, so by faith the reality is received spiritually. For in these things themselves consists the whole fruit of the sacraments." And in the article on the Lord's Supper, Article 23, we read: "Coenam vero mysticam, in qua Dominus corpus et sanguinem suum, id est, se ipsum suis vere ad hoc offerat, ut magis magisque in illis vivat, et illi in ipso." That is: "Concerning the Holy Supper we believe that the Lord in the same offers His body and blood, that is, Himself, so that more and more He lives in them and they in Him." And in the Second Helvetic Confession, which also is supposed to be conformed to the views of Zwingli, we read in chapter 21 of the Holy Supper of the Lord as follows: "By this holy supper also it is sealed unto us, that the very body of Christ was truly given up for us, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins, lest our faith might somewhat waver. And this is outwardly represented unto us by the minister in the sacrament, after a visible manner, and, as it were, laid before our eyes to be seen, which is inwardly in the soul invisibly performed by the Holy Spirit. . . . Therefore the faithful do receive that which is given by the ministers of the Lord, and do eat the bread of the Lord, and do drink of the Lord's cup. And at the same time inwardly, by the working of Christ through the Holy Spirit, they receive also the flesh and blood of the Lord, and do feed on them unto life eternal. For the flesh and blood

of Christ is true meat and drink unto life eternal: yea, Christ himself, in that he was delivered for us, and is our Saviour, is that special thing and substance of the supper; and therefore we suffer nothing to be put in his place." At the same time, however, this confession emphasizes the truth that the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ is not only performed at the table of the Lord, but also without the supper: "From all this it appears manifestly, that by spiritual meat we mean not an imaginary thing, but the very body of our Lord Jesus, given to us; which yet is received by the faithful not corporeally, but spiritually by faith: in which point we do wholly follow the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the sixth chapter of John. And this eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of the Lord is so necessary unto salvation that without it no man can be saved. But this spiritual eating and drinking takes place also without the supper of the Lord, even so often as, and wheresoever a man does believe in Christ." And this same confession even emphasizes that in the Lord's Supper the believer receives something more than otherwise: "Besides that former spiritual eating, there is a *sacramental* eating of the body of the Lord whereby the believer not only is partaker, spiritually and internally, of the true body and blood of the Lord, but also, by coming to the table of the Lord, does outwardly receive the visible sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord. True it is, that by faith the believer did before receive the food that gives life, and still receives the same but yet, when he receives the sacrament, he receives something more. For he goes on in continual communication of the body and blood of the Lord, and his faith is daily more and more kindled, more strengthened and refreshed, by the spiritual nourishment. For while we live, faith has continual increasings; and he that outwardly does receive the sacrament with a true faith, the same does not only receive the sign, but also does enjoy (as we said) the thing itself." And then it goes on to say that faith is required for the true eating and drinking at the Lord's table: "But as for him that without faith comes to this holy table of the Lord, he is made partaker of the outward sacrament only; but the matter of the sacrament, from whence comes life unto salvation, he receives not at all; and such men do unworthily eat of the Lord's table. . . . For when they do not approach with true faith, they do despite unto the death of Christ, and therefore eat and drink condemnation to themselves."

Now we certainly do not mean to aver that all this can be attributed to Zwingli himself. The First Helvetic Confession was not written by him, but by a number of Swiss divines, Bullinger and others; while the Second Helvetic Confession was written by Bullinger, who, however, was the successor of Zwingli.

And therefore we maintain that it is very questionable whether Zwingli's conception of the Lord's Supper was merely that of a feast of commemoration and nothing more.

Calvin seems to teach sometimes that in the Lord's Supper there is an influence of Christ's glorified body on believers. But this is probably to be taken in a figurative sense. For in other passages the reformer clearly teaches that the presence of the body and blood of Christ is present only spiritually and can be eaten and drunk not by the mouth, but only by faith. He emphasizes that every imagination of a local presence is to be entirely removed. Christ as a man is now present only in heaven, and not upon earth. And therefore His communion is to be sought only by faith. He cannot be included in the earthly elements.

And this is surely the teaching of all the Reformed confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism in the question and answer we are now discussing asks: "Why then doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood; and Paul the 'communion of the body and blood of Christ'?" And the Catechism answers: "Christ speaks thus, not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us, that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink, whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us, that we are really partakers of his true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God." Two elements, therefore, are here mentioned as constituting the power and efficacy of the supper of the Lord: first of all, that through the supper we spiritually eat and drink Christ at His table and our souls are fed to eternal life. And secondly, the confirmation of our faith through the Holy Spirit that we really are partakers of the suffering and obedience of Christ.

The same is evident from the *Confessio Belgica*, Art. 35: "We believe and confess, that our Saviour Jesus Christ did ordain and institute the sacrament of the Holy Supper, to nourish and support those whom he hath already regenerated, and incorporated into his family, which is his church. Now those, who are regenerated, have in them a twofold life, the one corporal and the temporal which they have from the first birth, and is common to all men; the other spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth, which is effected by the word of the gospel, and in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect. In like manner God hath given us, for the

support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread, which is subservient thereto, and is common to all men, even as life itself. But for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life, which believers have, he hath sent a living bread, which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of believers, when they eat him, that is to say, when they apply and receive him by faith in the spirit. Christ, that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, hath instituted an earthly and visible bread, as a sacrament of his body, and wine as a sacrament of his blood, to testify by them unto us, that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands, we eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Saviour in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life. Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ hath not enjoined to us the use of his sacraments in vain, so he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding, and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible. In the meantime we err not, when we say, that what is eaten and drunk by us is the proper and natural body, and the proper blood of Christ." Behind this last expression we may probably want to put a question mark. What does the Confession mean by eating and drinking the proper and natural body and blood of Christ? Can it be that the Confession means to say that we really eat the natural flesh of Christ and drink His natural blood, as it was separated at the Cross? But this evidently was not the meaning, as will be evident from what follows in the same article: "But the manner of our partaking of the same, is not by the mouth, but by the spirit through faith. Thus then, though Christ always sits at the right hand of His Father in the heavens, yet doth he not therefore cease to make us partakers of himself by faith. This feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates himself with all his benefits to us, and gives us there to enjoy both himself, and the merits of his sufferings and death, nourishing, strengthening, and comforting our poor comfortless souls by the eating of his flesh, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of his blood."

The same article emphasizes that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are not mere signs, but that in them the signs and the thing signified are connected, but nevertheless in such a way that the thing signified in the signs can be received not by the natural man, but only by faith: "Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed

receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers."

Lastly, the article emphasizes the fact that the Lord's Supper ought to be celebrated in the midst of the church and that believers ought to be in the true spiritual disposition of heart and mind in order properly and fruitfully to partake of it: "Lastly, we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up amongst us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour, with thanksgiving: making there confession of our faith, and of the Christian religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself; lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are excited by the use of this holy sacrament, to a fervent love towards God and our neighbour. Therefore we reject all mixtures and damnable inventions, which men have added unto, and blended with the sacraments, as profanations of them: and affirm that we ought to rest satisfied with the ordinance which Christ and his apostles have taught us, and that we must speak of them in the same manner as they have spoken."

Somewhat the same sentiment is expressed in the French Confession of Faith, Article 36: "We confess that the Lord's Supper, which is the second sacrament, is a witness of the union which we have with Christ inasmuch as he not only died and rose again for us once, but also feeds and nourishes us truly with his flesh and blood, so that we may be one in him, and that our life may be in common. Although he be in heaven until he come to judge all the earth, still we believe that by the secret and incomprehensible power of his Spirit he feeds and strengthens us with the substance of his body and of his blood. We hold that this is done spiritually, not because we put imagination and fancy in the place of fact and truth, but because the greatness of this mystery exceeds the measure of our senses and the laws of nature. In short because it is heavenly, it can only be apprehended by faith." Here too it is evidently presupposed that the signs and the thing signified in the Lord's Supper are connected, but so that we can apprehend the thing signified through the signs only spiritually and by faith.

The same truths concerning the Lord's Supper are confessed in the Scotch Confession of Faith. It condemns the doctrine of those who teach that the sacraments are nothing but mere signs; and it teaches that in the supper of the Lord, when rightly used, Christ is so joined with us that He becomes very nourishment and food of our souls: "Fiat animarum nostrarum

verus victus, verum alimentum." It emphasizes that this fruit is accomplished through the supper of the Lord by the Holy Spirit through faith. And notwithstanding the far distance of place which is between His body now glorified in heaven and us now mortal on this earth, we may nevertheless assuredly believe that the bread which we break is the communion of Christ's body and the cup which we bless is the communion of His blood. And so "we confess, and undoubtedly believe, that the faithful, in the right use of the Lord's table, do so eat the body and drink the blood of the Lord Jesus, that he remains in them, and they in him: yea, they are so made flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones." And again, it is emphasized in the same article that all this is a spiritual reality: "But all this, we say, comes of true faith, which apprehends Christ Jesus, who only makes this sacrament effectual unto us."

In the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England we find in Art. 28 the following confession concerning the Lord's Supper: "The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." Then, after a repudiation of the error of transubstantiation, the article continues as follows: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper, is faith." This article, too, therefore, emphasizes the truth that a real connection must be supposed between the sign and the thing signified, but that the reality of the thing signified can be apprehended by faith only; and therefore in the supper we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ only spiritually.

The Westminster Confession also has a rather elaborate exposition of the Lord's Supper in chapter 29: "Our Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his church, unto the end of the world; for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body." Here, therefore, the Lord's Supper is presented as a sacrament which seals to true believers all the benefits of Christ, and by which they are spiritually nourished and grow up in Him,

in order that so they may be able to realize their part of the covenant of God.

In a later paragraph this confession continues as follows: "The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine as they were before." Here we have the idea that through the bread and wine as the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord Christ crucified is presented to the believer. And the same is expressed in the following words: "Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are, to their outward senses." In the above words the truth is once more expressed that there is a real, though spiritual, connection between the signs and the things signified, so that believers may truly be said to eat the real, though spiritual, body and blood of Christ. Hence, the sacrament can be received as far as the real essence of it is concerned, and the thing signified, only by a true faith. Hence, we read: "Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so they are unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."

H. H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses their deep sympathy to the Vander Wal family because of the passing of our brother elder

**Mr. Nick Vander Wal**

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude to God his years of faithful service in our congregation.

May the Lord of all comfort be with the widow and the children and sustain them in their sorrow.

The Consistory,

H. Hoeksema, Pres.

James Kok, Clerk.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### David and Nathan

"And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house and she became his wife and bear him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, (the Hebrew text has it: "was evil in the sight of the Lord). 2 Sam. 11:26-27."

David was telling himself that he had no sin. The text reveals the reasoning by which he strove to overturn the accusations of his conscience. "The sword devoureth one as well as another," or, as the Hebrew text has it, "so and such". What David meant is that there is no respect of persons with the sword of war, and that therefore Uriah should have been more careful. He should have stayed clear of that terrible sword. In a word, Uriah's death was chargeable to everybody and everything—the Ammonites, the sword of war, Uriah, and even God—but to David himself.

That he got himself to blaming Uriah can be explained. Uriah's zeal was remarkable. Had David not restrained him, he would have returned to the battle at once. "Tarry here today also," were David's orders to him, "and tomorrow I will let thee depart." Doubtless it was also by Uriah's own request that Joab set him in the forefront of the hottest battle. And when the Ammonites went forth into the field, they were beaten back by the Israelites including Uriah and perhaps as led by him. For he was a captain in David's army. And of his own accord without any urging on the part of Joab, it may be imagined, he and his band were upon the enemy even to the entering of the gate of the city. His fellow warriors had not withdrawn from him, that he might be slain. No such orders had been issued by Joab, and as Uriah was unknown to the Ammonites, they could not have agreed among themselves to fight only against him. As by accident he was struck by one of the arrows shot from off the wall upon the King's servants. So the messenger reported.

Accordingly, David was telling himself that Uriah's death was none of his responsibility. That was his reply to the accusation of his conscience that he had killed Uriah by the sword of the Ammonites. And how true it was that he had done just that. For through his instructions to Joab, that Uriah be placed in the forefront of the hottest battle and then be forsaken in order that he might be slain, he had very actually identified himself with that sword. Through that instruction he had made that sword his very

own, and therefore he was just as guilty as he would have been had he slain Uriah with a sword wielded by his very own hand.

But of this he was willingly ignorant. He insisted that he had no sin. And when the mourning was past, he sent and fetched Bethsheba to his house, and made her his wife. For Uriah had fallen in battle, a victim of his own zeal. He was dead. The widowed wife was therefore free to marry again. And soon, yet not too soon, she bore David a son; and though there must have been whisperings and though the enemies of the Lord were blaspheming, no one was able to prove that the child that was born had been conceived in adultery. And David's sense of relief was great. It can be understood. What would have to be done with him had the whisperers been able to prove their suspicions? Israel's law called for the death of the adulterer and the adulteress.

But though David by secretly eliminating Uriah and by marrying the widow of the deceased had disarmed the whisperers and the blasphemers, he had no peace. His soul was like a troubled sea. For the thing that he had done was evil in the sight of the Lord, and accordingly the hand of the Lord was heavy upon him day and night. In the wrath of His love of His fallen servant, the Lord was excommunicating him before his consciousness from the church of God and from the fellowship of Christ and from all the spiritual blessings and benefits that God promised to and bestows upon His people. It meant that David walked in darkness. His anguish of soul was great. In his own language, his bones waxed old through his roaring all day long. His moisture was turned into the draught of summer, Ps. 32:3, 4. For he kept silence; he refused to acknowledge his sin unto the Lord, Ps. 32:2, 5. It meant that to his own great hurt he was tampering with his conscience—tampering with the testimony of God that he had sinned, communicated to him through his conscience. He refused to confirm that testimony. He brushed it aside and cast it far from him as though it was an error.

So the Lord in His mercy sent to him Nathan to admonish him by the objective word of prophecy. But how was Nathan to proceed with this fallen saint in bringing him, instrumentally, under the conviction of sin, in order that he might be restored to the level of grace from which he had fallen? In the spirit of meekness, to be sure, yet certainly without mincing words in setting before him his sins. But what was to be the prophet's approach to this man, who having been surprised by sin and in his carnality having added sin to sin, dared still to be arguing the point that he had no sin. What was to be the prophet's method of attack in breaking down the resistance of such a man? In his present state David was a problem for the most tactful of shepherds. But he was not

a problem for God, and on this account really was not a problem for Nathan either. For Nathan came to him with the word of God and as filled with God's wisdom.

Let us take notice of how the prophet dealt with David. He was careful not to begin his admonition by immediately pointing his accusing finger at David directly. That would not have been wise. For being carnal David would have fiercely resented any immediate direct reference to his past atrocious doings. So the prophet took recourse to the employment of legitimate guile. He posed as one who has come to David to plead the cause of a poor man in some city, outraged by his rich neighbour in the matter of a ewe lamb. The facts in the sad case were these: The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. The poor man, on the other hand had nothing, save that one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and raised. The animal was dear to the man and to the members of his household. For it had grown up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup. It lay in his bosom and was to him as a daughter.

There came a traveler to the rich man, and lo and behold, he spared to take of his own flocks and of his own herds, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; and he took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him. How astoundingly heartless!

Nathan had spoken in David's ear a parable in which he had beheld an image of his own carnal self, so disguised, however, that he failed to perceive that he was the man. Imagining that the prophet had been dealing not in fiction but in fact, David as seized by a paroxysm of indignation pronounced sentence of death upon the man; and unbeknown to himself he thereby pronounced sentence of death upon himself. For he was that man. These were his words: "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and had no pity." It was the heartlessness of the man that so sorely provoked the king.

But David's reaction raises a question. How could he be so grieved, perturbed, and shocked by another's evil doing that was but a faint echo of the crimes that he all along was excusing in himself? This is one of the ugly, ridiculous, nauseating and inexplicable quirks of fallen human nature. It just shows what sin has done to us. It has made hypocrites of us all. We hate sin in everybody but ourselves. The mote in the brother's eye has us worried, and we want to remove it; but we please to take no thought of the beams in our own eyes.

Yet David's wrath with the culprit in Nathan's parable was real enough. Only, it was not the wrath

of love but of carnal hatred,—hatred of God with whom his sinful flesh was sorely vexed for not wanting to justify him in his atrocities. And to give vent to his pent-up feelings he consigns the man in the parable of the prophet to eternal perdition. "As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die." These were his words. He was even more righteous than God. For the law went no further than to demand that such an offender restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep, Ex. 22:1.

This was the only punishment that the law prescribed even for such heartless offenders as the man of the parable. Such then was the character of David's wrath. Yet at the heart of his dispositions he was a truly good man. We know because God tells us so. With all his gross sinning he nevertheless possessed a heart in which God had poured forth His love,—a love that God now anew must and also does awaken. And therefore David can reply as he does to Nathan's, "Thou art the man."

(to be continued)

G. M. Ophof.



## Contribution

Esteemed Editor of The Standard Bearer:

Having read the Open Letter from Hamilton, many questions arose in my mind. In the first place, what have we really in common with the so-called Liberated Churches or De Gereformeerde Kerken, onderhoudende Art. 31? What binds us together, except that we both were thrown out, unjustly, out of our mother churches? Is there any more unity between us now then when we first came in contact with some of the leaders of this movement? Do they understand our doctrine better now, after all the literature sent to them, and did they come our way? What must we think of people who *plead* to become members of our churches, because we are according to their opinion the true church, but who turn around when the first man comes from their home-land, and follow him in his work of mutiny in the church? How can we at the same time have the same zeal for our mission work among the immigrants if we cannot trust them? What must we think of the royal treatments given to some of our leaders in their midst in the past? Does that not remind us again of the "Januskop"? What must we think when we hear that our preaching was so well received in the Netherlands, but still the immigrants *long* to have their own men preach to them, so much so that, oh, yes, they will become Protestant Reformed, but wherever and however possible they hold on to

their Arminian and Common Grace conception of the covenant and baptism? Must we think that it takes years to come to a clear understanding of each other? Why do they not answer questions put to them? What must we think of a church divided against itself? One leader advises his people to be sure and join the Protestant Reformed Churches, whereas another *great one* among them sends out the alarm: "BEWARE! If you are compelled to become really Protestant Reformed, that is, also with a view to their covenant conception, then *never join!*" Has there been anyone who ever protested against this? We have never read or heard of it.

What must we think of their conception of church polity? Especially with a view to what recently happened in Canada, where a minister of the Liberated churches, on his own hook, organized churches, without any charge or mandate?

How can we still be anxious to become sister churches whereas we even doctrinally disagree?

Should we not have first of all a clear understanding of one another's doctrine, before we become closer related?

It could very well be that we are much closer to the so-called "synodical" group than to the Liberated.

The undersigned has also spent some nine weeks in his homeland; has also attended church services there both in the Gereformeerde Kerken and in the Gereformeerde Kerken, onderhoudende Art. 31. And insofar as he has heard, he must say that the contents of the sermons in the Gereformeerde Kerken (the so-called "synodicals") were closer to what is Protestant Reformed than those of the "Vrijgemaakten". And I can testify that what I heard in the "Vrijgemaakten" was different from what we hear in our churches, although we admit that we heard only two against five of the others.

My impression differs somewhat from others who have visited the "old country" in the past. They seem to have seen nothing but sunshine, but we had different experiences.

We also had the opportunity to be present when a number of young people made public confession of their faith in the Liberated Churches. And one thing struck me: they asked these persons not only the three well known questions, but at least four or five more, which must be, of course, also *binding*.

In conclusion, if we do not receive in the near future a definite clear-cut answer to questions which were put to the brethren in the Netherlands, recently and in the past, then I for one would like to sound also an alarm to our people, and shout to them: "BEWARE!"

H. De Jong.  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Een Woord Van Dank

Mt. Hamilton, Route 6  
Ontario, Canada.

Geachte Redactie!

Wilt U zoo vriendelijk zijn dit schrijven in Uw blad: De Standard Bearer, op te nemen. Bij voorbaat onzen hartelijken dank.

Aan de kerkeraden en leden der Gemeenten waarvan wij bijdragen ontvangen hebben tot opbouwing en uitbreiding Uwer zuster-gemeente te Hamilton:

Broeders en Zusters in onzen Heere Jezus Christus!

Laat ik U eerst, als Scriba, mijn verontschuldiging aanbieden, daar ik overtuigd ben zeer nalatig te zijn geweest in het zenden van een dankbrief voor hun offers aan elk der gemeenten. Dit was van mij geen slordigheid of nalatigheid, maar dit lag enkel en alleen aan mijn onkunde van de Engelsche taal, waardoor ik namen en adressen van verschillende afzenders niet kon ontcijferen. Vandaar dat dit nu langs dezen weg geschiedt.

Namens den Raad en alle leden der Eerste Protstanttsche Gereformeerde Kerk te Hamilton, Canada, danken wij den Heere, dat Hij U allen gewillig heeft gemaakt om gehoor te geven aan onze aanvraag om ons te helpen met eene geldelijke bijdrage, opdat wij zouden kunnen overgaan tot het aankopen van een woning voor onzen Herder en Leeraar. Wij waren er van overtuigd, ondanks U met veel moeite Uw eigen gemeente moet opbouwen, dat gjt toch Uw liefde zoudt toonen voor de Kerk van Christus en voor Uw broeders en zusters te Hamilton.

De Raad en ook de gemeente is zeer gevoelig voor de door U gebrachte offers, en wij danken U daar zeer hartelijk voor, en wij hopen ook dat wij met den tijd wederzijds onze offers zullen kunnen brengen voor eventueele zustergemeenten, omdat wij weten, dat ook in dien weg de Heere ons laat medewerken tot het komen van het Koninkrijk Gods.

De Heere zegene U!

Namens den Raad van Hamilton's gemeente,  
Th. J. Hart, Scriba.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sympathy with one of its fellow-members, Mrs. J. Vander Wal, in the death of her brother-in-law,

Nick Vander Wal

May the bereaved experience the comfort of our Covenant God in His promise of eternal life.

Rev. G. Vos, Pres.

Mrs. J. Van Overloop, Sec'y.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition Of Hebrews 10:19-25

#### III.

In this article we see ourselves confronted with the task of beginning to give our explanation of the terms in the verses 19 and 20. We read in these verses the following: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, which He hath dedicated, a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God."

We notice, first of all, that the evident intention of the writer in this quoted passage is to state the reason, the ground as well as the incentive for giving heed to the admonition that we draw near unto God in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

It is well for the reader to take special notice of this intention of the writer to the Hebrew Christians.

For the purpose of this passage is to impress indelibly on our minds, that since we have such a glorious possession and right in Christ as believers, we can do nothing else but respond in the full assurance of faith. Every doubt and fear must give way for joyful and blessed peace and certainty. In this passage the very heart of the "word of faith that is preached" is very clearly stated in terms understood by every Hebrew believer.

Briefly, our text teaches the redemption that is ours through the blood of Jesus. God hath indeed spoken unto us in these last days through His Son Jesus Christ. Grace and truth have become a reality unto us in Him. Moses indeed gave the law, but Christ is made unto us wisdom of God, righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption. For Christ is the Corner-Stone, indeed rejected of men, but elect and precious unto God. Upon Him we are to place our trust. Doing this we shall never be moved!

That is the teaching of this passage in a nutshell.

It is true, that in our text different terms are employed by the writer than those that we have written in the former paragraph. The text uses terms and figures of speech which remind us very strongly of the symbolism of the Old Testament temple with its laws and ordinances. But this fact of different terminology does not in the least change matters as we have stated them in a former paragraph.

Let us take notice of the text in question.

The first matter that then strikes our attention is, that the writer addresses the readers as "brethren".

Now this term "brethren" certainly must not be taken to mean merely brethren according to the flesh. The writer is not a mere Hebrew addressing fellow-Hebrews. Such is never the case in the Word of God. In Christ there is exactly neither Jew nor Gentile, man nor woman, bond nor free. In Christ there is nothing that has any meaning except a *new creature*. Old things are indeed passed away and all things have become new. And, therefore, we may be very certain, that in the mind of the writer these addressees are those, who are born not out of bloods (commingling of many generations) nor of the will of the flesh, nor out of man, but of God. With the term "brethren" the writer acknowledges them to be joint-heirs with him, he addresses these Hebrew Christians as co-partakers of the New Covenant in Christ's blood. They are such by the faith of Jesus, believing in His Name.

The term "brethren" indicates a reality of salvation in these addressees making it possible for the writer to admonish by saying: *Let us draw near in the full assurance of faith*. The writer does not place himself outside the circle of readers, but places himself in their midst as a fellow-partaker of the blessed and eternal hope in Christ.

It is well, that we bear this manner of address in mind, especially when we come to the implication of our "having boldness to enter into the holiest". The question is: how does the writer view the hearers? And the answer is: as brethren!

But let us proceed.

We now come to the second element in this passage calling for attention. The element that calls for our attention is: what is the relationship of this admonition to boldly draw near unto God to the foregoing instruction of the writer in this epistle. This relationship is expressed in the word "therefore". The term in Greek indicates, that this admonition to draw near unto God must needs follow from the instruction given in the first nine and one half chapters of Hebrews. Since all the foregoing is true, this drawing near unto God in true faith cannot remain undone. It is the *necessary response of faith*, that is energized by love—the love that is shed forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

But what is that truth of the Gospel that impels faith to seek God in full assurance?

It is the wonderful truth, which God has spoken in these last days in His Son, which He has made a reality in the suffering and death, the resurrection and glorious ascension of the Mediator of the New Covenant. Compare Hebrews 1:1.

Of this great mediatorial work of Christ the writer to the Hebrews gives us a wonderfully clear picture, which we can state briefly in the here following salient

points. The first of these points is given us very clearly in Hebrews 1:1-18. Here we are very clearly and emphatically taught, that Jesus Christ is indeed the one of whom all the Scriptures speak. He is the subject concerning Whom all the books of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets speak. His name is exalted above every name. No angel can ever compare with Him in power and glory. He alone has the distinction of sitting by God's decree at the right hand of God in the heavens above. God has never said to any of the angels: Sit thou at My right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool! But thus He indeed speaks to the Son in our flesh, who even in the flesh is the very effulgence of God's glory, the expressed image of His being.

The second salient point, brought out by the writer of the Hebrews, is, that this Jesus, although He is Lord over all things in heaven and on earth, is nevertheless like unto us, His "brethren" in all things, sin excepted. He is the Son of God, to be sure, but He is the Son in our flesh. He was made like unto us in all things. Hence, He is not ashamed to call us "brethren". Both He, Jesus, Who sanctifies us, and we, the brethren, who are sanctified are all out of one, Adam. As far as the flesh is concerned, we are all out of one blood. This brings Him very near us. He was tempted of all things like as we are. However, in His temptation He never in any way was tempted of sin! A careful reading of Hebrews 2:1-18 will bear this out.

The third point, which is here worthy of separate mention, and which portrays to us the greatness of the High Priest, Who is ours in the heavenly temple, is, that which the writer tells us in Hebrews 3:1-6. It is: *that Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant is greater than Moses through whom the law is given.* Moses indeed worked in the house of God, that is, in the church of God in the Old Testament. But he labored only as a servant in the house. He was very faithful, it is true, but he only labored as a servant. Jesus the Son of God in our flesh labored as the Builder of the house. He came in the flesh. He was obedient in the flesh and built the temple of His church in three days through His death and glorious resurrection. This did not Moses. Moses could not bring about grace. He is the law-giver. However, in Christ grace and truth have become a reality. He became unto us from God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.

The fourth point, brought out by the writer of the Hebrews, is, that Jesus, since He is greater than Moses, is also greater than Aaron and the entire Old Testament priesthood. Jesus excels, according to the writer of the Hebrews, Aaron in the following respects: In the first place, Jesus' priesthood excels that of Aaron in that it is not a priesthood following from a carnal commandment, that is, from a commandment stating

that one must be born from Levi's loins, but that it is a priesthood following from a *word of oath*. Christ is not a mere priest by the decree pertaining to the flesh and blood of Aaron, but He is a Priest since God has placed Him there by His word of oath, saying: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The flesh dies and so the word of the carnal commandment ceases. But this Christ, who lives forever, is Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He lives and reigns forever. Wherefore He can perfectly save all those who through Him come unto God. In the second instance, and that too for the very reasons given above, Jesus is a Priest in a *better temple*. He is not a priest in the earthly temple. That temple was a figure of the *better temple* not made with hands in the heavens. Into the earthly temple Jesus never entered as the High Priest with His blood. He went into the heavenly temple, passing through the heavens, there to appear before God for us. In this better temple He also brings the *better sacrifice* and is the Mediator of the new Covenant based upon better promises.

Now these are the salient points, developed by the writer of the Hebrews, which form the basis of the exhortation: Let us draw near with true hearts in the full assurance of faith. The entire former part of the book of Hebrews is devoted to an elucidation of these points. In our text we have an admonition based upon these truths concerning our only King and High-Priest.

We have a High-Priest over the house of God. He is the High-Priest over us, over His house, the believers, who hold fast to the end to the confession of the hope.

That we have such a High-Priest is very important to consider. We do not merely have Jesus as our High-Priest on earth, while He was in the state of humiliation, in suffering and death, while He was going to prepare a place for us, but He is our King-Priest even as this very moment in heaven. Always He lives to pray for us. We may continually take refuge unto the Throne of Grace through Him. Constantly we may find grace in and through Him as our Advocate with the Father. He is Jesus Christ the righteous High-Priest that becomes us, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens!

Our drawing nigh unto the Father is only through and because of His intercession. It is because of this promise and knowledge and faith's certainty of His intercession that we draw nigh to God in the blessed assurance of being received by Him in mercy.

In Him our High-Priest is also the new and living way, the boldness to enter into the Most Holy Place before God's presence.

Of this we hope to say more in the next article.

Geo. C. Lubbers.

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Church Membership In His Fear

2.

#### *The Holy Catholic Church as First Principle.*

The important question that is before us, as we have seen, is: what does it mean that I am guided by the fear of the Lord, both as objective standard and as subjective principle, in my church affiliation?

That question is not an easy one to answer for many reasons, chief of which is the undeniable fact that we are surrounded in our day by a multitude of churches, so that the believer is forced to answer the question: where is the church? Time was, of course, when in an outward sense, at least, the believer did not have to face that question. Principally, of course, the question was always present, even when for centuries there was only one existent church communion. In fact, it is exactly because of the fact that in faith believers in past time faced that question that today we face the question in its modern garb, as it is placed upon the background of the fact that there are many churches and church communications in our time. Also that truth should become plain as we proceed. However, there was a time when in the outward sense, at least, the church was one, a long time. For centuries,—until the time, first of all, of the split between the eastern and western branches of the church, the Greek and the Romish,—one did not face the concrete question as we face it today: from among all these churches which one must I choose? There was only one church to join.

But especially after the Reformation in the sixteenth century the question took on new meaning. And more especially in protestant circles does the question have significance. The Romish Church, of course, blithely continues to claim the sole right to the name *catholic* only for itself. And we may as well admit too, that she makes a pretty good showing,—so good that even protestants make the mistake of granting her the honor of the virtue of catholicity by commonly referring to the Romish Church as the Catholic Church, a mistake which every right thinking protestant should studiously avoid. But among all churches the Romish Church succeeds in pretending that she is catholic and has maintained its world-wide dominion and communion where all others have failed. The fact is, however, that the Romish Churches now also stands historically as a church among churches, though it refuses to face this historical reality and to a large extent also keeps its membership in this straight-jacket.

In protestant circles, however, history has taken a different turn. It was not long after the first spark of the Reformation was kindled that the rend toward division and secession began. And that trend has continued down to the present time. History teaches us that the leaders of the Reformation were not themselves agreed by any means. And among the different branches of the movement of the Reformation divisions soon multiplied. Not only were there divisions along national, linguistic, and racial lines; but churches multiplied their confessions, confessions that often contradict one another on cardinal points. There seem to be many Lords, many faiths, many baptisms, instead of one Lord, one faith, one baptism. And whether they actually have the nerve to do this or not, the fact remains that each different church, by virtue of its separate existence as a church, calls to us: Here is the church; here you should belong; here the gospel is preached!

And we in America are right in the midst of the stream. Just as America has become the melting pot of the nations, so she has become the melting pot of the churches,—only the melting process has not produced the unity of a mixture up to this time. It would be better perhaps simply to call it a boiling pot, boiling with a mixture of some 250 different religious groups, all clamoring loudly for your allegiance. Even the modern movement for church union is but one more aspect of the denominational trend, one more raucous voice in the bedlam of ecclesiastical confusion.

Nor have the Reformed churches been immune, as we well know who are at all acquainted with Reformed church history. Even in the Dutch branch of the Reformed churches denominations have multiplied. We, as Protestant Reformed Churches, have been caught in that stream only 25 years ago, and in our own peculiar time and circumstances stand as church among churches. And in the Netherlands during the last decade again we have witnessed another split.

Add to this the fact that most churches have their own church extension activities, often well-oiled propaganda machines; and we would almost give up hope of coming to any well-grounded conclusion as to where we must affiliate.

What attitude must be assumed over against all these churches? How must one choose? Where must one affiliate? In what direction does the fear of the Lord lead us?

Certainly, the very first principle from which we must proceed is expressed in the confession: "I believe an holy catholic church." In the midst of all this confusion of churches that faith must be the shelter of God's children.

But not in a wrong way. Often that faith concerning the holy catholic church is used as a shield, but in such a way that we shirk our duty in regard to

church affiliation. You know the reasoning perhaps, for it is frequently followed. After all, they say, we cannot take the attitude that we are *the church*. God has His people in every nation and clime and tongue, not only, but also in every denomination. And it is presumptuous to take the narrow and intolerant attitude that the Protestant Reformed Churches are the true Church. Often to that line of reasoning is added rather piously that other people are going to heaven too, and that you cannot simply damn all the rest to hell. I believe simply the holy catholic church. *Ergo*, it doesn't make too much difference where I am member or where I attend church.

Now we will not immediately draw any conclusions as to this line of reasoning, although we hope to point out its fallacies in the course of this series. Rather is it necessary before all else that we clearly understand what is meant by the holy catholic church.

The confession that the church is catholic and that she is holy must be based upon the Word of God only. It certainly cannot be based upon experience. Experience contradicts both. As we have had opportunity to notice above, all our experience contradicts the confession that the church is one and universal. That unity is beyond our sensibilities. But also the holiness of the church is contradicted by the appearance of the church in the world. All her history and dealings in the world stand in contrast with the confession of her holiness. Often the church appears more corrupt than the world from which she is called. Struggle and partisanship, hatred, bloody persecutions, power-madness and fleshly lust, the stoning of the prophets and the crucifixion of the Lord of glory,—all these have blotted her record and do blot her record in history.

Yet the believer confesses that there is "one body" and that this one body is "an holy nation". And he makes and can make that confession only on the basis of the Word of God and by faith. What does it mean?

We do not intend,—and it would not be proper in this rubric,—to go into a thorough exposition of the idea of the church. We would simply briefly state this truth and its fundamental elements. And then we must notice:

1. That ideally the church is the body of Christ as she exists eternally in the counsel of God, that all the elect are members of that church, whether they be those who have already died and gone on to glory, whether they be gathered into the church. All together comprise the church as it stands eternally in the divine thoughts and as it shall in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ dwell perfectly in His everlasting tabernacle.

2. That church is an organic unity. In the first place, the church is one harmonious whole. It consists of a certain definite number of redeemed saints, and will not be fully realized until every last one of those

elect is gathered in. Nor can it be added to at all. Not one more, nor one less could possibly belong to the church of Christ than has been eternally determined by God Himself. In the second place, that definite, elect number of redeemed is not a mere multitude of saints, but a perfect and harmonious unity in the sense that each saint occupies his own position and serves his own particular God-appointed purpose in the church. In the third place, the church is an organism, not a mechanism. Perhaps we often stumble over those terms *organism*, and *organic*. We shouldn't do that; rather should we understand them and try to understand them. An organism is characterized by two elements: a common principle of life, and growth from that common principle of life. To distinguish between an organism and a mechanism, we may use the examples of a man and an automobile, the former being an organic being and the latter being a mechanism or machine. Now, then, the church is a spiritual organism. All her life and all her growth is from Christ, her Head. It is only by the entrance of Christ, through His Word and Spirit, into the hearts of His elect that men become *alive* and living members of His Church. And it is only from Him as their Head that the members of the Church continue to receive all their life and to live as His Church. All this is beautifully taught us in the figures which Scripture employs to picture Christ's Church to us, the figure of the Head and the Body, of the vine and the branches, the figure of the olive tree, and even the figure of the temple and its foundation.

3. That church is holy, first of all, objectively in Christ her Head, with Whom she is eternally united as one plant, and in whom her holiness is realized at the cross. But she is holy also subjectively through the principle of regeneration and sanctification in her members, so that these members are called "saints".

4. And that church is catholic in the sense that she is gathered in all ages, from the beginning to the end of time, and from all nations and tongues and tribes, not in the sense that in this present time upon earth she is realized and comes to manifestation in one institute completely and exclusively.

5. Finally, we also must mention the attribute of *apostolicity*, which means that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. This apostolicity of the church, therefore, is a succession of doctrine, not a succession of persons.

Really, if one wants to say all this in one word, he says "Christ". The church is His body, is the manifestation of His glory, His grace, His righteousness, His holiness, His everlasting beauty! She exists for Him, and out of Him, and through Him. And all that we have said above concerning the church flows from the fact that Christ is her Head.

And it is this fact which we must bear constantly before our mind when we deal with the subject at hand. Really there are not many churches but only one church in the sense in which we have described it above. Nor must we make the mistake of multiplying churches when we begin to make distinctions and speak of a visible church and an invisible church, a militant church and a triumphant church, an instituted church and an organic church. We may certainly make distinctions, and we shall have to upon the basis of Scripture. But we must bear in mind: there is *one body*, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His church. And our distinctions must be only *distinctions*.

And then the question must next be asked: what is the relation between the holy catholic church and the church as she exists in the midst of the world and comes to manifestation in the midst of the world?

H. C. Hoeksema.



## Report On The Call For Help

Some time ago a request was sent to our people to help financially three ministers and their families who came to us from another denomination, and who are now located in Grand Rapids attending our seminary. This article must serve as a report on the progress of this drive for funds.

Our hearts are overjoyed by the liberal response our people have given which, it appears to us, is an evidence of the Lord's blessing on the entire venture.

We have not really begun to hear as yet from our Western Churches which we believe could not be as enthusiastic in this drive simply because they did not understand the great need, neither did they have all the information concerning the three ministers that our Eastern Churches possess. We believe that as soon as they become thoroughly informed they, too, will become enthused and collaborate with us in this fund. The mere trickle will turn into a stream. But in spite of all this, our people have pledged themselves in the amount of \$6893.11 so far. Of this amount we have received in cash \$5412.41 and there are unpaid pledges in the amount of \$1481.00. The thirty cent differential being caused by the over-payment of a pledge by one individual. The amount of unpaid pledges covers those pledges due this year and some which are spread over a three-year period. If those who have pledged for this year would pay their pledge now, we would have approximately enough for this year. Of course, all that is over-paid will be applied to next year. From all this, our people can see the over-all picture which is indeed cause for joy and gratitude. We therefore take this opportunity to

thank our people for their noble effort and assistance in this drive. Above all we thank our Covenant God Who has put it in your hearts to sacrifice for this cause.

We can also report that a temporary committee has been formed composed of representatives of our Grand Rapids Churches, which has unstintingly given of their time and energy to procure lodging, etc., for these families, and to advise in the distribution of the moneys received. Mr. Sidney De Young, member of the Theological School Committee, has worked with the undersigned from the beginning in this undertaking. Especially to him and Mr. Orie Hamstra, also of our churches and in the Realty business, a special word of thanks is due. The temporary committee was broadened out to include also Mr. Donald Ondersma of Second Church and Mr. James Kok of First Church.

It is now the decision of this committee to present to the contributors in this drive who are members of the society by virtue of their contribution or pledge, the opportunity of selecting a permanent committee to take charge of the fund and the care of these families for the three years required for their instruction in our School. We present herewith a nomination of eight names representing the four Grand Rapids Churches. From this list four will be chosen to serve for the three years. Printed cards will soon be sent to all the members and they will be asked to return them by a certain date, and those receiving the most votes will be chosen. The nomination is as follows: Second Church:—Donald Ondersma and Henry Kooienga; Fourth Church:—Gerrit Pipe; Creston:—Dick Bloem; First Church:—Andrew Voss, James Kok, Orie Hamstra, and Sidney De Young. You are requested to look over these names and be ready to cast your vote for four when you receive your ballot card.

As to the three ministers and their families, we can report that they are now living in Grand Rapids in places provided by the committee. The ministers are attending our School and already performing the assignments handed out by the professors on opening day. We know that if they could only slip in a word here, they would want to give expression to their deep gratitude for all our people have done for them, and most of all, of course, to our God Who has so mysteriously directed them to us and our School. Perhaps later you will hear from them.

We attended the opening session of our Seminary which was, in our opinion, a great episode in the history of our School and Churches. It reminded us of the early days in our School. There was excitement and life. Even the professors were excited, so much so that one seemed a little confused in dishing out his assignments. What a complex group of students! From several nationalities and tongues and denominations they came. There were two young men who

came from the Liberated group in the Netherlands and who are thorough-bred Dutchmen of course. There was a Greek, an Irishman and an American. There were two German boys and five of our own, four of whom are attending Calvin College and our Seminary part time. In this complex group we saw a principle of the pluriformity of the Church as well as her unity. All were united in the love of the truth as we know it in its purest form.

If all our people could have witnessed what we saw on that opening day, they all would have carried away as we did a new interest and zeal for the School which the Lord has given us, and so signally blessed throughout the years of its existence.

In closing we would like to remind those who have sent us their pledges that expire this year to pay these as soon as conveniently possible so that we will know where we stand financially. Also we would encourage those who have not yet contributed, especially in our Western Churches, to labor with us in this venture which must be of interest to all our churches. You can send your contribution to the undersigned, or to Mr. Don Ondersma, 1135 Chicago Dr., S. W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

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



## A Grim Contrast

Dear Mr. Editor:

A grim contrast presented itself in our *Standard Bearer* between the report of Classis West and the letter of Hamilton's Consistory in the issue of September 15. It is a contrast which might possibly leave the impression that our churches are working at odds, at different ends,—an impression which should not be left uncontradicted. And an impression it certainly leaves which ought to be cleared up at once and in a proper manner by the common party involved.

I refer, of course, to the contrast between the Rev. Hettinga's dealings in the vicinity of our Hamilton congregation and over against Hamilton's Consistory and the publicly reported fact of Mr. Hettinga's public reception at the last meeting of Classis West in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

As a member of Classis West and a delegate to the last classical meeting I want to do my part personally in clearing up this matter. I am sure, too, that others share my attitude.

Perhaps this can best be done as follows:

I. Although I do not consider this as an excuse for

what I consider an evident church political error, it must nevertheless be stated that the undersigned at the time of the classical meeting had no official information as to the schismatic and clearly unethical actions of Mr. Hettinga, as reported by Hamilton's Consistory. If I had had such facts in my possession, his reception on our Classis would not have gone unprotected.

2. I am sorry that the Rev. Mr. Hettinga was ever introduced at our gathering, not because he was given or made use of any opportunity to further his schismatic labors, but because our classis publicly bade him "Godspeed" through the medium of our classical chairman. This should not have been done, especially not by our churches officially; and having learned the facts, I now hereby retract, in as far as that is possible, my "share" of that "Godspeed". As long as Mr. Hettinga does not return from the evil of his way, he cannot possibly carry away the Lord's blessing, nor may the church of Jesus Christ bid him Godspeed.

3. I believe that future classes should take warning from this incident that no man, whether his reputation among us is good or not, should be officially received by our churches unless he has official business and official accreditation to the meeting in question. That is the church political error to which I referred under "1". It was simply not the business of the classis to greet and receive the Rev. Hettinga at all. And with the other delegates I hold myself guilty of violating this rule.

4. I believe that the Liberated Churches, if they value the efforts toward correspondence at all, must before all else put a stop to the efforts of one of their ministers immediately and repudiate his work. The labors of the Rev. Hettinga are not only unethical and in that way block correspondence; but they are, as long as the Liberated Churches do not repudiate them, a *de facto* admission, both on the part of Mr. Hettinga and on the part of his churches, that correspondence is impossible between their churches and ours, whatever may be the reason in their opinion.

5. Finally, I believe that the Rev. Hettinga should publicly apologize for even allowing himself to appear formally on our classical gathering and to be officially introduced while he himself was well aware of the fact that he had opposed the cause of the Protestant Reformed Churches elsewhere: for we and he must bear well in mind that the cause of the congregation at Hamilton is the cause of all our Protestant Reformed Churches at once. That cause the Rev. Hettinga opposed. And therefore also at our classical gathering he appeared and acted as a schismatic. That calls for apology and confession on his part.

Yours in Christ,

H. C. Hoeksema.

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## PERISCOPE

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*Denying the Heritage of the Fathers.*

This was our reaction when reading some time ago the glaring headlines and the article which followed in the "Catholic Messenger".

The title of this article was: "Dutch Reformed Pastors re-examine their position in the light of church tradition." And then, "Ask the questions which may put them closer to Rome than Geneva."

A portion of the article follows:

"Amsterdam, Netherlands.—In the wake of the recent Holy Office instructions permitting, but limiting, discussions of religious reunion, a group of 30 prominent members of the Dutch Reformed (Calvinist) church, (Hervormde Kerk—J.H.) has issued a pamphlet appearing to place them closer to Rome than to Geneva.

"The pamphlet entitled "Reformation and Catholicity," has just been published at Rotterdam. In it the writers express themselves with great caution, and it is noted that they do not announce any formal "break" with the Dutch Reformed Church.

"Yet what they write on tradition, the Sacraments and the relation between nature and grace, together with the opinion that Christ is actually present under the appearance of bread and wine and the evident respect of the authors for the Church of the early centuries are looked upon here as paving the way for discussion which may open wide prospects.

"Having stated that in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, the desire for Church unity is getting stronger, the writer gives expression to the opinion that the glory of Christ's Mystical Body will bring salvation to the stricken world. The writers go on to say: (Note that what follows is a quotation from these 30 Reformed Ministers in the Netherlands—J.H.).

"We criticize tradition in the Roman church, yet we have established our own tradition. . . . We are convinced that *a new examination of the reformation of the Church is necessary.* (We underscore—J.H.) Exegetics and Church history must be made use of, even if this must lead to less difference between the Catholic and the Reformed Church."

"Special attention is placed on the four following points: (and notice again that we have a quotation from these 30 members—J.H.)

"(1) 'We believe that the church finds in Holy Writ the revelation entrusted to her by Jesus Christ; namely, in His words and those of the prophets and Apostles. This is the nucleus and the rule of her faith and her life.'

"(2) 'We believe as well that the confession of faith

of the Church is linked to her indivisibility. Hence her right to interpret the Scripture. Therefore we raise the following question: Is it opportune to bring once more into discussion the question of this Confession of indivisibility?

"(3) 'We believe that Christ instituted the Sacraments as vehicles of His grace. As for baptism, we believe Christ instituted it to be the bath of the rebirth so that we may be cleansed of original sin and receive new strength for our divine life. Hence the question: Is it right to teach that this Sacrament of Baptism is only the affirmation and sealing up of a grace of God which is considered to be present before and without the administration of the Sacrament.'

We pause here briefly to notice how differently our Confession of faith presents it in Article 34, "Therefore he has commanded all those who are his, to be baptized with pure water, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him; so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath, unto children of God. *Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God; . . . .* Neither does this baptism only avail us, at the time when the water is poured upon us, and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life; . . . ."

Again we take up the quotation, concerning the Lord's Supper. "As for the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, in a mysterious and hidden way, is really actually and truly present and that under the appearance of bread and wine He gives His most sacred Body and Blood as food and drink for the eternal life.

"We believe that this Blessed Sacrament re-enacts in our own days the Sacrifice which He made on the Cross for our sins, and that, by our participation in this Sacrament, we partake of the fruits of this, His sufficient Sacrifice.

"Therefore, we put the question: Is this Sacrament justly appreciated when it is taught that it is only a sign and a sealing up of the salvation granted through preaching?"

That in this paragraph the authors come very close to an outright denial of Lord's Day 30 of our Heidelberg Catechism is evident to anyone acquainted with its contents.

"(4) 'We believe that the Incarnate Word continues through the Holy Church until the end of the world. Therefore, we confess that the Church is the Body of the Son of God in which He lives among us and that He has established in it the office of apostles

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and bishops through whom He wants to exercise His lordship among us.

"We believe that *He links the imparting of the Holy Ghost to the imposition of the hands of the bishops consecrated through Him and their successors* and that his office is based on a special vocation and a segregation for His service. (We underscore—J.H.)

"Hence the question: *is it rightful for a Church to withdraw from this apostolic succession or to consider the apostolic office to be rather a specialization of an office entrusted to all?* (We underscore—J.H.)

"Also are we not wasting the grace of God when, disregarding this tradition which dates from the beginning of the Church, we administer the Sacraments without asking ourselves if we have the right to do so, and go on without looking for the solution of the problem?

"We are convinced that we must try to be connected with the historical line of Christian confession and life, faith and church-rule, from which we feel we are separated.

"Therefore, we appeal to a deep-searching consciousness on all these points. Any one earnestly considering this question will see what an immense field lies fallow. By unitedly praying and working we may, humanly speaking, pave the way for the full growth of the faith, brought here centuries ago."

Now exactly who the 30 people mentioned above as the authors of the pamphlet may be we do not know, except that they seem to be pastors.

But this we know—that the headline errs when it calls them Reformed. This they may be in name but certainly not in all that that name stands for historically. They have compromised the Reformed position so definitely that they have no more right to the name.

In passing do we see here perhaps the ultimate outcome of the present-day trend toward "ecumenicity?"

#### *Does Archaeology Confirm the Bible?*

Under this title in a recent issue of the "Southern Presbyterian Journal" appears an article by Harold Houston Leach which we here reproduce.

"Archaeology is a great though a rather new science to which many scholarly men devote their lives with marvelous results. There are many valuable books on the subject, especially those written by Bible-believing Christian men. From the nature of the case, the findings of these scientists pertain to the historical facts as given in the Bible.

"And when these findings agree with accounts as narrated in the Bible they are customarily spoken of as 'confirming the Bible.' This is a mistaken use to make of the findings of archaeologists, whatever other values those findings may have. They should not be regarded as 'confirming the Bible,' for the following reasons, just to mention a few:

"(1) God Himself is witness that His Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit, (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:21; Psalm 119:152; Luke 21:33).

"God's Word was written hundreds and hundreds of years before this research was thought of or begun. Whenever an agreement between the Bible and these findings is found, *the real meaning is that the Bible shows those findings are correct, reliable*—never, never that the Bible is confirmed.

"This talk of 'confirming the Bible' in this manner is like it would be if one would take his Waterbury watch down to the United States Naval Observatory and proceed to show the scientists on duty there the correct time! They have the time instrumentally from the stars to the hundredth of a second. He who made the stars and has kept them in their courses ever since 'with the exact precision of a most perfect mechanism,' also made the Bible. And for us to dig up something from the earth and say 'it confirms the Bible,' is far, far distant from honoring God. Such talk belittles His Word.

"(3) Another reason against this practice is that the records of those facts as disclosed by the research is merely a human record, a human work; whereas the Bible is a divine product, though it pleased God in unmeasured condescension to use men in the making of it. Is it reasonable to use a human work to prove the correctness of a divine work? Shall I take my watch to the observatory to prove the stars are keeping the correct time?

"(4) In addition, God the Spirit cannot be regarded as begetting faith in any sinner from the findings of archaeology, even when these agree with the Bible, because the testimony of the Spirit Himself is that '*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*' (Romans 10:17).

"(5) The above effort thus to confirm the Bible implies the historic passages in the Bible are not reliable, are untrustworthy and in need of further certainty. This is a method that may prove of high value in human courts where one witness may by his testimony corroborate that of another witness. But this is not needed when 'the Judge of all the earth' is the witness as He was in giving the Bible.

"... We acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word: ... 'Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever' (Psalm 119:152).

"'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away' (Luke 21:33).

"'And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever' (I John 2:17)." J. Howerzyl.