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MEDITATION

Jezus, Het Licht Der Wereld

“Jezus dan sprak wederom tot hen, zeggende: ik ben het licht der wereld: die mij volgt zal in de duisternis niet wandelen, maar zal het licht des levens hebben.”

—Joh. 8:12.

Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet met wat groote pretenties de Heere Jezus sprak alle de dagen Zijns levens? Hij noemt Zich het Brood, dat uit den hemel neerdaalde; het Water des levens; en heir noemt Hij Zich het Licht der wereld, en voegt er aan toe, dat die Hem volgt in de duisternis niet zal wandelen, maar dat hij het Licht des levens zal hebben. Nooit is er iemand geweest in de geschiedenis der wereld die met zulke pretenties tot het mensdom kwam. Het is daarom zoo dwaas om van Jezus te spreken en te leeren, dat Hij maar een gewoon mensch was. Als men dat doet, moet men als vanzelf nog een stap verder gaan, en leeren, dat Jezus de menschen bedroog, want geen gewoon mensch mag zulke titels zichzelf geven zooals Jezus deed. Er is daarom slechts ééne verklaring die past en die verklaring is, dat Jezus God is, te prijzen tot in der eeuwigheid. Hij zeide: Ik ben het Licht der wereld. En dat is eeuwig waar, want Hij is niet minder dan Jehovah, de Ik zal zijn die Ik zijn zal, tot ons gekomen in menselijke gestaltenis; Hij is waarlijk en waarachtig mensch, maar Hij is ook waarlijk en waarachtig God. Als we dat door genade mogen zien en gelooven, dan past alles, en dan zijn het geen pretenties waarmede de Heere Jezus tot ons kwan, doch dan brengt Hij ons de heerlijke waarheid, dat Hij is de Immanuel, God met ons! Dan zingen we tot in alle eeuwigheid van de zoo troostvolle waarheid, dat Jezus de duisternis verbrak die ons omhulde, en dat Hij voor ons kwam te staan als het Licht

der wereld, als het Licht dat van Gods aan'zicht straalt, hetwelk de blijdschap van Gods volk ten toppunt zal doen stijgen.

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De woorden van mijn tekst werden door Jezus gesproken gedurende de viering van het Loofhutten feest. En er schijnt ook een verband te zijn geweest tusschen Jezus' gebruik van deze beeldspraak in mijn tekst en een gewoonte die gevolgd werd door de Joden op dit Loofhutten feest. Men zegt, dat het de gewoonte was om twee groote lampen te ontsteken bij het vallen van den avond, aan beide zijden van het brandoffer altaar, lampen die niet alleen den Tempel en zijnen omtrek verlichtten, doch welks licht zelfs gezien werd door de menigte van feestvierders die Jeruzalem naderden, en in de verte die schoone lichten ziende, uitbraken in blijden zang en jubel. En bij die gelegenheid moet het dan geweest zijn, dat de Heere Jezus in de nabijheid van die lichten, mijne tekstwoorden uitsprak. Beginnende bij de typische en symbolische sprake van die twee groote lichten, zeide Hij dan, op Zichzelven wijzende: Ik ben het Licht der wereld! Met andere woorden: Ik ben de vervulling van al die typen en symbolen en schaduwen! Al die zaken en dingen waren niet dan een schaduw en belofte van wat nu in Mij vervuld is.

En dat is niet slechts zoo in verband met die brandende en schijnende lampen, doch met den geheelen typischen dienst die ingesteld was door God in Israel. Alle lijnen in het theocratische Israel loopen immers uit op Jezus Christus in wien zij hun vervulling ontvingen? Dat is zoo met land, stad, tempel, offers, priester, profeet en koning: alle die dingen en zaken vonden hun vervulling in den Zoon van God, den Heiland van het ware Israel der eeuwen.

En zoo is het ook nog vandaag. Ook heden begroeten we dien Jezus Christus als de vervulling van alle beloften, schaduwen en typen die aan de kerk van het Oude Verbond gegeven waren. En willen we

luisteren naar het Evangelie zooals Jezus het predikt in onzen tekst: Hij is het Licht der wereld.

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Ik ben ervan overtuigd, dat er ook iets zit in het feit, dat Jezus deze woorden sprak op het Loofhutten feest. Dat was het feest waarin het volk Gods twee dingen herdacht, en die twee dingen staan ook in onderling verband. Eerst was het het feest des oogstes, en dan ook het feest van de herdenking van wat de Heere gedaan had voor Zijn volk in de veertigjarige omzwerving in de huilende wildernis. Het verband lag zeker in het feit, dat de Heere hen verzorgde, zoodat al hun nooddrift gedurig vervuld werd, alhoewel men gedurende die veertig jaren niet zaaien noch oogsten kon.

En op dat feest zegt Jezus: Ik ben het Licht der wereld. Nu moet men voor de aandacht houden, dat het beeld van mijn tekst, dat spreekt van Licht, het leven Gods beduidt. Licht is leven, de trilling van leven, het leven Gods. Want God is de fontein van leven, van alle leven. Zoo had ook God het gepredikt in die lange zwerftocht van veertig jaren. Want de Heere was steeds nabij geweest in die vuurkolom die des daags gezien werd, en die dan en des nachts gloeide van goddelijk licht. Die wolkkolom was de heerlijkheid Gods, en heerlijkheid is uitstraling van deugden, het deugdenbeeld Gods. Zoo zullen we bemerken, dat licht, dat is, leven, het inbegrip is van alle deugd. Als Jezus zegt: Ik ben het Licht, dan beduidt dit, dat in Hem alle ware deugd gevonden wordt, zooals Hij het aangezicht, de openbaring van den DrieEenigen God is. En die deugden worden ons duide-lijk geleerd in Gods dierbaar Woord. Gods deugden zijn Zijn goedheid en trouw, almacht en majesteit, recht en gerechtigheid, lankmoedigheid en liefde; Zijn eeuwigheid en onuitsprekelijke schoonheid: Zijn wijsheid en vermogen, kortom, alles wat de Heilige Schrift ons vertelt van de wonderen, majesteit en groote deugden Gods. Johannes vat het alles te zamen en zegt, dat God een Licht is, en dat er gansch geene duisternis in Hem is.

Al die deugden nu zijn geopenbaard in Jezus Christus. En er is geen deugd in het Goddelijk Wezen die Hij niet geopenbaard heeft. Indien iemand den tijd er voor nemen wilde, kon hij zulks heel gemakkelijk bewijzen door alle teksten op te zoeken in de Heilige Schrift waar het werk van Jezus, mitsgaders Zijne leeringen in verband gezet worden met de deugden Gods. Zoo lezen we, dat Hij het land doorging goed doende. En is Hij de Goede Herder. Zoo lezen we, dat Hij alle krankheden met slechts een woord genas. We hebben ons grootelijks verwonderd, dat zelfs op Zijn woord de dood moest wijken, en Zelf stond Hij op ten derden dage uit de dooden. Bovendien tintel-

den Zijn spreuk van Goddelijke wijsheid en verstand. En om niet meer te noemen: Hij maakte van de krankzinnigen gedweeë volgelingen, en van den haat blazenden Saulus maakte Hij een beminnden Paulus.

O zeker, het is overduidelijk geworden, dat Jezus de openbaring is van het Licht Gods, dat is, van het volle deugdenbeeld des Almachtigen. Jezus is het Licht der wereld.

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En als de tekst zegt, dat Hij het Licht *der wereld* was, dan houdt dat zeker in, dat Hij de van God gegeven Gids is voor Gods wereld naar het harte Gods waarvan zij vervreemd was. De wereld, dat wil zeggen, de wereld van Gods eeuwige geneugten, was gevallen in de duisternis des doods, en als het licht beeld is van deugd, dan is de duisternis beeld van alle ondeugd. En die ondeugden zijn ook opgesomd in het Woord van God. En Jezus is het Licht dat schijnt in de duistere wereld van Gods eeuwige liefde en het doel van dat schijnen is, dat die van God beminde wereld verlost worde van hare duisternis en tot in alle eeuwigheid weer wandele in het licht des levens.

En dat is gerealiseerd in Jezus Christus. Beide voorwerpelijk en onderwerpelijk is Jezus het Licht der wereld. Voorwerpelijk is Hij dat Licht, want Hij neemt al de duisternis des doods op Zich en draagt die weg om nooit meer terug te komen. En onderwerpelijk is Hij het Licht want door Zijn Geest schijnt Hij in de harten van allen die tot Gods uitverkoren wereld behooren. Door dat licht roept Hij hen uit de duisternis des doods, en zet ze over in het Koninkrijk van Gods eeuwig licht. Ge kunt het ook zoo zeggen: door Zijn leven en sterven en verrijzenis verlost Hij de gekenden Gods van schuld en doem; en door Zijn Heiligen Geest en Woord roept Hij het zelfde volk van uit de klauwen des duivels en vanuit den dood tot het leven der verbondsgemeenschap met den levenden God. Zoo is Jezus het Licht der wereld.

Dat Licht moet gevolgd worden. En dat volgen van dat Licht is niet anders dan het zaligmakend geloof. Luistert naar Jezus' eigen commentaar: "Terwijl gij het licht hebt geloofd in het licht, opdat gij kinderen des lichts zijn moogt. Ik ben een licht in de wereld gekomen, opdat een iegelijk die in Mij geloofd in de duisternis niet blijve." Joh. 12:36 en 46. Ge ziet, dat we deze woorden aanhalen uit het verband van onzen tekst. Het volgen van Jezus is het levende geloof in Hem. En als ge zoudt vragen: maar wat wil dat zeggen: gelooven in Jezus, dan is het antwoord dit: dan kent ge Hem, en dan lieft ge Hem. Geloof is weten, kennen, wijsheid en verstand aangaande het Licht, en dat is de DrieEenige God in het aangezicht van Jezus Christus. Het beteekent dat ge de deugd, de ware deugd Gods leert kennen, en dan bedoelen we *kennen*

niet zoozeer in intellectueelen alswel in geestelijken zin. Dat kennen staat in onlosmakelijk verband met de liefde Gods die in onze harten is uitgestort door den Heiligen Geest die ons is gegeven. Rom. 5. En in dezelfde mate dat ge dat Licht kent, vertrouwt ge dat Licht, bouwt ge op dat Licht en laat U zakken en zinken op dat Licht, op dien Heiland onzer volkomene verlossing. En dat geloof in en vertrouwen op dat Licht openbaart zich in gehoorzaamheid. Geloof en ongehoorzaamheid worden in de Schrift tegenover elkaar geplaatst. Ziet het in Joh. 3:36. Die in den Zoon gelooft, die heeft het eeuwige leven; maar wie den Zoon ongehoorzaam is, die zal het leven niet zien, maar de toorn Gods blijft op hem. Gelooven in Jezus beduidt gehoorzamen van Zijn stem.

En het motief is theologisch. Men gehoorzaamt omdat men met groot verlangen hunkert naar de gemeenschap met God in het licht des levens. En dit alles te zamen is vrucht van het trekken des Heiligen Geestes en het dierbare Woord van God die te zamen ons trekken naar God heen, door Jezus Christus de Heere.

Gij allen weet, dat Hij zulks beloofde toen Hij nog op aarde wandelde. Ik dan, als ik verhoogd zal zijn, zal ze allen tot Mij trekken. Allen hier is natuurlijk niet alle menschen hoofd voor hoofd, doch allen die Hem van den Vader gegeven zijn, of kortweg, de uitverkorenen. Hij, Jezus Christus, het Licht der wereld, is de grootere en betere Jozua die het volk Gods leidt, totdat ze allen aankomen daarboven bij God.

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Nu zit daar nog een schoone gedachte in opgesloten die we niet over het hoofd mogen zien. Ik heb het oog hierop, dat Jezus ons leidt in die optocht vanuit de diepten des doods en der duisternis tot de hoogten van de verbondsgemeenschap in het eeuwig licht van Gods leifde. Jezus leidt ons en ging voorop en dat beteekende iets heel vreeselijks. Want Hij moest komen waar Hij ons vond, en dat is in de diepten des eeuwigen doods. De ware Kerk van God, dat is, de uitverkorenen, waren niet beter dan de anderen. Ze zijn allen kinderen des toorns. Ze zijn allen bedolven van nature in de zonde, schuld, straf, dood, verdoemenis en vloek. Dat zijn de vreeselijke feiten. En nu kwam Jezus, het Licht der wereld, en nam al die zonde als schuld, en al dien eeuwigen dood en verdoemenis en vloek op Zich. Hij ging vooruit, zeide ik. En dat zal waar zijn. Het beteekende voor Jezus dat Hij den eeuwigen dood moest sterven, dat Hij moest brullen in den eeuwigen nacht van Godsverlating.

O, de Kerk van Jezus is duur geknocht!

En die Jezus nu, staat in den hof van Jozef als de groote Christus Triumfator, and Hij roept Zijn jongeren en al Gods volk toe: Volgt Mij! en het gevolg

zal zijn, dat ge in de duisternis niet zult wandelen, maar gij zult het licht des levens hebben! Die in de duisternis is, is een dwaas. Men kan niet wandelen in de duisternis. In de donkerheid struikelt men. Dit doet ons denken aan den Spreukendichter. Die zeide eens: "Het pad des rechtvaardigen is gelijk een schijnend licht, voortgaande en lichtende tot den vollen dag toe. De weg der goddeloozen is als donkerheid, ze weten niet waarover ze struikelen zullen." En dat is de wandel van een ieder natuurlijk mensch; ook van hen die uiteindelijk zalig worden.

En daarom, zullen we deze woorden van Jezus opvolgen, en, aan de eene zijde, niet in de duisternis wandelen; en, aan de andere zijde, zullen we Jezus volgen, en daarom in het Licht der wereld wandelen, dan moet er een wonder met ons geschieden. En die wonderen geschieden er alle dagen. Jezus trekt nog Zijn volk, dat Hij als een erfenis van God ontving. Nog gebeurt het, dat Hij Zijn intrek neemt in harde harten, dezelve verbrijzelende door Zijn Woord en Geest. En dan, ja, dan gaat het anders en dan wordt het anders. Ik zeide zooeven, dat elk natuurlijk mensch in de duisternis wandelt. Wel, de duisternis is de sfeer van zonde, vuilheid, krommigheid en alle leelijke ondeugd. De wandel van een mensch is zijn leven zooals dat leven in het diepe hart begint. En dat geheele leven is duisternis. Dit is zoo geheel en al, dat Paulus zegt, dat wij eertijds duisternis *waren*. Het is de sfeer van onkunde, onreinheid en smart, want bij die duisternis past de toorn Gods, en die brengt smart, nu al in beginsel en straks in de buitenste duisternis zal die smart vereeuwigd worden, en zal men weenen en zijn tanden knerssen. Dat is de eenvoudige waarheid.

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Maar hoe geheel anders wordt dat als we door Gods genade in het licht mogen wandelen! En we hebben gezien, dat dit beteekent om Jezus te volgen. Als we dat doen, dan is van ons van toepassing wat Paulus zegt: Maar nu zijt gij licht in den Heere. Ziet ge, dan komt Jezus en woont in Uw hart. En dan wordt het geheel anders. We hebben bij het begin van onze overdenking gezien, dat het licht van mijn tekst ziet op het deugdenbeeld van God, zooals dit beeld door Jezus Christus geopenbaard werd. Welnu, als Jezus in ons diepe hart gaat wonen door wedergeboorte en bekeering en geloof, dan openbaren wij datzelfde licht dat van Gods aanzicht straalt. En daarom zeide Jezus: Gij zijt het licht der wereld! En dat is nog slechts een klein beginsel. De duisternis speelt ons nog vaak parten. Hoe heerlijk zal het zijn als we straks mogen wandelen in de zalen des hemels in 't volmaakte Licht Gods!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS**The Synod of 1951**

After the overture of Pella was read, the discussion continued as follows:

The Rev. H. H.: Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I want to state that the suspicion that is cast by Pella and by the Rev. Gritters, as if the Declaration was directed against the Rev. Petter is certainly thoroughly false. I cannot help it that the Rev. Petter wrote as he did. But the Declaration of Principles is not motivated by anything which he wrote, but simply by the desire to maintain our Protestant Reformed truth and to give the Mission Committee that which they ask for, namely, a basis for the organization of prospective churches. There was nothing else, and there is not one item of proof to sustain the suspicion that the Declaration was written in order to oppose the Rev. Petter. In the second place, Mr. Chairman, I want to remind the Synod again that the question is simply whether this Declaration is the expression of the truth as contained in our Confessions. The overture of Pella contains many quotations to prove that Reformed writers spoke of conditions in the past. To me that means nothing. I can readily grant that contention of Pella. And over against that I can quote other passages from equally Reformed writers which show the contrary. Dr. Bavinck writes that faith itself is not a condition for the other benefits of salvation, such as, justification and sanctification. Again he writes that the covenant relation did not depend on the keeping of the law as a preceding condition. And again, that the covenant is not dependent on any condition of man. And once more: "Properly speaking there are no conditions in the covenant of grace." And Dr. Kuiper, in his *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, writes: "Conditional is the covenant of grace never God gives everything, everything for nothing." Or, to give you a very specific quotation from the dogmatics of Dr. Bavinck, he writes in *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, III, 241: "In the first period theologians spoke freely of conditions of the covenant, but when the nature of the covenant of grace was thought into more deeply and had to be defended over against the Romish, the Lutherans, and the Remonstrants, many had objections against this terminology and avoided it." Once more I want to say that I do not attach over much importance to quotations from Reformed theologians. But these quotations which I just referred to certainly neutralize all that Pella has to say on this score. Besides, I am ashamed that Pella quotes Prof. Berkhof, one of the chief fathers of the Three Points. The question is not either whether the Reformed theologians that were delegates or present at the Synod of Dordrecht spoke of conditions. Also that we can grant. But while the term was wellknown by the Father of the Canons, and in the opinions of some, as, for instance, those of North Holland, the term was used, how do you explain that nevertheless we never find the term in the Confessions, except as put in the mouths of the Arminians. I could easily make a motion to express as a Synod that our Confessions never use the term **conditions**, except in the Arminian sense. And no one can possibly deny this. But this is not the question. The question certainly is not whether all the opinions, of Calvin and Berkhof and the delegates of the Synod of Dordrecht and others, Heyns included, are Reformed. We certainly must not take that position as Synod. That all such opinions were Reformed in a very general sense of the word was indeed our position before 1924. Then

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we were still in the Christian Reformed Churches. They had not cast us out. And then we were willing to admit that all such opinions could be tolerated in the Reformed churches. But shall we do the same thing today? Shall we go back of 1924, and take that same general Reformed position? I personally will never go along with a movement that includes all those opinions and positions, and accepts them as being Reformed, that is, I will never go with a movement that would make our churches officially to assume such a position. Then we can just as well subscribe to the Three Points, and admit that they too are Reformed. Then certainly we must admit that the First Point of 1924 was correct. The question, the very serious question, before us as Synod is whether we are willing to remain distinct. For that reason we base the Declaration of Principles four-squarely on the Confessions. Our official opinion here as Synod must not be based upon the opinions of men, not even on that of Calvin. We all know that it is very well possible for me to quote Calvin in order to prove that there is common grace. That does not mean that we as churches can officially hold such an opinion. We must not go back, but defend our beautiful and strong position at the head of all the Reformed churches. And therefore, we must stand on the basis of our Confessions. Let us continue to do this. O, even after the Synod of Dordt, 1618-19, many theologians claimed that they based their views on the Confessions. But they had no right to that claim. The same is true today. Even the Chr. Reformed Churches claim that the Three Points of 1924 are based upon the Reformed Confessions. We know nevertheless that this is not true. And therefore, let us clearly state what our Confessions teach, and stand upon their basis. Let us declare here as Synod that the Declaration of Principles is in harmony with the Confessions. Then we will remain distinct. Let us go on, not retreat. Reject this Declaration, and we sink back to a general Reformed basis. That danger is indeed imminent. Already it is evident that we have been influenced by Liberated theology, influenced by the writings of Prof. Veenhof, Dr. Schilder, and Bremmer. Be we should not be. We should be strong enough to take our own definitely Reformed stand. Mind you, do not misunderstand me. I do not take the position that these men are to be cast out. But I do take the position that we as Prot. Ref. Churches do not support their position.

We often speak of conditions in the Reformed sense. I would like to have someone give us a clear-cut definition of such conditions. Let someone present such a definition, and then let us test it. No one has ever made an attempt at this, not even Dr. Schilder, whether in the conferences we had with him or in the *Reformatie*. To me, a condition is always a prerequisite which someone must fulfill in order to receive something from someone else. Apply that definition of conditions to the work of salvation, and you have pure Arminianism. But, Mr. Chairman, we must not discuss here on the floor of Synod the abstract questions of conditions. That is not necessary here, for we stand before a very definite question. What point II of the Declaration of Principles teaches on the basis of the Confession is that the **promise** is unconditional. This we already accepted principally when we adopted point I of the Declaration. And, Mr. Chairman, I want to state that certainly it has always been our Prot. Ref. position that the promise is unconditional. That I personally always maintained that position may be well-known to all of us, even though some try to quote me erroneously in favor of the opposite position. I always denied that the promise is conditional and that faith is a condition. And this is the sole question before Synod at present. Are we going to deny that the promise

is unconditional? Are we going to assume the position that faith is a condition? The question is: condition unto what? Is faith a condition unto the promise? The moment we accept that position, we certainly depart from all that is taught in the Confessions concerning the promise, as I have clearly shown. Faith is not a condition unto the promise. But faith is included in the promise itself. Faith is promised. A horse's hoof is not a condition for a horse. A section of an orange is not a condition for the orange. My eye is not a condition for my body. No more is faith a condition of the promise. Faith is included in the promise. Faith is promised. Faith in relation to the promise, therefore, can certainly not be called a condition. To claim that God promises faith on condition of faith is absurd and nonsense. In the Confessions faith never occurs as a condition unto the promise, but it is a God-given instrument whereby the promise is appropriated. As I have emphasized before, the Holy Spirit is also included in the promise, and the gift of the Holy Spirit certainly can never be conditional. When God promises the Holy Spirit, He promises the application of all the benefits of salvation, — regeneration, calling, faith, justification, sanctification, etc. And all this is not our part of God's covenant, but God's part. And therefore, faith is included in the promise, and can never be a condition unto the promise. I am afraid, as I have said before, that some of us have a very limited conception of the promise of God, so that it only included eternal life in the future. The promise of salvation, then, is the promise to go to heaven. And faith is presented as a condition to enter into heaven. I am afraid that there is disagreement on this score among us. We do not understand the all-comprehensive promise of God, as it is taught in our Reformed Confessions. I am afraid sometimes that the trouble is that we have been separated too long as churches. How otherwise can you explain the patent fact that at this Synod Classes East and West are divided exactly along this line. We should have had conferences as ministers and elders. And we should still have conferences, preferably with as many of our people present as can attend such conferences. I said last week that a certain exclusive emphasis on the promise as it occurs in Canons II, 5 is evident on the floor of the Synod. This is evidently what the Rev. Gritters wants. This is not an insinuation. But nevertheless, this exclusive emphasis on Canons II, 5 as a definition of the promise is dangerous. It does not do justice to the concept **promise** as it is in our Confessions. If you do this, you probably get the notion that faith is a condition to enter into heaven. I do not mean to say that this is the teaching of Canons II, 5. Nevertheless, the danger is that when you place exclusive emphasis on the promise as it occurs there, you will teach and preach thus. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I want to warn Synod that we do not go the way of a general Reformed tendency and position, but that we adhere to the Confessions, regardless of the opinions of Reformed writers; that we do not retreat, but go onward, and develop and strengthen the Reformed position.

Rev. Howerzyl: I agree with much that has been said by the Rev. Hoeksema. Nevertheless, I think that the Rev. Gritters is held up to ridicule. I would be suspicious too of men who would point only to Berkhof. But even the *Standard Bearer* put the stamp of approval on what Berkhof said. For this I refer you to the overture of Oskaloosa. The point which Pella wants to bring out is that the impression is left that all use of the word **condition** is condemned, when we adopt the Declaration of Principles. We must remember that basically we are not dealing with a Declaration for those that are outside of our churches. The Declaration concerns us too. I cer-

tainly am willing in a proper way to submit to an examination of my views, but not in this way. If this Declaration is meant to be only for those that are outside, let us make this very clear. Mention has been made of a generally Reformed stand. And it has been said that if we assume such a stand, we can just as well go back to the Christian Ref. Churches. I have been told before that I should go back to the Chr. Ref. Churches. My orthodoxy already has been judged and questioned. I am afraid that this Declaration is going to be used as a club over our head, and that by it we are becoming too limited in our opportunity to express our opinions.

The Rev. Ophoff: Our fathers had reasons for composing the Canons. And those reasons were the five points of the Arminians. At that time too many said, "We must not be bound." But if this Declaration of Principles is in agreement with the Confessions, how can it possibly bind us more than our Confessions bind us? And why are we afraid to adopt it? How could the Declaration ever be used as a club over our head, above the Confessions? Do we not agree with our Confessions? Do we not love the Confessions? If so, we also agree with the Declaration. If the law is in us, we are blessed. But if the law is only outside of us, we are cursed. The same is true with the Declaration of Principles. If we hate this truth, it curses us. But if it is in our hearts, how can it possibly be a club over our heads to kill us?

Rev. Veldman: How can a Declaration be a club over our head to kill us? I can conceive of the fact that Confessions can. But can a Declaration?

Rev. Vos: I want to remind Synod that we are debating the question whether we shall check point II with the Confessions, not whether someone's private opinion will become a club. Let us be definite. Let us definitely refer to the Confessions. And tell us what is not in harmony with such and such an article in the Three Forms of Unity.

Rev. Gritters: Pella does not say that it wants conditions. We definitely said that we do not mean to usher in the term. But we are nevertheless afraid that those who do use it in our circles will be disciplined on the basis of the Declaration.

Rev. Veldman: I would like to know what is wrong with this point II confessionally, and what we as Protestant Reformed Churches never taught that is contained in the Declaration. What has to be added? Some seem to think that it does not say everything. And therefore I ask the question: what, according to them, should be added?

Rev. Ophoff: The Confessions state literally that faith is not a condition unto salvation, but a means or instrument. Now we are discussing the question whether the Declaration is the expression of the Confessions. If any do not agree with this statement, they are under the moral obligation to show that the Declaration is in contradiction to the Three Forms of Unity. If they cannot do this, they may never vote against this motion.

Rev. Doezeema: I want to make an amendment to this motion, that we add the following: "There are conditions in God's Word, the confrontation of God's demand which God annexes to the promise, in order to bring out clearly His unconditional grace and mercy, as well as His just wrath and man's inability to fulfill them."

Rev. H. H.: We must not forget, Mr. Chairman, that this Declaration is based upon the Confessions. I therefore must ask the Rev. Doezeema to base his amendment on the Confessions, and not to appeal directly to Scripture. We must have no additions to the Confessions, which the motion certainly is. The brethren have been maintaining right along that this

Declaration of Principles is a fourth form. But this amendment would surely make it such. Let us give Rev. Doezeema time, while we have recess, to find confessional proof for his amendment. The method to avoid the Confessions, and to get directly at Scripture over the Confessions was the method of the Arminians, and always is.

Mr. N. Yonker: With this suggestion, Mr. Chairman, I agree. Let us give the Rev. Doezeema all the time he wants to find confessional proof for his amendment.

Rev. H. H.: I move that we give the Rev. Doezeema time till tomorrow morning to submit confessional grounds for the amendment he made.

Mr. J. Faber: I support this motion, Mr. Chairman.

The motion to give the Rev. Doezeema time till 9 o'clock Tuesday morning carries.

Tuesday morning, 9 o'clock.

After the proper devotional exercises have been conducted, the discussion continues as follows:

Rev. Doezeema: To see this proposition of mine clearly, we must turn to several Scriptural passages, such as. . .

Rev. Ophoff: This is out of order, Mr. Chairman. The Rev. Doezeema agreed to come with confessional proof, and not with the Scriptures.

Rev. Doezeema: I always operate this way. I think we must always take the Scriptures and the Confessions together.

Rev. Vos: An interpretation of the Confessions requires grounds from the Confessions only. We need not go outside of those Confessions to search for grounds for an amendment.

Rev. Veldman: Let the Rev. Doezeema speak. Can we not cull out the Scriptural passages pretty soon?

Rev. Doezeema: When we treated the oath of the promise, appeal was also made immediately to the Scriptures.

Rev. Ophoff: Mr. Chairman, the Arminians always adopted that same method. They too would never appeal to the Confessions, and would not be bound by them, but would seek refuge in Scriptural passages.

Rev. Veldman: Those words of the Rev. Ophoff may be true. But to say that here to these brethren does not leave a good impression.

Rev. Vos: I rule this Scriptural reference out of order.

Rev. Doezeema: I will limit myself, then, to our Confessions. Let us begin with the Heidelberg Catechism. In Qu. 2 we read: "How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this true comfort, mayest live and die happily?" And in the answer we read of the three requirements that are necessary to possess this only comfort in life and death. I want to call the attention of Synod that here you have requirements, things that must be there before we have this comfort. In Question 3 mention is made of the law, which confronts us with its blessing and curse. Again in this question emphasis is laid on the requirement of man. Qu. 5 asks: "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" And the answer is: "In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." In this negative answer you have the confrontation of man with the law of God to bring out the misery of man and his incapability to fulfill the conditions. In Lord's Day V, Qu. 12, we read: "Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?" And the answer is: "God will have his justice satisfied: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves or by another." Here once more you have the confrontation of the demand.

Satisfaction must be made. That is the demand. And that satisfaction must be made by us or by another. In this way we are taught to see the necessity of the incarnation. Qu. 84 of the same Heidelberg Catechism contains a conditional temporal question: "How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?" And again you have the confrontation of the demand in the answer, when you read: "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." This plainly shows that we experience the forgiveness of sins only when we believe. The experience of forgiveness is only for the believing heart. Qu. 86 speaks of the "must" of good works: "Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?" This question and its answer again mentions the confrontation of the law of God. According to the answer we can have the assurance of faith only by its fruit. Good works are required of us. The fulfillment of them is the condition to the assurance of faith.

Now let us turn to the Belgic Confession. Art. 24 gives us the proper view of this assurance of faith. I will quote only part of this article, beginning near the end with the word "moreover": "Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus then we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior." In the matter of the assurance of faith God confronts us with the requirements of good works and of Christian living, not indeed as the ground of our assurance, for that assurance rests only on the merits of Christ. But nevertheless, good works must be performed to attain to the assurance of faith. I may refer once more to the Heidelberg Catechism. Question 116 asks: "Why is prayer necessary for Christians?" And the answer is: "Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us: and also, because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them." Here again we are confronted with the demand. Prayer is a condition for Christian living. Again, Art. 22 of the Belgic Confession speaks "of all things which are requisite for our salvation," and says that they are all in Christ.

Now let us turn to the Canons. Canons I, 3 speaks of the calling of the preaching to repentance and faith. These therefore come in the form of a demand. And again, therefore, you have a requisite or condition to the enjoyment of salvation in this article of the Canons. In Canons II, 5 the promise is presented in a conditional form, and adds to that promise the command to repent and believe. Canons III, 5 says that the law "discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof." In other words, through the law God shows man how weak his flesh is, so that he cannot fulfill the demands of the law. This is the confrontation of the law. Canons III, IV, 17, the middle part, speaks of "the sacred precepts of the gospel." And it warns us that we must not presume to tempt God by separating what He of His good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. And it tells us: "For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually

is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced." Canons V, 4 admonishes us that converts must "be constant in watching and prayer, that they be not led into temptation." And further, it warns us that "when these are neglected, they are not only liable to be drawn into great and heinous sins, by Satan, the world and the flesh, but sometimes by the righteous permission of God actually fall into these evils." And Canons V, 5 speaks of the interruption of "the exercise of faith." And then they lose the sense of God's favor for a time, "until on their returning into the right way of serious repentance, the light of God's fatherly countenance again shines upon them." Here too God shows to the Christians the unbreakable chain of repentance, conversion, and enjoyment of grace. And in Canons V, 14 we see that God begins the work of grace in us "by the preaching of the gospel," and "so he preserves, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation thereon, and by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof, as well as by the use of the sacraments."

Now turn with me to the Baptism Form. The third part of the doctrinal section tells us that we are "obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." Here you have once more the confrontation of the law and the admonition and demands. This is all in a conditional form, so that unless we do this, there is no enjoyment of salvation. "And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony, that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God." Again you see here the unbreakable chain according to which God gives His unconditional mercy on condition of our fulfilling the demands of His covenant.

Rev. Ophoff: I have one question. What point is the Rev. Doezeema arguing in presenting these excerpts? Does he mean to argue that faith is a condition, a prerequisite unto salvation?

Rev. Doezeema: I do not make that kind of distinction and definition of faith. I consider faith to be a spiritual bond with Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism gives its contents. But you also have to insist upon the demand of faith. Faith is a requirement, a thing that God demands of all men. God does not stipulate that He demands it only of those who are in Christ. But when we obey that demand, faith in Christ will be the means of the enjoyment of salvation.

Rev. Veldman: I would rather have this discussion under point III of the Declaration. All this belongs under the unconditionality of salvation.

Rev. Ophoff: The Rev. Doezeema has evaded my question. We must have an answer. The Declaration of Principles says that faith is not a condition or a prerequisite unto salvation. Now let the Rev. Doezeema show us that this statement in the Declaration is not in harmony with the Confession. That is the question, and that question the Rev. Doezeema has not answered.

Rev. H. H.: In the first place, Mr. Chairman, I want to state that principally we can agree with what the Rev. Doezeema meant to say. I have tried very seriously to understand the Rev. Doezeema in respect to what he meant to say. And, if rightly understood, I think I can say again that there is no principal objection. Only, he always seems to want to present faith as a condition to salvation. And that certainly is not correct. In the second place, I want to say that the remarks of the Rev. Ophoff fall away, because this is not a substitute

motion, but an amendment to point II, which says plainly that faith is not a condition. And therefore in the amendment to this point the Rev. Doezeema cannot mean to say that faith is a condition, because then the amendment would destroy the original motion. I think, Mr. Chairman, that the Rev. Doezeema will admit that his own motion was somewhat hastily composed and is not very correctly worded, in fact, in a way is somewhat clumsily expressed. Besides, I agree with what the Rev. Veldman said about this amendment belonging under point III. Yesterday I offered to serve on a committee to help the Rev. Doezeema find confessional proof for his motion. I was very serious about this, although you rejected my offer. But I thought about the material of the Rev. Doezeema's amendment, attempted to put it in my own words, and find confessional proof for it. In this I acted all alone in my study last night. And this morning I am prepared to offer a suggestion which covers the same material as the amendment of the Rev. Doezeema, though it is presented in a different form. I have almost the same references from the confessions which he has. It may even look like plagiarism, but it is not. And therefore I suggest this amendment in the place of the Rev. Doezeema's: "The sure promise of God which He realizes in us as rational and moral creatures not only makes it impossible that we should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness, but also confronts us with the obligation of love: to walk in a new and holy life, and constantly to watch unto prayer. All those who are not thus disposed, who do not repent but walk in sin, are the objects of His just wrath and excluded from the kingdom of heaven."

I offer the following confessional grounds for this amendment.

1. The Baptism Form, point 3 of the doctrinal section, which speaks of our part in the covenant of God.

2. The Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, beginning with "all those then who are thus disposed," etc., and up to and including the paragraph which starts "All these while they continue in such sins," etc.

3. Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 64, which speaks of the impossibility of carelessness and profanity in believers Qu. 84, which speaks of the preaching of the gospel as a key of the kingdom of heaven. And Qu. 116 which speaks of the necessity of prayer for Christians.

4. Canons III, IV, 12, 16, 17, and also B, 9; V, 14.

5. Belgic Confession, Art. 24.

You see, Mr. Chairman, I proceed from the assumption that the Rev. L. Doezeema in his motion yesterday meant to make an amendment to II. He did not mean to destroy II as to its contents. Hence, point II still stands. That point says that faith is not a condition, but an instrument. The amendment certainly does not mean to contradict that proposition. If it does, it is no amendment. In the second place, Mr. Chairmen, I want to point out that the Rev. Doezeema in his argument from the Confession seems to forget that the promise of the covenant is not another law. It is not another covenant of works, but a covenant of grace. Grace dominates the whole covenant. The result is that we do not have to have another law confronting us, but that we have the law by grace written in our hearts. The obligation and the precept become one because both are rooted in love. There is not an obligation of another law, that stands without us. But there is an obligation of a law written in our hearts. It is not a law imposed upon us from without, but it is a law that is entirely in harmony with our inmost heart. For this you can see Heb. 8, which speaks of the new covenant through which the law is written in our hearts. Thirdly, as I said before, the Rev. Doezeema's

amendment is not correctly worded. In the first place, he speaks of "conditions in God's Word"; but it is not the Word of God, but the Confessions that is in question here. Besides, the Rev. Doezeema in his amendment states that these so-called conditions consist in "the confrontation of God's demand, which God annexes to the promise." Also this is not correct. God does not annex anything to the promise. That leaves the impression as if the promise after all were conditional, as if we must do something before we can receive the promise. And that is not correct. God does not annex the command to the promise. By the promise, that is, when God fulfills the promise, the demand is written in our hearts. And the last part of the amendment I suppose refers to the very first part. The pronoun "them" must refer to "conditions in God's Word." But grammatically the same pronoun could refer to all that is between. And therefore the formulation is clumsy and ambiguous.

Rev. Veldman: I was troubled about this business early this morning. More and more I feel that it is a pity that we never had conferences. We would have understood one another better. And we would have been closer to one another.

Rev. Vos: I too consider it unfortunate that this amendment comes at this time. It really belongs under the third point of the Declaration.

Rev. H. H.: To make this plain, Mr. Chairman, cannot we read point III with the amendment?

Rev. Veldman: Only the Rev. Doezeema can withdraw his amendment at this time, so that we can take it up at point III. It was his amendment.

Rev. Doezeema: Mr. Chairman, I want to maintain my own amendment. I still insist that there are conditions in the Word of God. The Declaration states that little infants cannot fulfill conditions. But that is not the question. This Declaration was tentatively adopted by our Synod of 1950. And since we have made history with this document, I want my stand to be known in the minutes of Synod, so that all our churches may know where I stand. Our churches ask me to preach for them, or extend a call to me. I want them to know my stand. And, if necessary, I also want my stand to be condemned officially. And therefore, I want my amendment to stand, so that all may know my position.

Rev. Ophoff: I wish I knew what that stand of the Rev. L. Doezeema is. His proposition is not clear to me. I interpret it as saying that the commands of God and the believers' response to the command is a condition to salvation. If that is true, then the law, obedience, and faith are conditions to salvation. On the other hand, he speaks of God's unconditional grace and mercy. There is ambiguity and dualism in his proposition. If God's mercy is unconditional, how can obedience to the law be a condition to this unconditional mercy? This to me is nonsense. And therefore I ask him to clarify his stand.

The discussion continues as follows:

Rev. van Weelden: Now we are getting at the heart of the matter. I am convinced that these statements concerning the unconditionality of salvation are certainly the truth. Yet I too feel that there are conditions in Scripture in a certain sense. I am not much in favor of the word **condition**, but there is an idea in the word that I like to keep. I feel like Bavinck, who said that in the covenant of grace there are no conditions or demands. But he speaks of a conditional form. Faith is no condition to the covenant, but a condition in the covenant. It is the way for the enjoyment of all the blessings of the covenant. The confrontation is very strong in Scripture. God confronts us, places before all who hear the demand to repent.

This element we must keep. I agree that salvation is unconditional, and that faith is no condition unto salvation. But this idea in conditions we must retain. (In this connection the Rev. van Weelden quoted some passages from the dogmatics of Dr. Bavinck, which, however, the reporter did not quote.)

Rev. Veldman: I like to emphasize that we are in danger of denying or softening the truth of the unconditionality of the promise of God when we try to maintain the term **condition** nevertheless. Remember that in our Confessions the term is never used favorably.

Rev. Ophoff: You may say all you like that salvation is unconditional. But if at the same time you speak of conditions, you have ambiguity, and a duality. The Rev. Doezeema says that God's mercy is unconditional, and yet that there are conditions in the Word of God. The whole issue in this debate is this: is the law of God and the believer's response to that law and to the demand a condition unto salvation? I like to have an answer to this question. We must know what the brethren mean.

Rev. H. H.: After the last remark of the Rev. L. Doezeema, I have need of his answering another question. Did he mean this amendment to be an amendment, or did he mean by this so-called amendment to contradict point II? I now get the impression that he does not agree with point II, and that he means to express this in his amendment. If so, then this is no amendment, but it destroys the original motion. And then it is out of order.

Rev. Doezeema: That is the usual way to place the burden of proof upon me. If Synod thinks that my amendment contradicts the Confessions and the Declaration, let Synod say it, and let Synod reject the amendment and reject me. That is what I want. It has been intimated that the only use of the word **condition** is Arminian. In my mind this is not true. We can use the word **condition** in such a way that the Confessions are not contradicted. And I do not think that my amendment contradicts the Confessions.

Rev. H. H.: I am not satisfied with that answer. I want a definite answer whether or not his amendment destroys the second point and the original motion. I say once more: in that case it is out of order. Will the Rev. Doezeema vote **yes** on the motion as amended? That is the test as to whether this amendment destroys the original motion, or not.

Rev. Doezeema: I gave the amendment to test your reaction to it. I intended to give another amendment later. I will not vote for anything which says, "This is an expression of the Confessions," till I can see the necessity of it.

Rev. Ophoff: I still like to know what the Rev. Doezeema means. Does he mean that faith is a condition unto salvation? Let him clarify his own proposition.

Rev. Doezeema: God has placed that unbreakable relationship that there is no enjoyment of salvation until certain things take place and certain demands are fulfilled.

Rev. Ophoff: Again, Mr. Chairman, that is evading the question.

The amendment of the Rev. L. Doezeema is now put to a vote, and fails to carry.

A substitute motion is made that Synod expresses that there is nothing essentially objectionable in Point II. That motion is supported. And immediately an amendment is made to add: "because it is the truth expressed in the Confessions." The amendment carries by a vote of 9 to 7. Thereupon the motion as

amended is put to a vote, and carries, again by a vote of 9 to 7.

Discussion is begun on point III of the Declaration.

A motion is made to express that this part of the Declaration is the truth expressed in the Confessions as these were always interpreted and maintained in the Prot. Ref. Churches.

Rev. Veldman: I make an amendment that instead of III, B, 2, we insert the statement which the Rev. H. H. made this morning, together with the grounds of the Confessions which he offered.

Rev. H. H.: I would like to know what this part of the Declaration is, that has to be replaced. The question is: are all the amendments covered by the statement I offered this morning? If so, I think it is safe to do this.

Part III, B, 2 is now read.

Mr. John Faber: The Rev. J. van Weelden said something was missing in the Declaration. I think he will find what is missing right in this amendment. I think, therefore, Mr. Chairman, we should adopt this amendment.

The amendment is now voted upon, and carries. No dissenting votes are voiced. Thereupon the motion with the amendment is put to a vote, and carries by a vote of 9 to 7.

Point IV of the Declaration is now read and discussed.

Rev. H. H.: I make a motion that we eliminate A under IV.

Rev. Vos: That is out of order. We first must have a motion to the effect that we adopt point IV.

Rev. Veldman: I so move.

Rev. H. H.: I now make an amendment to eliminate point A, 1 and 2. My ground for this amendment is not that we do not express the truth here, but I am nevertheless impressed by the objections handed in that we cannot express judgment upon these churches.

The amendment is put to a vote and carries without a dissenting vote.

Another amendment is made to insert the amendments suggested by Classis East, which contain the grounds for the motion that is on the floor. This amendment too carries without a dissenting vote.

The motion with the amendments is now put to a vote. It carries without a dissenting vote being voiced.

The preamble is now treated, and a motion is made to adopt the preamble. A substitute motion is made to add this preamble to the Declaration. A motion is made to table the matter till we decide the main question as to whether we are going to adopt the Declaration for the use of the Mission Committee and the missionary as a basis for the organization of churches.

A motion is now made to adopt the Declaration, to be used by the Mission Committee and the missionary as a basis for the organization of churches.

An amendment is made to add the word "only,"

so that it reads: "to be used only for the organization of churches."

The amendment carries.

The Tuesday afternoon session is closed with prayer.

The Wednesday morning session is opened with the proper devotional exercises. Thereupon the Rev. A. Cammenga is given the floor to address Synod, a privilege to which he has the right according to Art. 8 of the Constitution of the Mission Committee.

I am very sorry that the reporter did not transcribe that speech of the Rev. Cammenga in his report. But at the time I jotted down the main points of that speech. These are as follows: 1. In the first place, the Rev. Cammenga expressed that he was very much aggrieved by the atmosphere of suspicion in which he labored as missionary of our churches. He felt very strongly that he and his labors were put under a cloud of suspicion in the midst of our churches, as if he did not faithfully present the Prot. Ref. truth in his labors.

2. In the second place, the Rev. Cammenga strongly expressed that he had no objection to the contents of the Declaration. He feels that they are surely the expression of the Confessions, as we have always interpreted them. He is in full agreement with the truth of that Declaration, has always preached it, and will preach it in the future.

3. The Rev. Cammenga asks what must be done with the Declaration when he goes to the mission field. Must the Declaration be conceived as a signatory document, which all that express the desire to be organized as a Prot. Ref. Church must sign? And must the people thoroughly understand the contents of the Declaration and express whole-hearted agreement with its contents before they can even be organized into a Prot. Ref. Church? The speaker feels that this will take a long time. He suggests that a pamphlet be written, or even a series of pamphlets, to present this Declaration in printed form, together with the necessary elucidations and comments.

Rev. Hoeksema: In the first place, Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few remarks in response to the speech of the Rev. Cammenga. As to his remark concerning the suspicion that is cast upon his labors, I want to emphasize that I personally am certainly not the author of those suspicions. I never gossip and cast suspicion. But what I say and write I express openly. Nor do I hear much about that suspicion. But, Mr. Chairman, it is not our churches that cast suspicion upon the labors of our missionaries, but those outside of our churches. I refer to writings such as those of Mr. van Dixhoorn in Chatham, who declared publicly that when Chatham was organized, they never promised to abide by the doctrine of the Prot. Ref. Churches. For the rest, Mr. Chairman, I think I can assure the Rev. Cammenga that our churches do not put him under a cloud of suspicion.

I am very glad, Mr. Chairman, that the Rev. Cammenga expressed wholehearted agreement with the contents of the Declaration. And I will try to answer briefly his question as to what must be done with the Declaration of Principles in the mission field.

It is my conviction that it will not prove to be difficult for him to explain to Reformed people, that is, in the general sense Reformed, this document in such a way that they can understand the truth of it in distinction from whatever might be in conflict with it. In 1924 and after we had to explain the tricky Three Points, which was much more difficult than the explanation of this Declaration. We instructed the people publicly and privately. And when after being instructed they asked for organization, we granted their request. The fruit of our labors was usually small. The gatherings were always well attended, but only a few families usually organized. Oak Lawn, for instance, was organized with 6 families, South Holland with 7, Rock Valley with 9, etc. The only churches that organized in greater numbers were Hull, with approximately 40 families, and Redlands, with 33. That only few organized shows that the others understood rather definitely what we preached and taught. Also in Hamilton, I am convinced, the families that organized understood the difference very well. You can easily explain the difference between a promise for everybody, and a promise for the elect only. I think it is not necessary to have a series of pamphlets to do that. We trust our missionary to be able and willing to explain the Declaration.

Then there is the question whether there must be complete understanding and agreement, or a willingness to be instructed before they can be organized. Now, Mr. Chairman, although we like to organize churches, we certainly are not interested in the first place in establishing churches, but in proclaiming the Reformed truth. The Christian Reformed Churches are not interested in being very specific. And if we follow their example, it is not difficult for us to become big, especially in Canada. But we do not expect our missionary to organize churches left and right, although we like to organize new congregations and we must have fruit on our labor under the blessing of God also in that way. But we must remember that it will be a slow process, unless we are willing to widen the gate. And therefore, I think that the question of the Rev. Cammenga should be answered thus. If after a while the Rev. Cammenga knows a group that in a general way understands the Declaration, and then expresses its desire to be organized into a Prot. Ref. Church, they should be organized. But they must understand the difference. You cannot organize merely on the basis of a promise that they will not agitate against the truth. That is negative, and we must have something positive as a basis for organization.

And now, Mr. Chairman, I have something to say yet about the motion that is on the floor. I do not care a great deal whether the Synod adopts this motion or not, that is, to add the preamble that this Declaration is only to be used for the organization of churches by the Mission Committee and by the missionary. But I think that Synod does wisely if it adopts this motion, nevertheless, because it will limit what we have adopted so far. The Declaration is adopted now anyway, and that is sufficient for me. However, I am afraid that if nothing is added, what some fear might happen, and that it will be considered a fourth form. Therefore we must add that it is only for the use of the Mission Committee and the missionary for the organization of churches. Once more I say that it is immaterial to me whether or not the Synod adopts this motion. The truth prevails, whatever we do. Of that I am convinced. You cannot legislate the truth, not by a majority

vote. Nor can you do anything against the truth by a vote of Synod. The truth is free, and will certainly prevail.

In the third place, it is plain now that the Declaration has been adopted, that the Consistory of Fuller Ave. in conjunction with the Mission Committee can exercise its own right, and print pamphlets if they deem necessary, and ask that our mission work be conducted according to the Declaration of Principles. We do not need a decision of Synod for that.

Rev. Cammenga: Mr. Chairman, the impression must not be left as if I find it difficult to explain the Declaration to the people. I asked for the pamphlets rather to be witness next to mine that my explanation is correct. It is not so easy to explain the pure Reformed truth to people even of so-called Reformed persuasion, especially not today. It is much more difficult today than when the Rev. Hoeksema went out to explain the Three Points. Today even people that call themselves Reformed do not know the truth as did the former generations. At that time, when they heard us they testified that this was what they have always been taught to be the truth of the Reformed Confessions. But today I would say that even many that call themselves Reformed hate the pure Reformed truth.

Rev. H. H.: I have no objection to the proposition of printing pamphlets. I also realize very well that times are different now from what they were 25 years ago. Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, is not this a question for Fuller Avenue's Consistory in conjunction with the Mission Committee?

Rev. Ophoff: The Rev. H. Hoeksema is not so much interested in this particular motion. Neither am I, seeing that the Declaration itself is adopted. But would it not be ridiculous to vote it down now?

Mr. John Faber: Mr. Chairman, I think we need to adopt this motion, and I hope that we adopt it unanimously. I am thinking of the public and the church-world that is watching us today. No doubt men like the Rev. Daane will write about it. The Liberated, reading the report of the Synod, will say that there are still some among us that believe otherwise. And they will point to the negative votes that are recorded in the Acts of Synod. But, Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize that the negative votes did not mean that some of us are convinced that the Declaration is not the expression of the truth of our Confessions. Some voted *no*, so they told me, not because they were not in agreement with the contents of the Declaration, but just because they did not want to declare anything. Others, though they agreed with the contents of the Declaration, said that it does not say all that can be said, and therefore vote against it. But essentially there is agreement among us as to the principles. Hence, we need to pass this motion.

Mr. N. Yonker: This Declaration was composed at the request of the Mission Committee, and therefore we certainly must adopt this motion. If we do not pass this motion, we have given the Mission Committee no answer to its request.

Rev. Veldman: What can be wrong from any point of view in passing this motion? Surely, if we pass this motion, it cannot be an obstacle for correspondence with the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands or with any Reformed churches. We owe it to one another to express clearly what we believe to be the truth of our Reformed Confessions. Let us, therefore, adopt this motion, and use the Declaration as a basis for the organization of churches, to be used by the Mission Committee and by the missionary. There certainly cannot be any danger then in adopting this Declaration of Principles.

Rev. Howerzyl: Those last remarks I cannot understand. Why should there be dangers? It is all settled. If Synod voted its convictions, I cannot see how the Declaration could be used in a wrong way.

Rev. Cammenga: The motion says that the Declaration is to be used "as a basis for organizing churches." Is that true? Is not the basis for organization of churches Scripture and the Confessions in the light of what we expressed since 1924? Would it not be better to call it an instructive document?

Rev. Veldman: I feel for what the Rev. A. Cammenga says. I hesitate too to adopt that word *basis*. I prefer *instrument*. *Basis* can mean a whole lot.

Rev. Vos: The Rev. J. Howerzyl says that he is surprised at the remarks that the Declaration may look like a dangerous thing. But the danger or fear expressed of having such a document or instrument was expressed by those who did not want to accept the Declaration. Those that spoke against the Declaration repeatedly spoke of its danger. Therefore it is wise to limit it by this motion and amendment.

Rev. Ophoff: I like to know, Mr. Chairman, what danger there can be ever in expressing the truth. This Declaration is, according to the conviction of Synod, the truth as expressed in our Confessions. It is, therefore, to our conviction the same as the Confessions. To be opposed to the Declaration is the same as being opposed to the Confessions. Let us admit this.

Rev. Hoeksema: I am not afraid of this document, no more than I am afraid of the Confessions. Nevertheless, suppose that one comes to our Consistory to protest against a sermon, and appeals to the Declaration. That would not be formally correct. And we would have to refer him to the Three Forms of Unity as a basis for his protest.

Rev. Veldman: I am not satisfied with this motion. "Basis" for organizing congregations does not sound good to me.

Rev. van Weelden: It was remarked that the opposition to the Declaration has spoken of this fear that it might be used in a wrong way, while the others did not express such fear. Suppose that this motion fails, does that mean that what we decided in regard to the Declaration takes on the form of a fourth form? I claim that this is not true.

Rev. H. H.: I can feel something for the remarks of the Rev. Veldman. We do not organize on the basis of the Declaration, but on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity. Can we not remedy this by stating "on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity as always maintained by the Prot. Ref. Churches and as they are further explained in the Declaration of Principles"? I make that an amendment, that we elide all after the word "missionary", and in its place add: "to be used only for the organization of prospective churches on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions as they have always been maintained in the Prot. Ref. Churches, and as these have been further explained in regard to certain principles in the Declaration."

This amendment is put to a vote, and is carried.

The motion with the amendment is put to a vote. Three votes are recorded as being against it.

Rev. H. H.: May I know, Mr. Chairman, what it means that these three negative votes are recorded? Does it mean that these brethren want their name publicly recorded in the *Standard Bearer* if the report of Synod is written? They will, of course, be recorded in the Acts. But I do not want to insult the brethren by mentioning their names or by failing to do so.

Rev. Vos: I do not understand this recording by name and its import. It is proper procedure in church polity? Does it mean to leave room for a protest, or it is a protest?

Rev. Veldman: I cannot see the necessity of mentioning the names of those who voted negatively.

Rev. H. H.: To me it means that these brethren want their names published. Otherwise I cannot see why it must be recorded in the Acts.

Rev. Howerzyl: I cannot have any objection to having my name published, since it will appear in the Acts.

The Rev. L. Doezema and the Rev. J. van Weelden express their agreement with this statement.

The preamble is now further treated. A substitute motion is made to use the substance of the motion just passed, and the amendment, as a preamble instead of the one suggested by Classis East. This motion is put to a vote, and according to the president is carried by a vote of 13 to 3. After Synod there seems to be some doubt as to whether this estimate by the president is correct. Certainly it sounded to me as if the motion was carried with an overwhelming majority, and, after all only three negative votes were recorded. These were those of the Revs. L. Doezema, J. Howerzyl, and J. van Weelden

The Synod had finished its agendum. The Rev. G. Vos addressed a few appropriate words to Synod, and also personally to the Rev. A. Cammenga, and thereupon closed the sessions of Synod with thanks to God.
H. H.



Resolution:

Whereas, on November 23, 1951, God in His providence has taken unto himself

Mr. John Hekman

our fellow board member,

Be it resolved, that the Board of the Grand Rapids Christian High School express its deepest sympathy to his widow and family who mourn his passing.

May our covenant God grant comfort in this sorrow and may He fill the loss in the ranks of Christian education, a cause which our fellow worker cherished and served so actively.

Dr. W. Harry Jellema, President
Dr. Daniel De Vries, Secretary

Adopted December 7, 1951

IN MEMORIAM

The Creston Young People Society herewith expresses its sympathy with their fellow-member, Leonard Kunz, in the recent death of his mother,

Magdalena Kunz

We commit him to the loving care of God who tells us that He is the Husband of widows and the Father of orphans.

Miss Nancy Hagar, Secretary

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to Deacon John Wierenga and family in the death of its infant son and brother.

May the Lord grant His grace, peace and comfort in their sorrow.

Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.
J. Bouwman, Clerk

Correction, Please?

In your article entitled "The Stocking is Finished" in the last issue of the Standard Bearer (Jan. 1, 1952) you state the following, in connection with a letter sent by our deputies of correspondence to the Reformed Churches (Art. 31); "However, when the work of the committee for correspondence was reported at the Synod of 1948, the latter *condemned* (I underscore, B.K. that letter, and decided to rewrite it, and send a different letter to the same deputies for correspondence in the Netherlands, and to their Synod which was to convene in Amersfoort the same summer." Although there are several statements with which I cannot agree in the aforementioned article, this is one of the most outstanding ones. As delegate to the Synod of 1948 I deny that the Synod *condemned* the letter of its deputies of correspondence, yea it did not even speak one word of disapproval, but rather, upon the advice of you, expressed "That the Synod in the main agreed with the sentiments expressed in that letter." In the light of this I am at a loss to understand how you can state that the Synod of 1948 *condemned* that letter.

To let our readers judge, I shall translate both the letters as they appear in the Acts of 1948, as also the action taken in regards to them by Synod. (See Acts 1948 pp. 37-39, and 53-54). Here follows the translation of the first letter of the deputies of correspondence.

Grand Rapids Michigan
February, 1948

To the Deputies of Correspondence:

Esteemed Brethren in the Lord:

The undersigned send this letter to you as Committee, appointed by the Synod of our Protestant Reformed Churches, to do preparatory work, which we hope, will lead to correspondence with our Churches.

The need is felt in our Churches to seek closer contact with your Churches. And this desire, which has been present with us for some time, has especially been strengthened in the past years. And from the voices we hear in your circles, this desire is also evident in your midst.

We are convinced that as Churches we have much in common. Both Church groups stand on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity. Added to this we can find several points of agreement as to the occasion and origin of both of our Church groups. We are firmly convinced that our Churches are the continuation of the original Reformed Churches, and that the origin of our Churches in 1924 was characterized as

an act of Reformation. But we also believe that the origin of your Churches was a Reformation and a return to the old and tried Reformed paths. Both, your Church group, and ours, know of no binding Synodical decrees, which are products of additions to the Confessions. Further, as far as Church Polity is concerned, we are entirely agreed. Dogmatical differences, which possibly may exist between you and us, are no confessional differences. We may believe, that it is our very heartfelt desire, to be subject to, and to be led by, the Word of God, and we know ourselves to be bound to the Confessions we have in common.

The visit of Prof. K. Schilder in our midst has been conducive to strengthening the tie between us. Prof. Schilder, who is also one of your deputies, will undoubtedly further enlighten you concerning us. We thought also to notice in him a desire for closer contact between us.

Finally, the fact that at present many Reformed, Holland immigrants are moving to America and Canada, is all the more reason why we, if at all possible, would like to have correspondence with your Churches. We do not know where the Liberated families are to be found, because we do not have their addresses. If at all possible we would like to do something for the members of your Churches. We would also like to receive them in our Churches, or to organize them into congregations wherever possible. In the present circumstances this is rather difficult because we do not know where they now live, or are planning to live. Under these circumstances it is very well possible that your members may find a church home in the which they eventually will not feel at home. Also in this respect, close contact between our Churches, would indeed be desirable.

Brethren, we could write much more, but this letter is only intended as an initial attempt to come to closer contact with one another. With keen interest we look forward to an answer from you, to know your thoughts in the matter. Perhaps your committee has some definite propositions in re this question. Our Synod convenes in the beginning of June, and if we receive an answer in time, then perhaps our Synod can make some definite decisions and regulations in this matter.

With high-esteem and brotherly greetings,
we remain, yours in Christ,

The Committee,
H. Hoeksema
G. M. Ophoff
J. D. de Jong

In Art. 46 (Acts 1948) we read:

"Motion is made and supported to adopt the advice of Committee of Pre-advice under II, B, 2, that Synod express its agreement with the contents of the letter.

"Substitute motion is made and supported to refer this matter to Rev. H. Hoeksema for his suggestion and advice.

"The Substitute motion carries."

From the same Acts we find under Art. 51 the following.

"Synod returns to the material under Art. 46. Rev. Hoeksema serves Synod with advice in the form of a proposed letter to the Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Art. 31).

This letter reads as follows: (I translate B.K.)

"To the Synod of the Reformed Churches (Art. 31)

"Esteemed and Worthy Brethren:

"The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the United States brings the following to your attention:

"1. That our deputies for correspondence with Churches in other lands, have brought to our attention a letter, containing a request for correspondence with the Reformed Churches maintaining Art. 31 (This is the letter translated above. B.K.). This letter had already been sent to your deputies for correspondence, and will undoubtedly be brought to the attention of your Synod for further consideration, which Synod we believe is to convene D.V., in September.

"2. *That our Synod in general is agreed with the sentiments expressed in that letter.* (I underscore, B.K.). We are eager to seek closer contact with the Reformed Churches maintaining Art. 31. As was stated in the letter sent by our deputies, we stand with you on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, and maintain the unadulterated Reformed Church Polity, averse to all hierarchy.

"3. That we, of course, do not expect that your Synod, at its first meeting, shall definitely decide to establish the relationship of sister churches, between you and us, no more than you expect that of us. However if your Synod should decide to take steps in that direction, then we request that your deputies correspond, or meet with ours, in order to advise your Synod as well as ours, in re the question of contact between our Church groups, and then to make definite decisions.

Wishing your gathering the Lord's blessing, we remain with high-esteem,

The Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

"Substitute motion is made and supported (for Art. 46) that Synod adopt this letter as its own, and

send it as such to the Synod of the Reformed Churches (Art. 31). It is so decided."

In the light of these facts, how is it possible for you to write, that the Synod of 1948 *condemned* the first letter of its deputies? It did not express one word of condemnation of the first letter. It did not retract a single statement of it; it did not even decide to substitute the second letter for the first. On the contrary, it not only expressed its agreement with the first letter, but substantiated it with a second. I agree with you that neither the first, nor the second letter express the sentiment of our Churches today, but they certainly expressed the sentiment of our Churches in 1947, 1948. I do not care to discuss with you the reasons for this change in sentiment in our Churches, but I do not agree with you, that the cause of this is only to be found in the Netherlands. But whatever the cause let us not distort history. By such careless and erroneous statements the cause of God is not prospered. I know only too well, as I have always known, that there are differences between us and the Liberated, but let us seek to remove them in the way of truth.

B.K.

REPLY

I could be very hard on the Rev. Kok for writing the above contribution. He accuses me of distorting history, and of making careless and erroneous statements. To this I reply: not guilty. But I will not be hard, just as I was mild in my answer to friend Schilder's "De Kous is Af". Perhaps, this is due to the fact that I am mellowing with age, but it is more probably to be attributed to the fact that I love brother Kok as a brother. But I would, nevertheless, give him this piece of brotherly advice, that he must not rush into print the moment he reads an article, as he evidently did (I received the above contribution the fourth or fifth of January), but first give it some quiet thought and consideration.

Now, I most emphatically deny that I was guilty of distortion of history and of careless and erroneous statements in the article "The Stocking is Finished". And this I will prove.

First of all, I must say a few words about that word *condemn*, on which the Rev. Kok bases his entire article. The Rev. Kok underscores that word, and that is, of course, his writer's right. But it nevertheless, leaves often a wrong impression, the impression namely, as if the original author also wanted to place emphasis on that word and use it in the strongest possible sense of the word. I did not do so in my editorial. If brother Kok will look up the word in the dictionary, he will find that it means: "to pronounce to be wrong, to disapprove, to pronounce unfit for ser-

vice." In that sense I used the word in my editorial, and in that sense it is certainly applicable to the decision of synod in regard to the letter which the committee for correspondence had sent to the Netherlands.

In proof of this I offer the following:

1. The very fact that, when the motion was made to adopt and express agreement with the letter sent by the committee, first a substitute motion was made to refer the matter to the undersigned for advice, and afterwards synod substituted an entirely different letter, proves that synod did not approve of the first letter. I claim that when a substitute motion prevails the original motion is dropped. And when synod adopted the second letter instead of the first, it discarded the latter, disapproved of its contents, and judged it unfit for service.

2. Anyone who compares the two letters, that of the committee for correspondence and that of the synod, can see for himself that they are two entirely different letters, and will, at the same time, readily surmise, why synod disapproved of the first. In his article, the Rev. Kok again underscores a sentence: "*That our synod in general is agreed with the sentiments expressed in that letter.*" But to interpret synod correctly, he should not have underscored the entire sentence, but only the words "in general." Synod meant to have that sentence read as follows: "That our synod *in general* is agreed with the sentiments expressed in that letter." This means that it did by no means agree with the entire contents of the letter. That is the reason why it deemed it unfit for service, and sent an entirely different letter.

3. To this I may add that anyone who was present at the sessions of synod 1948, and who followed the discussions on the letter in question, will agree that synod certainly did not approve of the letter sent by the committee, but was rather surprised that such a letter could have been written.

If the Rev. Kok desires that I point out to him the essential difference between the two letters, and to show him why synod could not possibly approve of the first, I am willing to do so. But I think the matter is self-evident.

Hence: 1. There is no need for correction. 2. I did not distort history, but presented it very correctly. 3. I did not make any careless and erroneous statements.

H. H.



CLASSIS WEST of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Rock Valley, Wednesday, March 5, 1952. M. Gritters, s.c.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(11)

THE CREATION OF MAN (4)

In our previous article we called attention to the concept: the image of God in man, and presented to our readers a short historical review of this concept. We also criticized the Roman Catholic presentation of this image of God and concluded with a few remarks in connection with the distinction: the image in broader and in narrower sense. We ended our article with the question: how, then, should we conceive of this image of God in man?

In answer to this question, we would remark in the first place that it is not difficult to understand the distinction as such between "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:26. We quote the text once more: "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." These words, we understand, do not teach us two different things—we refer, of course, to the words, image and likeness. Rather, the one explains the other. The word "likeness" is simply a further description of the word "image." The word "image" might simply mean that God had a certain idea of man, that He created man according to that idea, without necessarily implying that this image or idea consisted of a likeness. In other words, the idea which God had of man was that man should be a likeness of Himself.

Secondly, the idea of the image or likeness is simply that man was created to be a creaturely reflection of the living God, created so that he, as creature, could reflect the very life of the living God. When we say that a daughter is the striking image of her mother or a son is the striking image of his father, we mean the same thing. That man was created in the image of God implies, therefore, that he was created so as to be able to reflect the life of the living God. This, of course, is true only in a creaturely sense of the word. That man was created in the image of God, or, as we read in the second epistle of the apostle Peter, (that we are partakers of the Divine nature), must not be understood in the essential sense of the word. Essentially only the eternal Son of God is the image of the living God. To be the image of God essentially implies that we have that very life of

God and therefore reflect it in the essential sense of the word. This, of course, is impossible. The essential difference between the creature and the Creator must, of course, be maintained. The creature can never reveal or reflect the life of the Lord except in the creaturely sense of the word. This implies that we, as creature and according to the measure of the creature, live and reflect the life which God eternally lives and knows as God. That man was created in the image of God means, generally speaking, that he was created so as to be able to reflect the life of the living God in a creaturely sense of the word.

Thirdly, keeping the above in mind, we may say that Adam was created in that image of God essentially; that is, he was created in the image of God with and according to his entire being and existence. This image consisted of true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. That the apostle, in Eph. 4:24, speaks only of righteousness and holiness is evidently because this knowledge must be understood as consisting of true righteousness and holiness. Adam knew God, knew Him with all the love of his heart and mind and soul. He was perfectly righteous and holy, consecrated unto the living God. That this is the Scriptural significance of the image of God is plain from all of Scripture—see Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:5 f.f.; Col. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:8; I John 3:1, 2; John 17:3. — see "In The Midst of Death," page 107. Besides, Adam was created in the image of God according to body and soul. Also according to the body. This receives emphasis when we read that God formed him with His own fingers out of the dust of the ground. Also from a physical point of view man has been wonderfully made. He has been created so as to love and praise the living God. However, he also received a mouth which is adapted to serve man so that man can speak and sing. Man's vision, even from a natural point of view, far exceeds the physical eye of any other earthly creature. His body (eyes, ears, hands, etc.) have been formed so as to be a fit instrument in man's service of the living God.

This spiritual knowledge, righteousness and holiness, constitute the content, the essence of the image of God in man. And man reflected the life of the living God, loved and sought and desired what God loves, seeks, and desires, etc., with all his being. We also speak of the image of God in man, besides in this essential, spiritual sense of the word, in a formal sense. By this we mean that man was naturally constituted so as to be able to reflect this life of God. This "formal aspect" does not constitute the essence of the image. Man was created, essentially, an image-bearer, is that today, although he now is not in the

image of God but in that of the devil. An animal cannot praise or serve or love the Lord. An animal cannot see the works of God as the works of God's hands. An animal is not adapted to the life of God, cannot be reborn or regenerated. For an animal to be regenerated would imply that it would have to be changed from an animal to a man. Man, however, was created as adapted to this service of God. This *capability* of being endowed with the image of God we prefer to call the image of God in a *formal* sense. Hence, when man fell he retained his own human nature, remained essentially an *image-bearer*, but lost the actual image of God, the reflection of the life of God. In fact, he did not merely lose this image. Man did not become a vacuum. He did not merely lose his true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. But his image turned over into its opposite. His knowledge became hatred of the living God and love of the devil, his righteousness became unrighteousness, and his holiness was turned into corruption. He became a servant of the devil; reflecting formerly the image of God he is now the image of the devil, and this is possible because he remains man. An animal cannot love God but neither is it able to hate Him. Man, if you will, now reflects the life of God in exactly the opposite way. But, as he was created in Paradise, man was created in the image of the Lord. This constitutes his high nobility, his tremendously exalted position.

And to this we would finally add, in this connection, that man was created with a free will. This freedom must not be understood in the sovereign sense of the word, as if man was free in the sense that he was independent of God and was therefore master and captain of his own fate and destiny. This, we know, is impossible. Never, in any sense of the word, can the creature, may the creature be presented as independent of the Lord. The Lord always does all His good pleasure, also in and through the moral-rational acts of all His moral creatures. This also applies, of course, to the sin of Adam and Eve in Paradise. However, man was free in a moral sense, and that according to his creation. *As he was created* he could will to serve and love God. But, he was also created so that he could choose the evil. This lies in the very nature of the case. Man, by nature, cannot will the good. The elect in everlasting glory will never be able to will the evil. They shall be immortal, not be able to sin or die. But Adam was created so that he could will both, the good and the bad. Of course, choosing the bad he would involve himself and all his posterity in a horrible night of sin and corruption and death.



ADAM'S RELATION TO GOD

The Covenant of Works.

Although not given a place in our Reformed Confessions, the idea of a "Covenant of Works" is nevertheless endorsed and advocated today by several theologians of Reformed persuasion. It is, of course, imperative that we call attention to this concept when discussing the creation of Adam and the relation in which he stood to the living God. To understand what is meant by this Covenant of Works it is well to listen to those who advocate and teach this theory. A detailed exposition of this doctrine is presented to us by Prof. Berkhof in his "Reformed Dogmatics" from which we now expect to quote extensively.

First, the professor gives us the Scriptural foundation for the doctrine of a covenant of works. We now quote from the pages 213-215 as follows: "The widespread denial of the covenant of works makes it imperative to examine its Scriptural foundation with care.

1. *The Elements of a Covenant are Present in the Early Narrative.* It must be admitted that the term "covenant" is not found in the first three chapters of Genesis, but this is not tantamount to saying that they do not contain the necessary data for the construction of a doctrine of the covenant. One would hardly infer from the absence of the term "trinity" that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible. All the elements of a covenant are indicated in Scripture, and if the elements are present, we are not only warranted but, in a systematic study of the doctrine, also in duty bound to relate them to one another, and to give the doctrine so construed an appropriate name. In the case under consideration two parties are named, a condition is laid down, a promise of reward for obedience is clearly implied, and a penalty for transgression is threatened. It may still be objected that we do not read of the two parties as coming to an agreement, not of Adam as accepting the terms laid down, but this is not an insuperable objection. We do not read of such an explicit agreement, and acceptance on the part of man either in the cases of Noah and Abraham. God and man do not appear as equals in any of these covenants. All God's covenants are of the nature of sovereign dispositions imposed on man. God is absolutely sovereign in His dealings with man, and has the perfect right to lay down the conditions which the latter must meet, in order to enjoy His favor. Moreover Adam was, even in virtue of his natural relationship, in duty bound to obey God; and when the covenant relation was established, this obedience also became a matter of self-interest. When entering into covenant relations with men, it is always God Who

lays down the terms, and they are very gracious terms, so that He has, also from that point of view, a perfect right to expect that man will assent to them. In the case under consideration God has but to announce the covenant, and the perfect state in which Adam lived was a sufficient guarantee for his acceptance.

2. *There is a Promise of Eternal Life.* Some deny that there is any Scripture evidence for such a promise. Now it is perfectly true that no such promise is explicitly recorded, but it is clearly implied in the alternative of death as the result of disobedience. The clear implication of the threatened punishment is that in the case of obedience death would not enter, and this can only mean that life would continue. It has been objected that this would only mean a continuation of Adam's natural life, and not what Scripture calls life eternal. But the Scriptural idea of life is communion with God; and this is the life which Adam possessed, though in his case it was still amissible. If Adam stood the test, this life would be retained not only, but would cease to be amissible, and would therefore be lifted to a higher plane. Paul tells us explicitly in Rom. 7:10 that the commandment, that is the law, was unto life. In commenting on this verse Hodge says: "The law was designed and adapted to secure life, but became in fact the cause of death." This is also clearly indicated in such passages as Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:13. Now it is generally admitted that this glorious promise of unending life was in no way implied in the natural relation in which Adam stood to God, but had a different basis. But to admit that there is something positive here, a special condescension of God, is an acceptance of the covenant principle. There may still be some doubt as to the propriety of the name "Covenant of Works," but there can be no valid objection to the covenant idea.

3. *Basically, the Covenant of Grace is Simply the Execution of the Original Agreement by Christ as Our Surety.* He undertook freely to carry out the will of God. He placed Himself under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, and were no more in a position to obtain life by their own fulfillment of the law. He came to do what Adam failed to do, and did it in virtue of a covenant agreement. And if this is so, and the covenant of grace is, as far as Christ is concerned, simply the carrying out of the original agreement, it follows that the latter must also have been of the nature of a covenant. And since Christ met the condition of the covenant of works, man can now reap the fruit of the original agreement by faith in Jesus Christ. There are now two ways of life, which are in themselves ways of life, the one is the way of the law: "the man that doeth the righteous-

ness which is of the law shall live thereby," but it is a way by which man can no more find life; and the other is the way of faith in Jesus Christ, Who met the demands of the law, and is now able to dispense the blessing of eternal life.

4. *The Parallel Between Adam and Christ.* The parallel which Paul draws between Adam and Christ in Rom. 5:12-21, in connection with the doctrine of justification, can only be explained on the assumption that Adam, like Christ, was the head of a covenant. According to Paul the essential element in justification consists in this, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, without any personal work on our part to merit it. And he regards this as a perfect parallel to the manner in which the guilt of Adam is imputed to us. This naturally leads us to conclusion that Adam also stood in covenant relationship to his descendants.

5. *The Passage in Hos. 6:7.* In Hosea 6:7 we read: "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant." Attempts have been made to discredit this reading. Some have suggested the reading "at Adam," which would imply that some well-known transgression occurred at a place called Adam. But the preposition forbids this rendering. Moreover, the Bible makes no mention whatever of such a well-known historical transgression at Adam. The Authorized Version renders "like men," which would then mean, in human fashion. To this it may be objected that there is no plural in the original, and that such a statement would be rather inane, since man could hardly transgress in any other way. The rendering "like Adam" is after all the best. It is favored by the parallel passage in Job 31:33; and is adopted by the American Revised Version." thus far the quotation.

Before we proceed with the second quotation from this book of Prof. Berkhof in which he presents to us the various elements of this covenant of works, we wish to make a few remarks with respect to that which we have quoted. It is evident from this quotation, it seems to me, that the professor refers to the Protestant Reformed Churches when he states the objections which have been voiced against this doctrine. Note, for example, how the professor answers the objection that, in case of obedience, only Adam's earthly life would have been continued. It is simply a fact that the professor completely fails to answer this objection. We all agree, of course, that Adam enjoyed fellowship with God. But the assertion that, in case of obedience, Adam's life would cease to be amissible and therefore lifted to a higher plane, must surely be proven and not merely stated.

Secondly, the reader should notice that, according

to the quotation above quoted, the covenant of grace is basically the same as the covenant of works. To be sure, the writer declares that it is the Lord Who lays down the terms, that these terms are very gracious terms, etc. However, these latter expressions means very little, are simply hollow sounds. It is simply a fact that, basically, the covenant of grace is fundamentally the same as the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace Christ is our Head, places Himself under the law, did what Adam failed to do, and did it in virtue of covenant agreement. Would the professor, for example, be prepared to say that, if the covenant of grace is basically the same as the covenant of works, the covenant of works is basically the same as the covenant of grace? Of course not! But, then we need no longer wonder what is meant by the covenant of works. In the covenant of grace, which is basically the same as the covenant of works, Christ merited eternal life for us. In the covenant of works Adam is our head. Hence, the covenant of works simply means that the Lord presented Adam with the opportunity to obtain for himself and all his posterity, in the way of obedience, everlasting life. Besides, the very expression: covenant of *works*, cannot have another connotation. Terms simply have meaning.

Finally, I would also call the attention of our readers to the place which "conditions" have in this presentation of Prof. Berkhof. They fit in perfectly with his conception of the covenant. Conditions, as far as the undersigned is concerned, always precede before something else can follow. This is also true here. In this covenant of works a condition is laid down, the condition of obedience. And the plain meaning of the writer and the term here is that this condition must be met before the promise of eternal life can be bestowed upon Adam. Anyone is able to understand this. Now we all realize that regeneration must precede conversion, that conversion must precede the conscious enjoyment of justification, that the battle must precede the victory, the strife the crown. This lies in the very nature of the case. Hence, to teach that the promise is conditional must mean that something must precede the fulfillment of the promise. To teach that faith is the condition for the promise must therefore mean, if terms have any meaning at all, that we must believe before we can obtain the promise. But, faith is a part of the promise, belongs to the promise, is an element of it, God's means whereby He bestows upon His elect people everlasting life. Terms have meaning. It is not fundamentally the question how we can or do interpret a term, but how a term can be interpreted. The professor, speaking here of conditions, also tells us that the Lord is absolutely sovereign in His dealings with man and that His terms are very

gracious terms. The fact remains, however, that a conception has been taught and spread in the church in which it is impossible to mistake the meaning of the term "condition." The promise of eternal life to Adam was conditional. Does anyone doubt the meaning of the expression in the concept: covenant of works? To teach that the promise of God is conditional also today would lead us into the very same direction. Hence, may we remain true unto the calling whereunto the Lord has called us.

H. Veldman



THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Protevangel as the Unifying Idea of all the Scriptures

Let us now examine these promises. They shed a great new light on the promise concealed in the protevangel.

First we must take notice of this: that according to the promise as here communicated the Lord would give to Abraham's seed not only but to *Abraham* as well that land in which at the time he was walking up and down and was beholding with his eyes, namely Canaan. "To *thee* will I give it and to thy seed forever." The promise was fulfilled with regard to Abraham's seed, the people of Israel. Approximately 430 years thereafter the Lord entered the rest of Canaan with this people, but not so with Abraham. And yet the Lord spoke plainly, "to *thee* will I give this land," also to thee, and not alone to thy seed, was what the Lord was saying. But can it really be said that the Lord held Him to His promise as far as Abraham was concerned? Indeed He did. The Lord always keeps covenant trust with His people. What then is the solution? It is this: Abraham shall receive that land—he and his seed—when God shall have made it with all things new. In a word, what Abram and his seed shall receive is the new and glorified earth, the Canaan that is heavenly and therefore certainly that very land where Abram with Isaac and Jacob had dwelt in tents. For *essentially* the two are one. The heavenly is not a new creation essentially. It is the same creation but *with a new form*.

Abram then—he and his seed, the church of the elect—*shall* receive the promise. Together with all the saints they are yet to receive the promise at the appearing of Christ.

Hence, quoting the Hebrews (11:13), "these—Abraham and all the Old Testament worthies, in fact all God's people—died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them far off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth."

Mark you well, "and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers *in the earth*." The contrast here is *this earth* and the heavenly, heavenly country, the new earth. And on the heavenly, and not on this earthly, including Canaan as to the form it had at the time that Abraham sojourned in it—Abraham and all his seed have their affections set and the heavenly they seek. This is literally stated: "But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly." (11:16)

It is plain in the light of these observations that the term *everlasting* in the divine communication: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *forever*" indicates not a limited number of ages but age without end, thus everlasting.

And it also ought to be plain that the earthy Canaan as occupied by the seed of Abraham 430 years thereafter was a prophetic type of the heavenly country. For let us take notice of this: that not once did God say to Abram in just these words: "I will give thee a heavenly country." Yet Abraham was very actually living by the promise of this heavenly land. And by the promise of this land he died, as has just been shown from the Hebrews. It can mean but one thing, namely, that in promising him the land where he was a stranger, the Lord in the final instance was vowing to give him the new earth where God's tabernacle will be with His people, which must in turn imply that, as was just said, the earthy Canaan was a prophetic picture of the heavenly. If not, Abraham was without the promise of the heavenly and then his seeing the promise of the heavenly afar off as a good promised him was a sheer delusion.

We have yet to take notice of the Scripture at Hebrews 6:15, where it is stated that Abraham, after he had patiently endured, *received the promise*. But this looks to the preceding verse which is a promise spoken by the Lord Himself according to which He will surely multiply Abraham, that is, give him a seed. The birth of Isaac was the initial fulfillment of this promise, and therefore the writer could go on to say, "And so, after he—Abraham—had patiently endured,—that is, waited—he obtained the promise," that which the promise held forth, namely a seed. There is therefore no conflict between this Scripture and the one at Hebrews 11:13, which states that Abraham in common with all the believers of the Old Covenant died in faith, *not having received the*

promise. How this latter Scripture must be understood has just been explained.

By these revelations and the reactions of Abraham's faith to them, a new light is shed upon the promise of the protevangel. For the first time God by promise sets before the eye of the church the new earth under the type of an earthy land. What was also concealed in the protevangel—the promise of this heavenly land—the Lord now brings into view.

Then there is the Lord's saying to Abraham that in his seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. These, too, are momentous words for the light they shed on the question of the identity of the seed. They reveal who this seed is. This seed is Christ. For in whom can God bless all the families of the earth, men sinful, lost and undone in themselves but in one who, in the language of the Heidelberger, is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also God? And who is that one, save our Lord Jesus Christ? This is not reading our theology into this divine communication. It is the full truth contained in it, and in the Gospel as first published. But never before had the Lord spoken thus plainly. With what degree of clarity the truth here proclaimed was made to penetrate the sanctified consciousness of Abraham and God's believing people in general, is impossible to say. But we know and we know it from the Scriptures that the promises of God were to them pearls of great price. For by these promises they lived and died. They embraced them as confessing that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth, which was but another way of their saying that they counted all things refuse in order that they might gain Christ. It shows that their knowledge of the truth of their redemption, however imperfect, was adequate, and that there was real depth to their insight into it.

New light was shed on the promise of the protevangel not only by the Lord's dealings with Abraham, the representative of the seed of the woman, but also by the riotings of the seed of the serpent, the serpent's brood. The builders of the tower of Babel were this seed. The Canaanites infesting Canaan in Abraham's time and who in the 400 years to come were to fill their measure of iniquity in order that they might be destroyed, were this seed. This, of course, is not saying that Abraham was the only man on the face of the earth who truly feared God. There are plain indications in the book of Genesis that at the time there were many more such men as Abraham. We think of Melchizedek and the people over whom he ruled.

But now further, Esau was this seed, Esau the brother of Jacob. The Sodomites, that is, the men of the cities of the plain were this seed. The five kings

who carried Lot away captive were this seed, this reprobated seed. And the struggle between these two seeds comes prominently and peculiarly into view in this second epoch of the series. It comes prominently into view in the recorded struggle between Esau and Jacob in the womb of their mother. It comes into view in the struggle between the three great patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and those of the Canaanites who were hostile to them and troubled them. But the Lord suffered no man to do them any wrong, Ps. 105:11-15. It, this warfare, between the two seeds, comes into view in the war of Abraham with the five kings who carried away Lot captive. It comes into view in the struggle between Jacob and Esau and Jacob and Laban. But the holy seed wars the warfare of God. It fights this warfare in His fear and as kept by His power. Thus in this second epoch the victory is always this holy seed's. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob triumph over the hostile Canaanites; for, as we saw, God permitted no man to do them wrong. He was their sun and shield. Abraham triumphs over the five kings and is subsequently blessed by Melchizedek. Jacob triumphs over Esau and Laban. God gave them the victory. And Christ himself appears in this section as confusing the speech of the builders of Babel and of destroying the cities of the plain. It means that over and over in this section the head of the serpent is seen as being crushed.

In this second section or picture Isaac the seed appears as the wonder child. For he was born from parents whose bodies in the point of view of sexual potency were dead. Isaac was thus one of whom it must be said that he was raised from the dead.

(to be continued)

G. M. Ophoff

IN MEMORIAM

The Mary-Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. M. Vander Molen, in the loss of her sister,

Mrs. Grace Licha

May the Lord comfort the bereaved with the assurance that He does all things well and sanctify His way unto their hearts.

P. Vis, Pres.

Mrs. H. Leep, Sec'y.



TEACHERS NEEDED—The Adams St. Prot. Ref. School will be in need of Teachers for both lower and higher grades for the coming school year. Application can be mailed to:

EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE

Adams St. Prot. Ref. School

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IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

2.

THE TEACHER PROBLEM

The next aspect of the "teacher problem" which our schools face is closely related to the procurement aspect which we discussed last time. For this reason we choose to discuss it next also. It is the problem of *KEEPING OUR TEACHERS*.

It lies in the very nature of the case that these two aspects of the teacher problem are very closely related. The two, namely, the *procurement* of a teaching staff and the maintenance of a *permanent* teaching staff, are, in fact, *interrelated*. On the one hand, it is evident that the problem of procuring teachers declines to the extent that the teaching staff is permanent. The school board that can hang a "no vacancy" sign out in regard to its teaching staff, that can at contract time hand out new contracts to all its teachers and receive them signed after a while, that is not troubled with the mid-term departure of its teachers, is indeed fortunate: it has no teacher-procurement problem at all. And well may it do all in its power to maintain the *status quo*, when once it has a permanent staff of qualified teachers. On the other hand, it is also true that the school board which gives proper attention to the procurement problem, and which does not hastily obtain a number of signed contracts only in order to be rid of that "headache" for another year, will also be more successful in maintaining a permanent teaching staff.

This aspect of the problem too is a rather general one in the educational field. And especially in the past 10 or 15 years the incidence of contract-jumping, of changing schools, and of departing altogether from the teaching profession on the part of those who once took up this work have been on the increase. Any one reading the daily papers could read reports from all over our country telling us of the troubles which schools faced because of this condition. And in general I think that we may say that the causes contributing to this problem for our own schools are the same as those facing all schools, although there may be exceptions in some cases, and although this problem of maintaining a permanent teaching staff may also assume certain aspects which are peculiar to our own schools and peculiar to a Reformed school board and a Reformed teacher.

What are some of the contributing factors in this problem?

In the first place, there is the generally unsettled condition of our times, which has affected also the field of education. In our age, as never before, all things seem to be in a state of flux and, simultaneously, in a state of uncertainty. In a large measure, perhaps, this is due to the international situation. We live in an age when the giants of the world are striving for mastery. There has been no peace in our world, even from the world's point of view, for more than a decade. Always the world is teetering on the brink of conflict, of world war, if not engulfed in it. Everyone is haunted by the fear of a war the like of which we have not seen before. And, as a result, uncertainty and "jumpiness" seems to characterize all of life. It is well-nigh impossible to live on an even keel. Life is one big rush, a seeking for something—we know not what. And always there is a feeling of dissatisfaction, a search for some elusive pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow. One can notice this in almost every sphere of life. Governments are held in the throes of this tide of fear and uncertainty and doubt. The church has not at all been left untouched by the situation and by the manner of thought and action that goes paired with it. One can feel the clutches of its tentacles in the pulpit and on ecclesiastical assemblies, as well as mark its devastating progress in the contemporary history of the church. Almost one feels that it is a losing battle to raise a cry of warning against the seemingly inexorable and inevitable tendency away from everything that is right and sane, against what can only be a mad rush to destruction. Business and industry, commerce and agriculture, home and family—all of life is in a state of upheaval, so that almost this sort of life begins to seem normal, and a generation is rising, or perhaps has already arisen, which knows no other mode of living.

We may mention a few of the factors which are part and parcel of this generally unsettled condition in the affairs of men.

One of the most direct consequences of it is the factor of military training. Our young men, as matters now stand, cannot map out their educational future because of the uncertain factor of that notice of induction into the armed forces. Whether it should or not, is not the question we are discussing at the moment. But that the possibility and the probability of being called to the colors does interfere with the education and the desire for education on the part of many is a fact which cannot be challenged. The possibility of starting one's college training, training to be a teacher; perhaps, only to have it abruptly in-

terrupted by the draft after a year or so, or even in mid-term, discourages not a few from even entering college. It deters some from deciding upon their life's work. They assume an attitude of waiting—or they enlist. Besides, the same threat of military service assails some of our male teachers, so that school boards may even be loath to engage a man who is eligible for the draft. Perhaps a universal military training plan may overcome this to an extent. For if military training becomes something normal, as it has been for years already in other countries, so that a young man may figure from the outset on losing 18 months or 2 years to the government at, say, the age of 18, then the situation will be more or less stabilized. But as matters now stand, there is too much uncertainty in the foreseeable future of any young man.

A second element that seems to be paired with this upset condition is the economic situation. We have an inflated and boom economy—something by the way, which also seems to become the normal thing, at least in our thinking. And as usual in times like these, materialistic tendencies come to the fore. People are money mad. Everyone is out to grab as much as he possibly can. On the one hand, except where salaries of teachers are standardized, this has led to an increasing incidence in the teaching profession also of changing positions due to the lure of higher salaries and better working conditions. On the other hand, it has led to an alarming trend to neglect and forsake the teaching profession altogether. The lure of high wages, especially in war industries, has beckoned to many teachers in the past years, and has deterred many a high school graduate from even training for any profession, let alone that of a teacher. The inevitable result is a shortage of teachers and an inability to maintain a permanent teaching staff. And the cumulative result of all these factors is that the problem grows more difficult as times goes on. As the shortage of teachers increases, competition among schools becomes more keen, and teachers are more inclined to "change schools". Undoubtedly there is an economic reason behind all this. It is a fact that the income of those who are professionally employed has not kept pace with the income of the laboring man or the farmer. And from this viewpoint alone, it is understandable that the teaching profession is being forsaken and neglected.

Another element to which we may call attention is that of the over-emphasis on training for the trades and technical skills which has found its way into colleges which formerly were devoted solely to training for the professions. Our educational institutions are being geared more and more to the highly industrialized and merchandized age in which we live. To an ex-

tent this is undoubtedly necessary. But the fact remains that there is a vast difference between a trades school and college. And our colleges should not be transformed into trades schools, be the trades ever so skilled, so that they grant degrees for anything under the sun. This tendency has been to the detriment of the teaching profession and the teacher supply. It has been a factor in molding the minds of teachers and would-be teachers, and in casting their minds into a different mold than that of the teaching profession. The entire emphasis on training for various technical skills, sometimes by means of "quickly" courses, with the lure of a college diploma and even a degree dangled at the end of a course, and the materialistic promise of a more or less dignified position and especially of high wages as an added attraction, is detrimental.

It is with a certain amount of trepidation that I mention what undoubtedly is a major contributing factor to the inability to maintain a permanent and stabilized teaching staff, namely, the fact that to a large degree our schools are staffed by women teachers. With all respect to the small percentage of devoted women who have made teaching their life's work (and I am not too old to remember fondly some of such women teachers whom I did not always appreciate as a child), and with due regard to the fact that if it were not for women teachers coming to the rescue many a school would be teacher-less, I nevertheless maintain that on the whole the school which has a larger percentage of male teachers will also have a more permanent teaching staff. For the facts are these. By far the majority of our women teachers either entertain marriage-plans at the time they begin to teach, or they are easily tempted to give up teaching in favor of marriage when the opportunity presents itself. And this means that teaching is something temporal for them, rather than a career. And such temporary teachers are an asset to the extent that they furnish a school with teachers for a time, but they are a liability in two respects. On the one hand, they prevent the stabilization of the teaching staff. And on the other hand, their determination to teach only temporarily must needs color all their work. It affects their diligence and initiative, as well as their long-range objectives and ambitions. They have a "job" for a little while, rather than a life's calling and work. The male teacher, however, is much more likely to be entering his life's work when he begins to teach. He will treat it as such, and will, therefore, all other things being equal, be more permanent, more diligent, have a longer range point of view, devote his entire life to his work, rather than sell a certain amount of his time for a certain amount of the school's money. Besides, the male teacher most

probably has or will have the stabilizing influence of a family to support and maintain, which undoubtedly serves as a deterrent in the matter of changing positions and changing vocations. The fact is, however, that a large percentage, if not the majority, of today's teachers are women. Undoubtedly there are reasons for this, but just now we are dealing with the fact rather than the reason. And this fact contributes to the teacher problem, without question.

As far as the schools are concerned, the effects of this aspect of the teacher problem are in the main the same as those which we mentioned in connection with the teacher-procurement problem. Only one we would add. It is this. The lack of a permanent teaching staff plays a large part in preventing a school from functioning as a unit. Your children are not just attending one grade at a time; they are attending a whole school. And the principal and all the teachers are responsible for the pupils not only one grade at a time, but as long as they are in school. The school whose teaching staff is constantly changing will find it difficult to function in this respect. When 50 per cent of the staff leaves one year, and the other 50 per cent leave the second year, the pupil suffers. He faces an entirely new school within two years' time. Besides, the temporary teacher may give due attention to his class, but he will not give due attention to his career as a teacher of a certain grade or a certain subject in a particular school and a peculiar community. He cannot, because he has *no career* to attend to. A temporary teacher, for example, will not very likely contribute anything worthwhile to the development of a Protestant Reformed "philosophy" of education, or to the application of our principles in any branch of education at all.

If we bear these and other effects in mind, the problem is serious.

And it is a problem for teachers, for would-be teachers, and for boards; but it is also a problem for you, the parents. What can you do about it?

H. C. Hoeksema

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 1, 1952, our beloved parents,

Mr. and Mrs. R. Regnerus

celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their grateful children, humbly acknowledge God's goodness in that He has spared them for each other and for us these years, and our hope and prayer for them is God's blessing in all their way, and that if such is His will they may yet be spared many more years for each other and for us.

Mr. and Mrs. Edw. R. Bruinsma

Mr. Louis R. Regnerus

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob W. Regnerus

and five grandchildren,

Oak Lawn, Illinois

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 5:27-30

It is of great importance to bear in mind, Jesus insisting, that we understand that He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them. Not one iota or tittle of the law shall fail; heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of God stands.

This, however, does not mean that we are under law, that we are to be saved by works of law that we perform; truth is, that by works of law no flesh is ever justified before God. That is the very heart and keynote of the Gospel-tidings. But even so we are to perform good works since when Christ redeems us by His blood, He also renews us by His Spirit according to His image; good works are the fruit of salvation in Christ in our lives. They are the infallible fruits of election. It belongs to the ways of the elect to walk in all good works. For grace does not abolish the law but it establishes it.

This fundamental truth of the Gospel should be kept very clearly before our minds lest we fall into the error of legalism on the one hand, and antinomism on the other hand.

That is also true in regard to the proper understanding of the Seventh Commandment.

It is to this commandment that Jesus calls the attention of His hearers on one of the slopes of a mountain in Galilee. The text literally reads as follows: "*Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable to thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.*"

In this passage there are various elements that should be set forth in bold relief. They are the following:

Firstly, we should notice that Jesus lets the text of Exodus 20:14 stand just as it was spoken by the Lord from Mount Sinai and written upon the Tables of Stone. It is true, against this the Scribes and Pharisees have no complaint. They too insist very much on the accuracy of the text. Both say: Thou shalt not commit adultery!

Secondly, we should notice, that there is a *very*

different interpretation given of this commandment by the Jews and by their tradition than what is given by Jesus here in Matthew 5:27-30. The Jews simply made this commandment refer to the physical act of fornication; they did not make it apply to the sinful desires from which the act springs. They did not understand that the outgoings of man are from the heart; that we are as are our hearts. Make the heart good and the fruit is good, and make the heart evil and there will be evil fruit. By the fruits we know what the heart is like even as by the water what is the nature of the fountain from which it springs, and from the quality and amount of the harvest what is the nature of the soil. That is simply a law of nature. Jesus points out these truths to us bringing forth old and new treasures out of the law and the prophets.

And what is this different interpretation?

It is the truth that adultery must be sought not simply in the act of a man committing fornication in the very deed with "thy neighbors wife", but that it must be seen already in the first *sinful desire*; therefore Jesus says: But I say unto you that whosoever *looketh on a woman to lust after her* hath committed adultery already with her *in his heart*!

It is from the heart that all things spring!

The thoughts that are ours do not simply spring forth from the mind. It is never the teaching of Scripture that thoughts are simply those of a logical content; thoughts are always ethically qualified. Thoughts that are in our hearts must be revealed in their ethical nature. Jesus was set as a sign in Israel, we read, in order that the *thoughts of many hearts* be revealed. Thus the aged Simeon speaks prophesying concerning Jesus in the temple. And it is well to bear this in mind.

Back even of these thoughts of the heart are the desires, the affections. In a good and righteous man these desires are the natural and pure longings and affections of the soul. As soon as a man is sinful, and we all are by nature, then these desires are wrong, sinful and they are lusts. Lusts are simply evil desires, desires contrary to the law of God. It is of these desires that Jesus is here speaking. These evil desires are lusts. And in connection with the Seventh Commandment these lusts are carnal, they are the evil lustings of the flesh and of the eyes. These lusts are back of the deed of fornication.

Certainly this command forbids this fornication on the part of a man. No man may cast lustful glances at a woman. Certainly this does not merely mean that only a married man may not look at his neighbor's wife in lust, but it also means that an unmarried bachelor may not look thus at an unmarried maiden. The "whosoever looketh" makes this

prohibition universal. This is also indicated by the fact that the text speaks of "a woman". It does not make a bit of difference whether she is married to another or not. Anyone casting lustful glances at a woman committeth adultery with her in his heart. Such is the clear teaching of Jesus.

The question may be raised whether Jesus means to exclude the woman from this prohibition. We are of the conviction that such is not the case. Neither may a woman cast lustful glances toward a man, nor, and that is still more denatured, lustful glances toward another woman. We must dare to confess with the Heidelberg Catechism that this Seventh Commandment teaches that "all uncleanness is accursed of God". As to the question why Jesus directs this prohibition to man we may answer, that this is the usual manner of speaking in Holy Writ. The law is directed to man. He is the head of the wife and is the one who is addressed representatively. Thus it is here in this case.

When the commandment is thus viewed it is also evident that no one can keep his eyes from vanity in his own strength so that they will "look right on". Well may we say with Job "I have made a covenant with mine eyes". And we are also reminded of what John says of the lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and that Peter describes evil men as having "eyes full of adultery".

How are our eyes, dear reader?

Jesus rather presupposes that we have spiritual eye-trouble. That our eyes cause us to stumble is implied in the conditional clauses here employed in the text. The "if thy right eye offend thee. . . ." presupposes that such is indeed the case with us. The same is also presupposed in the next clause where we read "if thy right hand offend thee" The eye and the hand are here viewed as being very really offending members. It is at once humbling and encouraging to notice that presupposition in the text. It teaches us that we need to come a long way to arrive at perfection, but that yet the situation is not hopeless for us in Him, Who has come to fulfill the law and the prophets.

It is not hopeless?

No it is not, because the offending eye can be plucked out, and the offending hand can be cut off.

What does this mean to pluck out the right eyes and to cut off the right hand?

Must this be taken in the literal sense of the term? We think not. In the first place because such is never the instruction of Holy Writ elsewhere when speaking of the flesh that must be crucified in the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:13. Nowhere does the Bible teach that literal amputation of members of

the body is a cure for the sin of evil desires. The eunuch as well as the blind and the maimed still have to fight against these lusts or perish in them. Besides Jesus did not mean to say that the eye sins or the hand. It is we who sin by our hand and by our eyes. And the lust is back of the eye. The eye simply is the medium of lust and the hand the medium of the act. And so we do not believe that Scripture would understand this in the literal sense of the term; Jesus does not advocate literal amputation of limbs and sense-organs.

What then?

We believe that the eye stands for the organ whereby the lust conceives and the hand stands for the act of lust in its execution. The Word of God spoken here is exactly as it is told us concerning the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise. We read that the stages through which the fall went were the following: 1. The desire for Satan's word, 2. Looking at the tree that it was good for the eyes, 3. Taking of the fruit and giving it to Adam. Thus it is also here in the language of Jesus. The lust of the heart, the conception with the eye and the act of adultery. With this we can compare also James "but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then the lust when it hath conceived beareth sin, and sin when it is finished (full-grown) beareth death". James 1:14-15.

No, we must not think, that Jesus advocates literal amputation. The right eye is wholly clean and the right hand only performs righteousness when the heart is righteous. So we must purify our hearts, circumsize our hearts and not our foreskins. We must turn unto the Lord in sincerity and truth. Then and then only do we really make the evil eye to keep us from stumbling and the hand likewise.

We may we pray with the Psalmist: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer!"

G. Lubbers

IN MEMORIAM

Donderdag, 13 December 1951, heeft het den Heere behaagd uit ons midden te nemen onze geliefde echtgenoot, vader en grootvader,

Cornelius Wassink

in den ouderdom van 70 jaar.

Schoon wij hem missen, mogen wij toch gelooven dat zijn sterven hen tot gewin was, om zonder zonde en strijd zijne Heere te dienen. Moge zijn heengaan ons tot een spoorslag zijn om ons huis te bereiden.

De bedroefde familie,

Mrs. Cornelius Wassink

Mr. and Mrs. John Brummel

Mr. and Mrs. Arend Wassink
en 6 kleinkinderen

Hull, Iowa