

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Post-Thanksgiving Thoughts

"When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. Beware lest thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day. Deut. 8:10-11.

Among the flood of voices and musical strains attending the so-called celebration of the national holyday of Thanksgiving, I heard a certain man say something like this: "If God were a man He would surely be offended at the way we profess to have a national holyday dedicated to thanksgiving, and then proceed to completely forget Him in eating and drinking. But now that He is not a man, but God, He must surely be hurt." Well, my dear reader, that was the understatement of the week. And yet, when I mused awhile on this last statement of a "hurt" God, I was reminded of a text in Genesis 6, which reads: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and *it grieved Him at His heart.*" Of course, I realize full well that this certain man did not think of that kind of a "hurt": his whole speech was in a different strain. But I thought of it, and it set me to more thinking. And when I noted the following verse in Genesis 6, I shuddered at this "hurt" of God at this juncture of the history of the world. We know what this "hurt" of Genesis 6 produced. And if you have forgotten, I will remind you of it, by quoting the following text: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air;

for it repenteth Me that I have made them." And He did. The flood came and they were all drowned.

Now we know that this will not happen again, and we have the rainbow for proof. But a far worse flood is coming, and for the same reason as in Genesis 6: a flood of fire that shall destroy the wicked from the face of the earth. In His just wrath, the Lord has reserved unto fire this world of ours, and then the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. And all this because of the godlessness of the wicked. For I may safely assure you that the Lord is grievously "hurt" because of all the wickedness that goes on day after day. And not only on Thanksgiving Day but during all the days of our history.

Lest we forget.

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Lest we forget.

Do not think that we can quietly quote these things, these dreadful things, and then smugly sit by with pharisaical delight in a self-made righteousness. These dreadful things have a message for us. The "hurt" which was caused to God by this last holyday (?) was not caused by the out and out wicked alone. There is a measure of co-responsibility for these dreadful things with us, the church of Christ. The church is not completely holy as yet, and she sins also in this spectacle of Thanksgiving. And the danger to sin on a day like this is not the only one of the myriads of dangers to sin but threatens the church throughout all of her history. For proof I would point you to the history of God's covenant people Israel. And to the warnings which God sent to her by her prophets throughout all of the days of her history. The text of my post-Thanksgiving meditation is a case in point. The Lord knows our frame. He knows that nothing human is strange unto us; that we are inclined to the same sins as the wicked unregenerate world. Read the

swan song of Moses, and shudder. Read the fulfillment of prophecy, and weep.

Israel was about to enter Canaan. And Moses, the servant of God, gave them Deuteronomy, that is, the second reading of the Law. In it he rehearsed the forty years' journey through the howling wilderness. And rehearsing that journey is tantamount to rehearsing the wondrous deeds of Jehovah. Listen to him. On the one hand, Jehovah had humbled them, proved them, and had made them to hunger. But on the other hand, He had marvellously saved them: their raiment had not waxed old; their feet did not swell; and He had fed them with the bread from heaven, while the flinty rock gave water. And God's professed purpose was to teach His heritage that man does not live by bread alone, but that they must have the Word of God. And they were on the way to Canaan, the picture of wondrous well-being. There would be plenty of good land, water in abundance, depths and valleys and hills; wheat, barley, wines, figtrees, olives and honey. There would be no lack, no scarcity. There would be iron and brass, in short, all their needs would be fulfilled, and they would be a happy, contented people.

But, My people, beware!

Lest you forget!

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Lest you forget!

All such wonderful provision had a definite purpose.

My people, said God through Moses, when thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not.

Forget what? This: the Lord thy God!

In other words: when all your needs are supplied, do not forget to bless God!

And now I know that Israel is no more. And I know also that our land is not the land of the text: America is not the holy land of yore. But I know this too, that there is no fundamental difference in this admonition in this year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and fifty one. And I know too that the same danger threatens us that threatened Israel of old.

When thou hast eaten and art full.

Refers first of all to all earthly food drink and substance. It certainly refers to the things that are called by Agur: food convenient. Food convenient is a term which applies to all the things which we have need of according to God's own ordinances. You need a little oxygen for your lungs and your blood. You must have

a mediocrity of health and well-being. You must have a little warmth when the thermometer stands at zero or lower. You must have a friend or two that smile every time they see you. You must have a little sanity lest you rave and rave. Oh there are many things we must have if we are to live, even if we are to live for God. And God knows that we need these things. Jesus said that. I do not mean luxury nor poverty. Agur was afraid of both. I mean food convenient for bare life. The barest necessities.

Well, God knows we need them; and we knew it, and so on Prayer Day we asked for food convenient. And what did He do? And what is His usual custom? He made us full. We ate and we drank and we became full. And that is the understatement of this meditation. After all, I write for those that live with me in this good land, the North American Continent. Again I would ask; What did Jehovah do? He literally threw things at us. He over-loaded us with good things. And we are full. You ought to come in the homes of some of us. And the least have more than the best had in other parts of God's dominion where I lived when I was a child. I remember how one boy said to another boy: Wonder how it would feel if we could eat as much meat as we wanted.

Lest we forget.

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Lest we forget.

What did Jehovah do?

Well, I told you what He did in the realm of the earthy.

But that is nothing compared to what He did for our souls, for our spirits, for eternity. He gave us Jesus. In these simple words you have an eternity of bliss such as my poor tongue cannot adequately express.

He gave us Jesus.

All the bread and drink, all the shelter and contentment of an earthy nature are but symbols and God intended them to be just that. They are not an end in themselves. And there we strike at the heart of the godlessness of our race, of ourselves. The Bread of Life is Jesus. And that Bread is for the eternal sustenance of our souls and of our bodies. Man does not live by bread alone. The main thing is Jesus.

Sometimes the Lord breaks the staff of life.

And in its wake comes hunger, distress, utmost misery, and finally death.

We need that object lesson. To call us from life's dream away to the eternal realities that abide forever. And the eternal reality is this: We must have God in order to be happy forever.

And so, when we have eaten and are full in the proper sense then we should bless the Lord our God.

In these few words you have the only purpose of the universe, both this universe which is now, and the Universe that is coming, the renewed Universe.

Here is the purpose of God which He purposed with Himself: there should be a huge mirror before His face wherein He would see His wonders, His majesty and His praises.

And He chose you and He made you to be that mirror. And you may forget the mirrors we have: they are dead things. I mean a living, sounding, glorifying mirror.

And therefore the Lord said: Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God!

And, positively, "then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God!"

Lest we forget!

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Lest we forget!

What is it: to bless God?

Primarily it is a work of God. He blesses Himself. He bows down to His own beauty and He blesses Himself.

But after creating a good thing, He bows down to that good thing and blesses it. And that means, literally, to speak beautiful words to that object. And when God does that, something happens. When God speaks beautiful words to you, then something happens to you, then you are blessed, and that means that things happen to you, things of salvation. I will give you an example. There was a harlot standing behind Jesus. We do not know of one word which that woman spoke, but we know that she wept, and she wept much, for she employed the long tresses of her hair to dry the feet of Jesus. Finally, Jesus turned Himself about and He spoke wonderful words to her: Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace! There you have the blessing wherewith God blesses. They are beautiful words, and they do something. Ask of this woman if it did anything to her. She was transformed. I can imagine how she found her way out of this house of Simon, and along the streets of the city, back to her home. Her heart was bursting with happiness.

Well, the Lord wants you to bless Him.

That is proper thanksgiving.

That is heaven on earth.

In one way I can understand that the world does not thank God. Yes, they are wicked. Yes, they are responsible. Yes, they shall be called to account in the judgment day. Yes, they shall agree with God when

He damns them for not thanking Him. That is all true. But I ask you: Were they blessed? Are they blessed as you are? Did God speak His beautiful words to you as He did to that harlot?

What manner of people ought we to be in holiness and righteousness.

Lest we forget.

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Lest we forget.

Is it possible to bless God on Thanksgiving Day, and every day in the year?

There is a beautiful story in the answer to that question. It is the story of God's eternal love in Jesus.

My first answer must be: no! It is not possible to bless God.

Have you not seen round about you last week during the national holyday of Thanksgiving how utterly impossible it is to bless the Lord?

Another, a better question: have you not known from the beginning of your vain life that you are absolutely incapable to do any good and inclined to do all kind of evil?

Oh yes, there is a beautiful story about this blessing of God by man.

And this is the story: when we could not do it any more because of our sin, death and curse, God sent a Man in the world, and He placed Him before all the commandments, judgments and statutes of God, and He said to this Man: My people have broken all of them, and they continue to break them, and they have done this breaking in stead of keeping them. So I ask a twofold work of you: you must keep them and you must remedy the broken commandments in suffering the punishments.

And He did.

He did this for us. He did it in us. And He did it through us. And therefore the Word of God comes to us: Bless the Lord.

Awhile ago I said that we must speak beautiful words about God to God. Well the most beautiful words of blessing of God are not spoken but lived. Awhile ago I directed your wondering gaze to that woman who was a sinner. At that time I said that she spoke not one word. And that is true. But oh how she spoke in her deeds!

She spoke such wonderfully beautiful words that Jesus made it a point to call Simon's attention to it.

Oh, let us go and do likewise. Let us in the power and the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ live lives of true thanksgiving to God.

And that is living the Lord Jesus Christ.

G. Vos

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## EDITORIALS

### The Synod of 1951

For a while we intend to write as complete a report as possible on the transactions of our last Synod, especially on those sessions of Synod that were held from September 26 to October 3. In these sessions the Declaration of Principles was discussed as to its contents and as to its purpose, and was finally adopted.

I do not have in my possession a stenographic report, but I do have a rather lengthy and accurate report written in longhand. And since, of course, most of our people could not be present at the sessions of Synod, and since I am certain that they will nevertheless be interested to know not only the formal decisions, which can be found in the Acta, but also to read about the discussions and the debates that were carried on at Synod, so that they can have a complete picture, I will write as accurately and as objectively as possible on the basis of the written report I have in my possession.

The Synod reconvened on September 26. After it was opened, the delegates of Classis West were asked to report as to what they had done in regard to the contents of the Declaration. The report was that they had referred several of the protests against the Declaration that already appeared on the Agenda to the consistories, and that seeing that their position was that the Declaration was not legally before Synod, they had not entered into the contents of it.

Soon after this the Rev. H. Hoeksema made the following motion: "I make a motion that Synod declares that the Declaration of Principles is the expression of the Confessions with regard to some fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches."

The Rev. L. Vermeer asked: "Does that motion include the amendments suggested by Classis East?" This question was answered in the affirmative.

Thereupon the Rev. J. Howerzyl asked: "What is the purpose of this motion? Is it not begging the question? Is it preliminary to something else? What relation, for instance, is there between this motion and the advice of Committee I, B?"

Here I must needs inform the reader about this report of Committee I, B. A committee of pre-advice had been appointed by Synod to present its advice concerning the Declaration of Principles. It was a committee of four, consisting of two members from the delegates of Classis West and two members from the delegates of Classis East. This committee could not agree, and therefore presented a split report. The report of Committee I A, which consisted of the delegates from Classis West, advised Synod not to adopt the Declaration on the basis that it was not legally before Synod. This was the thrust of the overture to Synod from the Consistory of our congregation in

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Bellflower, California. However, the Synod in June had already declared that the Declaration was legal, or rather, had rejected the stand of Bellflower's overture that it was illegal by a vote of nine to seven. This really eliminated the necessity of discussing the report of Committee I, B, that is, the report of the other half of the same committee of pre-advice, to which the Rev. Howerzyl refers in his question, because that part of the report defended the legality of the Declaration of Principles. But for the sake of completeness, I will quote that report. Here it follows.

Two of the members of our committee having agreed that Synod ought to be advised to adopt the Overture of Bellflower, the undersigned members of the committee, wish to state that it is their opinion that Synod should rather be advised to adopt the Declaration on the basis of the six grounds included in Fuller Ave's advice and including all the amendments and the Preamble suggested by Classis East's overture.

We cannot agree with the statement in Bellflower's overture that the Declaration is an interpretation of the Confessions and that it came into being in an improper way. Concerning these two statements we have the following to say:

1. The Declaration is not an interpretation of the Confessions or a Fourth Form but simply a Declaration of the principles according to which our Mission Committee is instructed to labor in organizing new congregations. See the Preamble suggested by Classis East on page 42 (bottom).

a. To draw up a document and in it refer to the Confessions does not necessarily brand it as an official interpretation which must be signed together with confessions as belonging to Our Confessions.

(1) A professor of Theology, for example, might be suspended from his office for teaching false doctrine. The committee which advises Synod to do so might quote freely from the Confessions to show that he has departed from them in his teachings. When Synod adopts this advice and makes it her own, that does not make this document an official interpretation of the Confessions on the level with our Confessions.

(2) Since 1924 we have been interpreting the Confessions in a very definite way, and in 1950 our Mission Committee was not rebuked by Synod for writing to an individual: "We do not hesitate to express that the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity, as interpreted by us over against the theory of Common Grace and also the theory of General Grace as expressed in the Three Points of 1924 are binding in our Churches." See Acts of Synod page 115. This statement by the Mission Committee was not an official Declaration of interpretation of the Confessions. And we would remind Synod that the Mission Committee came with its request for a form because it was struggling with this problem of dealing with those who also claim to have and to maintain the Three Forms of Unity and who desired to join our churches.

(3) We must not therefore hasten to call every document that deals with doctrinal matters and which quotes the Confessions as an official Interpretation which Synod has no right to compose.

b. The very form of the Declaration indicates that it is nothing more than a document in which we state the principles according to which our churches always organized congregations in the past and according to which we propose to do so in the future as we approach those from other denominations than those amongst whom we labored in the past. Therefore the document begins historically with the principles according to

which we organized congregations in the past of those who came to us from the Christian Reformed Churches.

2. The Declaration is legally before Synod.

a. The Mission Committee had the right to come to the last Synod with its request.

(1) It, and it alone, functions in the organization of new congregations.

(2) Considering the Declaration as no fourth Form or Interpretation (as above) we must maintain that the Mission Committee is the only body that could come with the request which it presented to the last Synod. It could not come to Synod from a local consistory.

b. It certainly is now legally before this present Synod.

(1) Several consistories have overtured Synod to adopt it for the Mission Committee's use.

(2) It has now come into being not only as requested by the only body that could request it of the Synod, but now from the very bottom, consistory, Classis to Synod—local congregations are urging Synod to adopt it and to heed to the request of the Mission Committee.

From this it is evident that Committee I, B, advised Synod to adopt the Declaration on the basis of the six grounds adduced by the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and including all the amendments and the preamble suggested by Classis East. The rest of the report all concerns the legality of the Declaration of Principles, which had already been decided by Synod. It would be a mistake, therefore, to enter into that matter once more.

To the question of the Rev. Howerzyl, what was the purpose of the motion presented by the Rev. H. Hoeksema, the latter answered as follows:

The matter of the motion is certainly preliminary to something else, namely, to the adoption of the Declaration of Principles as a form for the organization of churches, to be used by the Mission Committee and the Missionary. But before we adopt this, it is certainly necessary that we declare as Synod that the Declaration of Principles is the expression of the Confession with regard to some fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches. If this motion is not adopted, then the adoption of the Declaration as a form for the Mission Committee is not necessary any more. Besides, this motion has the same substance as the first point of the grounds of Classis East's overture. This ground reads as follows: 'The Declaration of Principles is based fourquarely on our Three Forms of Unity and on the Baptism Form. It has been alleged by some, without any proof, that the Declaration represents a private theological opinion. But nothing could be farther from the truth. It consists almost exclusively of quotations from the Confessions. Essentially it is nothing else than the Three Forms of Unity as they have always been read and understood by the Protestant Reformed Churches. The Declaration offers nothing new.' The motion therefore certainly is not begging the question. The question of the truth as confessed by our churches on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity is certainly most important. And therefore the question whether this Synod will express agreement with the Declaration as an expression of the Confession is paramount. It is to me more important than the adoption of the Declaration of Principles as a form for the Mission Committee. And in answer to the question of the Rev.



Vermeer, whether my motion includes the amendments suggested by Classis East, I would say that this forenoon a motion was adopted to read the whole Declaration, including the amendments. And since it has been read with these amendments this morning, it stands to reason that my motion includes them.

And now I will quote the discussion on this matter conducted on the floor of the Synod from the written report as I have it before me.

The Rev. L. Vermeer: Rev. H. Hoekema says that if this motion is passed, then we have adopted the first ground of Classis East's overture. But if this is true, it seems to me that in that case we have adopted the whole thing. Then the Declaration itself has been adopted.

Rev. H. Hoekema: The remark of the Rev. L. Vermeer is not quite correct. This motion simply means that we as Synod agree on the truth of the Declaration, that is, we express that the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions with regard to some fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches. The question is now simply, whether this is true, or not. If this motion is passed, another motion will still be needed for its adoption as a form for the Mission Committee and for the Missionary.

Rev. L. Vermeer: That is a part of the truth. But it is also true that when we have adopted this first point of Classis East's overture, we will have to adopt the rest of it also, and we will have to say that 'it will safeguard our churches against the influence of those who claim that they adhere to the Reformed Confessions but do not.' The question is whether this applies to the people of our churches also. Classis West said that we agree with the main thrust of the Declaration. But we did not go into the contents of the Declaration of determine whether it is really the expression of the Confessions.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: Does not this motion broaden the scope of the whole matter? It seems to me that the Declaration is presented as a form for the organization of congregations. Doesn't this motion rather make it a Fourth Form of a confessional nature?

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: I cannot understand the objections of some against this motion. Even if we do express in this motion that we adopt the contents of the Declaration, what of it? The simple question is whether the Declaration is the expression of the truth of the Confessions. And if it is, do we not dare to adopt this? If we all agree that the Declaration is in agreement with the Confessions, and that it is the expression of the Confessions as we have always taught it in our churches, what can possibly be the objection against this motion?

Rev. H. H.: In answer to the Rev. J. Howerzyl I would say that it would probably be true that if this motion is passed, we adopt a certain form of a confessional nature for our churches, if this motion stood alone. But as soon as we adopt the main thing, that is, if we adopt the motion that this is to be used for the Mission Committee and the Missionary in the organization of churches, this whole objection falls away. If we adopt the preamble suggested by Classis East, this Declaration can never be used instead of the Confession or even along side of the Confessions. The Confessions remain the only basis on which we as churches stand. For instance, the Declaration, if we adopt it as a form for the organization of churches, can never be used to depose ministers, elders, or deacons.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: If this motion is passed in its present form, then regardless of subsequent action, this statement stands that this motion declares. It means that we say that this Declaration says nothing more than the Confession. And

that implies too, to my mind, that in the future the Three Forms of Unity will nevertheless have to be interpreted in the light of this Declaration.

The Rev. G. M. Ophoff: What the Rev. Howerzyl just said is undoubtedly correct. But what of it? If this Declaration is nothing but the expression of the truth of our Confessions, what can possibly be the objection? The question before us is exactly this: is the Declaration the truth of the Confessions, yes or no? If it is not, let us prove it. But if it is, don't we want that truth?

The Rev. M. Gritters: If this motion is a part of a series of other motions that are to follow, then we should certainly reject it. We do not know what else is coming. If we are to be of any service to the church in the future, we must make things very plain. Also, if we are to be of any service to others, for instance, to the Liberated, we should emphasize which fundamental principles are meant. That faith is the hand of the soul is a fundamental principle. Another fundamental principle is: 'Whosoever believeth shall have everlasting life.' We must therefore definitely state what fundamental principles are meant.

Rev. R. Veldman: I can see what the Rev. J. Howerzyl meant. And perhaps we want to avoid this, that is, to make of the Declaration a certain Fourth Form of a confessional nature. Is it not possible though, that together we say that this is the truth, regardless of the question whether we want to adopt it for the use of the Mission Committee. If we can agree that this is the truth, then we do not have to talk about that anymore. If we cannot agree on this, it is no use to talk any further. But if we do, we can simply discuss whether we want the Declaration to be adopted as a form for the organization of churches, to be used by the Mission Committee.

The Rev. G. M. Ophoff: In reply to the Rev. M. Gritters, I want to state that the Declaration plainly states what matters this motion treats. There can be no question about the principles involved. That the promise is unconditional and only for the elect—those are the chief fundamental principles which are mentioned in the Declaration. And exactly these principles must be enunciated. There are, of course, still other truths besides those which are mentioned by the Rev. Gritters. Such a principle, for instance, is the truth of the Trinity. But was it necessary to say something about this for the Mission Committee? The Declaration is certainly not vague, but very specific and clear. Everybody can understand it. Let the Rev. Gritters make clear where it is ambiguous or vague.

The Rev. L. Vermeer: The Rev. Ophoff states that it is one of the main principles of the Declaration that the promise is unconditional. But according to the Rev. Ophoff, we may also speak of conditional promises. I can quote him in regard to this from the **Standard Bearer**. This certainly is one instance of vagueness and ambiguity. Let the Rev. Ophoff explain.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: I would ask the Rev. Vermeer whether he really reads the **Standard Bearer**. If he does, he certainly must be acquainted with the fact that I used the expression **conditional promises** twenty-five years ago. At that time I was just out of the Christian Reformed Churches. Besides, at that time the question was an entirely different one, which must not be forgotten. Moreover, he must not overlook the fact, or forget to mention, that I publicly confessed my error in the same **Standard Bearer**. What right, then, does he have, after I confessed my error, to throw this up at me? Besides, although it is true that the question concerning the promise has been accentuated since we came into contact with the Liberated, the Liberated have nothing to do with this motion. The question be-

fore us is simply whether the Declaration is the truth as expressed in the Confessions. If it is not, let those that oppose the Declaration show it.

The Rev. J. Howerzyl: I read in this motion, 'that the Declaration of Principles is the expression of the Confessions with regard to some fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches.' Now, after 1924 it was still possible for Ophoff to write as he did, and speak of conditional promises. How then can he say these Confessions were **always** interpreted as in this Declaration?

The Rev. G. M. Ophoff: Principally twenty-five years ago I taught nothing else than what I teach today. Even then I did not defend a general promise to all. I was defending the truth of a particular promise, that is only for the elect. Only, we were accused of preaching only to the elect. And therefore I showed that we can present the gospel of a particular promise to all. I never said that God promised all men something. It is true that I used the term **conditional promise**, but only in the sense that the promise is particular, while the preaching of the gospel is general. The essence of what I then wrote is the same as what I teach today.

The Rev. G. Vos: I can easily defend the fact that the Rev. G. M. Ophoff and the Rev. H. H. used this terminology of a conditional promise, while at the same time they were teaching and advocating what this Declaration expresses. Even when they spoke of conditional promises, they were certainly not defending the Heynsian or Liberated theology, terminology. They defended what we defend today, even though they used this terminology. In our school they taught us exactly the truth which the Declaration states, even though they used this term, **conditional promise**, and in a later connection admitted that it was a blunder which they committed in quoting Calvin. The content of the word **condition** with them never had the content the Liberated give to it today. 'All the benefits of the covenant are unconditionally bestowed,' is what we had to memorize even when we were in school.

The Rev. R. Veldman: I do not like the way this discussion is going. We do not have to determine or define what the Rev. H. H. and the Rev. Ophoff said. Let us discuss the motion. Let the brethren that oppose the Declaration show that it is not the truth of the Confessions. Let them point out exact statements of what is and what was not always taught in our churches. What is wrong with the Declaration? That is the question. Show us that it is not the truth. Let us discuss what is the contents of the Declaration, and not what is in the **Standard Bearer**.

The Rev. J. Howerzyl: This is nevertheless a new approach, and begging the question. The question is whether we will **declare** this, not whether it is the truth.

The Rev. G. M. Ophoff: How can we possibly adopt a thing without talking about it, without discussing it? Can we talk about adopting it before we say whether we agree with its contents?

The Rev. L. Vermeer: We always believed and confessed that all our salvation is only from God. And on this point we are just as strong as ever. But there were other statements made, especially since Dr. Schilder was here, when conditional promises were mentioned. I maintain that this Declaration is not what we have always expressed and confessed.

The Rev. J. Howerzyl: The Rev. G. M. Ophoff suggests that I mean to vote on the thing without discussing it. My point is that you have first of all the question concerning the first ground of Fuller Avenue's overture, and again the question of declaring that the Declaration of Principles is the ex-

pression of the Confessions as these have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches. The question is whether we shall declare this. And the necessity of this Declaration has not been proved to me yet. If this Declaration is the same as the Confessions, it is not necessary. In this motion we express more than that this is a form for the organization of churches, to be used by the Mission Committee. This motion goes farther than the advice of Committee I, B.

Rev. H. H.: Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I publicly repudiate the insinuation as if in the last twenty-seven years I wrote or taught anything contrary to that which is expressed in the Declaration. I wrote volumes. And I dare say that principally I never changed. I always taught and preached the very same thing I preach today. It is true that when the subject of conditions was not pressing, I used the term. But I can prove to you by quotations from the **Standard Bearer** that in the same breath and in the same connection I emphasized that the promise is unconditional. In the second place, I maintain that if we do not dare to adopt this Declaration, then we certainly should go back to the Christian Reformed Churches and apologize for what we did in 1924, when we rejected the First Point of the three. The Rev. Howerzyl's contention is not correct. If we adopt the Declaration, there must be grounds upon which we adopt it. Therefore we must discuss the contents of this Declaration before we ever adopt it. We must discuss the question whether this Declaration is really the truth as contained in the Confessions. I can also move that we adopt the first ground of Fuller Avenue's Consistory, and you really have the same thing. Let us therefore enter into the discussion of the contents of the Declaration. We cannot discuss it by walking around it, as we do now. But we must talk about it.

The Rev. G. M. Ophoff: The Rev. Howerzyl says that if we adopt this Declaration, we have a Fourth Form. Now that is absolutely impossible if the Declaration is the Confessions, or is the expression of the Confessions. And I maintain that it is. It does not set forth one truth of which the Confessions do not speak. Nor can you find one statement in the Declaration that is in conflict with the Confessions. And therefore, it is impossible that it can be a Fourth Form.

The Rev. M. Gritters: I still say that I cannot vote for this without knowing what is to follow when it is passed. I know that when we say that we always confessed this, that nevertheless we had a different idea of the promise and a different approach to it. I beg Synod that if we are to be of any service to our churches, that we should define Heynsianism and these fundamental principles that are referred to in the motion. It is true that our Confessions condemn the term **conditions**. But they speak of conditions only with relation to election, and not in relation to the promise.

Rev. H. H.: Mr. Chairman, this last remark of the Rev. Gritters evidently enters into the contents of the motion. Of that I am glad. And I will show the Rev. Gritters that he is mistaken when he says that according to the Confessions the promise can also be conditional and when he denies that the Confessions say anything about conditions in relation to the promise or about conditional promises. I will take time to show this particular principle that the promise is unconditional from the Confessions.

I first of all refer you to the Baptism Form. In the Baptism Form we read of the promise in the strongest possible language. For there we read repeatedly that baptism **witnesseth and sealeth**. It witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that He doth make an eternal

covenant of grace with us. The Son sealeth unto us that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins. And the Holy Ghost assures us that He will dwell in us. This, therefore, is the sealed promise of God. Now the question is: to whom in this Baptism Form does the personal pronoun **us** refer? Does it refer to all the baptized children, head for head, and soul for soul? Does God witness and seal and assure with an oath to everyone baptized that He washes away his sins, etc? Or must we consider the church elect as speaking here, and that the **us** refers to believers and their spiritual seed, as found in the line of continued generations? I claim that this is the only way in which you can possibly read the Baptism Form intelligently. The question in the first part of the Baptism Form is: what does God do? and not: what do we do? God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us, that He adopts us for His children and heirs, that He will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. Would you say that God the Father witnesseth and seals this promise to all the baptized children. Then, and then only, can you say that the promise is for all that are baptized. But this is impossible. For what God promises, what He witnesses and seals, He certainly does perform. And He does not perform this upon every baptized child. God the Son in baptism witnesses and seals that He doth wash us in His blood, that He incorporates us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and accounted righteous before God. Again I ask: does He seal this promise unto every baptized child? And again I remind you that what God promises He fulfills. Through baptism the Holy Ghost assures us that He will dwell in us. This is important. There is no possibility of the realization of the promise except through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, belongs to the promise of God. Without the Holy Spirit there is no promise. If God promises us His Spirit, He promises us all the blessings of salvation. If He does not promise the Spirit, He promises us nothing. And now will anyone of us maintain that the promise of the Holy Spirit is conditional? You all remember that when Dr. Schilder was here, in our conferences with him I defended thirteen propositions on the covenant and on the promise. They can still be found in the **Standard Bearer**. At that time Dr. Schilder presented his view and attempted to prove that fundamentally we agreed. The difference between us was rather a difference of terminology, not of principle. You all remember that as far as the term **condition** is concerned, he made the illustration of a man that certainly must fulfill the condition of sowing, if he is to expect a harvest, with this illustration we can, of course, all agree. But in the matter of salvation a man can do absolutely nothing. He cannot sow to expect a harvest. He can only do worse than nothing. For he can only refuse, reject salvation. It is only the grace of the Spirit that can possibly change him. And therefore I claim that if the promise does not include the Spirit, it includes nothing. But according to the Baptism Form, the promise of God includes the Spirit. The Spirit will dwell in us and apply all that we have in Christ to us, 'the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.' And since the promise of the Holy Spirit is an essential element, and since the gift of the Holy Spirit is not conditioned upon anything man can do, the promise is necessarily unconditional.

In the second place, I want to call attention to the statement of the Rev. Gritters that the Confessions speak of conditions only with a view to election. Election is unconditional. But the promise may be conditional. Now this certainly is

not correct. Our fathers clearly maintained that the application of salvation is just as divine and unconditional as election itself. For this I refer you to Canons II, 8, an article of the confession which is also quoted in the Declaration. There we read: 'For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever.' Now does this article of the confession speak only of election? The main subject of this chapter of the Canons is 'The Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby.' The subject of election, pure and simple, was treated in the first chapter. But in Canons II, 8 we have the presentation of the counsel of God in its execution, that is, the application of the blessings of salvation. And this application of salvation, that is, of the promise, is, according to this article, only for the elect. Only upon them is bestowed the gift of justifying faith, in order to bring them infallibly to salvation. Only the elect are actually redeemed, according to the purpose of God. Only upon them are bestowed all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to the same purpose, —the gifts which Christ purchased for them by His death. Only them He purges from all sin. Only them He preserves faithfully to the end, and leads them to the enjoyment of glory in God's presence forever. Surely, according to the Canons, election is unconditional. But the unconditionality of salvation does not refer only to election, but also to the application of all the blessings of salvation to the elect only. And therefore also in this article of the confession the promise of God is sure, and for the elect, and unconditional."

In the middle of my speech we had recess. And after recess I continued as follows:

Before recess I was showing that the promises of God are always unconditional and only for the elect, according to the Confessions. The subject with which the Declaration deals is only the question concerning the unconditionality of the promise, which the Rev. Gritters disputes. We must remember that we are dealing here with the Confessions, and with nothing else. Our Confessions certainly are not, and cannot be, in dispute among us. I certainly may proceed from the assumption that the Confessions are Scriptural. This I do not have to prove. Anyone that has an objection against the Confessions must present a gravamen in the regular way. Nor need we have a discussion here of conditions in general. That is indeed a very interesting subject, and a matter which we can certainly discuss sometime. But that is not the question here, and at present, before this Synod. Here the question is simply whether the promise is ever conditional, and is ever for anyone but the elect. And that the promise is absolutely unconditional and for the elect alone I was showing, and now will continue to show from our Three Forms of Unity.

When you are dealing with the question of the promise of



God, you are naturally dealing with the sacraments: for these are signs and seals of the promise. We need not be surprised, therefore, that the sacraments have been in dispute throughout the ages of the church. The baptists and anabaptists reject infant baptism. What really lies back of this objection to infant baptism? Essentially this objection concerns the question of unconditional salvation. The promise of God cannot be conditional for infants, for they cannot accept conditions. Hence, they reject infant baptism, and must limit the sacrament of baptism only to the adults. The crux of the matter therefore is whether the promise of God is conditional. In a way this is also true of the sacrament of communion. Also in regard to this sacrament the question was always and still is whether it was a sign and seal of grace.

Now let us turn once more to the Confessions, to find out whether they speak of conditions only with regard to election, and whether they also do not clearly teach that the promise of God is unconditional. I refer you to the Belgic Confession, Articles 33-35. Let us pay particular attention to the pronouns 'we' and 'us' and 'our'. The question is whether these pronouns refer to the believing church and its spiritual seed, or whether they can possibly refer also to the carnal seed. Article 33 of the Belgic Confession speaks of the sacraments in general, and of them it is said: 'We believe, that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which he hath joined to the Word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which he signifies to us by his Word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost'. It is plain from the language of this entire article that the personal pronouns refer to the believing church and its spiritual seed, as it organically appears in the line of continued generations. It is also plain that in this article the promise is not a mere objective bequest, without subjective application. This would make it an offer to all the seed, spiritual and carnal. But a seal is by no means the same as an offer. It is rather an oath of God that He will fulfill the promise to all that are under the seal. Besides, that the promise is not a mere objective bequest, but that it implies the subjective application, and therefore concerns surely only the elect, is evident from the fact that also this article includes the Holy Spirit in the promise. Always the promise includes the promise of the Holy Spirit. And certainly the Holy Spirit cannot be conditioned. That this is the meaning of the article is evident from the fact that it speaks of imparting the salvation to us. The sacraments signify 'that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us'. Note: the article does not say that God offers salvation, nor that He merely objectively bequeathes salvation, but that God imparts salvation to us. Besides, that the promise of the Holy Spirit and the application of all the blessings of salvation are included in the promise of God is evident from the sentence that follows: 'For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost'. The Holy Ghost is included in the promise of God, and therefore it must needs be unconditional.

All these elements are also plainly expressed in Article 34, which speaks of Holy Baptism. In the first place, in this article too we have naturally the pronouns 'we' and 'our' and

'us', the same as in Article 33. And by these pronouns again believers and their spiritual seed are essentially referred to as the subject: 'We believe and confess . . . We are received into the church of God. Baptism serves as a testimony to us, that He will forever be our gracious God and Father'. And thus it is throughout the article. It is also evident from the same article that the promise is not conceived as a mere objective bequest, but that it includes all the blessings of salvation, as applied to us by the Holy Spirit. For baptism signifies 'to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, when sprinkled upon him; so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath, unto children of God'. Again, a little further in the same article, it is said that baptism signifies and seals to us that 'our Lord giveth that which is signified by the sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing and purging our souls from all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts, and filling them with all comfort; giving us a true assurance of his Fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds'. It is plain from all this that according to our Confession, baptism does not merely signify an objective bequest to all the children that are born under the dispensation of the covenant, but that it includes the promise of the Holy Spirit and the application of all the blessings of salvation, subjectively, to all the spiritual seed of the covenant. And therefore again, also from this article, it is very evident that the promise is not conditional.

And once more the same is true of Article 35, which speaks of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the same personal pronouns are used, and in them the reference is the same as in the preceding articles, that is, to believers and their spiritual seed. It speaks of those that are already regenerated. The sacrament of holy communion is designed to seal and signify to us the nourishing of our spiritual life: 'Christ, that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, hath instituted an earthly and visible bread, as a sacrament of his body, and wine as a sacrament of his blood, to testify by them unto us, that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands, and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Savior in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life'. And again, that also this sacrament signs and seals unto us not only the objective bequest, but also the subjective application of all the blessings of salvation to believers is plain from the following: 'Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ hath not enjoined to us the use of his sacraments in vain, so he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding, and cannot be comprehended by us as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible'. And once more, a little further in the article we read: 'This feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates himself with all his benefits to us, and gives us there to enjoy both himself, and the merits of his sufferings and death, nourishing, strengthening and comforting our poor comfortless souls by the eating of his flesh, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of his blood'. All this denotes far more than an objective bequest. It includes the promise of the Holy Ghost. And therefore I say once more that the promise is unconditional. In fact, that the promise is only for the elect, according to the Belgic Confession, and certainly not for the hypocrites and the carnal seed, is also evident from

the following quotation: 'Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers'.

I think for the time being I have said enough to repudiate the statement that according to our Confessions the term **conditions** is condemned only in regard to the doctrine of election. Always the promise is presented as unconditional, and is for the elect alone. A conditional promise is no promise, if it were only for the fact that the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot possibly be conditioned by anything that man can do. Somehow or other there is always a tendency in the church to depart from this truth. But let us remember that a conditional promise presupposes conditional election. And that is Arminian. Therefore, we must maintain our Confessions, which always maintain that the promise of God is surely fulfilled, that it is an oath of God which is meant only for the elect, and that therefore it is unconditional.

N. Yonker: We are finally getting into the subject-matter of the Declaration, and therefore are discussing the contents of the motion that is before the house. But why cannot we treat the whole Declaration on the basis of this motion, *seriatim*, and discuss the Declaration point by point. I make an amendment to the motion that we so do.

Rev. L. Doezeema: There is a good deal of material on the Agenda which is sent in by the consistories, and which deal with the contents of the Declaration. I would like to start out with a discussion of this material.

Rev. L. Vermeer: I cannot see why all this is necessary. Let us stick to the motion of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, which is before Synod.

N. Yonker: This is undoubtedly necessary, because in the material which the Rev. Doezeema mentions some objected to the contents of the Declaration. But when my motion is adopted, we naturally also enter into the contents of those objections.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: Mr. Chairman, I like this amendment, for it means that we enter into the discussion of the contents of the Declaration in detail. If there is something in the Declaration that is not correct or that is ambiguous, let us discuss it on the floor of the Synod, and let us go over it together.

Rev. R. Veldman: The motion which is offered by Mr. N. Yonker is really not an amendment, but it a substitute motion.

Rev. H. H.: Well, let us call it a substitute motion. It makes no difference to me. There certainly can never be any objection to a thorough discussion. And if there are any errors in the Declaration, they should be corrected. But let us have them then. We are certainly not defending any personal or private theological views. But it is a question of the Confession. And I think it is very good that we take our time, even if it is necessary to meet all next week.

J. Faber: All this is very well, but I don't see why it is necessary. No one has ever denied yet that the Declaration is the truth of the Confessions. If anyone maintains that the contents of the Declaration are not in harmony with the Confessions, let him say so, and let him tell us where it departs from the Three Forms of Unity. And then we can treat these departures. To my mind that would be sufficient.

N. Yonker: Let us not rush. The Synod of 1950 has been accused of rushing the matter of the Declaration through, and passing it in one evening session. Let us not expose ourselves

to any such accusation. Let us take our time, and go through it thoroughly.

Rev. H. Hoeksema: I am in favor of the motion to discuss it *seriatim*. And after we have discussed a point, we can make a motion to adopt that point which was under discussion.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: Does this imply that Synod will no longer decide whether it is a Confession or a Fourth Form or not? There are many truths which I hold, but that does not mean that I want now to declare them in a certain form.

Rev. L. Doezeema: I am against the original motion. I feel that we have to allow for all the doubts that have arisen about the formulation of this Declaration. I am ready to declare that the Declaration expresses the essential thrust of the Confession in regard to certain fundamental principles. But we have no need of any added statements about the Confessions which we already have. I repeat that we should go through the Agenda, to gather all the material the consistories have presented in the form of objections to the Declaration. These should be treated, and nothing more. And after such a treatment, we may be able to decide whether or not we will adopt the Declaration.

Rev. H. H.: My idea was to go through the Declaration point by point from the viewpoint of the question whether or not it is in harmony with the Confessions. This after all is the chief question. After this has been decided, we can determine whether we will adopt it or not.

De Vries: A large part of the Declaration is the Confessions. And we certainly do not have to decide or try to decide about the Confessions, do we?

Rev. L. Doezeema: We have a difficulty here, because of the original motion. The Rev. Hoeksema gave a speech in which he expressed other ideas than those which are in this document. We must treat only what the consistories sent in. I am not interested in changing any formulation, because I am not in favor of formulating anything. And I cannot agree with this formulation, although I once more state that I can declare that I am in favor of the essential thrust of this Declaration.

Rev. H. H.: To my mind, if we do not agree with the formulation, then we certainly cannot agree with the contents of the Declaration. You cannot possibly separate the terminology from the contents. If this is the position of the Rev. L. Doezeema, he is in duty bound to make another formulation, in which he clearly expresses what, according to his conviction, is the main thrust of the Declaration.

Finally, at the close of the Wednesday afternoon session, the motion was adopted to discuss the Declaration *seriatim*, to determine whether it is in harmony with the Confessions. It was also decided to put all the material of the Agenda that has reference to the Declaration in the form of objections, etc., in the hands of Committee I, to collate all that material for a better discussion. After this the Synod closed its session with prayer and thanksgiving.

After the Thursday morning session was opened with the proper devotional exercises, a discussion ensued on the floor of the Synod that interfered for a while with the order of the day. This discussion, which certainly had nothing to do with the discussion of the contents of the Declaration, but which occupied most of the morning session, ran as follows:

Rev. J. Howerzyl: Before we proceed, I wish to inform

Synod that I still stand on my recorded vote against the legality of the Declaration. My stand is that the Declaration is not legally before Synod. How, then, is it possible for me now to enter into the discussion of its contents? I want the Synod to know that if I do enter into such a discussion, that does not mean that I have changed my mind about the legality of the Declaration. And, if presently a motion is made to declare that the contents of the Declaration are the expression of our Confession, I will have to vote against such a motion. I want the Synod to understand this.

Rev. H. Hoeksema: Mr. Chairman, if this is the stand of the Rev. Howerzyl, if he still insists that the Declaration is not legally before Synod, in spite of our former decision to the contrary, he should not vote at all. Just because he is of the conviction that the Declaration is not legal, he certainly cannot register a negative vote on the motion that the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions. He may not obstruct Synod. In that case he simply cannot vote at all.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: That is exactly my stand. If such is the position of the Rev. Howerzyl, he has no moral right to vote. Not only that, but he should even keep himself out of the discussion. And this is true for all the other brethren too, if they are not willing to recognize the will of the majority of Synod that already expressed itself on the legality of the Declaration.

Rev. R. Veldman: This is a very unreasonable stand for the Rev. Howerzyl to take. The Synod has already decided on the legality of the Declaration by a majority vote. It is plainly out of order to come back on this decision. When will the brethren begin to decide that the Declaration is legal? How can they put themselves up against the decision of Synod that has been taken by a majority vote?

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: The Synod is a deliberative body. Motions are made, and votes are taken. Now it stands to reason that in regard to any decision there may be a majority and a minority. But it is according to the Church Order that the minority must submit to the majority. If it cannot agree, and if moreover it refuses to submit to the majority it shuts itself out.

D. Langeland: I can understand that the Rev. J. Howerzyl takes this stand. But I cannot understand why he cannot with us discuss the question whether the Declaration is the truth of the Confessions. He can always appeal to the next Synod about its legality.

Rev. R. Veldman: We cannot possibly conduct Synod this way. It was in answer to an overture from Classis West that the legality was discussed and decided upon. May we now simply disregard what Synod decided?

The Rev. J. Howerzyl: I still stand on the basis of my recorded vote that the entire matter of the Declaration is illegal. If you grant me the right on that basis to discuss the contents of the Declaration with you, I am willing. But I do not want to leave the impression that I bow to the vote of the majority. I do not. I am still convinced that it is illegal.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: Suppose it appears after discussion on the floor of the Synod that the Declaration is the truth as expressed in the Confessions. Is it possible that the Rev. J. Howerzyl's stand on the legality can be a reason why he votes against it being the truth of the Confessions?

Rev. J. Howerzyl: I mean, Mr. Chairman, when you decide whether it should be adopted as a form, I will have to vote against it.

Rev. H. Hoeksema: First of all, Mr. Chairman, I must state that in my opinion the stand of the Rev. J. Howerzyl is revolutionary. On the next Synod he may protest. But here he must certainly bow before the will of the majority. For what

is decided by the majority vote is settled and binding in our churches. That is the Church Order. And it is certainly his obligation to submit, unless he wants to separate himself from the Synod. Either he leaves the Synod, or he promises that he abides by the majority vote and works along with us. If he wishes to leave, let his alternate take his place. And even if all the delegates that take the same stand as the Rev. Howerzyl, and their secundi, refuse to work along with us, we as a Synod will still continue. We must finish our mandate. In the second place, I wish to call the attention to Synod that the Rev. Howerzyl now says that it is possible for him to enter into the discussion of the contents of the Declaration. But a little while ago he said that if a motion was presented to express that the Declaration is the truth of the Confessions, he would vote against it. He would have to vote No to such a motion because of his stand on the legality of this document. Now I propose to make a motion every time when a point has been discussed, to declare that that particular part of the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions. If the Rev. Howerzyl votes No on such a motion, I want the Synod to understand that this is impossible on the basis of his recorded vote concerning the legality.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: It is possible that I said that I would vote against a motion expressing that the Declaration is the truth of the Confessions. If so, I misspoke myself. I meant only that I would vote against adopting the Declaration as a form for the Mission Committee. It stands to reason that when we discuss the question as to whether this is in harmony with the Confessions, I can discuss with the Synod, if the Synod give me permission.

Rev. R. Veldman: I would like to have the Rev. J. Howerzyl see that there is nothing he can vote against as far as the contents of the Declaration is concerned on the basis of his stand against the legality. The Rev. van Weelden was not here in June, when the legality was decided. He might think that the Declaration was illegally before Synod. But may he vote against its being the truth on that basis? Synod decided that it was legal. May he now say that it is not?

J. Faber: Mr. Chairman, this whole discussion is entirely out of order. Let us return to the order of the day.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: The Rev. J. Howerzyl should see that his mind would be closed to all arguments because of his stand in re the legality of the Declaration. If he thinks that in spite of the decision of last June the Declaration is not legally before Synod, what right has he to vote at all, if he does not even listen to our arguments?

Rev. J. van Weelden: We may distinguish between the legality and the necessity of the Declaration. Synod decided that the Declaration was legally before Synod. It was not the Rev. de Boer that decided it, but Synod did. Now we can bow to this decision, and debate the question nevertheless of the necessity of the Declaration.

Rev. L. Doezeema: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that this Synod has been doing things wrong from the beginning. The Rev. J. Howerzyl has the right to refuse to enter into the question of whether this is the truth of the Confessions. I want to remind Synod that it merely treated the report of Committee I, A, in part. There were many remarks and arguments in re the question of the legality of the Declaration. But Synod did not make a written report in correct ecclesiastical style, and formulate its arguments in favor of the legality. Since Synod failed to do this, we have trouble. The trouble of not being convinced. And therefore we are afraid to discuss the contents of the Declaration. We have a right to refuse to discuss this point. Personally I am not all afraid to enter into the discus-

sion of the contents. But nevertheless, since the Synod did not convince us in the proper ecclesiastical way about the legality of the Declaration, it is difficult for us to enter into such a discussion.

Rev. R. Veldman: I move that we proceed to the order of the day.

Rev. H. Hoeksema: Mr. Chairman, I feel that we cannot let this matter pass. This stand of not being willing to bow before the decision of the majority of the Synod is principally the beginning of a schism. Mr. Chairman, if the brethren can no longer discuss with us, and decide on such important matters by majority vote as the contents of this Declaration, I feel that there is a principal separation. Now let us not have an ecclesiastical fight. I have seen too much of that. But if the brethren feel that they cannot agree with us, let us separate in all brotherly love, and let them leave our Protestant Reformed Churches, if they do not want to submit to the vote of the majority. I feel, Mr. Chairman, that during this entire session they have obstructed the proper progress of the work of Synod. And I do not like to be played for a fool. How can we ever labor together this way? The question is not simply whether they can discuss with us on the contents of the Declaration, but whether or not they can vote on the motion as to whether the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions. This is not only a deliberative body; it is also legislative. Synod is not a debating club, without offering and deciding upon motions. All the delegates have promised that they will discuss and decide with us on all matters that legally come before Synod, and that they will bow before the majority. It is immoral to refuse to vote. Nor is it true, what the Rev. L. Doezeema said, as if we did not motivate our decision on the legality. In all our discussions, as he well knows, we based our arguments on the Church Order. Besides, in the report of Committee I, B, it is black on white, and also in the grounds of the overture of Classis East.

Rev. L. Doezeema: The Rev. H. Hoeksema says that it is black on white in the report of Committee I, B, why the Declaration is considered to be legal. My point is that we never got up to this report. We treated the report of Committee I, A, up to point 2, and then voted that the Declaration is legally before Synod. I asked Synod three times to put the grounds of that decision in writing, but the Synod paid no attention to me.

Rev. J. van Weelden: I think that we have the wrong thing on the table. We ought to have the report of Committee I, B. We have no mandate to decide whether this is the truth of the Confessions.

Rev. G. Vos: There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding in regard to procedure. The brethren forget that the point of the legality has been decided, and is now finished. We cannot discuss that matter again. It is simply out of order. When the brethren recorded their vote against the legality of the Declaration, that matter was finished. And we do not go back now to decide once again whether or not it is legal. That is, that can not be brought up at the present Synod. The only way to discuss the question of the legality once again is to go through consistory, classis, and then to the synod of 1952. These brethren have freed their conscience by recording their negative vote. Now they must keep still about it. The Rev. J. van Weelden says that it is wrong to enter into the question as to whether this is the truth of the Confessions, because we have no mandate to do so. That, however, is plainly an error. We do have a mandate. It comes from Classis East, who mandated us to do this and to state that the Declaration is the truth as expressed in the Confessions.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: The Reverends J. Howerzyl and L. Doezeema maintain that they have nothing to reply to, since Synod failed to motivate its decision regarding the legality of the Declaration. But is that true? It emphatically is not. We argued on this question for two days. And every conceivable argument was advanced against the legality. And these arguments were plainly shown to be without grounds.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: I have to live with my conscience. And to my mind a recorded vote means that I state I do not agree with the majority and maintain my stand.

Rev. J. van Weelden: Perhaps we will get somewhere if we get to the preamble of the Declaration.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: The argument of the Rev. J. Howerzyl is beside the point. He virtually said that because of his stand on the legality, his mind is closed. In that case, he cannot go along with us in discussing whether this Declaration is the truth of the Confessions.

J. Faber: If we follow the method proposed by the Rev. Howerzyl, all our former decisions have no strength, and make no difference whatsoever. Then all our work is vain. Why vote then? On this ground, Mr. Chairman, we cannot proceed. It is the duty of the chair to admonish these brethren for obstructing the work of the Synod, and to declare that their position is schismatic.

N. Kunz: I cannot see that there is such a great problem here. If I had voted against the legality of the Declaration, I certainly could still discuss whether or not the Declaration is the truth expressed in the Confessions.

Rev. G. Vos: A moment ago the Rev. H. Hoeksema said that these brethren play us a foul. I must censure that remark. That may be his opinion, but he must not express it. I do not want to believe that they do that, either to him or to the Synod.

D. Langeland: I do not think that these brethren are trying to obstruct the work of the Synod, and I think that they can certainly discuss with us whether this is the truth of the Confession, whatever stand they may take on the legality of the Declaration.

Rev. R. Veldman: We cannot and we may not make our personal convictions the basis for our actions over against synodical decisions. We must always abide by the majority.

The Rev. L. Doezeema: Elder J. Faber said that the chair should declare us obstructionists and schismatic. If the chair does not do that, then Mr. Faber should make a motion that Synod do so.

J. Faber: I will gladly withdraw that remark, if only they will impede the progress of Synod no longer, and we proceed to the order of the day.

Rev. L. Doezeema: I did not insist upon this. As far as I am concerned, we can proceed with the order of the day. But there were some here that maintained that we did not have the right to discuss and to vote.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff: Now the brethren say: Let us proceed. But how can they? It seems to me that they will proceed with closed minds and will not allow themselves to be convinced or influenced by any arguments that might be advanced.

W. de Vries: Would it not be better to table this until the next Synod?

Rev. G. Vos: That is impossible. That certainly would be illegal. For we have a mandate to finish the question concerning the Declaration of Principles.

A motion now prevails to proceed to the order of the day. Point I of the Declaration is now read and discussed. Im-

mediately a motion is made that the Synod declare that Point I of the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions with regard to some fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches.

An objection is read from the material collated by Committee I from the Agenda of Synod. The objection concerns the introduction to the Declaration, which reads: 'The Protestant Reformed Churches stand on the basis of Scripture as the infallible Word of God, and the Three Forms of Unity. Moreover, they accept the liturgical forms used in the public worship of our churches, such as the Baptism Form, *et alii*, as confessions of a minor order.' The question was raised what is meant by these confessions of a minor order, and what is meant by the expression *et alii*. This matter was discussed.

Rev. H. H.: These minor confessions have always been accepted in the Reformed Churches. It is compulsory for all the ministers in the Reformed churches to use them. We may not depart from them or change them. Any objection against the contents of any of these forms, Baptism, Ex-communication, etc., must appear at Synod. Hence, they are often called confessions of a minor order.

Rev. J. Howerzyl: How far does *et alii* go? Does that mean the Marriage Form too? I make a motion that we strike out *et alii*, and enumerate the specific forms.

The motion carries.

(to be continued)

H. H.

## As To Books

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LANGE'S COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES; PROVERBS-SONG OF SOLOMON. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.95.

Also this volume of Lange's Commentary I have examined, and I heartily recommend to our readers for its scholarly as well as for its conservative and spiritual approach to the Holy Scriptures. The *Bibelwerk* that bears the name of Lange ranks among the outstanding commentaries of all times.

The present volume of Lange's Commentary was originally written by Dr. Otto Zöckler, a German theologian of the nineteenth century. The American edition has been much enriched by copious notes.

We agree with the doctrinal notes on the eighth chapter of Proverbs when they state that this chapter refers not so much to the eternal generation of the Word as to the foreshadowing of the New Testament Logos. According to the author the book of Ecclesiastes is not to be attributed to Solomon as its Author, but dates from a later period. This I regard, to say the least, as very dubious. As to the Song of Solomon, Dr. Zöckler rejects the allegorical as well as the profane erotic method of interpretation, and pre-

fers the typical-Messianic view of this book of Holy Writ. With this we can agree.

Heartily recommended.

H. H.

ANTITHESE OF SYNTHESE door Dr. C. van der Waal. Uitgever Jo Boersma. Enschede, Nederland. Prijs f 10.50.

Het neemt moed om alleen te staan. Het vereischt ook moed, den geestelijken moed des geloofs, om een lans te breken voor de antithese tegenover de synthese. En het vereischt denzelfden moed om temidden van allerlei oecumenische bewegingen onzer eeuw den nadruk te leggen op de handhaving van onze definitieve belijdenischriften.

Dit doet Dr. VanderWaal in Antithese of Synthese.

Ofschoon ik het misschien niet in alle opzichten eens zou wezen met den schrijver, toch ben ik het met de strekking van dit boek geheel eens. Het is uit mijn hart gegrepen. Ik hoop, dat het, niet alleen in Nederland, maar ook hier, voorzoover we het Nederlandsch nog machtig zijn, veel gelezen zal worden.

Het boek beschrijft en beoordeelt de wortels en de groei der oecumenische beweging.

Het is grondig gedocumenteerd. Taal en stijl zijn glashelder, zoodat ieder, die nog Hollandsch verstaat, het lezen kan. En men behoeft nooit te vragen, waar de schrijver heen wil.

Hartelijk aanbevolen.

H. H.

HERLEEFDE VERLEDEN door Prof. Dr. A. Sizoo. Uitgever J. H. Kok, n.v. Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f 7.50.

Dit is niet zoozeer een belangrijk als wel een aardig en interessant boek, een boek, dat iemand des avonds in de woonkamer misschien aan zijn vrouw, of voor zichzelf zal willen doorlezen. Ofschoon de schrijver zelf ongetwijfeld studie aan dit werk heeft besteed, vereischt het voor den lezer niet zijn "thinking cap" om het te lezen.

Het boek biedt allerlei schetsen uit het leven van de oude wereld uit den tijd van ongeveer 250 jaren voor en na Christus. De materie is gehaald uit brieven van heel gewone menschen uit die dagen. Die brieven worden door Dr. Sizoo vertaald weergegeven, met gewoonlijk eenige verklaring van Dr. Sizoo er bij. Daaruit leeren we dan iets te weten van het huwelijksleven, het schoolleven, het maatschappelijk leven, het familieleven, het godsdienstig leven, etc. van de oude wereld van tweeduizend jaren geleden.

Taal en stijl bieden gemakkelijke leesstof.

Wie dus eens niet een studieboek, maar een interessant boek wil lezen, schaffe zich dit werk van Dr. Sizoo aan.

H. H.



# THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

## An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

### PART TWO

#### Of Man's Redemption

#### LORD'S DAY XXXI

#### 3

#### *The Preaching of the Promise (cont.)*

It follows that preaching of the gospel must needs be such that it points very definitely to those for whom the promise is intended, and that it excludes those that have no part in it. This is evidently the meaning of Question 84 and its answer. For thus, and thus only, can the kingdom of heaven be opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel. To all and every believer, according to this answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, the preaching of the gospel declares and publicly testifies that "whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits." But by that same preaching of the gospel, it is also declared and testified "to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted." And according to that testimony of the gospel God will judge them both in this life and in the life to come.

Thus, and thus only, can the preaching of the gospel be a key-power, to open and to shut the kingdom of heaven.

A gospel for all is a gospel for none. It may sooth the conscience of the wicked, and send him to hell with an imagined hope. It will not comfort the elect, for the simple reason that such preaching does not mention them definitely as heirs of the promise. The gospel, therefore, must be so preached that it very definitely declares to the heirs of the promise that it is for them.

To be sure, the particular gospel must be proclaimed to all that hear the gospel externally. This is true, partly because we do not know who the elect are, and therefore it is impossible to preach to them only. And secondly, it must be preached to all, also because it is the will of God that even the reprobate shall hear the gospel of salvation by way of faith and repentance, in order that sin may appear to be sin indeed, and that they may be without excuse. The gospel does not mention the elect and reprobate by their natural

names. And therefore its preaching must needs be general. Nevertheless, in this general preaching of the gospel the heirs of the promise must be called by their spiritual name, in order that they may know that the sure mercies of David are for them. Under and through the preaching of the gospel God gives them a new name, a spiritual name, by which they may know that He intends the promise for them. Objectively, they are the elect. But according to their spiritual name, wrought by the Holy Spirit of promise in their hearts, they are the believers. And believers are those that sincerely repent of their sins. They are the weary and heavy laden, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the contrite and broken-hearted, they that have learned to place all their hope and expectation only in the blood of Jesus Christ their Lord, Who loved them and died for them and was raised for their justification. They are those that principally are crucified unto the world, and the world to them. They have an earnest desire to walk in all good works, and manifest this in their lives. They fulfill their part of the covenant of God, and walk in new obedience, cleaving to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, trusting in Him, and loving Him with all their hearts, with all their souls, with all their mind, and with all their strength; forsaking the world, crucifying their old nature, and walking in a new and holy life. To those the kingdom of heaven is opened by the preaching of the gospel. To them the promise of God is Yea and Amen. They shall never be ashamed. They shall be kept in the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. But on the other hand, that same preaching of the gospel shuts the kingdom of heaven to all unbelievers. They too have a name of their own. They are not filled with sorrow after God, and never repent of their sin. They love the darkness rather than the light, and refuse to be converted to God. To those the preaching of the gospel proclaims that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and to eternal condemnation. They are outside of the kingdom of God.

The question that finally must be asked and answered is: how can the preaching of the Word be effective unto the opening and shutting of the kingdom of heaven?

My answer is, briefly: because it is Christ that speaks through the preaching.

As we have said before, Christ, and He only, has the key-power. He only opens and no man shuts; and He only shuts and no man opens.

This implies, in the first place, that preaching is the declaration of the promise *with authority*. Christ is always principally the preacher. He alone speaks with authority. But this authority Christ has dele-

gated to the church through the apostles. Therefore, the church also through its official ministry speaks with authority, and proclaims the gospel of God on the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is certainly not the calling of every individual Christian to preach the gospel, though he is indeed a witness. Preaching is always the proclamation of the gospel with authority. One word used in the original to denote preaching means *to speak as a herald*. The preacher, therefore, must deliver his message, and must strictly adhere to it. He must deliver it with authority, and be able to say, "Thus saith the Lord." He must clearly leave the impression that the audience is under obligation to hear and to do the Word that is preached. All the hearers are obliged to bow before that Word, just because it is the authoritative Word of Christ. No false show of humility, nor fear of men may keep the preacher from addressing his audience with authority, provided he brings the Word of Christ, and nothing else. No word of man has any authority whatsoever. But the Word of Christ is binding, binding upon the consciences of all that hear, whether they receive the Word and obey, or whether they reject it and rebel. And because the Word that is preached comes with the authority of Christ Himself, therefore the preaching of the gospel is a key, to open the kingdom of heaven to everyone that believes, and to shut that same kingdom to all that do not sincerely repent.

Secondly, it must not be forgotten that preaching of the gospel is not only authoritative, but it is also a Word of power, and therefore, efficacious. We must emphasize once more that the real preacher is Christ Himself, unto Whom is given all power in heaven and on earth. It is He that speaks the Word of God. And that Word "is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:12-13. Through the preaching it pleases God, through Christ, the exalted Lord, the Chief Prophet of God, Who alone gathers His church, to speak to His people unto salvation. And to all that do not sincerely repent, the hypocrites included, that same Christ with His same powerful Word speaks unto damnation. It is because of this powerful and efficacious Word of God that the apostle can write: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life

unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" II Cor. 2:14-16. And therefore he also adds in the next verse: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." Thus, and thus only, is the preaching of the gospel a key-power to open the kingdom of heaven to all that believe and repent, and to shut that same kingdom to all unbelievers and wicked, that never repent of their sins. The former are saved, and they know it. The latter are damned, and through the preaching of the Word receive the testimony of their damnation in their own conscience.

Thus the preaching of the gospel has a salutary effect upon the church of Christ in the world.

It has the effect that it excludes the unbelievers that do not sincerely repent. It excludes the wicked that are without: for it is not probable that with such definite preaching they will ever join the church visible on earth. And it also excludes the carnal seed, the unbelievers and impenitent that are within the church. These usually separate themselves from the church visible that is characterized by such pure and definite preaching of the gospel. They become enemies of the church of Christ and of the people of God. They manifest themselves as those that are of antichrist, according to the words of the apostle John in I John 2:18-19: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." And even though they are hypocrites, and remain in the church visible for a time, as tares among the wheat, they can never escape the power and authority of the pure and definite preaching of the gospel. For God through Christ binds on their conscience that they have no place in the kingdom of heaven. And, on the other hand, such preaching of the gospel includes the true heirs of the promise and of the kingdom of God. For through the preaching they hear the powerful voice of the Good Shepherd, calling His own sheep by name. And they follow Him. And He gives them eternal life. They hear through this pure and definite preaching the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me, and rest." They are strengthened in their faith that they belong to Him Who died for them and rose again. They are quickened in their love of God, in the love wherewith He loved them through Jesus Christ their Lord, and therefore, in the love wherewith they love Him with all their heart and mind and soul and strength. And they are confirmed in the hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love

of God is shed abroad in their hearts, the hope of the eternal, incorruptible, and undefilable inheritance, that fadeth not away. And as by the pure and definite preaching of the holy gospel those that are within the church visible on earth are confirmed and strengthened in their faith, so by that same preaching the kingdom of heaven is opened that are without. They too are called by the Word of Christ. And being called, they join themselves to the true church in the world. Thus the preaching of the gospel as a key-power, to open and shut the kingdom of God, is indeed very beneficial to the church of Christ in the world.

H. H.




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## THROUGH THE AGES

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### The Arminian or Remonstrant Struggle

The following is a translation of the rest of the Contra-Remonstrance of the Calvinists.

What is wanted is that all those who urge Revision, just because they have something against the Confession, be allowed to sit as judge over their own objections. It is being contented that all the ministers be freed from the tie wherewith they themselves voluntarily bind themselves to the Confessions. Already the result is that several ministers have begun to reveal themselves as being addicted to sentiments that differ from those that have thus far been taught in the Reformed Churches. How then can they say that they are unjustly being suspected of seeking a change in the doctrine? How is this to be harmonized with what is being said here in this full gathering of your Noble Lords, namely that we must not look at what has been taught in this Land but at what is going to be taught in the future. If anyone thinks that something has been taught against God's word, let him reveal the same in a general meeting of the churches; there it belongs certainly. No one on this account will be accused of faithlessness or purgery, providing he is subject to the general judgment of the churches. For if one subscribes the Forms, he is not on that account forbidden, if he finds something in the Forms that he thinks not to

be in sufficient agreement with God's Word, to reveal the same, where it belongs, in order that it may be investigated according to the rule of God's Word. But that they want the Forms of Unity in the Reformed Churches revised, and ask to be freed from the obligation of subscribing the Forms, before they have pointed out that there is something that does not agree sufficiently with God's word—that can only serve to foster all manner of strife and cause unrest. This opens the door to all kinds of false teachings.

In this way there can be no stability in the churches. The papists will upbraid us for our lack of firmness in doctrine, and the Academy will fall into disrepute and be despised. We gladly admit with Dr. Ursinus that writings postulated by men are not to be held for writings that as such merit faith, yet we share his view that we must be on our guard against too great liberties, because changing the doctrine of the church can lead to schisms and give numberless offences. The ministers sin with reckless boldness, if they spread—and if the rulers allow to be spread—among the churches opinions that militate against the accepted doctrine before they have been investigated by their brethren and been generally approved. Had the Remonstrants indeed but acted according to the admonition of this celebrated theologian (Ursinus), we would have preserved rest and unity in our churches. What makes it that some of our churches are so divided, that some do not desire to hear their ministers and eat with them the Lord's supper? The reason is that even the common man notices that some ministers preach differently than until now it has always been the custom to teach in the Reformed Churches, yea, even differently than they themselves were wont to teach.

If the Remonstrants desire that your Noble Lords take them under your protection against church censure, they thereby show that they do not desire to submit themselves to the judgment of the Reformed Churches, though through appeal they may turn to the broader gatherings in case they feel themselves aggrieved by the censure of the smaller gatherings. But if in this way they decline and reject all judgment of the churches, with what show of right can they lay claim to being ministers in the Reformed Churches? If on the contrary they would candidly make known their objections to their Consistories and

Classes, doubtless satisfaction could be given them from God's Word, or otherwise they could convince their fellow brethren that their objections repose on grounds solid enough. Therefore we cannot by any means approve that the Remonstrants have submitted to your Noble Lords certain points that they have never communicated to any Consistory or Classis, and that they by the authority of your Noble Lords want to compel their brethren not alone to bear them in their views but also to maintain future ministers who share their views in the hope that finally their views will prevail in the Reformed churches of these Lands.

As to the points of doctrine, when they (the Remonstrants) set forth some teachings and say that among us almost nothing is being preached but these points, we find that therein they act unjustly and not in good faith, since they begin with the high point of predestination, which is preached in our churches with moderation and caution only to bring out that the grace of God is unmerited and to take away all human merit and worth; they ascribe to us things that we never thought to concede much less to preach. The articles that, according to them, contain their sentiments, are equivocably written and doubtful as to their manner of speaking; in part they are in conflict with God's word.

The Contra-Remonstrations, coming to us directly from the pen of the Fathers of Dort, is of incalculable value as source material for the subject that is being treated in this series of articles. I therefore include in this article also the original Holland text. The original of the above section reads:

Edel Welgeborene, Mogende, Hoogwijze, Gebiedende Heeren!

De "onderzchreven, gecommiteerden uit de Classen om te treden in conferentie met een'ge Mededienaren in het Evangelie" antwoorden op de beweeringsen der Remonstranten aldus: Dat de Remonstranten meenen tot het gerucht, dat ze naar enige verandering in the leer staan, geen aanleiding gegeven hebben, daarin zijn ze grootelijks "verabuseerd". Waaruit anders zijn de onrusten gerezen, dan daaruit dat eenige kerkedienaren hun bijzondere opinien drijven tegen 't gemeen gevoelen der Kerk, en dat ze hun gevoelen nooit rond en open hebben willen verklaren, veel min zich 't oordeel der kerken onderwerpen. Niet enkel daardoor dat ze de Revisie drijven van Catechismus en Confessie, hebben ze zich suspect gemaakt, maar vooral omdat ze zich laten verluiden, iets nieuws te hebben doch dit op geen enkele kerkelijke vergadering hebben verklaard. Ook dezerzijds wordt erkend, dat de belijdenschriften in autoriteit en waardighied niet vergeleken mogen worden bij de Heilige Schrift; hij doet hun onrecht aan die dit anders voorstelt. Doch aangezien alle secten Gods Woord

misbruiken ten dekmantel hunner opinien, zoo is het hoognoodig, dat Gods Kerk om te beter vrede en eenigheid te houden, over den rechten zin van Gods Woord eenige algemeene formulieren van eenigheid bezit, waaraan alle kerkedienaars met onderteekening zijn verbonden. Zorgelijk is het, zulk een algemeene belijdenis der Kerk in twijfel te trekken en daarover te disputeeren; dat brengt schade aan de kerk en leidt tot verdrukking der waarheid. Die vrucht speurt men ook in deze Landen, waar men zonder nood Revisie verzocht heeft en daardoor de gemeene leer der Geformeerde Kerken heeft verdacht gemaakt! Indien in Catechismus of Confessie iets is, dat den woorde Gods contrarieert of daarmee niet genoeg overeenkomt, niemand onzer is zoo onverstandig, dat hij niet zou toestaan, dat Gods Woord de eenige regelmaat is, waaraan alle leering moet worden beproefd, maar dezelve zou eerst moeten aangewezen zijn en dit is tot op den huidigen dag nooit geschied, hoewel de Remonstranten daartoe menigmaal gelast en verzocht zijn geworden. Men wil, dat zij, die de Revisie drijven, omdat ze iets hebben tegen de formulieren, zelve zullen oordeelen over hun eigen bedenken. Men drijft, dat alle predikanten in 't land ontslagen zullen zijn van de verbintenis, waarmee ze zich vrijwillig aan de Formulieren van eenigheid hebben verbonden. Uit dezen voorslag is reeds gevolgd, dat verscheidene predikanten begonnen zijn zich te openbaren als andere gevoelens te hebben dan tot nog toe in de Gereformeerde Kerken geleerd zijn. Hoe kunnen ze dan zeggen, dat ze ten onrechte verdacht worden van verandering in de leer te zoeken? Hoe komt dat overeen met wat door een hunner hier in de volle vergadering Uwer Edel Mogenden gezegd is, "dat men niet moet zien op wat tot nog toe geleerd is in den Lande, doch hoe men voortaan zal leeren." Meent iemand, dat tegen Gods Woord iets geleerd is, hij geve dat aan in een algemeene vergadering der Kerken; daar toch behoort het. Niemand zal hierover van ontrouw of meenedigheid beschuldigd worden, mits hij zich aan het gemeene oordeel der Kerken onderwerpe; want al heeft iemand de Formulieren onderteekend, zoo wordt hem daarom niet verboden, zoo hij hierop iets in de Schrift vond, dat hem docht, niet genoeg te accordeeren met Gods Woord, om dit te openbaren en het ter overweging te bieden, waar het behoort, om naar den regel van Gods Woord onderzocht te worden.

Maar dat men de Gemeene Formulieren van eenigheid in de Geformeerde Kerken wil gerevideerd hebben en van hare onderteekening ontslagen zijn, voor en aleeer men aangewezen heeft, dat er iets in is, 't welk met Gods Woord niet genoeg overeenkomt, dat kan slechts dienen om allerhande twist te berokkenen en onrust te verwekken! Dit biedt een open deur om allerlei nieuwe leeringen op de baan te brengen.

Zoo kan er geen vastheid zijn in onze Kerken. De papisten zullen ons ongestadigheid in de leer verwijten en de Academie zal wegens hare onvastheid in de leer in verachting komen en geschuwd worden. Wij bekennen gaarne met Doctor Ursinus, dat schriften, bij menschen gesteld, niet zijn te houden voor schriften die uit zich zelve geloof meriteeren, doch oordeelen ook met hem, dat men zich wachten moet voor te groote vrijheid, want uit verandering in de kerkleer kunnen scheuringen volgen en worden talloze ergerenissen gegeven. Zoo zondigen dan de leeraars met lichvaardige stoutigheid, als zij verbreiden—gelijk ook de Regeerders met slappigheid zondigen, als zij laten verbreiden—onder de gemeenten opinien, strijdig tegen de aangenomen leer, voor en aleeer ze door hunne broeders onderzocht zijn en gemeene bewilligen hebben verworven. Had den de Remonstranten toch naar deze vermaning van den vermaarden Godgeleerde gedaan, wij zouden rust en eenigheid in onze Kerken hebben behouden. Waaruit toch spruit het op,

dat sommige kerken zeer verdeeld zijn, dat eenigen hunne predikanten niet begeeren te hooren noch met hen het Avondmaal des Heeren te houden, dan daaruit, dat ook de gemeene man bemerkt, dat sommige predikanten anders leeren dan men tot nog toe gewoon is in de Gereformeerde Kerken te leeren, ja ook anders dan zij vroeger zelven geleerd hebben.

Als voorts de Remonstranten begeeren door Uwe Edel Mogenden in protectie genomen te worden tegen Kerkelijke censure, daarmede betoonen ze, dat ze z'ch aan het oordeel der Gereformeerde Kerken niet begeeren te onderwerpen, terwijl ze zich bezwaard vindende in de censure van mindere vergaderingen, door appel hun toevlucht tot meerdere Kerkelijke vergaderingen mogen nemen. Maar als zij alzoo alle Kerkelijk oordeel declineeren en verwerpen, met welken schijn van recht kunnen ze z'ch dan uitgeven voor leeraars der Gereformeerde Kerken?, Indien ze daarintegen hun bedenkingen rondweg openbaarden aan hunne Kerkeraden of Classen, zou hun wellicht satisfactie gegeven kunnen worden uit Gods Woord, of anders konden zij hunne medebroederen van de gegrondhied hunner bezwaren overtuigen. Daarom kunnen wij het ook geenszins goedkeuren, dat de Remonstranten aan uwe Edel Mogenden hebben overgegeven eenige punten, die ze nooit aan eenigen Kerkeraad of Classe hebben medegedeeld, en dat ze door autoriteit der Hooge Overheid hunne broederen willen dwingen om niet alleen hen in hunne gevoelens te dulden, maar ook den aankomenden predikanten, die met hen in eenzelvde gevoelen staan, de handen op te leggen, op hope, dat hun gevoelen eindelijk de overhand zal krijgen in de Gereformeerde Kerken dezer Landen.

Wat nu belangt de stukken der leer, als zij eenige leeringen voorstellen die zij zeggen, dat bij ons gedreven worden, daarin kunnen wij niet bevinden dat zij oprecht en te goeder trouw gehandeld hebben, dewijl zij beginnen met het hooge punt der predestinatie, waarvan in onze Kerken matig en voorzichtig pleegt gesproken te worden, alleen tot aanwijzing van Gods onverdiende genade en tot wegneming van alle menschelijke verdiensten en waardigheid; ze dichten ons dingen toe, die wij nooit gedacht hebben toe te stemmen, veel minder te leeren. De artikelen, waarin ze zeggen, dat hun gevoelen vervat is, zijn dubbelzinnig gesteld en met een twijfelachtige manier van spreken; ten deel strijden ze met Gods Woord.

As was stated, the Contra-Remonstrations are of inestimable value as source material. For the author and the signatories of this document were contemporaries of the Remonstrants. They lived with these people. With their own eyes they saw them in action and they heard them talk with their own ears. What we therefore have in this document is the testimony of eye- and ear-witnesses. And what a testimony it is! Let us take notice. The Remonstrants were openly teaching their heresies by the spoken and written word, but in language so equivocal that no one could base any charge on anything they said. When asked clearly to state their views on the meeting of a lawful synod they refused and continued to conceal their real sentiments in dark sentences. Though they corrupted the official doctrine of the churches they insisted that they were reformed, even more so than their opponents, for, as they had it, the views of the Calvinists militated against the Confession and the Catechism implying that their sentiments were in full agreement

with the doctrine contained in these creeds. Yet at the same time they requested their government to order the Confession and the Catechism revised, and in the mean time to free the teaching ministry from the obligation to adhere to these creeds in their expositions of the Scriptures, and all this on the ground that there were errors in these credal documents; so they said, yet they refused to state what these errors were and requested their government to do their bidding—change the adopted creeds of the churches—without compelling them to state what these errors were and to prove them. They claimed for themselves the right to a name and place in the communion of Reformed churches though they circumvented its assemblies—consistory, classis and synod—and directed all their appeals to their government.

Such is the testimony of the Contra-remonstrations, definitely of that section cited above. What a testimony!

Yet they were real pious people, were the Remonstrants. They offered touching prayers full of feeling. And, as was remarked, they were always and forever shouting: love! love! love! And they emphasized human responsibility and laid great stress on godly walk of life, placing it—godly walk—far above purity of doctrine “rechtzinnigheid”. And they were zealous exponents of “free investigation”, too, and of tolerance. (But they were not tolerant). But what they lacked with all their piety and broadmindedness and vaunted tolerance is honesty and righteousness and love of the truth. They defied the human will. This comes out so clearly in that Contra-Remonstrations of the Calvinists.

Having set forth their grievances against the manner of doing of the Remonstrants, the Calvinists go on in their Contra-remonstrations to inform their government how the Gospel is being preached in the churches by the orthodox. This they do in 7 articles or propositions that as translated read as follows.

In our churches the Gospel is being preached as follows:

I. Seeing that the whole human race is fallen in Adam and thereby is so depraved that all men are conceived and born in sin and are thereby children of wrath, who lie dead in their sins, so that of themselves they have no more power uprightly to turn to God and believe in Christ than a dead man has power to raise himself from the dead—God draws and saves out of that fall and that damnation a certain number of men whom in His eternal and unchangeable counsel from sheer loving-kindness and according to the good pleasure of His will He elected for the purpose of



saving them through Christ; and in His righteous judgment passing by the others and letting them lie in their sins.

Alzoo in Adam het gansche menschelijke geslacht is gevallen en daardoor zoo verdorven, dat alle menschen in zonde ontvangen en geboren worden en daardoor kinderen des toorns zijn, die dood liggen in hunne zonden, zoodat ze niet meer vermogen hebben uit zich zelven om zich oprecht tot God te bekeeren en in Christus te gelooven, dan een dood mensch vermogen heeft om zich zelven van de dooden op te wekken; dat God uit dien val en die verdoemenis trekt en verlost een zeker getal menschen, die hij in zijn eeuwigen en onveranderlijken raad uit loutere goedertierenheid naar het welbehagen van zijn wil, uitverkoren heeft om hen door Christus zalig te maken; de anderen door zijn rechtvaardig oordeel voorbijgaande en latende liggen in hunne zonden.

II. That not only adults who believe in Christ and moreover walk worthy of the Gospel are to be regarded as elect children but also children of the covenant so long as they do not indeed prove the contrary, and that therefore believing parents, if their children die in their infancy, have no cause to doubt the salvation of their children.

Dat voor Gods uitverkoren kinderen te houden zijn niet allen de volwassenen, die in Christus gelooven en voorts waardegelijk het Evangelie wandelen, maar ook kinderen des Verbonds, zoolang ze metterdaad niet het tegendeel bewijzen en dat hierom geloovige ouders, als hunne kinderen in hun kindsheid komen te sterven, geen oorzaak hebben om te twijfelen aan hunner kinderen zaligheid.

III. That God in this election had no respect to the faith and conversion of His elect nor to the right use of His gifts as to *causes* of His election, but that He on the contrary in His eternal and unchangeable counsel purposed and resolved to bestow faith and steadfastness in godliness and in this way to save them whom according to His good pleasure he chose unto salvation.

Dat God in deze verkiezing niet heeft gezien op het geloof of bekeering zijner uitverkorenen, noch op gebruik zijner gaven als op *oorzaken* der verkiezing, maar dat Hij ter contrarie in zijn eeuwigen en onveranderlijken raad voorgenomen en besloten heeft, dengenen, die Hij naar zijn welbehagen ter zaligheid verkoren heeft, het geloof en de volständigkeit in de godzaligheid te verleenen en alzoo zalig te maken.

IV. That to this end He gave *them* His only begotten Son, whom He delivered up to the death of the cross to save His elect, so that, though the sufferings of Christ as that of the only begotten and co-essential Son of God is sufficient to expiate the sin of all men, this nevertheless has, according to God's counsel and decree, its saving efficacy only in the elect and true believers unto redemption and pardon of sins.

Dat Hij tot dien einde *hun* gegeven heeft zijn eeniggeboren Zoon, dien Hij in den kruisdood heeft overgegeven om zijne uitverkorenen zalig te maken, zoodat, hoewel Christus lijden als dat ven den eeniggeborenen eens-vezigen Zoon Gods genoegzaam is tot betaling van aller menschen zonde, dit nochtans volgens Gods raad en besluit **alleen in de uitverkorenen** en ware gelovigen **zijn kracht** heeft tot verzoening en vergeving der zonden.

V. That moreover God the Lord to this end has His Gospel preached and that externally the Holy Spirit through this preaching and internally by a particular grace works with such efficacy in the hearts of the elect of God, that He enlightens their mind and changes and renews their will, removing their stony heart and giving them a heart of flesh in this manner that thereby they receive not merely power to be *able* to convert themselves and to be able to believe but also do actually convert themselves and believe.

Dat voorts tot dit einde God de Heere zijn heilig evangelie laat prediken en dat de Heilige Geest uitwendig door die prediking en inwendig door een bijzondere genade zoo krachtig werkt in de harten der uitverkorenen Gods, dat Hij hun verstand verlicht, hun wil verandert en vernieuwt, wegnemende het steenen hart en gevende een vleeschen hart, in zulker voege, dat zij daardoor niet allen macht ontvangen om zich te **kunnen** bekeeren en te kunnen gelooven, maar ook met ter daad en gewilliglijk zich bekeeren en gelooven.

The remaining two propositions (VI and VII) will appear in the article to follow.

All the translations in these series of articles are by the undersigned.

G. M. Ophoff



#### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Pierre Hoekema, in the loss of his infant son,  
**Keith Alvin**

May the God of all comfort give grace to say: "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Rev. P. Vis, Pres.  
H. Leep, Sec'y.

The Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Pierre Hoekema, in the loss of her infant son,

**Keith Alvin**

who passed away two days after birth.

May the Lord sustain and strengthen her, and comfort her with the blessed assurance that His work is perfect and is done in love to His children.

Rev. P. Vis, Pres.  
Mrs. D. Schipper, Sec'y.

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# IN HIS FEAR

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## Looking To The Future (I)

### Introduction

By "future" in the above caption I refer to the future of our own schools and of the whole movement for Protestant Reformed education.

And the presupposition of these articles is that it is not wrong, but wise, to look to the future. True, we must not be anxious about the future. But it is certainly the part of wisdom to lay plans, to set goals, and to evaluate and determine our present activity or inactivity in the light of the plans laid and the goals set. No more than we should be sluggards in our daily work and in regard to providing for our physical needs, no more should we be sluggards with a view to providing for our educational system and its needs.

Another presupposition of these articles is that we must speak not merely of the future of our own schools, as so many individual and independent organizations, but that we undeniably deal with a *movement*, a nation-wide and denomination-wide movement. I say "undeniably", because, while it is true that every school society is and should be autonomous and does and should conduct its own affairs, yet, when several similar societies and schools arise, with a similar foundation, governed by similar principles, having like ideals and like goals, and having common problems, you have basically a movement. The fact is self-evident. This touches already on one of the phases of the "future" about which I expect to write, but nevertheless I want to say that we should recognize this fact as having a strong bearing on our future. That movement is a reality, a simple fact. And no amount of reasoning or denial can remove it. Furthermore, that movement, I am confident, is present in embryonic form not only there, where actual societies exist and schools have been instituted, but everywhere it is present where there are Protestant Reformed parents and Protestant Reformed children, as well as friends and adherents of Protestant Reformed education who do not fall in the category of parents and children. Hence, while these articles concern more particularly those who already are active in the movement, they are not meant for them only.

A further premise of these articles is that this movement for Protestant Reformed education is here to stay. It is not a passing fantasy or fad, but a permanent movement—a movement with a future. I am confident of that, because I am confident that it is

a proper movement, founded on right principles. It cannot die. And because I proceed from the premise, I will in these articles try to contribute something to the health and growth of the movement.

The reader will bear in mind, however, that these are the writings of one who, though formerly an active participant in this field to an extent, now is not actively connected with a Protestant Reformed school society, school board, or school. In parentheses I may say: this is sad, but true. I therefore am writing not from present experience, but from the vantage point of distant observation. I call it a "vantage point" because though perhaps I might write differently if I were "in the woods", yet from a distance one has the advantage that he can see the woods and not merely the trees. If at times, however, it seems to you who see the trees that it might be more advantageous to see the trees, please bear in mind that I am not among the trees, but outside of them.

This leads me to another point. The intention of these articles is not destructive and derogatory of the work of our present schools, school boards, school teachers, and school societies. If at times they touch on any failures and shortcomings of those aforementioned, you will bear in mind 'hat my purpose is not to tear down, but to build up; not to emphasize failures, but to remedy them; not to harm, but to help. And if at times I am mistaken—*nihil humanum alienum mihi est*. And I am subject to correction, with proof.

I believe that the treatment of this subject is quite proper for more than one reason. In the first place, our schools and school movement are young. They face a period of growth, the most crucial period of their existence. Our schools—societies, boards, teaching-staffs—face many problems. And the infant movement has a good start, because the principle is sound. But it is essential that the infant shall grow up properly, with a straight back and soundness of bones. And it is the duty of the present to see to this. In the second place, the danger is not unreal, I have found, that we are inclined to be complacent and self-satisfied, once we have founded a school. To point with pardonable pride to a school building with the name "Protestant Reformed" chiseled on the corner stone or over the doorway, and then to rest on your laurels is a danger. Or to watch your little ones leave the house, lunch-pail under arm, on their way to that new school for which you have long labored and sacrificed, with the attitude that now your duty is done, is a pit-fall. When the school has been built and opened and the overt act of separation from the existing Christian schools has been accomplished, the biggest task is still ahead. We should realize this, not be to self-satisfied and complacent, and figure with the reality that all three—

societies, boards, and staffs—still face a gigantic task and must put their shoulders to the wheel.

With a view to this we have set ourselves a three-fold task in this present series of articles.

In the first place, we would like to take cognizance of some of the problems and tasks confronting us. I had a mathematics teacher who drilled into us the good rule that before we tried to solve a problem, we should see it. That rule holds good not only for mathematics, but for any problem. This we shall attempt to do first, then. And I think we may remind ourselves from the outset that two kinds of problems face us in this movement, namely, immediate and long-range. Of the former there are always many in a new movement—so many, in fact, that we tend to lose from view the long-range problems. That tendency is understandable. But at the same time we must combat it. For the trouble is that if these long-range problems are not kept in view, we become short-sighted. Long-range problems must not be neglected, but they must be treated exactly as their nature demands, that is, from a long range. If we fail to do this and assume an attitude of short-sightedness, the result will be that suddenly at some future day these problems will loom large upon the horizon, at a time when they either must be treated by emergency measures or else are beyond all treatment. On the other hand, we must certainly follow the rule of "first things first". We cannot neglect the immediate and pressing problems in favor of the long-range problems. Moreover, I believe that in most cases there is a rather close relation between the two types of problems. Our schools face some problems which, of course, are only peculiar to a new school. Some of the immediate problems which they face, however, will confront them repeatedly and begin to weary them, unless they take the long-range view. With this in mind I will try to emphasize especially some of the long-range problems, trying not to be too impatient of their solution.

In the second place, I will try to evaluate what is being done or what has already been accomplished in regard to these problems. This is naturally important for the future for the simple reason that we must proceed from our "givens".

And finally, I will try to make some constructive suggestions for a course of action with a view to the solution of these problems.

In conclusion, I have two more remarks.

First of all, I think we must bear in mind that many of the problems which we hope to mention are interrelated. For example, what I call the "teacher problem" is very closely connected with the "text-book problem". The teacher problem and the teacher-training problem are likewise inseparably connected.

And my second remark, which is of a different na-

ture, is this. I would like to invite anything in the way of comment, suggestions, information, or any other pertinent material on this subject from either our school boards or teachers. You may contribute either privately or for publication. How about it?

H. C. Hoeksema




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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition of John 8:1-11

The Scripture-passage to which we will call attention in this essay is too long to quote in full in view of the space at our disposal. Then too this passage is a familiar one to the average reader of the *The Standard Bearer*. It will hardly be necessary to quote it in full. We will limit our quotation to the verses 3-6, where we find the following: "*And the Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery; and having set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her? And this they said trying him, that they might have whereof to accuse Him.*"

Concerning this passage of Holy Writ there has been a great deal of discussion. In the so-called lower criticism, or text-criticism the question is whether this passage recorded here in the Gospel of John was really written by John himself, and, therefore, found in the original Manuscript. Those who claim that it was not found in the original document from John's hand are, in the main, of the opinion that a copyist copied it from the Gospel written by the evangelist Luke. The reasons adduced for this text-criticism is that this passage does not at all fit in this style, plan, framework and purpose of the Gospel of John; that the very words and grammatical phrases are not those of John, but that it is the style of Luke.

We will not weary the reader any further with this matter of text-criticism, for it does not afford us a bit of fruit in the end whether we determine this question or not. We do not wish to fall in the class of those who busy themselves with the letter of the Scripture without understanding its great and glorious glad-tidings of salvation in Christ Jesus. For certainly this passage is a unique part of the Gospel-story concerning the great grace and truth that have become a reality through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

It is the conviction of the writer of these lines that this unique passage of John 8:1-11 does not first of all intend to have all attention here focused on this wretched woman taken in adultery, in the very act. The subject in this passage is not first of all this woman. Nor must we think that the subject here in the hypocrisy of Scribes and Pharisees. It is true this is a part of the picture, but these Pharisees and Scribes are not the central figures in this picture.

What then?

We believe the central and all-controlling thought in this portion of Holy Writ is: *The greatness of Jesus, the Son of God in the flesh, when compared with the relative greatness of Moses.*

The key toward understanding the entire Gospel according to John is given us in John 1:16-17 where we read: "*For of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth became through Jesus Christ*" This is the clear and lucid word, in the light of which we must also interpret the Scripture passage here in question. The Scribes and Pharisees contend with Jesus tempting Him and say: *Moses in the law commanded us to stone such: but what sayest thou of her?*

The contrast is: Moses and thou!

But the contrast is not correctly drawn as it is drawn by the Holy Spirit Himself, and neither is this contrast here made out of pure motives.

The motive is: to tempt Jesus in order to bring a *formal accusation* against Him before the Sanhedrin, the seventy rulers in Jerusalem! For had not the temple-police returned, on the day prior to the day in which this matter here in question took place, empty-handed? Had they not said: Never a man spake as this man speaks! And were these evil Jews not verily at their wits end? Ah, how desperate and frustrated man must be who opposes this Cornerstone of the temple of the living God. And so in their desperation they must play out Moses and Christ, denying both; now they will prove that they err knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. They will now be caught in their own craftiness; they will now be pinned tightly between the horns of their own dilemma.

Moses commanded that such be stoned by us; what sayest thou of her?

Seemingly this is a very cleverly put proposition. It is one of the wiles of the Devil, concerning whose purpose our Lord is not ignorant, nay not even in this generation of vipers. For thus these Scribes, who know the law (and we can well imagine them standing with the Sacred Scroll of Leviticus and Deuteronomy under their arms) must have reasoned: if he says: stone this woman, execute Moses, then He will raise public sentiment against Himself and then they would have cast a wedge, as they foolishly reason, be-

tween Jesus and those following Him. And if he should say: do not stone her they would have an airtight case against Jesus, that He was at variance with the expressed command of Moses that a woman taken in adultery should be stoned. Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24.

And the Pharisees who were forever attempting to establish their own righteousness by their works of law concurred with these Scribes; surely here was a woman who was from every viewpoint guilty according to the letter of the law; she is a woman who is taboo in the circle of these Pharisees.

They have a perfect case here in this woman; why she is taken in the very act! Eye-witness they had been of this folly in Israel. And it must be removed out of the land! Thus spoke Moses. It is written in Leviticus 20. The Scribes knew the passage from memory and the Pharisees had painfully kept themselves from such an act, at least in public! But come now Jesus: what sayest thou? O, how persistent self-righteousness can be! These men keep on asking Jesus, and that too before a large number of people whose size seems to be steadily growing in numbers. All the while this woman stands here in their midst; shall we say that here was a snickering laugh and there the plagueing of an accusing conscience? But not yet in these men does conscience accuse; they persist: Come Jesus: what sayest thou of the woman?

Are these men perturbed that great folly has been committed in Israel? No "such as these" may well continue in their folly, if only Jesus may be condemned and put out of Israel as an imposter, a contradictor of Moses, a false teacher!

But who can stand before the presense of the Lord, Jesus? Who can stand before Him as He stoops down and writes in the sand? Yes, but wait till He rises and answers to their persistent questioning: He of you that is without sin let Him cast the first stone?

Did these men hear correctly? Moses is right according to Jesus. They are told to execute Moses, something which had not been done for a long while? And this must be done by them without their own hands full of blood-guiltiness, fornication; without any consciousness of sin before a holy God who through Moses has said: Cursed is he who doth not remain in all that is written in the book of the law to perform it! Ah, how that law begins to burn in the conscience of these men. The law says: Cursed is he who does not remain *in all that is written* in the book of the law to perform it. Come now you Scribes with your Scrolls in your hand, and strongest Pharisee; see if ye can countenance the *whole law*, in every last jot and tittle?

This Jesus is so relentless. No, Moses' law is relentless. This law requires perfection. And Moses law says: the man that doeth the same shall live by it.

Rom. 10:5; Lev. 18:5. Here must be the full measure or we perish under the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who keep the truth down in unrighteousness. But since they want the law they must have the full measure. For works is truly works. Ah, now they stand in the flame of God's holiness; and all the self-righteousness of the Pharisee melts like wax before the holiness of God's law given through Moses!

Jesus writes on the ground.

But He has administered the Word and it is effective. God is opening the books of their conscience. And they are deeply conscious that they stand condemned before God. And that too from the eldest to the youngest? Has God forgotten about this woman's sin in this awful moment? Ah, simply wait a bit; her turn will come presently. But these men are convicted by their conscience and stand condemned before the tribunal of God!

He that is without sin cast the first stone!

O Moses, Moses, who can execute thee? Who can give the full measure that is required by the law given through thee?

But Jesus demands the full measure: All must be without sin, and unless this is done none can live and wrath shall come upon Israel's folly, and all go down into silence of captivity in Babylon! Before thy sight Lord, no man is justified; O, enter not into judgment with thy servants!

But must Moses not be fulfilled? This woman still stands here in the midst of the people. Must not he, who is without sin, cast the stones? O God, the dilemma is so terrifying! Moses has said: that such we must stone. Lord we cannot cleanse the land, we cannot remove folly out of Israel, for we all perish under the just demands of thy law. Moses must be fulfilled; what sayest thou Lord Jesus.

And now, O marvel, He goes and stands in the dilemma; and when He stands in this dilemma then the law is fulfilled. The stones are cast; they are cast! All the stones are cast by God from His holy pavillion of the Holy of Holies; for God is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent. For the stones are about to be cast, all the stones upon all the publicans and sinners, the harlots and adulterers! Yes, upon you and me they are about to fall!

Throw the stones Jesus, for thou canst say: Who of you can convict me of sin. But Jesus says: I want the full Moses; the full measure of all the stones. However, I did not come to throw the stones, but to come under all the execution of the righteous judgments of God, to pick up and carry away the sins of my people.

Woman, where are these thine accusers; has no one accused thee?

Nay, Lord!

Neither do I! I have come to fulfill the law and the prophets. Moses' law will receive its own. Grace and truth become through me. Go and sin no more. Drink out of my fullness from the never ending streams of mercy and grace and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Great is Moses, a servant in the house of God; faithful he was. But he could not bring you into the land of Canaan. I am the Son, the Builder of the house, the end of the law for righteousness to every one believing!

G. Lubbers




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## PERISCOPE

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The Synod of 1951 — (cont.)

Synod then returns to the discussion of the motion to declare point II is the expression of the Confessions etc., and during this discussion the morning session is brought to a close.

After a long discussion in the afternoon session an amendment is offered as follows: "There are conditions in God's Word, the confrontation of God's demand which God annexes to the promise in order to bring out clearly His unconditional grace and mercy as well as His just wrath and man's inability to fulfill them."

Synod decides to give the author of the above motion time to submit the confessional grounds for his motion. Synod decides to adjourn until Tuesday morning to give such time.

The confessional proof for the above motion is offered in the Tuesday morning session. As a remark on the motion Rev. Hoeksema gives a slightly different form of the above amendment, omitting the word "condition" but keeping the essential thrust and remarks further that his proof is strikingly almost the same as that offered by Rev. Doezema. This remark with its proof is later inserted as an amendment under point III.

Synod returns to the discussion of the amendment and its proof. The amendment is put to a vote. The vote is a tie. The amendment fails.

A substitute for the whole motion as amended is now offered: "That Synod expresses that there is nothing essentially objectionable to the Declaration Point II." An amendment is immediately offered, "Because it is the truth expressed in our Confessions." Once again the amendment is carried by a vote of 9 to 7 and the motion as amended is carried by a slightly larger majority.



Synod begins to read the material relevant to point III and during this reading the morning session is closed.

After dinner the motion is made that "Synod declare that point III of the Declaration as amended by Classis East is the expression of the Three Forms of Unity, with regard to certain fundamental principles, as these Confessions have always been maintained and interpreted by the Protestant Reformed Churches."

An amendment comes to elide point III B 2 which reads, "That when He so fulfills His promise and establishes His covenant, the elect are not mere stocks and blocks, but obliged and willing to fulfill their part of the covenant, to love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, to forsake the world, to crucify their old nature, and to walk in a new and holy life," and to insert instead, "The sure promise of God which He realizes in us as rational and moral creatures not only makes it impossible that we should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness but also confronts us with the obligation of love, to walk in a new and holy life, and constantly to watch unto prayer. All those who are not thus disposed, who do not repent but walk in sin, are the objects of His just wrath and excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. Grounds: (1) Baptism Form Part 3, (2) Form for the Lord's Supper—Third part beginning with "all those" up to "But this is not designed." (3) Heidelberg Catechism, Question 64, 84, 116; Canons 3 and 4:12, 16, 17; 3 and 4 B:9, 5:14; Belgic Confession Article 24. And further to amend by adding the amendment made by Classis East as follows: "That the preaching comes to all, and that God seriously commands to faith and repentance, and that to all those who come and believe He promises life and peace."

The amendment to elide the former and to insert the last two quoted paragraphs carries. The whole of point III as amended is then carried.

Synod now turns to point IV. A motion is made to adopt point IV. An amendment is made to elide A 1 and 2 under IV. This deals with the action of the Reformed Churches in Netherlands making binding decisions without giving opportunity to protest and deposing officers in the church and our disapproval of their action. Synod rightly felt that we could not sit in judgment over them without having the case before us, and this amendment to elide was carried. Synod further decided to amend this point IV by adding the following: "For proof we refer to Netherlands Confession, Art. 31; Church Order, Article 36, only the consistory has authority over the local congregation; Article 84; Form for the Installation of

elders and deacons: called by the congregation and therefore by God." This amendment carries. The amended motion carries and Synod adopts Point IV as amended.

Synod now takes up the matter of the use of the declaration. We shall not weary our readers by giving all the motions and amendments but the final action was as follows: "Synod adopts this Declaration of Principles to be used only by the Mission Committee and the Missionaries for the organization of prospective churches on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions as these have always been maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches and as these have been further explained in regard to certain principles in the Declaration." This motion is adopted. Although more voted against the adoption of this motion only Revs. Doezeema, Howerzyl and Van Weelden ask to have their negative votes on this motion recorded.

Synod also decides to use the substance of the above motion as a Preamble to the Declaration.

Synod next decided to give the Committee for Correspondence permission to make their report at the next Synod.

Synod now takes up the letter from the Canadian Reformed Churches. In the discussion it becomes evident that during the Synodical recess this letter has been mislaid and cannot be located. It is therefore decided that the Stated Clerk write these Churches expressing our regret that the missive was lost and kindly requesting a duplicate which shall then be handed to the Committee for Correspondence to be answered by them.

Rev. Vos, the President of Synod extends a word of appreciation and commendation and confidence to our missionary, Rev. Cammenga, in the name of Synod. He also speaks a few words of thanks and farewell to the members of Synod.

After this Synod sings the doxology and Rev. Vos returns thanks to God. J. Howerzyl



#### IN MEMORIAN

Op den morgen van 13 Nov. 1951, behaagde het onzen getrouwen Verbonds God om tot zich te nemen onze dierbare man, vader en grootvader,

ANDREW BRUMMEL

in den ouderdom van 63 jaar.

Ofschoon wij ons verlies zeer gevoelen, behoeven we evenwel niet te treuren als de genen die geen hope hebben. Openbaring 14 vers 13.

De bedroefde familie,  
Mrs. Andrew Brummel  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Brummel  
Mr. and Mrs. John Brummel  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brummel  
Mr. and Mrs. D. Vander Schaaf  
Mr. and Mrs. G. Brummel  
Mr. and Mrs. R. Brummel  
en 17 Kienkinderen, benevens  
zijn bejaarde moeder

Hull, Iowa