

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### Een Vermaning Tot Reiniging

“Dewijl wij dan deze beloften hebben, geliefden, laat ons onszelve reinigen van alle besmetting des vleesch en des Geestes, voleindigende de heiligmaking in de vreeze Gods.”

II Cor. 7:1.

De tekstwoorden staan in een eigenaardig verband. Om onze tekst eenigzins te verstaan moeten we voor de aandacht houden, dat Paulus de gemeente van Corinthe zeer gestriemd had in zijn eersten zendbrief. En de reden was dat er groote zonden gevonden werden in die gemeente. En als we het verband zien van onzen huidigen tekst in den tweeden zendbrief, merken we op, dat eigenlijk al die eerder genoemde zonden voortkwamen uit wereldgelijkvormigheid.

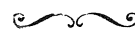
Daarom roept hij hen toe: Trekt niet een ander juk aan met de ongelooften! Zie vers 14 en de verdere verzen van het voorgaande hoofdstuk. En hij vervolgt dan in de verdere verzen om de redenen aan te toonen, waarom wereldgelijkvormigheid onmogelijk geacht moet worden voor een Christen.

En een van de kraste redenen is wel: “En wat samenstemming heeft Christus met Belial?” En zoo kwam Paulus tot de eindelijke vermaning in het vorige hoofdstuk: “Daarom gaat uit het midden van hen en scheidt U af, zegt de Heere. En die vermaning gaat gepaard met twee schoone beloften. Als ze dat doen, door Gods genade over hen natuurlijk, dan zal God hen aannemen, en Hij zal hun zijn tot een Vader en zij zullen Hem zijn tot zonen en dochteren.

Wat heerlijke beloften! En van die beloften spreekt mijn tekst. En op die beloften stoelt Paulus een verdere vermaning, en zegt hij: Reinigt uzelve van allerlei besmetting!

Bij die vermaning wilden we Uwe aandacht eenigzins bepalen, en iets zeggen van een vermaning tot

reiniging. En dan hopen we wat te zeggen van de beteekenis, de practijk, en de reden van die reiniging.



Eerst dan de beteekenis.

Het woord dat hier gebezigd wordt voor reinigen beteekent zuiveren van alle vreemde bestanddeelen. Hetzelfde woord vindt ge in de zaligspreek van Matth. 5:8, waar staat: Zalig zijn de reinen van hart, want ze zullen God zien. Daar komt het woord voor als een zelfstandig naamwoord, en in mijn tekst als een werkwoord, doch beiden komen van denzelfden wortel. En, zooals we zeiden, de grondbeteekenis van het woord is het zuiveren van alle vreemde bestanddeelen. Zoo is een rein hart, een hart dat van allerlei vreemde bestanddeelen gezuiverd is, een hart b.v., zooals het voortkwam uit de hand van den Schepper aan het begin der historie. Een rein hart is een hart, dat alles doet ter eere van God. Alle uitgangen van dat hart gaan naar den Heere heen in zang en lof en dank. Zóó had God het hart van den mensch geschapen, en zoo stonden Adam en Eva in het eerste, heerlijke paradijs. En nu wil Paulus, dat de gemeente van Corinthe zichzelf reinigen zou van allerlei besmettingen en vuilheid, opdat zij rein leven mochten.

De wortel van de reiniging is de wedergeboorte, en dat is de werking der kracht der genade Gods in het hart van Gods uitverkoren volk. En let wel, dit is een vermaning. Daarom is dan ook deze reiniging geen instorting van een soort heiligheid, doch een uitwerking van het zaad der wedergeboorte vanuit het hart des menschen. Het is het geven van een nieuwe koers aan de uitgangen van dat hart, hetwelk wedergeboren werd, door het Woord en den Geest van Christus.

Daarom is de eigenlijke Auteur dan ook de Drie-Eenige God, door Jezus Christus den Heere. En de voorwerpen van deze vermaning tot reiniging zijn Gods uitverkoren volk. Let er op, dat deze vermaning niet maar in het algemeen tot alle menschen komt,

doch zeer particulier tot "geliefden". Ze hebben van eeuwigheid tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid genade gevonden in de oogen Gods.

Wat zalige gedachte!

En let er nu op, dat die "geliefden" de beloften hebben. En die beloften hebben zij allereerst al ontvangen in de wedergeboorte, die zeker niet tot stand kwam door hun eigen wil. En voorts werd de belofte hun geschonken door het leven der bekeering en geloof. Maar de Heere werkt Zijn werk door ons heen, en daarom komen al die duizende vermaningen van Zijn Woord tot het wederomgeboren hart, en zet Hij Zijn volk aan 't werk. En zoo roept Hij de gemeente van onzen huidigen dag toe, evenzoowel als bijna tweeduizend jaren geleden in Corinthe: Reinigt uzelve van de besmettingen des vleesch en des geestes, voleindigende de heiligmaking. Hij roept ons toe op het huidige oogenblik, dat wij, Zijne kinderen, dat doen zullen. We moeten ons hart en leven zuiveren van allerlei vuilheid en boosheid, zoowel van het vleesch als van den geest, opdat wij rein leven zouden.

We worden in dezen tekst geroepen om ons af te scheiden van alles wat vuil en boos is, en, positief, opdat we ons hart en leven zouden toewijden tot God, die ons schiep en herschiep in den Heere Jezus Christus om vaten te zijn die gevuld staan te worden met Zijn eeuwige barmhartigheden en lieflijkheden.

En die reiniging moet geschieden in de sfeer der vreeze Gods. Die vrees is niet de vrees van een slaaf die zich kromt onder de zweep van zijn meester, maar de overweldigende indruk die Gods grootheid maakt op het kind Gods dat Hem liefheeft. De vrees Gods is rein en wortelt in de liefde van het kind tot zijn Vader. In die sfeer van liefde moet het kind Gods zichzelf reinigen van allerlei vuilheid. Dat is zijn roeping en daartoe wordt hij hier vermaand.



De tweede vraag die ons bezig houdt is deze: wat is dat nu in de concrete practijk van het leven. Laat ons eens zien. De besmettingen zijn de onzuivere bestanddeelen die in ons hart en leven niet thuisbehooren. Het leven dat we ontvingen in de wedergeboorte is het leven van Christus. Dat zegt God in Coll. 3. Ons leven is Christus. Zijn leven en het onze zijn één. Maar dat lieflijke leven Christi wordt omringd door allerlei vuilheid en besmetting. Laat ons maar bij het onmiddellijke verband blijven. De reiniging waartoe we geroepen worden heeft zekerlijk het oog op die lijst van gruwelen van het voorgaande hoofdstuk.

We worden geroepen daarom om ons te zuiveren van de ongeloovigen, van de ongerechtigheid, de duisternis van Belial, en van de afgoden. Leest het maar in

de verzen 14-16 van hoofdstuk zes. Dat zijn vreemde bestanddeelen. En zij vloeken eerst al tegen onze eerste schepping, en zeker tegen onze tweede schepping, of herschepping in den Heere Jezus Christus. Al die dingen vloeken tegen den Zaligmaker. Want Hij is de Zuivere, de Reine en de Liefelijke bij uitnemendheid. En sindsdien de Christenen Hem toebehooren en uit Hem leven is het onze roeping om ons te zuiveren van alle vreemde bestanddeelen.

En indien ge zoudt vragen wat besmet wordt, dan is het antwoord onze geheele natuur, vleesch en geest. En dat was het vreeselijke geval in Corinthe. Er was vuile hoererij en dan van een soort die zelfs onder de heidenen niet genoemd werd. Er was brasserie bij de viering van het Heilig Avondmaal des Heeren. Ook was er verdeeling in de gemeente, zoodat vier partijen streefden naar de meesterschap. Doch ook de geest van de kerkleden in Corinthe waren besmet geworden. Er was afgunst, jaloezie, nijd en haat aan 't werk in de gemeente die naar haar wezen en roeping één moest zijn. Er regeerden onverzoonlijkheid en onvergeeflijkheid. Al die ondeugden laten zich denken bij het lezen van den striemenden eersten brief van Paulus. Daartegenover werden zij vermaand om toch de heiligmaking te voleindigen in de vreeze Gods.

Wel, we weten wat die heiligmaking beduidt. Zij is uiterst belangrijk in het leven des menschen Gods. Zonder de heiligmaking zal niemand God zien. Zij is het afleggen van den ouden mensch en het aandoen van den nieuwen mensch. Het is positief de vernieuwing des gemoeds. Het is den nieuwen mensch aandoen die naar God geschapen is in ware rechtvaardigheid. En indien iemand zou vragen, wat dit beduiden mag, dan zal Paulus U het antwoord geven in zijn brief aan die van Efeze, hoofdstuk 4, vers 32. We zullen goedertieren zijn jegens elkander en barmhartigheid bewijzen. We zullen vergevende zijn jegens elkander gelijkerwijs ook God in Christus ons vergeven heeft. En als ge doorleest in het vijfde hoofdstuk hoort ge van de roeping om te wandelen in de sfeer der liefde Gods. Dat is het om de heiligmaking te betrachten. En negatief zal man den duivel geen plaats gunnen in het leven vanuit het diepe hart. Geen vuile rede ga uit onzen mond, en men zal den Heiligen Geest niet bedroeven.



Dat neemt ontzaglijke kracht. Die strijd is de zwaarste strijd op aarde. Die zijn geest bedwingt is sterker dan die een stad inneemt. Het is o zoo gemakkelijk om te haten en te zondigen met vleesch en met den geest. Leeft slechts Uw booze natuur uit, en ge zijt vuil, kwaadaardig en boos. Doch tracht om Uw oude natuur te dooden en in een nieuw god-

zalig leven te wandelen, en ge zult uitvinden, dat alles U tegen is hier beneden. Dat heeft elk Christen ervaren. En zoo gaan wij naar den Heere heen, van Wien wij zingen: Hij is de kracht van onze kracht!

Heeft Jezus niet gezegd: zonder Mij kunt gij niets doen? En zoo wenden de kinderen Gods zich naar den Heere met de bede: Och, schonkt Gij mij de hulp van Uwen Geest; mocht die mij op mijn paan ten leidsman strekken! 'k Hield dan Uw wet, dan leefde ik onbevreesd; dan zou geen schaamt mijn aangezicht bedekken. Wanneer ik steeds opmerkzaam waar' geweest, hoe Uw geboon mij tot Uw liefde wekken!

Dat is de bede geweest van allen die de overwinning behaald hebben op de besmettingen des vleesches en des geestes. Ze hebben gestreden tegen die vuilheden en boosheden en ze hebben de victorie behaald door de kracht des Heiligen Geestes die hen geschonken werd.

En dat is onze roeping. Indien ons kracht ontbreekt, en wie klaagt daar niet over, dan is het onze roeping om tot God te gaan in den naam van Jezus, en Hem te smeecken om de kracht des Heiligen Geestes. En we weten te voren, dat als we tot Hem vlieden om hulp en sterkte, Hij ons zekerlijk verhooren zal.

Zegt Jezus niet in de Bergrede: Indien dan gij die boos zijt, weet uwen kinderen goede gaven te geven, hoeveel te meer zal de hemelsche Vader den Heiligen Geest geven dengenen die Hem bidden?

En als de Heere ons den Heiligen Geest geeft, tezamen met Zijn dierbaar Woord der wijsheid, dan zal 't gaan. Dan zullen we in Zijne kracht den strijd des geloofs strijden, en in heiligheid des levens wandelen. O neen, we zullen niet volmaakt kunnen leven. Verre van daar!

Zelfs de heiligste onder Gods kinderen hebben slechts een klein beginsel van de nieuwe gehoorzaamheid. Doch wel dit: dat kleine beginsel zal openbaar worden in Uw geheele leven, en de goddeloozen die rondom de kerke Gods zijn zullen het kunnen zien in onzen wandel, en ze zullen huns ondanks daarvan getuigen en zeggen: ziet hoe lief zij elkander hebben!



En waartoe zullen we ons reinigen van alle besmettingen des vleesches en des geestes?

Allereerst omdat God het zegt. Ge zult het doen uit pure gehoorzaamheid. Als er ergens ruimte is voor zoogenaamde blinde gehoorzaamheid, dan is het in de kerk van Christus. Blinde gehoorzaamheid, want van te voren weten we, dat hetgeen God gebiedt goed is voor ons. Het mag duizend malen schijnen alsof

we in ons gehoorzamen ten onder zullen gaan, dat maakt absoluut geen verschil. God zijn alle dingen van eeuwigheid bekend. En Hij heeft het ons verteld. Die in Hem vertrouwt en Hem gehoorzaamt zal welvaren. Die waarheid kunt ge wel op duizend bladzijden van Gods Woord lezen. En ook al schijnt het niet alleen, doch als ge er werkelijk onder moet, als ge zelf zoudt moeten sterven in den weg der gehoorzaamheid, dan is het ook goed. Zegt Jezus niet, dat die zijn leven verliezen zal om Zijns Naams wil het zal vinden? En zoo zeggen we het nog eens: we zullen deze vermaning opvolgen allereerst omdat God het zegt.

Maar het is ook lieflijk. Het past bij onze geboorte uit God. Het behoeft ons niet te verwonderen, dat we gedurende ons geheele leven vermaand worden om ons te heiligen en te reinigen, want God is heilig, en het is een goed kind dat naar zijn Vader aardt. Daarom zegt God het alreede in het Oude Testament: Zijt heilig want Ik ben heilig. En Petrus heeft die klank opgevangen en in het Nieuwe Testament door gegeven.

En eindelijk, de Heere gaf ons een drangreden in den tekst zelf: we hebben Zijne beloften. Het is de goede boodschap van de beloften Gods die ons toelokken.

Wat die beloften zijn? In het begin van deze woorden heb ik er al wat van gezegd. De Heere belooft Zijn volk, dat Hij in ons zal wonen. Straks zal Hij alles zijn en in allen. En als God de Lieflijke is bij uitnemendheid, kunt ge U het dan eenigzins voorstellen wat zaligheid het zal wezen om vervuld te zijn van God?

Toen Stefanus bijna gestorven was blonk zijn aangezicht als het aangezicht van een engel Gods. Ik moet hier stamelen.

En al degenen die door Gods genade zich reinigen door de kracht van Jezus Christus in en over hen zullen zijne zonen en dochteren zijn!

We noemen hier op aarde de kinderen van be-roemde menschen zalig, doch wat zullen we zeggen van het eeuwige kindschap Gods? Hem eeuwiglijk te mogen aanspreken als onzen Vader? Hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwonderend oog!

G. Vos.

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“God has no larger field for the man who is not faithfully doing his work where he is.”

—from Preaching the Word.

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**EDITORIALS****Why Not Protestant Reformed**

Continuing with our answer of the article which appeared in the "Gereformeerd Gezinsblad" during the month of February of this year, we repeat what we wrote in our article of the July issue, that we will not reflect upon all the matters which appear in that article. The article, e.g., discusses the decision of the June 5, 1950, consistory meeting in connection with the acceptance of members, which decision was endorsed by the October, 1950, Classical meeting of Classis East. We surely need not enter again into these matters which have been mentioned again and again.

However, before we discuss the grievances which the Liberated immigrants around Hamilton lodge against the doctrine of our Protestant Reformed Churches, we wish to touch upon two matters which are mentioned in this article.

The first matter is contained in the following quotation: "This occasioned opposition (the decision of the June 5 consistory meeting—H.V.) when people were visited who wish to join. These defended the Scriptural doctrine of baptism and the covenant in the Netherlands." We refer particularly to the second of these sentences. We do not deny that the binding decision of the June 5 consistory meeting occasioned opposition. This is surely true. But we do deny that these people defended the Scriptural doctrine of baptism and the covenant in the Netherlands, unless "defending these doctrines" is the same as the refusal to renounce them. The undersigned must yet meet the immigrant who is able to defend his conception of the sacrament of baptism over against the Scriptural, Confessional, and Protestant Reformed conception of these doctrines. It is simply a fact that W. Wildeboer, one of the authors of the article which we are now answering, declared once to his uncle and aunt whom we visited in Orangeville, that it cannot be said of the people in the Netherlands that they are well-informed with respect to our Reformed Confessions.

The second matter to which we would call brief attention is contained in the following quotation: "Then the majority of the consistory retracted this decision, maintaining in the meantime that the Prot. Ref. theology in itself was completely Scriptural and according to the confessions. One consistory member made his objections public. According to his opinion the Prot. Ref. Theology and the consequences thereof were not in harmony with Scripture and the Confession". First, it must be evident even to the most

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superficial reader that this quotation contains a glaring contradiction. On the one hand we are told that the majority of the consistory retracted the binding decision, maintaining that the Prot. Ref. theology in itself was completely Scriptural and according to the confessions. And on the other hand we are told that one of the consistory members made his objections public, declaring that, according to his opinion, the Prot. Ref. theology and the consequences thereof were not in harmony with Scripture and the confessions. Hence, this consistory member, who maintained that the Prot. Ref. theology in itself was completely in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions, protested against the binding decision, declaring that the Prot. Ref. theology was not in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions. This, of course, is nonsense. Secondly, the second sentence of this quotation is simply untrue. I am assuming that the article refers to the protest of L. Klapwijk which he presented at a consistory meeting against the binding decision of June 5, 1950. How the authors of this article dare to write that deacon Klapwijk opined that the Prot. Ref. theology was contrary to Scripture and the Confessions is a riddle to me. Especially in the light of the fact that T. Hart, one of the authors of the article, was an elder at the time. It is simply a fact that Klapwijk never declared this. He presented his protest at a consistory meeting which was held in the month of July. And fully two months afterward he declared that the doctrine as taught in our Protestant Reformed Church was more in harmony with Scripture and the Confessions than that which was taught in the Netherlands. And, at a consistory meeting which was held in November, at which also Hart was present, the entire consistory gave the undersigned the assurance that he had never uttered a word which, in their opinion, was contrary to Scripture or the Confessions.

I believe that I have now disposed of these two quotations. I must say this for the sake of the record.

We will now proceed with a discussion of the criticism which these Liberated members or immigrants lodge against the doctrine of our Protestant Reformed Churches. I will quote this part of their article in full: "All this brought us to the conviction that both doctrines could not exist side by side. We began to view the Protestant Reformed doctrine as unscriptural. Through the preaching we came to the conviction that the entire Prot. Ref. doctrine has been worked out to be a logical-closing system of faith completely adapted to the human mind. Proceeding from election all the works and acts of God are humanly explained. They have, e.g., drawn up a declaration of principles (the question whether it is binding is of little significance; actually it is the basis for working and acting of the Prot. Ref. Church) which exclusively contains ex-

pressions from the Confessions. Hence, they say, that is therefore according to the Scriptures. They have built up a system and prove it with texts. They say that God is unchangeable and works all things according to His decrees. Everything has been determined and ordained by Him. God has loved the one eternally and hates the other. Because God loves His children always there is no place for wrath. The consequences unto which this preaching leads are illustrated by the following examples. When Adam fell in sin he actually did nothing else than carry out God's counsel as obedient servant, namely by leading the human race to fall. Thereby the *deed of sin* is not ascribed to man as an individual whereby the guilt-consciousness because of the deed disappears. The sin which we commit as child of God is not viewed as a personally-turning-away-of-ourselves from God. God's child CAN not turn his back upon God inasmuch as He always draws His child unto Himself and it cannot resist that. This is shown, o.a., by Paul's cooperation in the stoning of Stephan which is not presented as sin and they also come to the conclusion that Paul was not converted on the way to Damascus, but merely apprehended by God in his heart. Fact is, Paul was elected, God loved him and every step which that beloved child of God did IS to His honour. We must be conscious of His election and live accordingly. If we have that, that consciousness gives the comfort which we need in this life. Hereby we do not come to the sober reality that also WE as God's children live in a falling and rising, sin and repentance, the constant exchange of loving-God and violating of His law. The prayer to Christ for daily repentance has no place in that system. Man IS converted, i.e., elected, or man is not. God never strikes His people with His judgments, for if God strikes, then it is not His people which are stricken but the world. When the Scriptures teach us how the Lord goes up with the people of Israel, then that is explained merely as concern for people who are elected, and those are but few in Israel. They come to the declaration that Israel could not enter Canaan because the Lord did not will it, but not because they refused to be obedient to Him. Applied to our daily life, this declares that it is not unbelief which carries us away from God, but unwillingness on God's part. Although they loudly admit that they completely maintain the responsibility of man as according to the Confessions, there is no place for this in the practical life of faith. God's child can never be chastised and admonished upon the basis of his responsibility over against God. The Building of the revelation of God also closes (is also complete—H.V.) without the Stone of responsibility. In connection with this stands the rejection of the pure church-conception according to the Confession. For God's election goes through the walls of the church. To be



member of a certain church is more of an expression of accord with that which is taught in that church than an obedient answer to the gathering-command of Christ (thus I understand this particular sentence—H.V.). The practice of Mission work (as that is done in Canada among the immigrants) is then also an attempt to convince these objects of missionary work of the correctness of the Prot. Ref. conception, and only then one can proceed with church-organization.”—end of quote.

This charge of Determinism and Fatalism, hurled in this quotation against the truth as preached and taught in our Protestant Reformed Churches is ungrounded, wicked, and malicious slander. And, having unburdened themselves of this venom and malice and hate against the Prot. Ref. Churches, they conclude their article as follows: “We now, however, look with full confidence to the future. With the Head of the Church we shall also solve the opportunity to enjoy regular labour and administration of the Word, in order that also we as simple, unlettered believers may have the support which men receive in the Netherlands from a well instructed Shepherd and Teacher in the congregation.”—end of quote. This, in the light of their attack upon our churches and the truth we proclaim and teach, is blasphemy. It implies that they look with confidence to the future, and that, in their way of sin and slander, the Head of His Church is accompanying them, etc. So much for this latter quotation. We are mainly interested in the longer quotation which we quoted in the preceding column.

Please notice, first of all, what is said of the entire doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Incidentally, it must be borne in mind that this article which we are now criticizing, although signed by three men, has the endorsement of the entire group which now gathers as a Free Reformed Church of Hamilton. Of our doctrine they say that it “has been worked out to be a logical-closing system of faith completely adapted to the human mind. Proceeding from election all the works and acts of God are humanly explained.” What does this mean? If I recall correctly, Prof. Veenhof once wrote the same thing about the truth of our churches. This means that we laid our hands upon the Word of the living God and deliberately set ourselves to draw up a system of faith and truth which would be completely adapted to the human mind, and which is so cleverly drawn up that none can lay the finger upon anything as contrary to God’s Word or the Confessions. What brilliant men our leaders must be! I do not recall that this has ever occurred in the history of the Church of the living God. Mind you, our doctrine is contrary to the Scriptures. This articles declares, does it not, that “we began to view the Prot. Ref. doctrine as unscriptural.” Hence, this system which we have drawn up is heresy. Yet, so

brilliant have we been that this system is air-tight, heresy-proof. A truly remarkable achievement! Secondly, however, what a terrible indictment against our churches! How wicked of us that we lay our hands upon the Word of the living God, use it merely for our own personal enjoyment, and deliberately construct a “logical system of faith which is completely adapted to the human mind.” We have deliberately refused to BELIEVE the Scriptures and will accept only that which we can understand, which our human intellect is able to grasp. This, of course, as applied to our Protestant Reformed Churches, is wicked nonsense. If this were true, then, I am sure, we would never subscribe to truths such as: the virgin birth or Incarnation, atonement, creation, the resurrection, heavenly renewal of all things, etc. Thirdly, can anyone conceive of anything more wicked than to draw up deliberately a logical system of truth and faith which is contrary to the Scriptures? This is indeed a terribly wicked thing. We are reminded of what Paul says in Eph. 4:14: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” This is Paul’s characterization, through the inspiration of the Spirit, of those who deliberately set themselves to draw up a logical system of faith which is unscriptural. Such systems of truth are the product, according to the apostle Paul in this passage, of the sleight (this word means literally that wicked men gamble with the truth for their own gain—H.V.), and of cunning craftiness. How wicked must be our churches if we are guilty of drawing up such an heretical, logical system of faith and truth! Did the authors of this particular article which appeared in the “Gereformeerd Gezinsblad” purpose to express all this when they accused our churches of drawing up such a system of truth? This I do not assert. However, let us then stop hurling this monstrous accusation against the Protestant Reformed Churches. One thing, however, is sure: the Liberated immigrants were utterly incapable of laying their finger upon anything we preached or taught as contrary to Scripture or the Confessions. The consistory itself gave the undersigned this unanimous testimony. The Bible itself is a logical “system” of truth, is it not?

Notice, in the second place, what these members of the late Protestant Reformed Church of Hamilton say about our emphasis upon the doctrine of election. We read in their article the following: “They say that God is unchangeable and works all things according to His decrees. Everything has been determined and ordained by Him. God has loved the one eternally and hates the other. . . . We must be conscious of His election and live accordingly. If we have that, that consciousness gives the comfort which we need in this

life. Hereby we do not come to the sober reality that also WE as God's children live in a falling and rising, sin and repentance, the constant exchange of loving-God and violating of His law."—end of quote. Mind you, these things are said in the spirit of criticism. The undersigned wishes to ask these people: Don't you believe these things? Can we imagine reformed people saying these things? One will undoubtedly say: these people do not deny these truths as such; they merely criticise our undue emphasis upon them. Indeed, if these immigrants were asked whether they believe these cardinal reformed truths they would undoubtedly answer in the affirmative. However, I assure our readers that they are fearful of ANY emphasis upon the doctrine of election. Besides, how must we judge the following: "We must be conscious of His election and live accordingly. If we have that, that consciousness gives the comfort which we need in this life." What is wrong with this? Do not the Liberated immigrants believe this? I ask our readers in all seriousness: does this lengthy quotation from the article we are now criticising speak of love and admiration and longing and respect for the doctrine of election? It reminds the undersigned of the criticism which was hurled at our churches in 1924, and which was also hurled at our Fathers at the time of the Synod of Dordrecht.

However, I wish to say a little more about this attack by these Liberated immigrants upon our preaching and teaching of the doctrine of election. I maintain that, fundamentally, they criticise our preaching and teaching with respect to this doctrine because they are not friendly toward the Scriptural doctrine of election. They are not friendly toward our conception of election for the simple reason that it does not harmonize with their peculiar conception of the sacrament of baptism and the general promise. Why do I say this? I preached once on 2 Peter 1:10. Now, one thing must be perfectly plain: To deny that we must live out of the doctrine of election, that the consciousness of that doctrine must comfort us, is neither reformed nor Christian, inasmuch as it contradicts this very word of the living God in 2 Peter 1:10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never stumble." In my sermon I deliberately set myself to emphasize the beauty and comfort of the doctrine of election, that it alone is our comfort and peace and assurance in the midst of the world, the truth of the eternal and unchangeable and unconditional love of God. But, I also set myself deliberately to emphasize that we must make our election sure by making sure our calling. *Briefly stated, I set forth the comfort and assurance of election as experienced by us only in the way of the making sure of our calling, i.e., in the way of sanctification.* And I set

myself to emphasize this all the more because I was aware of the charge which was constantly hurled at the doctrine of election as preached and taught in our churches. What does this mean? This: these Liberated immigrants have absolutely no right to assert that they criticise our presentation of the doctrine of election because we present it fatalistically or deterministically. Never has this been done in the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. They fear and oppose the Scriptural doctrine of election because it does not fit in with their conception of the sacrament of baptism and the general promise. But, more of this later.

In connection with this, I wish to conclude this article with a straight-forward statement concerning the Scriptural doctrine of election and as taught in our churches. We hate Fatalism and Determinism. Fatalism and Determinism deny Election and must never be viewed as presenting a certain phase of that Scriptural doctrine. Whoever attempts to proclaim Election deterministically simply does not proclaim this Scriptural truth. What a monstrous injustice to our churches to assert that all we proclaim or say to anyone is: Are you an elect? To preach the doctrine of election implies that one must preach faith and the entire way of sanctification. This is not due to the fact that faith is in any sense of the word a condition for election (none among us believes this), but because faith is a part of our election. Election is not merely that sovereign act of God whereby He sovereignly decreed to place a certain number of people in eternal glory, but it is that sovereign and eternal will of God to save a people in the way of faith in Christ Jesus into and unto everlasting glory. But we must bear in mind that this faith in Jesus belongs to election, is a part of its content. Hence, to preach the doctrine of election means that we must preach the entire content of that doctrine. Therefore, to preach election and not faith and sanctification is impossible. To ignore the latter signifies that we deny the former. But, the doctrine of Election must be preached. And this implies that the doctrine of Reprobation must also be preached. The former is impossible without the latter. And the doctrine of Reprobation is the teaching which sets forth the eternal and sovereign will of God whereby He sovereignly willed a sinner who because of his sin is condemned to eternal ruin. Again, we must bear in mind that this means that the sinner and his sin do not precede this counsel of Reprobation, but are a part of it, that therefore the sinner and his sin are the product of the sovereign will of God. And, this must be preached also. In order that the sin of the sinner may be fully revealed, that he may be exposed in all his iniquity, that it may become fully revealed that it is exactly the living God, the only God Whom the sinner refuses to serve and acknowledge.

And, primarily, the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination must be preached and taught in order that *the* Church, the elect of God may have the comfort that transcends all human understanding, the comfort that all things are our's, that all is always well, that we are ever and constantly safe in the midst of a wicked and hostile world in which we have a name and place. Election is indeed our only comfort in the midst of the world, God's particular and eternal and unchangeable love. It must be my comfort. Out of it I must live. I ask the Liberated leaders in the Netherlands: Brethren, is this reformed? This the immigrants around Hamilton criticise as unscriptural and fatalistic. Are they reformed?

H. Veldman.




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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(3)

#### THE SECOND DAY.

*Genesis 1:6-8.*

We quote: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

*Immediately an interesting question confronts us here.*

We will first state the question as such. On the one hand, did the Lord upon the second day of creation-week for the first time make separation between the heavens and the earth, so that until now they were united but that they are separated by this firmament upon the second day? And, on the other hand, was the firmament the means whereby the Lord separated the waters above from the waters below; or, was this firmament the means whereby this separation, which already existed since the first moment of creation, was maintained? This question, we understand, is an interesting one. If the former interpretation be correct, then the Lord created the firmament to make separation between the waters and also between heaven and earth; if the latter interpretation be correct, then this separation between the waters above and the waters below already existed, but the firmament was created to maintain this separation. Prior, then, to the creation of the firmament God simply maintained

separation between the waters above from the waters below by His almighty power. I believe that we may safely say that the text in Gen. 1:6-8 does not necessarily support the first interpretation. I do not think that the text simply rules out the second interpretation, that it necessarily teaches us that heaven and earth were united, or that there was one huge mass of water and that this water was divided by means of this firmament. The text certainly permits the interpretation that this separation already existed but that it was now the firmament, created by God, which would maintain this separation.

We prefer the second of these interpretations, the explanation which regards heaven and earth as already separated and the firmament as the means to maintain this separation which already existed between the waters above and the waters below. First, the text itself permits this interpretation. Do we not read that the Lord divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament? Does this not imply that these waters *were* above the firmament and that they *were* below the firmament? Be this as it may, the text at least allows this interpretation. Secondly, we prefer this interpretation because of what we read in Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This verse speaks of the heaven and the earth and surely implies that the heavens and the earth were separated from one another. Hence, we would conclude from this verse that this separation existed already from the very first moment of creation. The chaos, therefore, of the things above and of the things below existed already from the very beginning. The earth, we read, was covered with water, as in 2 Pet. 3:5: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." Would not the same thing apply to the heavens? Is it possible that when the Lord caused the dry land to appear upon the third day, so that it was no longer covered with water, that the same thing might have been done upon this third day to the heavens? Be this as it may, we would read verse 6: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters," as implying that the waters were already separated from the waters, and that the firmament was created to maintain this separation, which until now had been maintained by the Lord's almighty power. God had until now maintained this separation between the waters above and the waters below without the firmament. Of course, we do not mean to suggest that, beginning on the second day, this separation is being maintained by a firmament and not by the Lord's almighty power. God's almighty power maintains this firmament from moment unto moment. It is simply meant that the firma-



ment is the means from now on whereby the Lord by His almighty power maintains this separation between the waters.

### *The firmament.*

The word, firmament, is derived from a word which means: to thin, stretch out, in the Holland: uitdunnen, uitslaan, spannen door uit te rekken. How the Lord created this firmament we are not told specifically. However, it is surely not impossible that the Lord formed this firmament by stretching, thinning out the waters which are above and the waters which are below so that they constitute this firmament. This interpretation we would base upon the following considerations. First, the literal meaning of the word, firmament, itself would suggest this interpretation. The word means literally: to thin, to stretch out. Secondly, modern science tells us that the firmament, that wonderfully blue ocean above us, indeed consists of a very fine, delicate matter, so that the blue sky is nothing else than a wide and deep ocean of ether-matter. The entire universe is filled with this delicate matter, this ether, so that nowhere a vacuum exists. Thirdly, this also appears to be the presentation of Holy Writ, namely, that God created the firmament by thinning out the waters, so that the waters above and the waters below are now separated by this firmament, this blue ocean of ether. We have already called attention to the literal meaning of the word, firmament, which means: to thin, stretch out. Besides, that Scripture does not conceive of the earth as merely a flat surface with a roof overhead, so that one, coming to the edge of it, would be in danger of falling off this earth (thus people conceived of the earth ages ago, so that also from this viewpoint Columbus' dauntless venture to cross the ocean must be considered a marvellous experiment especially in the light of the prevailing conception of his time) is clear, for example, from a passage such as Isaiah 40:22: "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." We should note, in this connection, that the prophet in this text speaks of the "circle of the earth." And in Job 37:18 and Ps. 104:2 we read: "Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? . . . Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." Job 37:18 can be read literally as follows: "Hast thou with Him spread out the sky unto a very fine matter, material?" And the second part of this text speaks of the sky as a molten looking glass. In Ps. 104:2 we should note that the psalmist, as does also the prophet, Isaiah, speaks of the heavens as being stretched out like a curtain.

This will also throw light upon the significance of

the "waters above" and the "waters below." A common interpretation explains the "waters above" as the clouds. This, however, is quite impossible. First, the clouds very obviously belong to the waters below, are formed by the waters below and return unto these waters below in the form of rain. Secondly, God made the firmament to maintain the separation between the "waters above" and the "waters below," created the firmament *between* them, so that the waters above the firmament must be understood not as below the firmament (as are the clouds) but above it. The waters below, we understand, are then the oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, etc. The waters above are the original waters which were separated from the waters below. Even as the earth was originally covered with water, so also originally the heavens were covered with and surrounded by water. These we understand to be the waters above.

Finally, in this firmament the heavenly bodies move about. That the earth moves about the sun is therefore not to be attributed to the sun's magnetism or power of attraction, but simply to the tension or power, if you will, of the firmament to hold these various bodies in their respective places. Hence, what is true of the relation wherein the earth stands to the sun also applies to the relation of the various bodies to one another in this tremendous space of the universe. Nowhere does a vacuum exist. In this tremendous space the firmament holds all the bodies in their places. We believe that this is the presentation of Holy Writ. We read in Rev. 6:14: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." When the heaven, this firmament, shall depart, be rolled up, disappear as a scroll, the stars of the heavens shall fall upon the earth and all things will be torn loose out of their places. This is also the presentation in 2 Peter 3:7-10: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Also here we read that the heavens will be rolled up as a scroll. All things will collapse. Then the heavens will pass away with a great, a tremendous noise, and all the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The firmament or heaven holds all the heavenly bodies in their respective places. When this firmament is rolled up these heavenly bodies collapse and the end of all things will be at hand.

### THE THIRD DAY.

*Genesis 1:9-13.*

We read in this passage: "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."

We may note at the very outset that God's creative act upon this third day of creation-week consists of two parts: the creating of the dry land and the forming of the plant world.

*God's creation of the dry land.*

First, let us notice this creative act as such. On the one hand, it is evident from the text that this land which the Lord caused to appear upon this third day was not created upon this day of creation-week. We read that God said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and *let the dry land appear*. Hence, these words certainly imply that the land was already in existence, having been created in the very beginning. The Lord did not create the land now but merely caused it to appear. On the other hand, this also enables us to understand somewhat the ninth verse: "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so." Also here we read the majestic words: And God said. Hence, by His almighty power the Lord caused the dry land to appear, to rise, and the bottom of the sea to sink, thereby causing the waters of the sea to be rolled or gathered together unto one place and the dry land to appear. Besides, also here in connection with the Divine creation of the Dry Land, we should note the amazing and utter soberness of the narrative. We are not given a vivid and thrilling description of this truly mighty and wonderful work of the Lord. The details are completely lacking. Scripture is not interested in describing things in a sensational manner from the human point of view. We are dealing here, we must understand, with a work of the living God. As such it was the work of a moment, did not require hundreds and thousands of years to be completed. All

the emphasis falls upon the fact that it was a work of Divine creation, the work of a moment, for God simply *said*, and therefore it was so exactly as the living God had said. The simplicity of the language used here simply emphasizes the Divinely majestic aspect of this work of creation.

Secondly, we may also conclude that the dry land which the Lord created upon this third day was limited and did not embrace all the present continents, such as North and South America, Europe, Asia, etc. The world as it exists today differs from the world as it existed before the flood and as it was called into existence by the Lord's word of almighty and irresistible power. This observation we would base upon the following grounds. First, we believe that Scripture gives us this presentation in Genesis 1. The Divine narrative informs us that all the waters were gathered together *into one place*, and that the dry land appeared. From this we would conclude that there was no division of oceans and seas but that all the waters constituted one gigantic sea. And when we read that out of and in the midst of that one gigantic sea the dry land appeared, we receive the impression that there was but one dry land, but one continent, and that this one continent was limited in size.

Secondly, continuing with our grounds for our observation that the original earth was limited in size and did not embrace all the present continents, we would remark that before the flood there was no need for several continents such as exist in our present day. Today seven continents are inhabited by the peoples and animals of the earth. Before the flood the world's population was limited and certainly did not need these several parts of the world.

Thirdly, this also enables us to understand a passage such as 2 Peter 3:3-7. We again quote this passage: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But in the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The apostle, in this particular passage of Holy Writ, is referring to the world as it existed before the flood. Today, he declares, there are scoffers, mockers, who mock at and ridicule the second coming of the Lord. They ridicule, we read, the promise of His coming, declaring that all things continue to exist as they were from the beginning of creation, and thereby implying

that all things will continue to exist. Hereupon the holy writer declares in the verses 5-6: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." The implication of the holy writer is obviously that they are willingly ignorant of the fact that the world did not exist as it does at present, but that the earth, before the flood, was standing out of the water and in the water, standing, as it were, as an island in the midst of water. In the days before the flood the scoffers, although standing, as it were, in the very midst of the water, ridiculed the very idea that their world would be destroyed by water, declaring that all things would continue to exist even as they did from the beginning. And today the wicked scoffers, although surrounded as it were by fire (verse 7: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men") ridicule the idea that the world will be destroyed by fire, declaring also now that all things will continue to exist as they did from the beginning of the creation. We may, therefore, conclude from this passage of 2 Peter 3 that the earth as before the flood and at the time of the creation of the world, was limited in size and completely surrounded by water. However, these mockers, we read, are willingly ignorant. They hate the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming, are afraid of the coming destruction of the world, and therefore willingly, wilfully shut their eyes to reality and believe what they wish to believe. This fear of the wicked world appears repeatedly upon the foreground. When a few months ago, last year, upon a certain Sabbath, a strange haze obscured the sun (this phenomenon was later attributed to the smoke of forest fires in the Canadian province of Alberta), many frightened people asked the question whether the world were coming to an end. The fear and dread of the end of the world fills the world of wicked men. Indeed, when strange phenomena arise or when terrible events occur and force themselves upon the attention of the wicked world, when they are forcibly reminded of the catastrophe of the end of this world, they fear and quake. Otherwise, however, they are wilfully ignorant of the facts. Standing in the very midst of the water before the flood they simply shut their eyes to that dreadful fact and simply made themselves believe that the world would continue to exist as it did from the very beginning. And today, standing as it were in the very midst of fire, they simply shut their hearts and eyes to the word of the living God that this world will be destroyed by fire, and persist in their vain belief that the world will continue to exist as it did from the beginning of the creation. Thus it ever was and thus it

ever will be unto the end of the world, when the Lord, because of this wicked and wilful ignorance, will overtake them as a thief in the night. Let us watch and be sober, all the more because the end of all things is at hand. But, as remarked before, we may conclude from the passage in 2 Peter that the earth as before the flood was limited in size and completely surrounded by water.

H. Veldman.

## Contributions

### DE AANBIEDING VAN BROEDER K. C. VAN SPRONSEN AANGENOMEN

Langs deze baan, die toch zeker zuiver is, kan er geen scheiding gemaakt worden tusschen Gods profetie en belofte, of tusschen geloovigen en verkorenen. Dit laatste wordt maar al te zeer gedaan om een zekere voorwaardelijke theorie of theologie, te handhaven. De doorlopende gedachte der Schrift is dat de belofte is de zekerheid in de profetie inbegrepen. Nergens in de Schrift wordt Gods Woord zonder de zekerheid daarvan gevonden. God werkt of bevestigt niets zonder Zijn Woord. Dat profetie en belofte of Woord en zekerheid volkomen elkander insluiten kan het duidelijkste bewezen worden van, en bij den Profeet, Gods Zoon, Jezus Christus. Dit spreekt voor zichzelf en verdere uitwijding zou overbodig zijn. Zooals er onderscheidene namen zijn voor Christus, zoo zijn er ook onderscheidene benamingen voor hen die in Christus Jezus zijn, doch deze benamingen zijn niet te scheiden. Door dit wel te doen onstaat er verwarring, confusie, en afwijkende beschouwingen. Want het zijn de verkorenen Gods die gelooven, en de in God geloovigen, zijn Gods verkorenen, zoo dus, deze twee sluiten elkaar in, en niet afzonderlijk, want God schenkt het geloof (kennis) alleen aan hen die Hij verkiest of verordineert.

Daarom het geloof is de vrucht, of anders gezegd een instrument van Gods verkiezing, door hetwelk Hij, n.l., God, de Zijnen, in Zijn Zoon tot Zich trekt. God trekt Zijn volk met koorden (kennis, geloof) der liefde tot Zich. Neen, er is geen scheiding tusschen geloovigen en verkorenen Gods, geen tweërlei volk, maar zij zijn één volk in God. Toch heeft Ds. Petter e.a. dit in het verleden trachtten te doen in het bestrijden der "Verklaring". Als bewijs voor mijn stelling; in Joh. 6:37 lezen we de woorden van Christus aldus: "Al wat Mij de Vader geeft, zal tot Mij komen, en die tot Mij komt zal ik geenzins uitwerpen." Want Christus, het vleesch geworden Woord, is uit den Hemel nederge-daald, om den wil des Vaders te doen, Die Hem zendt

En de wil des Vaders is dat al wat Hij Christus gegeven heeft, Hij daaruit niet verlieze; en verder: "dat een iegelijk die den Zoon aanschouwt en in Hem gelooft, het eeuwige leven hebbe, en Ik zal hem opwekken ten uiterste dage". Op het murmureeren der Joden lezen we in vers 44: Niemand kan tot Mij komen, tenzij dat de Vader die Mij gezonden heeft, hem trekke. Zij zullen allen (de gegebenen des Vaders) van God geleerd zijn. Een iegelijk dan, die het van den Vader gehoord en geleerd heeft, die komt tot Christus, en die in Hem gelooft, heeft het eeuwige leven. En dit is het Eeuwige leven, dat zij U kennen, den eenigen waarachtigen God, en Jezus Christus dien Gij gezonden hebt. En verder: Christus bidt voor hen (Joh. 17:3) die God den Vader Hem gegeven heeft, want zij zijn Godes, en al het Mijne is Uwe, en het Uwe is Mijne; en Ik ben in hen verheerlijkt. Heilige Vader, bewaar ze in Uwen Naam, die Gij Mij gegeven hebt, opdat zij één zijn gelijk als wij; Joh. 17:1-11, 21: Uit dezen Schriftuurlijke aanhalingen, die veel vermenigvuldigd kunnen worden, is het zeer duidelijk, dat Belofte en Profetie, zoowel als geloovigen en verkorenen, onlosmakelijk in één gesloten zijn.

Het is gezegd geworden, dat God trekt ons zoo maar niet bij de haren en plaatst ons waar Hij wil in den vorm van een Dictator. Deze voorstelling wordt gebruikt, en is gebruikt, tot verdediging, of verduidelijking van zekere voorwaarden die God stelt, die de mensch moet verrichten. Ik stem toe, zoo letterlijk genomen werkt God niet. God werkt niet Zijn liefde in de haren, maar in het hart, en daar is de mensch onwederstandelijk tegenover God. Want van nature is de mensch boos, tegenstrijdig, ongehoorzaam in het hart. Daarom vermurwt God het steenen hart, en maakt het tot een vleeschelijk hart, dat is in beginsel een gehoorzaam hart. In dat is de mensch onwederstandelijk. Wanneer God dan aldus werkt is het Gods werk, hetwelk in den mensch werkt, en is het niet 's menschen werk. God werkt kennis (geloof) in zulk een hart. De "conditie" van zulk een kennend hart, is geen voorwaarde, maar de toestand. Er is verschil in de meening van het woord "conditie". Het kan beduiden: Staat of toestand, doch het kan ook voorwaarde beteekenen. En dat is het, waarover het gaat, en dan toegepast op de betrekking tusschen God en mensch. Zoo bezien is het niet zoo: de mensch wat, en God veel. Neen! maar God alles in al, en de mensch niets!

Broeder Van Spronsen spreekt van voorwaarden door God gesteld, die trots dat ze door God genadig worden gewerkt, toch door de mensch als geloovige moeten vervuld worden. Het volgende Schriftuurlijke voorbeeld, is wellicht figuurlijk, doch is van toepassing op den geloovige. Na het bedrijf van Adam's ongehoorzaamheid aan God, verborg hij zich, omdat hij bewust was van zijne naaktheid door het kennen

van goed en kwaad. Het was niet Adam die tot God ging (dus geen God opstelde voorwaarde) maar het was God die Adam opzocht en riep, daarom kon Adam antwoorden. Het was ook God Die den mensch klederen maakte en zelfs aantog. Voorwaarden die den mensch vervullen moet zoodat Gods raad of wil zal uitgevoerd worden? Ze zijn hier bij Adam en Eve niet!

Voor God bestaan er geen voorwaarden. Toen niet, ook nu niet. Dit geldt voor het gansche menschedom. Onderling onder ons menschen zijn er wel zekere voorwaarden, doch wij zijn van de aarde, aardsch. Kortzichtige zondige menschen. Wij zijn alszoodanig bloot tijdelijk. Doch God werkt absoluut naar den raad Zijns willens, zonder eenige voorwaarde, waardoor Hij Zich zelven afhankelijk zou maken. Dit te doen, zou God geen God zijn. Neen! God Drieëinig is onafhankelijk in Zijn eeuwig innerlijk liefde leven. Gods eeuwige liefde is Gods eeuwig leven. Liefhebben, dat is Gods wil en gebod tot den mensch, en is 's menschen verantwoordelijkheid. Die uit God is, kent God, heeft Hem lief en doet Zijn wil. Die Zijne liefde niet heeft, is niet uit God, doch de toorn Gods blijft op hem. Tot dusver is mijn betoog, met de aangehaalde Schrituurlijke plaatsen, tegenover het geschrijf van de twee brieven door Van Spronsen, zeker nu wel voldoende. Wat nu nog overblijft zijn de z.g.n. voorwaarden bij onze vaders van 1618-19; en de Canones. Wanneer men de geschiedenis bestudert, wat aan de Synode van 1618-19 voorafging, beschreven door Wagenaar, in "Strijd Tot Overwinning"; krijgt men een beter inzicht der achtergrond van de Synode (onder toezicht van J. H. Donner en A. S. Van den Doorn, uitgegeven bij D. Donner, te Leiden), is dan wat duidelijker. Beide boeken zijn voor studie wel aan te bevelen. "Strijd Tot Overwinning", bevat verschillende deputatiën, en stellingen, alzoo conferantie's tusschen verschillende Professoren, Predikanten en Studenten. Ook Arminius is inbegrepen. De inhoud der oorspronkelijke Acta der Synode is ook zeer rijk voor studie. Het bevat de letterlijke ingediende stukken van alle afgevaardigden, die ingebracht moesten worden, en welke door de Synode werd onderzocht en besproken. Uit deze gezamenlijke stukken zijn door de Synode, de vijf artikelen tegen de Remonstranten opgesteld. Vele Remonstrante stellingen, gesprekken, en conferenties komen hierin voor, die door de afgevaardigden, persoonlijk, of groepsgewijze, schriftelijk werden behandeld, en bestreden. Enkele van de bedenkingen en stellingen die door de vaders schriftelijk werden verworpen wil ik aanhalen. Eerstelijk wil ik verwijzen (doch niet neerschrijven) wat de vijf Nederl. Profesoren verwerpen op bls. 698-699 der Acta. Vervolgens verwijs ik maar blz. 393-394; waarvoor komt wat de Bremers verwerpen: verworpen wordt die leeren: "Dat Gods welbehagen hierin bestaat, dat het God goedgedacht heeft, de daad des geloofs voor te schrijven, als een voorwaarde van de geloovigen zalig te

maken, daar Hij de zaligheid had kunnen geven, onder welke conditie Hij gewild had." Versta wel, dat is een Remonstrantsche stelling, die in zijne totaliteit door de Bremers verworpen werd. De taal van Ds. Petter in de Concordia van Feb. klinkt ongeveer gelijk. Wordt in deze verwerping de z.g.n. Gereformeerde voorwaarde gehandhaafd?

Doch er is meer. Op blz. 643 verwerpen de vaders het volgende: "Dat het geloof is een gave Gods, van te voren in het verkiezen vereischt, maar dat zulks niet gegeven zij, uit de verkiezing, maar uit een andere wil Gods." Ook wordt verworpen, de openbare lastering: "Dat het volstrekke besluit Gods, de roeping, het geloof, en goede werken insluit."

Remonstrantsche stelling VIII. De Britten verwerpen aldus: "Dat het welbehagen Gods, naar hetwelk Hij, uit vele mogelijke condities besloten heeft, het geloof te verkiezen, en aan te nemen, of te stellen tot eene conditie, om op dezelve de zaligheid mede te delen." Vraag: Verwerpen de vaders hier niet, alle vele mogelijke voorwaarden?

Op blz. 618 wordt het volgende door Prof. Lubbertus verworpen: "Dat het geloof en deszelfs gehoorzaamheid, en volharding zijnde door God voorzien (gegeven) als van den mensch gewrocht, is een voorwaarde of conditie in degenen die verkoren worden, van te voren vereischt op de welke het besluit is steunende."

Op blz. 434 de theologen uit Hessen verwerpen het volgende: "De tweede vreemde leering omtrent deze stof, die buiten de Haagsche conferentie in hunne andere geschriften te vinden is: "Dat de dood van Christus gesteld en volbracht zijnde, stond het den Vader vrij, onder wat voorwaarde het Hem beliefd, dezelve mede te deelen, ja uit vele mogelijke voorwaarden te verkiezen en voor te schrijven zulke voorwaarden des Nieuwen Verbonds, en der zaligheid; als Hij wilde: zoo wie deze voldoen zoude, dezelve zoude alsdan eerst de beloften des Verbonds verkrijgen." Op dezelfde blz. wordt ook de derde vreemde stelling verworpen.

Bezien we nu Canon I:8; Verworpen wordt die leeren: "Dat het geloof, de gehoorzaamheid des geloofs, heiligheid, Godzaligheid en volharding, gebaseerd is op te voren vereischte condities, en als volbracht zijnde, voorzien zijn in dengenen die ten volle verkoren zullen worden."

Canon II:3; Verworpen die leeren: "Dat Christus door Zijne genoegdoening, voor den Vader verworven heeft, de macht of volkomen wil, om op nieuw met de mensch te handelen en voorwaarden zulks als Hij zoude stellen voor te schrijven."

Canon V:1; Verworpen die leeren: "Dat de volharding der ware geloovigen, is eene conditie des Nieuwen Verbonds, die de mensch voor zijne beslissende verkiezing en rechtvaardigmaking moet volbrengen."

Canon V:2; Verworpen die leeren: "Dat God den

geloovigen mensch wel voorziet (geeft) met genoegzame krachten, om te volharden, en bereid is, dezelve in hem te bewaren, zoo hij zijn ambt doet." Doch als wederlegging voegen de vaders er aan toe: "Doch als nu alle die dingen die noodig zijn, om in het geloof te volharden, en die God gebruiken wil om het geloof te bewaren, alreeds in het werk gesteld zijn; dat het nog altijd hangt aan het believen van den wil, dat hij volhardt, of niet volhardt. Deze leer berooft God van Zijn Eer." Deze aanhalingen, die veel vermeerderd zou kunnen worden, betreffen verschillende vormen, van hetgeen de vaders als onschriftuurlijk hebben verworpen. De Schriftbewijzen voor deze verwerpingen die er aan toegevoegd zijn, laat ik achterwege, vanwege plaatsruimte. Het was mijn doel aan te toonen, dat de vaders van Dordrecht in 1618-19 vele, alle mogelijke voorwaarden verwierpen. En in de positieve Schriftuurlijke stellingen (voorkomende in deze Acta) die door de vaders zijn gehandhaafd, aangenomen en verdedigd, komt niets voor van z.g.n. voorwaarden. Het woord wordt alleen gebruikt in betrekking tot Remonstrantsche leeringen. Gaarne zou ik willen vernemen, waar die z.g.n. Gereformeerde voorwaarden bij onze vaders van Dort te vinden zijn.

Hiermede meen ik, dat mijn taak in betrekking tot het schrijven van broeder K. C. Van Spronsen volbracht is. De toepassing van: "Zie zoo, klaar is Kees", kan zekerlijk niet op dit betoog toegepast worden. Wij als eenvoudige beknopte Protestantsche Gereformeerden kijken nog steeds uit, voor uiteenzetting door de Vrije Gereformeerden met Schriftuurlijk bewijs voor de beschouwing van Gods voorwaardelijk Verbond en Belofte. Niet in het meervoud, zooals verbonden, of Beloften Gods. Neen! maar één n.l. het verbond Gods. De belofte Gods. Eén verbond; Eén Belofte; Eén liefde; Eén raad; Eén plan; Eén wil; Eéne genade Gods. Het al is Eén en in Eén. Wat niet uit God is, is leugen, is duisternis, is geen leven, is geen waarheid, is geen liefde; maar is haat. Wat uit God is, is liefde, is leven, is licht, is waarheid, is werkelijk, is waarachtig, is volmaakt, is zekerlijk, is de schoonheid, is onveranderlijk, is onafhankelijk, en is dus onvoorwaardelijk. God is God en niemand meer. Hem zij de Eere, en Hem alleen, nu en in eeuwigheid.

Indien iemand hierop iets te zeggen heeft, zoo doe hij dit, hetzij goed- of afkeurend.

J. R. Kuivenhoven.  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

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#### CLASSIS WEST

will meet in regular session in Edgerton, Minnesota on Wednesday, September 5, 1951.

M. Gritters (stated clerk).



## THROUGH THE AGES

### John Calvin and The Reformation In Geneva

*Calvin's second labours in Geneva.* His first act after his return was to demand of the Council that it approve and adopt a Church Order setting forth and calling for the introduction of a "Reformed Church Polity or Government". The Council did so. Calvin's plan of Church Order was taken directly from the Scriptures, definitely from the New Testament. It provided four orders of men for the instruction and government of the Church—the pastor, the doctor, the elder or presbyter, and the deacon. According to the Church Order proposed by Calvin, the ministers of the Gospel and the elders form the council of the church. It is the only body of rulers authorized by Christ to rule the Church as to its internal affairs.

Calvin's Church Order was approved and adopted by the Genevan authorities. We have here to do with an achievement of Calvin of great significance. As an achievement it was the first of its kind among the reformed of the sixteenth century.

Calvin perceived that the office of civil magistrate is one and that the office of elder is another. He perceived, did Calvin, the essential distinction between things civil and things ecclesiastical or spiritual, and of the civil magistrate and the latter under the jurisdictions or powers, the former under the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate and the latter under the jurisdiction of the elder in the church. He saw—did Calvin—that the civil magistrate rules men only in their capacity of citizens of the state and not also in their capacity of members of the church institute (Caesaro—papism or papalism); and that, on the other hand, the elder in the church has jurisdiction over men only in the latter's capacity of members of the church and not also in their capacity of citizens of the state. Calvin allows not an atom of civil power to the elder in the church, nor an atom of ecclesiastical power to the civil magistrate. The one is not subject to the other. Each has his own sphere of action upon which the other may not encroach. The civil magistrate does not handle the keys of the kingdom of heaven as he has not the key-power, and the elders do not handle the sword as they do not have the sword-power. As to the elders in the church, they exercise their key-power as they feel they must in absolute independence of the civil magistrate.

So did Calvin restore to the Church of Christ her offices and rightful power. This was one of his great achievements. Luther and Zwingli placed the church

under the power of the civil government. All exercise of key-power had to have the approval of the civil magistrate. The church could not excommunicate without the consent of civil government. In all cases of discipline the latter had to be consulted, and its word was final. The only difference between Luther's system and that of Rome is that in Luther's system the pope was replaced by the civil magistrate. So it was in Germany, Switzerland and in England. Geneva was the only place where in the point of view of Church Polity the Reformation came to its own. Calvin is the father of Reformed Church Polity.

*The method of election of officebearers.* The ministers of the Gospel were chosen by the consistory and approved by the congregation. But the selection had also to be approved by the civil authorities. This is not reformed. Calvin also objected to it, but the civil magistrates were insistent, and Calvin yielded the point. The elders were elected by the civil authorities, definitely by the little council of twenty-five, the council of two hundred, and the council of citizens or council-general. This, too, was wrong. Yet with the exception of the excommunicated in Geneva, the entire citizenry belonged to the church. The same was true of the members of the two councils, so that it was still the church people in Geneva that elected to the office of elders. But they did so in their capacity not of members of the church but of citizens of Geneva. This, too, was wrong. But the civil authorities again were adamant. And Calvin yielded also this point, in his own words, because of the weakness of the times.

Calvin in common with all the men of his day, believed that it is the duty of the civil authorities to punish offenders of the first table of the law so well as of the second. Hence, the impenitent offenders of the first table of the law as well as offenders of the second table of the law were punished by the civil authorities after their excommunication by the church. Thus in Calvin's view the civil authorities must punish heretics but only such heretics who publicly offend. This conception must still be proved wrong with the Scriptures.

Finally, in Calvin's view, the ministers must assist the civil authorities with their good advice.

Though in Calvin's view church and state are separate, there ought to be this kind of cooperation between the two.

Calvin's Church Order and his Moral Code were approved and adopted by the Little and the Great Council and by the entire body of citizens. But there was a sizable minority that was opposed. This minority was divided into three classes.

The first class was formed of old Genevan families, who felt that their city was again being laid in bondage by "that foreigner Calvin", and his supporters.

The second class was composed of persons hateful of all discipline and restraint, ecclesiastical and civil. They were people who loved to dance, masquerade and play.

The third class was comprised of persons of lowest morality—adulterers and drunkards—and of persons whose aim it was to uproot the true religion. Infidels they were.

The persons included in the second and third class were the libertines proper. Their presence in Geneva explains why Servetus went to this city. He felt certain that with the support of this element—pantheists and unitarians—he could overthrow Calvin.

The *Christian* Geneva was composed of the native disciples of the Gospel; second, the foreign refugees of protestantism; and third, the youth of various nationalities in training under Calvin. Eventually they outnumbered the libertines. This finally made Calvin's position in Geneva unshakeable. But the way that led to the final triumph was one of intense struggle.

There were several cases of conflict—a conflict that lasted to 1555. In all the battle lasted nine years. Calvin had to endure every kind of insult. His enemies called their dogs by the name of Calvin and to make the insult more stinging would often pronounce the word Cain. They would hiss and put out their tongue as they passed the reformer.

*The case of Philip Berthelier.* This Philip was an immoral man and therefore he was excommunicated out of the church. As the tide was running against Calvin, Philip demanded of the civil magistrates that they annul the sentence of excommunication. They did so and this against Calvin's remonstrances. Calvin assembled all the pastors and proceeded to the Great Council of two hundred. He argued that the decision was a violation of both the laws of the state and the laws of Scripture, and that, if persisted in, it would sweep away all that had been done during the past ten years for the reformation of morals, and render hopeless all efforts in the future. But the council refused to yield. Calvin declared that he would leave Geneva rather than serve the Lord's Supper to excommunicated persons. Still the council held out. It seemed therefore that Calvin's work in Geneva was again about to end.

The following sabbath Philip and other excommunicated persons were present in the service to partake of the Lord's Supper that was to be administered. They and other libertines, with their hands upon their sword-hilts, forced their way into the presence of the holy table, showing that they were determined to eat the Lord's Supper. At the close of his sermon Calvin said, "As we are now about to receive the Lord's sup-

per, if any one who has been debarred by the consistory shall approach this table, though it should cost my life, I will show myself such as I ought to be." Having read the liturgy, Calvin came down from the pulpit. When he had blessed the bread and the wine, the Libertines did as if they would seize the bread and the wine. Calvin, covering the symbols with his hands, exclaimed, "These hands you may crush; these arms you may lop off; my life you may take; my blood is yours, you may shed it; but you shall never force me to give holy things to the profane, and dishonor the table of my God." The Libertines slunk away, as if flung back by an invisible power, and left the church. The Lord's supper was then celebrated with a profound silence. Giving the holy things to the profane was to Calvin, and certainly correctly so, a question whether he should maintain the Reformation or abandon it. That question he decided right there and then.

Calvin expected to be banished from Geneva by the civil authorities. On the evening of that same day therefore he preached his farewell sermon to his flock. But no banishment came, though Calvin waited for it hour after hour. For the time being, he was therefore victor. This happened in 1533.

*The case of Micheal Servetus.* Servetus was a Spandiard of the same age of Calvin. He was an erratic genius. He studied law, theology, physic, and astrology and medicine. He discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood. His creed was essentially pantheistic. Besides he was a Unitarian and thus a follow of Arius one of the most notorious heretics in the ancient Christian church.

Servetus held that Christianity had been corrupted at an early age by the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity and the Chalcedonian Christology. He assigned himself to the task of restoring Christianity by exposing the fallacies of these doctrines. To these doctrines he apposed his own teachings. He taught that the "logos" before his incarnation existed merely as an idea in the mind of God. He thus denied the essential divinity of the person of Christ. Christ, according to Servetus, was a mere man. Servetus taught further that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal power proceeding from God. He also denied infant baptism. Servetus wrote his heretical teachings in a book, which he entitled "Restitution of Christianity", and which he published in 1553 under an assumed name. But he had already completed his book in 1546, and had sent Calvin a copy of the manuscript accompanied by a letter in which he told Calvin that he, Calvin, had stopped too soon, that he had preached as yet only a half reformation; and he offered to initiate Calvin into his new system, and assign him to the post of leader in that great movement by which mankind was to be led into a greater domain of truth. He also wrote in this letter that he would visit Geneva if agreeable to Calvin

and if granted a safe conduct. But Calvin refused him a safe conduct and warned him not to set foot in Geneva. And writing Farel, Calvin said, "If he come to Geneva, I will never permit him to depart alive, provided my authority be of any avail." This settles the question whether Calvin was responsible for Servetus' condemnation and execution. He was.

While this correspondence between Calvin and Servetus was in progress, Servetus published his book. Soon after the Roman authorities learned its authorship. Servetus was cast into prison and condemned to be burned. But before the sentence could be executed he escaped from his prison in Vienne and went to Geneva. Calvin reported his presence in the city to the civil authorities and demanded that they arrest Servetus, and put him on trial. He presented a complaint in 36 articles and presented it against Servetus.

Before Calvin appeared in the court room, Servetus was meek. He said that he had not intended to blaspheme and that he was ready to retract. But when Calvin was introduced, he broke into a tempest of rage, denounced the reformer as his personal enemy, again and again called him a liar, and styled him a corrupter of the word of God, a foe to Christ, a sorcerer, "Simon Magnus".

The preliminary examination of Servetus ended, and the Council of two hundred declared that Calvin's charges were true. It thus resolved to proceed with the trial. Calvin at this time was fighting two battles. The one was with Philip Berthelier. Philip's case had already been considered. This other battle was with Servetus. During his trial, Servetus waxed very bold. He continued to utter his blasphemies and to abuse Calvin with his tongue. There were reasons for this. He knew that the Council of two hundred had nullified the consistory's excommunication of Philip and had thus usurped the power of the consistory. This was to Servetus the certain indication that the Libertines in and outside of the council had succeeded in overthrowing Calvin, that accordingly Calvin would be banished from Geneva and that the Council would exonerate him, Servetus.

It did indeed seem at this juncture that Calvin's work in Geneva had again come to an end. As was said, Calvin's aim was to purge the church in Geneva of the Libertines. Either they had to repent and forsake their abominations or endure being excommunicated out of the church and besides being punished by the civil authorities. For Calvin's aim was to convert the church in Geneva into a model brotherhood and the city into a model community. This was to be accomplished by the exercise of key-power by the consistory and the exercise of sword power by the civil authorities. The consistory must excommunicate the impenitent offenders of both tables of the law, and

the civil authorities, holding their offenses to be crimes against the state, must punish them.

But now the civil authorities had nullified the excommunication of Philip. They had thereby let it be known that they had made an end of excommunication out of the Christian Church in Geneva and that they would not punish the offenders of the first table of the law.

Though the Council of two hundred had found Calvin's charges against Servetus true, it hesitated condemning him and ordering his execution. This was due to the Libertines in the council, who were making Servetus' condemnation difficult. At this stage of the conflict, the civil magistrates decided to consult the Swiss protestant churches. The churches consulted were those of Bern, Zurich, Schaffhausen, and Basel. Calvin had at this time no influence with the council—civil magistrates. Writing to Bullinger at Zurich, he says, "Were I to declare that it is day at high noon, they, the council, would immediately begin to doubt it."

The answers of the churches came after some three months. There were eight answers in all, one from each government and one from each of the churches. The verdict, eight times pronounced, was death. So was the fate of Servetus decided outside of Geneva.

The Council of Geneva assembled to give judgment. The discussion was a stormy one. Servetus had already been condemned by the popish tribunal of Vienne; now the tribunal of the Swiss Reformed churches had condemned him; the codes of Theodocius and Justinian, which still formed the basis of the criminal jurisprudence of Geneva, condemned him; and the universal opinion of Christendom, Popish and Protestant, held him worthy of death. To these considerations was added the horror his sentiments had inspired in all minds. Not only did Servetus' opinion outrage the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion; they assailed with atrocious blasphemy the Persons of the Trinity. The Trinity he called a three-headed monster.

The council therefore did not dare do otherwise than condemn Servetus. "Let him," so ran the decree, "be condemned to be led to Champel, and there burned alive, and let him be executed tomorrow, and his books consumed." Calvin earnestly interceded with the Council, not that Servetus might be spared, but that the sword might be substituted for the fire; but he interceded in vain. The following day the sentence was executed. Servetus would have lived, had he only retracted his heresies even at the last moment. But he would not.

Calvin, too, wanted Servetus condemned and put to death, not by the church—the church, according to Calvin, had not sword-power but only key-power—but

by the civil authorities. For Calvin held that it is the duty of the civil magistrate to punish offenders not only of the second but of the first table of the law as well. This was the jurisprudence of the men of the Christian world since the days of Justinian. Thus in his battle with Servetus, Calvin was the victor. Servetus was executed in August, 1553.

*The case of Bolsec.* Jerome Bolsec was a physician. He openly accused Calvin of being in error respecting the doctrine of Predestination. Unwilling to retract, he was excommunicated by the consistory and thereupon punished with imprisonment and banishment by the civil authorities. He was a worthless person. Afterward he returned to the Roman church and avenged himself by a biography of Calvin full of lies.

*The case of Sebastian Castellio.* Calvin had appointed him rector of the Genevan school. But he became hateful of the moral restrictions and compulsory prescriptions of matters of faith under Calvin's rule and also showed his hatred by accusing the clergy including Calvin of pride and intolerance. He was deposed and left Basel. Deposed he was but not censured and excommunicated. Whether he would have been had he remained is a question. It would depend on how he conducted himself. This took place in 1554. His real offence was that he described the Canticles as a mere love poem.

*The case of Gruet.* This man circulated an abusive tract against the clergy. He also said that Christianity is only a fable, that Christ was a deceiver and his mother a prostitute and that neither heaven nor hell existed. He was excommunicated by the consistory and put to death by the civil magistrates. This took place in 1547.

There were several other such cases. The historian Kurt tells us that between the years 1542 and 1546 there were fifty seven death sentences carried out. This is a considerable number, considering that the population of Geneva was only twenty thousand. Still others were punished by excommunication and banishment, but how many is not known. Certainly, it was not for minor offences that these punishments were meted out. It was only the hardened and gross sinners that were so dealt with, men like Servetus and Gruet.

It is not a wonder that the Libertine party in Geneva revolted against the Calvinistic reign. As has already been stated, this party gained strength among the magistrates until finally the council of two hundred in 1546 took away from the consistory its key-power, but without banishing Calvin. There can be but one reason for this. The majority were still for Calvin. There may have been many of this majority who disliked his reign, but who still wanted Calvin. For he was a great and good man. Under his guidance the excesses of the Libertines were being checked, much

was done for education and for improved trade. Under his influence and guidance Geneva had become a flourishing community.

*The final victory.* The refugees who sought asylum in Geneva were at that time increasing. Weeded out of the land of persecution, they were the men of the purest morals, of the richest culture, and the noblest souls. Not a few were men of the highest rank. The civil authorities now began to inscribe their names on the registers of its citizens. At one sitting the Council admitted as many as fifty foreigners, all men of known worth, to the rights of citizenship.

The Libertines were furious. The heads of the party met in a tavern and decided to massacre all the refugees of religion, and their supporters. The next night the mob-patriots rushed into the street with arms in their hands to begin the dreadful work. But other citizens also rushed armed into the street. There was a great uproar, but the fray passed without bloodshed.

The Council assembled a few days later. Measures were taken to bring the seditious to punishment. Four heads fell beneath the axe. Many of the other ring-leaders fled. Those who did not flee were banished from Geneva. The opposition was destroyed. Never again did it dare to raise its head.

At the same time, the civil authorities resolved to return the key-power to the consistory and not any longer interfere with the exercise of this power by the consistory. It meant that now Geneva was secured to Calvin.

Geneva was now a model of good morals, quiet living, and industry. There was no city like it in all the world. Calvin had made good his foothold at last. He now had peace. Geneva was now his. Her law, her council, her citizenry—all consented to be part of him. For two centuries Geneva was pre-eminent as an honorable, pious, and strictly moral city.

*The Academy of Geneva.* Calvin was drawing toward the evening of his life, when He laid the foundation of the Academy of Geneva. Next to the Reformation, this school was the greatest boon that he conferred on the Republic which had only lately enrolled his name among its citizens. It continued long after he was dead to send forth distinguished scholars, in every department of science, and to shed glory on the little state in which it was planted.

The position which Calvin now filled was one of greater influence than perhaps any man had exercised in the church of Christ since the days of the apostles. He was the counsellor of kings; he was the adviser of princes and statesmen; he corresponded with warriors, scholars, and reformers; he consoled martyrs, and organized churches; his admonitions were submitted

to, and his letters treasured, as marks of no ordinary distinction.

*Calvin's simplicity of life.* He was in life and manners in nowise different from any ordinary citizen of Geneva. He was as humbly lodged, he was as simply clothed, and he was served by as few attendants as any burgess of them all. He had been poor all his days, and he continued so to the end. He had married in 1540, at Strassburg Idaletta de Bures, the widow of an Anabaptist converted by him. His wife died in 1549.

*The spread of the Calvinistic Reformation.* After Calvin's death, it spread over France, Netherlands, Scotland, Switzerland, parts of Germany and East Europe; it deeply influenced English Reformation and all English speaking peoples. It was the purest type of Protestantism.

*Calvin's Theology.* Its point of procedure is God. It is characterized by absoluteness. God is God, absolutely so. It sets forth, does this theology, a predestination—election and reprobation—that is absolute. It sets forth God's decrees as absolute in their sovereignty. The will of man, in Calvin's theological system, is in the moral sense absolutely impotent and man himself is absolutely depraved; the sinner is saved by grace absolutely so; he contributes nothing at all to his salvation. It sets forth the saints as persevering by the grace of God to the end. Calvin's theology sets forth what we believe to be the truth of God's Word. This theology is found in Calvin's Institutes.

*Calvin's Church Policy.* The local church is autonomous. It has pastor, elders and deacons, elected by the people, that is, members of the congregation. It is ruled by the consistory, formed of the teaching and ruling ministry. Its classis is composed of the delegates of the various churches; its synod is composed of delegates from the various classes. Then there is the general synod. It correctly regards this system as laid down in the Scriptures. This system is Calvin's own, which he derived from the Scriptures. It is of no other Reformer. Calvin, as already had been pointed out, gave back to the church her offices. He is the father of Reformed church polity.

*Relation of Church and State.* In Calvin's system church and state are separated in the sense that each had its own government and each its own domain therefore on which the other may not encroach. To the church is given the key-power; to the state the sword power. Each must be allowed to exercise its own power without the interference of the other. Yet between church and state there is close cooperation. The state punishes all the persons excommunicated by the church, the offenders of the first table of the law as well as the offenders against the second table. And

the ministers assist the civil authorities with their good counsel.

*Calvin's Labours.* Even as a student he was devoted to his studies. So ardent was he in the pursuit of knowledge that often the hour of meal passed without his eating. He would keep pouring over his books till far into the morning. After being in school from seven in the morning till six in the evening, he would study the material he had received in the class rooms until he had mastered it. He would arise early in the morning and again go over the field in preparation for the recitations of the day. In Geneva "he preached almost daily, attended all the sittings of the consistory and the preachers association, inspired all their deliberations and resolutions, delivered lectures in the academy, composed numerous doctrinal, controversial, and apologetical works, and conducted an extensive correspondence."

*Calvin Death. His Successor.* Calvin died in 1564, at the age of 55 years. His successor in Geneva was Beza, born in 1519 of an old noble family in Vezelay, Burgundy. He studied law at Orleans. As a youth he was a man of the world and led a loose and reckless life. In 1544 he was converted and received the professorship in Greek at Lausanne. He accepted wholeheartedly Calvin's doctrine. In 1558 Calvin called him to Geneva as a preacher and professor in theology in the newly erected academy. Calvin was his senior by only ten years. If Calvin died in his fifty-fifth year, Beza became eighty-six years old.

G. M. Ophoff.

\* \* \* \*

## THE TEST

It is easy to live on the mountain,  
Where we speak to our Lord face to face;  
But the test is to live in the valley  
Just to live, every day, by His grace!

It is wonderful where all is brightness;  
There we fain would reside—never go;  
But the test is to live by the moment  
Step by step in the valley below!

It is pleasant to be in the sunshine,  
Where we see our Lord's land as He guides;  
But the thing that is precious in Jesus  
Is the faith that in darkness abides!

—Philip L. Carlson.



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# FROM HOLY WRIT

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## Exposition of Matthew 5:3

The beautiful and well-known passage of Matt. 5:3 reads as follows: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

In our exposition of this passage it may be well to remember, what the fathers of Dordrecht write, when speaking of the various degrees and different measures in which the elect of God arrive at the certainty of their election. Our Fathers emphasize that we do not arrive at this certainty by curiously prying into the secret things of God, but rather that we arrive at such certainty by observing in ourselves with spiritual joy and holy pleasure the infallible fruits of election, such as, true faith in Christ, filial fear of God, godly sorrow for sin and a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

These latter are *fruits*, infallible fruits of election!

And to this singled out group of fruits of election (these fruits here named are not meant to be exhaustive, but only representative) we may well add the fruit of election: To be *poor in spirit*. For the poverty here spoken of is indeed a fruit of election. Of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who is Reformed in faith and life.

Let us attempt to understand our text a little more in detail.

The first matter that calls for attention here is: What must be understood by the term "spirit" in the phrase "poor in spirit"? To what does the term "spirit" refer; does it refer to the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of Christ Jesus our Lord, or does it refer to the spirit of man?

We are of the conviction that this term "spirit" must certainly refer to the spirit of man. Our reasons are as follows: First of all because our text speaks of a poverty in respect to spirit which constitutes infinite blessedness. Now if our text were made to refer to the Spirit of God, the blessedness here spoken of could not at all be true. This would mean that we would not be "rich in God, the Holy Spirit", and this latter is not blessedness at all, but it is the very essence of wretchedness, death and hell. However, our text speaks of a blessedness which must be sought in being "poor in spirit." And so the term spirit can only refer to the spirit of man.

Secondly, because of the very phrase itself. Jesus is here evidently paraphrasing various Old Testament passages into one sentence. And the phrases thus paraphrased are those referring to the spirit of man. Thus in the Old Testament we read of the "sacrifices

of God as being a *broken spirit*, a broken and a contrite heart." Ps. 51:17. And, again, we read the beautiful passage in Isaiah 57:15, where we read: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, of him also that is of a contrite and humble *spirit*, to revive the *spirit* of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones". Also in this passage "spirit" refers to the spirit of man. It does not refer to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of Christ. Thirdly the analogy of all the beatitudes requires this interpretation.

However, the question arises: What must be understood by the term "spirit" in our text.

It seems to us, that "spirit" in this our text should be distinguished from such terms as "soul" and "body" and also from the term "heart". It may not be possible to find a hard and fast distinction, theologically scientific distinction, between such terms as "soul" and "spirit", yet there can be no doubt that such a distinction exists and that it will be conducive to a fruitful discussion of our passage to call attention to such distinction.

The term, soul, surely often refers to the psychical nature of man, to man as he is out of one blood. It refers to the psychological in man. This, I say, it often does. However, the term "soul" sometimes refers to the more spiritual nature of man. For instance, we read of the salvation of our souls. It then seems to verge in meaning on the term "spirit". On the other hand it seems quite safe to observe, that the term "spirit" never refers to the physical, earthly side of man's nature. It refers rather to the rational, spiritual side of our nature, as we stand before God as conscious and responsible and responding creatures. The quite absolute statement in I Cor. 2:11 that no man knoweth the things of man save the *spirit* of man that is in him, could not be stated of the soul of man. The spirit of man is in man the self-conscious "faculty" just as the Spirit in God is the One who searches the deep things of God. There is analogy between the created "spirit" of man and the non-created personal Spirit of God.

Hence, I take it that the term "spirit" refers to that self-conscious principle and "faculty" in man, whereby, he is able to be confronted with the things of the Holy Spirit of God, whether this be in the things of the Logos and revelation of God in creation, or whether this be with the things of the Holy Spirit in the law of God and the gospel in Christ Jesus.

To this we wish to add, that it is our conviction, that the spirit of man is never spoken of in Holy Writ apart from the ethical nature of the heart. As the heart is so is the man, also in His rational nature by which he is confronted with the revelation of God. It is for this reason that in Psalm 51 and Isaiah 57 the

terms "spirit" and "heart" are employed synonymously in the Hebrew parallelism. Attend to the following: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, Thou, o God, wilt not despise. In the first member of this parallelism the Psalmist speaks of "spirit" and in the second part of "heart". The same is true from the passage in Isaiah 57. And from this we would not conclude that the terms spirit and heart are identical in meaning, but we do insist that the spirit of man is always ethically qualified in its operation and attitude, as being either humble and contrite, or haughty and rebellious.

This ethical qualification is also taught implicitly in our text by Jesus. It is taught in the term "poor". This term refers to an ethical quality in the spirit of man, and his conscious spiritual relationship to God. For the term poor really is derived from the verb in the Greek, which means: to crouch, to stoop, to assume a beggarly and needy attitude. All sense of being self-sufficient is then gone, and has given room for the sense of deep, deep need and dependency for life and help from others. Here, of course, the term refers to the deep need of man to find rest for his spirit in God, and in His boundless mercies. It is the broken spirit before God, broken under the hammer blows of the Word and the Holy Spirit. It is a David, crying from out of the depths, for mercy and pardon. It is to be filled with the sense of helplessness in self, in our spirit, and not being sure to find a way ourselves out of our plight of sin and death, and to long for the comforting and darkness-dispelling Word of God. Here the spirit no longer determines (sic) what is good and evil, but prays: Teach me, o Lord, Thy way of truth and from it I shall not depart; that I may steadfastly obey, give me an understanding heart!

Ah, that is blessed!

Jesus says that it is. Says He: *Blessed* are the poor in spirit!

The term "blessed" really refers to the inner, deep contentment and joy of the Holy Spirit as He testifies with our spirit that we are the children of God. Thus David breaks forth into jubilant strains in Psalm 32 when he says: "O the blessedness of the man whose sins are forgiven, whose iniquity is covered . . . ." It is the very opposite, this blessedness, of having one's bones wax old in him because of his roaring all the day long. Then peace like a river attends life's way. Goodness and mercy follow all the way, and we are assured that we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Such is the blessedness of my text as to its Scriptural idea.

But such is also the blessedness of my text as to its content. For the content of the blessedness of the poor in spirit is that *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.

In general it can be said that this Kingdom of

Heaven is the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, His Son, and our Lord. It is the Kingdom, the blessed dominion of the Son of God in our hearts through the operation of the Holy Spirit. This is not the dominion such as the kings of the earth exercise over their subjects, even calling themselves their benefactors, but it is the dominion of the Son of God whereby in grace He saves us completely from the dominion of sin, and causes us to reign through righteousness by faith over all sin and all the gates of hell with Him. And in this Kingdom God is all in all. And here in this kingdom no one boasts in ought else but in the Lord, our righteousness.

Now this latter has already become the cherished possession of the poor in spirit. Because God is everything to them and Christ is their complete Redeemer, they seek all in Him. And in themselves they are poor and wretched and naked and blind, but in Christ they find their all. Nothing do they lack in Him. Humbly bowing at God's throne our every need is fulfilled, and that is blessed. This is the Kingdom in our hearts.

It is the Kingdom of *heaven* in our hearts.

It is the kingdom that has its origin in heaven. It descends from heaven. There is the King of righteousness, there is the Capitol City of the Lord of Lords and the King of kings. All is heavenly in this Kingdom in its origin. It is out of heaven, and it is not a kingdom of the earth.

But it is also a Kingdom, which, when it is consummated, will be wholly heavenly. The earthly shall be no more, the former things shall be remembered no more. For all is ours from the Lord out of heaven. And as we now bare the image of the earthy, thus presently we shall bare the image of the heavenly, the Son of God in glory.

This Kingdom of heaven also in its future glorious consummation and final revelation is also the present possession of the poor in spirit. In hope they are saved. In this hope nothing lacks us when we look into the future. Our spirit finds rest in the eternal love of God manifested in this heavenly Kingdom in the Son of His love.

And the more the poor in spirit really live in this their poverty of self, the more they shall also receive the assurance of God who shall say: Come ye blessed, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

G. Lubbers.

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*Notice!* — as is customary, the Standard Bearer will not be published for the 15th of August.

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# IN HIS FEAR

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## Back To School

A bit early?

Yes, as this is being written it is the middle of July. The mercury hovers around the 90-degree mark. And almost no one,—at least of all the children,—thinks of school yet, with the exception, perhaps, of some board members and teachers who will be charged with opening the school doors at the proper time.

Yet, when this appears in our *Standard Bearer*, it will be August. And August is generally the month for enrollment with a view to the opening of the schools themselves in September. And because when you enroll your children you take a step which is practically difficult to undo, we would like to have you read this *before* enrollment time.

Hence, this writing is none too early.

And we would ask you to face with us a few pertinent questions. Questions they are, which are pertinent with regard to the training of *your child*, first of all. But also questions with regard to the *institutions* for the training of your child.

\* \* \* \*

*Where is your child going?*

The above question may be asked from a formal point of view, first of all, and that too with regard to children of various ages and various circumstances.

*To High School or Not?*

For a certain group, namely, those who graduated recently from the eighth or ninth grade, the question may be asked: Is your child going to high school or not? Perhaps to some that question may seem a bit strange. In certain states, more especially in our larger cities, a high school education is compulsory; and it is only under very special circumstances that one may be permitted to end his education before he finishes high school. However, that situation is by no means universal. Especially here in the midwest,—and I speak from experience now,—in our rural communities the matter of a high school education is one of the individual's choice. And therefore, for many the above question is pertinent.

Now, this arrangement would not be so bad, provided the proper choice were made in every case. But the choice is often, I am convinced, wrong. The mere fact that such a large percentage of grade school graduates never go on to high school convinces me of this. It undoubtedly is true that there are certain children

who under the most ideal circumstances have difficulty in completing grade school work, and who should certainly not be forced to take up high school work, at least not in the normal sense of the word. But this percentage is certainly also very small, while the percentage who actually end their education with grade school is disproportionately large. This added fact prompts the urgency of the question: Is your child going to high school or not?

We may take cognizance of the fact that acquiring a *Christian* high school education is not an easy matter in some areas, due to the lack of such institutions. We may also recognize the fact that even Christian institutions for a higher education are not all that could be desired by us Protestant Reformed parents. We may acknowledge the perhaps not unfounded fear of some parents that their children will suffer spiritual damage in the way of going to high school.

But we may nevertheless face the question, and face some questions behind the question. And let us do so honestly. Let us ask ourselves:

1. Is it proper, if your child has the mental equipment and the ability to study in any normal degree, to end his education at the 8th grade? Or to put it this way: If God has given your child a normal mind, is it not your obligation as parents to see to it that his mental equipment is properly and thoroughly developed also? And consider this question in the light of two undeniable facts. In the first place, there is a growing tendency to limit the field in grade school education, to make the work easier, so that the grade school pupil of today does not graduate with as much education, as thorough an education, or as large a mass of knowledge as the pupil of yesteryear. I can remember the time when my own parents, comparing my grade school training with theirs, would shake their heads in despair at the shortcomings in my education. And by now I can make a comparison over a span of some fifteen years, and observe more changes. Partly this may be due to the fact that the grade school training of today looks forward to high school, and partly due to the general decadence of education under the progressive philosophy. But the fact remains that a grade school education is not complete.

But there is another undeniable fact that looms large upon the scene. And that is the fact that a grade school education is not geared to prepare one completely for the life of today in the world of today. Many elements enter into this picture, but perhaps the largest is the simple fact that the world in which we must live is an *educated* world more than ever before. You reply, perhaps, that we don't have to imitate the world? Very correct, that is, from a spiritual viewpoint. But the truth is that we must live *in* the world, while not being *of* the world. And

that implies, that instead of living in anabaptistic separation, local separation, formal separation, we must rather live *this world's life* in every sphere, but from the principle of faith. And I submit that more and more this implies that the education of our children may not, from the viewpoint of the fear of the Lord, end at grade school.

Even from the viewpoint of the fact that your children are the future church this question is important. It is undeniably true that, all other things being equal, one who is formally equipped better educationally will be a better church member, will make a more able officebearer, will have a better understanding of the truth. This fact underlies our maintenance of a trained clergy, for example. This does not condemn all who have only a grade school education as nim-compoops. And such need not reply that they "got along on an 8th grade education". Take merely the matter of education in the English language, in grammar, in spelling, in vocabulary, etc. What a difference a little training can make in understanding the preaching, the catechetical instruction, the confessions, the writings in the church papers. Certainly, you can overcome the lack of education to an extent by personal effort and exertion; and that is a good thing too. But the fact remains that an eighth grade graduate is not educationally prepared for his future in the church of the 20th century.

2. Is it not true that too often parents take their children from school after the 8th grade to "get something out of them"? Mother wants her daughter to help at home, and father wants his son to help on the farm. Those children are getting bigger; they're capable of working a little now; why should they waste their time at school? Now, that may be all right in case of dire necessity. And it may be all right if son or daughter was rather dull mentally and was perhaps passed on by the teachers from grade to grade merely to get rid of him or her. But those are exceptions. And in the vast majority of cases it is to be feared that parents act from the principle of *utility*, instead of from the desire to "train up a child in the way he should go".

3. Is it not true that too often the whole matter of education is approached from a utility standpoint, that is, from the point of view of the question what practical good will it do our children? Perhaps we already do that in regard to grade school. But when a high school education is non-compulsory, we very coldly figure up the dollars and cents, and begin to ask: what good does it do my child to know world history or United States History, or English language and composition, or Geometry and Algebra, or Latin and German? Will it help him to get a job? Will it help him make more money? Will it help him run the

store, or plow a field, or will it help her as a housewife? Without answering the questions as such—and perhaps the answers would be surprising in some cases—we may point out that such an attitude is motivated by pure utility, a philosophy that is as carnal as it is common in our age, and therefore to be condemned. All this does not mean that a child must not be trained for his life's calling. But do not forget that neither you nor the child knows what his calling is yet at the end of the eighth grade.

And in the latter connection we may mention two practical possibilities, which we mention because they stand out in our circles. Could it be possible that your son is destined for the Protestant Reformed ministry, and that you are in duty bound to give him an education? You don't know yet whether he is or not? No, but you do know that he cannot attend our theological school without a high school education. And shall you then prevent him? Could it be possible that your son or daughter is destined for the field of Christian education? You don't know yet. But you do know that no one can teach without a high school education. And what is more, you do know that the movement for Protestant Reformed Christian education is expanding, and that if we are to have schools we must have teachers, and that if we are to have Protestant Reformed schools we must have teachers out of our own midst. And shall you then prevent your son or daughter from going on to school? These, remember, are concrete possibilities. And you parents must face them *in the fear of the Lord*.

Finally, it may not be out of place to emphasize that the *parents* have this responsibility, not the children. Your children are children, and not in the deciding position. Their like or dislike of school is not the controlling factor, though their aptitude may be. Nine times out of ten your child will want to quit school or else go to school to have a good time. The question is: how must *you* educate your children? And *you* must answer that question as a Christian parent.

### *To College or Not?*

This question must also be faced by some, and largely for the same reasons. The difference is, that by the time this question must be answered the student, a high school graduate, may know what his life's calling is; and what his calling is may determine the answer somewhat. Besides, at this stage the pupil himself must share in determining the answer.

And therefore, I would add an appeal to our young people, just out of high school,—even though our boys face a good deal of uncertainty due to the draft,—to seriously consider this question as Protestant Reformed Young People, with a peculiar calling in the midst of church and world. Don't hasten past the question

in your over-eagerness to get a job, make some money, be independent, get "on your own". You might regret it, as some have. And you certainly must face the question where God wants you in this world, and what training you must have for that position. And you must face it soberly, prayerfully, in the midst of a vain and frivolous generation.

More pertinent questions we have. But these must wait for another issue.

H. C. Hoeksema.



## A Question About Mixed Marriages

Dear Editor:

Would you please give light on the following questions?

Is it showing love of parents, brothers and sisters, to attend the wedding of a son or a daughter who after several admonitions marries away from the Protestant Reformed Churches into an Arminian, not even a so-called Reformed Church?

Is it sin for the party that marries away?

And is it loving brother or sister above God for the ones that congratulate such a party after the ceremony?

signed N. N.

ANSWER:

The Editor referred this question to the undersigned, since he lacked the time prior to his vacation, to answer same. I will try and answer it.

My answer can be very short and to the point.

1. I do not think that attending a wedding of a son or daughter who marries away from our Protestant Reformed Churches is sin. How could that in itself be a sinful act? Your attending the wedding or your absence has nothing to do with the joining of two persons in marriage.

2. Parties that "marry away" from our Protestant Reformed Churches commit a sin. That is also very plain. If it is true that the Protestant Reformed Churches are the purest manifestation of the Body of Christ, and it is true; and if it is true that we are duty bound to join ourselves to that church which is the purest manifestation of that Body of Christ, and that also is true, then it is plain that "marrying away" from those churches is a sin.

3. Congratulating a party, that "marries away" from the Protestant Reformed Churches, in such a way that we leave the impression that everything is

as it should be is a sin and very cruel. We should warn the son or daughter for the consequences of their sinful act. Although I should add that much wisdom is necessary for such warnings. It is so easy to blunder and make matters worse. We should not leave the impression as though we are better. We should not embitter the son or daughter and the party who came from outside and took our child away. Rather we should try and win the "arminian" son-in-law or daughter-in-law. At any rate, to withdraw ourselves from them, relegating them as so much water over the dam, is cruel and sinful. If we have a better doctrine, and we have; if we live a better life because of our doctrine, and we should; then we should do some family mission work, and try to draw the erring children back into the fold.

4. Finally, we need the Spirit of prayer and supplication when we find ourselves in situations such as you describe.

Sincerely,  
Gerrit Vos.

P.S.—Consider that your very presence at such a wedding, if you have done your duty, as you described it: "after several admonitions", is as a warning Word of God to those that err.



## MINISTERS' STUDY FUND SOCIETY

Dear Friend:—

In 1950 an appeal was sent to members of our congregations; this appeal was to determine whether our people would be willing to assume the financial obligations of three former Episcopalian ministers and their families over a period of three years.

During this period these men intend to devote their time attending our Protestant Reformed Seminary. Through God's grace, which doth work in us to will and to do, our people have responded and with the help of the ministers doing part-time work the past year has been successful.

During this time the congregations in the vicinity of Grand Rapids have had the opportunity of meeting and hearing these men. Arrangements are now being made D.V., to have these men speak in our western churches.

The spirit of cooperation, sincerity and gratitude manifested by these men with the newly formed board has been a privilege, thanks to the God of our salvation who has bestowed these gifts unto men.

The brethren take this opportunity to express their gratitude for your labor, kindness, and love:





*"I have learned more about the pure Reformed truth and life, while a student in our Theological School this past year, and while a member of our churches, than at any other time of my spiritual life. I deeply appreciate the help of all who have made it possible for me and my family to reside in Grand Rapids, and have our physical necessities provided for. Praise God for His grace and care!"*

James A. McCollam.

*"I wish to express, in these few words, my deepest appreciation to all who, by God's grace, have been enabled to share our financial burden with us, during the past school year. We realize that only the love for the "Truth" and the sincere desire to see that "truth" proclaimed has motivated the hearts of all who have made contributions. Our prayer is that we may, by God's grace, prove faithful in our calling, "fight the good fight of faith" and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*

E. Emmanuel.

*"Jehovah has well-ordered our affairs, graciously receiving us, His children, into His care and custody to be supported and further educated; so that we anticipate all blessings from Him only, and know that He will always supply our necessities for both body and soul. May our hope depend on no other."*

R. C. Harbach.

For distinction and the convenience of the Society the board has adopted for its name, Ministers' Study Fund Society. Also, work is now in progress to have our society incorporated with the State. In so doing all contributions and gifts donated to this cause can be deducted from your income tax.

For the continuance of this work the board proposes that, if at all possible, the society members duplicate their gifts made last year.

Lest we forget let us consider the blessings of our God toward us and give as He has given.

Contributors are kindly requested to notify the treasurer of gift or pledge at earliest convenience. In so doing the work of the treasurer can be simplified and provisions made for future work.

Having been given the assurance that the calling and labors in this work are of the Lord, let us continue to labor while it is day.

Sidney De Young, Chairman  
James Kok, Vice-chairman  
Gerrit Pipe, Secretary.  
Donald Ondersma, Treasurer  
1131 Chicago Drive S. W.  
Grand Rapids 9, Michigan

## ANTWOORD AAN DS. VAN RAALTE

Het spijt me zeer dat Ds. Janse zich schijnbaar niet meer herinnert deze vraag te hebben gesteld of het althans beslist ontkent.

Doch aan het verzoek van Ds. Van Raalte (S.B. June 15) kan ik nogtans niet voldoen, daar het eerste vereiste onmogelijk is, en het tweede desgelijks, daar het voor mij nog even "certain" staat als voorheen.

Het beste zal wezen het met vele andere soortgelijke dingen over te laten aan de "Dag" die het zal verklaren. (1 Cor. 3:13)

Hoogachten,

H. De Jong.

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## A PREACHER'S PRAYER

For an illumined mind to see  
Something of the immensity  
Of Thy love and marvellous grace,  
Resplendent in Thy glorious face—  
For a clear head, Lord, I pray;  
Understanding of Thy way.

For a compassion like Thine own,  
Which brought Thee down from heav'ns  
throne,  
To seek and save the lost in sin,  
And make them pure and whole within—  
For a tender heart, I pray,  
That will warm the words I say.

For the anointing from above,  
Enduing me with pow'r and love  
So that in all my ministry  
I may a faithful witness be—  
For unction, dear Lord, I pray;  
Holy Spirit, come today!

Rev. J. Kenton Parker  
—Southern Presbyterian Journal.

Notice! — as is customary, the Standard Bearer will not be published for the 15th of August.

## Report of Classis East

IN SESSION, JULY 11, 1951 at HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

The opening exercises were conducted by Rev. B. Kok. After the singing of Psalter No. 88 he reads II Tim. 2 and leads in prayer.

The credentials are read and reveal that Chatham is represented only by the pastor, the rest of the churches are represented by two delegates.

Classis being declared constituted, Rev. H. H. Kuiper, according to rotation, is called upon to preside. He speaks a few words of welcome to the delegates.

A few delegates who are present for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription.

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

Grand Haven requests Classical appointments until the meeting of the next Classis. The following committee is appointed to draw up a schedule: Rev. J. Blankespoor, Rev. J. A. Heys and Elder G. Pipe. A little later the committee presents the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

July 22, Rev. B. Kok  
July 29, Rev. R. Veldman  
Aug. 12, Rev. G. Lubbers  
Aug. 19, Rev. M. Schipper  
Aug. 26, Rev. E. Knott  
Sept. 2, Rev. G. Vos  
Sept. 9, Rev. H. De Wolf  
Sept. 16, Rev. J. Blankespoor  
Sept. 30, Rev. H. H. Kuiper  
Oct. 7, Rev. G. Vanden Berg  
Oct. 14, Rev. A. Petter

Classis receives and accepts the invitation of Second Church to hold its next meeting there. In order not to conflict with the meeting of Synod, Classis decides to hold its next meeting the second Wednesday in October at Second Church.

The first Church of Grand Rapids asks advice in re the erasure of a baptized member.

After the consistory gives further information in this case, the consistory is advised to proceed with erasure.

The following instruction from Randolph is read:

"It is decided to request Classis to overture our next Synod to take steps toward active foreign Mission work on the grounds that:

1. It is the injunction of Christ to His Church to evangelize throughout the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem.

2 The latter has been done to the point where we are warranted to look for a broader field.

3. The material (both finances and personal) seems now to be available.

4. Our churches, also in this endeavor, have a calling distinctive from all others."

Classis decides to send this overture through to our next Synod (1952).

Randolph, at their request, receive permission to ask for collections in the various churches of Classis East to help defray the cost of their newly acquired church building.

They were also granted permission to overture Synod for permission to ask for collections in Classis West.

The Church Visitors reported that "peace and harmony prevails in the congregations of Classis East", that some consistories were advised, that due to the rising cost of living the pastor's salary should be raised if at all possible; that the congregation of Randolph had purchased a basement church building furnished with seats and an electrified reed organ for the sum of \$5000.00.

Rev. H. De Wolf and Elder R. Newhouse were appointed to thank the ladies for their catering services.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are answered by the various consistories.

The minutes are read and approved.

A motion to adjourn carries. After the singing of Ps No. 203, Rev. G. Vos leads in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.