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MEDITATION

Het Voorwerp Van Gods Welgevallen

“Maar op dezen zal Ik zien, op den arme en verslagene van geest, en die voor mijn woord beeft.”

Jesaja 66:2b

Van alle eeuwen zijn er mensen geweest die met de ware godsdienst in aanraking kwamen, en er niets van verstaan hebben. De eerste van dat soort mensen was Kain. Hij dacht, dat hij den Heere iets toe kon brengen. Dat was zijn fundamentele fout. En die fout maakte hij vanwege de grootheid des levens. Hij was een trotsch mensch. Hij verfoeide de bloedtheologie van Abel. Want hij heeft beseft, dat dit bloedende schaapje hem te zeer vernederde. En het getal van dat soort mensen is vermenigvuldigd. En het verband spreekt van dat soort mensen in Sion. Zij wilden den Heere een Huis bouwen. En tegen dat soort mensen zegt God: De hemel is Mijn troon, en de aarde is de voetbank Mijner voeten: wáár zoude dat Huis zijn dat gijlieden Mij zoudt bouwen, en wáár is de plaats Mijner rust? En, zoo gaat de Heere voort: Mijne hand heeft alle deze dingen gemaakt, en alle deze dingen zijn geweest, spreekt de Heere. Wat dwaze gedachte dan, alsof de mensch den Heere iets zou kunnen toebrengen? Waneer zullen we nu eens ernstig leeren, dat alles van God, door God en tot God, is? Lijdelijkheid, zegt ge? Neen, maar ware Godsvrucht. Verlammend voor de heiligmaking? Neen, maar juist de mensch die deze fundamentele waarheid gelooft en beleeft, zal van Hem Zijn wegen leeren, en juist zulk een mensch wandelt in die wegen Gods. Dat soort mensen heeft ervaren, dat God de kracht is van hunne kracht.

Neen, zegt de Heere, gij bouwt niet Mij een huis, maar Ik bouw een huis voor Mijn volk. Ik ga wel

wonen, maar Ik ga wonen in de harten van Mijn volk waar Ik Mij een plaats verover in den Zoon Mijner eeuwige liefde. En zoo hooren we het in den tekst: maar op dezen zal ik zien, op den arme en verslagene van geest en die voor Mijn Woord beeft.

Dat soort mensen zijn de voorwerpen van Zijn eeuwig welgevallen. Eerst zullen we vragen: Wat hij is; dan, wat hij doet; en eindelijk, wat hij ontvangt.

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Eerst dan, wat hij is.

Dit soort mensen worden gekarakteriseerd als armen en verslagenen van geest. Wat dat mag beduiden? Wat is de geest des menschen? En wat wil het zeggen, dat die geest arm is? De geest des menschen is de inblazing Gods. God deed tweeërlei toen Hij den mensch schiep. Hij formeerde zijn natuur uit de aarde, een terzelfder tijd blies Hij in Adam's neusgaten, waardoor zijn geest geformeerd werd. En daardoor werd hij een levende ziel. Het dier werd door God geformeerd uit de aarde, gelijk de natuur des menschen, doch het dier ontving niet die inblazing des Almachtigen. Daar is het fundamentele verschil tusschen mensch en dier. En door diezelfde inblazing des Almachtigen werd de mensch beeld Gods. En dat beeld Gods heeft den kostelijken inhoud van ware kennis Gods, ware gerechtigheid en ware heiligheid. De geest des menschen is de zijde des menschen waardoor hij op God aangelegd is. Daarom kan de mensch niet rusten tenzij hij rust in God. En daardoor wordt het mogelijk, dat hij of ten hemel vaart in groote zaligheid, of ter helle vaart in groote smarten. Dat zit vast op den geest des menschen. Een boom of een dier kan noch ten hemel noch ter helle varen. Om dat te kunnen moet men zeer hoog en verheven geschapen zijn, zooals de mensch.

Wat mag het nu beteekenen dat men arm van geest

is? Een arme van geest is een mensch die wel geest is, doch die de materiele, geestelijke, heerlijke inhoud van het beeld Gods mist. En dat is nog niet het vreeselijkste. Het vreeselijkste is, dat hij juist het tegenovergestelde in zich bevindt. In plaats van de kennis Gods, de gerechtigheid en de heiligheid te bezitten, heeft de arme van geest de dwaasheid, de verkeerdheid en de vuilheid. Een arme van geest is een mensch die de formeele zijde van het beeld Gods behield, doch die het tegenovergestelde van dit beeld bezit. Het koningskind vinden we in het vuil van de goot. Dat nu zijn alle menschen: ze zijn alle geesten en formeel blijft het beeld Gods hen tot in alle eeuwigheid bij, want het behoort bij hun wezen. Doch ze zijn alle dood—arme geesten. De geestelijke ziel die op God aangelegd is kleeft aan 't stof en maakt van dat stof zijn god. Verder verderft hij zijn weg op aarde en is op weg naar de hel. Hij is arm van geest en arm aan God van natuur, nadat hij in de zonde viel.

En toch worden alle menschen heir niet bedoeld. Dat zou strijden met de geheele Schrift. Die Heilige Schrift spreekt duidelijke taal en vertelt ons, dat God niet alle menschen liefheeft, ofschoon alle menschen wel arm van geest zijn. De Schrift zegt, dat God Ezau haatte en Jakob liefhad. En die waarheid kunt ge op duizend plaatsen van Gods Woord vinden. Wat dan? Wat mag de verklaring zijn? De verklaring is zeer eenvoudig. Het wil zeggen, dat alleen zij die weten en erkennen dat zij arm van geest zijn door God bemind worden. Let op het tweede lid van den tekst: die voor Mijn Woord beeft. De zaligheid wordt beschreven vanuit het oogpunt des menschen. Het zijn die menschen die zeggen, zingen en belijden: Hoe kleeft mijn ziel aan 't stof, ai ! zie mijn nood ! Wend, wend mijn oog van d' ijdelheden af ! Ik ben vleeschelijk, verkocht onder de zonden ! Het zijn die menschen die weten en erkennen, dat zij van nature "ellendig, en jammerlijk en arm en blind en naakt zijn."

Dit volk wordt verder gekarakteriseerd als "verslagenen van geest" Letterlijk beteekent het menschen wier geest "geslagen, verbrijzeld, en doorpriemd" zijn. Daarom is de gedachte wel duidelijk. Vooral als we er op letten, dat dit volgt op het arm van geest te zijn. Dat zij arm van geest zijn doet hun leed. Omdat ze zoo ver van huis zijn gevoelen ze zich met vele smarten doorstoken, doorpriemd en verbrijzeld. Ver van den hemel staat dit soort volk te schreien en zeggen: Hoevele huurligen mijns Vaders hebben overvloed van brood en ik verga van honger! Hoe komt het dat dit volk zoo handelt? Waarom erkennen zij hun toestand en staat? Dat komt voort uit de reine bron der liefde Gods. Dit volk zijn de wedergeborenen en bekeerden. Dat maakt het groote verschil. En het groote werk Gods der wedergeboorte en bekeering heeft altijd tot

eerste vrucht de droefheid naar God. En die droefheid naar God wordt beschreven in mijn tekst.

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En wat doen die menschen? Dit: ze beven voor Gods Woord. Wat is dat Woord Gods? Er is allereerst een algemeen Woord Gods, en dat wel in de natuur rondom ons. Ge leest daarvan in Psalm 19 en Romeinen 1. Voor bijna 6000 jaren heeft God luide gesproken, maar de mensch is doof van nature. Hij wil niet luisteren naar de schoone sprake Gods in de dingen die Hij gemaakt heeft. Leest Romeinen 1 tot het einde toe en beeft. Dan is daar het Woord Gods zooals het tot Israel kwam door engelen Gods van Horeb. En dan is er het Woord Gods zooals dat eerst kwam door de profeten en later vleesch werd in Bethleem. Als nu de arme van geest en de verslagene van hart dat drie-voudige Woord Gods hoort begint hij te beven. Dat is een der schonste kenmerken der genade. Die Woorden Gods vertellen hem, dat God de groote Schepper is van het heelal. Dan ook, dat Hij de rechtvaardige Rechter is die zekerlijk recht zal doen en vergelden alles wat in het lichaam geschiedde, hetzij goed, hetzij kwaad. Dat doet hem beven en sidderen. Hij beseft, dat hij den Heere niets kan antwoorden op duizend vragen die in gerechtigheid tot hem gericht worden. En dan is daar het Woord Gods, het lieflijkste Woord van alles: en dat is het Woord hetwelk Hij spreekt door Zijn geliefden Zoon. De man van mijn tekst staat als 't ware voor het kruis van Golgotha en beeft voor God. Hier zullen we wat moeten zeggen van dat beven en sidderen. We moeten wel verstaan, dat dit niet beteekent het beven zooals een slaaf beeft voor zijn harden meester, want dat beven is een uiting van haat. Maar het is beven dat opkomt uit de pure liefde Gods. Het is de gewaardwording van diep ontzag voor zoo vreeselijken en lieflijken God. Des Heeren vrees is rein en opent een fontein van heil dat nooit vergaat. En dat beven van dit soort menschen vindt men vooral bij de aanschouwing van het kruis van Christus. Want daar openbaarde God Zich op het grootst en het lieflijkst. En zoo zal er een trilling zijn van de reine vreeze Gods tot in alle eeuwigheid als de groote schare het Lam zal zien in het midden van den troon, staande als geslacht.

En zoo zijn er altijd twee soorten van menschen als het Woord Gods gepredikt wordt. Dan zijn er menschen die den Heere een huis gaan bouwen, doch dan zegt God: waar is het Huis Gods dat gij Mij zult bouwen? Het is juist andersom: de Heere bouwt *ons* een Huis. Het is het Huis des Heeren in den Geest. En God neemt ons en maakt ons tot levende steenen in dat Huis, waarvan Zijn Zoon de uiterste hoeksteen is. En het tweede soort menschen beeft als zij het Woord

Gods hooren verkondigen. Zij staan daar als ze God hooren vertellen van het Huis des Heeren in den Geest. En zingen ze: Hier weidt mijn ziel met een verwonderend oog! Zij beven geduriglijk voor het Woord van God. Van dat volk wordt gezegd: Welzalig is den mensch die geduriglijk vreest!

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En, eindelijk, moeten we nog wat zeggen van hetgene dat dit volk ontvangt. Daarvan zegt mijn tekst: maar op dezen zal ik zien . . .

Wat mag dat beteekenen?

Ge gevoelt direct dat dit meer beteekent dan het bloote zien. God ziet alles en allen ten allen tijde. Hij ziet ook de goddeloozen en Satan met zijne trawanten. Niets is verborgen voor Zijne majesteit. Hier moet meer bedoeld worden. Het woord zien is zeer rijk. Er zijn vijftien verschillende woorden in het Hebreeuwsch voor de idee van zien, en ook vijftien woorden voor het zien in het Grieksch. En het woord dat hier gebruikt wordt beteekent zien, met een honger om zich te vereenigen met het voorwerp. Hetzelfde woord vinden we in Job 39:32 waar we lezen: "Van daar speurt hij de spijs op, zijne oogen zien van verre af." Dit wordt daar gezegd van den arend. En we vinden hetzelfde woord ook in Jesaja 20:6, waar het woord gebruikt wordt om de ervaring te vertolken van het volk Gods, dat hongerend uitzag naar hulp. De gedachte is daarom duidelijk: het is een hongerend, verlangend zien naar het voorwerp van Gods liefde.

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Er zit veel in deze gedachte van den tekst. Er zit een wereld van liefde in deze eenvoudige woorden: Op dezen zal Ik zien! Als dit ons mag gebeuren dan is het goed, goed voor den tijd en goed voor de eeuwigheid.

Dat beteekent allereerst, dat God op ons ziet van eeuwigheid. Daarvan zegt Jeremia: Ik heb U liefgehad met een eeuwige liefde. En Jesaja: Zie, Ik heb U in de beide handpalmen gegraveerd, uwe muren zijn steeds voor Mij. En dit zien van eeuwigheid met het zien der liefde zit geheel en al vast op den Christus Gods. Ziet ge, God heeft ons als kinderen Gods eeuwiglijk gezien in den Zoon Zijner liefde. Het uitgedrukte Beeld van Gods zelfstandigheid is centraal in die handpalmen Gods. En de liefde van God tot Zijn volk zit vast op dien Zoon. Jezus heeft daar Zelf van gezegd in het Hoogepriesterlijk gebed: Zij waren Uwe, en Gij hebt Mij dezelve gegeven! En met die gave Gods aan Jezus, waarin Hij al de uitverkorenen Gods als Zijn eigendom ontving, ontving Hij ook alle

hunne zonden als schuld. En nu moest die Zoon arbeiden om al die zonden als schuld te verdelgen, opdat de Heere God tot in eeuwigheid met welgevallen mocht neerzien op het volk, dat Hij liefhad van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid. Want God is te heilig, dan dat Hij kan zien op de zonde en boosheid der menschen. Als men zingt: Jezus neemt de zondaars aan! dan moet men er altijd om denken, dat dit op zichzelf onmogelijk is. God haat de zonde. En daarom moet de zonde vernietigd worden, opdat de Heere tot in der eeuwigheid op Zijn volk kan neerzien met dit zien der liefde. En in de stille eeuwigheid heeft God Zijn volk gezien met het zien der liefde, omdat zij toen al veilig waren in den Christus die in de volheid des tijds komen zou.

En in den tijd ziet God op Zijn volk met een oog van genade en ontferming. Dat kan want Jezus woont in het volk Gods. Jezus heeft alle gerechtigheid vervuld. Hij heeft een gehoorzaamheid geopenbaard in Zijn lijden en sterven die tintelde van liefde. Tot op den bodem der hel heeft Jezus Zijn God gehoorzaamd in liefde. En zoo ziet God ter neder op Zijn Zoon met het oog des welgevallens. En naardien Jezus in Zijn volk woont zijn de kinderen Gods ook het voorwerp van dat welgevallen Gods.

Die gedachte is het Evangelie, mijne vrienden! Gedenkt daaraan als 't bang wordt en er groote vreeze komt. Gedenkt daaraan als ge Uwe zonden en ongerechtigheden ziet, en de gedachte opkomt: Hoe kan de rechtvaardige God met mij te doen hebben? Hij ziet in gunst op die Hem vreezen.

En zoo zal het zijn tot in alle eeuwigheid. Al Gods volks zal uiteindelijk aankomen in den hemel daarboven bij God. En dan zal juist dit de hemel zijn: men zal in het oog van God mogen zien. En in dat oog van God zal men een eeuwige liefde lezen. Het is de eeuwige liefde Gods in Zijn Zoon. Daarvan zegt Paulus triumfantelijk: Wie zal ons scheiden van de liefde van Christus?

G. Vos.



Yea, I will tell the mighty acts
Performed by God the Lord;
Thy righteousness, and Thine alone,
With praise I will record.

For from my early youth, O God,
By Thee have I been taught,
And faithfully have I declared
The wonders Thou hast wrought.

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EDITORIALS**The Legality of the Declaration**

At our last synod—I mean the synod that was held last June—it was decided that the decision of Synod, 1950, concerning the Declaration was certainly legally adopted.

Against this decision all the delegates from Classis West, except one of them registered a negative vote. And six of them were so strongly opposed to declaring that the action of Synod, 1950, in regard to the Declaration was perfectly legal, that they asked to have their vote recorded in the minutes.

It is impossible for me to understand on what ground these brethren could take such a stand. It seems to me that it implies a rejection of the Church Order. This Church Order, in Article 30, plainly states: "In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted, and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common." I am referring, of course, especially to the last clause of this article. Matters that pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common may be dealt with the major assembly, in this case, of course, the synod. Now certainly the mission work of the church belongs to the churches of the major assembly in common without any doubt. Article 51 of the Church Order states plainly: "The missionary work of the church is regulated by the general synod in a mission order." For this mission work and the regulation of it the synod appoints a mission committee. This committee, therefore, is a synodical committee, which cannot and may not with its matters go the way of the consistory, classis, and synod, but directly turns to the widest or largest assembly of the church, that is, to synod. At the Synod of 1950 there was a request of the Mission Committee for a form for the organization of churches, which request, therefore, the synod had to treat. And the Synod acceded to this request in the Declaration of Principles.

It has been alleged, in opposition to the Declaration of Principles, that it is a new confession. But nothing could be farther from the truth. That this is not true is plain on the very face of it. The Declaration is meant as a form for the Mission Committee, for the purpose of showing to all that desire to become organized as churches within our fellowship the stand of our churches in regard to certain fundamental points of doctrine. Now, certainly, a form for the

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Mission Committee and for the organization of churches can never be a confession let alone a new confession. A confession is binding upon the churches and can be judged in the light of Scripture only. But that the Declaration is not such a binding confession, imposed upon the churches, is very evident from the fact that at any time that Declaration may be judged and criticized in the light of the Confessions. One does not have to turn to Scripture in order to prove that the Declaration is not Reformed. But it is sufficient for him, if he can show that it is not in harmony with the Confessions.

Besides, as far as the legality is concerned, for the opposition to which the brethren that voted against that legality on our last session of Synod not only have no ground to stand on as far as the Church Order is concerned. But also every historical precedent condemns them.

Did the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19, which composed such an elaborate interpretation of the Confessions, as contained in the Canons, commit an illegal act when they adopted the Canons and imposed them upon the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands? Yet, mark you, this action of the Synod of Dordrecht certainly was not justified by the fact that the matter in question had come from consistory to classis to synod, but only by the fact that the Confessions pertain to the churches of the major assemblies in common. Were the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands not justified when they adopted the Five Conclusions of Utrecht in 1905? Yet also these were composed by the Synod directly. Was not the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches justified when it decided on the matter concerning Prof. Dr. Jansen? Yet also this matter certainly had not passed from consistory to classis to synod, but was handled directly by synod. Just as matters pertaining to the mission committee belong to the churches of the major assembly in common, so also the matters concerning the theological school belong directly to synod, and can be and should be treated by that assembly even without consulting the churches. Nor, mark you well, did we ever deny the right of synod to interpret their confessions in the Three Points of 1924 as such. But we always based our criticism certainly not on the fact that the matters of the Confession do not belong to the synod or to the churches of the major assembly in common, but on the fact that what the synod called interpretations of the Confessions were additions and corruptions of our Three Forms of Unity.

And therefore, I state once more that the opposition to the motion concerning the legality of the Declaration is simply inexplicable to me. I cannot understand it, and I maintain that the brethren that oppose that decision have no legal ground to stand on whatsoever.

H. H.

The above editorial was written before synod met again in adjourned session on Sept. 26.

These sessions lasted till Oct. 3.

Now it is definitely adjourned.

It is too early to give my impressions about this important Synod. I hope to write about in the near future.

Only one thing I wish to state now: it is a sign of health that our churches are still strong enough to fight about and for the Reformed truth, and that, in them, the truth still prevails.

And a truly brotherly spirit dominated.

H. H.



Vragen

Geachte Ds. Hoeksema:

Als Editor van de Standard Bearer, kom ik met een tweetal vragen tot U. Wilt U die in de Standard Bearer beantwoorden.

Vraag 1: Vloeit het zichtbaar optreden der Kerk ook voort uit het karakter, waar door zich genade van zonde onderscheidt?

Vraag 2: Vanwaar heeft Pro. Ophoff het recht om als afgevaardigde naar de Classis en Synode te gaan? Of heeft Prot. Ref. Church met de kerkenorde afgedaan? Die leert toch geheel iets anders?

Wm. Pelskamp

Sioux Center, Iowa

Antwoord:

1. Ik heb lang op de eerste vraag van broeder Pelskamp gestaard, maar het is me niet gelukt haar te verstaan. Om een vraag te beantwoorden is het natuurlijk zaak haar eerst goed te verstaan. Daarom vraag ik den broeder vriendelijk of hij zijn vraag niet ietwat kan toelichten.

2. Ds. Ophoff is, als ik het wel heb (ik was op de vergadering der classis, waar voor afgevaardigden naar de synode gestemd werd, niet tegenwoordig), voor afgevaardigde gestemd in capaciteit van emeritus predikant van de Eerst. Prot. Geref. Kerk te Grand Rapids. Ik ben me niet bewust, dat dit in strijd is met de K.O.

H.H.



ERRATUM

Ik schrijf in het enkelvoud, niet omdat er niet meer drukfouten in de S.B. zijn, maar omdat ik deze ééne fout zoo, zal ik zeggen "koddig", vindt, dat ik er wel even de aandacht op moet vestigen. In mijn revue van Dr. Schilder's boek in de laatste S.B., wordt gezegd, dat mij een "openbaring" van het hart moet. De lezer gelieve te lezen "opmerking". Openbaringen des harten heb ik gelukkig niet.

H.H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXXI

1.

The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

Qu. 83. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

A. The preaching of the holy gospel, and christian discipline, or excommunication out of the christian church; by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.

Qu. 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?

A. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, 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; and on the contrary, when it is 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: according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them, both in this, and in the life to come.

Qu. 85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by christian discipline?

A. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, those, who under the name of christians, maintain doctrines, or practices inconsistent therewith, and will not, after having been often brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, or to those, who are thereunto appointed by the church; and if they despise their admonition, are by them forbidden the use of the sacraments; whereby they are excluded from the christian church, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again received as members of Christ and his church.

Usually three distinguishing marks are mentioned by which the church may be known in the midst of the world and may be distinguished from what calls itself church, but is not. These marks are: the preaching of the Word of God, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the right exercise of Christian discipline, or the use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. By some these marks of the true church are reduced to two, namely, to the preaching of the gospel and the proper administration of the sacraments, seeing that after all christian discipline or the use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven only can serve the purpose to stand as a sentinel, watching over the preaching and the proper administration of the sacraments. In a way you can safely limit the distinguishing mark of the church in the world to the preaching of the

Word of God. This, at least, is always the chief distinguishing mark of the church. Where the Word of God is purely preached and heard, there undoubtedly you have the church. There is Christ: and where Christ is, there is the church. In this you cannot make a mistake. Where the Word of God is not preached, there the church cannot be. There is only one sphere where the Word of God is heard in this world; and nowhere else is it heard. And that sphere is the church. It stands to reason that where the Word of God is purely preached, you surely have the proper administration of the sacraments. Besides, the preaching of the Word is the chief key of the kingdom of heaven, and the main means of Christian discipline. All these stand and fall with the preaching of the Word, so that in a way you can safely say that the distinguishing mark of the church is the pure preaching of the Word.

This does not alter the fact that we can and must treat of the keys of the kingdom of heaven separately. And this subject is indeed of grave importance for the church of Christ in the world, both from a doctrinal viewpoint and from a practical aspect. There are indeed many questions that must be answered in this connection. What is meant by the keys of the kingdom of heaven? That it is the power and authority to open and to shut that kingdom is very evident. But what is the idea and the character of this power? Is not Christ's alone the power to open and shut the kingdom of heaven? In what sense, then, can that power be said to be conferred upon men? And upon what men is it conferred? Is it, perhaps, delegated to Peter alone, as the proper successor of Christ in the world? Or was it bestowed upon the apostles, so that after the termination of the apostolic period there is no more power of the keys? Or does that key power continue to be exercised properly by the church; and, if by the church, is it exercised only by the officebearers or by the whole church? Further, the question is: how is that power exercised, and how can it be efficient in such a way, that what is bound on earth is at the same time bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is at the same time loosed in heaven? And finally, we may ask: what is the purpose of Christian discipline, exercised by the key power?

So much as far as the doctrinal questions involved are concerned.

But also from a practical aspect the subject of the keys of the kingdom of heaven is very important. In general, we may certainly assert that the church, or what calls itself church, in the world has long forgotten to employ these keys. Of this we need not be surprised. For especially in our American world the church is no longer a strong fortress, but an open city, where every one can enter or from which anyone can make his exit, according to his own good pleasure. The result is, of course, that the preaching of the Word

is corrupted, and the holy sacraments are profaned. But even in our own churches it is certainly necessary to emphasize ever and again the practical import of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Is it not true that many among us do not realize the tremendous importance of the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Is it not true that many assume an utterly erroneous attitude over against this key power by the church? When we make confession of our faith in the midst of the church, we promise before God and the congregation that we will submit to Christian discipline. Yet, how often this solemn vow is broken: how often those that profess to be the people of God show a sad ignorance, when they carelessly and profanely withdraw themselves from that discipline when it is exercised. And how many fail to understand that it is not left up to them, whether or not they will visit the brother that sins against them, but that it is their sacred calling and obligation of love to the brother to admonish him, according to Matthew 18. Moreover, how many of us fail to understand the true, spiritual character of Christian discipline. Hence, from every viewpoint it is certainly important to treat the subject of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Lord's Day 31, which speaks particularly of the keys of the kingdom of heaven and Christian discipline, stands intimately connected with the preceding question and answer. There the question of open or closed communion was broached; and it was asked whether they also are to be admitted to the supper of the Lord, who by confession and life declare themselves to be ungodly. And the answer was negative: the ungodly may not be admitted to holy communion, because the church must watch over the sacredness of the covenant of God, and if they would open the communion table to all, including the ungodly, the covenant of God would be profaned, and His wrath kindled against the whole congregation. And therefore it was stated that "it is the duty of the Christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and His apostles, to exclude such persons, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life." It is evident, therefore, that according to the Catechism the exclusion from the Lord's Supper is principally the same as the being cast out of the kingdom of heaven.

Most of the Reformed confessions make mention of this key power of the church. Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, which speaks of the marks of the true church, wherein she differs from the false church, states the following: "The marks, by which the true church is known, are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin: in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary there-

to rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as only head of the church. Hereby the true church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself."

The Scotch Confession of Faith mentions the same distinguishing marks of the true church: "The notes therefore of the true church of God we believe, confess, and avow to be, first, the true preaching of the Word of God, into the which God has revealed himself unto us, as the writings of the prophets and the apostles to declare. Secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed unto the Word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. Last, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered, as God's Word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and virtue nourished. Wheresoever then these former notes are seen and of any time continue (be the number ever so few, about two or three), there, without all doubt, is the true church of Christ: who according unto his promise, is in the midst of them."

And to quote no more, the Westminster Confession speaks of Christian discipline or the keys of the kingdom of heaven separately, as follows: "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of the church offices, distinct from the civil magistrates.

"To these offices the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins; or to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the administration of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

"Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

"For the better attaining of these ends, the offices of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person."

As to the Holy Scriptures, the keys of the kingdom of heaven are literally mentioned. First of all, we find mention of them in Matthew 16. It was on the occasion when Jesus, coming into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, asked His disciples: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" and when, after having received various answers, He confronts them with the

direct question: "But whom say ye that I am?" and Peter, as the spokesman of the apostles replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," that Jesus first mentions these keys of the kingdom of heaven: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 16:17-19. The same key power is evidently referred to in Matt. 18:15-18: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Indirectly the same power is evidently delegated to the apostles at the time when He appeared unto them after the resurrection. For we read in John 20:21-23: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Finally, we may refer also to Rev. 3:7, where the key power is attributed to Christ alone. There we read: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

Taking these several Scripture passages together, we may note that they teach the following truths.

First of all, it is emphasied that Christ alone holds the key of David, that is, the key of the kingdom of heaven. He alone holds those keys and employs them. For it is emphasied in Rev. 3:7 that no man opens or shuts that kingdom of heaven, and that when He openeth, no man can possibly shut, and when He shutteth, no man can possibly open. Christ's, therefore is the key power. The exalted Christ, Who was crucified and raised from the dead, and unto Whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, is the only One that holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Christ alone is set over the whole house of God. His is all the

authority, and He is become the quickening Spirit, so that He has not only authority, but also the power to include in and to exclude from the kingdom of heaven.

The next question is, however: what is included in that power? Or, in other words, what is meant when the text in Matt. 16 and 18 speaks of loosing and binding? Does this expression merely refer to legislative power and authority, so that He determines merely what is right and wrong, what is true or false, in the kingdom of heaven? Or does it imply also judicial authority, authority over persons, so that ultimately He determines not only *what*, but also *who* shall be included in or excluded from the kingdom of heaven. According to our conviction, both are included. Surely, if we proceed from the correct idea that it is Christ that principally holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, it stands to reason that He does not only have all the legislative, but also all the judicial authority and power in that kingdom. His is surely the power and authority to declare with determination the spiritual, ethical character of what shall be valid in the kingdom of heaven. But His is also the spiritual power, as well as the authority, to bestow this spiritual character and to determine on whom it shall be bestowed, and thus to determine who shall and who shall not have a place in His everlasting kingdom. Hence, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven is the power of Christ to open and shut that kingdom legislatively, but also judicially. It is the power to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven for those that are still without and belong within; for those that are within and belong without; to keep within those that are in the kingdom; and to keep outside of the kingdom those that have no place therein.

Further, these passages teach us that Christ exercises this power on earth and in the church in the world, first of all, through the apostles. We may, of course, also state this truth in this way, that Christ conferred the authority and power to open and shut the kingdom of heaven on His apostles. But although this is expressing the same thing, it seems to us that it is better to maintain that it is Christ Himself, the Head of His church, both organically and judicially, that exercises the key power through the apostles. In Matt. 16:18 the church is considered from the viewpoint of a building, a fortress, or a city, with its gates. That city, or fortress, of the church is built upon a rock. That rock, according to the text, is Peter. But certainly not Peter as a person, nor Peter from the viewpoint of his subjective faith, but rather that apostle as he manifested himself in his confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That foundation is to be laid through the instrumentality of the apostles. And upon that foundation Christ will build His church. For the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Him-

self being the chief cornerstone. Eph. 2:20. This church, however, this strong fortress, is conceived of as being built in the midst of the world, as is evident from Matt. 16:18, where it is said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against that church. I take it that by the somewhat figurative expression "the gates of hell" is meant that which issues forth from these gates, the power of death, of sin and of darkness, the very power of hell. And Christ assures His church that those powers will never overwhelm or overcome or prevail against His church, that is built upon that sure foundation. The gates of the church are securely closed, as becomes a strong fortress. And as such it is impregnable, and no powers of darkness can possibly overwhelm it. Now, the keys of those gates, hence, the authority and power to open and shut, to include or exclude from that church, or from the kingdom of heaven, are first of all bestowed upon the apostles. That it is not on Peter alone that this power is conferred, but on him as spokesman of the apostles, is plain from Matt. 18, where the same power is evidently bestowed upon all the apostles. And, as this key power is conferred on them, it implies that in a special manner they will be infallibly taught the truth as it is in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of promise, and that thus, infallibly inspired, they will be able in the name of Christ to declare and to determine what will have a place in the kingdom of heaven, as well as who shall and who shall not have a place in that kingdom. Their infallible inspiration as apostles is the necessary requisite for their authority and power.

Finally, however, it is also evident from these passages that Christ exercises this key power not only through the apostles, but also through the church and on the basis of their infallible Word. This is evident from Matt. 18:17, 18. For the final injunction, "Tell it to the church," cannot possibly refer to the apostles: for they are not the church. Neither can it refer to their "successors": for the apostles had no successors. But it must mean the whole church, as headed by and founded on the doctrine of the apostles. Hence, after the apostles' death, Christ exercises His key power through the church as it hears the Word of and is in that sense obedient to the apostles, and through them to Christ. It is the church, as locally it is manifest in the instituted congregation, and as it functions through its officebearers, particularly through its ministers and elders. Hence, also the church has the calling, the sacred obligation, and by the Word of the apostles and the Holy Scriptures, as well as through the indwelling Spirit, the power to employ the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We conclude, therefore, that the key power is the power conferred on the church, or the power which Christ Himself exercises through the church, to determine what shall have a place and who shall have a place in the kingdom of heaven.

The purpose of the exercise of discipline is threefold. In the first place, the chief purpose is always the glory of God in Christ. For the church in the world is a manifestation of God in Christ. It must show forth His glorious virtues. And therefore it has the calling to be holy, even as He is holy. The church, therefore, may not be mixed with the elements of darkness. This does not imply, of course, that there is no sin and that there are no sinners in the church visible in the world. But it certainly means that all that are members of the church are characterized by a manifest sorrow after God, repent of their sin, crucify the flesh, and strive to walk after sanctification of life. And it is for the glory of God that all those who are not disposed to lead such a life of repentance and sanctification are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Secondly, it is to the well-being of the church that Christian discipline is diligently exercised. If not, the covenant of God is profaned, the wrath of God is kindled against the church; and soon, if the workers of iniquity and the power of evil is left in the church visible in the world, it will become subject to those powers and soon be corrupted. And finally, the purpose of the exercise of Christian discipline is also the salvation of its members. When they walk in sin, of which they do not repent, it is certainly not to their salvation that they are left undisturbed, without rebuke and admonition. And the positive purpose of the exercise of Christian discipline, as far as the members of the church are concerned, is certainly their salvation.

H. H.

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ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Pub. Ass'n., was held on Sept. 27.

Newly elected board members are Wm. Kamps, Charles Kregel and Richard Teitsma. Retiring members are Otto Vander Woude, Gerrit Bylsma and Dick Vander Wal.

Rev. E. Emanul gave a very interesting talk on the essential need of a paper such as the Standard Bearer in this age of spiritual indifference.

Reports were given by the secretary and treasurer and were accepted by the society.

THE BOARD

As To Books

ONENESS WITH CHRIST by W. R. Nicholson, D. D.
Published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Price \$3.00.

This book is commentary on the epistle to the Colossians. As a book for the general public it makes very good reading. It is spiritual and devotional. Moreover, the author maintains all the fundamental truths of the Christian faith as they concentrate around the atonement of our Saviour. As sinners, according to the author, we may not come to God and enter into His blessed fellowship, except on the basis of God's righteousness in Christ; and we cannot and will not come to God because we are dead in sins, and, therefore, we are in need of the efficacious grace of God in Christ.

As a commentary, however, it is not very complete or thorough. For instance, I cannot conceive of a complete commentary on the epistle to the Colossians without a thorough exposition of the section in 1.15-20, especially of the concept: "the firstborn of every creature." This concept is fundamental for the correct understanding of the whole epistle. Yet, the author simply passes over it.

But I say again, the book offers very good reading and I heartily recommend it to the Christian reader.

H. H.



GOD THE PORTION OF THE SOUL

Thou art my portion, Lord;
Thy words I ever heed;
With all my heart Thy grace I seek,
Thy promises I plead.

I thought upon my ways,
Thy testimonies learned;
With earnest haste, and waiting not,
To Thy commands I turned.

While snares beset my path,
Thy law I keep in view;
At midnight I will give Thee praise
For all Thy judgments true.

All those who fear Thy Name
Shall my companions be;
Thy mercy fills the earth, O Lord;
Thy statutes teach Thou me.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(7)

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

What it is.

We may as well discuss the theory of Evolution at this time. We have, until now, called attention to the Divine work of creation and have finished our discussion of this mighty work of the Lord with the exception of the creation of man, who, of course, is the highest and noblest of all the creatures of God and will therefore demand a major share of our attention. The theory of Evolution, however, discusses not only the origin of man but also the beginning of all other living creatures. We thought it, therefore, not amiss to call attention to this conception at this time, before our discussion of man and after our treatment of the creation of the animal-world.

The Divine origin of man has never been doubted in the Christian Church and in Christian theology. The Word of God does not leave this matter in doubt. Outside God's revelation, however, many conjectures have been made and many theories advanced concerning this origin of man. Many wise men among the heathens, it is true, ascribed the creation of man to gods or semi-gods. Others recognized in man who had been formed out of the dust of the earth a higher, rational principle which was derived from the gods. But it cannot be denied that also totally different ideas concerning the origin of man have been advanced in religion and in philosophy. Some have declared that he came forth from an animal, and others advanced the theory that he was the fruit of some tree.

A theory which today is generally known and taught is the theory of Evolution. This theory expounds the ideas that man descended from a lower animal, body and soul, through a perfectly natural process, controlled entirely by inherent forces, and therefore not by any external (as a Divine) power.

It is true, as is generally known, that there are varying theories of Evolution. Some evolutionists do not deny the evidence which order and adaptation, which may be observed in nature, attest unto the existence of God and His immanence in and providential control of His works. These profess to believe in the possibility of harmonizing an evolutionistic conception of the development and existence of things with the thought of an eternal and ever working God. Other evolutionists would recognize God as the original source in the far and remote past to which, then, the

origination and the primary adjustments of the universe are to be referred, but they deny His immanence and constant providential activity in all the works of His hands. This means that the origin and continued existence of the world can be likened to an alarm clock. After such a clock has been wound it runs of itself. God, then, is the origin of the world. For the rest, however, the Lord holds Himself aloof from its continued existence and development. A third class of evolutionists consists of those who either obscure or deny the evidence afforded by the order and adaptation in the universe for the existence and activity of God alike as Creator and as Providential Ruler.

We are primarily interested in the third class, in the conception which is commonly known today as the theory of Evolution. We may safely say that this theory expounds the theory that all things evolve from an original cell, that all things exist and have developed by a force residing in the world itself. Some say that man is a descendant of one of the species of anthropoid (resembling a human being) apes now in existence, and others assert that man and the higher apes have a common ancestor now no longer in existence. Be this as it may, all things have developed out of an original cell, the animate out of the inanimate, the organic out of the inorganic, man from an ape, etc. Long before Darwin (1809-1882) the philosophy of the world had taught that the animal was man's ancestor. Darwin was certainly not the first whose name must be associated with the theory of Evolution. What Darwin did was to conduct a series of observations which were related to the life of man and of the animal in order to reveal this connection and association. Darwin, who must have stated that the earthworm was the most helpful of all animals, developed the theory which treats the evolution of all forms of living organisms from a few forms of primitive life or from one such form, the keynote of the theory being natural selection or the survival of the fittest. He knew how to combine these various observations or phenomena and to serve an hypothesis, a supposition which already existed in his mind, and thereby showed the way in which man's descension from the animal appeared possible.

The so-called basis or proof for this theory.

Darwin called attention, first, to the struggle of and for life everywhere present in nature round about us. In this struggle of life every living creature takes part. Every living creature is simply compelled to fight and struggle for survival; if it fails to do so it will perish.

Secondly, out of countless plants and animals and men, nature selects only those for continuous existence and development which are the best, and this natural

development is such that each "wife" seeks the best "man." It is simply a struggle of the survival of the fittest, and the fittest, the best survive.

Thirdly, in this struggle of the survival of the fittest, the favorable characteristics of the parents are passed over to the children, and in this process the organisms become better and better.

In addition to this the following phenomena are also cited. Attention is called to the likeness and similarity which exists between organic beings, and which also exist in physical and psychical (according to the soul) between man and the animal. They also note changes and hereditary transmission of attributes and characteristics which one may continually observe in the world of men and animals. Moreover, attention is also called to the rudimentary (first, embryonic, elementary) organs which have remained in man since his descension from the animal world and which man derived from his association with the animal world.

Later other arguments were brought forth in support of this theory of Evolution. The attempt to prove the similarity between and a common ancestry of man and animal was made by means of blood tests. The palaeontological argument was also called into being. Bones have been unearthed of beings which lived long, long ago. And from these remains ancient men have been reconstructed for us by modern scientists. And in our present day museums we may now enjoy ourselves by looking at these ancient men, these forefathers of our present human race, such as the Java man, the Heidelberg man, the Neanderthal man, the Cro-Magnon man, the Piltdown man, and others. And one can hardly dispute the fact that these reconstructed men look very much like apes. And so the attempt is made to seek a common ancestry for man and the ape, and man has therefore descended from a lower type of living being. Indeed, the wise and the prudent of this world have spared neither time nor expense to establish the perfectly natural origin of the human race and to deny man's Divine origin. And although it is true that Darwinism, the phase of Evolution associated with Darwin, is commonly held today in disrepute, one cannot deny that the theory of Evolution, which teaches that all things evolve from an original cell and that all things exist and have developed by a force residing in the world itself, is advanced as the only true explanation of the origin of the human race and all living creatures.

This view, of course, utterly fallacious.

First, the blood tests proved completely untrustworthy and fallacious. Later tests, in which the entire blood was examined, and not merely certain parts of it, showed conclusively that there is an essential difference between the blood of animals and the blood

of men. This means, we understand, that this particular "proof" for the theory of Evolution falls away, although we hasten to add at this moment that the important thing is not the similarity between man and the animal world (Scripture has indeed an explanation for this phenomenon), but the distinction between man and the rest of the animals (that man alone is a moral-rational being).

Secondly, the palaeontological argument is equally false. Only a few bones were found of each, and in some cases even these bones were widely scattered. It was not even certain that they belonged to the same creature or being. Their reconstruction, therefore, does not testify of the validity and truthfulness of these reconstructed beings which we have mentioned in the foregoing, but only of the skill but also of the shameless boldness of these so-called "scientists" who reconstructed them. One may well marvel because of the skill of these wise and prudent of this world, but one must also be amazed because of their shameless wickedness and folly. A certain professor of the University of London declared once that he knows of no occupation which is less worthy of the name of Anthropology (the science of man) than the occupation of modelling, painting, or drawing of these nightmare pictures of the imagination, and lending them in the process as an utterly false value of apparent reality. And another scientist of our present day has declared that it is simply impossible to produce as an ancestor of modern man from fossils which are found. And, concerning the origin of man another has declared: "I know nothing about the origin of man, except what I am told in the Scriptures, that the Lord has created him; I do not know anything more than that, and I do not know of anyone else who does."

Thirdly, the argument which is advanced in support of the theory of Evolution because of the similarity between men and certain animals is surely no argument. It is certainly not "scientific" when the attempt is made to show that man and the animal have things in common. In fact, it is hardly to be regarded as something new that man, too, is an animal, be it in the highest sense of the word. Fact is, already in the Book of Genesis we are told that man is an animal. Man and the animal are both called "living souls." And that there is some similarity between man and the animal need not in any sense surprise us, inasmuch as both living creatures were created out of the dust of the earth. Hence, to show that man and the rest of the animals have things in common is surely nothing new. Already the man, Moses, led by the infallible Spirit, informed us to this effect ages ago.

Fourthly, the theory of Evolution utterly fails to prove the phenomenon of life and the transmission from one stage to another. People speak glibly of the transmission from the inorganic to the organic, from

the inanimate to the animate, from the lifeless to the living, from stones to plants, from plants to animals, from animals to man. They speak glibly of thousands and millions of years and cannot produce a single date (of course not) which goes back farther than those recorded in Holy Writ. They call themselves scientists, boast that all they want is facts, believe in things they can prove and establish, and produce the Darwinian theory, concerning which a certain eminent man once wrote: "The Darwinian theory has not a single fact to support it . . . it is purely the product of the imagination." Indeed, wicked man believes what he wishes to believe.

Fifthly, the theory of Evolution not only fails completely to explain the origin of life, but it also completely fails to explain the difference between man and the animal. On the one hand, if man descended from an ape, would it not be logical to assume that certain "missing links" between man and the ape-world were in existence? During the last thousands of year (six thousand years) man and the monkey have been wholly different, and not a single ape can be found or has been found which resembles man more than another, or v.v. Besides, this transmission from apes to people nowhere occurs anymore. Why not? In addition to this, present day science frankly admits that they have no explanation for the difference between man and the animal. Apes cannot think or will. They have no intelligence. Man is a moral-rational being. How did this happen? Why the complete difference between man and the animal? The Word of the Lord explains this phenomenon when it informs us that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. And if Science cannot account for man's moral-rational nature, has no explanation for it, what "scientific" right does it have to deny Scripture's account? Evolution, as a theory to explain the origin of man, falls because of its own weakness and utter lack of proof. However, this is not all, especially for the child and Church of the living God. Even so, of course, our weightiest objections against this theory have not yet been advanced.

In the sixth place, the Church of the living God lifts up its voice of protest against this godless presentation of the origin of man for other reasons. First, it denies the testimony of Holy Writ. The Bible could hardly be more explicit and teach more clearly than it does that man is the direct product of the creative act of the almighty God. We read in Gen. 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." To be sure, some theologians, in their eagerness to harmonize Scripture with the "devastating" evidence of Evolution, suggest that this text may be interpreted to mean that man has descended from the animal! Do we not read that the Lord formed

him "out of the dust of the ground?" Is not also the animal out of the dust of the ground? Hence, God, then, formed man out of the body of the animals which, after all, are also dust. Of course, this is nonsense. This is plain from Gen. 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This text certainly does not mean, does it, that man shall return to his former animal state? Moreover, we would also refer the reader to Job 33:4; Gen. 1:26, 27, 31; 2:19, 20; Psalm 8:5-8. These various passages surely emphasize the truth that man is the direct product of the living God, and also that man is highly exalted above the rest of the animal-world. Secondly, it denies God. This is surely a truth that speaks for itself. Evolution speaks of energy as eternal and of force which resides in the creature and in the world itself. It does not know the Lord and denies that God, in the beginning, made the heavens and the earth. Also for this reason, and alone for this reason, the Christian cannot believe in the evolutionistic conception of things, inasmuch as he has been united with that living God through faith in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the theory of Evolution surely degrades man. Instead of having been created by the living God and in His image, we have descended from apes. What a difference! Scripture presents man as having been formed in the image of God, as being a son of God, whereas Evolution would have us believe that we are the children of apes. Is there any logical reason why we should be so vastly superior to our ancestors from whom we have sprung. Then there is no essential difference between man and the monkey. Fourthly, it denies the Bible as the inspired Word of the living God. This, too, lies in the very nature of the case. Inasmuch as there is no living God who created all things and sustain all things by the continuous word of His almighty and omnipresent power, there cannot be a Word of God. Hence, we have no Divine Scripture, no infallible rule or norm for life and conduct. What this implies one can easily conjecture. To deprive man of the Scriptures as the rule or norm for life and conduct surely means that there is simply no norm for human conduct. In the fifth place, Evolution denies the Lord Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ, we understand of course, is the Wonder of the ages. Christ is Immanuel, God with us, the everlasting Father, even as the living God, in the second Person of the Son, assumes our flesh and blood. Christ is God as He enters into our human race to save us from sin and death and lead us into everlasting glory. But the theory of Evolution needs not this Wonder of the ages. According to this godless conception of the origin of mankind, salvation and deliverance through Divine grace is wholly unnecessary. This must be self-evident. Fact is, the world is developing unto perfection by a force inherent in itself.

We do not need any "foreign" person or power to come into our life to save us and to help us. We can very well take care of ourselves. In the sixth place, Evolution denies the reality of the fall. Man does not fall from the higher to the lower plane, but is gradually climbing from the lower to the higher. What a difference between Lord's Day 3 and Evolution! Here indeed we have the principal difference between education as based upon Scripture and as taught in and by the world. According to the presentation of Holy Writ the line goes down, and according to the world the line goes up. Scripture informs us that man was created by God in His image and that he therefore stood upon a very high plane. The wise of this world would have us believe that man originally stood upon a very low plane and is gradually reaching the heights. What a tremendous difference this must make! According to the one conception we can and are developing of ourselves, are constantly developing in sin and iniquity, and can attain unto salvation only through the irresistible grace of the living God. Finally, Evolution destroys all religion, morality, consciousness of sin. There is really no sin inasmuch as the present defects of the human race are to be ascribed to lack of development. Man sins, not because he is inherently evil, but only because he is the victim as yet of circumstances over which he has no control. These defects, however, he is gradually overcoming. Besides, there is no God. If there be no God, there can be no sin, for there is none against whom we can sin. This also make all prayer life impossible. Hence, Evolution is the destruction of all religion and morality.

Evolution is the ridiculous, absurd, but also desperately wicked attempt of man to escape the living God. He would rather descend from an ape than be the product of the living God! Of course! He hates the living God and will therefore spare neither time nor expense to read the Lord out of the universe. God, however, is in the heavens, laughs at him, and holds him in derision. The Lord will do all His good pleasure, and all eternity will witness that He is, and always was the only true God.

H. V.



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THROUGH THE AGES

The Arminian or Remonstrant Struggle

As was stated, Wtenbogaert well realized what fate awaited him as his party should the struggle between Arminians and Calvinists end in a calvinist triumph. Wtenbogaert therefore called also his party to arms. As we have seen, his first move was to arrange a meeting of the leading spirits of his party—a party the members of which came to be known as “The Remonstrants.” As was seen, too, it was decided to give to the Concept-Act that Wtenbogaert had prepared and with which he had come to the meeting, the form of a “remonstration,” and to place this document—The Five Articles of the Remonstrants—in the hands of the Counsel of the States of Holland.

In the last part of my previous article we were occupied with the introduction of this famous writing. We took notice of the complaint of the subscribers that it voices, namely that they were being *falsely* accused. We appraised this complaint in the light of the facts and found it to be groundless.

Regard may now be had to the second part of the introduction. It reads, and I translate:

“The undersigned do have a few considerations bearing on the Confessions, which they are also prepared to reveal, but they have need of stating first of all that they seek no change in religion (of this they were accused—O). They do desire revision or summarization (of the Confessions—O), but if according to the judgment of their noble lords (meaning the government—O) a national synod at this time cannot be held or if for other reasons they desire a postponement of revision or summarization, that then by virtue of that resolution (to postpone revision—a resolution) that is Christian, praiseworthy and agreeable to the Word of God, and ought so to be regarded—the Confessions be declared to be a kind of writing wherein something can be found that is in the need of betterment, thus writings that therefore also are always examinable and censurable by the churches so that every one of her members is at liberty to submit difficulties (respecting the doctrine of the Confessions) that must be examined by the Word of God, without anyone in the least becoming censurable (on that account) even though that one should present

difficulties that he failed to provide with grounds. Their subscribing the Confessions was done on that supposition. Otherwise Art. VII would be overturned and a new ground laid for papalism, which would be unendurable. If for the sake of the quietude of the churches, their noble lords should approve a postponement of revision of the Confessions until a time more opportune, that then a Formula of Subscription be prepared in which justice is done to the Word of God and no one pricked in his conscience beyond what is proper.”

As ought to be clear from this rendering from my pen, the original Holland text forms a bit of composition rather involved and therefore not easily understood and correctly translated. I therefore present also this original text. It reads as follows:

Ondergeschrevenen hebben wel eenige consideraties op de belijdenisschriften en ze zijn bereid, die bekend te maken, doch ze stellen op den voorgrond, dat ze ganschelijk geen verandering in de religie zoeken. Revisie of resumptie begeeren ze doch indien Hunne Edel-Mogenden oordeelen, dat een Synode National nog niet gehouden kan worden of om andere oorzaken, die Revisie of resumptie wenschen op te schorten, dat dan toch krachtens die Resolutie, die voor christelijk, loffelijk en conform Gods Woord gehouden worde, de belijdenisschriften verklaard zullen zijn voor zoodanige, waarin iets kan bevonden worden, dat verbetering noodig heeft, die daarom ook altoos examinabel zijn en censurabel zijn door de kerken, zoodat 't elk harer leden vrijstaat, bedenkingen in te dienen om naar Gods Woord te worden onderzocht, zonder dat iemand, die zelfs een ongegronde bedenking voorstelt daarom ook maar de minste censure zal onderworpen zijn. Als zij de Confessie hebben ondersteekend, dan is het geweest in deze onderstelling. Anders toch zou Art. VII zijn omvergestooten en opvieuw een Pauselijken grond zijn gelegd, 't welk zij achten onverdragelijk te zijn! Indien hunne Edel-Mogenden 't om de rust der kerken goedvinden, om de Revisie tot bekwamer gelegenheid uit te stellen, dan worde een formulier van onderteekening beraamd, waarin aan Gods Woord niet te kort gedaan, noch iemand in zijn conscientie buiten behooren gepord worde.”

The clause modifying the word, “Resolutie,” and reading, “die voor Christelijk, loffelijk en conform Gods Woord gehouden worde,” is subjunctive. The thought conveyed therefore is. “The Resolution (to

postpone revision) is christian and praiseworthy etc. Let the government therefore so regard it and resolve so to do. Such is our petition."

As to this statement on a whole it brings clearly into view the striving of Wtenbogaert and his party. It reveals that what they wanted is the following.

A national synod in full sympathy with their heretical beliefs and accordingly willing and ready to change the confessions into statements of these beliefs and thus so to revise them that thereafter they could be quoted in condemnation of the hated doctrines of the Calvinists.

This explains their now asking not merely for a "summarization" of confessions but for the "revision" of these documents. That precisely is what they all along had desired, namely "revision" of the Confessions. It shows that Oldenbarnevelt was not speaking the truth when previously he assured the Calvinists that the purpose was not "revision" at all but merely "summarization" of the Confessions; in other words, that the purpose was not to change the Confessions, but simply to read them through once more and thereupon affirm that they were not in need of "revision." In this secret "remonstration" directed to his government, his petition is that the Confessions be "revised," that is, changed.

That what the Remonstrants wanted is a national synod ready and willing to revise, that is, change the Confessions also explains their petitioning the government in this secret "Remonstrations" to postpone the calling of a national synod for the revision of the Confessions. As the Calvinists were still in power, their influence, it was feared, would be dominant on the synod, if immediately called. All that they could expect from such a synod is the condemnation of their own heresies and the re-iteration of the doctrines of the Calvinists. Hence, their petition that the government wait with the calling of the synod national until they could be certain that they could obtain from synod what was desired.

But supposing now that the kind of synod that they wanted could not be held until after several years. (In fact it was not held until 9 years after the occurrence of the events with which we are now occupied). Would during all these years the Remonstrants—Wtenbogaert and his party—have to endure being legally bound in their preaching and teaching by the hated Confessions of the Calvinists? That would be insufferable. Wtenbogaert had thought also of this. In this part of his "Remonstrations," it will be noticed, he had also taken care to include a petition to the effect that his government, in case it should decide to postpone the calling of a national synod, immediately declare the Confessions to be a species of writings in which something can be found that is in

the need of correction, thus writings at all times censurable and that therefore it be made permissible to charge them with error without the accusers being compelled to prove with the Scriptures that the charges are true. This verily was Wtenbogaert's petition. What it came down to is this: that any and everyone in the churches receive permission to repudiate the Confessions at will without being compelled to prove with the Scriptures that they are in error. But on what ground could it be right to allow anyone so to deal with the Confessions? Precisely on the ground that they belong to a category of credal writings the doctrines of which are per se heretical. And that the Confessions are writings of such a character is as little in need of proof as the axiom that the shortest distance between two points is a line. It is simply a universally admitted fact.

Such was here the subtle reasoning. But its fallacy is apparent. Certainly the Confessions are fallible; that is, in contradistinction to the Scriptures, they *maybe* as to some of their statements in error. Of this the Christian church is fully aware and in the abstract also concedes. It is a thing of which she takes full account as is clear from the language contained in the Formula of Subscription to the effect that "if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise etc."

However to concede wholly in the abstract that the Confessions may be in error is one thing. But to affirm in the concrete *that they are actually* in error is quite another. Wtenbogaert did the latter. He was therefore in duty bound also to prove with the Scriptures that the Confessions are actually in error. But of this he seems to have been willingly ignorant. And in this ignorance he committed the folly of petitioning his government to declare it permissible for any and all to prefer charges against the Confessions, without being compelled to provide any proof. The Confessions being what they are—from the nature of matters erroneous and on this account always censurable writings—this, that is, proving the charges, is wholly unnecessary. Such was the reasoning. Such was the idea underlying the second part of the introduction of the "Remonstrations." It was the point to the petition.

The introduction goes on to say that such was the supposition on which the Formula of Subscription was subscribed—the supposition, mark you well, that this very Formula allowed its signatories the freedom to charge the Confession with error without being compelled to prove their charges, and this on the ground that the Confessions are actually from the nature of matters always in error and that there can be so little doubt about this that no one, repudiating the Confes-

sions need go to the trouble of proving it. Such is verily the thrust of Wtenbogaert's agreement. It is the very thought underlying the two statements, "The Confessions be declared to be a species of writings in which something can be found that is in need of correction, thus writing always examinable and censurable." "No one preferring charges against the Confession, shall incur the censure of the church, even though he fail to provide his charges with grounds." On this supposition, according to Wtenbogaert, the Formula was subscribed.

But with what a strange perversion of fact we here deal is clear from the promise that the Formula of Subscription elicits from those subscribing it. In case they have any differences regarding the doctrine of the Confessions, these signatories promise that they will reveal their differences to consistory, classis and Synod. They promise moreover that, regarding their difficulties, they will submit to the judgment of the aforesaid assemblies under the penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very act, suspended from their office. How can the Formula elicit from those signing it such a promise and at the same time allow them such liberties regarding the Confessions? This is not well possible. Yet, according to Wtenbogaert, to challenge his contentions is to lay a new foundation for papalism, that is, hierarchy. Thus, according to Wtenbogaert, to insist on the integrity of the Confessions, if and as long as it cannot be shown that they are in error is hierarchy; and likewise it is hierarchy to insist that charges preferred against the Confession must be proved. A stranger conception of hierarchy is not well conceivable. Didn't Wtenbogaert realize that what he was asking his government to do is to make an end of the binding power of the Confessions and thereby authorize the teaching ministry in the church to interpret the scriptures as it pleased? The man knew what he was doing. He was fully aware of the import of this section of his "Remonstrations." And he also knew his government, knew that it was just as eager as he to rid the churches of the hated Confessions of the Calvinists.

The concluding statement in this part of the "Remonstrations" is significant. The statement is a petition to the effect that the government provide the churches with a Formula of Subscription that gives more thought to the Holy Scriptures. But here, too, Wtenbogaert was not speaking plainly. What he really wanted is that his government draw up for the churches a Formula of subscription eliciting from the teaching ministry a promise that would bind it in its preaching and writings to the Holy Scriptures alone and thus not to the Scriptures as interpreted in the Confessions of the Calvinists. Not that it must be supposed that this man's heart was aglow with love of the Holy Scriptures. Hating the Confessions, he of

necessity hated also the Scriptures. But, of course, to tie the teaching ministry to the Scriptures alone was to free it from the binding power of the Confessions and thus allow it to interpret the Scriptures exactly as it pleased. That this was the motive behind this petition and behind the whole striving of Wtenbogaert and his party is plain from the new Church Order that the States-General had prepared in 1591. As has already been pointed out, by its elimination of the phrase, "and in the articles of the Christian Faith," the government had made the second baptismal question to read, "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and which is taught here in this Christian church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation." As was stated, not a word is here said of the Confessions.

Having revealed to the government their sentiments regarding the worth of the Confession as a limiting instrument in the interpretation of the Scriptures, the "Remonstrations" in its introduction proceeds to argue the point that the Remonstrants adhere to the Confessions more than do their opponents. The argument reads:

Opdat voorts, noch hunne Edel Mogenden noch iemand anders meene, dat er onder de consideraties, die ze hebben wat bijzonders schuilt, willen ze openbaren, welke leerpunten hen 't meest in 't gemoed persen en waarover ze de meeste zwaarigheid hebben. Ze kunnen niet toestaan, dat ze in Confessie of Catechismus begrepen zijn, hoewel anderen ze hen als zoodanig willen opdringen en hen op poene van Kerkelijke censuur willen persen, ze te leeren. Zij echter houden die leerpunten strijdig met God's Woord. Ze zijn de volgende:

Dat God—zoo eenigen zeggen (reference here is to Gomarus and the supralapsarians)—door een eeuwig besluit uit de menschen sommigen ten eeuwigen leven, anderen ter eeuwigen verdoemenis heeft verordend, alleen omdat het Hem alzoo geliefd heeft, zonder eenige aanmerking van gerechtigheid of ongehoorzaamheid. Dat voorts krachtens een tweede besluit de uitverkorenen noodzakelijk en onvermijdelijk moeten zalig worden en niet kunnen verloren gaan, en de verworpenen—zijnde ver het meeste deel—noodzakelijk en onvermijdelijk moeten verdoemd worden.

Anderen leeren, dat God het menselijke geslacht wel aangezien heeft als gevallen in Adam en misdien 'de vermalde dijnige weerdig,' en besloten sommigen te verlossen en te zaligen tot bewijs zijner barmhartigheid, doch ook anderen zoowel jong als oud, ja

zelfs eenige gedoopte kinderen der bondgenooten, die in hun kindsheid sterven onder den vloek te laten blijven, welk besluit genomen is zonder aanmerking van bekeering en geloof in den eene en van ongeloof en onbekeerlijkheid bij de anderen. Diensvolgens is—volgens deze leeraars—Jesus Christus niet gestorven voor *alle* menschen, *maar alleen voor de uitverkorenen*; werkte de Heilige Geest met *onverstaanbare* kracht in hen, zoodat ze zich moeten bekeeren en gelooven en zoo noodzakelijkerwijze zalig worden, terwijl de verworpenen deze genade niet ontvangen. Deze worden door den geopenbaarden wille Gods wel geroepen, genoodigd en gesmeekt tot bekeering en geloof, maar de innerlijke kracht, daartoe noodig, wordt hun niet medegedeeld—door den heimelijken wille Gods. Die door die onweerstaanbare kracht het waarachtig geloof hebben ontvangen, kunnen dit, wat grove zonden ze ook mogen doen, niet meer geheel en veer goed verliezen, doch ze worden door die onweerstaanbare kracht bewaard.

De ondergeschrevenen kunnen niet toestaan, dat deze punten of ook maar een enkel er uit, in Confessie en Catechismus zijn uitgedrukt, in tegendeel—men vindt er plaatsen in, die er tegen strijden. Doch hoe dit zij ze kunnen deze punten in geen geval houden voor conform God's Woord en achten ze onstichtelijk en schadelijk.

As freely translated this reads:

In order further that neither their noble lords nor anyone else may imagine that there is something strange about their considerations that cannot bear the light, they shall reveal which points of doctrine grieve and burden them most. They cannot concede that these doctrines are included in the Confession and Catechism, though others insist on finding them there, and under the penalty of church discipline want to compel them to teach the same. They, however, hold them to be in conflict with the Word of God. These points of doctrine are the following: That God—as some teach—by an eternal and unchangeable degree predestined from the human race some unto everlasting life, and others unto everlasting damnation, solely because He so willed, and without and respect to righteousness and disobedience. Further that by virtue of a second degree the elect necessarily and inevitably must be saved and cannot perish, and that the reprobated—

whose number exceeds that of the elect—necessarily and inevitably are damned.

Others teach that God did indeed regard the human race as fallen in Adam and in consequence thereof as ill-deserving, and decreed to save some but also to allow others to abide under the curse, young as well as old, even children of covenant members, who die in their infancy—and so decreed without any respect to repentance and faith in the some and to unbelief and impenitence in the others. In consequence thereof—according to these teachers—Jesus Christ did not die for all men, but for the elect alone. In the latter, according to these same teachers, the Holy Spirit is operative with a power that cannot be resisted, so that they must repent and believe and necessarily be saved, while the reprobated do not receive this grace. By the revealed will of God they are indeed called, invited and implored unto repentance and faith, but the necessary inward power is not imparted unto them—by God's secret will. They who by this irresistible power have become the recipients of the true faith cannot wholly and permanently again lose this gift, no matter how grossly they may sin, but they are kept by this irresistible power.

The undersigned cannot grant that these points or even some of them receive expression in the Confession and Catechism. On the contrary, passages are found in them that militate against these views. However this may be, they cannot in any case hold these points to be in agreement with the Word of God. To their mind they are unedifying and harmful.

G. M. Ophoff



IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its heartfelt sympathy to our fellow member, Mrs. W. Kuiper in the loss of her infant daughter,

Sharon Lynn

May the Lord comfort her in her bereavement and may she know that He Who hath control of all things, doeth all things well.

Rev. Lubbers, Pres.

Mrs. P. Koole, Sec.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Acts 13:32, 33ff

IV

Lest we forget the exact text of Acts 13:32, 33 it is proper, that we once more write it out in full. It reads as follows: *And we declare unto you glad-tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again.*"

The elements in the text to which we have called attention thus far are:

1. The meaning of the "Promise made unto the fathers." It was no less than the great oath-bound Promise of God to all the heirs of the Promise in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom all God's promises are yea and in Him Amen! It is the Promise which God fulfills and is, therefore, immutably certain.

2. The truth that God has fulfilled this Promise, unto us the children of the fathers, through raising Jesus from the dead. It is emphatically in the resurrection thus we pointed out, that God has made His own Word to stand and to come true. Jesus was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.

3. We also called attention to the truth, that God has fulfilled the Promise exactly according to His eternal Decree! Thus it was written in Psalm 2:7 and thus it has come to pass. The Decree stands; God triumphs gloriously.

Such was the line in our former articles, three in number, on this Scripture passage.

There remains, however, an important part yet in the text, that we have not touched upon in our discussion. This element too should be set forth in bold relief.

Let us attend to this element in the text.

It reads: "*And we unto you gospelize (declare glad-tidings) that God hath fulfilled the Promise to us, the children.*"

It is important to notice, first of all, that there is a definite and conscious *point of departure* in the text in connection with this preaching of the glad-tidings. This point of departure is that of *election* as it is worked out in the *elect people*. The glad-tidings, in the *historical situation*, comes to the *elect people*. In other words to express it negatively: the preaching is not addressed to simply a people considered as "lost humanity," as a certain number of individuals in the whole human race as such a gross whole, but the glad-tidings is here to "all the people" as was so beautifully

stated by the angel to the Shepherds in the fields of Ephratha! Luke 2:10.

Our second observation is, that in consequence of this fact it is also true that Paul is not to be viewed as preaching in heathendom here, but that he stands and preaches to the people that knoweth the joyful sound! Paul stands here amongst those whom he addresses as "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and ye that fear God."

It is well that we notice this point of departure in the actual, concrete historical situation here in Antioch of Pisidia. It is Paul's point of departure, that he is not standing in the midst of the world, the nations (ethnai) but that he is standing on the Sabbathday in the midst of the people (laos) the congregation, those who have been shut in in the O. T. Dispensation by the "law" unto Christ, and to whom now the glad tidings of the great liberation comes.

Since this departure is lost sight of as often as this departure is real, it can do no harm to notice the concrete historical approach of Paul here.

This approach to the audience in Antioch is not at all one of a speaker addressing his "geachte toe-hoorders!" Paul never calls his audience "esteemed hearers!" This audience in the Synagogue is entirely unique. Say Paul: And to you evangelize . . . ! It is exactly like the distinction made by the angel at the open grave on the resurrection morn when he says to the fearful and amazed women at the open grave: "Fear not *ye* . . . ! Others have reason to fear, but not *ye*! Ye are those seeking Jesus the crucified one. And Ye are those seeking Jesus the crucified one. And so also here in this sermon Paul says: You are the singled out people to whom this glad-tidings comes. Ye are the "people," the laos to whom God wills that we bring the Word of Comfort, that *ye* have received from the hand of the Lord doubly for all your sins! We are Ambassadors from Christ the King to you. It is a particular message to a particular people!

Such is the concrete approach in the historical situation on the particular sabbath morning in Antioch of Pisidia!

That such is the case is evident not only from the "we to *you* evangelize . . ." but is corroborated by all that Paul says in this sermon. It is the very warp and woof of the sermon. This is so clear, on the very surface, that it stares one in the face.

First of all this is clear from the invitation of the rulers of the Synagogue to Paul and Barnabas. They are deeply conscious, these rulers, that they are the children of the fathers. They are like the people in the temple to whom Anna spake of the redemption of Israel; the people who were awaiting with holy impatience for the Redemption spoken of by all the law

and the prophets and foreshadowed in the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law. Thus it is also here. The leaders say: if ye have any word of consolation (exhortation) to the people (laos) say on. This term "people" has a very definite denotation in this passage. It means the "people" of whom Scripture always says: I will be unto thee a God and ye shall be my people! II Cor. 6:16-18. It means that God will dwell in their hearts with His Spirit and grace, make His permanent abode in their midst, never to leave them nor forsake them, but to live with them in Covenant faithfulness forever. And the request of these believing leader is: have you a word of consolation from God *to this people of God!* See verse 15. When Paul responds to this request to speak *to the people*, surely he will speak to them from the "law and the prophets," the O. T. Scriptures that had just been read in the hearing of the "people." See Verse 15. Unto the last jot and tittle Paul answers to this request, only he gives far more consolation than these rulers of the Synagogue expected on this particular Sabbath morning. But, and this is our point, in so doing, Paul maintains this point of departure of the rulers of the Synagogue. In fact he gives a historical survey of the birth and meaning of the *people* of God! He shows how the "people" became such a people with whom God deals as with none other under heaven.

And what is this?

It is simple and clearly stated by Paul: "The God of this people Israel elected our fathers . . ." Paul is addressing *Israel* here in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. They are the people. Now they are not simply *viewed* as the people. They are the people. God is their God and they are His people! In this solid rock-bottom of God's elective purpose Paul's preaching is here anchored. Let the winds of error blow; the purpose of God according to election stands. It stands in the concrete historical approach of Paul too. Let this be clearly seen; let this be clearly seen each Sunday morning that the minister proclaims God's benediction upon His people, the congregation of believers!

And this same tenor is maintained throughout this passage here.

I shall simply quote them literally.

In verse 17 we read: "God . . . exalted the *people*, being strangers in the land of Egypt . . ." Yes, God exalted His elect people, a holy nation, a royal people, called out of darkness. For this people is in Christ. God called His First-born Son out of Egypt! Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15.

In verse 24 we read: "When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the *people* of Israel." John stood in Israel, and baptized with water unto the forgiveness of sins. Paul stands

in the midst of the same people of God, the same elect people as John, be it than in a different part of the world. For John preached to Israel, to the people. That was John's point of departure. He speaks in the midst of the people of Israel to whom Christ must be manifested publicly from heaven at His baptism! John 1:31.

In verse 26 Paul says to the audience: Ye are this people of God. For says he "unto *you* is this word of salvation sent" namely, this word of comfort and glad-tidings. This tidings is not sent to all; it is sent to Israel and is preached within the tents of Shem as it shall also become the abiding dwelling place of the sons of Japhet! For the Japhet of election shall dwell in the tents of the Shem of elective grace!

Thus also we read that the disciples are the witnesses of Jesus to all the people. Says Paul in verse 30, 31. "But God raised Him from the dead. And He was seen many days of them which come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem who are His witnesses *unto the people.*"

Such is the tenor in all of these passages.

And Paul brings that tenor to bear in our text when he says: "And we *unto you* evangelize that God hath fulfilled the promise to you!

Such is the point of departure here in Acts 13, which records to us Paul's sermon.

To them is brought the glad tidings!

But why do they need this glad-tidings? What is the historical situation in which they find themselves? Is it not this that they are by nature children of wrath, that they are in the bondage of sin, guilt, death? Is it not to this guilt and death, that Paul alludes in what is recorded in verse 38, 39 where we read "Be it known unto you men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses?" Of course!

This element of the bringing of the glad-tidings to the people, to all the people we must understand. We should take careful notice of the approach to the people in this sermon. The church is here addressed according to the elect remnant. She is not addressed according to the unbelieving seed, but according to the Seed. Thus she is viewed and thus she is addressed! Hence we do not read in verse 39 "if you believe this is for you," but we read "and by Him all that believe are justified. (en toutoipas opisteuoon dikaioutai) Literally it reads: In this One *every one believing* is justified!

Why is the believing one justified, and why can and must this be announced?

It is because God hath fulfilled the Promise to such in raising Jesus from the dead. God delivered Him for our offences and raised Him because we were justified! That is the glad-tidings. God hath fulfilled the promise to *you*. And to you children of Abraham, heirs of the Promise is this glad-tidings.

Is there then no warning for the rest; For the "rest" that are hardened?

Of this we hope to say more in a following and last instalment., D. V.

G. Lubbers



I N H I S F E A R

Back To School

(5)

From the general and all-comprehensive principle of the Christian's spiritual isolation we have arrived, by way of application, at the confession of the necessity of Christian education. It is the very nature of God's people, through the wonder of divine grace, that they are a covenant people, that they are of God's party in the midst of the world, that they stand antithetically in the midst of the world that lies in darkness, with the calling to be holy as the holy God that called them and to proclaim the virtues of Him Who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light; and since their calling is exactly that they live in the midst of the world, in every sphere of life, out of the principle of regeneration, so that their entire life is ruled by the spiritual principle of the new life; and since the sphere of education is one department of their life: it follows that also this sphere of education must be ruled by this principle of spiritual separation, and must therefore be in harmony with God's Work. We found, however, also that this same conclusion to the necessity of Christian education follows from this principle of spiritual isolation from another viewpoint, namely, that of the preparation of the educand for a covenant life in the midst of the world. Education must prepare for life. And, in the case of covenant children, it must prepare them for a life out of the principle of God's calling. Hence, it lies in the very nature of the case that if the education of our children is to achieve its purpose—preparation for the life of the covenant—

that education must itself be covenant instruction, must itself be rooted in the fear of the Lord.

You confess that you are a Christian?

Then you cannot possibly deny the necessity of Christian education. You confess that your calling is to walk as a separate people? Then you certainly do not consider it a *question* whether your children shall receive Christian instruction, separate instruction. You claim to be covenant parents? Then you certainly acknowledge that this matter of covenant education is not a matter for *you* to decide, but a matter that *has been decided* for you by the living God Who called you.

And mark you well: this is a matter of *confession*. That is far different than a matter of logic or a purely formal matter of the right understanding of certain Scriptural passages. We are not interested now in a mere academic discussion of the necessity of Christian education. This is the very crucial matter of our *confession* as Christians.

And we should understand well that confession always includes walk. You cannot—of that I am certain—with any sound reason deny what has been said concerning the necessity of Christian instruction. That stands. It cannot be assailed. And any Reformed man must say *Amen* to it. Furthermore, what we have said on this score is a matter of *principle* too. And it is a matter of fundamental principle—one of the most fundamental principles of the Reformed world and life view. But still it happens only too often,—and I speak from experience now—that a man agrees with this principle, grants the necessity of covenant education for covenant children, yea, even enthusiastically acclaims this principle, and gives expression to his wholehearted agreement, and yet turns around and opposes that very principle in his walk. Mind you I am not now speaking of the question of Protestant Reformed education versus the education of the existing Christian Schools; that too, I am convinced, is governed by this same rule. But I have seen it, that this principle is maintained and that parents still dare to send their children to the public school. And how sad a sight that is!

O, you know the excuses. The Christian School is too distant. The Christian School is too expensive. The difference isn't worthwhile in view of the cost.

But understand this matter well. And I include myself and all present supporters of Christian education, as well as those who walk contrary to this rule. This principle of the fear of the Lord runs roughshod—as the principles of the fear of the Lord do always—over any practical objection which you may raise. You have no money? The rule stands: covenant instruction for covenant children. You live too far away? God's truth stands: covenant instruction or nothing.

You are dissatisfied with the existing Christian Schools? The Word still echoes and resounds: be ye separate! To be sure, it may take time and effort to implement this decision. Christian Schools do not simply mushroom out of the ground. But to assent to this principle, and at the same time to sit lethargically and inactively by, or rather to actively oppose it by supporting and making use of the public school, is wrong. This is *sin*! Sin against the living God! And we may not walk in sin!

Hence, to the extent that this evil is prevalent among us, it must be put away. To the extent that this principle is not practiced among us, let us be admonished to conform our practice to the principles of God's Word. To the extent that our practice of supporting Christian instruction is not governed really and truly by this principle of covenant education for covenant children, let us examine our principles and learn spiritually to understand this divine necessity of Christian education. And let us for God's sake learn to give our all in the cause of His covenant.

But how?

The above, as we have intimated already, is the only question you and I may ever ask. How shall we go about fulfilling our calling? How shall we put into practice what we confess, namely, that a Christian education is a divine necessity for our children? How shall we provide our children with the proper spiritual and mental food?

In terms of the question which we asked some time ago, as to the three theoretical possibilities in the education of our children, we must now choose between the second and third possibilities, i.e., the existing Christian School and the Protestant Reformed Christian School. The first, the public school, has been ruled out. It cannot provide our children with the right food. And the attempt to Christianize the public school not only is practically impossible as well as in many places contrary to the law of the land, but it is at the same time contrary to our calling as God's people.

Hence, it remains to determine in the sphere of Christian education generally, what our calling is as Protestant Reformed Christians. Is it our calling before God to establish and maintain our own schools? That is after all *the* question. Answer it, and you have the whole matter solved fundamentally.

Now, however, the application of the principle of Christian isolation assumes a somewhat different aspect. For it cannot be denied, in the first place, that the existing Christian schools stand historically and formally in the line of the Christian school movement. Secondly, we would not attempt to deny that in the general sense of the term the existing schools are Chris-

tian, and also in that same sense Reformed. In the third place, when the actual product of the existing schools is compared with the fruit of the public school, one cannot choose in favor of the latter. It is for these reasons especially that as long as any group of Protestant Reformed parents has not established its own school, they may not countenance the practice of passing by the existing Christian schools in favor of the public school. And we submit that our parents should be very careful in this matter, lest not only they themselves but also and especially their children grow to be historically disconnected from the Christian education movement. It is not at all inconceivable that a generation grows up that has no heart at all for Christian education, if we are careless in this respect.

Nevertheless, our aim should be Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed children. Various arguments have been adduced for this position in past years. Many and various faults have been found in the existing Christian schools. They have been protested by individuals as well as consistories. Cooperation has been long and frequently attempted. But certain facts remain—facts which *a priori* doom all such cooperation to failure, granted that both (or all) groups in these cooperative Christian schools stand their doctrinal ground.

In the first place, it cannot be gainsaid that Christian Reformed parents, by virtue of their holding the majority, have control of the existing schools. We have no quarrel with them about this matter, for the simple reason that we have no quarrel on the score of decision by majority vote. We merely state a fact.

In the second place, these Christian Reformed parents who control the existing schools are committed to the doctrine of common grace as expressed in the Three Points of 1924, as well as to the error of general grace expressed in the same doctrinal utterances of 1924.

In the third place, it is the position of Protestant Reformed parents that as soon as you make grace common in any sense of the word, you have done violence to the very basis of the principle of Christian isolation. Make divine grace common, and you necessarily replace the antithesis by synthesis, isolation by amalgamation.

Because of these facts—and we need not resort to the sophistry that these doctrinal differences are confined to the churches as institutes—we differ radically and principally as to the very basis of Christian education. And because of this radical and principal difference, any cooperation must needs be but very superficial or it involves a sacrifice of principles by one or both parties.

To state the matter positively, when the principle of the antithesis is applied strictly and properly to the

sphere of education, we, as Protestant Reformed people, who claim that we have adhered to that principle while others have departed therefrom, necessarily arrive at the conclusion that the only way in which we can ever have schools purely based upon this rule of Christian isolation is to have our own schools. And by "our own" schools we understand not simply separate schools. We may not and should not separate merely for the sake of separation or merely in order to put the name *Protestant Reformed Christian School* over the entrance of a building. But the education given in those schools must be such that it applies the principle which we have delineated in these articles to the entire curriculum. On any other basis the name Protestant Reformed School is a hollow sound.

Call to action.

And once more, when we view ourselves in the light of these facts, there is much to be done. True, a beginning has at long last been made. In our eastern churches, the movement for Protestant Reformed education appears to be on solid footing now. And there are outposts of the movement in the midwest (Edgerton) and the far west (Redlands). But it is to me an amazing thing that a Protestant Reformed congregation can exist for twenty or twenty-five years without the slightest spark of zeal for truly Christian education. In spite of every practical consideration that can be rallied in opposition, our Protestant Reformed people should all, without exception, be on fire with zeal for this principle of distinctive covenant education. And sad to say, one can only too often conclude that this zeal is absent, for real principle will surely triumph at all costs. We are stricken with a terrible lethargy in regard to this matter of education. We of all people have a heritage in which we may rejoice, of which by God's grace we may glory. We may and do say: Here is the true Reformed line; this is Reformed principle; this is Calvinism; this is truth, the pure truth of the Word of God!

And yet we are inactive., be it said to our shame.

And let him that reads take warning—warning, lest indeed a generation arise which can no more be roused by a love of this principle of the fear of the Lord, and in which no warm hearts can be found for the cause of covenant education! It is high time for action!

H. C. Hoeksema



Here perfect bliss can ne'er be found;
The honey's mixed with gall;
'Midst changing scenes and dying friends,
Be thou my all in all.

De Komst Des Konings

Ik zeg U, in dien nacht zullen twee op een bed zijn: de een zal aangenomen en de ander zal verlaten worden. Twee vrouwen zullen tezamen malen: de eene zal aangenomen en de andere zal verlaten worden. Twee zullen op den akker zijn: de een zal aangenomen en de ander zal verlaten worden. En zij antwoordden en zeiden tot Hem: Waar Heere? En Hij zeide tot hen: Waar het lichaam is, aldaar zullen de arenden vergaderd worden".

Lucas 17:34-37

Het verband van onze tekstwoorden begint bij het twintigste vers. In het verhandelde hebben we eigenlijk twee gesprekken van Jezus, het eene met de Farizeërs en het andere met de discipelen. En onze tekst is de praktische toepassing van Jezus' woorden tot Zijne discipelen. Het groote thema van beide gesprekken is de komst van het Koninkrijk Gods. Jezus beantwoordt een vraag der Farizeërs: Wanneer komt dat Koninkrijk? Maar zij bedoelen het uitwendiglijk. Jezus' antwoord tot hen komt hier op neer: Het Koninkrijk Gods is onzichtbaar en geestelijk. Dan keert Jezus Zich tot Zijne discipelen en verklaart hen de eindelijke komst en openbaring des Koninkrijks. Ze zullen vóór dien tijd verlangen naar hun Koning en Hem niet zien. Velen zullen hen willen verleiden: Past op! Als de Koning komt zullen ze niet behoeven te twifelen: hier? of daar? Maar als een bliksemflits in den hemel zal Hij komen en ze zullen het onmiddellijk weten. Doch eerst moet de Zoon des menschen lijden en verworpen worden door de menschen. Doch de toestand der wereld zal zijn gelijk als in de dagen van Noach en de dagen van Lot. Daarom: gedenkt aan de vrouw van Lot; en: zoowie zijn leven zal liefhebben zal het verliezen, doch zo wie zijn leven zal verliezen, die zal 't in het leven behouden. De wet des Koninkrijks.

Nu dan, de persoonlijke toepassing voor de discipelen, en ook voor ons, hebben we in de woorden van onzen tekst. We willen wat zeggen over de komst des Konings. Eerst, hoe Hij de menschheid zal vinden; dan, hoe Hij de menschheid zal schiften; en, eindelijk, in welk teeken de menschheid zal staan.

Eerst dan hoe Hij de menschheid zal vinden. Op het bed, in den molen en op de akker. Daar hebben we drie terreinen des levens: het intieme huiselijke leven, het fabriekswezen, en het boerenbedrijf. Het volle leven der aarde wordt ons hier geschetst. Het ziet op alles dat in verband staat met deze drie gegevens. Alle activiteit, alle werk en plezier en rust des levens des menschen wordt ons hier voorgesteld. En let er nu op, dat alles zijn gewonen gang zal gaan. Men zal eten, drinken, ten huwelijk geven en nemen, koopen, verkoopen, planten en bouwen en werken totdat Jezus zal komen op de wolken des hemels. Er zal geen

wanorde zijn. Dit is dikwijls de gedachte bij sommige Bijbelverklaarders aangaande de oude wereld en de wereld van Sodom en Gomorrah, en ook hun verwachting van het doen en laten der menschheid bij het komen van Jezus. Maar zoo schildert het de Schrift niet. Het zal alles ordelijk zijn gang gaan onder de menschen. Zoo was het ten tijde van Noach en van Lot, en zoo zal het ook zijn ten tijde van den jongsten dag. Er zal een verschrikkelijke orde zijn in het gewone wereldgebeuren. Verschrikkelijk, want de bovengenoemde arbeid zal dan ook alles zijn wat de mensch doen zal. En tot op een zekere hoogte zal de kerk meedoen. Daarom zeiden we dat het een verschrikkelijke orde zal zijn. Twee op één bed; twee in één molen; en twee op één akker. Vanuit een zeker oogpunt kan het niet anders. Wij zijn in de wereld en tot op zekere hoogte moeten we met de wereld mee. We zijn niet voor het kloosterleven der middeleeuwen. Dat was verkeerd. Paulus zeide immers, dat we ons niet geheel en al kunnen afzonderen van de wereld: anders zouden we uit de wereld moeten gaan. En dat kan niet en mag niet. Maar we moeten niet vergeten de woorden die Jezus eens vragend uitsprak: Als de Zoon des Menschen zal komen, zal Hij geloof vinden op de aarde? Daarom is er iets verschrikkelijks in den tekst. Het zal schijnen alsof de gansche menschheid, verkorenen en verworpenen, zal leven uit slechts één beginsel. En dat is verschrikkelijk. Ik denk, dat aan het einde der wereld het kleine beginsel der nieuwe gehoorzaamheid uitermate klein zal zijn. Ik denk, dat het slordige leven van Lot iets te zeggen heeft aangaande den geestelijken toestand der Kerk aan het einde der eeuwen. We kunnen het reeds zien in onze dagen. De groote zonde van onze eeuw is wereldgelijkvormigheid. Van voorlang heeft God gezegd: Israel dan zal zeker *alleen* wonen. En Paulus roept de Kerk van het Nieuwe Testament toe: Trekt niet een ander juk aan met de ongeloovigen! En leest ook de verdere verzen daar in II Cor. 6:14-16. En na bijna twee duizend jaren is het er niet op vooruit gegaan. Meer en meer aapt de kerk de wereld na. En doet men zijn werk te zamen. En we herhalen het: tot op zekere hoogte moet dat, en kan men zich niet geheel en al afscheiden van de wereld. Maar dat is het punt niet. Er is een samengaan met de wereld dat door Gods Woord gebrandmerkt wordt als groote zonde. Daar speelt men met de wereld en danst met de wereld. Men gaat naar de theaters met de wereld en verbindt zich met haar op allerlei gebied. En dat wordt dan goedgepraat door de dwaze filosofie van een algemeen terrein waar het kind van God en het kind Satans arm en arm wandelen. Maar al zulk doen wordt door God gevloekt en vervloekt. Er is immers geen samenstemming tusschen Christus en Belial? En wordt de kerk van Christus oorzaak, dat haar reine kleeding bevuild wordt met den modder van Sodom. O, onze

tekst heeft een ernstige vermaning voor de kerk van het heden. O zeker, het kleine beginsel der gehoorzaamheid is er, en het zal er blijven tot op den laatsten dag. Maar het is niet meer de bloeitijd der kerk van Christus. Er is verslapping en achteruitgang en meer en meer is er het pogen om de lijnen te verdoezelen, de lijnen die door God zelf getrokken werden, en die scheiding maken tusschen kerk en wereld. Geve God genade tot bezinning en terugkeer.

Maar er zal dan toch een einde komen aan al die eenheid van streven. De Koning zal komen, en Hij zal de menschheid schiften. Die eerdere eenheid zal plotseling een einde namen. En zal weer terugvallen in een tweeheid. Aan het eerste begin der historie heeft God gezegd tegen de duivel: Ik zal vijandschap zetten tusschen u en tusschen deze vrouw, en tusschen uw zaad en haar zaad! Welnu, die verdeling zal een vrucht hebben En we zullen het verdeelen der menschheid duidelijk zien aan het einde der eeuwen. God zal aan het einde der eeuwen de harten der aard-bewoners zien en doorzien. En Hij ziet de twee geheel verschillende beginsels des harten der menschen. En naar die twee beginselen zal Hij het menschdom schiften en in tweeën doen uitgaan. En Hij zal dat feilloos doen op het bed, in den molen en op den akker. We spraken van twee beginselen des harten. Bij den een is het 't beginsel van de haat Gods, en bij den ander is het de liefde Gods. Men mag spreken en discussieëren zooveel men wilt, dit blijft vast staan als een rots: er zijn slechts twee beginselen in de menschheid, en die twee beginselen zijn de haat Gods en de liefde Gods. En gij wordt beheerscht door het eene beginsel of door het andere. Een middenweg is er niet En is er nooit geweest. Ge zijt binnen of buiten het Koninkrijk Gods. Er bestaan geen halfslachtige menschen. Er is absoluut geen neutraliteit tegenover God. Ge behoort bij de slagorde Israels of ge behoort bij de slagorde van Satan. En daarom: de schifting gaat dwars door de wereld heen, en door middel van die schifting zal het uiteindelijk ook openbaar worden of ge ter rechter—dan ter linkerzijde van den troon komt te staan.

Dat wordt openbaar in den tekst. Sommige zullen aangenomen worden. Voor het woord: aangenomen, heeft het Grieksch een samengesteld werkwoord. Het bestaat uit een woord, dat zeer dichte nabijheid beduidt, en het andere woord beteekent nemen. God zal sommige menschen als 't ware opnemen in Zijn armen en aan Zijn borst drukken. De Koning zal sommige menschen zeer dicht naar Zich toenemen. Aan de andere zijde wordt ook een samengesteld werkwoord gebruikt, en het beteekent juist het tegenovergestelde: God zal sommige menschen beetnemen en van Zich wegdoen. Hij zal andere menschen verstooten. Nu moeten we wel verstaan, dat deze schifting der menschheid niet naar willekeur is. De diepste grond is het welbehagen Gods. Hij past ons om hier zeer voor-



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zichtig te zijn. En toch we mogen er wel wat van zeggen, want God heeft het ons immers geopenbaard. En zoo spreekt Gods Woord van Zijn eeuwigen raad. Vooral Efeze 1 spreekt van dien raad. En ook Romeinen 8 en 9 spreken van dien Raad des welbehagens. In dien raad heeft God alles besloten wat in den tijd geschieden zou, niets buitengesloten. En in het hart van dien raad staat het beeld van Zijn Zoon, den oudsten broeder der uitverkorenen. Ge moogt zelfs zeggen, dat Jezus de Uitverkorene is bij uitnemendheid. De Raad Gods spreekt van verkiezing coördinaat en van verwerping. En die twee grootheden, geopenbaarde grootheden, zijn niet coördinaat maar subordinaat. Het is onze bedoeling niet om hierop in te gaan tot de kleinste bijzonderheden. Maar wat moesten we toch zeggen van den achtergrond der schifting der menschheid. Nu dan die aangenomen worden zijn de verkorenen en die verlaten worden zijn de verworpenen. En in de menschheid worden de verkiezing en de verwerping duidelijk openbaar. Dat zit zoo. Van nature openbaart de menschheid niet dan de haat Gods. Dat is het grondbeginsel van elk menschenkind. De menschen zijn God-hatend en elkander hatend. En tezamen zijn ze op weg naar de verdoemenis. Doch God grijpt de uitverkorenen aan in het hart, en wederbaart hen. Dat is puur en simpel het werk Gods, en de mensch is daarin geheel en al passief. Doch de Heilige Geest blijft bij zulk een mensch wien het mag gebeuren. En dan zorgt God dat die verkorene menschen bij het Woord komen. En door Geest en Woord wordt het openbaar dat zij door God opgezocht zijn. Zij ontvingen de gave van het geloof van Jezus, en dat maakt al het verschil tusschen menschen en mensen. Welnu, als God komt aan het einde der eeuwen, dan zal Hij het menschdom schiften naar Zijn Eigen werk in hen. Al die geloof hebben worden aangenomen en die zonder geloof zijn zullen verstoten worden. En dat voor eeuwig.

Nu rest ons nog ééne vraag: in welk teeken zal de wereld staan aan het einde der eeuwen? En het antwoord wordt in den tekst gegeven. Waar het lichaam is, aldaar zullen de arenden vergaderd worden. Dat is het antwoord op de vraag. Ge gevoelt direct dat we hier te doen hebben met beeldspraak.

Ziet ge, de vraag is: is het teeken van de komst van Christus een teeken van aanneming of van verwerping? Wat zal het kenmerkende zijn aan het einde der tijden? En dan merken we direct op uit de beeldspraak, dat de wereld zal staan in een vreeslijk teeken. Net eender als het teeken waarin de eerste wereld stond, en ook het teeken van Sodom. De oude wereld stond in het teeken van verdrinking. Sodom stond in het teeken van verbranding. En onze wereld zal staan in het teeken van verderving, verslinding, zooals de roofvogels het rottende lichaam verslindem.

Sommigen zeggen, dat dit beeld, door Jezus gebruikt, ziet op Jezus' lichaam, en dan het doode lichaam van Jezus als lokaas der geestelijke arenden die zich alsdan zullen vergasten op dat lichaam in geestelijken zin genomen. Dit is geheel en al verkeerd. En bij het lezen ervan gruwet men. In de eerste plaats beteekent het woord, dat voor lichaam gebruikt wordt, een rottend, stank verspreidend lichaam, d.w.z. als het gebruikt wordt met het woord dat hier vertaald wordt door arenden. Evenwel de vertaling arend is niet juist hier. Het zijn geen arenden die tot het lichaam vergaderd worden, maar het woord beteekent de gieren die zich vergasten op het doode aas. En zoo is het beeld zeer duidelijk. De Heere karakteriseert de wereld van den laatsten dag. Die wereld zal gelijk zijn aan een rottend lichaam, dat de eindelijke vrucht der vuile zonde zal openbaren. En zoo zal het zijn in de laatste dagen. De zondaar zal dan in Anti-Christ in den tempel Gods zitten en zeggen, dat hij God is en niemand meer. En het geheele menschdom zal uitgebroken zijn in allerlei openbaring van zonde en boosheid. En vanuit die rottende wereld zal God Zijn volk nemen en brengen in ongekende zaligheid. En dan zal Hij zijn Engelen gebieden om dat lokaas der rottende wereld te nemen en weg te werpen in eeuwige verdoemenis.

Ernstige woorden, mijne geliefde vrienden!

Ze behoeven bijkans geen toepassing. Ik denk ge hebt de toepassing zelf gemaakt. De eindelijke dag is er nog niet. Hoe lang de Heere zal toeven weten we niet. Maar die eenigzins op de hoogte is met Gods Woord ter eener zijde, en, ter anderzijde, ziet op de ontwikkeling der zonde rondom ons, die zal toestemmen, dat we in het laatste der dagen zijn. En daarom komt de vermaning met te grooter nadruk tot ons op wien de laatste der eeuwen gekomen is: Gaat uit het midden van haar, mijn volk, opdat gij aan hare zonden geen gemeenschap hebt, en opdat gij van hare plagen niet ontvangt. Of luistert naar Jezus eigen woorden in het verband van mijn tekst: Gedenkt aan de vrouw van Lot!

Laat ons onze kleederen rein houden van de bezoedeling der zonde, en wandelen in de heiligmaking zonder dewelke niemand den Heere zien zal! Hij geve het door Zijne genade aan U en aan mij.

G Vos



My sins and faults of youth,
Let them forgotten be,
And for Thy tender mercies' sake,
O Lord, remember me.