

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVIII

NOVEMBER 1, 1951 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 3

## MEDITATION

### The Blessedness of those that Hunger and Thirst

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst  
after righteousness: for they shall be filled."  
Matt. 5:6.

The Lord Jesus is teaching His disciples on the unnamed mount of Galilee. My text is part of the celebrated Sermon on the Mount, which extends from this chapter through chapter seven.

It is significant that this Sermon begins with a description of those that are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. It colors the whole sermon. And also this: they are pictured not so much in their outward behaviour as in their subjective estate. Significant, for they are blessed, seven times blessed.

The Law of the Kingdom is fulfilled in them: they exhibit the inner principle of the love of God. For that reason they are the poor in spirit, and the meek, they hunger and thirst after the righteousness of that Kingdom: they know and have tasted its wonders.

These citizens of the Kingdom of God are called blessed because they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they shall surely be filled with that righteousness.

Righteousness!

What is it?

I think that there are many possible answers, and that because this concept is so indescribably rich in content.

God is righteousness!

Christ is called: the Lord our righteousness!

And God's people of every age are called the righteous!

God is Righteousness! He is His virtues.

In God it is one of His virtues. Righteousness is that virtue in God wherein He is, in all His living and

willing, in all His loving and work in perfect harmony with the only norm of Goodness, and that is His own Being. Righteousness is that which answers to the highest and only norm of goodness. Righteous is one when this norm of goodness is laid alongside of his thought, word and deed, and when this norm expresses that he is in harmony with goodness.

To speak very simply: righteousness is good conduct.

And that is the virtue of God Triune. He always does all things well. Attend to Deut. 32:4: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." It is the song of God! It describes the living God in His ways, His conduct. You will sing that song unto all eternity. Far is the Lord from all iniquity!

God, our own God, is righteousness itself!

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And therefore man is righteous.

That is, man as he was created by this righteous God. When man was created, God looked at him, through him, and said, Behold, he is very good! Oh yes, we came from the hand of the Creator very righteous creatures.

But we fell, and thereby hangs a story of unspeakable misery, for we became unrighteous. No, we did not merely lose righteousness as the wonderful virtue of good conduct, but we turned into its very opposite: we became crooked in all our ways. Our thoughts, our words and our deeds became crooked, for we in our deepest being became crooked. We are a perverse lot. And history has written her commentary on that truth. That is the reason why the whole history of man may be written in blood and tears. We are a perverse lot.

But God loved man from all eternity.

And in that love God determined by Himself to glorify Himself in millions of righteous men. He de-

terminated from before the foundation of this world to have a commonwealth of men that would be very righteous and that would surround His throne unto all eternity, singing and joying before Him, telling Him unto everlasting how wonderfully good He is. In other words, God determined that there should be a living mirror around about Him in which He would see a reflection of His own righteousness.

But how is this possible? Man is so unrighteous, so crooked that when you henceforth approach him with good conduct, he will turn away from it; no, more, he will turn to you and toward your righteousness and try to destroy it. He hates good conduct from his inner heart. That is proven in the bloody pages of history. I will have opportunity to prove this very conclusively.

The answer to this question is found in Jesus Christ, our Righteousness.

You see, when man fell away from God and from righteousness, God had provided *some better thing* than Adam showed even in his state of original righteousness. It was not God's will to glorify Himself eternally in and through the first Adam. He determined from before the foundation of the world that the Universe should be united to Him in the second Adam, and that is Jesus: the perfect Man of God's good pleasure. This will of God is so central in His eternal counsel that the Scriptures teach how even the first creation, I mean the creation that fell away from God in Adam, was created by Christ and for Christ. Read the first chapter of Col. 1:14-20, and tremble. The adorable Godhead planned to reveal all the glory of its perfect Being in Christ! That is central in all God's counsel and planning.

And so we come to the perfect, the righteous Man!  
And He is Christ, the Christ of God!

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The Righteous Man!

Jesus Christ our Lord!

Attend to it that the Holy Ghost calls Him: The Lord Our Righteousness!

God will show the second, the last Adam to the world, and so Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the fullness of time.

But He was heralded from the beginning of time.

And He was the Angel of Jehovah from the beginning of time.

And He was concretely revealed from the beginning of time.

Read Paul in I Cor. 10, and marvel. Marvel, my dear brother, for Paul wrote that Christ was in the Old Testament. And the Rock was Christ.

And Daniel saw the Son of Man in the Old Testament, and he wrote of His advent, how He would come

to bring in an everlasting righteousness!

And we need just that, and so very, very much!

Remember? We said that righteousness is good conduct. Now look strongly on Jesus! Heaven, earth and hell have left their testimony: He was a good man! Oh yes, Jesus was a very righteous Man.

Heaven said it: This is My beloved Son in Whom is all My goodpleasure!

The earth said it: He went through the land, doing good. And could we forget the testimony of Pilate? I find no guilt in this Man?

Hell said it: attend to Judas, the incarnation of Satan: I have shed the innocent Blood! May I bring in the circumstance that the Sanhedrin had need of false witnesses? It is a strong testimony for Christ's righteousness.

Yes, Jesus is very Righteousness, a righteousness which God, the Triune God, planned, thought out from all eternity.

And Christ established this righteousness, this good conduct. He died for the ungodly. He paid the price that God's justice demanded. For all that commonwealth of which I spoke before this. For a certain number of men and women and children, Jesus paid the price which God's justice demanded because of their sins.

But that is only part of the good conduct of Jesus.

He fulfilled the Law of the Ten Commandments for us. God said to the righteous Adam in Paradise: You, your wife, your sons and the whole human race in you shall love Me as the highest Good, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself!

We did not.

And this Christ fulfilled that which we failed to do.

His conduct in this was so wonderful, He loved God and his neighbor so intensively that He fulfilled the law for many, and secondly, He brought us to the heavenly heights. He does not bring us back where we came from, but He brought us to the heights of the spiritual man in Him that will lie with Him in the bosom of the Father.

Must I add here that He could do all these miracles because He also is very God Himself? Mere man could not satisfy God's justice. It demands eternal wrath, and eternal wrath is eternal: poor, weak, miserable man would never get through paying. Second: mere man cannot redeem himself, so how could he redeem his brother? Man cannot make overtime with God. But he will not either. Say that the possibility were opened to do this, even then he would not, for he hates God. And, finally, mere man cannot bring himself by good conduct to the heavenly glory of God's covenant in Christ.

But Jesus could.

And He did.

He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification.

The Righteous Man!

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Righteousness of my text!

It is the object of the hunger and thirst of the people of my text.

Now we can see it. These people are the blessed people of God.

The reason why these people hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ is because they have received the Holy Ghost which was shed abroad in their heart. That Spirit of God, united with His blessed Word, taught these people that they were black with sin and corruption.

But this Spirit gave these people, also through the Word of God, a taste of this Righteousness in Christ. In other words: the Spirit of Christ brought them in contact with the Christ of God. And gave them a taste of this Christ.

And that, my friends, makes all the difference in the world.

Through that blessed operation of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and the Word of God, we receive a taste of the good conduct of Christ. We learn to know that Christ in all His riches: His coming, His suffering for us, His vicarious death and resurrection, His glorification upon His ascent to the highest heavens, and His return in the Holy Spirit.

And I assure you that the view of that Christ is beautiful beyond compare.

It makes all the difference in the world. When you once have received a view of that Christ of God, of that Righteousness in Him, you can never forget Him. You will follow after that righteousness from morn till night, yes, you will die for it. Thousands upon thousands have died for that view, that glorious view of the Christ of God. And more thousands will die for it again and again before the sorry history of this world is over and done with.

They hunger and they thirst for this righteousness, for this Jesus.

It is the Righteousness of my text.

And they are blessed indeed!

First, because this hunger and thirst is a true earmark of grace.

Natural man does not hunger for this righteousness.

Natural man will always try to build his own righteousness. It is the earmark of natural man to do this for he is poisoned by the devil. The devil's sin is pride, and he has instilled this pride in the heart of man from the beginning, and he continues to do so.

And the nearer you bring natural man to the gospel

of this Righteousness, the more he will try to build his own good conduct before the face of God, so that he will endeavour to become his own redeemer. Witness the sorry spectacle of the self-righteous Pharisees.

Good conduct by natural man? A little while ago I said that I would say a little more about that. Well, here is the proper place.

Bring God to the nation; bring Christ to the natural man; show the good conduct that Jesus did for His own to the natural man; place the Godhead within reach of natural man in the Person of Christ, and he will murder Him. That is the truth.

Witness Golgotha, and tremble, tremble, tremble!

Oh yes, natural man does hunger and thirst. But they long and yearn for sin. I know because I find it in me. Nothing human is strange to me.

They long for sin, for perverseness, for the earth and for earthly things. They wallow in sin and would have more of it. And they have success in it. The end shall be the revelation of the Man of Sin, and that is AntiChrist.

But there always will be a people that genuinely hunger and thirst for Christ, and for His righteousness.

They are those that were regenerated by God.

And converted by God.

And sanctified by God.

And justified by God.

And they shall be glorified by God.

God does it all. Yes, some of it through us, but even then, our fathers said, and I agree with them: even the act of believing is of Him.

And these people are blessed, secondly, because they shall be filled.

That happens even now on earth.

There is a beginning of this fulfilment.

Good conduct is given them in regeneration and conversion and sanctification. No, it is not a perfect fulfilment. It is only a beginning. There winds a thread, a golden thread of good conduct through the lives of these citizens of heaven. And we love that golden thread. It pays to be good. To be good, to think good thoughts, to say good words and to do good deeds carries its own reward. It gives you a little bit of heaven in your heart.

And the complete, the perfect fulfilment is coming.

What shall I say of that?

It is so heavenly and I am so earthy.

It is so glorious and I am so tarnished.

It is so eternal and I am so temporal.

But the Bible speaks of it. I have heard the heavenly song. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia!

That, my dear reader, is good conduct, that is righteousness!

G. Vos.

**THE STANDARD BEARER**

Semi-monthly, except monthly in July and August

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association  
Box 124, Station C., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

EDITOR — Rev. Herman Hoeksema

Communications relative to contents should be addressed  
to Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand  
Rapids 7, Michigan.All matter relative to subscription should be addressed  
to Mr. J. Bouwman, 1350 Giddings Ave., S. E., Grand  
Rapids 7, Michigan. Announcements and Obituaries must  
be mailed to the above address and will be published at a  
fee of \$1.00 for each notice.Renewals:— Unless a definite request for discontinuance  
is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the  
subscription to continue without the formality of a re-  
newal order.

Subscription Price: \$3.00 per year

Entered as Second Class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

**EDITORIALS****Our Synod of 1951**

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches of 1951 definitely closed its sessions on October 3.

It belongs, therefore, in the past, and will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the most important synods—if not the most important—that to date was ever held.

The reason lies, of course, in the fact that our churches finally officially declared what according to their conviction is the truth as expressed in our confessions, especially concerning certain fundamental principles, all concentrating around the promise of God and the preaching of the gospel, and therefore around one aspect of "common grace."

I say *finally* our churches declared themselves officially on these fundamental principles. It would probably have been more proper, and undoubtedly more expedient too, if they had drawn up a Declaration of Principles as soon as they had become definitely organized as a separate group of churches in 1924. I am convinced that if this had been done, such a declaration would principally have been no different from the one that was adopted by our last synod. And I am also confident that if such a declaration had been adopted at that time by the general consistory, or somewhat later by the classis (a synod was not yet organized, of course), it would not have met with any serious opposition whatsoever. But this was not done, although there was sufficient occasion for it in the adoption of the Three Points of 1924 by the Synod of Kalamazoo. The reason why some such declaration was not drawn up cannot be officially ascertained. I rather surmise that at least one of the reasons was that our churches were small—we consisted only of three congregations: Kalamazoo, Hope and Grand Rapids Eastern Avenue—and we all felt that our ministers and consistories, as well as our people, would all give a strong testimony against the theory of common grace and in favor of the confessional truth of particular grace pure and simple. However, *finally* our last synod declared in an official document what had been always considered the truth of our Confessions as they are understood and maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

For this we may be thankful to God, Who moved us to maintain the truth of His holy Word as expressed in our Reformed Confessions.

I feel that we may indeed say: "It seemed good

**C O N T E N T S****MEDITATION—**

- The Blessedness of those that Hunger and Thirst..... 49  
Rev. G. Vos

**EDITORIALS—**

- Our Synod of 1951..... 52  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

**THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE—**

- An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism..... 54  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

**AS TO BOOKS—**

- De Algemeene Openbaring — Dr. G. C. Berkhouwer..... 57  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

- Thine is the Kingdom — James H. Hunter..... 58  
Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema

**OUR DOCTRINE—**

- The Hexameron or Creation-Week (8)..... 58  
Rev. H. Veldman

**THROUGH THE AGES—**

- The Arminian or Remonstrant Struggle..... 62  
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

**IN HIS FEAR—**

- Back to School (6)..... 66  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

**FROM HOLY WRIT—**

- Exposition of Acts 13:32, 33ff..... 68  
Rev. G. C. Lubbers

- Er Is Geene Verdoemnis..... 70  
Rev. G. Vos

to the Holy Ghost and to us," to adopt the Declaration of Principles.

It means that our churches still stand on the same basis on which they stood in 1924, immediately after the Christian Reformed Churches had cruelly cast us out, that is, they still stand on the ground of the Three Forms of Unity without any addition or falsification. For, that the Declaration of Principles stands four-squarely on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity no one has ever contradicted.

This stand concerns our position over against the Three Points of 1924, more especially over against the first of these points, which was always the chief bone of contention. For it is especially the First Point that declares that there is grace of God for the reprobate, and that this grace is especially manifest in the preaching of the gospel. It therefore very really maintained that the promise is for all.

It may be expedient to rehearse that First Point and its history at the Synod of Kalamazoo, 1924.

Literally that First Point as it was finally adopted reads as follows:

"Relative to the first point, which concerns the favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect, Synod declares it to be established according to Scripture and the Confession that, apart from the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scriptural passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5 and II, IV, 8 and 9, which deal with the general offer of the gospel, while it also appears from the citations made from the Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our Reformed writers from the past favored this view."

As the declaration stands, apart from its supposed proof from the confessions and Scripture, it appears rather harmless. It seems to declare nothing else than that there is a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. To this we might even have subscribed in 1924. Had we not always ourselves taught that God is good and gracious to all His creatures, that in that sense, according to Ps. 145:9, He is good to all? But, first of all, we must remember that the Synod did not mean to speak of a grace of God over all creation in the organic sense, but definitely wanted to say something concerning the gracious attitude of God toward all men. This is evident already from the introductory clause, "Relative to the first point, which concerns the favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect." This is still more evident from the original report of the committee of pre-advice *ad hoc*. They had advised Synod to declare that there is a

grace of God or a gracious attitude of God toward humanity in general "in which, of course, the reprobate are included." But thirdly, that it was indeed the intention of Synod to declare that God is gracious to all men is evident from the proofs which Synod adduced from the confessions and from Scripture. The proofs from the confessions are as follows:

Canons II, 5: "Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel."

Canons III, IV, 8: "As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called, should comply with the invitation. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him."

Canons III, IV, 9: "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ, offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel, and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come."

Thus far Synod, which evidently wanted to emphasize the general offer of the gospel, quoted this last article, which continues as follows:

"... the fault lies in themselves; some of whom when called, regardless of their danger, reject the word of life; others, though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression on their heart; therefore, their joy, arising from a temporary faith, soon vanishes, and they fall away; while others choke the seed of the word by perplexing cares, and the pleasures of the world, and produce no fruit.—This our Saviour teaches in the parable of the sower. Matt. 13."

And as far as the Scriptural passages adduced by Synod of 1924 are concerned, part of them are supposed to prove the theory of common grace in the Kuyperian sense, and part of them evidently are supposed to teach that the promise of the gospel is general and is grace for all that hear. As to the first the following texts are quoted: Ps. 145:9; Matt. 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36; Acts 14:16, 17. And as to the second, which we will here quote in full, the following texts are adduced:

I Tim. 4:10, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

Romans 2:4, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not



knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

Ezekiel 33:11, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Ezekiel 18:23, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"

The question may be asked: how did the Synod of 1924 come to quote the proofs from the Confession that speak of the promise of the gospel, and how did they lapse into the error of insisting that this promise of the gospel is grace for all that hear? The answer is rather plain. Synod was looking for proofs from the Confessions for the theory of common grace in the Kuyperian sense of the word (*gemeene gratie*). But of course, the Confessions did not deal with this question whatsoever. They only spoke of the grace in Christ Jesus, that is, what is called particular grace. And the Synod nevertheless, desiring to prove its point, namely, that there is common grace in the Kuyperian sense of the word, naturally lapsed into the error of the Arminians, which the Confessions, and especially the Canons of Dordrecht, opposed and combatted.

Thus the Synod came to teach that the preaching of the gospel is a well-meaning offer on the part of God to all that hear, or briefly, that the preaching of the gospel is grace for all. And this is the same as saying, especially in the light of the confessions quoted by the Synod, that the promise of the gospel is grace for all that hear.

This is what we called "het puntje van het eerste punt."

This is the Heynsian view of common grace within the covenant.

And over against this error we always maintained that the promise is not general, but particular, and is only for the elect.

And what we always maintained we now declared officially in the Declaration of Principles, which is not a fourth form, but is simply the expression of the Confession and may be tested by the Confession at any time.

H. H.



Help us on thee to cast our care,  
And on thy word to rest;  
That Israel's God, who heareth prayer  
Will grant us our request.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

#### Of Man's Redemption

#### LORD'S DAY XXXI

#### 2.

#### *The Promise of the Gospel*

In our ecumenical age, it is almost like a voice crying in the wilderness when we insist that the church must still exercise its power of the keys. Under the slogan of a wrong interpretation and application of John 17:21, "that they may all be one," most churches have long discarded the truth of the gospel, abrogated their confessions, and strive to unite into one ecumenical church, in which Arminians and Calvinists, Moderns and Barthians, Baptists and Episcopalians and even Roman Catholics can find a place. The attempt is to make one body of all the churches over the whole world. Only it is not the body of Christ. The salt has lost its savor, and is good for nothing, but to be cast on the dunghill and to be trodden under foot of men. It stands to reason that in the light of this ecumenical striving the subject of the keys of the kingdom of heaven has become antiquated. Yet, the true church, however small, may not follow this false ecumenical trend, but must insist on the exercise of the power of the keys.

Thus far we found that the key-power consists in the authority, power, and sacred obligation to open and shut the kingdom of heaven to men on earth, and that, too, in such a way that this act on the part of the church on earth will be valid in heaven. We found, secondly, that this authority and power rests principally only with Christ. He only can open, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man opens. We further noted that this power and authority was, nevertheless, conferred upon the apostles, and that, finally, the same power and authority is transmitted through the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures and, by the indwelling Spirit, to the church of the new dispensation. The purpose of this exercise of the key-power is threefold: the glory of God in Christ, the maintenance of the purity of the church visible in the world, and the salvation of the sinner that repents.

In the present chapter we must discuss the Word, or the preaching of the Word, as a key-power. In re-

gard to this, the Heidelberg Catechism instructs us in Question and Answer 84 as follows:

"How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?

"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."

It is evident that, in this question and answer, especially three elements demand our attention. First of all, the fact that the contents of the preaching is here defined as the promise of the gospel. Secondly, we must call attention to the fact that this promise of the gospel must be preached by the church. And finally, we confront the question, how by this preaching of the promise of the gospel the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut to unbelievers.

What is meant by the promise of the gospel? Both Scripture and the Confessions very frequently speak of that promise.

As to Scripture, it refers to the promise in the plural to express the manifold riches of its implications, as well as in the singular, to denote its unity and identity. Always the promise is the same, both in the old and new dispensation. It is the promise that is given to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For having mentioned these saints of the old dispensation, and having spoken of their life and death, or translation by faith, the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews tells us: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." vs. 13. And having reviewed the life and battle by faith of many more of the great cloud of witnesses, and including them all in his view, the author of Hebrews finally states: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." vs. 39. It is evident from these passages that all through the old dispensation there was a promise given unto the saints, which they embraced and believed, by which they lived and died, for the which they were willing to be strangers and pilgrims in the earth, suffer hunger and exile and imprisonment, endured cruelty and mockeries and scourgings, were slain with the sword and sawn asunder, wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, afflicted, destitute, and tormented. And in the great-

ness of their faith and endurance, and the severity of their sufferings, we may see reflected the beauty and the riches of the promise they possessed and saw afar off. The third chapter of the epistle to the Galatians is a classic chapter on this subject of the promise. It emphasizes that the promises were made to Abraham and his seed, and that this seed of Abraham is centrally and essentially Christ. vs. 16. It is plain that Christ, the Seed, Who is the fulfillment of the promise, is at the same time also the chief recipient of the same promise. It states that the law which came four hundred and thirty years later than the promise to Abraham could not possibly make the latter of none effect, vs. 17, and that God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise, vs. 18. It reaches the conclusion that if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, vs. 29. As to the contents of this promise, Scripture speaks of it as the promise of the Holy Spirit, which is given to Christ, Acts 2:23, and to them that are of Him by faith, Gal. 3:14. It speaks of it as the promise of life, I Tim. 4:8, II Tim. 1:1; the promise of eternal life, I John 2:25; the promise of Christ's coming, II Peter 3:4; the promise of entering into His rest, Heb. 4:11; the promise of becoming heir of the world, Rom. 4:13; the promise of raising up a Savior from the seed of David, Acts 13:23. Hence, it also speaks of the Spirit as the Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:13; of children of the promise, that is, of children that are born not only in the line of the promise but also by the power of the promise and according to the promise and upon whom the promise rests, Rom. 9:8. It points out the heirs of the promise and the co-heirs of the promise: for not all men have received the promise, nor is the promise meant for all. Heb. 6:17, 11:9. And at the beginning of the new dispensation the Scriptures speak of the same promise in the following words: 'For unto you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Acts 2:39.

Also our Confessions very frequently speak of the promise, and give it a very rich contents. In Question 22 of the Catechism we read: "What then is necessary for the Christian to believe? All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us." It is evident that the whole contents of the Christian faith is here described as the promise of the gospel. That God, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, is our Father in Jesus Christ our Lord, Who establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us, makes us His children and heirs, and provides us with all good things, is declared in the promise of the gospel. That Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, is come into the flesh, as He was born of the Virgin Mary and conceived by the Holy Ghost, is implied in the contents of the gospel. That

Christ suffered and died on the cross of Calvary, descending into all the agonies of hell, thus satisfying for all our sins, so that God was in Christ reconciling us unto Himself, is part of the promise of the gospel. That He rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, in order from thence in the fulness of time to come again to judge both the quick and the dead and to make all things new, all belongs to the content of the gospel. Besides, the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Christ, given unto the elect in order to apply all the blessings of salvation to them and to the whole church, forgiveness and righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption, preservation and perseverance, and the glory of everlasting life—all this is contained in the promise of the gospel. The promise of the gospel is also the subject which is the chief object signified and sealed in the sacraments. For the sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross." Remission of sin and eternal life, therefore, belongs to the contents of the promise of the gospel. Qu. 66. In Question 69 we read of the same promise of the gospel in the following words: "That Christ appointed this external washing by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away." And what it means to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ is plainly expressed in Question 70: "It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives." Hence, forgiveness of sins, regeneration, and sanctification to be members of Christ, so that we may put off the old man and put on the new man, is implied in the promise of the gospel. Even infants receive this promise, for "redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult." Qu. 74. Also Question 75, which treats of the supper of our Lord, speaks of the same promise: "adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of

cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and of Christ." And what this further implies is explained in Question 76, where it is stated that the forgiveness of sins and life eternal and the becoming more and more united to Christ by the Holy Ghost is the promise that is signified and sealed in the supper of the Lord.

Also in the Belgic Confession we read of that promise of the gospel more than once. The promise of the gospel is that God will forever be our gracious Father, that Christ washes us from all our sins by the power of the Holy Ghost, and regenerates us from children of wrath unto children of God. It implies all the gifts of grace, washing, cleansing, and purging of our souls from all filth and unrighteousness, renewing our hearts, and filling them with all comfort, putting on the new man and putting off the old man with all his deeds. Art. 34. By implication Article 35 speaks of the same promise as implying all the merits of Christ's suffering and death and the nourishment and strengthening of our souls, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of His blood.

Also the Canons of Dordrecht speak of the same promise of the gospel, though not always in so many words. It is undoubtedly the promise of the gospel that "God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally, to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of the riches of his glorious grace." Canons I, 6. And in Canons II, 5 we read: "Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God of his good pleasure sends the gospel." And that this promise of the gospel is not meant for all, but only for the elect, is very evidently implied in Canons II, 8: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy



Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever." Again, in III, IV, 8 the Canons speak of the promise of the gospel for all that come to Him and believe on Him as follows: "As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called should come unto him. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him." And, that the gift of faith, and therefore the Holy Ghost, is essential to the promise of the gospel, is plainly taught in III, IV, 14: "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure; but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; nor even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will, consent to the terms of salvation, and actually believe in Christ; but because he who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe, and the act of believing also."

Of the same promise of the gospel, as witnessed and sealed unto us in holy baptism, the first part of the "Form for the Administration of Baptism" speaks. According to it, in that promise of the gospel that is sealed unto us in holy baptism "God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit." This is what God the Father witnesses and seals unto us, that, He swears by an oath that He will surely fulfill His promise to His people. Moreover, according to the same "Form for the Administration of Baptism," the Son "sealeth unto us, that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God." Perfect righteousness in Christ is implied in the promise of the gospel, as sealed unto us in holy baptism. Finally, the promise of the gospel also includes the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ that applies all the benefits of salvation to us. For let us never forget: there is no promise of the gospel except through the Holy Spirit. Hence, in the baptism form we read: "In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that

he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us, that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

Hence, according to all our confessions Christ and all His benefits, as merited by Him, and as applied by Him through the Holy Spirit, are implied in the promise of the gospel.

H. H.



## As To Books

DE ALGEMENE OPENBARING, door Dr. G. C. Berkhouwer; uitgever J. H. Kok, n.v. Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f. 7.90.

Zooals de titel aangeeft, behandelt in dit boek Dr. Berkhouwer het probleem van de z.g.n. algemeene openbaring. In elf hoofdstukken bespreekt de schrijver de beschouwingen van verschillende schrijvers. Vooral de beschouwing van Barth komt herhaaldelijk in bespreking. Deze, zooals bekend is, kant zich niet slechts zeer scherp tegen wat bekend staat als "natuurlijke theologie", maar wil ook niet weten van eenigen vorm van "algemeene openbaring". Zijn eigen beschouwing geeft Dr. Berkhouwer hoofdzakelijk in de capita zeven tot negen. Hoofdstuk zeven behandelt "openbaring en kennis" in verband met Rom. 1; hoofdstuk acht spreekt over "openbaring en wetsvervulling" in verband met Rom. 2. (In dit verband noemt de schrijver mij ook nog even in 't voorbijgaan "Hoeksema, die eveneens door zijn apriorische instelling tegenover de gemeene gratie het spoor hier bijster raakte" p. 154); en in hoofdstuk negen behandelt de schrijver "openbaring en verlichting" vooral in verband met den proloog van het evangelie van Johannes.

Wie belang stelt in het probleem der "algemeene openbaring" schaffe zich vooral het werk van Dr. Berkhouwer aan. Hij zal hier veel vinden, dat zijn belangstelling dubbel waardig is. De schrijver is een man van ernstige studie. En alleen zijn bespreking van de verschillende beschouwingen van anderen is voor den lezer, die belang stelt in dogmatische studie, van groot belang.

Maar het laatste woord over de z.g.n. algemeene openbaring is hier niet gezegd. Eigenlijk zou een boek als dit veel breder moeten worden besproken dan in eene korte "boekbespreking" mogelijk is. Verschillende vragen bleven onopgelost, die toch zeker om oplossing roepen. Wat is openbaring? Is er eigenlijk wel openbaring zonder den Heiligen Geest? Wat openbaart God van Zichzelf aan de heidenen, zoodat

hetgeen van Hem bekend is (to gnooston tou theou) in hen openbaar is (phaneron estin en autois)? En wat is de beteekenis in Rom. 2:14, 15 van "de dingen, die der wet zijn" (ta tou nomou) en van "het werk der wet" (to ergon tou nomou)? Dat dit niet kan beteekenen dat de heidenen van nature de wet volbrengen, en dat de wet in hunne harten geschreven is, is niet alleen uit heel de Schrift, maar ook uit het verband zeer duidelijk. Maar zou het ook kunnen beteekenen, dat hetgeen de wet bij Israel deed (n.l. zeggen "gij zult en gij zult niet") de heidenen "van nature" doen? Zie, Dr. Berkhouwer kan wel even in 't voorbijgaan opmerken, dat ik door mijn apriorische instelling tegenover de gemeene gratie hier het spoor bijster raakte, maar daartegenover zou ik willen opmerken, dat hijzelf door zijn apriorische instelling inzake de gemeene gratie het spoor bijster is geraakt.

Uit bovenstaande zal men in elk geval kunnen zien, hoe ik gaarne een breedere bespreking van Dr. Berkhouwer's boek zou willen geven. Misschien doe ik het later nog wel eens, evenals van zijn boek over de Voorzienigheid.

Intusschen beveel ik het boek van Dr. Berkhouwer van harte voor ernstige en critische studie aan.

H. H.



THINE IS THE KINGDOM, by James H. Hunter, published by Zondervan Publishing House. Price \$3.00.

This novel is the first prize winner in the second International Christian Fiction Contest. With its setting in the area of three beautiful lakes in northern Canada, it tells the story of a successful attempt to overthrow Communism there. The book has a clever and interesting plot based on the interplay of identical twins, and is easy and enjoyable to read. The characters in their thrilling and dangerous dealings with the Communists acknowledge their dependence on God.

It is a Christian novel that can be recommended to old and young. Yet, as in almost all such novels, it cannot be recommended without reservation. The book has a tendency toward post-millennialism, and it sets democracy over against Communism as the God-ordained state. And the characters often quote Scripture in so free a way as to make it almost profane.

Mrs. H. C. H.



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## OUR DOCTRINE

### The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(8)

THE CREATION OF MAN (1)

HOW HE WAS CREATED

#### *Scriptural references*

The direct and detailed references in Holy Writ to the creation of man we find, of course, in the account of creation in the book of Genesis. In Genesis chapter 1 vs. 26-28 we read: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." In Genesis 2:7-8 we read: "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. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." And in the same chapter, verses 18-25 we are told the following: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Other Scriptural references to the Divine creation

of man (of course, all of Scripture establishes the Divine origin of man) are passages such as Matt. 19:4 and Acts 17:26: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He Which made them at the beginning made them male and female . . . And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

*Confessional reference:*

Our Confessions, of course, also refer to this amazing work of the almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth. Art. XIV of our Confession of Faith reads in part as follows: "We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, Who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed in darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calleth men darkness."—end of quote. Of note, in connection with this article, is the fact that here the truth is expressed that man was created by God in such a way that he was able in all things to will agreeably to the will of God. Man was created perfect; he lacked nothing. It is therefore not true, as the Roman Catholic Church would have us believe, that something was added to man after his creation. We will have occasion to call attention to this later.

The same truth is held before us in the Canons of Dordrecht, Art. 1 of the third and fourth heads, where we read: "Man was originally formed after the image of God. His understanding was adorned with a true and saving knowledge of his Creator, and of spiritual things; his heart and will were upright; all his affections pure; and the whole man was holy; but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, and abusing the freedom of his own will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and on the contrary entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and

obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections."

And in the Heidelberg Catechism we read in Lord's Day 3, answer 6: "By no means; but God created man good, and after His own image, in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him and live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him."

*In distinction from the "animal world."*

The reader will notice that the expression: animal world, occurs in quotation marks. We need not be surprised if and when modern science tells us that man is the highest animal. It is simply a fact that the holy Scriptures, already in the infallible account of creation, uses the same term with respect to man and the rest of the animal world. Both are called in Holy Writ "living souls." This also appears from the Holland translations of Gen. 1:20 and Gen. 2:7, and we quote: "En God zeide: Dat de wateren overvloediglijk voortbrengen een gewemel van levende zielen; en het gevogelte vliege boven de aarde, in het uitspansel des hemels . . . En de Heere God had den mensch geformeerd uit het stof der aarde, en in zijne neusgaten geblazen den adem des levens; alzoo werd de mensch tot eene levende ziel." The reader will notice that the expression: levende zielen, occurs in both passages. The expression: "living creature," in Gen. 1:20 and: "living soul," in Gen. 2:7 are in the original identical: living soul.

Now we read in connection with the creation of the animals in Gen. 1:20-25 as follows: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

It is evident from these several Scriptural passages that the distinction between the creation of man and that of the animal is two-fold. On the one hand, the animals were created in such a way that the earth brought them forth upon the creative word of the living God, whereas man was *formed* out of the dust of

the earth. And on the other hand, God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man was created in the image of the Lord.

In passing we may also remark that both, man and the animals, have in common that they are created out of the dust of the earth.

*As such.*

First, we would make the observation that there is no essential difference between the accounts in Gen. 1:26-27 and Gen. 2:7-8. It is quite evident that in Gen. 1:26-27 we have a more general account of God's creation of man. In Genesis 1 the creation of man appears at the end of the Scriptural account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and more particularly of the latter inasmuch as the viewpoint of this work of the Lord in Genesis 1 is earthly, is regarded from the viewpoint of the earthly. And therefore in Genesis 1 the creation of man also appears as the climax of this work of God. But in the second chapter of Genesis we have the same creative act of God but then as set forth in greater detail. This greater detail appears, first of all, from Scripture's account of the creation of Adam. We are told that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and that man thus became a living soul. And, secondly, this appears from the fact that we also have a detailed setting forth of the creation of Eve. Concerning this latter work of the Divine Creator we read in the verses 21-22, and are told that the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and then proceeded to take one of his ribs, closing up the flesh instead thereof, and made of that rib a woman and brought her to the man. This clearly confirms our assertion that the account in Genesis 2 is a more detailed account than that recorded in the first chapter.

Secondly, when we deal with Scripture's account of the creation of man we must be careful. This applies particularly, we understand, to what we read in Genesis 2:7-8, and we quote once more: "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. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." At present we are merely interested in this creative act as such. We will have opportunity later in this series of articles to focus attention a little more closely upon man's being and essence according to Holy Writ. It is clear from Gen. 2:7-8 that God's creation of man is described as a work of the Lord with a two-fold aspect. First, we are informed that God formed him out of the dust of the ground. This cannot mean, we should understand, that that which the Lord formed out of the dust of the

ground was a sort of clay image, a well formed but lifeless clay image (a *clay* image inasmuch as it was a product of the dust of the ground but lifeless), and that the Lord, when He later breathed into its nostrils the breath of life, thereby caused that clay image to live. This explanation of the text is surely quite impossible. First, it is impossible because we read that God formed *man* out of the dust of the ground. We do not read that God formed his body out of the dust of the ground, but man. And it is surely beyond all doubt that the expression "man" refers to something more than merely the body. Secondly, this explanation is impossible in the light of its comparison with the creation of the animal world. God did not merely cause the earth to bring forth lifeless, soulless animals, but animals, living souls. The expression: lifeless, soulless animals, is a contradiction in itself, inasmuch as the word "animal" means literally: living soul. Hence, Gen. 2:7-8 must also then be interpreted as signifying that God formed *man*, the complete man, out of the dust of the ground. However, we have stated that the Divine creation of man was a two-fold work of God. The Lord not only formed him out of the dust of the ground, but we are also informed that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. This does not mean, obviously, that we have here two separate, successive works of God, the one following closely upon the other. In the first act, then, God created the body, and in the second part He formed the soul. We have already called attention to the fact that that which was formed by God out of the dust of the ground was not merely the body, but man. Hence, we do not have here two successive works of the Lord but one work of God with two sides as it were, both occurring simultaneously. Besides, this account in Gen. 2:6-7 would not inform us that God first created a living being which was in some respects an inferior being, that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and thereby elevated it to a higher plane or level. This would smack of Roman Catholicism. We have here one work of God, described from the viewpoint of its two-fold aspect. The first aspect describes man from his earthly aspect, as he is earthly, and this we must understand as referring to both, body and soul. And the second part or aspect describes the same man from his spiritual-heavenly aspect as he was marvelously adapted unto the living God, and this, of course, in distinction from every other earthly living creature.

#### *The creation of Eve.*

It is at this time, before we continue with the creation of man, that we would devote a little space to Scripture's account of the creation of Eve.

Various Scriptural passages refer to this marvelous work of the Lord. In Gen. 2:18, 21-24 we read:

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In Eph. 5:22-33 this beautiful passage occurs: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." In 1 Cor. 11:8-9 we read this: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." And the last passage which we wish to quote is 1 Tim. 2:12-13: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Modern Criticism has also directed its attack upon the Scriptural account of the creation of Eve. If it be true, they declare, that the woman was formed out of the man, then it follows that man originally must have been a double being, masculin-feminine. Or, if it be true, so they continue, that the Lord formed Eve out of one of Adam's ribs, then the man today must be minus one rib. What reasoning! How vain and ridiculous to dispute or cast doubt upon this marvellous work of God! The simple fact is that the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while Adam slept the Lord God took one of his ribs and made a woman of it. Did Adam have one less rib after the

creation of Eve than before? What of it? The important question is not: How did the Lord do this, and then proceed to speculate and philosophize. Of much greater importance is the question: why did the Lord thus make Eve? Why did Jehovah not make the woman as He made the man? Why did He not form her out of the dust of the ground and breathe into her nostrils the breath of life?

Scripture's answer to this question is two-fold. First Holy Writ would emphasize the truth that even as the woman is out of the man and man was therefore formed first, therefore she must serve him and be subject unto him. This is surely the clear teaching of Holy Writ. This we read, e.g., in Gen. 2:18: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." An help meet is an help meet, proper for Adam. The idea is that the man is the responsible party, the one who must not only rule in the home, but also be of the party of the Lord in the midst of the world. And the woman has been created to help him, stand at his side, be his support in the midst of the struggle in the midst of this world. As such she must also be subject unto him. This does not mean that he must "lord" it over her, and the relation between a man and his wife must not resemble that of a master and his slave. The wife is not merely his "squaw." The fact remains that she must be an help meet for him, *help* him, also with counsel and advice. Nevertheless, man is the ruling party and the woman is subservient to him. How little this is understood in our present day is known only too well! Yet, man is the ruling party, and to ignore and ridicule this created ordinance of the living God (as is so often done today) simply means that we court and invite disaster. However, we remarked at the beginning of this paragraph that the answer of the Word of God to this question is two-fold. But, the second part of this Scriptural answer must wait until our following article.

H. Veldman



#### Attention: Consistories

The Board of the RFPA decided at their last board meeting to send THE STANDARD BEARER to all the young men of our demoniation who are in the Armed Forces. Will you please forward their names and addresses to Mr. John Bouwman, 1350 Giddings Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. Also PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED OF CHANGES OF ADDRESSES.

THE BOARD



## THROUGH THE AGES

### The Arminian or Remonstrant Struggle

Having stated in the third and last part of the introduction to their "Remonstrations" what particular doctrines of the Calvinists especially grieved them, the Remonstrants—Wtenbogaert and his party—proceed to posit what they believe. This they do in five articles, known to posterity as the Five Articles of the Remonstrants. The obvious purpose of these propositions is to show that the Remonstrants are good orthodox people and that there is no appreciable difference between their teaching and that of the Calvinists.

Article I has to do with Predestination.

"We believe that God by an eternal and unchangeable decree in Christ Jesus His Son, before the foundation of the world, decided from fallen and sinful humanity to save in Christ and for Christ's sake and through Christ all such who by the grace of the Holy Spirit would believe in Christ and in that faith and in the obedience of faith through this same grace persevere to the end."

"Wij gelooven, dat God, door een eeuwig en onveranderlijk besluit, in Jezus Christus, zijnen zoon, eer's werelds grond gelegd was, besloten heeft uit het gevallen zondig menschelijk geslacht diegenen in Christus, om Christus' wil en door Christus zalig te maken, die door de genade des Heiligen Geestes in Jezus geloven en in dat geloof en in de gehoorzaamheid des geloofs door diezelfde genade ten einde toe volharden zouden."

If we think this to be sound doctrine we will especially be impressed by the orthodoxy of the third of these five articles.

"We believe that man does not have the saving faith of himself, nor out of the strength of his free will, considering that in the state of deviation and sin he out and of himself cannot think, will or do any good that is truly good (as especially saving faith), but that it is necessary that in his mind, inclinations, will and all his strength he be reborn of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit in order that he may rightly understand, think, will and perform the truly good ac-

cording to the word of Christ: John 15:5. *Without me thou canst do nothing.*

"Wij gelooven dat de mensch het zaligmakend geloof van zich zelve niet heeft, noch uit kracht van zijnen vrijen wil, alzoo hij in den staat der afwijking en der zonde niets goeds, dat waarlijk goed is (gelijk inzonderheid het zaligmakend geloof) uit en van zich zelve kan denken, willen of doen, maar dat het noodig is, dat hij van God in Christus door zijn Heiligen Geest worde herboren en vernieuwd in zijn verstand, genegenheden, wil en alle krachten, opdat hij het ware goed recht moge verstaan, bedenken, willen en volbrengen, naar het woord van Christus: Joh. 15:5. *Zonder mij kunt gij niets doen.*"

Let us get before us just what the Remonstrants here profess as their faith.

1. There are such things as election and reprobation (see the introduction to their "Remonstrations.")
2. Election is God's eternal and unchangeable decree whereby He decided to save all such who—mark you well, *who by the grace of the Holy Spirit* should believe in Christ.
3. Grace is not of man, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Faith is not of man; it is God's gift.
4. The unregenerate, natural man cannot of and out of himself think will or perform any good that is truly good. That is to say, the natural man is spiritually dead in his trespasses and sins and thus, unless he be born again by the Spirit of Christ, can only produce out of himself moral and spiritual corruption.

This has the semblance of sound doctrine. It makes the natural man as depraved as the Scriptures say that he is, and grace and election as sovereign as any supra-lapsarian even of the type of Gomarus can conceive. For certainly if the natural man is totally depraved, and he must be, if as the Remonstrants here state he cannot of and out of himself think, will and perform any good that is truly good, then in that case grace and election must of necessity be strictly sovereign; and then it is also correct to say with Gomarus that election is the decree of God whereby He predestined out of the whole human race a certain number of persons unto everlasting life *without any respect to their faith and obedience.*

Identical sentiments receive expression in the fourth article of the series.

"We believe that this grace of God is the principle, progress and completion of all good,

also in so far as without this previous, revivifying, accompanying and co-operating grace the regenerated person can neither think, will and perform the good nor also resist any temptation, so that all conceivable good deeds or workings must be ascribed to the grace of God."

"Wij gelooven, dat deze genade Gods het beginsel, den voortgang en de volbrenging van alle goed is, ook in zoover de wedergeboren mensch zelf zonder deze voorgaande of voorkomende, opwekkende, volgende en medewerkende genade noch het goede denken, willen of doen kan, noch ook eenige verzoeeking kan wederstaan, zoodat alle goede daden of werkingen, die men maar bedenken kan aan de genade Gods in Christus moeten toegeschreven worden . . ."

Apparently the thrust also of these sentences is: Man is nothing, grace is all. God's is all the glory.

On reading this material most of the Calvinists were satisfied and even elated. Remarks such as these were heard: These people are reformed. Wtenbogaert and his party admit, don't they, that all is of grace. They believe an eternal and unchangeable decree and they set forth Christ as the sole ground of salvation and salvation as worked by Him alone. These are the things that are essential. Let everything that goes above and beyond these things remain private opinion. Let us then have peace. Why controvert about private opinions.

Such were the reasonings. And it is not a wonder. Even Wtenbogaert's definition of election, stating as it does that God decided to save all such *who by the grace of His Holy Spirit* should believe in Christ, bears the semblance of the truth. Apparently the worst that can be said about the definition is that it is new. Yet nobody really interested in setting forth the truth about election, would so define it. For the definition no clear and definite answers to the questions whether grace is sovereign and thus whether the divine decree of election is also and actually the fountain and cause of faith.

The sad fact is that Wtenbogaert and his party were again equivocating. They were masking themselves with the truth and the near truth to throw their critics off-guard. And with what success, we have just seen. All but a few Calvinists concluded that they were men sound enough in their thinking. The trouble with these Calvinists was that for some reason or other they refused to take notice of the real thrust of Wtenbogaerts sentences, of their true underlying meaning.

What Wtenbogaert really had in mind is glaringly evident from the other articles of the series.

#### Art. 2.

"We believe that by virtue of God's eternal decree Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, died for every man, in the sense that by His crucifixion He merited reconciliation and pardon of sins for all, but in this sense, however, that no one, except they who believe, actually enjoy the pardon of sins. I Joh. 2:2. *And he is the propitiation for our sin: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*"

"Wij gelooven dat krachtens Gods eeuwig besluit Jezus Christus, de Zaligmaker der wereld, voor ieder mensch gestorven is, alzoo dat Hij voor allen door den kruisdood de verzoening en de vergeving der zonden verworven heeft, alzoo nochtans dat niemand de vergeving der zonden werkelijk geniet dan de gelovige. I Joh. 2:2. 'Hij is de verzoening voor onze zonden en niet alleen voor de onze, maar voor die der gansche wereld.'"

#### Art. 4. in its entirety reads:

"We believe that this grace of God is the principle, progress and completion of all good, also in so far as without this previous, revivifying, accompanying and co-operating grace the regenerated person can neither think, will and perform the good nor resist any temptation, so that all conceivable good deeds or workings must be ascribed to the grace of God." But now take notice, "But regarding the manner of the working of this grace, this is not irresistible. For we read of many that they have resisted the Holy Spirit. Acts 7 and elsewhere in many places."

#### Art. 5.

"We believe that they who by a true faith are grafted into Jesus Christ and by reason thereof have become partakers of His life-giving Spirit, have abundant strength to strive against satan, sin, the world and their own flesh and to secure the victory, to be sure always by the assistance of the grace of Christ's Spirit; and that Jesus Christ always assists them in all temptations, offers them His hand, and if only they are prepared to strive and desire His help always and without fail, will make them to stand and so to stand that neither by satan's guile nor by his violence can they be mislead or plucked out of

Christ's hand. See the word of Christ in Joh. 10: '*no one shall pluck them out of my hand.*'"

"But whether through neglect they cannot forsake the principle of their being in Christ, again cleave to this present world, depart from the holy doctrine once delivered them, lose their good conscience, and neglect the grace (of God), that should first have to be made a matter of investigation from the Scriptures, before we could teach it with full confidence."

"Wij gelooven dat, die Jezus Christus door een waar geloof zijn ingelijfd en overzulks Zijn levendmakenden Geest deelachtig zijn geworden, overvloedige kracht hebben om tegen den Satan, de zonde, de wereld en hun eigen vleesch te strijden en de overwinning te verkrijgen, welverstaande altijd door den bijstand van de genade van dien Geest; en dat Jezus Christus hen door zijn Geest in alle verzoeken bijstaat, de hand biedt en, zoo zij maar allen ten strijd bereid zijn en zijn hulp begeeren en in geen gebrek zijn, staande houdt, alzoo dat ze door list noch geweld des Satans verleid of uit Christus' handen getrokken kunnen worden; zie het woord van Christus bij Johannes 10: 'Niemand zal ze uit mijne hand rukken.'"

"Maar of ze door nalatigheid het beginsel van hun zijn in Christus niet kunnen verlaten, de tegenwoordige wereld weer aanhangen, van de heilige leer, hun eenmaal gegeven, afwijken, de goede conscientie verliezen en de genade verwaarlozen, dat zou eerst nader uit de Schrift moeten onderzocht zijn, eer wij het met volle verzekering onzes gemoeds zouden kunnen leeren."

The teaching of these articles—2, 4, and 5. Just what is it? Concisely stated, it is this:

Art. 2. Christ merited for all the right to the benefits of His death. *Legally* therefore all are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, and accordingly are *objectively* saved—saved to the uttermost—in Christ unto God. Yet, only the believers are *actually* saved, and saved on the condition of their faith and repentance.

Art. 4. Man can resist God's grace. This can mean but one thing, namely that man can make it impossible for God to save him by his unwillingness to be saved.

Art. 5. The reborn man can again lose the new life once implanted in his heart by rejecting and departing from it.

These teachings clearly enough indicate what Wtenbogaert and his party meant to be telling their

government in the first of the five articles. Verily this: that God, by an eternal and unchangeable decree, resolved to save in Christ all such persons who of and out of themselves and as assisted by God's grace should choose to believe in God's Son and be saved. This is predestination of Wtenbogaert and his party—a predestination that is based on God's foreknowledge of the use that men of and out of themselves should choose to make of God's grace.

It is said and held generally that the sum of the doctrine of the third article of the series (quoted above) is that "all is of grace." Actually, however, this third article as to its real teaching is as bad as the others. And it cannot well be otherwise seeing that underlying also this article is first the conception that man is free in his willing—free in the sense that he can choose to serve God or darkness, choose to accept or reject the aid to salvation that the grace of God affords him; and second the conception that all the good choices of man—his choice to believe, his choice to yield himself to God and be saved—are of and out of man and thus originate in man; and third the conception that, if a man has once made up his mind not to be saved, all God's efforts to save him are vain.

This third article states that saving faith is not of man. But faith as Wtenbogaert and his party conceived of it, is a figment of Wtenbogaert's own imagination. For it is faith minus the good choice and power of man's will to believe. These, this choice and power, are of man. Such is the real idea of article 3. The article itself clearly indicates this by the following statement occurring in it, "We believe that man does not have the saving faith of himself, nor"—mark you well—"nor from the power of his free will . . ." Thus, according to Wtenbogaert, man has a free will, and this will of man has power—power to choose Christ and his salvation. But what is faith minus this goodwill, power, choice to be saved? It is nothing. It doesn't exist.

The article goes on to say (see above) that out and of himself man in the state of sin can neither will nor think nor perform the truly good. Yet, according to this same teacher, man of himself can think and will to choose for Christ in rejection of darkness and the lie, which can only mean that after all man of himself can indeed think and will and perform the truly good. For certainly a better work than that of Choosing for Christ is not well conceivable. And if a man of and out of himself is capable of works of this nature why then should he still have need of being reborn and renewed of God's Spirit in his mind, inclinations, will and power in order that, as the article maintains, he may understand, mind, will and perform the really good.

The article closes, it will be noticed, with a quota-

tion from John's Gospel: "without me thou canst do nothing." Yet certainly, according to the author of these articles, man of himself can do nearly everything regarding the matter of his salvation. He can originate his good choice to be saved as though he were God. And at every point of the way to glory the sole determining factor of man's steadfastness is again man's very own will. Of and out of himself he chooses and continues to choose not to reject and forsake and thereby lose the principle of grace within him.

What a pious fraud this third article turns out to be. How all but a few Calvinists, on reading this article, could wax enthusiastic, and in their enthusiasm hail Wtenbogaert and his party as men of sound doctrine is a conundrum. But so it goes. And so also, sad to say, it continues to go. It is with an eye to this third article that the historian Walker remarks, "It (Arminianism) was at one with Calvinism in denying the ability of men to do anything really good of themselves—all is of divine grace. Hence the Arminians were not Pelagians."

But essentially they were Pelagians. For with Pelagius, the Arminians—Wtenbogaert and his party—held to the freedom of the will. Also their slogan was, "If I ought, I can." Pelagius said, "as often as I speak of the principles of virtue and a holy life, I am accustomed first of all to call attention to the capacity and character of human nature and to show what it is able to accomplish; and from this to arouse the feelings of the hearer, that he may strive after different kinds of virtue." This, too, was necessarily the attitude of the Arminians, and of every one who holds in his thinking to the freedom of the human will in this Pelagian and Arminian sense.

The Arminians' conception of a *true* Christian is that of a man with a free will, thus of a man who *truly* loves and serves God but who at any time can reverse himself and reject God to serve sin and darkness, yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But this certainly is not the right conception. It clashes with the teachings of the Scriptures on this point. According to Holy Writ, the believer is grafted into Christ by a faith that is living and indestructible and that therefore cannot cease. His will therefore is anything but free in this arminian sense. Never can he will to reverse himself to return to the old ways of sin. For he is a new creature in Christ now and everlastingly. True, he still has his sinful flesh in which there dwells no good thing. And therefore also, in the language of the Form, he feels many infirmities and miseries in himself, as namely, that he has no perfect faith, and that he does not give himself to serve God with that zeal as he is bound, but has daily to strive with the weakness of his faith, and evil lusts of his flesh. But for all that, he is a true

child of God still, as is evidenced by the fact that, in the language of this same Form, he is sorry for these weaknesses, and earnestly desires to fight against his unbelief, and live according to all the commandments of God. A Christian that can reverse himself again to yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin is simply not a Christian. No man's will is free in this arminian sense, much less the will of the Christian. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (I Joh. 3:9).

This precisely is the point to Paul's reasoning in Rom. 6. "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. . .?

The fifth article of the "Remonstrance" contains this quotation from John's Gospel, "No one shall pluck them out of my hands," no one, Wtenbogaert should have added, but the Christian man himself. For that was his teaching. Strange therefore that in quoting this passage in support of his heresy he was not aware that he overturned the very words of Christ Himself.

Let us now get before us in their order the five articles of the Remonstrants as to the substance of their teaching.

Art. 1. Predestination is based on divine foreknowledge of the use that men of themselves would chose to make of the means of grace.

Art. 2. Christ died for all, though none receive the benefits of his death except the believers.

Art. 3. Men are incapable of doing anything really good of themselves—all is of divine grace.

Art. 4. Grace is resistable.

Art. 5. True believers can fall from grace.

Of course, as lifted out of the thought-structure of Arminius, and as occupying its own place in the thought-structure of the Scriptures, this third proposition or articles is sound doctrine. But certainly in the mouth of Arminius it is heresy, the reason being that in his mouth the term "grace", and with it such terms as faith, and counsel, etc., etc., take on new meanings—new as compared with the meanings that these terms have in the Scriptures—thus meanings of Arminius' own invention. A man may get himself on the housetop and shout until he is hoarse that all is of grace etc, and still in *the point of view of his definition of terms* be proclaiming the lie. The question is: what is the man's thought-structure in which he lives and moves and thinks and speak—that of the truth or of the lie.

G. M. Ophoff

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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Back To School

(6)

In our past few articles we have tried to urge not the expediency of truly Christian, and therefore, Protestant Reformed education, but the principal necessity of a strictly covenant education for our covenant children. And we have expressed that principle as consisting in the isolation of God's people, by virtue of the very fact of their belonging to His covenant, applied now particularly to the sphere of education. Moreover, from that principle of isolation we concluded to our calling to isolate ourselves educationally. Further, by way of application, we appealed to our Protestant Reformed people, to the extent that they have not yet begun to practice this principle in the sphere of education, to take action, and to do so before we reach that stage of historical development in our generations at which all love and zeal for Christian education is dead. We make this appeal on the basis of a confidence that the principle is indeed present, not only on some confessional paper, but in our hearts, and simultaneously we sound the alarm because we fear that it is dying for lack of exercise.

A warning and an incentive are, we feel, necessary in this connection. We speak of a warning because also in this matter of education the more stringently you apply this principle of Christian isolation, the more dangerously you live; and we should be aware of that fact. And we mention an incentive, because the more stringently you apply this principle of the antithesis, the more safely and serenely we walk in the midst of the world; and we should be encouraged thereby.

#### *Dangerous Living*

The note which Scripture sounds in connection with our spiritual separation is a gloriously cheerful one, full of promise. If we turn to the passage from Deuteronomy which we cited previously, we discovered that the assurance of Israel's safety is attached to her isolation. For Moses the man of God, tells Israel in chapter 33, verse 28: "Israel then shall dwell *in safety* alone." And when the apostle Paul, speaking to the believers, to those who have righteousness, who have concord with Christ, who are the temple of God, sounds the call to separation in II Corinthians 6, vss. 14, ff., we find that at the same time he adds this incentive: "and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." vss. 17 and 18. And, speaking more

in particular of the training of our children, the Preacher tells us to train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart therefrom.

Not infrequently in our day we lose sight of the real spiritual nature of this promise. And instead, stress is laid upon the glorious outward achievements that are possible for a Christian educational institution. We like to lay all stress upon the fact that it is possible for our Christian institutions to gain a place under the sun, to be recognized and applauded even by the world. Men like to emphasize that it is possible for the products of our institutions to find a place in the world, to be recognized for their scholarship and research. And sometimes the matter is so pictured that the cause of covenant education involves no struggle and no danger at all, outside of the fact that it involves an extra financial layout.

I consider this a grave danger. The danger is that, setting our sights upon the above-mentioned objects, we conform our schools to that goal. And then we are lost. To be sure, it is not wrong in itself that our educational institutions should be good from the formal viewpoint—they must indeed be educational institutions. The idea of a Christian School is not that the children are going to church five days a week extra, while in a public school they go to school. No, our schools must indeed be schools, and, as much as possible they must be good schools as respect equipment and scholarship, instruction and training in the various branches. But these things are not a goal in themselves. Having them all, and having no fear of the Lord in them, you fail to have a Christian School. Moreover, it is as certain as the rising of the sun in the east that if we find our satisfaction in such things, our Christian schools will have no battle at all. Any one will allow you to have a *private* school. But principally the world will never grant you the right to maintain a *Christian* school. And to the extent that the Christian schools fail to experience a very sharp and continual conflict with the world, to that extent they may well ask themselves whether there is something wrong, perhaps, with their Christian school. For we must remember, the world under the command of the devil will never cease to do battle against God's people in this present time. To be sure, the battle may rage more fiercely at one time than at another; but it never ceases. And the Christian, or the band of Christians, or the Christian institution that begins to find itself the object of the world's friendship instead of its enmity may well pause for inventory—an inventory of the status of their spiritual isolation.

For we must not forget that from a certain viewpoint this way of isolation is a dangerous way to live. Certain it is, on the basis of Scripture, that it is the



way of the realization of God's promise, and that therefore in that way Israel, the church, and the individual child of God, together with his covenant seed, shall dwell safely. And by faith we apprehend that sure promise of God also. But by the world and the flesh and by all who live from the worldly principle of utility that position of isolation is considered both foolish and dangerous. It is not a wonder that it is always exactly against this way of life, as it roots in God's eternal elective decree to separate His people, that men set themselves, also often in the midst of what calls itself church. To dwell alone is not easy; nay, it is for the flesh impossible. The flesh can go alone as long as no separation from the world is required. But that same flesh will never stand for the cause of the living God, because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Only faith can do that. And our Christian schools must be strictly a venture of the faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen. Proceeding out of any other principle they may be schools, but they will not be Christian.

And from that viewpoint it is well for us to consider the cost. To dwell alone is everything but pleasant.

To be sure, it requires financial sacrifice. It means, for example, that in addition to the legally required support of the world's schools through taxation we must also see to it that we support and maintain our own, separate, schools. The world will not help us with that, while we must help support their schools. In other words, the cost of education is double for us. And there is no question about it that this financial burden is sometimes great.

But yet this is not the worst. Nowadays the emphasis is often upon that aspect of cost in dollars and cents. And often it seems too as though that financial problem is the most difficult for our school boards. But, in the first place, we must get out from under the rule of the almighty dollar in that respect also, and should increasingly learn that our wealth is the very least we have to sacrifice. If it never comes any further than that we have to *pay* for the education of our children, even to the extent of sacrifice, then we have a fairly easy time yet. And in the second place, the case of extreme financial sacrifice is in our times rare in this respect. Most of us can afford to have three square meals a day yet, plus a little cake and pie, and at the same time support the Christian school handily. And I submit that when the time comes that we can follow the example of our forefathers, and put the money for the Christian School tuition aside before we know where the next loaf of bread is coming from to satisfy the physical needs of our children—then we can speak of real sacrifice.

But the danger of isolation is much greater, and runs much deeper. Is it not necessary for our earthly life to unite with the world, to seek her friendship, instead of inviting her hatred and enmity? What can we do without the world and its favor? God's people are small and limited in power, of no account as far as influence is concerned. Generally they do not possess this world's goods in abundance. Nor, as a rule, do they occupy positions of influence and power, the positions where the factors of name, position, honor, respect, and all our earthly way are controlled. No, it is the world that numbers among its citizens the great and powerful men, who have the ability and authority to determine your and my entire position in the world, who hold in the balance prosperity and adversity, life and death for you and me. Do we not need the world's favor?

What will become of us if we always emphasize in word and deed our separation. Do we not invite the hatred of the world, its reproach and contempt. Will they not trample us, and refuse us a place in their midst, and finally deny us a place on the earth? Exactly those will be the results. We will be refused a name and position, power and influence, money and goods. They will speak evil against us, persecute us, hate us and reproach us and kill us all the day long, if we do not leave our isolated position.

Moreover, bear it in mind that when you give your children a covenant education, you are training them for exactly such experiences. Your dear ones, whom you love with all your heart, your flesh and blood, will have just such a reception—and not a prosperous one—from the world from which they are trained to be separate.

And in the light of all this is it not foolish and dangerous, foolhardy, to maintain that God's people must dwell alone and that their safety lies in their isolation?

Moreover, does not history teach us a lesson in this respect? Israel dwelt alone, and what became of her? Were they not finally wiped out as a nation? Did they not become the object of the fierce hatred of all the nations? Did the nations not use Israel as a plaything, to vent all their rage and cruel hatred upon her? And was not her whole institution finally destroyed and brought to utter ruin and desolation?

And does not the history of the new dispensation teach us the very same lesson? Was it not true through all of history that the church that dwelt alone, that maintained her isolation faithfully, that steadfastly defended her spiritual ramparts against the onslaughts of error and human philosophy, was always small and despised, the object of reproach and persecution? And was it not the church that came out of its isolation that invariably occupied a favorable position

in the world? We need not wonder then, that few have ever maintained the isolationist position. A small minority have always insisted that the safety of God's people is in their isolation, while the great majority have always said with ever more emphasis: God's people can never dwell safely alone; our safety lies in the greatest possible degree of amalgamation with the world.

Dangerous living indeed!

H. C. Hoeksema



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Acts 13:32, 33ff

#### V

In this last essay of our exposition of Acts 13:32, 33 we wish to call further attention to the element in the text, that speaks of the *preaching*, the *proclaiming* of the glad-tidings of the Gospel, that God hath fulfilled the Promise in raising Jesus, our Lord, from the dead.

This glad-tidings is preached definitely to the people, to the congregation as a word of comfort and exhortation.

Thus we attempted to point out in our former writing on this subject.

But the question still remains in this connection (it persists) does this preaching, this *evangelizing* merely come to those children of the covenant, who are the spiritual Seed of Abraham, or is the preaching also to those who remain unpersuasive to the Gospel.

To this question we can only answer, in the light of the sermon of Paul recorded here in Acts 13, that the *preaching* of the glad-tidings comes to all to whom God in His good-pleasure sends it. It does not only come as preaching, as sermon (Canons of Dort, III, IV Art. 6) merely to those who believe, and who from the good heart bring forth good fruits, but it also comes to those who are to be likened unto the three kinds of unfruitful soil in the Parable of the Sower. Such also hear the Word and react to it; they give a spiritual-ethical response to it. It is a horrible response, but it is a response nevertheless to the preaching of the glad-tidings concerning the fulfilled Promise in Jesus, that God has made Him both Lord and Christ.

And this horrible response is that they will not, that He be King over them!

To them comes the preaching together with the command to believe and repent!

Such is clearly the teaching of Holy Writ, and such is the very preaching of Paul here on this Sabbath-morning in Antioch of Pisidia.

It is very clear not only from the subsequent attitude of unbelief on the part of a rather large number in this audience, (see verse 45) but also from Paul's preaching itself that the *preaching* came also to the unbelievers, that is, that it came into their hearing. They heard and did not understand, they saw and yet did not see. Their ears were dull of hearing and their hearts were fat nevertheless, lest they repent and the Lord heal them! Yes, the preaching they hear without spiritually perceiving and grasping the content with believing hearts.

Hence, we read in verse 45 "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things *which were spoken* by Paul, and blasphemed." And what does Paul then say: This word is not spoken to you? Nay, he says "it was necessary that the Word of God should *first be spoken to you*. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles!" And this word is spoken by Paul and Barnabas very boldly. These contradictors are told that the word was *spoken to them first*. They are the Jews, who would save themselves; establish their own righteousness they seek to do.

Have they then not heard the preaching?

Indeed they have heard it; it was preached to them on this Sabbath morning. But they have not believing hearts. They cannot be justified by works of law and yet they will continue in their sins. And the fault is not of the gospel, nor of Christ offered (presented) therein, nor of God who calls men by the gospel, and confers upon them various gifts, that they who are called by the ministry of the Word, refuse to come and be converted: the fault lies in themselves; some of whom when called, regardless of their danger, reject the word of life; others though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression on their heart; therefore, their joy, arising only from a temporary faith, soon vanishes, and they fall away; while others choke the seed of the word by perplexing cares, and the pleasures of this world, and produce no fruit.

It seems that these contradictors are those in whom the seed falls upon stony ground. They did not understand the word that was sown in their hearts, and the Evil One came and took it out of their hearts. They heard but did not understand; they did not com-

pare spiritual things with spiritual. And so they are only blind before so much light and deaf before such great and glad-tidings.

Was this preaching glad-tidings *to* these people? Did these unbelieving Jews *consider* and *judge* this message of Paul from all the Old Testament Scriptures to be glad-tidings of great joy? Of course not! For this joyful tidings is joyful tidings *to all the people*. And to the rest, who are hardened in their hearts and blinded, it was bitter in their mouth, the Rock of offense upon which they are crushed, and which shall dash them to pieces! To such says Jesus in John 12: 47-49 "And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I *spake* the same shall judge him in the last day."

Surely the word is spoken to all; to all to whom God sends it in His good-pleasure. Let each therefore, beware how he hears!

Thus also Paul speaks a word of warning to the congregation before him, composed of the elect kernel and the shell, children of the Promise and children of the flesh!

To this church comes the word of warning as written in the Prophecy of Habakkuk. In chapter 1:5 we read "Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvellously; for I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you."

Concerning this quotation we would like to make a few introductory remarks in connection with the subject of the preaching of the Gospel as it comes to all who hear it.

In the first place, we would remark, that we have in this passage a very clear and conclusive "case-study" of what our fathers refer to when they, speaking of the preaching of the promise of the gospel, express that this preaching of the Promise of the Gospel always goes together with the *command of faith and repentance*. Canons II, 5. And it is our conviction, that this should not be overlooked. We should notice this fact as a fact, and should emulate it in our preaching of the promise of the Gospel. It is the *confrontation* of all with the preaching!

In the second place, it should not escape our notice, that this text quoted by Paul in this sermon from Habakkuk 1:5 is the direct word of warning from the mouth of the Lord. It is a word of warning from God to Israel in the days prior to the Babylonian Captivity under Nebukadnezzar, warning them to take notice of His marvelous judgments upon the earth. And Paul, who lives a few centuries later, quotes this same word,

and applies it to the situation in his day.

Thirdly, it ought to become very clear to us, that his quoted passage is full of rich significance. In it reference is made in the judgment and marvelous deeds of God in the entire history of the Pan-Asiatic nations, to wit, Chaldea, (Babylon) Medo-Persia, and then afterwards in the Western world-powers of Greece and Rome. Mighty judgments God would work. The impossible would happen. Jerusalem will be besieged and made a desolation. The city of the great king David will be taken by the proud Chaldeans. It will then seem to be the end of the work of God's redemption and that the glory has departed from Judah. Her kings will be led captive in chains, the temple of the Lord destroyed and layed in ruins, the walls of the city will be broken down. The people once delivered by God's high and mighty arm out of the land of Egypt will be led to a country that is not theirs. Then shall Jeremiah write his Lamentation, and the unbelieving people will have their wall of wailing. And all shall be for an atonishment and a hissing. And they that pass by will wag the head. Psalm 2 with its word that the Lord will have the nations in derision and that He will laugh at them will seem to be true no longer.

But high and above these judgments the Word of God stands, that even then the just shall live by faith! It must be written by him who climbeth into the watch-tower of the Prophetic vision; it must so be written in bold and large letters, that he that runneth may read the glad message even in the midst of these judgments: "My just shall live by faith." That is still true of the people of God's promise in such times. And so they only see these judgments with their eyes, but it does not really come nigh unto them. They take refuge in the Name of the Lord, which is a strong tower of their strength.

On the other hand if anyone's heart is not right in him, if he is not trusting the Lord, then God has no delight in him and he falls back into perdition. At such a time the souls of men are tried. And if the gold of faith is lacking the judgments will clearly reveal it.

Now this was all written for the warning of the church.

And this word of warning is uttered here by Paul in this memorable sermon in Antioch of Pisidia.

And it is still applicable.

For God still works the great and mighty judgments. It is true: the time on the clock of God's times and seasons is a bit later. But fundamentally the pattern of God's dealings in the Word is the same. Fact is, that there is an intensification of the judgments of God. Is not Pentecost the opening of the era of the

Great Day of the Lord? Is not the preaching of the Word of the Cross that which shall convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and is it not also the saving power unto life eternal of all those believing?

When Paul begins to preach here in Antioch then all men are called to repentance. God shall judge the world through one man Jesus Christ, and this judgment shall be according to Paul's gospel.

And so there is in the preaching itself threatening, warning, calling to repentance. It is the precepts of the Gospel calling to walk in the old yet new Commandment. It is the call to walk not after the flesh but according to the Spirit in the ministry of reconciliation. And through this call and these warnings the Holy Spirit turns His people unto Christ in whom the Promise is realized, for this is a part of the Ministry of reconciliation. Any other ministry is the ministry of the law. And this ministry of law kills us!

When Paul says to the church: "Beware, lest that come upon you, which was spoken in the word of the prophets," then those, who had ears to hear took refuge to Christ by faith.

And the rest became manifest to be void of faith, while they contradict the Word!

G. Lubbers



Grace has enabled me to love  
Thy holy law and will;  
But sin has not yet ceas'd to move,  
It tyrannizes still.

Hence often fill'd with dread alarms,  
My peace and joy subside;  
And I've employ for all the arms  
The gospel hath supplied.

Thus diff'rent pow'rs within me strive,  
While opposites I feel:  
I grieve, rejoice, decline, revive,  
As sin or grace prevail.

But Jesus hath his promise pass'd;  
Sin with the body dies;  
And grace in all his saints at last  
Shall gain its victories.

## Er Is Geene Verdoemenis

"Zoo is er dan nu geene verdoemenis voor degenen die in Christus Jezus zijn, die niet naar het vleesch wandelen maar naar den geest. Want de wet des geestes des levens in Christus Jezus heeft mij vrijgemaakt van de wet der zonde en des doods."

Rom. 8:1, 2.

Wat we in onzen tekst lezen is een gevolgtrekking van datgene wat Paulus de gemeente geschreven had in de voorgaande hoofdstukken. Dat geleerde komt hier op neer, dat de mensch, zondaar zijnde en schuldig voor God, niet uit de werken der wet gerechtvaardigd kan worden. Maar Paulus had geleerd van Jezus Christus en van Zijne gehoorzaamheid, waardoor velen rechtvaardig voor God gesteld zouden worden. Het kwam neer op deze kardinale vraag: Zijt ge geborgen in Christus Jezus, den Middelaar Gods en der menschen? Is het antwoord bevestigend, dan is er groote vrede voor zulk een mensch; is het antwoord ontkennend, dan is men in zijn zonde en daarom onuitsprekelijk ellendig. Want dan wacht niet anders dan een toornend God die zekerlijk recht zal doen in dien grooten dag, wanneer alle menschen voor Zijn vierschaar gebracht zullen worden. Maar als we geborgen zijn in Christus Jezus, dan is het geheel anders. Dan werken alle dingen ons mede ten goede. Dan is er niet dan zonlicht op ons pad, want dan reizen we naar den hemel heen. Van die zaligheid spreekt mijn tekst. Indien we in Christus Jezus zijn, dan is er geene verdoemenis. En men kan het weten. Want de tekst gaat verder en zegt, dat dit soort menschen niet naar het vleesch wandelen maar naar den Geest. En de tekst zal het ons ook verklaren hoe het mogelijk is, dat menschen, die van der jeugd aan geleerd hebben om kwaad te doen, naar den Geest kunnen wandelen. Het komt hier van daan, dat zij vrijgemaakt zijn van de wet der zonde en des doods; en het middel tot die vrijmaking is de wet des Geestes des levens in Christus Jezus. Laat ons nu eenige oogenblikken bij die verschillende gedachten stilstaan, als we schrijven over het hoofdthema: Er is geene verdoemenis. Eerst zullen we zien de beteekenis daarvan; dan de reden; en, eindelijk, het gevolg daarvan.

Eerst dan de beteekenis.

Verdoemenis is een vreeselijk woord, en het is drager van een verschrikkelijke idee. Het is een rechtelijke term, en beteekent, dat men veroordeeld is door den rechter. Maar er zit meer in. Het houdt ook de straf in voor degenen die door den rechter veroordeeld zijn. En er zit ook het vreeselijke van die straf in dat woord. Verdoemd te zijn is verschrikkelijk. Als we door God verdoemd worden dan worden we door Hem gedoemd totdat we geheel en al verdaan worden. Dat

voorvoegsel *ver* spreekt van een eeuwige verwording voor het toornige aangezicht van God. Iets hooren we ervan als de goddeloozen uitroepen: de groote dag Zijns toorns is gekomen en wie kan bestaan? Ook lezen we van het erbarmelijke roepen der goddeloozen als ze spreken van het oog Gods en van den toorn des Lams. O het zal vreeselijk zijn.

Die verdoemenis is er nu al. Zij is aanvankelijk in de plaats waar de goddeloozen komen als ze hier op aarde sterven. Er is verdoemenis bij God in Zijn oordeel waarmede Hij alle dagen oordeelt. En er is een voorsmaak van eeuwige verdoemenis in den goddelooze hier op aarde. Er is nu al een smaken van den onlust des Almachtigen als men wandelt in de paden der goddeloosheid.

Nu dan, de tekst komt tot ons met het liefelijke Evangelie, dat er voor sommige menschen geene verdoemenis is. Dat is negatieve taal, maar er zit een positieve gedachte in. De Heilige Schrift spreekt vaker in dien stijl. Zoo hooren we Jezus zeggen: Die tot Mij komt zal Ik geenzins uitwerpen! Dat is ook negatieve taal, maar het houdt juist het tegenovergestelde in van uitwerpen, namelijk, aannemen, ontvangen, in Mijn armen drukken, enz. Zoo ook in Psalm 32, waar van het kind Gods gezegd wordt: Welgelukzalig is de mensch . . . in wiens geest geen bedrog is. Dat houdt zeker in, dat in zijn geest de waarheid woont. En zoo ook hier. Als de tekst zegt, dat er geene verdoemenis is voor dit soort menschen, dan houdt dat in, dat er voor hen juist het tegenovergestelde is, namelijk, vrijspraak voor Gods troon, en volkomen rechtvaardiging met al de zaligheid die zulk een staat ons brengt. Als er voor U geene verdoemenis is, dan blijft er niets anders over dan dat ge het eeuwig welbehagen en de gunste Gods ontvangt. Dan zijt ge welgelukzalig. En als ge nu het teksthooftstuk verder leest, dan zult ge zien, dat die zaligheid van deze menschen daarin verder beschreven wordt.

En nu komt de vraag: wie zijn die gelukkige menschen? En dan zegt de tekst: die in Christus Jezus zijn. Wat mag dat beteekenen? In Christus Jezus zijn kan tweeërlei beteekenis hebben, namelijk een juridische of een organisch-geestelijke betrekking of relatie. Hier is het duidelijk, dat de juridische beteekenis op den voorgrond staat. Dat is eerst al duidelijk uit het gebruik van de rechtelijke term: verdoemenis. Maar het is ook overduidelijk uit het feit, dat er van deze menschen gezegd wordt, dat er geene verdoemenis voor hen is. Dat kan nooit afhangen van onze goede werken. Maar hangt alleen af van Gods welbehagen. En wat beteekent het nu, dat we juridisch in Christus Jezus zijn? Het antwoord op deze vraag, mijne vrienden, behandelt een waarheid die zeer gehaat is in alle eeuwen dat het Evangelie gepredikt is. De

mensch van nature haat de idee van dit inzijn in Christus, en dan vooral als de natuurlijke mensch hoort, dat men daardoor alleen zalig kan worden. Met andere woorden: de mensch van nature is zoo trotsch dat hij niet uit genade zalig wil worden. Hij wil zijn eigen rechtvaardiging bewerkstelligen. In Christus Jezus te zijn in den juridischen zin beteekent, dat God van voor de grondlegging der wereld zekere menschen aan Jezus Christus gegeven heeft, dat God Jezus Christus voor die menschen verantwoordelijk stelde, dat Jezus Christus antwoorden moet op alle de vragen die God Hem stellen zal in verband met de zonde en ongerechtigheid die door die menschen bedreven zou worden in den tijd. Het is nu eenmaal een feit, dat God zekere menschen, een vast aantal bij God bekend en door God bemind van eeuwigheid, aan Christus gegeven heeft met de opdracht, dat Hij er niet één van verlieze, maar dat Hij hen op zou wekken ten uiterste dage. Dat feit kan niemand ontkennen, want het wordt op duizend bladzijden van Gods Woord geleerd. Het duidelijkst bewijs vinden we in Johannes 17, dat ons het Hoogepriesterlijk gebed van Jezus openbaart. Daar zegt Jezus tegen Zijn Vader: Zij waren Uwe, en Gij hebt Mij dezelve gegeven! Zou het daarom zijn, dat zeker dichter zong: Veilig in Jezus' armen? Dat zijn de welgelukzaligen voor tijd en eeuwigheid. De Heilige Schrift noemt hen met vele en met schoone, met liefelijke namen. Zij zijn het bundelken der levenden; de geliefden van eeuwigheid, het nachthutje in den komkommerhof, het overblijfsel naar de genade, de uitverkorenen, de gekenden, enz. Onuitsprekelijk zalig is de mensch die tot dat getal mag behooren. Zingt gij niet: Welzalig is de mensch die 't mag gebeuren, dat God naar recht hem niet wil schuldig keuren? Welnu, die menschen worden hier bedoeld met het "in Christus Jezus zijn."

Wat mag nu de reden zijn, dat er voor hen geen verdoemenis is? We staan hier voor een schijnbaar raadsel, namelijk, dit: Hoe kan God sommige menschen niet verdoemen? Alle menschen zijn toch zondaar, en verdienen dubbel en dwars om verdoemd te worden tot in der eeuwigheid? Ziet God de zonden door de vingers? Zegt Paulus niet in Romeinen drie dat het geheele menschedom voor God verdoemelijk is? Hoe kan hij dan nu zoo beslist zeggen, dat er voor sommige menschen geene verdoemenis is? De reden waarom er geene verdoemenis is voor dit soort menschen is, omdat zij vrijgemaakt zijn. Vrijgemaakt waarvan? Van de wet der zonde en des doods. De wet der zonde en des doods! Hoe vreeselijk! Stelt het U voor: onze staat en toestand van nature wordt een wet genaamd. Hier zit een ontzettende gedachte in. De mensch is zoo absoluut goddeloos van nature, dat zijn woelen in de zonde en de ongerechtigheid vergeleken wordt bij een wet. De mensch is onophoudelijk in de zonde





bezig, van de wieg tot de laatste snik is hij zondaar. Alles wat hij doet is zonde; het is een wet, een vreeselijke hebbelijkheid voor hem om te zondigen. Dat is de idee van wet hier. Maar er is nog meer. Hij is ook gebonden aan de wet des doods. Ziet ge, God had gezegd bij den aanvang der historie: Indien ge daar aan eet zult ge den dood sterven. En later lezen we: de ziel die zondigt zal sterven. Dat is ook een wet. En er is geen uitzondering op. Het behoort bij het God-zijn van God om de zonde te straffen met den dood. Zondigt ge? Wel, dan moet de dood volgen. En ge moet dat woordje dood hier in zijn volle beteekenis lezen. Het houdt in de lichamelijke, de geestelijke en de eeuwige dood. Dood is scheiding van God en van Zijn lieflijkheid. Dood is ook rebellie tegen God. Dat is de geestelijke dood. Maar het vreeselijkst is de eeuwige dood. Dan is men weggedaan van voor Gods aangezicht en dan komt men jammerlijk om in de plaats die gemaakt is voor de duivel en zijn engelen. Ik moet er niet in komen. Het is een vreeselijke plaats. En dan voor eeuwig. Nooit komt men er uit. En dat is een wet voor elk natuurlijk mensch. Het is een wet voor hem om te zondigen. Het is een wet voor den zondaar om te sterven. Gestorven komt hij ter wereld. En sterven doet hij steeds meer totdat hij in de plaats des doods, des eeuwigen doods aanlandt, en dat is de put die brandt van vuur en sulfur, waar hij gepijnigd zal worden met den draak en zijne engelen. Is het niet vreeselijk?

Maar deze menschen zijn vrijgemaakt van die dubbele wet der zonde en des doods. Hoe is dat toch geschied? En de tekst zegt, dat zij vrijgemaakt zijn door de Wet des Geestes des levens in Christus Jezus. Daar hebt ge Uw antwoord. Wat het beteekenen mag? Het beteekent dit: De Geest hier is de Geest van den DrieEenigen God. Als zoodanig is het de Geest des levens van God. Het leven waar hier sprake van is is het leven Gods, Zijn eeuwig verbondsleven. Maar er is meer. Het is de Geest van dat verbondsleven zooals die Geest aan Christus Jezus is geschonken en waardoor Hij Zichzelven den Vader opgeofferd heeft. Leest het maar in Heb. 9:14. Dat is een van de depste teksten in Gods Woord. En die tekst is zekerlijk verbonden aan de waarheid die hier ons geleerd wordt. Let er op, dat deze gelukkige menschen vrijgemaakt worden door den Geest des levens in Christus Jezus. Er was dan ook geen andere weg. Zelf zouden ze het nooit kunnen doen. Het neemt de eeuwige almachtige kracht van den God des levens om menschen te zaligen, en dat wordt hier geleerd. We worden vrijgemaakt van zonde en dood door den Heilige Geest die Christus gener-eerde, bewaarde, en waardoor Jezus Zich den Vader offerde als het onstraffelijk Lam, dat de zonde der wereld wegdraagt. En let er nu op, dat dit ook een

wet is. Het is wet der Tien Geboden die door den Heere Jezus vervuld zijn. Eerst hierin dat Hij de vloek van die wet droeg voor Zijn volk; dat Hij veroemd werd door die Wet. En tweedens, en dan actief, dat Hij die Wet der Tien geboden vervulde voor Zijn volk Hem van den Vader gegeven, en dan zoo intensief, dat Hij een plaats verwierf voor hen in een Paradijs Gods, dat boven het eerste Paradijs uitstak als de hemel hooger is dan de aarde. En in het vervullen van die Wet heeft Hij een gehoorzaamheid geopenbaard die genoemd mag worden de gehoorzaamheid der liefde Gods des verbonds des vredes. Door die Wet zijn de Christenen vrijgemaakt.

En wat is het gevolg?

Dit, dat ze niet meer naar het vleesch wandelen, maar naar den Geest. En wat mag dat inhouden? Wat is de beteekenis van het vleesch? Het vleesch omvat de dood, vers 6; vijandschap tegen God, vers 7; onderwerpt zich der wille Gods niet want het kan zulks ook niet, ook in vers 7; en het vleesch kan Gode niet behagen, vers 8. Daar hebt ge een beschrijving van het vleesch in het onmiddelijke verband. Het vleesch is de zondige mensch die altijd het kwade bedenkt en doet. En zoo zult ge wel kunnen verstaan wat het zeggen wil om naar dat vleesch te wandelen. *Naar* beteekent hier *overeenkomstig*. Men wandelt in harmonie met het goddelooze vleesch, en dat doet elk mensch van nature. Maar die in Christus Jezus zijn wandelen niet naar dat vleesch. Waarom niet? Omdat diezelfde Geest waardoor Jezus hun tot een offer werd, nu ook in hen komt te wonen. Die Geest wederbaarde en bekeerde hen en stortte het geloof in hen. En door de werking van dien Geest en door het Woord van God dat door dien Geest toegepast wordt, dooden die menschen hunne leden die op de aarde zijn. Wat dan? Dit volk wandelt naar den Geest. Dat wil zeggen, ze wandelen overeenkomstig dien Geest van Christus. Ze bedenken wat des Geestes is, wat Godes is, en wat daarom welluidt. En als ge nu, ter eener zijde, meer wilt weten van het wandelen naar 't vleesch, leest dan Gal. 5:19-21; en wilt ge meer weten van het wandelen naar den Geest, leest dan Gal. 5:22. Om kort te gaan: het wandelen naar het vleesch is de hel op aarde; maar het wandelen naar den Geest is de hemel op aarde. En daartoe worden we als Christenen ook geroepen. Betracht ge dat?

Geve de Heere U en mij genade om het leven der liefde Gods in Christus Jezus te leven hier op aarde. Tot Zijn eeuwigen prijs en lof.

G. Vos.



## Report of Classis East . . . IN SESSION OCTOBER 10th, 1951 AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

This session of Classis East was held at the Second Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids. Rev. H. H. Kuiper, who presided at the last Classis, conducted the usual opening exercises.

The credentials are read and accepted. They reveal that all the churches are represented by two delegates with the exception of Chatham; of this congregation only the pastor was able to be present.

According to rotation, Rev. G. Lubbers is called upon to preside, and Rev. H. H. Kuiper serves as clerk.

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

Grand Haven requests classical appointments in the interim between this and the next meeting of Classis. This request was granted.

A committee was appointed to draw up a schedule. Later in the meeting they presented the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

Oct. 21 Rev. G. Vos	Dec. 2 Rev. H. DeWolf
Oct. 28 Rev. G. Lubbers	Dec. 9 Rev. J. Blankespoor
Nov. 4 Rev. R. Veldman	Dec. 16 Rev. J. A. Heys
Nov. 11 Rev. E. Knott	Dec. 23 Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Nov. 18 Rev. M. Schippers	Dec. 30 Rev. C. Hanko
Nov. 25 Rev. B. Kok	Jan. 6 Rev. A. Petter
	Jan. 13 Rev. H. H. Kuiper

Next Classis was occupied with the letter from brethren in Hamilton, that also appeared in the Standard Bearer of Oct. 1, 1951. This letter was read and received for information. It was then placed in the hands of a committee to serve the Classis with advice in this matter.

This committee advised Classis to send the following answer to these brethren. Classis adopted this advice and sent them the following letter:

"Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches expresses, that we would be ready to accept your confession of guilt with respect to your evil treatment of Rev. H. Veldman and Elder S. Reitsma, were it not for the fact that almost in the same breath you publicly attack the good name and reputation of Rev. H. Veldman without proof, and contrary to the report our classical committee gave of this matter. We require that you publicly retract the unfounded charges against your former pastor.

Also Classis East condemns your use of the name Prot. Ref. Church, to which you have no right, since you withdrew from the fellowship of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

Finally, we counsel you in the name of the Lord:

1. To publicly confess your sins, committed against Rev. H. Veldman and brother Reitsma, before Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches.
2. That you request the Classis to reorganize you into a Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton.
3. That you request the Classis to reinstate you together with the Rev. Veldman and Elder Reitsma in your office of elders and deacons and minister in the Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton that is thus reorganized.
4. That if then you have any objections against the work of the Rev. H. Veldman, you walk the legal way, bringing your objections to your own consistory, calling a neighboring consistory if necessary, and finally appeal to Classis.

It is our sincere desire that you heartily confess the sins committed, and that you may strive to walk the church political way toward healing the existing breach between you and us."

The consistory of Hope comes with an overture in re a conference of ministers and elders of both classes. Classis advises Hope that according to Art. 30 D.K.O. this matter cannot be treated here but that this matter belongs to the organic endeavour of our churches.

A consistory asks for advice in re the increasing of censure upon two confessing members. After the necessary light is given by the consistory, Classis advises them to increase the censure.

A consistory asks advice in re the erasure of a baptized member. After the necessary information is given by the consistory, classis advises to erase this baptized member.

Rev. G. Lubbers and Rev. G. Vos were elected to serve in the classical committee. D Jonker was elected as stated clerk.

The chairman, Rev. G. Lubbers thanks the ladies for their catering services.

The minutes are read and approved. Rev. J. Bankespoor closes with prayer.

D. JONKER, S.C.