

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVIII

FEBRUARY 15, 1952 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 10

## MEDITATION

### Het Vermelden van de Uitnemende Liefde

"De koning heeft mij gebracht in zijne binnenkamen; wij zullen ons verheugen en in U verblijden; wij zullen Uwe uitnemende liefde vermelden, meer dan den wijn: de oprechten hebben U lief."

—Hooglied 1:4b

We zullen U niet vermoeden met eene bestrijding van hen die allerlei onzin gebazeld hebben aangaande het Hooglied van Salomo. Misschien weet ge niet eens, dat er allerlei onzin in omloop is aangaande dit schoone minnelied. En misschien weet ge het wel. Hoe dat dan ook zij, het is beter dat we niet te veel tijd besteden aan dat volk. God zal hen richten.

In 't algemeen mag ik wel dit zeggen: er zijn altijd menschen geweest die van dit lied zeggen, dat het eenvoudig weg de natuurlijk liefde bezingt van mensch tot mensch, en meer niet. Maar de kerk van Christus heeft hier altijd geluisterd, eerbiedig geluisterd naar den zang van Gods verbondsliefde.

We hebben hier niet minder dan een zang die spreekt van Gods liefde tot Zijn volk; en de liefde van dat volk tot God. En als ge in Nieuw-Testamentische trant wilt spreken, dan zegt ge: hier hebben we een boek dat de liefde van Christus bezingt, beide vanuit het oogpunt van de liefde zooals die zich richt tot de Kerk, en vanuit het oogpunt dier liefde der Kerk tot den Christus. En dat is de beteekenis van dit boek. Uit een zeker oogpunt is het het diepste boek uit den geheelen Bijbel. En het zal ons passen om ons schoeisel van onze voeten te nemen, want de plaats die we hier betreden is heilige grond.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

De Koning heeft mij gebracht in Zijne binnen-

kamen. Indien gij Uwe jaren doorgebracht hebt in de Gereformeerde kerken, dan weet ge hoe in dit Hooglied twee partijen spreken. De eene is God of Christus; en de andere is de kerk. God wordt ons hier geopenbaard als de Liefhebber van de zielen van Zijn volk; en dan als de groote Bruidegom. En de andere partij die sprekend of zingend optreedt is de Bruid, dat wil zeggen, de kerk van Christus. In mijn tekst is die kerk aan het woord. En die kerk zegt als inleiding: De Koning heeft mij gebracht in Zijne binnenkamen. En nu vragen we als vanzelf: wat beteekenen hier die binnenkamen?

Wat we hier hebben is natuurlijk beeldspraak. En dan wel Oostersche beeldspraak. Een Koninklijk paleis telt vele kameren. Er is een gehoorkamer; er is een raadskamer; en zijn spijskamers; huiskamers; er is een schatkamer; en er zijn vele slaapkamers in het paleis eens Konings. Doch hier is sprake van een binnenkamer. En dat is die plaats in het paleis waar de Koning op 't innigst leeft. Dat is een kamer waar men zoo maar geen toegang ontvangt. En als we dit beeld overbrengen op het leven des menschen, dan is het overduidelijk, dat hier bedoeld wordt des menschen binnenste, of zijn diepste hartelevens. En, dat beeld spreekt van God, zoo is het het hartelevens van den DrieEenigen God. En als we dat gezien hebben, dan kunnen we ook de beteekenis, de geestelijke beteekenis benaderen. En dan is het die plaats, waar het diepe leven Gods geconcentreerd is, waar de liefde Gods opborrelt, opbruist, en jubelt van oneindigen verbondsmin. Die binnenkamen van God is Gods zingende, volzalige hart van onbegrijpelijke, eeuwige liefde en vriendschap des verbonds.

En in die plaats nu, wordt de bruid gebracht. Ze zingt hier in mijn tekst van het feit, dat ze toegelaten is in Gods harte. Die plaats, mijne geliefde vrienden, is verloren. Adam mocht in die binnenkamen wonen, doch slechts in aardchen zin. En in de binnenkamen was Adam zalig. Doch door moedwillige ongehoorzaamheid verloor hij die plaats, werd hij uit

die plaats verbannen, dat wil zeggen, voorzoover het zijn praktisch, gewaarwordend leven betreft. Want wat God betreft is Adam nooit uit Zijn hart geweest. Let wel: het Evangelie is juist dit: wij moeten met God verzoend, doch God is eeuwiglijk verzoend geweest met Zijn volk. Doch Adam en met hem alle natuurlijke menschen verloren die plaats, praktisch, feitelijk, onderwerpeijk. En ze verloren die zaligheid zoo absoluut, dat een ieder natuurlijk mensch nu walgt van die heerlijke en lieflijke binnenkamer.

Neemt nu, b.v., de duideliikste plaats aangaande deze zaak. Er staat dan: Wijk van mij, want aan de kennis Uwer wegen heb ik geen lust! Zoo staat de natuurlijke mensch tegenover God.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

En ge kunt het ook weten uit het praktische leven rondom U. Neemt nu den Sabbat. Wat een klein aantal van ons zoogenaamde Christelijke Amerika en Canada gaat naar God huis? Hoeveel menschen zijn er die zich om het eeuwige Evangelie bekommeren? Omgekeerd, hoeveel millioenen vergapen zich aan het vuile, het zondige, het zingenot van deze tegenwoordige vuile tijd? De theaters zijn vol, berstens vol, doch de kerken zijn leeg. De goddeloosheid groeit onrustbarend aan, en de deugd struikelt op alle straten. De mensch der zonde, de vuige Antichrist is aan 't komen. Luistert, mijne vrienden: de natuurlijke mensch walgt van Gods hart. Wil niets weten van dat hart. In de derde plaats, luistert naar de stem van Uw eigen vleesch, en ge zult sidderen. Ten minste, als ge genade ontvingt. Anders weet ge niet eens waar ik het over heb. Maar als ge genade ontvangen hebt, dan zult ge mij toestemmen, dat ook ons vleesch afkeerig is van God en van Goddelijke zaken. Wij die God kennen door Jezus Christus moeten bekennen, dat we ons vleesch moeten kruisigen elken stap op den weg naar den hemel heen. Dat zijn de vreeselijke feiten. En daarom sprak ik van sidderen.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Daarom, mijne vrienden, moeten we in die binnenkameren ingebracht worden. En dat geschiedt door de trekkende liefde Gods. Dat is de wedergeboorte, en dat is de bekeering. Dat is het leven des geloofs en der heiligmaking. Let er op, dat er staat, dat God,

dat de Koning ons in die binnenkameren inleidt. Dat is een fundametele waarheid, een waarheid waarop de Pelagiaan van alle eeuwen zijn tanden stomp gebeten heeft. Maar nooit had die Pelagiaan succes. Want God is God en Hij blijft God. God brengt ons toe, en niet wij. Dat staat immers in een van de psalmen? God heeft ons gemaakt en niet wij tot schapen Zijner weide. Een ander beeld dan we hier hebben doch dezelfde zaak. God komt tot U, indien Zijn eeuwige liefde U van eeuwigheid zag. Indien gij genade vindt in Zijne oogen, dan komt Hij, dan kwam Hij of dan zal Hij komen, en dan neemt Hij U beet in 't diepe hart, en dan leidt Hij U zachtens totdat ge aankomt in Zijn diepste hart. Nu woont ge daar niet altijd, doch als ge eenmaal de smaak mocht proeven van wat het zeggen wil om met dien God gemeenschap, hartelijke gemeenschap te hebben, dan zingt ge van tijd tot tijd, en dan somtijds klagend van verlangen: Goedertieren Vader! Milde Zegener! Stel Uw vriend'lijk hart, op Wiens gunst wij hopen, eeuwig voor ons open; weer steeds alle smart! Dus de grond is Zijn toebrengring. En wat mag de inhoud zijn van het vermelden?

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

De inhoud, mijne vrienden, is beide theologisch en anthropologisch. Die woorden beduiden, dat de tekst ons de inhoud van het vermelden van Gods liefde schetst vanuit het oogpunt van God alswel vanuit het oogpunt van den mensch. Laten we beginnen met het laatste. En dan zegt de tekst, dat de mensch die in de binnenkameren geleid werd van Gods diepste hart, zich verheugt. In de intieme verbondsgemeenschap met God is verheuging en verblijding. Dat wordt eerst geconstateerd. Let er op, dat terwijl er eerst staat, dat de Koning *mij*, dus in 't enkelvoud, in Zijne binnenkameren leide, *wij*, dus in 't meervoud, ons zullen verheugen en *ons* verblijden. En dan is het antwoord: dáár stond de individueele toebrengring op den voorgrond, doch hier is het effect geconstateerd in de zingende gemeente.

Wat is nu verheuging? Verheuging is het effect van dien toestand wanneer alle begeerten en nooden vervuld zijn. Als het vogeltje at en dronk, dan zong het. Dat is een beeld uit de natuur, en dat beeld past op den Christen. Als ge intieme gemeenschap met God mocht hebben, dan kan het niet anders, dan gaat ge aan 't zingen, want dan zijt ge tevreden. Want God is 't einde van alle vragen, van alle nooden,

van alle begeerten. Het hart rust, het kan en zal rusten als het God gevonden heeft. Spijze en vroolijkheid behooren tezamen in die orde. Als God in Christus Uwe spijs is geworden, dan zult ge zeker zingen, zingen van gena.

We zullen ons ook in U verblijden, zegt de Bruid in onzen tekst. Dat toont, hoe de zaligheid des menschen vastzit aan God. In U, O God, verblijden we ons, en dat wil zeggen in Uw deugden, in het volle deugdenbeeld van den volzaligen God. Hoe groot is de zaligheid van de Kerke Christi! En dan volgt de Theologische inhoud. Wij zullen Uwe uitnemende liefde vermelden! Dat volgt erop. En het volgt, niet omdat het minder is, doch omdat het theologische zingen der Kerk meerder is. We zien in onzen tekst het opklimmen van het leven des Christens, van het anthropologische tot het theologische. Eerst: ik ben verlost! Dan: door Gods liefde ben ik verlost! en eindelijk; en dat is ook het leven des hemels tot in eeuwigheid: Wat een liefde! En dat laatste is theologisch leven en zingen.

Het gaat hier niet over de liefde Gods zonder meer. O neen. Het gaat hier over de uitnemende liefde Gods. Let daar op. De liefde Gods werd geopenhaard in het eerste Paradijs. Maar de kerk ziet meer dan net maar de liefde Gods. Wij mogen de uitnemende liefde Gods zien. En dat is niet maar het liefderijk verzorgen van den mensch, zoodat Hij Zijn God mag kennen als de gever en behouder van het gewone aardsche, natuurlijke leven. O neen. We moeten hooger zien, en verder en dieper zien. De uitnemende liefde Gods is het Kruis van Jezus Christus. Dat is zóó uitnemend, dat Paulus zegt: ik heb mij voorgenomen om niets te weten onder U dan Jezus Christus en Hem gekruist.

O zeker, Adam in den staat der rechtheid zou U hebben kunnen vertellen van de liefde Gods. Doch vergelijkt het met de kennis die de Kerk van Christus nu heeft van die liefde, en ge zult zien hoe er een vreeselijk groot verschil is. Wij mogen kennen en zingen van een liefde die Zichzelven in de helsche verdoemenis stortte om ons, ellendige zondaren te redden. Deze uitnemende liefde roept ons toe, dat Hij ons liefhad toen we Hem in het aangezicht sloegen, toen we Hem den doornenkroon op de slapen drukten, toen we Hem aan het kruis hechtten. Dat er de uitnemende liefde. En zij zal den hemel doen ruischen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheden. Omdat die liefde zoo uitnemend was, daarom zullen de uitverkorenen zingen: Gij hebt ons Gode gekocht door Uw bloed! Ze doen dat meer dan den wijn. Daar hebt be het theologische oogpunt. De wijn is beeldspraak voor de zaligheid, voor de verheffing des eeuwigen levens van Gods volk. Doch de kerk zegt: ik zal vermelden Uwe

groote liefde, meer dan mijn eigen verheffing, mijn eigen zaligheid. Want God moet geprezen.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

En nu nog eenige woorden aangaande de derde gedachte: wie zijn het onderwerp van dit vermelden van Gods uitnemende liefde? En dan is het antwoord: de oprechten, want ze hebben U lief. Hun liefhebben van God is het bewijs van hun oprechtheid. En die oprechtheid is een deugd die God hun schonk.

Wat is oprechtheid? Oprechtheid is die deugd, waardoor ons inwendige leven en ons uitwendige leven harmonieus zijn. Om het nu heel eenvoudig en plat te zeggen: Een oprecht mensch is een mensch die van binnen en van buiten hetzelfde is. Een oprecht mensch is zichzelf gelijk waar ge hem ook aantreft. Hoe is dat zoo gekomen? Want een ieder weet, al stemt men het niet grif toe, dat de natuurlijke mensch verre van oprecht is. Men rekent er immers overal mee, dat juist het tegenovergestelde van den medemensch verwacht kan worden? Wel, om dat te vertellen, moet ik U eerst wijzen op de waarheid dat God de oprechtheid zelve is. Oprechtheid is een deugd Gods. God is en blijft Zichzelf altijd gelijk. Want Hij is waarheid en Licht. God is als de kristallijne oceaan. Er zijn geen verdachte schaduwen bij God. Hij is de Oprechte bij uitnemendheid. En relatief woonde die deugd in den mensch. Doch we hebben die deugd verloren door de zonde. En nu zijn we van nature onoprecht. Ge kunt den mensch nu niet meer vertrouwen, want hij is anders dan hij zich voorstelt. Hij kan U glimlachend aanstaren en heel lieflijk spreken tot U met aanvallig klankgeslacht, doch ge kunt het niet vertrouwen, want het is best mogelijk, dat hij U in zijn hart vloekt. En die trek karakteriseert ons allen. Doch als God U in Zijn binnenkameren inleidde, dan geeft Hij U van Zijne deugd der oprechtheid. En dan is er een beginsel van die schoone deugd in Uw leven, en den openbaart ge die deugd in de heiligmaking. En dat is ook Uwe roeping want Hij zegt, dat ge oprecht zult zijn als de duiven. En dat volk heeft God lief. Daarom zingen ze: God heb it lief, want die getrouwe Heer, hoort mijne stem, mijn smeeking en mijn klagen; Hij neigt Zijn oor; 'k roep tot Hem al mijn dagen; Hij schenkt mij hulp, Hij redt mij keer op keer!

G. Vos.

— : — : —

I am a stranger here, dependent on Thy grace,  
A pilgrim, as my fathers were, with no abiding place.

**THE STANDARD BEARER**

Semi-monthly, except monthly in July and August

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

EDITOR — Rev. Herman Hoeksema

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

Subscription Price: \$3.00 per year

Entered as Second Class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

**EDITORIALS****Classis, January 9, 1952**

IMPRESSIONS (continued)

As I have said, I write no official report.

I do not have all the documents to write such a report. In order to be complete, such an official report must needs include the complete report of the Classical Committee in re the Chatham case, the letter from Chatham addressed to Classis, and the reply of Classis to that letter.

But I am not in possession of these documents. And as I merely write impressions, I do not need them. For these impressions I rely only on my memory, trusting that, if my memory should fail me, someone will be good enough to correct me.

If, then, my memory is correct, the letter of Chatham, addressed to Classis, which was also addressed to all our consistories, exhorts our churches to liberate themselves from the sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The question is: which are these sins to which the Consistory of Chatham refers?

From the letter that was addressed to Classis by Chatham this is not clear. It refers, if I remember well, only to the Declaration of Principles. But, if we also consult the report of the Classical Committee, the sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches are chiefly: 1. That they adopted the Declaration of Principles. 2. The censure case of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids against the two Dutch students, H. de Bolster and H. de Raad. 3. The case of the Consistory of Randolph, that refused to baptize the child of a member that was of Liberated convictions. 4. The refusal of the Committee of Correspondence of the Protestant Reformed Churches to get into contact with the Netherlands.

These are the so-called sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

All this left upon me a very strange impression.

In the first place, it left the impression that the brethren in Chatham were very eager to separate themselves from our churches, the fundamental reason being that they did not agree with the truth of our Confessions as maintained by these churches. My impression is that the fundamental reason being that they were not Protestant Reformed, they now looked for an excuse to separate themselves. And they finally did "liberate" themselves without any regard to the

**C O N T E N T S****MEDITATION—**

Het Vermelden van de Uitnemende Liefde ..... 217  
Rev. G. Vos

**EDITORIALS—**

Classis January 9, 1952—(*Impressions*) ..... 220  
Promise and Prediction ..... 223  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

**THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE—**

An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism ..... 223  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

**THE DAY OF SHADOWS—**

The Protevangel as the Unifying Idea of all the Scriptures .... 232  
The Covenant of Sinai ..... 234  
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

**IN HIS FEAR—**

Looking to the Future ..... 236  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

**FROM HOLY WRIT—**

Exposition of Matthew 5:33-37 ..... 238  
Rev. G. C. Lubbers

**CONTRIBUTION—**

Hidden Evil? ..... 240  
A. Haan

Word of God, the Confessions, and above all, the Church Order.

Leaving for the moment the question of the Declaration of Principles alone, what are these sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches? Suppose it were a sin of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids to censure the two above-named students, which it certainly was not—could this be called a sin of the whole denomination of Protestant Reformed Churches? This, of course, is nothing short of ridiculous. And suppose the case of Randolph, according to which they refused to baptize a certain child, had been a sin of that Consistory, can that sin be laid at the door of all the Protestant Reformed Churches? Also this is ridiculous. And again, suppose it were true that the Committee of Correspondence refused to go to The Netherlands or get into contact with their deputies of correspondence, and suppose this were sinful of that Committee of Correspondence, could that attitude of the Committee be called a sin of the Protestant Reformed Churches? The reader knows better. All these alleged sins are simply flimsy excuses to cover up the real reason why the Consistory of Chatham decided to “liberate” themselves, and separate from the Protestant Reformed Churches. And that real reason is simply that they did not agree with the Protestant Reformed truth. If only the brethren had freely and openly acknowledged this fact and informed our churches that they had been in error when they were organized as a Protestant Reformed Church, no one would have blamed them. But now it is quite different. For now they separate themselves on the basis of such flimsy excuses, and moreover, make a futile attempt to create a schism in our Protestant Reformed Churches, they expose themselves as revolutionaries and schismatics.

But let us look at those three alleged sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches a little more closely.

First of all, the case of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids *in re* the censure of the two students. In the first place, it is very evident that the Consistory of Chatham, like a certain Mr. Land that wrote a letter in the *Reformatie*, is guilty, in this case, of the sin against the ninth commandment, which the Catechism explains as follows: “That I bear false witness against no man, nor falsify any man’s words; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer; that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly, or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God.” Of this the Consistory of Chatham is evidently guilty.

For they evidently based their judgment only upon the testimony, written or otherwise, of the two students that were censured themselves. They never consulted the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church. Still less did they send a protest to that Consistory against that censure. And therefore, it is certainly true that they were guilty of backbiting and slander and of judging the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church rashly and unheard. Secondly, I want to reiterate that this action of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids is not to be denominated a sin. These two students were not put under censure because of their Liberated views, but because they refused to promise that they would not make propaganda for their views, and because they finally threatened in the presence of the whole Consistory that if they were put under censure, they would make propaganda for their views in all our churches, and thus try to make a schism. Nor did these students walk in the ecclesiastical way and appeal to Classis, but immediately separated themselves, together with a few others, and assembled on the sabbath in a separate group. If this is not schismatic and revolutionary, I confess that I do not understand the meaning of those terms.

Secondly, there is the case of the Consistory of Randolph, Wisconsin. Again, I have the same objection as I had in the case of the two students that were censured by the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, namely, that the Consistory of Chatham made themselves guilty of the sin against the ninth commandment. They were guilty of backbiting and of rashly condemning the Consistory of Randolph, Wisconsin, without being heard. I do not know on what basis the Consistory formed their own judgment of that case, but I do know that they never consulted the Consistory of Randolph nor made any protest against that Consistory, but based their opinion on mere hearsay, probably of the party involved. In as far as that “sin” of Randolph is concerned, also in this respect the Consistory of Chatham is in error. It is true that they refused to baptize a baby of one that was of Liberated convictions. But, in the first place, it is also true that said party would not and could not answer the second question of the Baptism Form, “Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the Articles of the Christian Faith, and which is taught here in this Christian church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?” Moreover, if I remember well—and I think I do—said party refused to partake of communion in the proper way, but insisted to have his baby baptized nevertheless, so that he demanded of the Consistory of Ran-



dolph to make separation between the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Such is the information which I have; and if this is not correct, the Consistory of Randolph can set me straight. But I am positive that if the Consistory of Chatham had appealed to the Consistory of Randolph, and if they had not been satisfied, had protested against that Consistory to the Classis, they would have had no case whatsoever. But instead of walking in the ecclesiastical way, they rather have recourse to slander and backbiting and judging rashly and speaking of the sins of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Finally, there is that alleged refusal of the Committee of Correspondence of the Protestant Reformed Churches to go to The Netherlands or to get into contact with the deputies for correspondence of the Liberated Churches in The Netherlands. Also this is not true. The Committee has never refused to go to The Netherlands, even though their visit has twice been postponed for reasons of which they can give account if necessary. The fact is that we are still attempting to get contact with the Reformed Churches (Art. 31) of The Netherlands, as is evident from the fact that at a recent meeting the Committee has decided to send a letter to The Netherlands, asking them whether they still desire correspondence in spite of the adoption of the Declaration, and informing them that if they should desire a colloquium, we would be willing to meet them in The Netherlands, or else to receive them here in our own country, assuring them of a brotherly and hospitable reception. But again, I say that the Consistory of Chatham is guilty of the sin against the ninth commandment. They have never consulted the Committee of Correspondence, and therefore they have judged them rashly and unheard.

But of all these sins they make no mention in the letter that was addressed to Classis, and which also was addressed to all our Consistories.

In that letter they made mention only of the specific sin of adopting the Declaration of Principles.

But again I say: suppose that the Declaration of Principles is not the truth as expressed in our Reformed Confessions, which it certainly is and which has never been contradicted? The act of "liberating" themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches at this time was nevertheless schismatic and revolutionary. The Consistory of Chatham certainly could have sent a protest through Classis to our next Synod with grounds to prove that the Declaration of Principles is certainly not the expression of the Reformed truth as found in the Three Forms of Unity. We would not have blamed them if they had done so. Nor would we, in the meantime, pending their protest, have held them responsible for the adoption of

the Declaration by our last Synod. Thus we understand Article 31 of the Church Order of Dordrecht. And if after our Synod of 1952 had reached a decision and had maintained the decision of the Synod of 1951, the Consistory of Chatham could not conscientiously have acquiesced, they always would have had the liberty to separate themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches. Now, however, their act is that of schismatics and revolutionaries. But as I say once more, that Consistory never was in sympathy with the Protestant Reformed truth. And that is the deepest reason why they separated from our churches.

The Classis decided to send a reply to the letter of Chatham.

This letter was not addressed to any Consistory, still less to the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham, which they were not, but simply to those who call themselves the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Chatham.

In that letter they state that they have no desire to enter with them into a discussion of the Declaration of Principles, seeing that they have forfeited the right to such a discussion by not walking in the ecclesiastical way.

Secondly, they earnestly exhort and admonish the brethren in Chatham that sent the letter to repent from their evil and schismatic way, in which they cannot expect the blessing of the Lord, but only wrath and misery.

And finally, they reminded them of the fact that at the occasion of the organization of the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham they had been earnestly and strongly admonished not to organize unless they could answer the second question of the Baptism Form concerning the doctrine which is taught here in this Christian church. And knowing all this they had organized nevertheless.

This business of Chatham was the main dish at the meeting of Classis, January 9, 1952.

After this there was not much business to transact. The main item on the agenda was the election of delegates to Synod. But the names of these will be published in the official report of Classis.

And hereby I close my meditation on the impressions I received at the meeting of Classis East.

H. H.

— : — : —

#### IN MEMORIAM

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

Mrs. Steve Faber

May our heavenly Father comfort the bereaved in their hour of sorrow and strengthen them with His sustaining grace.

Mrs. H. Leep, Sec'y.

## Promise and Prediction

To understand the article of Dr. Schilder which the Rev. Kok translated without any criticism or comment in *Concordia* (Jan. 17, '52), we must remember and constantly bear in mind that he writes as a Liberated theologian. Otherwise we can never understand the article, and especially why he is in such emphatic need of conditions. Strange to say, Dr. Schilder since he was here the first time, and therefore approximately during the war, changed his entire conception about the covenant and the promise and now embraces the Heynsian conception, except in as far as that subjective preparatory grace of Heyns is concerned. I first was in hopes that he really did not fully agree with the Liberated theology, but gradually it has become more and more evident that he is in complete agreement with it.

This implies that there is rather a fundamental difference between him and us as Protestant Reformed people.

When he speaks of the covenant, he does not mean the same thing as we do. He definitely needs parties in the covenant, while we speak of parts, and no parties.

When he speaks of the promise, he means something quite different from what we mean by it. For him the promise is for all the children of the covenant, head for head and soul for soul, elect and reprobate, Jacob and Esau. For us the promise is only for the elect. For Schilder the promise is only an objective bequest. For us it includes all the blessings of salvation, as they are applied to the elect by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of promise. For Schilder, therefore, the promise is necessarily conditional. For us, that is, for all truly Protestant Reformed people, it is unconditional.

In the light of all this we can also understand the emphasis of Dr. Schilder on the false distinction between promise and prediction. Writes he: "But now comes the fine point of distinction: God does give us promises, but no predictions. Thus He does not say to N. N.: you shall sometime go to heaven, and to another N.N.: you shall forever remain without.

"Therefore He gives a promise, with a command, even as it is taught us in the Canons of Dordt: the promise comes with the command to believe and repent. And thus at the time of baptism He says: He that believeth in Me shall not be ashamed; for them that honour Me I will honour; unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; them that seek Me early shall find Me. And he who would call this Arminian, does not, in my opinion, read his Bible correctly, by

means of which, nevertheless, the Arminians have been defeated."

Now as far as the last clause is concerned, it is true, of course, in a way, that the Arminians have been defeated by Scripture, but certainly not by reading Bible texts. In the Canons of Dordrecht they interpreted Scripture and composed very many doctrinal and dogmatical statements. You cannot defeat Arminians by merely quoting Bible texts.

But as far as the above quotation is concerned, let me call your attention, first of all, to the fact that Dr. Schilder makes the common error of quoting Canons II, 5 apart from the rest of the Confessions, as if in that article we have the presentation of a definition of the promise and of the whole promise of God. At the last Synod I called the attention of the brethren to the danger of committing that very common error, that is, of isolating certain parts of the Confessions and separating them from the whole. I warned that in this way one can make the Confessions themselves speak Arminian language. Recently a friend of mine called my attention to the fact that this same warning has been issued before. I quote from the explanation of The Netherland Confession by W. H. Gispen, 1886:

"We believe, however, that not only the offer of salvation and the urge of the Holy Spirit to receive the proffered salvation, is a gift of God and the work of His grace, but also that the *will* to accept it, the *will* to stretch out the hand to the proffered alms is the work, the gift of God. *We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith.* We do not deny that the death of the Son of God is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. Nor do we deny that 'the promise of the gospel must be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, with the command to repent and believe,' and that the guilt of the unbelief of many does not lie in failure or insufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, but lies entirely in themselves . . . But we would certainly fail to speak the whole truth, if we would mean to maintain that this presentation expresses the *full*, the *whole truth*. For this is not so. He who lays a onesided emphasis upon these truths, runs into great danger to approach the extreme limit of Remonstrantism, and may transgress that limit more quickly perhaps than he himself wishes to do." pp. 158-159. This indeed is almost the same sentiment as I expressed at the last Synod.

But let us return to the quotation from Dr. Schilder.

He writes that God gives us promises, but no predictions.

We must carefully analyze this brief sentence, in order to find out what the writer means.

First of all, then, we ask the question: what in the sentence does the pronoun *us* mean? It is evident from the context that Dr. Schilder does not refer to the elect, as is so often the case in the Confessions. In fact, it is very well possible to apply this pronoun *us* to all men, without distinction, as, for instance, is the case when Canons II, 5 states that the promise of the gospel must be declared and published to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction. But at any rate, we can state that particularly all the children of the covenant, head for head, soul for soul, elect and reprobate, are meant. To them all the Lord does not give predictions, but He does give his promises. Dr. Schilder would no doubt subscribe to what Prof. Veenhof writes in his *Unica Catholica*:

"In His holy, glorious covenant language the Lord calls the children of the covenant not only His children, but He also gives unto them the promises of the covenant.

"He promises them also, that He will be their God.

"What these promises of the covenant are you may read in the inimitably tender language of the Baptism Form, what the covenant God has promised: the Father, that He adopts us as His children and heirs; the Son, that He washes us in His blood; the Holy Spirit, that He will sanctify us as members of Christ. Thus are the promises of the covenant. All this the Lord promises to the children of the covenant.

"And these promises are meant for *all* the children of the covenant.

"Here we may make no separation; we may not say that it means for the one and not for the other, God promises *all* the children of the covenant all the blessings of His salvation. Therefore also to them that are not regenerated. Also to them that never are regenerated.

"Also to a covenant child that will be lost these promises are given.

"But when such a one later in life wantonly breaks with the covenant and with the God of the covenant and turns his back to Him, he receives no part in the ranks of the heirs of grace.

"Through his own disobedience to the God of the covenant and of his fathers he himself despised the blessing and rejected it. In spite of the fact, that the Lord had promised him much, he closed for himself through his disobedience the gate of heaven."

And a little later:

"Our children are children of the Lord.

"They belong to the Lord from their birth on. The

Lord views them as 'my children.' He has a right to them. They *may* not live as they please!

"When they sinfully depart and turn their backs to the Lord, their sin is greater than that of one who never belonged to the covenant, for it is the sin of disobedience, the breaking of the covenant.

"Then finally the same stage is reached as in a family, in which a son forgets himself sometime that he is disinherited by the father.

"He made himself unworthy of the inheritance! . . .

"And when later the departing covenant child would say that God after all did not give him the benefits of the covenant, then the word must be applied to him: 'It is your own fault; you did not want it any different.'

"Also to this lost child the Lord promises His salvation, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He promises this and means it seriously and promises it honestly."

That in all this there is no mention of election and there is certainly no room for reprobation is plain to all that can read. I do not say that either Veenhof or Schilder deny the sovereign counsel of election and reprobation outright. But I do maintain that in their covenant conception it is left out of view altogether. God promises to all the children of the covenant all the blessings of His salvation, forgiveness of sins and eternal life; and when they do not receive them, this is to be attributed only to the fact that they close for themselves the gate of heaven. How, with such a view, the brethren in the Old Country can escape the indictment of Arminianism, I fail to understand.

But at any rate, this is the implication of the pronoun *us* when Dr. Schilder writes that God gives us promises, but no predictions.

The next question concerning this statement is: what does Schilder mean when he writes that God gives no predictions to them?

To this I would answer that God does not address them by their natural name, N.N., John, Peter, William, etc., and thus assure them that they shall go either to heaven or to hell. This is evident from the sentence: "Thus He does not say to N.N.: you shall sometime go to heaven, and to another N.N.: you shall forever remain without." He does give N. N., John, Peter, William, promises; but He does not assure them by a sure prediction that they shall be saved, or go to heaven.

And now what is perhaps the most important question: what does Schilder mean by the promise?

Here we hit upon the element of conditional theology, and, at the same time upon the most inexplicable contradiction in their entire view.



Does Schilder by promises mean the entire promise, including the application of the blessings of salvation by the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith? That is impossible. For in that case he would make God a liar. The Holy Spirit and the gift of faith are certainly absolutely unconditional. To deny this is to become Pelagian and Arminian. To say that God promises faith on condition of faith is a contradiction in terms. And to say that God promises His Holy Spirit on condition of walking in the way of obedience is the same contradiction, if not Pelagian. That cannot be the meaning, therefore. We remember that even Heyns does not dare to say this, and for that reason makes a separation in the doctrinal part of the Baptism Form between the promise of the Father and of the Son, on the one hand, and of the Holy Spirit, on the other. The promise of the Father is that He will establish an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs. The promise of the Son is that He incorporates us into His death and washes us in His blood from all our sins. But the promise of the Holy Spirit is that He *WILL* apply the blessings of salvation to us, presupposing, of course, that we will never receive them from the Holy Spirit unless we also will it. I do not know whether Schilder would subscribe to this view of Heyns. But certain it is, that he cannot refer to the whole promise of God when he says: "God gives us promises." He refers evidently to the partial promise of future glory and salvation, as is also the case in Canons II, 5. Hence, in the conception of Dr. Schilder here the promise does not include, but excludes the gift of faith. He would undoubtedly interpret Canon II, 5 in this way, that God connects the promise of salvation, the promise of eternal life in the future with the demand of faith and obedience, and therefore on condition of faith and repentance.

Thus, I think, we can understand what Schilder means when he says that God gives us promises, but no predictions.

All he has is a conditional promise to all, without any assurance that all will receive the benefits of the promise.

It makes no difference whether or not he tries to save himself by emphasizing that God fulfills Himself all the conditions (This, in the first place, is nonsense, because a condition which God fulfills can never be presented as a condition which man must fulfill. And in actual fact the common people in the church will never understand this, but always maintain that a condition is a prerequisite which they themselves must fulfill. In other words, in the light of this doctrine they always feel that they are responsible not for their sin or disobedience but for their own salvation:

it is up to them to close the gate of heaven, and therefore also to keep it open.), for this is not the question.

The question is whether the promise includes the gift of faith and of the Holy Spirit, or not.

Does God promise all the subjective blessings and application of the benefits of salvation, including the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith, to all the children of the covenant? Heyns says: No, the Holy Spirit only promises that He *will*, not that He *does*, apply all the benefits of salvation to all the children of the covenant. And I dare say: Schilder is bound to say the same thing. Faith is a condition, a condition that is demanded of us together with repentance. And if faith and repentance are conditions of the promise, faith cannot be included in the promise.

This, it seems to me, is the chief difference between Schilder's conditional promise and the Protestant Reformed conception of the promise.

Schilder's promise does not include the gift of faith. For if God promises faith to all, all will certainly be saved. But we say: Yes, the promise includes faith. But for that very reason we say: The promise is not for all, but only for the elect, and is absolutely unconditional.

Now let us turn to Scripture and to the Confessions, in order to prove that the distinction between promise and prediction is thoroughly false. In fact, it is a mystery to me how Schilder can ever maintain such a distinction. To my mind, practically all the promises in Holy Writ are at the same time predictions. And all the predictions are promises.

To prove this is almost quite unnecessary. Nevertheless, I will refer to a few passages at random to corroborate my contention.

First of all, I will point to Genesis 3:15, the well-known protevangel, the mother of all promises: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." That in these words of Scripture we have a prediction, a prediction of the battle of the ages between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, a prediction, too, of the final victory in Christ Jesus our Lord, Who shall crush the head of the serpent, is very evident. But that at the same time we have no mere prediction, but also a promise of God is well-known and is also very evident from the words themselves, as well as from Question and Answer 19 of the Heidelberg Catechism. God here promises enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That enmity is positively friendship of God. And that friendship of God is certainly the realization of the promise in the hearts of the seed of the woman. And that this is also

the meaning of the Heidelberg Catechism is evident from Qu. 19: "Whence knowest thou this? From the holy gospel, which God himself revealed in paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by his only begotten Son." According to the Catechism, the holy gospel is the same as the promise. And when it is said that this holy gospel, or promise, was revealed in paradise, the reference is without any question to Genesis 3:15, the mother of promises. Hence, we have in these words of Scripture both a prediction and a promise. The promise is a prediction, and the prediction is a promise.

The same is true of all the passages in Scripture that speak of the establishment of the covenant. In Gen. 6:18 we read: "But with thee will I establish my covenant." And again, in Gen. 9:9: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." Notice, that here too we have both a prediction and a promise. The promise is that God establishes His covenant. And the prediction is that He will continue His covenant in the line of the generations of Noah. But again, there can be no separation between promise and prediction. Again, in Genesis 15:18 we read: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Here too we have a promise and a prediction. And really, the promise and the prediction are essentially identical. And from the context it is also very evident that both the prediction and the promise, the establishment of the covenant and the realization of the covenant-promise, depends on God alone. There are no parties in the covenant, altho there are parts. I say this is evident from the context, as is well-known. In the context God appears to Abraham in a vision. And in the vision Abraham asks the Lord: "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" Abraham, therefore, is eager to know how he can be sure that he shall inherit the promise. And the promise is the land of Canaan; but the land of Canaan is at the same time the final glory, according to Hebrews 11. For he looked for a better country, that is, an heavenly. And in answer to the question, God points him to the absolute certainty of His covenant as it is established by God alone. For he is directed (always in the vision) to take an heifer of three years old and a she-goat of three years old and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove and a young pigeon. He divides them, except the doves, and puts them in juxtaposition over against one another. These animals are undoubtedly symbolic of God's covenant, not as a con-

tract, nor as a way of salvation, but as an eternal bond of friendship between God and His people in Christ. But the point to which we must call special attention in this connection is that God passes thru the pieces of the animals that are placed in juxtaposition over against one another *alone*. When men establish a covenant between themselves, it always is an alliance between two or more parties, with mutual stipulations and conditions and promises. And hence, when in olden times a covenant was symbolically ratified by the divided animals, all the parties of the covenant would pass between the pieces, signifying no doubt that they would be faithful to the covenant thus ratified even unto death. But this is not the case with the covenant which God establishes with Abraham. That covenant is not bipartisan, but God is His own party in the covenant. It is not bilateral, but unilateral. This is indicated by the fact that God alone passes thru the pieces. Abraham was no party at all in the establishment of the covenant of God. In fact, when God passed thru the pieces under the symbol of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, Abraham was still in a deep sleep. It is true that when God established His covenant with Abraham, he became *of* the party of the living God. But man is never a party in relation to God. That Abraham was of the party of the living God is to my mind clearly symbolized in the text when he drove away the vultures that came down upon the carcasses to devour them. Thus, then, we have in this passage a beautiful revelation of the covenant and promise of God as depending not on Abraham and God, but on God alone. And thus Abraham has an answer to the question: "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" But also here you have very clearly both a promise and a prediction. The promise is the land of Canaan, and therefore the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, or the heavenly country. That Abraham actually looked upon the promise in that light is very evident from Hebrews 11:9, 10: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And again, this is also evident from the same chapter, vss. 13-16: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have

returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Surely, Abraham had the promise. But at the same time, the promise of God was a prediction, the prediction of the final heavenly tabernacle of God with men in the New Jerusalem and in the new heavens and the new earth. You cannot separate promise and prediction. Prediction is the promise, and the promise is prediction.

Thus it is in all the passages of Scripture that refer to God's covenant. In Genesis 17:7 we read the well-known words: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." That these words are both a promise and a prediction is plain in itself. The promise is that God will establish His covenant with Abraham. The promise is, too, that of his seed. And the prediction is that God will continue His covenant in the line of Abraham's generations, and that it will be an everlasting covenant, so that its final realization shall be in the tabernacle of God with men. But take these words in the connection with the promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:2,3 in connection with Heb. 6:13-18. In the former passage we read: "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." That also here you have both a promise and a prediction, and that, besides, the promise and the prediction are absolutely sure and both pertain only to the heirs of the promise that is, the elect, is evident from the reference to these words in Heb. 6:13-18: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying thee I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." O, to be sure, God gives no predictions to N.N. to John, Peter, and William. But neither does He give promises to N.N., but only to His people. And His people are certainly not all that live under the outward dispensation of the covenant, but only to the elect. Unto the heirs of the promise, unto whom God

shows the immutability of His counsel by an oath, does He give His promises. But again, let Schilder not say that the promises are no predictions. For in Scripture they are always identical. And always both refer only to the elect.

Read also in that beautiful covenant psalm, Psalm 89, that sings of the everlasting mercies of God to His covenant people, how promises and predictions are combined and inseparably connected: "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." vv. 2-4. And again: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help on one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm shall also strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for ever more, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." And again, after the psalmist has stated that God will visit that covenant seed with His rod if they forsake His law and walk not in His statutes and judgments, he continues: "Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once I have sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Promise? O yes. Prediction? To be sure. Inseparable connection between both? Without a doubt. And both unconditional and certain, based only on the faithfulness of God? Absolutely!

Let me quote a few more passages. For the Scripture is full of promises and predictions that are identical and inseparable from one another.

In Isa. 43:1-7 we read: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When

thou passest thru the waters I will be with thee; and thru the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest thru the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, the Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: For I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Beautiful predictions and glorious promises! But neither are for all, but only for the elect. They were precious in God's sight from before the foundation of the world and because they were precious in the sight of God from all eternity, they are honorable, and God has loved them and loveth them forever.

One more passage from Isaiah. In 44:1-5 we read, "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Again you have here glorious promises which are at the same time predictions. And again, both these promises and predictions are not for all, not for N.N., not for John, Peter and William. But they are only for the elect of God, whom God has chosen from before the foundation of the world.

I must continue next time. But when once more my spirit enters into the truth of this material, I can not help saying to Kok and Schilder and the Liberated: You can have all the conditional theology you want. But let me preach and embrace the truth that God's promise is only for the elect, and absolutely unconditional.

H. H.

— : — : —

Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXXI

4.

#### The Key-Power of Christian Discipline

In the eighty-fifth question of the Heidelberg Catechism the key-power of Christian discipline is explained. The answer has the following elements. 1) It teaches us that personal admonition is not a certain right or a certain privilege of which the believer may make use or which he may neglect, but it is a command of Christ. When anyone in the church sins, his brother has the obligation to admonish him. 2) It describes the objects of discipline as those who, under the name of Christians, depart from the right way, either in doctrine or walk. 3) It emphasizes that those who depart must often be brotherly admonished, they must be reported to the church, that is, in case they do not renounce their errors and wicked course of life. It is therefore not the sin as such, but the impenitence of the sinner that is the proper object of Christian discipline. 5) If the sinner also refuses to listen to the admonitions by the church, he is excluded from both the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and thereby, according to the Catechism, they are excluded from the Christian Church and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ. And 6) they may be received again into the communion of the church upon sincere repentance and promise of amendment.

Also the Netherland Confession speaks of Christian discipline, first of all in Article 30, which speaks of the government and the offices in the church as follows: "We believe, that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual policy which our Lord hath taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church: that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means: also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their



necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy." And in Article 32 of the same Confession, mention is made more directly of the discipline of the church as follows: "In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial, that those, who are rulers of the Church, institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church; yet they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, hath instituted. And therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all laws, which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord, and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose, ex-communication or church discipline is requisite, with the several circumstances belonging to it, according to the Word of God."

The Church Order of the Reformed churches also speaks rather elaborately of Christian discipline: In Articles 71 to 78 of discipline over the members, in Articles 79 and 80 of discipline of officebearers.

Article 71 emphasizes the fact that discipline is of a spiritual nature and is therefore distinct from the sword-power: "As Christian Discipline is of a spiritual nature, and exempts no one from Civil trial or punishment by the authorities, so also besides Civil punishment there is need of Ecclesiastical Censures, to reconcile the sinner with the Church and his neighbor and to remove the offense out of the Church of Christ." This article at the same time defines the spiritual nature of Christian discipline as consisting of reconciliation, and therefore, of forgiveness, as well as of removing the offense out of the church of Christ.

Articles 72 and 73 emphasize that Christian discipline must be exercised according to the rule of love and that therefore the sins of the brother must be kept as secret as possible and not unnecessarily be published. In Article 72 we read: "In case anyone errs in doctrine or offends in conduct as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matthew 18 shall be followed." And in Article 73 we read: "Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the Consistory." Both these articles, therefore, emphasize that Christian discipline must be kept within pro-

per bounds, and that the sin of the brother must be covered as much as possible.

However, when a sin is public in its very nature or has become public by the sinner's refusal to repent and to listen to the admonition of one or more witnesses, the church itself, thru its officebearers, is in duty bound to deal with the matter. This is explained in Articles 74 to 77. In Article 74 it is explained in what way the Consistory becomes concerned in the matter: "If any one, having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the Consistory." Of course, in the case of a public sin the Consistory itself is most probably acquainted with the matter, and therefore it will not have to be reported to it. In Article 75 the question is answered concerning the manner in which a public sin in case of repentance must be confessed. This may either be done by confessing before the Consistory and announcement of such confession before the whole church, or by public confession before the church itself: "The reconciliation of all such sins as are of their nature of a public character, or have become public because the admonition of the Church was despised, shall take place (upon sufficient evidence of repentance) in such a manner as the Consistory shall deem conducive to the edification of each Church. Whether in particular cases this shall take place in public, shall, when there is a difference of opinion about it in the Consistory, be considered with the advice of two neighboring churches or of the Classis." Usually, of course, the majority vote of a Consistory is quite sufficient in such matters. Nevertheless, in case of serious difference of opinion in the Consistory itself, the advice of two neighboring consistories or the Classis must be asked. Articles 76 and 77 speak of the proper method of discipline, that leads to final excommunication. In Article 76 we read: "Such as obstinately reject the admonition of the Consistory, and likewise those who have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, shall be suspended from the Lord's Supper. And if he, having been suspended, after repeated admonitions, shows no signs of repentance, the Consistory shall at last proceed to the extreme remedy, namely, excommunication, agreeably to the form adopted for that purpose according to the Word of God. But no one shall be excommunicated except with advice of the Classis." And in Article 77 the steps that lead to excommunication are prescribed more in detail as follows: "After the suspension from the Lord's Table, and subsequent admonitions, and before proceeding to excommunication, the obstinacy of the sinner shall be publicly made known to the congregation, the of-

fense explained, together with the care bestowed upon him, in reproof, suspension from the Lord's Supper, and repeated admonition, and the congregation shall be exhorted to speak to him and to pray for him. There shall be three such admonitions. In the first, the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned that he be somewhat spared. In the second, with the advice of the Classis, his name shall be mentioned. In the third the congregation shall be informed that (unless he repent) he will be excluded from the fellowship of the church, so that his excommunication, in case he remains obstinate, may take place with the tacit approbation of the Church. The interval between the admonitions shall be left to the discretion of the Consistory." This article, therefore, leaves room for really four steps of censure. The first consists in barring the offender from the Table of the Lord without announcing anything to the congregation whatsoever. This is called "silent censure". The second step consists in announcing the fact of the sin to the congregation without announcing the name of the offender. The third step consists in this, that not only the offense, but also the name of the offender shall be mentioned in the Church. Also this announcement is made for the purpose not only that the congregation shall know and approve of the action of the Consistory, but also that the congregation shall have the opportunity to admonish the offender and to pray for his repentance. This third step of censure, however, may not be administered except with the advice of the Classis. This also gives the offender an opportunity to appeal his case to the Classis if he so desires. The final step is, of course, that of excommunication from the church. This step also must be preceded by an announcement in the church that the Consistory shall apply the final step of censure unless the offender repents. And again, also this announcement is made in the church in order to give the congregation an opportunity to still admonish the offender and to pray for his repentance. And if the offender does not repent, excommunication follows.

Finally, in Article 78 it is explained in what way an excommunicated sinner may again be received into the fellowship of the church: "Whenever anyone who has been excommunicated desires to become reconciled to the Church in the way of repentance, it shall be announced to the congregation, either before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or at some other opportune time, in order that (in as far as no one can mention anything against him to the contrary) he may with profession of his conversion be publicly reinstated, according to the Form for that purpose." It stands to reason that only by a public confession before the whole church and by a public reinstatement

the excommunicated sinner can again be received into the fellowship of the church.

Articles 79 and 80 speak of discipline of officebearers, ministers, elders, and deacons. Article 79 indicates the way in which such officebearers may be suspended or deposed from office: "When Ministers of the Divine Word, Elders or Deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the church, or worthy of punishment by the Authorities, the Elders and Deacons shall immediately by preceding sentence of the Consistory thereof and of the nearest Church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended. Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis with the advice of the Delegates of the (particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11." A distinction is made in this article between the ministers of the divine Word, on the one hand, and elders and deacons, on the other. The latter may be suspended and even deposed from their office without the advice of the Classis, merely by a double Consistory. But the former may only be suspended, and whether they shall finally be deposed from office is left to the judgment of the Classis, together with the advice of synodical delegates. In Article 80 the sins that make an office bearer worthy of suspension or deposition are enumerated: "Furthermore, among the gross sins, which are worthy of being punished with suspension or deposition from office, these are the principal ones: false doctrine or heresy, public schism, public blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, filthy lucre; in short, all sins and gross offenses, as render the perpetrators infamous before the world, and which in any private member of the Church would be considered worthy of excommunication." It is evident from this that no officebearer may be expelled from office for any minor offenses. At the same time it is also evident that deposition from office cannot be the end of the matter. One who is thus deposed from office certainly cannot remain as a member of the church unless he repents of his sin, and excommunication must follow.

As to the Scriptural ground for this key-power of Christian discipline, we refer, of course, first of all, to Matthew 18:15-18: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them,

tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In I Corinthians 5 the apostle speaks of a gross sin of fornication committed by someone in the church. And the apostle is evidently grieved that the church has not excommunicated this gross offender. He writes that as far as he himself is concerned, he has already judged and excommunicated this fornicator, who committed adultery with his father's wife: "For verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as tho I were present concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." And he continues to admonish the church to purge out the old leaven. For they must not keep company with fornicators, that is, with fornicators within the church of Christ: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then ye must needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." And at the close of the chapter he admonishes the church to put away from among them that wicked person that had committed that gross sin of fornication.

In II Thessalonians 3:14 we read: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." To obey not the word of the apostle is, of course, the same as not to obey the Word of God. And this disobedience can have reference either to the doctrine of that Word or to a walk in disharmony with it, or to both. And to have no company with such an one certainly implies excommunication from the church of Christ. For if the church can have no company with someone, it certainly implies that it cannot allow such a person to be admitted to the Table of the Lord. Yet the apostle adds in verse 15: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." This implies, of course, that the church must always live in the hope that the sinner comes to repentance. In Titus 3:10, 11 we read: "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and

sinneth, being condemned of himself." And that the church must have no fellowship with those that teach false doctrine is also very evident from II John 10, and 11: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." The Church of Pergamos is admonished to cast out those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." From all these passages it is very plain that the Word of God admonishes the church to exercise discipline over those that depart from the truth, either in doctrine or walk or both, and if they do not repent, to excommunicate them from their fellowship.

H. H.



#### IN MEMORIAM

It pleased our Heavenly Father, in the early hours on Tuesday, January 22, 1952, after a long illness, to take unto Himself, our dear wife, mother and grandmother,

**Johanna Jonker**

at the age of 74 years and 6 months.

She longed for the rest that remaineth for the children of God. Romans 8:18, preached at her burial, are our comfort and also hope.

John Jonker

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Palma  
and 2 grandchildren.

Three brothers:

Jake De Boer, John De  
Boer, Joe De Boer.

One sister:

Mrs. Sharporn

— : — : —

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

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Protevangel as the Unifying Idea of all the Scriptures

David was followed by Solomon. Solomon, in distinction from David, was the typical king of glory. His reign, in contradistinction to that of David's, was a reign of peace. Solomon in his glory together with his kingdom of peace is the type of Christ and His redeemed people in glory *on the new earth*.

Solomon in his glory and Solomon's peaceful reign complete the fourth epoch in the series.

Some additional remarks:

Again in this fourth epoch the two seeds and the struggle between them are brought to the fore as this is not the case in any of the preceding pictures.

Here the seed of the serpent are the heathen nations that dwell on Israel's borders and through the agency of which the Lord laid his strokes upon his backsliding people.

Here the holy seed is again the Israel according to the election as headed by such godfearing personages as Samuel and the other godfearing judges raised up by the Lord to deliver his people. Outstanding here is King David. When he came to power the people of Israel were groaning under the yoke of the Philistines who had nearly overrun the whole of the land of Canaan.

David in his wars with them compelled them to retreat to their own borders and rendered them tributary. Then through a series of military campaigns he conquered all the other hostile heathen nations that dwelt within Israel's ideal boundaries and rendered them, too, tributary. As was stated, on the ruins of these conquered nations he built a mighty empire. Of all these kingdoms he was the Lord. Thus as seated in Israel's theocratic throne he was very actually the Lord of lords—the Lord of these conquered heathen kingdoms and in this capacity at once the king of the twelve tribes of Israel. Canaan was the realm of grace. In contradistinction to all the rest of the earth Canaan was God's country, thus the land of the truly living; for here was the tabernacle of God with men, the church of the elect of that day. But this is all type. Its corresponding reality is the exalted Christ seated at the right hand of God in the highest heavens where He reigns as the King of kings—all the kings of the earth—and in this capacity as the king, priest and prophet of his church.

By David's conquest of the heathen the head of

the serpent was again crushed, be it, of course but typically. From the day of the death of Joshua on the heathen—the serpent—had been harrassing God's people, the church, had thus been crushing the heel of the woman. This was God's doing. As was said, He through the agency of these nations was chastizing His people for their sins and apostacies. But finally, when God had done with the heathen, he raised up David, and through his agency He crushed the serpent's head, and thereupon Solomon's typical kingdom of peace and glory appeared. The church was again on the heights but only typically. And therefore Solomon's kingdom of glory could not last. It must disappear, and so it did.

Before leaving this epoch of sacred history, we must take a glance at the Lord's promise to David that came to him on the occasion of his expressed desire to build the Lord a house. It reads:

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

"He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. And I will be a father to him and he shall be my son."

That *the seed* is in the final instance Christ is plain from the use that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews makes of this word of God to David. "To which of the angels said he at any time, *I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son*" (Hebrews 1:5). Here the writer quotes Nathan literally (II Sam. 7:5), his purpose being to establish with the Old Testament Scripture the preeminence of Christ as compared with the angels.

Certainly the promise as proclaimed to David shed new light on the identity of the seed. In the protevangel He is set forth as *the seed* who shall bruise or rather crush the head of the serpent. The pronoun used is "he,"—*He* shall bruise thy head. Eve understood and believed. For when Cain was born, she was glad. Thinking that the promise had already gone into fulfillment, she jubilantly exclaimed, "I have received a man from Jehovah." But of what nation was *the seed*—the man with the Lord—to be born, of what family, and house? The question must always have been present to the minds of God's believing people. And the Lord continued to give answer. Finally the Lord's finger pointed to the *seed* that should proceed out of David's bowels and whose kingdom and throne the Lord would establish forever, but whom the Lord will also chasten with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men. This could be none other than *the seed* promised from the beginning, the Christ of God. That David understood is a fact at-



tested by the apostle Peter in Acts II. "Men and brethren," said the apostle to the multitude, "let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Sheol, neither his flesh did see corruption."

This brings us to the fifth epoch of the series. It sets in with Solomon's idolatry. Shortly after Solomon's passing the ten tribes, as a result of Rehoboam's sinful pride, finding expression in his harsh answer to the people in reply to their petition that he lighten their burden, broke away from the Davidic dynasty. The ten tribes chose Jereboam as their king. But Jereboam, apostatized. He instituted in Bethel and in Dan the worship of the golden calf, Idolatry even in the form of Baal-worship raised its foul head everywhere in the kingdom of these tribes, and also in Judah.

The Lord now laid his strokes upon His people. The throne in the ten tribes became a playball of carnal ambition. There were political revolutions one after the other in close succession. Not one king of the ten tribes feared the Lord. All were profane and wicked. Things went from bad to worse. Finally when the cup of iniquity was filled, God plucked up the ten tribes out of His country and dispersed them among the heathen. Their exile was permanent.

Yet God had his elect also among these tribes even in their permanent dispersion. For it was with reference to the dispersion of these tribes that Paul in Romans 11 beginning with verse 1 asks, "I say then has God cast away his people? God forbid. For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scriptures said of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God to him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

The seven thousand is a symbolical number. It indicates the elect remnant present among the Jews throughout all the ages of the past and the ages to come.

Thus in this exile of the ten tribes a new element of truth contained in the promise of the protevangel

is set before us. It is this: that God does not cast away his people which He foreknew.

Judah was not less guilty than the ten tribes. Consequently also Judah in fulfillment of the voice of prophecy was exiled to Babylon. It means that the church was again in lowest depth on account of her sins. From the point of view of nature her plight was again hopeless. But in fulfillment of His promise of the eighth century prophets, God turned the captivity of His people. The temple was rebuilt. The breaches in Jerusalem's walls were mended; and the temple services restored. The church was again on the heights, so to say. She had again witnessed and experienced the salvation of her redeemer God.

We here deal with a new—the fifth ministration of grace. Peculiar to this ministration is that it brings into clearest view an element in the promise that is but dimly seen in the previous epochs. This element is the great work of Christ that consists in His calling in this Gospel period by His Spirit and His Word the elect out of every nation and tribe. Of this work the turning of Judah's captivity was the prophetic type. It requires but one Scripture passage to prove this. Micah 4: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountains of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and the people shall flow into it.

"And many nations shall come and say, Come let's go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us his ways, and we shall walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"And he shall judge among many nations, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his figtree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it.

"For all the people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

"In that day, saith the Lord, will I remember her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

"And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even forever.

"And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the

first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

The only work of God that satisfies this prophecy is the calling of the gentiles and finally the resurrection of the just unto life everlasting at the final appearing of Christ.

The Babylonian captivity of Judah again spelled the bruising of the heel of the woman by the serpent. But again it was only the bruising of the heel. For the church arose again from the depth into which she had been made to disappear for a season. God turned the captivity of His people. And the head of the serpent was crushed. Babylon was destroyed.

Between the turning of Judah's captivity and the birth of Christ was a period of four hundred years. The church again passed into the depth especially during the reign of the madman Epiphanus, the son of Antiochus the Great, who died, 187 BC. By him the covenant people were fiercely persecuted. He killed thousands of Jerusalem's inhabitants, robbed the temple of its treasures, offered the blood of swine upon the altar of burnt offering and sprinkled the holiest place with it. The daily sacrifices ceased, and the rite of circumcision was forbidden, and as many copies of the law as could be found were burned.

But in the fulness of time *the seed appears*. The word became flesh. Christ was born. And the serpent crushed His heel. He inspired wicked men to nail Him to the cross. But so it had to be. For the Lord had laid upon Him the iniquities of us all and therefore also bruised Him for our sins even through the agency of the serpent.

But again it was only the bruising the heel of *the seed*. Having atoned our sins, God raised Him up and set him with his people in heaven and Him, the Christ, at His own right hand as the lord of lords and the king of kings and the head of His church. The atonement of Christ was the judgment of the serpent. Christ will cast him and his brood into the bottomless pit at His appearing. And unto His people Christ will give the kingdom.

G. M. Ophoff

#### IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the Manhattan Prot. Ref. Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Rev. and Mrs. P. Vis and family in the death of Mrs. Vis's sister,

Mrs. S. Faber

and to elder Henry L. Visser in the death of his sister,

Mrs. G. Willemstein

May the rich promises of God's Word comfort and sustain them in their sorrow.

The Consistory

## The Covenant of Sinai

1. *The covenant at Sinai was the covenant of grace.* It was thus the very covenant that the Lord established with our first parents right after the fall when he said, "I will set enmity..." the very covenant that he established with Noah and later with Abraham as the father of all believers. The truth of this statement is born out by the fact that the promise by which the Lord bound Himself to the people of Israel first in Egypt, later at Sinai, was in the final instance the promise not of things symbolical-typical—typical salvation and the typical rest of Canaan—but the realities signified by these typical things—Christ and His redemption and the true rest of the new earth where God's tabernacle will be with men.

Let us now show that the covenant at Sinai was the true covenant of grace be it with a typical form and ministration.

The proof of this is that the promise by which the Lord bound Himself to Abraham and his seed and again to Abraham's seed at Sinai was in the final instance the promise, not of things typical—typical salvation and the typical rest of the earthy Canaan—but of the realities signified by those typical things—Christ and His redemption and the true rest of the new earth where God's tabernacle will be with men.

Let us show how true this is of God's promise to Abraham. The land that the Lord promised him was in the first instance the earthy land of Canaan. Fact is that this is the only land that the Lord ever spake to him about directly. Let us quote the Scriptures here.

Gen. 12:1, "Now the Lord said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land that I will show thee."

Gen. 13:14, "And the Lord said unto Abraham after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward."

Gen. 15:18, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river . . ."

Gen. 17:8, "I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."

In all these Scripture passages the good thing promised directly and in the first instance is the earthy Canaan. Yet the Scriptures at Hebrews 11:16

assert that Abraham desired and sought and thus embraced the promise of a country that was heavenly. The passage reads, "And now they desire a better, that is, an heavenly country . . ." It can mean but one thing, namely, that the earthy Canaan as peopled by Abraham's seed was a prophetic type of the new and heavenly earth, so that on this account the Lord in promising Abraham and His seed the earthy was at once and in the final instance promising him the heavenly.

And so it was and must have been with the promises by which God bound Himself to Abraham's seed at Sinai, when He said to this seed: "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage." This likewise is a typical promise holding forth things that were typical namely a typical deliverance and a typical rest in a land—the earthy Canaan—that was typical, so that in promising this seed—Abraham's seed—these good things the Lord was at once promising it the realities of which these things were the prophetic type, to wit: Christ and all the heavenly benefits of His cross—the true redemption from sin and life with God and the new earth.

Thus what the Lord was saying to His people there at Sinai in the final instance is verily this: I am the Lord thy God, the God of thy salvation in Christ Jesus. As in my love of thee I delivered thee from the bondage of Egypt and will enter with thee into the rest of a typical Canaan, so will I in Christ and for His sake and on the ground of His atonement deliver thee from all thy sins and enter with thee into my rest—the rest of the new Earth and that remaineth for thee, my people.

How true is it therefore that the covenant at Sinai was the true covenant of grace indeed, be it with a symbolical-typical form and ministration. And how clear it is again that this covenant included, could include, only the Israel, the seed of Abraham, according to the election. For how could the Lord be saying also to the Israel according to reprobation: I am the Lord thy God, the God of thy salvation in Christ. For Christ's sake and on the ground of His atonement I delivered thee from all thy sins and give thee all things in Christ." This is impossible. How could the Lord not be guilty of being unfaithful to His promise with regard to the reprobated seed of Abraham, if it were true that he bound himself also to this seed by such a promise. But the Lord was not unfaithful to his promise. For the promise was given only to the children of the promise in the sense that only to these children did the promise actually *promise* salvation. For according to the Scriptures at Rom. 9:8, "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the

children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." At verse 11 these children of the promise are identified with the elect. The verse reads: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth."

That in the final instance the Lord at Sinai was binding Himself to Abraham and to his elect seed also of the old dispensation by the promise of Christ and his heavenly salvation is also clear from Gal. 3:16, a passage which reads: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and seeds, as to many: but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."

Thus the promises were made to Abraham and, let us take notice, *to Christ*; and certainly they were the same promises. Now what did these promises hold forth to Christ? And the answer: Victory over sin and death and hell and the world, and heavenly glory. This same good the promises therefore must have held forth also to Abraham. For they were the same promises common both to Abraham and to Christ. This again proves that in saying to Abraham, "I will give thee this land—the earthy land of Canaan as occupied by his seed 400 years thereafter, the Lord thereby was indeed promising the patriarch the new earth. Thus Abraham did also very actually receive that land (of Canaan) which during his lifetime he dwelt in tents—received that land as an eternal possession, that land, not however in its earthy but in its glorified state.

The apostle continues (next verse): "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after did not disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

Indeed, this promise abode—this promise of the Christ and of all the spiritual benefits of his cross—the promise given to Abraham and to Christ and, to be sure, in the first instance to Christ and not to Abraham. It abode, did this promise, to be bestowed anew on Abraham's elect and spiritual seed at Mt. Sinai, and to this seed only. For certainly the promise can only be given to Christ and only to all such included in Christ by God's sovereign and eternal election.

In fine, the covenant of Sinai was certainly the covenant of grace, and second it included, could include, only the elect, the spiritual seed of Abraham.

G. M. Ophoff

---

# IN HIS FEAR

---

## Looking To The Future

### Chapter 2

#### THE TEACHER PROBLEM

(As to Teachers Qualified for Prot. Ref. Schools)

In the present article, I believe, we touch on what is undoubtedly the most important aspect of the whole teacher-problem for our Protestant Reformed Schools. And because the teacher is such an integral part of the school, we therefore also touch on the most serious and fundamental question in all our efforts toward a Protestant Reformed educational system, viz. how shall we make and keep our schools Protestant Reformed? Hitherto in this series of articles we have treated only what we may call the formal, mechanical aspects of the teacher problem. In the present essay we deal with the material side of the problem. In other words, we indeed must procure teachers; and we must also work toward the maintenance of permanent teaching staffs, as much as possible. But we must above all else have *Protestant Reformed teachers*.

#### *The Importance of the Problem*

In order to see the importance of this matter, we must remind ourselves that the important, the essential aspect of any school is in the instruction. Not the physical plant,—the building, the benches, the books, the paper,—is essential. You could have a school, if need be, without these after all. But a school without instruction you cannot have.

From this it follows, of course, that you cannot have a school without teachers, who are the instructors. It is true that in some cases a pupil can instruct himself with the aid of books; and then you have a "self-taught man". But a school, properly speaking, consists of instructors and instructed, teachers and pupils, those who give instruction and those who receive instruction. This idea, that the teacher must give instruction, — which it seems to be self-evident and almost axiomatic — is nevertheless a principle which we must not forget. A school is not an institution in which the pupils simply learn what they want to and from whatever source they want to while the teacher is simply a sort of overseer or foreman, whose duty it is only to see that the pupils learn something, whatever it may be. We must be extremely critical of such a conception of a school, not simply

from an educational point of view, but on the basis of Scripture. The Bible teaches us that it is not merely our duty to let our children learn something, but that it's our calling diligently to teach them the precepts of the Lord and to train them in the way that they should go. The Christian must have nothing of "progressive education."

Now this parental task of instructing our children is, to a large extent at least, transferred to the teacher, who is engaged by an organization of parents to teach their children. The teacher must instruct the children in wisdom, the principle of which is the fear of the Lord.

It is plain, then, that the teacher makes the school, or breaks it. Principally we may say that it follows that if the teacher is a fool, he will instruct his pupils to be fools, while if the teacher is wise, he will instruct the children in wisdom. That is also axiomatic, isn't it? And that is fundamentally the reason why we want and must have Christian schools. The world can only instruct our children in foolishness, and we want our children instructed in wisdom, in the fear of the Lord.

This is also the reason why our Protestant Reformed parents insist on their own schools. We believe that in our Protestant Reformed truth, which is the Reformed truth, we have the pure and unadulterated principles of true wisdom, undefiled by any of the corruption of worldly wisdom, the true and pure delineation of the fear of the Lord, according to the Scriptures in which alone that fear of the Lord is revealed. And in that unadulterated wisdom, not a mixture of the wisdom of God and the foolishness of the world, we want our children instructed. That is our calling.

What follows from this?

In obedience to that calling some of us (many more of us should, and should do so without further delay!) have established our own schools. We have organized societies, conducted drives, built our school buildings (and in some cases are busy expanding them already), engaged a teaching staff, and sent our Protestant Reformed little ones off to school.

All of this is to be commended, and I would be the last to condemn it.

But is this all? And is it enough?

We are inclined, I sometimes fear, to answer in the affirmative. We have separate schools. We have Protestant Reformed men and women to teach our children. We can now successfully eliminate many of the features we always fought in the existing schools. We shall have no off-color hymns sung in



our schools. The Bible instruction will not be colored by the Arminian error of the First Point of 1924. We can now prevent the rendition of bad programs and plays, and the showing of corrupt motion pictures. We need no longer subject our children to the teaching of semi-evolutionist science teachers. We have Protestant Reformed schools!

And should we ever do that, we would make a very serious mistake. I would almost dare say that then the whole movement isn't worthwhile. We hardly need schools of our own merely for that. We do not merely need a school which provides correct Bible instruction. That is only a small part of the school—a part which could even be left entirely to the church and home. It is commendable, to be sure, that if our children receive instruction at school in Bible or Church History, it be correct. And by correct I mean Protestant Reformed. But if we stop there, we fail miserably. What about the rest of the instruction? Must that be neutral? Must it be instruction in worldly wisdom? Must history, for example, simply be instruction concerning facts and events? Or must it be instruction in the significance of events far more? And who must say what is the significance of events? Man? Or God? Must then our own schools be institutions in which our children receive instruction in doctrine? No! It is the duty of the church to instruct in doctrine. And let our schools forever leave all instruction in doctrine to the catechism room and the pulpit. There it belongs. But our school *must* be institutions in which our Protestant Reformed principles (or *doctrine*, if you will) are *applied*, and that too in the entire curriculum.

Let us remember that, and never rest until and unless we have such schools.

However, such a school is impossible without Protestant Reformed teachers. The teacher gives the instruction. Therefore, the teacher makes the school. Without Protestant Reformed teachers — that is, teachers who are capable of and who do actually give Protestant Reformed instruction—you cannot have a Protestant Reformed school.

#### *What is a Qualified Teacher?*

You will ask perhaps: but do we not have Protestant Reformed teachers? We engage only members of the Protestant Reformed Churches to teach in our schools. Do we then not have Protestant Reformed teachers?

I answer: not necessarily.

And I hasten to add that by my answer I do not

mean to put any of our teachers under a cloud. My answer does not mean that I do not believe that the men and women who teach in our schools are Protestant Reformed, that they agree with our doctrine 100% and that they also strive to live according to that doctrine. If I had good reason to believe that of anyone, be he a teacher or not, I would follow another course than that of publishing it in our *Standard Bearer*.

But my answer does mean that merely being Protestant Reformed, adhering to the Protestant Reformed faith, agreeing with Protestant Reformed doctrine, does not yet guarantee a Protestant Reformed *teacher*, that is, a teacher who in his particular subject or subjects is capable of applying Protestant Reformed principles, and of giving instruction, say, in history, geography, language, literature, or arithmetic, according to those principles. Such teachers we must have.

And I have good reason to believe that such teachers as yet are rather rare, through no fault of their own. My reasons are these: 1) In my personal experience, in the erstwhile Teachers' Club in Grand Rapids, of which the Rev. Ophoff and myself were co-chairmen at one time, I found that not many of our teachers and prospective teachers were of such calibre, or showed much ability to apply our principles. They were receptive to instruction in a Protestant Reformed view of history, for example. But to develop something themselves was another story. This also was through no fault of their own. Most of them, if not all, were trained in a Christian Reformed college, where, certainly, they would not be taught to apply Protestant Reformed principles in the field of education. 2) None of our teachers has had a Protestant Reformed teacher's training course. That is simply a fact. Many have gone to Calvin College. Others have been trained elsewhere. And who, unless he is of unusual ability, can be a Protestant Reformed *teacher* without Protestant Reformed teacher-training? 3) It is not everyone's work, nor everyone's calling, to develop such a Protestant Reformed curriculum. It is not even every teacher's work. To be a teacher or to be an educator are two different things. You cannot simply say to every teacher: "You sit down and develop a history course along Protestant Reformed lines." We need teachers who are able to give Protestant Reformed instruction, and therefore we need teachers who are themselves *trained* to give it. And therefore we need educators who will furnish such teacher training.

(to be continued)

H. C. Hoeksema

---

## FROM HOLY WRIT

---

### Exposition of Matthew 5:33-37

The Scripture passage to which we shall call attention in this essay is very important for our life of sanctification in the midst of the world, which lies in the lie and error. We need the teaching and admonition of Jesus, also of this passage, to live a godly life in our day by day problems, which must be solved in faith. The teaching of this passage is necessary for us, and we must indeed heed it, shall we ever anew enter in through the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to life. In a word Jesus' teaching is intensely practical. Let it not be forgotten!

This Scripture passage from the mouth of our Savior reads as follows: "Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath*: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither *by the heaven*, for it is the throne of God; nor *by the earth*, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

In the quotation in the former paragraph we have underscored those parts which are Jesus's quotation from the O. Testament Scriptures. They are Numbers 30:2; Isaiah 60:1 and Psalm 48:2. It will help the reader to also read those passages. It will cause us to see in bold relief, what Jesus intends to bring out with these quotations in our text.

In order to gain the proper perspective of this Scripture passage it is well to bear in mind, that Jesus is here addressing the subjects of the Kingdom, in whose hearts the new and everlasting Covenant of grace and mercy is established. At least that is the viewpoint from which they are addressed. They are looked at and addressed as the poor in spirit, as those who mourn for their sins, as those who are meek and lowly in heart, as those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who are therefore blessed! They are viewed as those who possess this blessedness, but who must still receive it in an ever increasing measure by means of the Word of God, by the warnings and admonitions of the Gospel, and through the Holy Spirit. They do have righteousness, but they must receive more and more until they arrive at the perfection set before them in the life to come. Then shall they be perfect even as their Father in heaven.

Such is the general viewpoint of Jesus in this entire Chapter.

Now in view of this perfection at which we must arrive more and more in this life, and unto which we shall completely have arrived in the life to come, it is of the utmost importance, it is an indispensable ordinance of God, that we do not forget the law of the Kingdom as to its Spiritual nature. Christ has not come to destroy the law, but He has come to fulfil it even unto the last iota and tittle. Only then can heaven and earth pass away when the law has perfectly been written in the hearts of all the children of God. When the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God and no one shall any more say to his neighbor: know the Lord! then shall the end come of this present world in which the Gospel and the law is *being written* in our hearts. Therefore let us not forget the warning finger while it is *today*. Such is the warning note in this Sermon on the Mount.

This warning note is also implied and expressed in the Scripture passage under consideration. When Jesus warns against the improper use of the Oath He is instructing us to walk in the perfection of His Kingdom, according to the Spiritual nature of the law.

Let us try to see this.

In the first place, we would like to observe, that Jesus has no dispute with Moses' statement in Numbers 30:2 concerning the Oath and its use. He is not contending with Moses, whom He has come to fulfil, but He is contending with what the Scribes and Pharisees have made of this Word of God in Moses, distorting it, as they did with all of the Scriptures, to their *own* destruction! Not seeing the spiritual meaning of this Word of God for the regenerated child of God, being blind for the Kingdom of heaven and its righteousness of the heart, they simply so construed the precept of Moses concerning the Oath, that it allowed them room for all the evil of their hearts; they simply did not enter the Kingdom themselves and they forbade those to enter who would. It is with this corrupting of the Word of God that Jesus takes issue here. Wherefore He says, speaking of these evil teachers, you have heard it said to you by the Scribes that it was said to Moses of ancient times, that we must perform our Oaths to the Lord. But according to Jesus they do not interpret this correctly in their pulpits and schools. They do not understand Moses' precepts at all. That and that only is Jesus' dispute in this passage.

Positively Jesus points out to us, that, when we "perform our oaths unto the Lord," it means, that we have truth in inward parts; it implies that the truth dwells in our hearts, that we hate the lie and love truth and equity. And that from the abundance of

pure hearts our speech indicates that we are lovers of the truth, that we walk the strait and narrow Gate-Way that leads to life. Only such a man performs his vows unto the Most High. Such a man has the last iota and tittle of the law in his heart. He does not think little of the law, but sings: O, how love I Thy law! He has heard the Gospel with its precepts and performs them in his life. O, the blessedness of the man so doing.

Such is briefly the meaning of Jesus' teaching and admonition in this Scripture passage.

Why does Jesus underscore the positive meaning of this word of Moses "to perform unto the Lord our vows?"

The answer to this must be sought, as to its occasion, in the fact, that due to the Jewish casuistry and catalogueing of great and smaller commandments they also applied this rule of the "greater and lesser" to the Oaths, and spoke of greater and lesser oaths. Thus they corrupted the Oath itself; they lost sight of the very seriousness of the Oath itself. Life had lost its very meaning because it was not under the tension of the law of the Kingdom. With such a corruption of the foundations the righteous could do nothing. The wicked simply rode high and handsome while the righteous were led astray and could not arrive at the end of the law, Christ, the righteousness for everyone believing. This evil must stop and therefore Christ says: but I say unto you, *Swear not at all!*

Jesus does not mean to teach that the oath *as such* is sinful, but He does mean to teach that in His Kingdom where truth is loved the rule of life is: *Swear not at all!* Here the truth is to be spoken in love. Here men will not need to resort to the bolstering of statements with all kinds (?) of oaths. Yes will be yes and no will be no. Hence, swear not at all.

The Jews of Jesus' day, the Scribes and Pharisees, had a righteousness that did not allow for swearing by the Name of God, but it did permit of swearing by many creatures. When our eyes are opened by grace, it is at once obvious that this evil practice of swearing by creatures did not change the nature of this Oath one wee bit. It was still swearing by the Name, might, truthfulness and justice of God.

Such is the evident intent of these words of Jesus when he says do not swear by "heaven," "the earth," "Jerusalem" or "our head." It is sinful to swear by all of these things.

Why is this sinful?

Because one can never so swear by the *creature* or he at once swears by the *Creator*. Back of everything created stands the Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth. He so rules and upholds all things by His almighty power and Counsel, that all things live and

move and have their being in Him. Such is the folly of swearing by the creature, in general, when trying to avoid swearing by God, the Creator.

Thus it is in general we said.

But Jesus does not simply leave this matter by the rash oath that general. He makes the folly stand out very clearly by applying the Scriptures to this question.

Hence, we have the quotations to which we referred earlier in this essay, and which are found in the written text as quoted above.

Says Jesus: Do not swear *by heaven*. Why not? Because heaven is: *throne of God*. It is quite clear from the original Greek, that such is the emphasis of the text. The thought is: Heaven is the throne of God, and he who swears by heaven swears by Him, Who sitteth on the Throne. Wherefore do this not.

Says Jesus: Do not swear *by the earth*. Why not? Because the footstool of *God's feet* it is. He who swears by the earth swears by God. Do this not. Swear not at all.

Again, says Jesus: Swear not by Jerusalem. Why not? Because it is the city of the Great King, the Lord of Hosts is His name. Do it not.

Finally, Jesus says: Do not swear by your head. Why not? Because he who swears by his head swears by God who makes the hairs white and black. Do it not.

What then?

Walk the strait and narrow Gate-Way that leads to life; let each speak truth with his neighbor, being each others members. Then and then only will we be performing our vows to the Most High. Love will reign in our lives and not sin and folly. We will then seek the Kingdom of heaven and His righteousness and all the other things will be added unto us. God will provide. The Lord will judge His people.

Will we then never need to use the oaths? The use of the oath will not be the rule in our lives, but it will be the exception. Then only will it be used when the glory of God demands it, the salvation of a neighbor depends upon it, or when the magistrate demands it. For the rest: Swear not at all. Let your Yea be yea, and your Nay be nay, for what is above this comes from the evil one.

G. C. Lubbers

— : — : —

#### ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CHURCHES

Classis East, at its last session on Jan. 9, 1952, decided that Rev. A. Petter is eligible for a call.

Classis East—D. Jonker, S.C.



MRS EFFIE MONSMA  
726 FRANKLIN ST SE.  
CITY 7

2 52

240

## THE STANDARD BEARER

### CONTRIBUTION

#### HIDDEN EVIL?

Esteemed Editor:

May I please have a little space in the *Standard Bearer* to express a deep concern which I have in regard to a grave error which seems to be gaining a large foothold in our churches.

First of all, I feel certain that among Reformed church circles, we are considered to be strict, if not the most strict in seeking to uphold sound church government. We believe that Christ rules in His church through the offices of consistory. We have consistently taught that the local consistory is the only ruling body in the church. By way of Classis and Synod all matters of church government are decided, or at least should be.

However, of late there is much departure from this rule among our people. Due, no doubt, to the controversies of the last few years, many of our people are 'taking sides' which in itself may be good, yet if not properly applied simply tears us apart as churches. Let me explain:

When a certain minister (or ministers) is asked by the consistory to preach for us, members of the congregation who do not like this minister simply go to another church for this particular service. They say "I don't want to listen to him." They disagree with him. They do not follow the rule of Matt. 18 and speak to him. They do not care whether or not the consistory has asked this minister to preach. Above all, they do not care about the calling which this minister has received from God to preach. They simply take matters in their own hands.

Now surely, if a member is in disagreement with this minister, he should be able to tell this man of his wrong. In fact, he must do this. Or, the member should tell the consistory. But this is not done. So now, what do we have? Democracy in the church—each and every member doing as he sees fit? And this under the pretense of piety?

Without ever once appearing before the consistory with any objection whatever, members of our own congregation asked for their papers to a sister congregation and they tell other members that they leave because the pastor is not Prot. Reformed. One group wants the pastor to preach their way—another group wants the preaching their way. It's not a question of TRUTH—it's simply a question of personal opinion. The one is of Apollos, the other of Cephas, etc.

Surely, in case of error, we should seek to save the

pastor—not destroy him, to save the congregation—not leave it to its misery. Christ never used these tactics. He testified of the TRUTH. He never ran away no matter how great the opposition.

In 1924, our leaders fought for the truth until they were 'kicked out.' They did not leave the church. After 28 years we are still seeking to show the Christian Reformed churches their error.

In conclusion, this much I feel is sure—unless we come back from this evil way we are doomed as churches. We cannot expect a blessing in this way. I am not advocating a policy of 'love at any cost', not at all—but we must seek one another in Truth. We must uphold the principles laid down by our Saviour. We may not just take things in our own hands.

If we walk in God's law and precepts, we can rest assured that He will make all things well. Otherwise not. When the individual member and not the consistory rules in the church, we are lost as churches. Each one of us must exercise the office of believer to be sure. But all things in the church of Jesus Christ must be done in good order.

May God give us all grace to war against this evil, both in our own heart and in our church.

Arthur H. Haan,  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

---



---

### BOUND VOLUME XXVII

Volume 27 to be bound are now at the book binder and should be ready during this week. Those residing out side of Grand Rapids and who have a standing order for this volume should forward *at once* their loose issues to Mr. C. Kregel, 1250 Philadelphia Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, or to Mr. J. Faber, 829 Oakhill St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Those residing in Grand Rapids should have the loose issues ready to be picked up when the bound volume is delivered.

Book Comm., R.F.P.A. Board



Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.