

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Het Rechtvaardige Oordeel

“En de Koning zal antwoorden en tot hen zeggen: Voorwaar zeg Ik u, voor zooveel gij dit een van deze Mijne minste broeders gedaan hebt, zoo hebt gij dat Mij gedaan.” —Matth. 25:40.

Er zijn vele verkeerde beschouwingen over het laatste oordeel, dat over het gansche menschelijke geslacht komen zal.

Aan de eene zijde, zijn er mensen die denken, dat Gods volk niet in het oordeel komen zal. En, ter anderzijde, zijn er die zeggen en leeren, dat het oordeel over de Kerk, juist zoowel als over de wereld, zijn zal naar de werken. Nu zit in die laatste gedachte veel waarheid. We lezen vaak in de Heilige Schrift, dat de Heere ons oordeelen zal naar onze werken. Zegt Paulus niet, dat wij allen geopenbaard moeten worden voor den rechterstoel van Christus, opdat een iegelijk wegdrage hetgeen door het lichaam geschiedt, naardat hij gedaan heeft, hetzij goed hetzij kwaad? Ge kunt dien tekst vinden in II Cor. 5:10. Dit is wel de duidelijkste tekst die zulks leert.

En toch, men moet meer zeggen, dan net maar, dat Gods volk, juist zoowel als de wereld, door God geoordeeld staat te worden naar hunne werken. Anders zou er geen plaats zijn voor het eeuwig Evangelie, dat we, namelijk, behouden worden door het bloed van Christus, en dat niemand gerechtvaardigd zal worden uit de werken der Wet. De doorgaande leer der Heilige Schrift is immers, dat we uit genade zalig worden, door het geloof? En dan wel zoo, dat zelfs dat geloof nog een gave Gods is, zoodat niemand kan roemen in het vleesch.

Maar hoe moeten we dan al die teksten verklaren die schijnen te leeren, dat de mensch, hetzij rechtvaardig of goddeloos, geoordeeld zal worden naar zijn werken? Neemt, b.v., een tekst zooals Openb. 22:14,

waar staat: “Zalig zijn ze die Zijne geboden doen, opdat hunne macht zij aan den boom des levens, en zij door de poorten mogen ingaan in de stad.” En dan moet ge wel verstaan, dat men ook mag vertalen: opdat zij *recht* mogen hebben om door de poorten in te gaan in de stad. Dus hier wordt geleerd in Gods Woord, dat niet liegen kan, dat ingang in de stad des hemels afhangt van het doen der geboden Gods. Hoe zit dat?

We hopen dat probleem te onder de oogen te zien in deze verhandeling, en we zullen trachten om het op te lossen.

Dat we hetzelfde probleem in onzen tekst hebben, is duidelijk aan elken Bijbelkenner. Het gaat hier over de woorden van Jezus, die Zijne discipelen vertelde van het laatste oordeel. En de Heere had Zichzelf op het oog toen Hij zeide: En wanneer de Zoon des menschen zal komen in Zijne heerlijkheid, en alle de heilige Engelen met Hem, dan zal Hij zitten op den troon Zijner heerlijkheid; en vóór Hem zullen alle de volkeren vergaderd worden, en Hij zal ze van elkander scheiden, gelijk de herder de schapen van de bokken scheidt; en Hij zal de schapen tot Zijne rechterhand zetten, maar de bokken tot Zijne linkerhand. Alsdan zal de Koning zeggen tot degenen die tot Zijne rechterhand zijn: Komt gij gezegenden Mijns Vaders, beërft het Koninkrijk hetwelk U bereid is van de grondlegging der wereld;” en nu komt het probleem: “want Ik ben hongerig geweest en gij hebt Mij te eten gegeven”, enz. En de Pelagiaan zegt triumfantelijk: ziet ge nu wel? De kinderen Gods worden zalig, ze beërven het Koninkrijk omdat zij wel gedaan hebben! Ergo: men wordt uit de werken der Wet gerechtvaardigd.



Wel, laat ons eens zien.

Als er staat in het verband, dat de Zoon des Menschen alle de volkeren zal vergaderen ten oordeel, dan is het oogpunt de kerk. Dat is duidelijk, want het volk, dat geoordeeld werd kwam in aanraking met Jezus. De Heiland zegt: in zooverre ge dit één van deze Mijne

minste broederen gedaan hebt, zoo hebt ge dat Mij gedaan.

De Koning oordeelt Zijn Koninkrijk. En de voorwerpen van dat oordeel zagen Jezus en dienden Jezus, of wilden Jezus *niet* dienen in de kerk. Dat is ook duidelijk uit andere plaatsen van de Schrift.

Alle de volkeren zijn daarom de gekerstende volkeren. Het zijn de menschen die of kerkleden waren, of die met de kerk, den Bijbel en den wandel der Christenen in aanraking kwamen. De ontelbare schare die nooit van Jezus Christus hoorden, worden hier niet genoemd. Van hen hooren op andere plaatsen in Gods Woord. En die zullen een veel lichter oordeel ontvangen. Ze hebben den weg niet geweten. En zij zullen opstaan in dien dag en allen oordeelen die den weg geweten hebben en niet bewandeld.

Maar hier gaat het over menschen die door het Evangelie verlicht zijn geworden. Het gaat hier over de historische kerk op aarde, over alle geslachten die van den Christus hoorden.

Die historische kerk nu, bestaat uit kern en bolster. De kern zijn de schapen, die straks aan de rechterhand van Jezus gezet zullen worden. En de anderen, de bolster, zijn de bokken die straks aan de linkerhand van Jezus geschaard worden. Er zijn ook andere namen voor hen in de Schrift. De kern, de schapen, zijn de uitverkorenen, en de bokken zijn de verworpenen. Die namen vindt ge keer op keer in de Schrift.



En wat wordt nu geoordeeld?

Bij den eersten oogopslag klinkt het vreemd. Zoals we al eerder opmerkten: het schijnt alsof de uitverkorenen behouden worden door hunne werken. Er staat immers: Beërft het Koninkrijk, want . . . en dan volgen alle goede werken die zij gedaan hebben aan Jezus, omdat ze die werken gedaan hebben aan Zijne broeders. De Heere Jezus beschrijft den wandel der schapen ten voeten uit. Hij zegt: Ik was hongerig, en ge hebt Mij te eten gegeven; Ik ben dorstig geweest, en ge hebt Mij te drinken gegeven; Ik was een vreemdeling en ge hebt Mij geherbergd; Ik was naakt en ge hebt Mij gekleed; Ik ben krank geweest en ge hebt Mij bezocht; Ik was in de gevangenis en ge zijt tot Mij gekomen.

En, let wel, alle deze werken worden opgesomd, nadat de Heiland zeide: Beërft het Koninkrijk, want ge hebt alle die dingen aan Mijne broederen, en daarom aan Mij gedaan. En de Pelagiaan vraagt triumfantelijk: Wilt ge het nog duidelijker hooren? Men wordt immers uit zijn werken gerechtvaardigd!

Bovendien, hoe komt het, dat de goede werken der vromen de ze aan de naasten bewezen hebben, hier als een maatstaf gebruikt wordt? Het gaat hier immers over de tweede tafel der Wet? Er wordt niet één woord gezegd van den honger naar God of het dienen

van God. Telt de eerste tafel niet mee? En zou de eerste tafel der Wet niet allereerst moeten gelden in het laatste oordeel? Is het dienen van God niet belangrijker dan het dienen van den mensch?

En toch, het is een waar oordeel en het is een rechtvaardig oordeel.

Laat ons beginnen bij de eerste vraag: worden de kinderen Gods hier gerechtvaardigd uit hunne goede werken?

En dan willen we direkt zeggen, dat de goede werken nooit als basis kunnen gelden in het oordeel. Wat we hier hebben is dit: het levende geloof, hetwelk aanwezig was in de schapen, werd gedurende hun geheele leven bewezen uit hunne werken. Ge hebt dezelfde zaak bij die geschiedenis van de vrouw die een zondares was. Jezus zegt van haar: Daarom zeg Ik u, hare zonden zijn haar vergeven die vele waren, want zij heeft veel liefgehad. Ik vraag U: was het feit, dat zij veel liefhad de grond voor de vergeving der zonden? Neen, maar het feit, dat vele zonden haar vergeven waren, bleek uit de groote liefde die zij aan Jezus betoonde.

Ziet nu eens weer op den wandel dier schapen: ze bewezen, dat de zonden hun vergeven waren, want ze wandelden in de liefde. De liefde is een bewijs, dat God een goed werk in hen begonnen was.

Hoe moeten we de zaak dan voorstellen? En hoe onderwijst ons de doorlopende leer der Heilige Schrift? De schapen waren van nature wolven. De Christenen zijn niet beter, van nature, dan de bokken die aan de linkerhand van Jezus geschaard zullen worden. Maar God zoekt hen op, wederbaart hen door Woord en Geest. En de wedergeboorte is niet anders dan dit heuglijke feit: Jezus Christus gaat door Zijn Geest en Woord in hen wonen. Hij krijgt hoe langer hoe meer een gestalte in hen. Hij geeft hen het levende geloof, en door dat levende geloof gaan zij wandelen in de goede werken. En let er nu op, dat die goede werken, voorbereid zijn, van voor de grondlegging der wereld, opdat de Christenen daarin zouden wandelen. Dat wordt immers letterlijk in de Schrift geleerd? Leest Efeze 2:10.

En er zijn ook wel fingerwijzingen in het verband die ons deze verklaring leeren. Let eerst hierop: de Christenen worden door den Rechter aangesproken als Gezegenden Mijns Vaders! Dar zit reeds alles in. Het is immers de zegen Gods die ons opzoekt, wederbaart, heiligt en zaligt? Maar er is nog meer. In de tweede plaats, staat er: Beërft het Koninkrijk, hetwelk u bereid is van de grondlegging der wereld. Hoe ter wereld zouden de goede werken der menschen den hemel openen, waar die hemel hun bereid was vooraleer zij geboren waren? Ook hierin zien we, dat het fundament der zaligheid buiten den mensch ligt. En, ten slotte, let er op, dat zij schapen genoemd worden. En de Heere heeft ons duidelijk geopenbaard, dat Hij ons

maakt tot Zijne schapen en niet wij. Dat staat letterlijk in Gods Woord. Psalm 100:3 "Weet dat de Heere God is; Hij heeft ons gemaakt (en niet wij), zijn volk en de schapen zijner weide."

Uit dit alles blijkt, dat Christen niet gerechtvaardigd wordt uit de goede werken. Neen, maar die goede werken die Jezus opsomt zijn een bewijs, dat zij schapen zijn, dat zij gezegenden des Vaders zijn, dat zij het ware, levende geloof in zich dragen en uitleven, dat Jezus Christus in hen woont.



En de tweede vraag die we stelden was deze: waarom wordt de wandel naar de tweede tafel der Wet aangegeven als een maatstaf, en niet hunne werken die naar de eerste tafel der Wet zijn. Waarom zien we de liefde tot den naaste voorop inplaats van de liefde tot God voorop. En het antwoord ligt voor de hand. Wie ter wereld zal de liefde tot God aanwijzen? Als we dat doen konden, zouden we ook bij machte zijn om de uitverkorenen aan te wijzen. Neen, de liefde tot God woont in het verborgen hart en wordt door God alleen onderkend. Maar in het oordeel van den laatsten dag moet aangetoond worden voor de oogen der goddelozen, dat Gods volk waarlijk den wandel des hemels wandelden. En daarom ging de wandel naar de tweede tafel voorop. En die wandel bewijst, dat de liefde tot God ten grondslag ligt aan alle liefde tot den naaste. Want zoo staat de zaak. Liefde tot den naaste is niet mogelijk zonder de liefde Gods in het hart te hebben. Hebt ge liefde tot God, dan hebt ge ook den naaste lief. Hebt ge die liefde tot God niet, dan haat ge ook Uw naaste.

Wat zien we dus in dit laatste oordeel?

Dit: Jezus ziet en herkent Zijn eigen werk in Zijn volk, en keurt het goed. Ja, ik stem toe dat dit vernederend werkt op den trotschen mensch, die door zijn eigen pogen naar den hemel wil. Maar het zal niet gaan. Daar zal nimmer eenig vleesch zijn, dat zal roemen voor God. God zal alle eer ontvangen in de zaligheid van menschen. Zeg nu eens, dat de mensch werkelijk door zijn goede werken gerechtvaardigd zou worden. Dan kunt ge toch wel begrijpen, dat hij tegen de goddelozen zou zeggen in dien dag: Waarom waart gij niet goed en lieflijk zooals ik en al die schare van godvruchtigen? En hij zou eindigen om tot in alle eeuwigheid zijn eigen wijsheid en zijn eigen goedheid te zegenen, in plaats van God die het alles gedaan heeft in den Zoon Zijner eeuwige liefde.

Daarom moeten we hier besluiten, dat het heil des Heeren is, en niet des menschen.



Nu rest ons nog ééne vraag: Waarom worden zij zoo beloond? Want het is wel waar, dat hunne toestand tot in eeuwigheid in verband staat met wat zij

in den tijd deden. Wat de mensch zaait zal hij ook maaien.

En dan is het antwoord als volgt: Ze hebben Jezus gediend, in Jezus' kracht.

Ziet ge, Christen wordt omringd door hongerigen, dorstigen, vreemdelingen, naakten, zieken en zieken, en gevangenen. En nu heeft Christen gedurende al zijn leven de Christenhand der erbarming uitgestoken naar al dat volk. Hij heeft den hongerigen te eten gegeven, den dorstigen heeft hij gelaafd. De naakten kleedde hij, en de zieken en gevangenen heeft hij bezocht en getroost. En hij heeft alle die dingen gedaan in den naam eens discipels. Hij heeft er voor gezorgd, dat men geen verkeerden indruk ontving van zijne goede werken. Hij gaf Gode de eer gedurende zijn goede leven op aarde.

En daar kwam nog dit bij: bij al zijn goede werk bekende hij, dat de zonde hem parten speelde. Al zijn goede werken waren met zonde bevestigd. Zoudt ge daarom aan een Christen vragen: kunnen Uwe goede werken de basis zijn voor Uw ingang in het Koninkrijk der hemelen? dan zou hij U onmiddellijk antwoorden: Dat zij verre! Want ik ben met al mijn goede werken een ellendige zondaar. Ik bevlek mijn goede werken vaak door mijn verkeerde motieven, die steeds maar opkomen in mijn hart. Neen, de basis voor mijn ingang in den hemel is Jezus en Zijn gerechtigheid die Hij verwierf door Zijn bitter lijden en sterven. Trouwens, de goede werken die ik doe werden in mij gewrocht door Zijn Woord en Heiligen Geest. Ik heb niets van mijzelf. Want Hij leert mij, dat het willen en het werken door God gewrocht wordt in mijn diepste hart. Langs den geheelen weg vanuit deze door de zonde gevloekte aarde tot in het Nieuwe Koninkrijk is het God, geheel en al. Uit Hem, door Hem, en tot Hem zijn alle dingen! Hem zij de glorie tot in eeuwigheid!



En, ten slotte, zien we het gloren van een lieflijk licht in de verklaring der goede werken, zooals Jezus die verklaring geeft in den tekst. Hij zegt eenvoudig: voor zooverre ge het aan één Mijner minste broeders gedaan hebt, hebt ge het aan Mij gedaan.

Dat is schoon. Wat een wonderlijk licht wordt hier gestort op de ware philanthropie! In den minsten broeder woont Jezus. Als ik hem help en dien, dien ik waarlijk Jezus. Want Hij heeft Zijn woning gemaakt in het hart en leven van alle mijne broeders en zusters.

Ge ontvangt dan dit beeld: Jezus woont in U en stort Zijn Heiligen Geest in U uit. Door dien Geest woont de liefde Gods in Uw hart. Ge moogt dan ook zeggen, dat de Zoon Gods in U woont en in U werkt tot goede werken. Maar Hij woont ook in den arme en naakten broeder. En nu noopt Hij mij tot Zijn dienst in het uitreiken van Christelijke hulp en erbarmen.

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

### Nothing Binding?

In one of the *Reformaties* of the present volume, pp. 341-342, there appeared a contribution by a certain J. J. Bade, to which Dr. Schilder added a post scriptum which to my mind is rather important from the viewpoint of the question whether in the Liberated Churches anything is binding with regard to the question of baptism.

I will first translate this post scriptum as literally as possible. The translation is as follows:

"1. Also we have always pointed out, that a 'doctrine' was never *directly* imposed, and was in first instance never brought into question by anybody. One can make of a 'doctrine' anything and everything; and no one has ever consistently taught a thoroughly considered 'doctrine' with all its consequences during his whole lifetime. *Behind* the *formulas* of 1944 may lie all kinds of 'doctrines': the regeneration doctrine, the church doctrine, the doctrine of the sacraments, the covenant doctrine. A thousand times we repeated: we are asked to report within two weeks, whether we promised to teach nothing that was not in perfect agreement with definite FORMULAS. Because of our no to THAT question we were suspended and deposed. Any talk about a 'doctrine' is misleading. And this makes the separation between the synodocracy and those that are not stupid, and who further consider that this demand is wrong, greater. The 'binding' concerned therefore among others that one FORMULA. Is it possible that we must also seek all possible kinds of 'doctrine' which lie behind the fifteen *other* formulas, and then assure that *they* are binding or not binding? Let us stay by the *facts*! When the contributor insists on this he is right.

"2. For the rest presumptive regeneration as ground for baptism does indeed receive significance in connection with the *baptismal question*. One that understands the phrase 'sanctified in Christ' according to 1905-1942-1944, and hears in that first baptismal question the little word '*therefore*', comes to stand face to face with that 'doctrine'. The *binding* of officebearers to present this 'sanctified' according to *synodical opinions*, as according to divine revelation, implied therefore at the same time a *binding* of the *parents* to accept this doctrine also as binding at the occasion of the baptism of their child. The result is that whoever could not agree with this, could neither present his child to baptism, nor be a silent onlooker at such baptism, nor openly join in the thanksgiving; everyone who sits in the pew knows that those words in the

mouth of that minister on the pulpit mean exactly this and that; and that he himself who sits in the pew declares openly in the thanksgiving after baptism ('We thank and praise Thee', etc.) that he agrees with it, something that is also clearly expressed.

"3. For this reason the very first demand and the only way unto reunion is fellowship with all the office-bearers that have been cast out, and with those parents that present their children to baptism who can answer 'yes' to a baptismal question that is not binding according to the interpretation of 1944. If all members who see that hierarchy may never be imposed upon the children of God, had maintained their simple *rights* the reunion which took place in 1944 and following years would have been much more extensive. It still stands open every day and is demanded every day. But *this* reunion they still call schism. We call schism the imposition and acceptance and agreeing with and co-imposition of norms not allowed by God with the immediate effect of not admitting those to office who watch over the rights of the flock over against those that are not shepherds, as a synod which is no super-consistory."

Thus far Dr. Schilder.

The main thrust of this post scriptum is, of course, that no synodical decisions, such as were declared in 1905-1942-1944, may be made binding upon the churches. In the abstract, at least, Dr. Schilder seems still to conceive of the possibility that all that call themselves Reformed, regardless of their view of the covenant, of the promise, and of baptism, can live peacefully in the same church fellowship. Now it seems to me that the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands ever since 1892-1905 and to the present day has revealed quite the contrary. In 1892 the present Christian Reformed Church (of the Netherlands) refused to go along with the union of the Doleerenden and the Afscheidenen, mainly because of the question of the covenant, baptism, and presumptive regeneration. In former years Dr. Schilder always sharply rebuked these churches, because according to his conviction they walked in the way of disobedience. Now, however, ever since the meeting of the Vrijmaking in the Hague, 1944, he pleads for union with them. But why? Is there no binding in these churches? There certainly is. They insist on their own view of baptism and regeneration. But the simple fact is that since the days that he conceived of the Christian Reformed Churches as walking in the way of disobedience and demanded that they should return to the Gereformeerde Kerken he has changed his view of baptism and regeneration and the covenant. About this, and also about his acceptance of Heynsianism I wrote Dr. Schilder a long letter immediately after the war, to which he never replied. Be that as it may, the ques-

tion of reunion is to my mind not so much a question of binding, but rather a principal question concerning the covenant and baptism. 1905 was a miserable compromise on the same question. And subsequent history shows very plainly that the compromise never worked. And so it is not surprising that the main issue at the synod of 1939 to '44 after all was the question concerning the covenant.

Nevertheless, from the above paragraphs it is evident that in the abstract Dr. Schilder concedes the possibility of reunion with the Synodicals, if only the binding is removed, and if confession is made of the hierarchical action whereby the synod deposed office-bearers. For he writes that the first and main demand unto reunion is fellowship with all the office-bearers that were cast out and with those parents that cannot reply affirmatively to the baptismal question concerning the "sanctified in Christ" according to the interpretation of 1944.

Now since we in the States have the very same difficulty with the Liberated immigrants, I want to point out how impossible a real reunion is on the basis to which Dr. Schilder refers.

Notice that under "2" Dr. Schilder points out that according to the "binding" interpretation of the phrase "sanctified in Christ" in the first baptism question this question implies the theory of presupposed or presumptive regeneration. And therefore, when this question is asked according to this binding interpretation, the parents and the whole congregation are at the same time bound by this interpretation. Hence, Dr. Schilder concludes that under this binding no parents that cannot agree with this interpretation can present their children to baptism nor join in with the thanksgiving after baptism. Everyone knows, he says, that such a minister that is bound by the interpretation of 1944 definitely refers to presumptive regeneration when he asks the first question in baptism, and that the plural of the first person, "we", in the thanksgiving after baptism includes the whole congregation and the parents that present their children for baptism. And by doing so they openly declare that they agree with this view of the minister.

But can this be avoided?

Suppose that a reunion took place on the basis that nothing was binding regarding this question.

And suppose that as a result of this reunion a certain congregation would be, say 50% agreed with the synodical view of baptism and 50% with the Liberated view. And suppose, further, that the minister in such a church agreed with the synodical view of the covenant and that he explained from the pulpit that the phrase in the first baptism question "sanctified in Christ" means real sanctification and therefore that we must presuppose in baptism that the children are regenerated and further that the words in the baptism



thanksgiving, ("We thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism"), mean just what they express and do not refer simply to the objective bequest or promise to all, but to the fact that the children that are baptized are real partakers of the forgiveness of sins and of the adoption unto children. And suppose, moreover, that the consistory of such a church agrees with that minister, and shakes hands with him at the end of such a sermon. Could in that case the Liberated element of such a congregation present their children to baptism only because the doctrine proclaimed by the minister and confirmed by the consistory is not synodically binding?

I claim that this is nonsense and also impossible.

Do not forget that after the first question is asked of the parents and confirmed by the consistory and the whole congregation the second question still follows. And that second question reads as follows: "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian Faith, and which is taught *here in this Christian church*, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?"

Now Dr. Schilder knows as well as I do that in the course of history there has been much ado about the phrase in this question "taught here in this Christian church", and that various attempts have been made to have this phrase eliminated from that question. But our Reformed fathers insisted that it should remain. It is also clear that that phrase certainly refers to the local congregation. And therefore it can mean only the doctrine that is taught by the local minister and confirmed by the local consistory. And therefore we still stand before the same difficulty. That question is certainly binding. And I claim that any parent who in such a case answers the first question in baptism and joins in with the well-known words of thanksgiving after baptism certainly expresses agreement with the doctrine that is taught here in this Christian church, which in this case is the doctrine of presumptive regeneration.

And therefore I claim that the Liberated bind themselves, regardless of any synodical decision.

The same thing is true regarding the occasion of confession of faith. The first question that is asked at the occasion of public confession of faith in the Reformed churches is literally the same as the second question in baptism. Is it not plain, then, that those that make confession of faith in any church that upholds the doctrine of presumptive regeneration and the synodical view of the covenant, regardless of any

synodical binding, bind themselves to express agreement with that doctrine?

I insist that they do. And therefore I claim that you can never avoid binding. Synodical formulas are not necessary.

And therefore, when we in Canada work among the Liberated immigrants, we first of all make very plain to them, so that there could be no misunderstanding, that although we did not fully agree with the synodical view of baptism and presupposed regeneration, we certainly condemn the Heynsian view, and that our conception of baptism and the covenant and the promise differs radically from that of the Liberated. And only after they had been instructed in that difference and agreed to be further instructed in our doctrine and promised not to make propaganda and to agitate against the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches, did we organize them into a church in our fellowship.

Some of them, I understand, now claim that at the time of organization they never promised anything at all.

But this is manifestly dishonest. They certainly knew the difference between their view and ours. And they certainly understood very well that we would never organize them into a Protestant Reformed Church unless they agreed with our doctrine. When Chatham sent a request to our Mission Committee to be organized on the basis of their own view of baptism and the covenant, that request was refused.

I was personally present at the organization of the congregation in Chatham. On that occasion I preached the sermon. And in that sermon I emphasized our conception of the promise and of the covenant unambiguously, so that there could be no misunderstanding. And I emphasized at least three times in my sermon that if they organized as a Prot. Ref. Church, they must be able to reply affirmatively to the second question in baptism, "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine . . . which is taught here in this Christian church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?" And I told them very plainly that that means nothing else than the doctrine that is taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches. I emphasized that unless they could agree with this, they must never organize as a congregation. How anyone in that congregation can claim that they agreed to nothing, that nothing was binding in our churches, and that they could maintain their own Liberated view of baptism and the covenant is beyond my comprehension. It is plainly dishonest.

But I claim that the reasoning in the above paragraphs that reunion with the Synodicals is possible if only the deposed officebearers are received and reinstated in their office and the binding decisions of

1942-'44 are removed and no longer considered binding, is thoroughly mistaken.

If Dr. Schilder tells his readers that in the conferences that were held in Grand Rapids he clearly explained his view of the promise and of the covenant, I want to remind him that this is more emphatically true concerning our explanation to him of the Protestant Reformed view. In no less than 13 propositions, which can still be read in the *Standard Bearer*, I proposed and defended and maintained our conception. Dr. Schilder knows that. And he also knew this when in the Netherlands he advised the Liberated people to join the Protestant Reformed Churches. And if he meant by that that the Liberated immigrants would have the liberty in our churches to make propaganda for the Heynsian view of the covenant, which we hate, the error is his, not ours. Let me emphasize once more that in our churches there is nothing binding but the Three Forms of Unity and, of course, in the second place, the liturgical forms that must be read in our churches. But it is our conviction that the Heynsian view of the covenant and of baptism is not according to those Three Forms of Unity, but is essentially Arminian.

And therefore, if ever correspondence is established between the Reformed Churches (maintaining Art. 31) and our churches (which to my mind is still not at all inconceivable), this question must be thoroughly discussed. It is above all necessary for any proper and brotherly correspondence that we are honest with one another.

*Epi paasin aleetheia*, "the truth above all."

H. H.

Hier volgt de vertaling van dit artikel:

### NIETS DAT BINDT?

In een der *Reformatie's* van den huidige jaargang, pp. 341-342, komt een bijdrage voor van een zekeren J. J. Bade, waarvan Dr. Schilder een postscriptum toevoegt, hetwelk naar mijn opinie zeer belangrijk is, namelijk, vanuit het oogpunt der vraag of er in de Vrijgemaakte Kerken niets is dat bindt, ten aanzien der doopskwestie.

Hier volgt dan het postscriptum van Dr. Schilder:

"1) Ook wij hebben altijd erop gewezen, dat een "leer" nooit *direct* is opgelegd, en door niemand in eerster instantie is in geding gebracht. Men kan van een "leer" alles en nog wat maken; en niemand heeft nog ooit consequent een in alles doorgedachte "leer" met alle consequenties zijn leven lang "geleerd". *Achter de formules* van 1944 kunnen immers *allerlei* "lee-ingen" liggen: *wedergeboorteleer*, *kerkleer*, *sacramentsleer*, *verbondleer*. Duizendmaal repeteerden wij: wij zijn gevraagd, binnen 14 dagen te berichten, of wij

beloofden, niets te zullen leeren, dat niet met bepaalde *FORULES* volkomen overeenstemde. Om ons één op *DIE* vraag zijn we geschorst en afgezet. Elk gesprek over een "leer" is misleidend. En maakt de scheiding tusschen de synodocratie en degenen die niet dom zijn, en die voorts dien eisch verkeerd achten, groter. De "binding" betrof dus *onder andere* die ééne *FORUMLE*. Moeten we soms ook nog zoeken naar de mogelijke soorten van "leer" die achter de vijftien *andere* formules liggen kunnen, en dan *verzekeren*, dat daaraan al of niet gebonden is? Bij de *feiten* blijven! Inzender heet gelijk, als hij dat verklaart.

"2) Overigens krijgt de onderstelde wedergeboorte als grond voor den doop *wél* beteekenis bij de *doopvraag*. Wie "in Christus geheiligd" opvat naar 1905-1941-1944, en bij de *doopvraag* het woordje "*daarom*" hoort gebruiken, krijgt dus daar met die "leer" te doen. De *binding* van de *ambtsdragers* om dat "geheiligd" aan te dienen *naar synodale inzichten*, als naar goddelijke openbaring, werd dus meteen een *binding* van de *ouders*, om nu deze leer ook als bindend te aanvaarden bij den doop van hun kind. Vandaar dat wie het er niet mee eens kon zijn, noch zijn kind kon laten doopen, noch bij zoo'n doop stilzwijgend mee kon toezien, en openlijk mee kon danken; ieder die in de bank zit, weet, dat die woorden in den mond van dien dominee op den preekstoel die voor ons geen plaats heeft, dat en dat beteekenen; en dat hij het "*wij danken U*" (uit het gebed na den doop) *hijzelf*, die in de bank zit, openlijk wordt verklaard ermee in te stemmen, wat trouwens ook duidelijk gezegd is.

"3) Daarom blijft een samenleving met alle uitgestooten ambtsdragers en met die doopouders, die alleen maar "ja" kunnen zeggen op een *niet* naar de binderde interpretatie van 1944 gestelde doopvraag, de eerste eisch, en de eenige weg tot hereeniging. Als alle leden, die zien, dat hiërarchie aan Gods kinderen nimmer opgelegd is, zich hadden gehouden aan hun eenvoudige *rechten*, dan ware de hereeniging die er in 1944 e.v. geweest is, nog groter van omvang geweest. Ze staat nog elken dag open, en is ook iederen dag eisch. Maar *die* hereeniging noemt men nog altijd scheurmaking. Wij noemen scheurmaking het *opleggen* en het *accepteren* in *mee-spreken* en *mee-opleggen* van door God niet toegestane normen, met onmiddelijk effect van onthouding van ambtelijke toelating dergenen die waken voor de rechten van de kudde tegenover niet-eens-herders, zooals een synode die geen opperkerkeraad is.

K. S."

Tot dusver Dr. Schilder.

De hoofdgedachte van dit postscriptum is natuurlijk, dat geen synodale besluiten, zooals men uitsprak in 1905-1942-1944, den kerken binden gemaakt mogen worden. Dr. Schilder schijnt nog steeds de mogelijkheid te onderstellen, in het afgetrokkene ten minste,

dat allen die zich gereformeerd noemen, afgedacht van hunne beschouwing van het verbond, van de belofte, en van den doop, vredig saam zouden kunnen wonen in dezelfde kerkgemeenschap. Nu schijnt het mij toe, dat de geschiedenis der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland vanaf 1892-1905 tot op den huidige dag toe juist het tegenovergestelde geopenbaard hebben. In 1892 weigerde de tegenwoordige Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (van Nederland) om mee te gaan met de vereeniging der Doleerenden en de Afgescheidenen, hoofdzakelijk om reden der kwestie van verbond, doop, en veronderstelde wedergeboorte. In vroegere jaren heeft Dr. Schilder altijd deze kerken berispt, omdat zij, naar zijn overtuiging, in den weg van ongehoorzaamheid wandelden. Nu, evenwel, sinds de vergadering der Vrijmaking van den Haag 1944, pleit hij voor vereeniging met hen. Maar waarom? Is er geen binding in deze kerken? Die is er inderdaad. Zij staan op hun eigen beschouwing van doop en wedergeboorte. Maar het is eenvoudig een feit, dat sinds de dagen, dat hij de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken opvatte als wandelende in den weg der ongehoorzaamheid en van hen eischte, dat zij zouden terugkeeren tot de Gereformeerde Kerken, hij zijn beschouwing aangaande den doop, wedergeboorte en het verbond heeft veranderd. Daarover, en ook over zijn omhelzing van het Heinsianisme, schreef ik Dr. Schilder een langen brief, vlak na den oorlog. Op dien brief heeft hij nooit geantwoord. Laat dat nu zoo zijn: de vraag van hereeniging is naar mijn opinie niet zoozeer een vraag van wat bindend is, doch een principieele vraag aangaande het verbond en den doop. 1905 was een ellendig compromis over dezelfde vraag. En de latere geschiedenis heeft duidelijk aangetoond, dat het compromis nooit succes had. En behoeft het ons niet te verwonderen, dat de hoofdzakelijke ter Synode van 1939 tot '44 toch de vraag aangaande het verbond was.

Niettegenstaande blijkt het uit de bovenstaande paragrafen dat in het afgetrokkene Dr. Schilder de mogelijkheid toegeeft van hereeniging met de Synodalen, mits men de binding wegneemt, en indien men belijdenis doet van de hiërarchische actie, waarin de Synode ambtsdragers afzette. Want hij schrijft, dat de eerste en belangrijkste vraag tot hereeniging, gemeenschap is met al de ambtsdragers die uitgeworpen werden, alswel met die ouders die niet bevestigend kunnen antwoorden op de doopsvraag aangaande het "in Christus geheiligd", naar de uitlegging van 1944.

Sindsdien we dezelfde moeilijkheid hebben hier in Amerika met de Vrijgemaakte immigranten, wil ik aanduiden hoe onmogelijk hereeniging is op de door Dr. Schilder aangegeven basis.

Let er op, dat onder "2" Dr. Schilder er op wijst, dat naar de "bindende" uitlegging der phrase "in Christus geheiligd" in de eerste doopsvraag, deze vraag de theorie der veronderstelde wedergeboorte insluit.

En daarom, wanneer deze vraag gedaan wordt naar deze bindende uitlegging, dan worden ter zelfder tijd de ouders en de geheele gemeente gebonden aan deze uitlegging. Daarom concludeert Dr. Schilder dat onder deze binding geen ouders die met deze uitlegging niet kunnen overeenstemmen hunne kinderen kunnen laten doopen, noch ook kunnen meebidden in het dankgebed na den doop. Iedereen weet, zegt hij, dat zulk een predikant, die aan de uitlegging van 1944 gebonden is, definitief de veronderstelde wedergeboorte bedoelt als hij de eerste doopsvraag stelt in den doop, en dat de meervoudsvorm van den eersten persoon, "wij" in de dankzegging na den doop, de geheele gemeente insluit, zoowel als de ouders die hunne kinderen laten doopen. En door zulk doen verklaren zij openlijk, dat zij het met deze beschouwing van den predikant eens zijn.

Maar kan dit vermeden worden?

Zeg nu eens, dat een hereeniging plaats vond op de basis dat er niets bindend zou zijn aangaande deze vraag.

En stelt U nu voor, dat als een resultaat dier hereeniging een zekere gemeente, zeg, 50% samenstemde met de synodale beschouwing van den doop, en 50% met de Vrijgemaakte beschouwing. En stelt U verder voor, dat de predikant in zulk een gemeente het met de synodale beschouwing van het verbond eens was, en dat hij van de preekstoel verklaarde, dat de phrase in de eerste doopsvraag "in Christus geheiligd" werkelijke heiliging bedoelde, en dat we daarom in den doop moeten veronderstellen, dat de kinderen wedergeboren zijn, en verder, dat de woorden in de dankzegging na den doop: "Wij danken en loven U, dat Gij ons en onze kinderen, door het bloed van Uwen lieven Zoon Jezus Christus, al onze zonden vergeven, en ons door Uwen Heiligen Geest tot lidmaten van Uwen eeniggeboren Zoon, en alzoo tot Uwe Kinderen aangenomen hebt, en ons dit met den heiligen doop bezegelt en bekrachtigt", precies bedoelen wat zij zeggen, en dat zij niet eenvoudig doelen op de voorwerpelijke toezegging of belofte aan allen, maar dat die woorden doelen op het feit, dat de gedoopte kinderen werkelijk deelhebbers zijn aan de vergeving der zonden en aan de aanname tot kinderen Gods. En stelt, bovendien, U voor, dat de kerkeraad in zulk een kerk het met dien predikant eens is en hem de hand schudt aan het einde van zoo'n preek. Kon in zulk een geval het vrijgemaakte element hunne kinderen ten doop brengen, net maar, omdat de leer door den leeraar verkondigd, en bevestigd door den kerkeraad, niet synodaal bindend is?

Ik beweer, dat zulks onzin is en ook onmogelijk.

Vergeet niet, dat na de eerste vraag die aan de ouders gevraagd en door den kerkeraad en de geheele gemeente bevestigd is, de tweede vraag nog volgen moet. En die tweede vraag luidt als volgt: "of gij de leer, die in het Oude en Nieuwe Testament, en in de Artikelen des Christelijken Geloofs begrepen is, en



in de Christelijke Kerk alhier geleerd wordt niet bekend, de waarachtige en volkomene leer der zaligheid te wezen?"

Nu weet Dr. Schilder juist zoo wel als ik, dat er in den loop der historie heel wat te doen geweest is aangaande de phrase in deze vraag "in de Christelijke Kerk alhier geleerd wordt", en dat er verscheidene pogingen gemaakt zijn om deze phrase in de vraag te schrappen. Maar onze Gereformeerde vaders stonden er op, dat zij gehandhaafd zou worden. Het is ook duidelijk, dat die phrase zeker de lokale gemeente beduidt. En daarom kan het slechts zien op de leer die door den lokalen predikant geleerd, en door den lokalen kerkeraad bevestigd wordt. En daarom staan we nog voor dezelfde moeilijkheid. Die vraag is zekerlijk bindend. En ik beweer, dat eenige ouder die in zulk een geval de eerste doopsvraag bevestigend beantwoordt, en instemt met de bekende woorden der dankzegging na den doop, zeer zeker zijn instemming betuigt met de leer die in deze Christelijke Kerk alhier geleerd wordt, welke in dit geval de leer der veronderstelde wedergeboorte is.

En daarom beweer ik, dat de Vrijgemaakten zichzelve binden, afgedacht van eenig synodaal besluit.

Hetzelfde is waar aangaande de gelegenheid der belijdenis des geloofs. De eerste vraag die gevraagd wordt bij de gelegenheid der publieke belijdenis des geloofs in de Gereformeerde Kerken is letterlijk dezelfde als de tweede doopsvraag. Is het dan niet duidelijk, dat zij die belijdenis des geloofs afleggen in eenige kerk die de leer der veronderstelde wedergeboorte huldigt, alswel de synodale beschouwing van het verbond, afgedacht van eenige synodale binding, zichzelf binden door overeenstemming te betuigen met die leer?

Ik houd vol, dat zij dat doen. En ik beweer, daarom, dat men nooit de binding kan vermijden. Synodale formules heeft men niet van noode.

En, daarom, toen we in Canada onder de Vrijgemaakte immigranten werkten, maakten we het hen allereerst zeer duidelijk, zoodat er van misverstand geen sprake kon zijn, dat ofschoon we het niet geheel en al eens waren met de synodale beschouwing aangaande het verbond en de veronderstelde wedergeboorte, we zekerlijk de Heynsiaansche conceptie veroordeelden, en dat onze beschouwing van den doop en het verbond en de belofte radikaal verschilde van de beschouwing der Vrijgemaakten. En slechts nadat ze in dat verschil onderwezen waren, en toestemden om verder onderwezen te worden in onze leer, en beloofden geen propaganda te maken en niet te ageeren tegen de leer der Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken, hebben we hen georganiseerd in een kerk van onze gemeenschap.

En ik versta, dat nu sommigen van hen beweren, dat zij ten tijde hunner organisatie niets beloofd hebben.

Edoch, dit is kennelijk oneerlijk. Zij kenden zeer zeker het onderscheid tusschen hunne beschouwing en de onze. En zij hebben zeer zeker verstaan, dat wij hen nooit in een Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk zouden organiseren tenzij ze overeenstemden met onze leer. Toen Chatham aanvraag deed bij ons Zendings-Comité om georganiseerd te worden op de basis van hun eigen beschouwing van den doop en van het verbond, werd dit geweigerd.

Ik was persoonlijk aanwezig bij de organisatie van de gemeente in Chatham. Bij die gelegenheid mocht ik het Woord bedienen. En in de preek legde ik nadruk op onze beschouwing der belofte en des verbonds op ondubbelzinnige wijze, zoodat er geen sprake kon zijn van misverstand. En ik legde er nadruk op tot drie malen toe in mijn preek, dat indien zij zich organiseerden in een Prot. Ger. Kerk, ze in staat zouden moeten zijn om toestemmend te antwoorden op de tweede vraag bij den doop: "of ge bekent de leer die in deze Christelijke Kerk alhier geleerd wordt de volkomene leer der zaligheid te wezen." En ik heb hen duidelijk gezegd, dat dit niets anders beteekent dan de leer die in de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken geleerd wordt. Ik legde er nadruk op, dat tenzij ze hiermee accord konden gaan, ze nooit als een Prot. Ger. gemeente moesten organiseren. Hoe iemand in die gemeente kan beweren, dat zij met niets instemming betuigd hebben, dat in onze kerken niets bindend was, en dat zij hun eigen Vrijgemaakte beschouwing des doops en des verbonds konden handhaven gaat boven mijn bevattingsvermogen. Het is eenvoudig-weg oneerlijk.

Doch ik beweer, dat de redeneering in bovenstaande paragrafen, dat de hereeniging met de Synodalen mogelijk is, indien slechts de afgezette ambtsdragers weder opgenomen en in hun ambt hersteld zouden worden, en de bindende besluiten van 1942-\$44 weggenomen en niet langer voor bindend gehouden zouden worden, door en door foutief is.

Indien Dr. Schilder zijn lezers vertelt, dat in de conferentie's die in Grand Rapids gehouden werden, hij zijn beschouwing van de belofte en van het verbond duidelijk verklaard heeft, dan wil ik er hem aan herinneren, dat dit met nog meer nadruk geldt van onze verklaring aan hem van de Protestantsche Gereformeerde beschouwing. In niet minder dan 13 propositie's, die nog in de *Standard Bearer* gelezen kunnen worden, stelde ik onze beschouwing voor, verdedigde en handhaafde haar. Dr. Schilder weet dat. En hij wist dit ook toen hij in Nederland den Vrijgemaakten menschen aanraade zich aan te sluiten bij de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken. En als hij daarmede bedoelde, dat de Vrijgemaakte immigranten de vrijheid zouden hebben in onze kerken om propaganda te maken voor de Heynsiaansche beschouwing van het verbond, die wij haten, dan is de dwaling de zijne, en niet de onze. Laat mij nog eenmaal met nadruk zeg-

gen, dat in onze kerken niets bindend is dan de Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid en, natuurlijk, in de tweede plaats, de liturgische formulieren die in onze kerken gelezen moeten worden. Maar het is onze overtuiging, dat de Heynsiaansche beschouwing van het verbond en van den doop niet naar die Drie Formulieren van Eenigheid zijn, maar dat zij wezenlijk Arminiaansch zijn.

En daarom, indien er ooit correspondentie zal bestaan tusschen de Gereformeerde Kerken (onderhoudende Art. 31) en onze kerken (hetwelk naar mijn opinie nog steeds in 't geheel niet ondenkbaar is), dan moet deze vraag door en door besproken worden. Het is boven alles noodzakelijk, voor eenige correcte en broederlijke correspondentie, dat we met elkander eerlijk omgaan.

*Epi paasin aleetheia*, "the truth above all".

H. H.




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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.

All the Reformed confessions, therefore, emphasize that the eating and drinking which takes place at the table of the Lord is purely spiritual.

There is a spiritual food. Christ imparts Himself at the table of communion to believers as the true meat and drink unto eternal life.

There is, secondly, a spiritual operation. It is through the Spirit of Christ that He imparts Himself to believers.

And thirdly, there is also a spiritual mouth by which we eat and drink. And that spiritual mouth is faith.

But this entire spiritual mode of operation, this spiritual eating and drinking of Christ, takes place through the means of the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out.

Let us elaborate a little on this idea of spiritual eating and drinking.

For the sake of clarity it may be well to compare this spiritual eating and drinking with the process of physical nourishment, as is also done in the article on the Lord's Supper in our Netherland Confession. First

of all, in physical nourishment there is a physical organism, the human body. It cannot sustain its own life, but is dependent on the outside world. Constantly it must be supplied from without. Secondly, there is a physical substance, food and drink, that must be assimilated by that body. Because the body is physical, it stands to reason that the food it assimilates and can assimilate must also be physical. You could not feed a physical body with spiritual nourishment. In the third place, there is the longing of that body for physical food and drink: it hungers and thirsts. In the fourth place, there is the eating and drinking by the physical mouth. And finally, there is the process of assimilation, whereby the body changes the food and drink into its own flesh and blood, and thus is strengthened.

All this can be applied spiritually. In the first place, there is a spiritual entity that must be nourished, the regenerated, inward man, which is created in Christ Jesus, but is not independent and cannot sustain its own life, but must be nourished from without. Now the proper nature of that regenerated life is spiritual. It consists of a spiritual knowledge of God in Christ, forgiveness of sin, righteousness before God, adoption unto children, holiness, hatred and abhorrence of sin, delight in the law of God. And that spiritual life must be nourished. It must be sustained, and it must grow and develop unto perfection.

Now even as the physical organism of our body cannot be nourished by spiritual food, so the spiritual entity of the regenerated man can never be nourished by material food, but must have spiritual nourishment. There must therefore be a spiritual nourishment, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, light, knowledge, which is outside of that regenerated man and which can be assimilated by him. That spiritual food and drink is in one word: grace. And that grace is all in Christ. Christ is the food of that regenerated man, by which he is fed unto eternal life. For "of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." John 1:10. And again: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Christ is the fountain of the water of life. For: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Christ is the bread of life that came down from heaven to give life unto the world. John 6:33. Hence, Christ could say: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6:35. And again: "I am that bread of life." John 6:48. And once more: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the

bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51. Christ therefore is the spiritual nourishment which the regenerated man needs to sustain his life.

But also the process of assimilation by which this spiritual food and drink becomes my own, so that I become flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone, is purely spiritual. Christ must impart Himself to the regenerated believer. And the believer must eat and drink Him. And also this mode of operation cannot be physical, but must be purely spiritual. According to the Roman Catholics there is an action of Christ through the priest on that physical food by which it is changed into the body and blood of Christ. But this would place the living Christ actually beyond my reach. For that bread and wine can be taken only physically; and it can have nourishing effect only on my body. And therefore the operation in the Lord's Supper is spiritual. Christ is truly present in the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out, but only in a spiritual sense. By an operation of His Spirit He imparts Himself to the believer, and that not only mystically, but also through the consciousness of the regenerated man, so that he constantly is strengthened in righteousness and holiness, in knowledge and wisdom, and grows in the grace of the Lord. And as Christ imparts Himself by His Spirit to the regenerated man, the latter eats and drinks Him, and that, too, not with his physical mouth, but by the spiritual mouth of faith. Faith is the spiritual power of the soul to eat and drink Christ. And this faith whereby I receive Christ and assimilate Him is wrought and also strengthened chiefly by the Word of the gospel, but also through the signs and seals of the sacraments, in this case particularly through the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out.

And herein lies the special significance of the Lord's Supper. It is not thus, of course, that in the supper a grace is imparted to us that is not and cannot be received in any other way than by eating and drinking the signs of the broken bread and the wine that is poured out at the table of the Lord. Christ always imparts Himself to the believer and feeds his soul unto everlasting life. And the chief means whereby He thus imparts Himself is always the preaching of the gospel. The sacraments add nothing to the Word. But through the signs of the broken bread and the wine poured out the Holy Spirit effects two things. In the first place, through these visible signs He strengthens the personal assurance and the personal confidence of faith, "that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits." Heid. Cat. qu. 21. And secondly, the same Spirit through these same visible signs stimulates faith to a greater hunger and

thirst for Christ, so that by faith we eat and drink Him unto life eternal, even as He imparts Himself to us at His table. And thus the supper of the Lord is a means unto growth in grace.

It stands to reason that a spiritual disposition is required in order to be truly partakers of the table of the Lord. The unregenerated and unbeliever cannot eat and drink Christ. He has no life that can be nourished. Like the gospel, the supper of the Lord is strictly particular. Unbelievers can indeed receive the visible signs; but they cannot partake of the essence of the supper. But there is more. Even believers are not always ready to partake of the supper of the Lord. Even as we may be sick in body, so we may also be sick spiritually. We may nourish a certain sin, of which we will not repent. There may be hatred in our hearts against the brother. We may fail to attend the preaching of the Word of God. We may love the things of the world and seek them. And in such a disposition we cannot fruitfully partake of the supper of the Lord. We must be spiritually healthy. And spiritual health is characterized in the first place by a sincere and heartfelt sorrow over sin, by a fervent longing for forgiveness and for the grace of Christ, by an earnest desire to live in sanctification, to crucify the flesh, and to walk in a new and holy life, and by the sincere love of the brethren. Only in this true spiritual disposition of heart and mind can we expect to receive the spiritual food and drink that is presented to us in the table of the Lord.

H. H.



## Of Books

*Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, by John Peter Lange. Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Ten Volumes. Price per volume \$3.95.

From the Zondervan Publishing House I received for review a beautiful set of Lange's Commentary on the New Testament, ten volumes. The volumes of the same commentary on the Old Testament are on the press and will, the Lord willing, soon follow.

It would be worth while to write a detailed review on this commentary volume by volume, but this would require far too much space in our paper. I must, therefore, needs limit myself to a general description, characterization, and evaluation of this important publication by the Zondervan Publishing House.

For many years I have been acquainted with Lange's Commentary. A complete set of his *Bibelwerk* in the original German I have in my library. But the English set, now published again by Zondervan, far exceeds the original, not only in size and number of

pages, but especially in riches of contents because of its many additional notes by the translators.

What is known as Lange's *Bibelwerk* or his commentary on the Holy Scriptures, was not written in its entirety by himself personally, but was completed with the collaboration of other biblical scholars, such as Van Oosterzee (Luke, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon), Kling (I and II Corinthians), Schmoller (Galatians), Braune (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians), Auberlen and Riggenbach (I and II Thessalonians), Moll (Hebrews). The commentary was translated and enriched with many notes by several translators under the chief editorship of Dr. Philipp Schaff.

The commentary proper is uniformly divided into three parts: a critical and exegetical, a doctrinal and ethical, and a homiletical and practical part. As has already been remarked, it is quite impossible to offer a detailed criticism on a work like Lange's *Bibelwerk*. But in general I will say that, on the whole, I find that the exegesis in this commentary is quite thorough and scholarly, that the doctrinal and ethical notes though we cannot always agree with them, are of the conservative type, and that the homiletical and practical notes are helpful to the student. This does not imply that we always agree with the exegesis in the commentary. Dr. Lange and his collaborators were of the evangelical rather than of the Calvinistic type of theologians. The details must be left to the discerning criticism of the individual reader and student of Holy Writ. But with this provision, I am of the opinion that the Zondervan Publishing House rendered an important service to all who are interested in the study of Holy Scripture by republishing this commentary, and we gladly recommend it to our readers.

H. H.



## Contribution

### IN REPLY TO BROTHER IJPSMA

I think I can be brief in answering your questions.

In the first place, I could refer you almost entirely to the article of our Editor, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, in the same issue of the Standard Bearer, "Criticism and Its Answer".

As to what we have in common, see page 52, the first part of the article, where we see that having the same Three Forms un Unity means very little.

Secondly, regarding the charge that I generalize, read page 56, right column, lower half. Also concerning the "Januskop" read page 55, right column, lower half.

And about your conception of leaders (by the way), you should not say, "your leaders", but "our leaders",

for you are a member of the Prot. Ref. Church of Chatham.

Thirdly, read page 56, beginning by "But there is more."

Fourthly, Prof. Dr. Schilder who until lately advised his people to join our churches, and Rev. Van Dyk who writes: "BEWARE".

Fifthly, we at least agree with the Synodicals that the promise of God is only to the elect. You ask: which group is closer to me, they who teach "presupposed regeneration" and the "common grace theorie" or they who probably only with regard to baptism and the covenant have a different viewpoint. Is this still a question in your mind? I will answer this also with a question: If it should be a question of degree in error, which is worse: "presupposed regeneration" or to say that all children, born in the sphere of the covenant *are really children of God*, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of all the blessings in Christ; but are able to make all this of none effect and void? Besides, is common grace also included in the sphere of the covenant? Or is there probably also a certain grace outside of Christ's meritorious work? (Read Prof. Veenhof's Appél.)

I am not a theologian, but I believe I have just a small pair of Reformed Feelers (Gereformeerde Voelhorens). And I have heard a Synodical minister preach on Lord's Day 26, and have not heard one sentence with which I could not wholeheartedly agree.

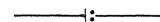
Sixthly, that there were four questions in the "Dutch Psalmboekjes", I did not know (we have only three), but that that minister asked more than four I am quite certain. But I am sorry that I could not record them.

Another minister asked many questions when an adult was baptized, among them a question such as this: Whether you believe in only one baptism, and not in two, in a true and in a sham baptism. And of this I am certain.

Finally, I think your hope will be realized regarding "other voices", in fact there have been such voices already, and very likely there will be more in the future.

I suggest, however, that you shout to other immigrants, BEWARE, but also tell them why, namely, that when they intend to join our churches we expect them to become PROTESTANT REFORMED, and not LIBERATED. And to abide by it.

Hessel De Jong.



### CONSISTORIES — ATTENTION!

The Assessment for the Emeritus Fund will be \$1.00 for the coming year.

In the Acts — 1950 — Article 108, page 82, a mistake has crept in. The word "discontinue" should be "continue". So that the article should read: "Moved and adopted to **continue** the assessment for the Emeritus Fund at \$1.00 per family for the coming year."

D. Jonker, stated clerk.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### The Idea Of Creation. (6)

#### *The Purpose Of Creation.*

*Scripture, proceeding from the standpoint that God is the living God, proclaims unto us that the purpose of creation is the glory of the living God.*

All the works of the Lord's hands are a revelation of the Lord's virtues and proclaim His praises—see Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:19, etc. God created man in His image and unto His glory and praise. This we read in Is. 43:7: "Even every one that is called by My Name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." The Lord glorifies Himself in Pharaoh, Ex. 14:17, and in the one born blind, John 9:3. He makes the wicked for the day of evil, Prov. 16:4 and Romans 9:22. Christ came to glorify the Father, John 17:4. All the benefits and the blessings of grace He bestows upon us for His Name's sake, redemption, forgiveness, sanctification, etc., Ps. 105:8, 78:9, Is. 43:25, 48:11, 60:21, 61:3, Romans 9:23, Eph. 1:6 f.f. He does not give His glory to another, Is. 42:8. God is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, Is. 44:6, 48:12, Rev. 1:8, 22:13. And, out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things Romans 11:36. Hence, because of this revelation and testimony of Holy Writ we may safely conclude that the glory of God is the purpose of all the works of His hands. The Lord does all things for His Name's sake.

Against this glory of God as the Divine purpose of the universe a two-fold objection has been lodged. First, God, then, is selfish, egoistic, never seeking anyone but Himself. This objection, of course, is groundless. To be sure, for a creature to seek itself would be the depth of selfishness and pride. But, we cannot speak thus of the living God. God is the Absolute Good, the only Good, the God of infinite and eternal goodness and perfection, in Whom the love of Self is the life of His infinitely perfect and glorious Being. As the perfect Good He must love only Himself and therefore He must seek Himself in all His work. This is not selfishness but God's own glory, His own infinite and eternal perfection.

Secondly, if God seeks His own glory in and through the creature, is it then not true that He needs that creature, that the world serves the Lord's Self-glorification, that the Lord is therefore richer with the universe than He would be without the universe? To this we would answer, first of all, that the universe did not enrich the Lord for the reason that God has

the eternal reality of all things before Himself in His eternal counsel. In this connection I would call the attention of the reader to the book of Rev. Hoeksema, "God's Way Out," the chapter which begins on page 165. The Lord has eternally the whole world in space and in time before His Divine mind. And, on the other hand, the Lord seeks not the creature but Himself through the creature. God is and remains His own purpose. If the world is but a reflection which reflects the glory of God, surely this mirror does not make God richer, even as a mirror does not make me richer simply because I behold myself reflected in it. All the things that move and live and have being have but one purpose and that is, not to enrich the living God, not to add unto Jehovah's glory and honour, not to give Him something which He otherwise would not possess, but simply to reveal that He is, in Himself, the God of infinite perfection, the only, absolute, all-sufficient Good.

Herewith we conclude our discussion of the IDEA OF CREATION.

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### THE CREATION OF THE SPIRIT WORLD. (1)

*A Discussion of this Subject is Profitable at This Time.*

It may be considered profitable to devote a little space in the Standard Bearer at this time to the creation and existence of the spirit world i.e., the world of spirits, of angels. It is true that the creation account in Genesis 1-2 is emphatically earthly in its point of view. Having set forth the truth that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1 we regard as the statement of a fact and not merely as a summary of what follows in chapters 1 and 2, to which Scripture we would call attention, the Lord willing, in a subsequent article), the infallible record thereupon concerns itself solely with the earthly aspect of the creation of God. The fact is that already in verse 2 the emphasis is laid upon the earth: having been informed that God created the heavens and the earth, our attention is immediately directed to the earth, and of that earth we are told in verse 2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Thereupon we are told of the creation of the light and the darkness, and also this is evidently described unto us from the viewpoint of the earthly, as is evident from the rest of the chapter. The infallible record speaks of the firmament in the midst of the waters, the separating of the waters above from the waters below, of the creation of the dry land and the calling into existence of all vegetation. Upon the fourth day the sun,



moon, and stars are called into being, but it is clear from the verses 17-18: ("and God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.") that again the viewpoint is earthly. And, finally, upon the fifth and sixth days all the animals and man are created.

Neither need it surprise us that the Scriptural record in regard to the creation of the world should be preponderantly earthly. O, it may be true that the earth is not the only planet, yea, that it is not the largest of all the bodies which the Lord called into existence. It may even be true that the earth is not the center of the universe. However, that the earth is the center of the revelation of God and the most important planet is surely beyond every shadow of a doubt. It is a fact, first of all, that Scripture, in Genesis 1 and 2, concerns itself almost exclusively with the creation of the earth. It is upon the earth that the night of sin and guilt was introduced, and the earth was willed by the living God to become the sphere of the uncompromising conflict between the Seed of the woman and that of the devil, of light and darkness, life and death. It is upon this earth that Christ assumes our flesh and blood, takes upon Himself the sin and guilt of the brethren, suffers and dies and rises again, and is seated at the right hand of the power of God. And it is also upon the earth that the Son of God, by His Word and Spirit, gathers out of the whole human race, out of every nation, land, tribe, and tongue, His Church, His elect own given unto Him by the Father from before the foundation of the world. Consequently, this earth is surely the center of the universe, the heart of the entire creation of God, as far as the eternal counsel of the living God is concerned. And it is therefore not strange that the creation of the world should be revealed unto us from a preponderantly earthly point of view.

Nevertheless, we wish to devote a little space to the creation and existence of the world of angels, before we set ourselves unto the task of describing the Scriptural record of creation as recorded for us in Genesis 1 and 2. First, this is generally done. A discussion of the world of angels usually precedes the discussion of the earthly creation. And, secondly, it seems to me that a little discussion of this subject could be profitable to us.

#### *Many Strange Notions About The Angels Or Spirits.*

*Scripture itself furnishes us evidence that the heathens worshipped evil angels, spirits or demons.*

This is surely implied in Acts 17:22: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of

Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." In Ps. 106:37, 38, we read: "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood." In I Cor. 10:20 we read: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." And in Deut. 32:17 we read: "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."

*The belief in the existence of angels not characterized by unanimity of thought.*

Although, according to the late Dr. H. Bavinck, all religions have acknowledged the existence of a spiritual world, the belief in the existence of angels has not been characterized by unanimity of thought.

The Scriptures inform us in Acts 23:8 that the Sadducees denied the existence of spirits. There we read: "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." Others declared that Christ and His apostles spoke of angels only because they simply adapted themselves to the superstitious notions of their contemporaries, without necessarily implying that they also shared these opinions. The eighteenth century wiped out all distinction between men and angels, even as the nineteenth century wiped out all distinction between men and animals. And finally, over against the tendency of Materialism a reaction set in, known as Spiritism, which not only acknowledges the existence of deceased spirits, but also proclaims the possibility of fellowship and communion between them and the people who are left behind in the land of the living, so that thereby the way is once more opened for thousands to believe somehow in a spiritual world.

*Finally, how varied and strange have been the opinions expressed in regard to the world of angels.*

Concerning the Roman Catholic doctrine in regard to the angelic world, we read on page 253 of Hodge's Outline of Theology the following, and we quote: "What is the Romish doctrine and practice with regard to the worship of angels? 'Catechismus Romanus, III. 2, 9, 10—For the Holy Spirit Who says, Honor and glory unto the only God (I Tim. 1:17), commands us also to honor our parents and elders (Lev. 19:32 etc.); and the holy men who worshipped one God only are also said in the sacred Scriptures to have adored (Gen. 23:7, 12, etc.), that is, to have suppliantly venerated, kings. If then kings, by whose agency God governs the world, are treated with so high

an honor, shall we not give to the angelic spirits an honor greater in proportion as these blessed minds exceed kings in dignity; (to those angelic spirits) whom God has been pleased to constitute his ministers; whose services he makes use of, not only in the government of the Church, but also of the rest of the universe; by whose aid, although we see them not, we are daily delivered from the greatest dangers both of soul and body? Add to this the charity with which they love us, through which, as Scripture informs us, they pour out their prayers for those countries (Dan. 2:13) over which they are placed by Providence, and for those too, no doubt, whose guardians they are, for they present our prayers and tears before the throne of God (Job 3:25, 12:12, Rev. 8:3). Hence, our Lord has taught us in the gospel not to scandalize the little ones, because *in heaven their angels do always behold the face of His Father which is in heaven*. Their intercession, therefore, we must invoke, because they always behold God, and receive from Him the most willing advocacy of our salvation. To this, their invocation, the sacred Scriptures bear testimony.—Gen. 48:15, 16.”

Augustine stressed the fact that the good angels were rewarded for their obedience by the gift of perseverance which carried with it the assurance that they would never fall.

Another opined that as many people would be saved as the number of the angels which had not fallen. And still another asserted, because of Matt. 18:12 (“How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?”) that the proportion of the number of the people to that of the angels was one to ninety nine. And still others declared that the number of angels was to be fixed at one thousand times one thousand million.

And, finally, we would remark that the church fathers were mainly of the opinion that the angels did not differ from one another in essence and kind, *essentia* and *specie* (Bavinck, II, 433).

#### *Their Number.*

The Scriptures, as we all know, give us no definite information in regard to the number of these created spirits or angels. Any attempt, therefore, to estimate this number, must be regarded as idle speculation.

However, we may certainly declare that they constitute, according to the Word of God, a mighty, innumerable host. They are repeatedly designated as the host of heaven or of God, and this already points to a vast number. We read in Deut. 32:2: “And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, and

He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them.” In Ps. 68:17 we are told: “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” In Mark 5:9, 15 we read: “And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.” A Roman legion was not always of the same number, but we do know that the size of a legion varied from three to six thousand. And in Matt. 26:53 we read: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” And, finally, we read in Rev. 5:11: “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

We may also remark that the angels do not constitute an organism as does mankind. They do not marry, are not born one of another. Their full number was created at the beginning of the world and it has since not been increased.

#### *Their Organization.*

*Although the angels are not an organism, organically constituted as is the human race, they do constitute an organization, are organized.*

This is evident from the names which Scripture assigns to them. The angelic host is characterized by ranks and order.

A rather common name in the Word of God to designate these spiritual beings is that of “angel”. This word is not what we would call a “natural name” for these heavenly creatures but an official name or title. The word “angel”, means: messenger, and it is also used to designate a man, either sent by God or by man, as in Job 1:14, I Sam. 11:3, Haggai 1:13, Mal. 2:7, 3:1. In the last two passages we read: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. . . . Behold, I will send My messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”—the word, messenger, in these passages is “angel”. Thus the word also appears in the New Testament, where the word frequently is used to designate men—Matt. 11:10, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:24, 27, 9:52, Gal. 4:14, James 2:15.

However, there is no general distinctive name for

all the spiritual beings in Scripture. They are called sons of God in Job 1:6, 2:1, Ps. 29:1, 89:6, spirits in Heb. 1:14, saints in Ps. 89:5, 7, Zech. 14:5, Daniel 8:13, watchers in Daniel 4:13, 17, 24. There are several specific names, however, which point to different classes of angels.

#### *Cherubims.*

The Scriptures speak of this class of angels in several passages. We read in Genesis 3:24: "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Here the cherubims are appointed by the living God to guard the entrance into the Garden of Eden in order that man should not eat of the tree of life and live forever. They gaze upon the mercy seat, according to Ex. 25:18 f.f., 37:8, I Chron. 3:14, Heb. 9:5, and between them the Lord dwelleth, according to Ps. 80:1, 99:1, Is. 37:16. Quoting Ex. 25:18-22 we read: "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." And in Hebrews 9:2-5 we read: "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." There are more passages in the Word of God which deal with these spiritual beings but space forbids us now to call attention to them. The Lord willing, we will continue this discussion in the following number of the Standard Bearer.

H. Veldman.

## Rev. Petter On Right Attitude In Controversy

As was stated, in the "Concordia" for October 12, Rev. Petter announced his intention to write a series of articles on "The Declaration of Principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches". In this same issue appeared Rev. Petter's first instalment. It partook of the nature of an introduction and consisted exclusively of admonitions to brotherly conduct in controversy. In the "Concordia" for October 26 is printed Rev. Petter's second instalment under his section-heading—"Among Our Treasures". In this article Rev. Petter writes on the subject of right *attitude in discussion*. I don't want to hide that I am disappointed. I had imagined that Rev. Petter had done with admonition, and accordingly I was looking forward with considerable eagerness to an article from Rev. Petter's pen—the first of the series—dealing with the content of the "Declaration of Principles". Nevertheless I have read this essay of Rev. Petter on "Right Attitude in Discussion", or controversy (Rev. Petter uses these terms interchangeably). I have studied its paragraphs, sentences, and words. And the result is that I have need of making a few observations.

Rev. Petter writes: "Thus our attitude toward each other (in discussion or controversy,—O) must certainly be that true Christians in the measure that they are Christians must find each other". Rev. Petter means this (he can't very well mean anything else): If the two parties to a controversy are truly Christians, they must find each on the basis of the truth.

Let us bring this statement down to earth by applying it to our case. If we (Revs. H. Hoeksema, H. Veldman, and the undersigned) on the one hand, and Rev. Petter on the other hand are truly Christians, Rev. Petter and we must find each on the basis of the truth. This is Rev. Petter's reasoning. But it raises this question: what is truth here? According to Rev. Petter's conviction, faith is a condition. That for him is truth. We affirm with just as much emphasis that faith is not a condition but solely an instrument,—a doctrine that Rev. Petter has condemned. Hence, what Rev. Petter must mean is that he and we must or should find each other on the basis of *his* doctrine. But this is impossible *for us*. And as it is just as impossible for him to find us on the basis of our doctrine, each of us shall have to walk alone regarding the question whether faith is a condition. For neither parties to a dispute may trample their convictions, forsake what they believe to be the truth of God's Word, for the sake of finding each other. Really to find each other consists in their being able to agree on what is truth. All other union is out of the flesh.

Next Rev. Petter asks: "Why is there such a great difference among Christians?" He means: why is there such a great difference as to doctrine among true Christians? Why, in other words, does Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Veldman and the undersigned affirm that faith is not a condition but solely an instrument and in this conviction pronounce Rev. Petter's teaching erroneous; and why do I, Rev. Petter, affirm that faith is a condition and in this conviction condemn the teaching of Rev. Hoeksema?

Let us attend to Rev. Petter's answer. He writes: "Because of our sin, our different natures, our different characters, our different relationships of life pushed into different directions by the power of sin. For insofar as we are sinful we do not seek and find unity in God as He comes to us in the Word. We do not find that focal, rallying point for our thoughts there, but on the contrary we find that point of control in ourselves. We are lovers of self. We hate to be subject to God and to one another. And so instead of the one word of God to which we are all drawn in will and mind and understanding we all draw in our own direction even when finally as a group we rally around one subordinate focus. That is the power of sin with which we always have to reckon." So far Rev. Petter.

Now what have we here? A truly amazing confession from Rev. Petter regarding his doing. If what Rev. Petter writes is true, and if he actually means what he says, he accuses himself of and confesses to the following, namely that the reason I, Rev. Petter, defend the doctrine that faith is a condition and condemn the teaching that faith is not a condition but solely an instrument is my, Rev. Petter's, sin; the reason is my differing nature, character, and relationships of life; the reason is that by the power of sin in me I push my relationships of life into a direction opposite to that in which Revs. Hoeksema and H. Veldman push their relationships of life; the reason is that, being sinful, I do not seek and find that unity in God as He comes to us in His Word; the reason is that I, Rev. Petter, do not find that focal, rallying point for my thoughts in God's Word, but on the contrary find that point of control in myself; the reason is that I am loving myself; the reason is, finally, that I hate to be subject to God and to the brethren (Revs. H. Hoeksema, H. Veldman, and the undersigned). Therefore I teach that faith is a condition and condemn the opposite doctrine.

This is indeed an amazing confession. It all comes down to this: My, Rev. Petter's, openly defending the doctrine that faith is a condition and my condemning the teaching of the brethren, Revs. Hoeksema, Veldman and Ophoff, that faith is not a condition but solely an instrument, is a work of darkness in the working of which I am motivated solely by my sinful flesh.

Now this is what Rev. Petter really is telling us in his article. He does not, of course, focus his argument on his controversy with us. The reason I do so is to clarify the point that he argues.

Is Rev. Petter's confession genuine? Is it actually the conviction of his heart that as a champion of conditional theology he wars a carnal warfare of unbelief as constrained by his carnal love of self? Such, of course, is not his stand at all. But this: that he defends the truth in opposition to what he believes to be our error, and that therefore he fights the good fight of faith. It is only a few weeks ago, isn't it? that he was telling us in the "Concordia" that he would maintain everything that he had in essence written about conditions. And with what vehemence did he not condemn our position. Certainly, Rev. Petter's stand is that he fights the good fight of faith.

Unless we are reprobated, we, too, firmly believe that we fight the good fight of faith. It is in that conviction that we champion our doctrine and oppose it to what we believe to be Rev. Petter's error. Hence, Rev. Petter must not tell us that in order to take the right attitude in our dispute with him we must take the stand that we fight a carnal fight as motivated by love of self. We believe that we rise to the defense of the truth as laid down in the Scriptures and in our Confessions.

Certainly, the point that Rev. Petter is arguing is not that he and we are actually defending the truth, be it as Christian men, whose best works, including our good fight in this present controversy, are tainted with sin. How, seeing that Rev. Petter has condemned our position, could he seriously be taking the stand that he and we, and we as well as he defend the truth under the impulse of the love of Christ.

Nor must Rev. Petter say that if the expression 'by nature' be inserted in his reasoning, it ceases to be offensive. That is not true. His reasoning is just as offensive with the expression "by nature" inserted in it. What difference is there between his telling us that as Christian men he and we defend what each of us believes to be truth *because* we are sinful men (this is the point to Rev. Petter's article) and his saying that he and we defend what each believes to be the truth because *by nature* we are sinful men.? No Difference whatsoever.

It ought to be clear that what, according to Rev. Petter's article, is the right attitude in controversy is not at all the right attitude but a strictly forbidden attitude, an attitude that Rev. Petter himself is not taking, at least in his dispute with us. The only position he condemns is our position, certainly not his own. The attitude that Rev. Petter insists on can be taken by the disputant only if he condemns in his heart what he defends with his mouth and agrees with his opponent.

Once more then, Rev. Petter's conception of what constitutes the right attitude in controversy is wrong. The church of the elect in order to be taking the right attitude in her controversies with darkness must certainly not take the stand that in defending what she believes to be the truth of God's Word, she fights the carnal fight of unbelief under the constraint of her sinful flesh.

True it is, that, as Rev. Petter says, there is a great difference among Christians. But the reason is not that, as Rev. Petter maintains, all Christians are carnal and that no Christian loves God and the Scriptures. Were that true, where would be the true church? Some Christians do love God and His Scriptures, and are united on the Scriptures. All are not reprobated. There is the true church. And the true church controverts in the conviction that she fights the good fight and thus not as passing sentence of condemnation on herself for fighting that fight.

Rev. Petter's conception of what constitutes right attitude in controversy, as applied to the Protestant Reformed in their dispute with the Liberated would verily be this: that the Protestant Reformed pronounce their defence of Protestant Reformed doctrine a work of the flesh; that they confess that the reason they defend this doctrine is their sin, their differing nature, character, relationships of life pushed into a different direction by the power of sin in them; their not seeking and finding that unity in God as it comes to them in His Word, their not finding the rallying point of their thoughts in God's Word, but on the contrary their finding that point of control in themselves; and finally their hating to be subject to God. In a word, in order to be taking the right attitude in their dispute with the Liberated, the Protestant Reformed, according to Rev. Petter's conception, must repudiate their whole theology. Is this what Rev. Petter wants them to do? If not, why does he present to our people such an impossible conception of what constitutes right attitude in controversy?

Rev. Petter's article on the right conduct in controversy is misleading. Therefore I felt it my bounden duty to make an attempt to expose the falacy of its argument.

A remark or two in conclusion.

The following sentences from Rev. Petter's pen strike me as strange. He writes: "In parenthesis I want to remark that to characterize the Liberated as teaching common grace, without at least some designation of particular persons is very misleading. And the same is true of the term Heynsianism, which can cause all manner of confusion, *both by the saying that we have condemned it* and by saying that they have embraced it."

Especially the clause in italics, which are mine, sets me to wondering particularly in the light of the fact

that Rev. Petter with such vehemence and apparent conviction has condemned our position. Rev. Petter's article contains more such dubious statements, such as the following: "We certainly shall have to be mindful of the fact that we have grown in America in close relation with the Christian Reformed Church. . . . At the same time the Liberated have had their own wholly different surrounding that influenced them."

"The relation is sometimes characterized this way: They are in danger of underemphasizing the Divine determination and efficacy, and that we are in danger of slighting the tremendous fact of moral-ethical implication, reaction and responsibility of the creature."

And then in the sequel Rev. Petter goes on to state as a fact: "From our side that very easily appears in an emphasis on the sovereignty of God that neglects the intricacy of man's moral-ethical place in the sovereignty. Then we no longer have the real Biblical sovereignty. As an illustration I may say that I believe that the revelation of that sovereignty does not crush out the element of the conditional relation, for the abundant use of it in the Bible proves that it exactly brings out the riches of that sovereignty."

If I understand English—and I do—then what Rev. Petter is here telling us is that the difference between the Liberated and us is one of emphasis.

G. M. Ophoff.

#### IN MEMORIAM

On October 20, 1950 it pleased the Lord to take unto himself our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,  
Mr. William Plaisier

at the age of almost 91 years.

Sorrow has filled our hearts, but we mourn not as those who have no hope, for we live in the blessed assurance that he has entered the eternal rest.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Plaisier  
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Labryn  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Plaisier  
Mr. and Mrs. Garret Plaisier  
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Hoozeboom  
Mr. and Mrs. Garret De Vries  
Mr. and Mrs. Garret Geers  
Mr. and Mrs. William Plaisier  
Mr. and Mrs. John Vander Breggen  
30 grandchildren  
14 great-grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday, November 16th, 1950, the Lord willing, our beloved parents

Mr. and Mrs. John Hamstra  
will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We thank God with them for having kept them together through the years and it is our prayer that the Lord may continue to bless them and grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Riekse  
Mr. and Mrs. Harm Hamstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hamstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Orie Hamstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Hamstra  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ondersma  
Mr. and Mrs. John Hamstra Jr.  
20 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Mich.



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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Church Membership In His Fear

#### 4.

#### The Church as a Gathering on Earth.

In our last article we called attention to the work of the gathering of the church. Just to establish the connection we remind you that we emphasized the following fundamental truths concerning this gathering of the church. In the first place, this act of gathering the Church is the great wonderwork of God in history, so that the church and its establishment is strictly a divine work, not merely a human organization or society or even a mere "religious movement". In the second place, we emphasized that the church is the gathering of those who are *called* to be saints, and that this calling is of God and is efficacious: God unerringly calls His church into existence. We called attention, in the third place, to the truth that this calling takes place through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human nature, and by His Word and Spirit. And finally, we stressed the fact that this calling through our Lord Jesus Christ goes forth through the preaching of the gospel throughout the ages, both of the old and new dispensations, and that also in this respect the gathering of the church is strictly a divine work.

The reader must bear in mind that we mention these truths and emphasize them only with a view to our main subject, "Church Membership in His Fear", and that while it is our purpose to discover to ourselves the meaning and spiritual requirements of church membership in the fear of the Lord, we can only do so bearing in mind the nature of the church and the mode of her existence in the world. To that end we emphasized previously that the church is the holy catholic church, and that the believer in all his relationship to the church in the world and in his entire attitude must in holy fear be deeply conscious of the fact that it is the holy catholic church which is, so to speak, at stake in this question. And to that end we call attention now to the truth of the gathering of the church with the purpose of emphasizing the practical importance of this truth as far as our church membership is concerned.

There is, however, one more important element which we must notice in this connection. And that is the truth that in this world Christ gathers His church in the midst of the world, He does not in a disorderly and discontinuous and random fashion gather individuals; but He gathers families, and He continues

His church in the line of generations. That this is true is beyond all contradiction. This fact appears in the very beginning of the history of the church, when in the period before the flood the antithesis between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" took form, and when it followed the lines of the generations of Seth on the one hand, and Cain on the other. And thus it was that in the entire old dispensation Christ gathered His church in the line of Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, even according to His promise in Genesis 17:7 which was in essence repeated many times afterwards. And while in the new dispensation the church is no longer nationally limited, the same rule holds, and the promise is unto us *and our children*. We must beware, however, that we do not wrongly conclude from this truth that membership in the body of Christ is a natural heritage, which we acquire simply by virtue of birth from believing parents. Membership in the church of Jesus Christ is not a matter of flesh and blood. Nor does the fact that God continues His church in the generations of the saints mean that He gathers every child of believers into the body of Jesus Christ or that in any sense at all *every* child has grace. For that gathering in the line of generations,—and that is the very striking fact to anyone who considers the revelation of this truth in Holy Scripture,—is exactly antithetical, so that while there is a gathering there is at once a distinction made, the result of which, to use the example of the old dispensation once more, is that the church is gathered in the line of a Shem, in distinction from a Japheth and a Ham; an Abraham, in distinction from his father's house; an Isaac, in distinction from an Ishmael (and the sons of Keturah); a Jacob, in distinction from an Esau; a Judah, in distinction (generally) from the ten tribes.

Yet there is something different about those children of believers that are not children of the promise, that are not brought into living contact with Christ, in distinction from other reprobate children. And the difference is that they are born and brought up in the sphere of the manifestation of the church. And in that sphere they have everything in common with the elect seed *except* the grace of God in Jesus Christ. They share the preaching of the gospel; they share the sacraments; they share the catechetical instruction; they share all that belongs to the life of the church in the midst of the world;—except the grace of God that renews them and brings them into living spiritual contact with the body of Christ and with Christ Himself. God's promise is not for them, nor ever realized unto them. His promise is for us and our children organically, for us and for our elect seed, because it pleases Him to take His seed, the children of the promise, from among our off-spring.

\* \* \* \*

### Conclusions.

We may, in the light of the above discussion of the gathering of the church, draw the following conclusions with a view to our subject of church membership in His fear. In the first place, the church on earth is the gathering of *believers and their children*, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the second place, the church on earth, as a result of the fact that the Son of God gathers it by His Word and Spirit, always exists as a *gathering*. You may, perhaps, be tempted to say that this is a truism. Let it be, then, but let us remember it as a very important truism. In the third place, and in close connection with our second conclusion, this gathering of the church, or this gathered church is manifested in *gatherings*, plural.

Now this whole truth concerning the gathering of the church, as well as the conclusions which we have just drawn, stands in connection naturally with the truth of the institution of the church and all that it means. Nevertheless, we may at this stage well call attention to the practical significance of the above conclusions as far as our church membership is concerned, provided we remember that there is more to follow and that what we now say must be considered in that light also of what follows.

### Believers and Their Children.

The first fact which follows from our conclusion that the church on earth is the gathering of believers and their children is a negative one. And while it appears to be only another doctrinal conclusion which we draw, it is nevertheless from the viewpoint of the matter of church membership a very important one. It is this: the church on earth is never pure from the viewpoint of its members. They are not all Israel that are of Israel. The carnal seed is always present.

Now this may seem to be a very commonplace fact. But every now and then that malicious story has a way of arising that the Protestant Reformed Churches and people think that they are all elect and that all the elect are in the Protestant Reformed Churches. I call it a *malicious* story, because it is undoubtedly raised by those who hate us and who hate the doctrine of election which we are graced to teach, and who wish to influence unknowing and innocent children of God. Let it be said in concrete form and emphatically: the Protestant Reformed Churches are never pure; in them all is not Israel that are of Israel; the carnal seed is always present in them.

That means, too, that when we seek to join ourselves to the church here on earth we must never look for a church where all are without doubt elect people of God. We will surely fail in our search. Often the matter of church membership and the question of the

true and the false church is confused by this approach. This is not the time to propose the positive and correct standard in this matter; that must wait for a later issue. We only want now to disavow emphatically that any church here on earth is ever pure from the viewpoint of its membership.

Furthermore, we must remember that it is always this carnal seed that corrupts the church on earth. It is from this carnal seed that the false church springs. It is from that same carnal seed that the final great apostacy, that precedes the manifestation of the man of sin, arises. It is from that carnal element that error and ungodliness and all kinds of trouble may be expected to arise also in our own churches. And I would add that as Protestant Reformed people we especially should be aware of that probability, exactly because of our view that Christ gathers His church in the line of generations.

And being aware of it, we must never be discouraged when error arises. On the contrary, we must know that the mighty Christ is gathering His church and that even in this present time His gathering of the church is a distinctive gathering which brings into being the very antithesis between the spiritual and the carnal seed.

Therefore the church and its members is called also always to watch and to pray, to put on the whole armor of God, to be girt about with the truth, in order that she may be able to stand, in the assurance that Christ will surely gather and preserve His Church to the end.

And that calling is concrete too! It means that in the faith that the church is gathered in the line of generations and consists here on earth in the gathering of believers and their children, we are mindful of our calling to preserve the truth of the gospel. It means that we are mindful of our calling to deliver that truth to the next generation. It means that believers are responsible that their children are in catechism and prepared for their catechetical work. It means that believers are responsible also outside of the sphere of the church institute that their children are "instructed and brought up in the doctrine of *this Christian church* to the utmost of their power" in home and school.

This truth implies also that *families* belong to church and go to church. It is undoubtedly because of this truth that our church membership is reckoned in family units,—a system which appears strange and illogical in other circles often, where membership is reckoned in the number of souls. But our church attendance itself should very definitely evidence that faith that God gathers His church in the line of generations. In the fear of the Lord believers should take their children with them to church, take them by the hand, and that at as early an age as *feasible*. And when the children begin to grow up a little, they should not be allowed to go to church individually. Believing

parents should not allow their families to go to church separately or by instalments, and to sit scattered all over the auditorium. From every aspect it is proper that children sit with their parents in church, where their parents may know without doubt that they are present at the services, and where their parents may know that they are behaving in an orderly and attentive way during the preaching of the Word. And they should insist as long as their children are *children* in the church that this shall be the rule.

That is church membership in the fear of the Lord!

H. C. Hoeksema.



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition Of Hebrews 10:19-25

#### V.

In this article we shall continue our discussion of the Scriptural-Revelational meaning and implication of the terms: "holy place", "the veil", and "his flesh". We will seek to understand what it implies to have "boldness" to enter into the Holy Place "through the veil, that is, His flesh". Vs. 20.

It has become evident in our former article, that the Holy Place is really the Throne of God as it is the Throne of Mercy to all who approach it by a living faith by the way of the Altar in the Outer Court. The symbolism of the Temple (Tabernacle) portrays unto us the way that leads unto God, the Father. As we shall have occasion to point out presently, Christ is the only Way unto the Father, because He is the Truth and the Life. (John 14:6).

Let us try to understand this from the text.

We should be engaged in this pursuit with believing hearts enlightened by the Spirit of grace, so that we may understand spiritual things spiritually. Then we shall not have troubled and fearful hearts, but we shall draw nigh in the full assurance of faith, our hearts we shall then have assured before God. (Compare John 14:1-6 and John 3:19).

The first matter that calls for our attention at this time is the meaning of the "veil" in the tabernacle and its relationship to the "flesh" of Jesus. For the text teaches us that we have boldness to enter into the Holy Place through the blood of Jesus and through His *flesh*.

How are we to account for this?

In answer to this we would call your attention to two matters. The first is the fact that elsewhere in Holy Writ the veil in the temple as well as the Sanctuary as a whole is directly associated with the "besh"

and "body" of Jesus. The first instance of this, and to this we now call your attention, is recorded to us in John 2:13-21. In this section of the well-known chapter of the Gospel of John we have revealed to us the incident of Jesus' cleansing of the temple; it refers to the first cleansing of the temple of Jesus at the very beginning of His mediatorial labors "in the days of His hesh". We are told, that He drove out those who bought and sold cattle, sheep and doves, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers. Furthermore, we are informed that hereupon the temple authorities (?) come and demand a sign of Jesus whereby He should convincingly prove to their satisfaction, that He is not simply taking powers upon Himself, but that He is indeed appointed an Authority in the temple; He must convincingly demonstrate that He has the right to take into His hand the affairs of the temple in the face of the temple-police and priests. And it is then that Jesus gives these "temple-authorities" the sign of the death of the Cross and of His resurrection from the dead after three days. Says He: "Break (ye) down this temple and in three days I shall build the same" (raise it up). At that moment in which Jesus speaks these words the Jews refer this matter of the Sanctuary to the temple in which they are standing, they think of the earthly temple, the building which at that very moment is still in the hands of carpenters, masons and artists. They remind Jesus that this temple has been in the process of construction for forty-six years already; does He think that He shall be able to build it up again in three days? But they do not understand. And they shall not understand until that day when in their blind fury and unbelief they shall see this "sign" of Jesus fulfilled in His glorious death and resurrection. For Jesus is here not speaking merely of this earthly temple made with hands; He is thinking of the temple of the body of His flesh. In so speaking Jesus *identifies* the body of His flesh with the Sanctuary. At the moment of the breaking down of His body—shall the temple be broken down in the rending of the "*veil*".

In so speaking Jesus does not here identify the substance of the "Sanctuary" with the substance of His "body"; He identifies them in their meaning. And in their revelational intent and language they are related as the reality and the promise, as the body and the shadow that is cast by the same. The Sanctuary is the shadow of which Christ is the body. The Sanctuary is a picture in the earthly form of the heavenly reality of God on the Throne in the midst of His people, thus dwelling in our midst, ever making His abode amongst us. It is the tabernacle of God with man.

Thus it is understood by the disciples after the resurrection, then they are enlightened by the Spirit of Pentecost as He is the Spirit of truth leading into all truth, the truth as it is in Jesus. And they then believed the Scriptures and what Jesus had said to them.

Our point is established in this passage that the "flesh", the body of Jesus is closely associated with that of the temple. In passing it may be remarked, that it is true, that in this passage in John mention is made of Jesus' "body" and not of His *flesh*, as in Heb. 10:20, and that the text here also speaks of "Sanctuary rather than of the "veil". But to our mind all this makes little or no difference. In either case the connection between the two is clearly taught. There is indeed a distinction, a rather clear and marked distinction in fact, between the terms "flesh" and "body". For the time being we pass this by; we shall return to this presently. Suffice it to say at this point, that both Jesus' body and His flesh are always associated in His mediatorial consciousness with the temple.

The second passage teaching this close association between Jesus' "flesh" and the "veil" is Matt. 27:51, where we read: "And, *behold*, the veil of the Sanctuary was rent in twain from top to bottom, and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent."

In this passage too there is a close connection between the "veil" and Christ's "flesh". This is evident from the connection of this verse with the foregoing. It is there that Matt. places us at the very end of the sufferings of Jesus, of His sacrificial and mediatorial work; the end of the work, which had been given to him to perform. This work He had just completed in the suffering of the anguish and torments of hell, bearing the wrath of God against the sin of His children. There was nothing more to do; His people are redeemed from their sins by the ransom price, which He paid. He need learn no more obedience from that which He suffered. The cup which He had taken from His Father's hand He had emptied. It is finished! It is finished before God and men, before the angels about God's throne and before all the demons of hell. The latter have been stripped of all their power to accuse the saints, an open shame they have been made by God in Christ, who nails the hand-writing that was against us to the Cross. That is the context of Matthew 27:51.

And now there is something at that very moment when Jesus gives up the Ghost that should claim our believing attention. It is the rending of the veil in the Sanctuary and the striking way in which it happened. "Behold" says Matthew, "the veil in the Sanctuary is rent from top to bottom in twain". A hand which is not human had affected this. That is what we must see. It was the hand of Him who makes His abode in the temple—in the Holiest in the temple. He has rent the veil. And He did this at the very moment that the work of Atonement on the Cross is perfectly and forever finished in Christ Jesus our Lord on the Cross. And writing to us, the Church, Matthew says: Behold this singular fact of the Cross! It may by no means escape our attention. For our soul's salvation sake we must see this—and *believe*!

Look then, and perceive! Look with a beholding and with a perceiving of faith in perfected assurance, and draw near unto the throne of God's mercy in the Holy Place.

Behold what, do you ask?

I answer that you must notice that when Jesus had passed through His own "flesh" 'on the Cross in the obedience to the law of God in our stead, having been cursed with our curse, from that moment we may pass through the veil of His flesh and draw near unto God the Father, who dwells in the Holy Place.

But that is not all. There is still another element in the Gospel of Matthew that shows that God is maintaining the connection between the veil of the Sanctuary and the "flesh" 'of Christ. It is that Christ in His whole suffering keeps this reality before His Messianic consciousness. It is there always before His priestly, prophetic and kingly heart. It is there constantly in the love wherewith He loves us even to the bitter and shameful death of the Cross.

This becomes strongly evident in the hearing of Jesus before Caiaphas. There too the matter of Jesus' connection with the temple is mentioned. It is brought up by false witnesses to be sure. They even corrupt the text. But even so the connection is there, and Jesus' wilfully maintains this connection of Himself with the temple. Jesus is here intentionally silent, that these men, who have His word once spoken, may by their wicked hands do all the determinate counsel and foreknowledge God had set them to perform. And through it all Jesus obedience reached for the cup from the Father's hand to empty it to the bottom. They will break down the body of flesh and nail it to the Cross, but He will raise it again the third day in glory.

And all this again shows beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Christ's flesh is to all intents the same as the "veil". It is the real veil that is rent. And when this flesh is rent the veil in the temple must be rent too. The body has come and so the shadow must disappear.

But now the question in this connection still may be raised at the term "flesh". Is this term "flesh" the same in scope and content as body? We think not.

The reason? In the first place because the term "body" is a more comprehensive term than "flesh". This is evident from the fact that presently we shall indeed have our own body again, but it shall then to be flesh and blood; the latter cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven. (I Cor. 15:50). Also Christ Himself shall have a body in heaven. It will be the glorious body. But it will not be flesh and blood. (Phil. 3:21). In this latter passage we could not possibly read "His glorious flesh". Flesh and body are not identical in Scripture as the above passage shows.

Of this more in the next issue, D. V.

Geo. C. Lubbers.

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## PERISCOPE

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### *In Good Company?*

"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy . . . Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, o man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay . . ." (Romans 9:11-21).

To this text and the age-old accusation which it contains our attention directed itself when we read a review of Rev. Hoeksema's book, "Abundant Mercy" in the "Moody Monthly". This review by C. N. B. (C. Norman Bartlett?) follows:

"This is the fifth in a series of volumes by Dr. (even though Rev. Hoeksema does not have a doctor's degree we can understand the reviewer's mistake if we can compare his writings with much that is written by "doctors"—J. H.) Hoeksema constituting an exhaustive and detailed interpretation of the Heidelberg Confession. In the book under review we have a masterly exposition, lighted up by many a penetrating flash of insight, of such doctrines as the nature of the Church, the future life, justification, and sanctification.

"But along with the many excellent features of the book there is a fundamental flaw fortunately all too characteristic of Dr. Hoeksema's theological contributions, namely, a hyper-Calvinism (?—J.H.) that stigmatizes as deadly heresy the assumption that man possesses freedom of will wherewith he may either accept or reject salvation offered him in Christ. Surely it is going altogether too far when a writer refers to evangelism in scornful terms as 'the hawking of Christ in modern preaching, and the attempts to persuade the sinner to come to Christ.' The doctrines of election and predestination are distorted into a fatalism which if pressed to its logical conclusion, would relieve men of all moral responsibility and would make God an arbitrary despot and the author of evil.

"It ought further to be mentioned that Dr. Hoeksema is an ardent amillennialist, who pours his vials of contempt upon all and sundry forms of premillennialism."

There you have it!

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### *Canadian Mission Activity.*

It is well-known to most of us that the Reformed, Christian Reformed and other groups as well as ourselves are engaged in the spiritual care of the immigrants from Holland.

We were reminded of another group that is active there—the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in America (commonly known among us as Oud-Gereformeerde or Nederduitsch). In their paper "The Banner of Truth" we are told that they now have mission posts at Otterville and Burlington in Ontario and it seems an established church at Lethbridge: "In June we made a trip of a few weeks to Canada and the State of Washington . . . Then friend Bouma traveled with us to Alberta, Canada . . . On Sunday we preached for some friends about Lethbridge (Lethbridge ?—J. H.). These friends now have a new church, plain and simple but very inviting. We also enjoyed our visit there and met with various friends." Another mission station was established in Sardes, British Columbia.

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### *"In Everything Give Thanks".*

"In everything? Certainly . . . Thank God for health, and continue to praise Him in ill-health; for prosperity, and also in adversity; when surrounded by kind friends, and when despised and forsaken; when sheltered beneath a good roof, and when in a hovel. Indeed, it is not the material condition that evokes thanks, but the heart condition. No good thing will He withhold; it is our privilege to realize in our hearts that all things work together for good. And in no other place can we realize this great truth except in the heart . . . We do not give thanks because we realize only the present pain, but always because we know that the end of it all is sweet companionship in the celestial city with Him. All that goes on in this earth is part of the great divine plan that ushers in the ceaseless ages of God's and our eternity. So, no matter what that part may be, because it enters into the eternal plan, I will in everything give thanks to God." C. A. Kinder in "Moody Monthly".

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### *Reminiscent of the Janssen Controversy but Much Worse.*

Recently we have pointed out some of the issues in



the current struggle going on in the Southern Presbyterian Church. That some of the modernistic teachings which threatened to invade the Christian Reformed Churches in 1918-22 and against which Rev. Hoeksema took such a leading part have invaded the Southern Presbyterian Church and have been carried much farther becomes evident from a recent article in the "Southern Presbyterian Journal."

According to the article in one of the Southern Presbyterian Colleges a certain book 'Christian Beginnings' is required reading for those who take their major in Bible. The author of the article quotes at some length from this book in order to show what is being taught in church supported colleges and calls for an end to such teachings. Because this opposition belongs to the fight of the conservative wing of the Southern Presbyterian Church of which the Southern Presbyterian Journal is the spokesman we take over some of the quotations—which show by the way the ultimate outcome of the modernistic teachings condemned in the "Janssen case."

The author of this article gives us the following: "The preface of Part II, 'The Beginnings of the Gospel Story,' begins as follows: 'The claim for Christianity is often made that it is the 'faith once for all delivered to the saints.' To the student of history such a claim is not only false; it is positively absurd.' " To this the answer is given:

"... Eliminate the supernatural and deny divine inspiration and the Bible becomes a book of folk lore, of pious frauds, unworthy of the faith and allegiance of intelligent people."

"Going on from this premise, Dr. Enslin later says in his preface, 'Today we recognize that we cannot hope to reconstruct the early days of the Christian beginnings by an uncritical reading of the four gospels and the Book of Acts. The authors, no one of whom was himself an eyewitness of the events he recorded, had to depend upon earlier sources, written or oral, and not upon telepathy for their information!'

"Here, with one grandiose sweep the author says Matthew and John were not eyewitnesses of that about which they wrote, but actually perjurers. Furthermore, inspiration by the Holy Spirit is ruled out ...

"We quote now at some length to show the absurd lengths to which 'scholarship' will go when it casts away the rudder of divine truth and embarks on the endless sea of human speculation:

P. 159—"A careful study of these four accounts leaves but little room for doubt that John the Baptist was thus transformed by Christianity from an independent preacher into the forerunner of Jesus. Nor is it improbable that his message has been similarly edited.

P. 151—"On the basis, then, of this critical sifting

of the gospel account and of the testimony of Josephus there would seem to be little support for the modern conjecture that Jesus was started on his career through contact with the Baptist, and that he repeated the latter's message even after John's tragic death had sundered the bond of teacher and pupil. It would, accordingly, appear more probable that the paths of Jesus and John did not cross at all and that our gospel accounts preserve little or nothing of the actual history of this enigmatic man.

P. 152—"Accordingly, it appears not unlikely that the incorporation of John into the Christian picture was a deliberate and studied attempt by early Christians to vanquish an embarrassing rival.

P. 340—"II Peter is a superficial highfalutin attempt to write elegantly by one who constantly displays a complete lack of even fundamental honesty.

"Our objection is not that such books are included in courses given in Bible. It is only by knowing the denials which are current and the reasons for our faith that students can go out into the world properly prepared.

"The thing to which we take strong exception is the method of giving students such books without at the same time directing their thinking to combat them ...

"Brethren, this is called 'Christian Education' but we do not believe it is either Christian, nor is it education in the true sense."

With such opposition we can certainly agree and once again would spur this editor on in his fight for the truth of God's inspired word.

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#### *The Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.*

From the "Banner" we quote the following:

"The Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands decided, at its recent Synod, to affiliate with the International Council of Christian Churches though a couple of delegates objected on the ground that the Council membership included Arminians, Baptists, and Dispensationalists. The same Synod declined to send delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to be held in Edinburgh in 1953, because of the up-to-now uncertain stand of that body with reference to the World Council. The denomination will be represented at Edinburgh by official observers.

"With reference to other denominations in the Netherlands, the Christian Reformed Church will continue conversations with the recently formed Reformed group under the leadership of Dr. Schilder, and it issued a call to the Netherlands Reformed Church 'to return completely to the true worship of God.' "

J. Howerzyl.