

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### Blessings In Prospect

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."—Zachariah 12:10.

"And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced."—John 19:37.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."—Rev. 1:7.

I might have added to the array of texts that which we find in Luke 23:48, where we read: "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." I might have added that in order to see the complete picture. Then we have the sight of the pierced God with the resultant wailing in all three instances. You see that in Zachariah, then also in the Gospels, and also in the Revelation of John.

God is pierced.

But there is a difference. In Zachariah this pierced God is seen because of the pouring out of the Spirit of grace and supplications. But in Luke and in Revelation God is seen as the pierced One without such spiritual bounty.

But both wail because of this sight: the elect wail in Zachariah, and are blessed. The reprobates see Him and wail in Revelation, and are damned.

And the difference is in the motive of their wailing.

The reprobate wail because of stark terror.

The elect wail and are in great bitterness because of the motive of purest love of God.

The difference lies in that Spirit.

Oh, that Spirit of grace and of supplications!

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Who receive the blessings in prospect?

Zachariah tells us.

They are the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Who are they? What mean those appellations?

The house of David are those blessed people who, like David, are men, women and children after God's own heart. They are the elect, pure and simple. Therein lies all the difference. The Lord God looked upon them from before the foundation of the world, and loved them with all the love of His Divine heart. Before the flood we read that Noah found grace in His sight. Not because of anything in Noah. Oh no, but because God willed to love him, and not the millions that were to drown in the great flood.

And thus it is throughout all history. Also in the days of Zachariah. Those days were awful days. Read the broad context and weep. Judah as well as Israel had gone awhoring from God and His statutes.

But there is that remnant. And the remnant find grace in His sight. And the people that find grace in the sight of God are the house of David. David means: Beloved. Beloved of God.

And they are also called: the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thereby hangs a wondrous tale. Jerusalem is the miraculous city. It is the city of peace. It is the place where God touches the earth. It is the place where God dwells with His people. The earth is normally (!) the camp of the rebels that dared to lift their fists to the Most High and shout belligerently: Depart from us: we have no pleasure in Thy ways. The whole earth is a great camp of warriors, warriors against God and His heavenly hosts.

But Jerusalem is different. There is peace, hea-

venly, eternal peace. And all because of the reaching finger of God: He touched them.

Oh yes, the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are blessed people. God loves them, and He dwells among them.

They are blessed. And God will reveal His blessings to them. Blessings that are present and blessings that are still to come in the future.

Blessings in prospect!

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Blessings in prospect!

God says: And I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and of supplications!

There is a prophecy of the coming Pentecost.

The Spirit is the Spirit of the suffering Servant of Jehovah: Jesus Christ, the righteous Man of God.

And when that Spirit is poured upon you, you receive grace, and thru that grace you break out in supplications.

Grace is beauty. Moses prayed for that beauty. Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us. And that prayer is always answered. We sing of it today: On us let the grace and beauty of the Lord our God remain! And it is answered, answered even today. And we grow beautiful, as God is beautiful.

Grace is beauty, the beauty of God. God's whole Being is beautiful. Whatever God is, thinks, speaks and does is only beautiful, attractive, comely, lovely. That makes heaven so wonderful.

And when grace is given you, you become beautiful. By nature we are so ugly. Later we will say more of that, in its proper place.

But the house of David receives the beauty of the grace of God. And they receive it by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

And they also receive the Spirit of supplications.

And here is the connection between grace and supplication: when you receive of the beauty of God, you see your estate; you see your wickedness and sin. You see that you are desperately foul and ugly and filthy. And so you pray, you pray to God who gave you the beauty of His own virtues. But your prayer is vehement; your prayer grows insistent. Your journey to the throne of grace is as a storm. And such prayer is called supplication. You cry to God.

You have but one desire left. David will lead the way: One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His Temple. Psalm 27.

You see, when beauty has touched you, you have but one desire left; to receive more beauty, and still

more, until you are as beautiful as God. And then you want to view beauty for evermore.

And so you break out in supplications.

For blessings in prospect!

Ever more blessings from God!

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Blessings in prospect!

They come to you in disguise. First they come in a bitter disguise.

You receive the only correct view of the Cross of Jesus.

Listen to Zachariah: and they shall look upon Me whom they pierced!

Oh yes, the elect have also pierced God. Every sin the elect have sinned is a thrust into the God of their salvation. Adam and Eve began this murder of God. They killed Him. If the living God lived it was not because Adam and Eve did not try to kill Him. They killed Him in their heart and mind. We are all theocides. Let's take just one example: when the Triune God walked among us in the form of the suffering Servant Jesus, Peter said: I know Him not! I will be cursed and damned of Jehovah Himself if I know Him. As far as Peter is concerned He is dead and gone. Nay, worse still: He never existed! We are all theocides.

They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced.

In these few words you have the whole picture of the horror, of the stark horror of sin and evil of the whole human race, the elect included.

But they do not know the extent of their crime. They are blind in their raging. If they knew they would cry even today. If the whole God-forsaken world knew that they are constantly killing Him who is the song of the angels, they would weep with agony, the same agony of Revelation 1:7. They saw a little glimpse of it in Luke 23, and they returned to their miserable hovels of sin in Jerusalem, all the time smiting their breasts.

But the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem know. Not at first. At first we looked upon God and pierced Him. Just as the others. When we first looked upon Him at His coming in the flesh there was no beauty that we should desire Him. Oh no, but He was rejected of men. For His love we gave Him our hate.

God was pierced by us. Our literal representative is a Roman soldier. Never mind. It was the church, the church of all the ages who joined with the God-forsaken world to crucify God. We pierced Him. The Holy Ghost tells us in John 19 that when the Roman soldier pierced Him literally, a scripture was fulfilled:

it is the text in Zach. 12. *Fulfilled*, because we had been doing it right along. And we continue: God be merciful to us, for we have continued even to this day.

But there was a culmination. God would demonstrate so that no one would disbelieve the horror of this piercing. He demonstrated it, for He came from the heavens to dwell among us. And when He had thoroughly proven His Godhead and Mission, we pierced Him. It is the crucifixion of our Lord in the fullness of time. It was the culmination of all the piercing of 4000 years. And it still goes on.

Why do you think that hell is a necessary thing? Because God was pierced.

But the house of David knows. And so do the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They know because God took away that which shrouded the cross, and He has shown it in all its awful reality. After the Spirit of grace made them beautiful in principle they began to see what they had done. And also why they had done it. It is the result of all their hatred against God and His anointed Son. They saw all the natural ugliness and hardness of their fallen nature.

And they cried for mercy.

They cried for the blessings of mercy and compassion and forgiveness.

They cried for the wonderful blessings in prospect!

★ ★ ★ ★

We read of a great wailing in our text taken from Zachariah. Also the murderers of Jesus wailed in Luke. And John speaks of the great mourning of the judgment day.

But here is the difference between them that are beloved and them that are not: the house of David wail *now*, in the today of grace. The others wail when it is too late. And the first wail because they love God; the others shall all wail because they are so afraid, they are so scared in that awful day. They saw it too late.

Yes, we read of great wailing of the elect in Zachariah. Also of great bitterness.

A little while ago I had taken Peter as an example in order to show that also the elect have always pierced God. It is fitting that also here I take him for my example. Did you note how Peter wept, and wept *bitterly*?

They shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son.

I can understand that to some extent. When we lose an only son we experience the worst affliction that can befall a mere man, or woman. Think of that widow of Nain. Her mourning was so deep, so pitiful that the whole city was moved for her. And

the multitude went with her to the grave. But remember, my dear brother, that this is but an example, a simile. The reality is greater, the sorrow of the house of David beggars description. No one is able to tell about his sorrow after God.

But God knows. When we cannot weep anymore because of our conviction of sin; when we can but sigh and bow the head, while the heart is slowly breaking, the Spirit comes and prays within us with groanings that we cannot utter. And God knows and listens and forgives.

There are two sorrows: the sorrow of the world and the sorrow after God. And they are dissimilar; oh, they are so dissimilar.

The sorrow of the world worketh death.

You believe that the world sorrows, do you not? For they really suffer, and their suffering is very deep. The world is one great vale of tears. How could there be any real happiness in a den of murderers? Here we have a race of men and women that find their delight in killing a God who is so wondrously beautiful that perfect angels hide their faces and they kill Him all the day long! And when the first graces reach some of them, they are killed by the world. Just have the grace and beauty of the Lord your God in your speech and every behaviour, and the wicked will come and kill you, either literally or in principle. Ask Paul, and he will tell you in Romans 8. We are killed all the day long and we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. And why? For God's sake.

But they do suffer. And they will suffer more and more. Their suffering shall increase, but they will never repent as the house of David repented. But they will finally look up to heaven and blaspheme Him who sent their plagues.

But the house of David's sorrow is sorrow after God. That means that they sorrow with a sorrow that is approved of God.

They sorrow because they realize how they have pierced and killed their own God and Saviour. Listen to the watchword of the Reformers: "En ik dacht er niet aan, dat ik zelf door mijn schuld, Zijn kroon had gevlochten, Zijn beker gevuld!"

And what is the result?

This: they are forgiven all their piercing of the God of their salvation. They see and marvel: thru their heinous crime of the crucifixion of the God of their salvation, the way is opened for their eternal reception in the new Kingdom.

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

### Promise and Prediction

The last time I called attention to the paragraph of Dr. Schilder's article, translated in *Concordia* by the Rev. B. Kok, which I consider the heart of the entire article. I will quote it once more.

"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 honor Me, I will honor; 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."

This, to my mind, is the heart of the entire article.

I may say in passing that Dr. Schilder seems to think that by referring to the texts he quotes from Scripture he defeats Arminianism. But this I deny. The Arminian also teaches: "He that believeth in me shall not be ashamed." But the question is: who are they that believe in Him? Where does that faith come from? And even then one has to be careful, for even the Arminian will confess that faith is a gift of God. And therefore one must ask the final question: but to whom does God give that faith? Then finally it will be exposed whether a man is Arminian or Reformed. For the Arminian will say that faith is a gift of God to whoever will receive it; while the Reformed man confesses that faith is a gift of God sovereignly bestowed upon the elect alone. The same is true of the other texts. Surely, we all confess with Scripture: "For them that honor Me I will honor," the Arminian as well as the Reformed. But again the question is: who honors God? And the answer of the Reformed man certainly is: not the natural man, but only the believer, who has received the gift of faith from God, and that is the elect. Again, both the Arminian and the Reformed confesses with the Word of God: "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." But again, according to Scripture the upright are they that have been delivered from the power of sin and death by sovereign grace, and there-

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fore, the elect. For them only arises light in darkness. And finally, the same is true of the text, "Them that seek Me early shall find Me." But again, if we say no more, we speak only half a truth, even though we appeal to Scripture. For who seek God? Certainly not the natural man, but only those that have first been sought and found by God, and therefore, altho it is true that those who do not seek God certainly shall not find Him, yet the seeking is not a condition which man must fulfill in order to find God, But rather the designation of the way in which the sovereign grace of God leads His own rational-moral children to find Him.

But let me call your attention to the fact that in all these texts the promise is not to N.N., to Peter, William, or Charles, but to those that believe, that is, the elect; to those that honor God, that is, the elect; to the upright, that is, the believing, regenerated elect; to those that seek, and that therefore have been found of God, that is, the elect.

Before I proceed to show from Scripture that there is no distinction between promises and predictions and that neither promises nor predictions are for N. N., but that both are only for the elect, I would like to give a brief summary of my former editorial, in order to bring to mind concisely and clearly the contents of that former article, and at the same time to show in what respect we, the Protestant Reformed people, differ fundamentally from the view of Dr. Schilder and the view of the Liberated.

Briefly, then, I tried to bring out the following points.

1. Schilder makes a distinction between promises and predictions. We claim that promises and predictions are identical. Promises are predictions, and predictions are promises in Holy Writ.

2. Schilder makes God promise salvation to N.N., Peter, William, Charles, etc. In this respect Dr. Schilder agrees with a certain minister from the Liberated Churches in the Old Country with whom I had a bit of correspondence at the time when we still sent packages to the Netherlands. Concerning the promise he wrote me that he taught all his young people that they all had a check in their pocket. The check, of course, was the pledge of salvation and eternal life on the part of God to them all. If now they would only go to the bank and cash that check, they would receive the promise and the salvation indicated on the check. In a letter I wrote to him, I asked what was written on the check. Did one read on that check: "I Jehovah God, promise eternal life to believers?" Or "I, Jehovah-God, promise N.N., Peter, William, or Charles eternal life?" In another letter he replied that the latter was the case, so that if Peter had that

check in his pocket, he could read on that check: "I, Jehovah-God, promise you, Peter, eternal life." And when in another letter I asked him how that was possible, since God did not fulfill His promise and since there was no capital in the bank, except for the elect he answered me that that was a mystery. It belonged to the secret will of God, and we have to do with the revealed will. In our first conference which we had with Dr. Schilder after the war, I told that story. And he could hardly believe that the story was true. Nevertheless, principally he agrees with that Liberated minister. For now he writes himself that the promises are for N.N., altho no predictions are for them. We, on the other hand, maintain that no promises are for N.N., but only for the believers, that is, the elect.

3. Dr. Schilder evidently presents the promise as excluding faith, as is evident from his appeal to Canons II, 5. We, on the other hand, claim that the promise includes faith. For God promises the Holy Spirit, the author of faith. And therefore God pledges by the promise that He will give faith to the elect.

4. For Dr. Schilder the promise is conditional, conditioned on faith, repentance and obedience. Again, the appeal is to Canons II, 5. On the other hand, we who claim that the promise includes faith, insist that it is unconditional, for the simple reason that it is nonsense to say that faith and obedience are a condition unto faith.

5. For Schilder faith is a condition unto the promise. For us faith is an instrument which God sovereignly works in our hearts according to His promise.

6. For Schilder, as well as for Veenhof, unbelief closes the gate of heaven. For us the gate of heaven was never open to the reprobate, that remains in his sin and unbelief. And seeing that it was always closed to him, unbelief cannot possibly close it.

Such is, in brief, the difference between the view of Dr. Schilder and the Liberated, and us as Protestant Reformed believers. At bottom it is a question of God's absolutely sovereign predestination, both His election and reprobation. I do not say that Dr. Schilder is Arminian: for even in the article which was translated by the Rev. Kok in *Concordia* he emphatically confesses to believe in the sovereign grace of God. But I do maintain that I cannot square his conception of the promise to all with the pure Reformed view of God's sovereign grace. And I do maintain that if Dr. Schilder insists on his conditional promise for N.N., he must maintain that there is common grace (all have the promise) within the sphere of the covenant. And secondly, I cannot understand the difference between his conception and the Christian Reformed theory of a well-meaning offer of grace



and salvation on the part of God to all that are in the covenant. If Dr. Schilder is still interested, I would like to have him comment on the above remarks.

And now I will continue to prove from Scripture, this time especially from the New Testament, that the distinction between promises and predictions is false, that neither promises nor predictions are according to the Word of God ever for N.N., but that they are always both for the elect.

For this proof I refer the reader in the first place to the beatitudes, which are found in the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew.

There we read: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is here promised to the poor in spirit. That promise is both the pledge of a present reality and of a future blessing. It is, therefore, both a promise and a prediction. This promise and prediction is not for N.N., for Peter, William and Charles, etc. But it is for the poor in spirit. And the poor in spirit are those who by the grace of God know their own poverty of spirit. They are, therefore, the believers. And again, they are the elect. Both the prediction and the promise is for them only.

The beatitudes continue: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." In the light of the context, and in the light of all Scripture, it is very evident that the reference is here not to those that naturally mourn, but to those that mourn because they are poor in spirit. They mourn because of their sin and unrighteousness and imperfection. And perhaps we can add too that they mourn because they are still in the flesh and in this present world. And the promise to them, which is at the same time a prediction, is that they shall be comforted. Again, also in this text the promise is not to N.N., but definitely to the elect alone. And so is the prediction of future comfort and glory.

Again, in the third beatitude we read: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Again there is in this text a blessed promise. But the promise lies for its realization in the future, and therefore is at the same time a prediction. But this promise and the prediction are not for N.N., but only for the meek, that is, without any question, for those that suffer for Christ's sake meekly and patiently in the present world. And once more: that promise is for the elect alone.

In the fourth beatitude we read: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Who are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness? Certainly not N.N. Surely not natural man. He hungers and thirsts to be sure, but not after righteousness, but after the things

of this world. It is only those that have been translated by the sovereign grace of God from death unto life, and have been called from darkness into light, in other words, again the elect that so hunger and thirst after righteousness. And the promise is that they shall be filled. Surely, that promise includes a present boon: for already they are filled by faith with the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. By faith and hope they already possess the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But on the other hand, this promise lies for its ultimate realization still in the future. And therefore the text reads: "They *shall* be filled." Again we have here a promise and a prediction. But neither the promise nor the prediction is for N.N., but only for those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and therefore, only for the elect.

In the fifth beatitude we read: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Certainly, this cannot mean that anyone shall obtain mercy on condition of his being merciful himself. For in that case no one would ever receive mercy. A promise of mercy for N.N. on condition that he is merciful certainly is void of all meaning. But the merciful are those that have first been touched by the mercy of God. Because they have tasted the mercy of God and experienced His mercy, they are merciful. And to them the promise is that they shall obtain mercy. Already they have obtained mercy, for God's mercy is absolutely first. But when in turn they themselves reveal mercy to the brother, they lay hold on the promise of God that they shall obtain mercy, when God blesses them with everlasting perfection in eternal glory. But again, the point is that also in this beatitude there are no promises, neither predictions, for N.N., but only for those that are merciful by the grace of God, and therefore, for the elect only.

Again, in the sixth beatitude we read: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." This is again a promise and a prediction, or, if you wish, a promise in the form of a prediction. It is, of course, impossible to see God, that is, to ever look on His face with pure delight, except for those that are pure in heart. But who are the pure in heart? They are, of course, those who by the grace of God have principally been cleansed from all sin and pollution in their deepest heart, and therefore, once more, the elect. And again I want to emphasize that also here there are no promises and no predictions for N.N., but only for the people of God.

Finally, in the seventh beatitude we read: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." It is not necessary for me in this connection to say that the peacemakers are not to be found at the conference tables of the nations, but

that they are those who have received the peace of God that passeth all understanding in their hearts, and therefore, fundamentally they seek the only peace there is,—peace with God and peace with one another in Christ Jesus their Lord. And again, the promise is at the same time a prediction: they shall be called the children of God. They are known as children of God even now. And they reveal themselves as children of God even in this world. But in the final and public adoption unto children and heirs, they shall certainly be called children of God in perfection. And therefore, also here we have a promise and a prediction. And the promise as well as the prediction is only for the children of God, for the elect, that are the only peacemakers in the world.

(To be continued)

H. H.

### As To That Straight Record

The Rev. J. De Jong acceded to my request to publish the letter I sent to him from California *in re* correspondence with the Netherlands. In that letter I stated that the letter proposed by the Rev. De Jong to the committee was "perfectly allright for the purpose."

Concerning this statement the following:

1. I can only say that I am very sorry that I ever made such a statement, and thereby led the Rev. De Jong and also the Rev. Ophoff to believe that I agreed with the entire contents of the letter. I cannot understand nor will I attempt to explain the statement. It certainly did not, at the time, anymore than it does now, express my conviction concerning the contents of the letter in question. Of this fact there are more than one witnesses. That I did not agree with the contents of the letter is very evident from the clear cut and splendid editorial written in the last *Concordia* by the Rev. De Boer, whose testimony to this effect is as unsolicited as it is unexpected. How, then, did I ever come to write such a statement? I do not know. All I can say is that, at the time, I was still far below par because of my then recent illness. I was not on the alert. Nor did I feel like arguing, especially not on paper, because it was very difficult for me to write. Nevertheless, I apologize for the statement and say *peccavi*.

2. From the rest of the contents of my letter the Rev. De Jong should have and must have received the impression that I did not like his proposed letter. I wanted to wait, and he should have waited rather

than press the Rev. Ophoff to sign. I pronounced it a begging letter, and I did not like to beg. The Rev. De Jong was in the hurry, and there was no need for hurry.

3. This matter proves that important business of any committee should never be transacted by correspondence, but only in a properly called meeting of the committee. In such a meeting the matter could have been properly discussed. If that had been done I am sure that the letter as proposed by the Rev. J. De Jong would never have been sent. Had I, as chairman of the committee for correspondence, been on the alert, this is what I should have replied to the letter of the Rev. De Jong, and nothing more.

4. All this, however, concerns only a personal blunder on my part, for which I once more apologize. What is far more important is the fact that synod condemned the letter of the committee, and neutralized its effect by adopting a substitute letter from which all the obnoxious clauses were eliminated. That this is a fact is also corroborated by the aforementioned editorial in *Concordia* by the Rev. De Boer, who, however, is of the opinion that we should have expressed the disapproval in stronger and more definite terms. And the editor, too, was delegate to synod at the time. This is, after all, the important question, for it proves that our churches at the time of the synod of 1948 were not ready to open the door of our churches to the doctrine and members of the Liberated churches.

H. H.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, on March 4, 1952 our beloved parents,  
MR. AND MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA  
will celebrate their 55th Wedding Anniversary.

As each year unfolds, we, their children, realize more fully the blessing that is ours in having devoted Christian parents. It is our earnest prayer that the Lord bless them on the rest of life's journey and supply them abundantly with His grace.

Their Children:

Mr. and Mrs. George Spruyt  
Mr. and Mrs. John Bartelds  
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Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Meyer  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerard E. Bylsma  
Mr. and Mrs. George De Vries  
20 Grand children and 7 Great-grand children.

Open House, afternoon and evening at 838 Adams Street, S.E.

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## QUESTION

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### Faith, Hope, and Love

Manhattan, Montana  
February 6, 1952

Rev. H. Hoeksema  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Brother:

In our Men's Society there is difference of opinion in regard to the proper explanation of I Corinthians 13:13, especially in regard to these words: "And now abideth faith, hope and charity."

Some of the members are of the opinion that essentially faith and hope will abide with us even in eternity, while others maintain that this is impossible, since our faith and hope will then be fully realized.

So our question is: Do these words refer only to time, or also to eternity?

Will you be so kind as to shed some light on this question in the *Standard Bearer*?

Yours in the Lord,  
The Manhattan Men's Society  
Pierre Hoekema, Sec.

*Reply:*

I am glad that Manhattan's Men's Society takes the initiative to send in a question once again of this positive nature that has nothing to do with the sad, but very necessary controversy in our churches about the Liberated and their Heynsian conception of the promise and the covenant. It is refreshing. I sincerely hope that many more follow Manhattan's example.

As to the question itself, there always have been and still are the two different interpretations of the text in I Cor. 13:13 suggested by Manhattan's question. On the one hand there is the interpretation suggested in the rhyme:

"Faith will vanish into sight,  
Hope be emptied in delight,  
Love in heaven will shine more bright,  
Therefore give us love."

But on the other hand, there are also those that maintain that the apostle means to teach that hope, faith, and love will never cease, not even in the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

The latter is my interpretation, and I will give you my reasons.

1. In the context, especially in ch. 12, the apostle wrote about the different *charismata* or gifts of grace,

such as the gift of tongues and of prophecy. It is in distinction from these that he now writes: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three." While all the other gifts shall cease, therefore, these three shall never end but ever abide.

2. The verb *abideth* has all three: faith, hope, and charity (or love) for its subject. It is arbitrary, therefore, to make a distinction. In the sense that love abides (and there is no question about the abiding character of love) faith and hope abide too. All three, therefore, are everlasting.

3. The difficulty, it seems to me, is not so much in the interpretation of the words of the apostle, as in the question: how can faith and hope be everlasting? Does not Scripture teach that "now we walk by faith, not by sight" suggesting that in the eternal kingdom faith shall be changed into sight? And does not the same Scripture teach us that "hope that is seen is not hope"? Indeed. Yet, both faith and hope abide forever, as well as love. It is true, indeed, that faith shall no more serve as an evidence of things unseen. Nor shall hope exist without seeing. Nevertheless, faith is more than an evidence of things unseen. It is essentially the bond that unites us with Christ, and by which we live out of Him. As such faith shall abide forever. Never shall we live or have anything apart from Christ. Never, therefore, shall we live without faith. And this is also the case with hope. In the first place hope is not only expectation of a future good, but also longing, principally longing for God in Christ. And although this longing shall, in glory, be constantly satisfied, it shall be longing nevertheless. In the second place, heavenly perfection does not mean that life shall be at a standstill. There is no end to the infinite beauty, goodness, and glory of the living God. And therefore, there never will be an end, even in perfection, to growth in the knowledge of God which is eternal life. And this presupposes ever abiding hope.

Hence, "now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three."

Hoping that I have shed some light upon Manhattan's question, I am your brother in Christ,

H. H.

— : — : —

Jesus, my Lord, I look to Thee;

Where else can helpless sinners go?

Thy boundless love shall set me free

From all my wretchedness and woe.



## 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 regard to the question concerning the key-power of Christian discipline, it is very important that we understand certain definite principles.

In the first place, also in regard to Christian discipline we must understand that its key-power lies only in the Word of God. The word of man, or the opinions of men, can have no power to open or shut the kingdom of heaven. Whether, therefore, Christian discipline consists in private admonition, in which a brother admonishes another, or in the action of the whole church thru the consistory, always it must be the Word of God that is the content of the admonition. Only Christ holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And Christ speaks His own Word only thru the Holy Scriptures. This, of course, does not mean that in admonishing the brother or in finally excluding him from the communion and fellowship of the saints we may only read the Bible to him. But it does mean that all our admonition and exhortation must be based on the Holy Scriptures. This implies, of course, that we must be certain that the brother has sinned, either privately or publicly, and that now we can point out his sin to him and rebuke him definitely with the Word of God on our lips. Only then can Christian discipline be to the glory of God in Christ, to the well-being of the church, and to the salvation of the brother. Only then can such discipline be a key-power, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven.

A second important principle, which is often ignored, is that Christian discipline must be motivated by the love of God in Christ and the love of the brother. One who either as minister or elder labored for some time in the church of Christ on earth will know by experience how this principle of love is often violated and ignored, and how in this respect the key-power of Christian discipline is often misunderstood and wrongly applied. Christians often act as if they think that the key-power of the church

is the same as the sword-power in the world. Instead of admonishing the brother from the motive of the love of God in Christ, they seek their own rights rather than the salvation of the brother. To use an illustration, say that someone has borrowed a thousand dollars from a brother and refuses to pay it back. In such a case frequently the brother from whom the thousand dollars was borrowed seeks his right, that is, the return of the thousand dollars, rather than the salvation of the brother. It is not the sin of the brother that grieves him, but rather the fact that the money is not returned to him. He is like the man pictured in the parable of the unmerciful servant, of whom we read: "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." Now, mark you, we by no means claim that in the above illustration the brother that borrowed a thousand dollars should not return the money. But we do maintain that in such a case, and in similar cases, the chief question does not concern the money, but the sin of the brother. If the brother is admonished in love concerning his sin of not returning the money and paying the debt he owes, and he repents of his sin, the money will be returned as a matter of fact. Nevertheless, it is not chiefly a money question and a question of right, but it is a spiritual, ethical matter, the matter concerning the sin of the brother. Christian discipline must be motivated by the love of God in Christ and the love to the brother. That this principle of love is often ignored in Christian discipline is also evident from other facts. Often when one brother attempts to admonish another brother, the former at the same time often publishes the sin of the brother on the streets of Ashkelon, while it is his Christian obligation to keep it as secret and private as possible. Another fact that lies in the same line, and that is evidence of the same lack of love and of the violation of that important principle in Christian discipline, is that an admonishing brother frequently hurries technically thru the rule prescribed in Matthew 18, in order then as soon as possible to bring the matter before the consistory. He visited the offending brother once, and again visited him with two or three witnesses, in order then to lay the matter before the church and make it public. Technically such a brother certainly followed the rule of Matthew 18. But if he would have been motivated by the love of God and the love of the brother, he rather would have ad-

monished him repeatedly and in private, before giving the matter any wider publication.

There is a principal and fundamental difference between the sword-power of the world and the key-power of the church. In the first place, as we have already pointed out, there is the difference of motive. The sword-power is motivated and must be motivated by justice: the evil-doer must be punished, and he that doeth well must be protected. But the motive of Christian discipline is love, the love of God in Christ Jesus. And this love of God in Christ appears as a love to sinners. This too is emphasized in the parable of the unmerciful servant. In that parable we read: "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." God reconciled us to Himself when we were still enemies, and He manifested His love toward us in sending His only begotten Son into the world, in order that He might pay the debt which we could never pay. If that love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, we certainly will love Him and will love the brother for His name's sake, and motivated by that love will be ready to forgive the brother. In that love of God we are willing to deny ourselves, earnestly seek the glory of God, the well-being of His church, and the salvation of one another. And this leads us to a second point of difference between the sword-power of the world and the discipline of the church. The purpose of the sword-power is the maintenance of justice and righteousness. It is the calling of the sword-power to maintain the law in its own sphere of the public relationships of the citizens. But the purpose of the power of Christian discipline is the salvation of the sinner, the purity of the church, and the glory of God. There is, thirdly, also a difference as to the objects of the exercise of the sword-power and the objects of the exercise of Christian discipline. The former, that is, the power of the sword, is concerned only with some public offenders. But the objects of Christian discipline are all impenitent sinners, no matter what the nature of their sin may be. And therefore, finally, there is also a difference between the end or outcome of the exercise of the sword-power and of the exercise of Christian discipline. The outcome of the former is punishment,

whether by fine or prison or capital punishment. But even as the motive and purpose of Christian discipline is not revenge and is not the maintenance of justice and righteousness, so also its end is not punishment, but is either forgiveness or excommunication from the church.

That it is the principle of love which must be the motivation of all Christian discipline is also plainly evident from the classic passage in Matthew 18:15-18. Notice, in the first place, that according to this passage it is the obligation of love that the offended party visit the offending brother. This does not mean, of course, that the same obligation does not rest upon the latter: it is certainly his calling to go and confess his sin before the offended brother. But the Lord addresses the brother against whom the sin has been committed, in the first place, to make sure that the brethren meet. And it seems far more certain that this will be realized when the offended brother takes the initiative than when this is left up to the brother that sinned. Secondly, also in this respect the offended party must be a follower of God. We did not love God, but He loved us. He blotted out our sins and reconciled us unto Himself and sought us as sinners, when we were still enemies. And therefore, it is certainly the obligation of love that the offended party seek the erring brother. Hence, the Lord says: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." This implies too, of course, that when anyone sins against us, it is not left up to our choice whether or not we shall go and rebuke the brother; but the sin of the brother imposes upon us a sacred obligation to go.

Moreover, if the brother trespass against us, we must not approach him in the spirit of pride, in order to defend our right or avenge the wrong which the brother has committed against us; but rather we must meet him in the spirit of humility and of sorrow because the brother walks in the way of sin. For the same reason we must not visit him in order to make light of his sin or to smoothen things over: for also this would not manifest the spirit of love. On the contrary, the Lord very definitely admonishes the offended party that he must go to the brother in order to tell him his fault. He must rebuke him with the Word of God and attempt to bring him to repentance. In the third place, the truth that Christian discipline must be motivated by the spirit of brotherly love in the love of God is also evident from the fact that the Lord admonishes the offended party to keep the sin of the brother as private and secret as possible. He must tell the brother his fault between himself and him alone. The matter, therefore, must be covered up

and must be kept within proper limits. In the fourth place, if upon the admonition the brother repents, this ends the matter: for it is the sacred obligation of love to forgive one another.

About this obligation of forgiveness a few words may still be added. In the first place, it is evident that forgiveness on the part of the offended party can be granted and can be received by the erring brother only in the way of repentance. Where there is no conviction of sin and therefore no sincere repentance and desire for forgiveness, it is absolutely impossible to grant and to receive forgiveness. In the second place, the right to forgive exists strictly speaking only among brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is based upon the blood of the cross. No one has the right to forgive those whom God does not forgive. And God forgives only on the basis of the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hence, the right to grant forgiveness of sins, which is at the same time a privilege, can be maintained only in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And thirdly, it must also be emphasized that there can never be an end to the obligation to forgive. This is evident from the context of Matthew 18. After the Lord had laid down the rule that in the case of an offended brother the latter must go and rebuke the offending party, we read that Peter approached the Lord with the question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" And the Lord answered him: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Also in this respect we must be followers of God as dear children. The mercy of the Lord is without end. No matter how often we sin against Him, He is ready to forgive in the way of sincere repentance. And even that repentance He Himself works in our hearts through His Spirit and grace by the preaching of the Word. And therefore, if the brother sin against us seventy times seven times and repents and asks for forgiveness as often as he sins against us, it is our sacred obligation to forgive. Always we must be able to say, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

The question may be asked here: what kind of sin is the object of Christian discipline, and what sin is ultimately sufficient cause for excommunication from the church on earth? The answer to this question may be very brief. It is this: all known sin of impenitence. We dare not make a distinction between gross sins and sins of minor importance. No sinner as such can possibly be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. A murderer that repents may belong to the church of Christ, even though the power of the sword inflicts capital punishment upon him. On the other hand, one offending word spoken against the brother of which

the offended refuses to repent may be the cause of his excommunication from the church on earth and from the kingdom of God in heaven. Any sin, therefore, whether it be in doctrine or in walk, of which the sinner does not repent is the object of Christian discipline, and may ultimately be the cause of his being expelled from the kingdom of God.

But what if, after repeated admonition, the brother refuses to acknowledge his sin and remains impenitent? In that case it becomes finally a matter for the whole church. Thus the Lord teaches us in Matthew 18:16, 17: "But if he will not hear thee, 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 to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." All this has reference, of course, to private sin, that is, to sin that is not known to the whole church. When a sin is public in its very nature, and is known to the whole church, it stands to reason that the church through its officebearers is obliged to take action. The consistory in that case has the obligation to visit and admonish the offending brother in order to bring him to repentance. Even in such a case the rest of the members of the congregation may not assume the attitude that they have no further obligation with respect to the offending brother, seeing that the case is in the hands of the consistory. On the contrary, the obligation of love never ceases, and they too must exhort and rebuke the brother, in order that he may repent of his sin. Nevertheless, when a sin is public and known to the church, the consistory may not leave the matter to the members of the congregation, but must itself take action. However, in regard to a private sin, that is known to only one brother, the rule of Matthew 18 must be followed to the end. The offended party, if upon repeated admonition the offender does not repent, must take along one or two witnesses, in order that in their mouth every word may be established. And if the offender does not heed the admonitions of the offended party in the presence of these witnesses, the matter must be reported to the church. And if ultimately the sinner shows no repentance, he must be unto the church as a heathen man and a publican. And what this implies is plain from verse 18 of the same chapter: "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 other words, the impenitent sinner is excluded from the kingdom of God, both on earth and in heaven.

As to the way in which this final remedy is ultimately applied, also this is characterized by the spirit

of love, that ever hopes that the sinner may repent. First of all, the consistory labors with the erring brother, in the meantime, however, barring him from the table of the Lord. If he is repeatedly admonished and reveals no spirit of repentance, he is publicly censured, that is, his censure is announced to the church, without, however, mentioning his name. If after this censure the brother should come to repentance, his censure is removed and his repentance is likewise announced without mentioning the name of the erring brother. However, if he becomes hardened in his sin and shows continued impenitence, a second step of censure is applied, this time with the advice of the classis. And also this step of censure is announced to the congregation, and this time with the name of the offender. It is understood, of course, that the announcement concerning these different steps of censure is not made in order to satisfy the curiosity of the church, but rather in order that the whole congregation may have the opportunity to visit and admonish the offending party. It is after all the whole church that exercises discipline. Upon the whole church rests the obligation of brotherly love, of exhortation and admonition, and of prayer that the offending brother may come to repentance. And if, after all these private and public admonitions, the sinner still does not show any signs of repentance, he is finally excommunicated from the church of Christ in the world, and thereby from the kingdom of God in heaven. For whatsoever, according to the Word of God, is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The proper exercise of Christian discipline according to the Word of God is of great benefit to the church of Christ in the world. It is of benefit to the erring brother, who through the admonitions of the Word of God is brought to repentance and re-established in the fellowship of the saints. This applies, of course, only to the brother, not to him that bears the name of Christian but continues to walk in the way of sin and impenitence. He will harden himself against and through all Christian admonitions and exhortations, and will ultimately leave the church of Jesus Christ or be excommunicated from the fellowship of the people of God in the world. But the erring brother will repent and be saved, and that too, not by human efforts, but because it pleases Christ to use the exhortations of the brethren and of the whole church to bring His wandering sheep back to the fold. Moreover, Christian discipline is of great benefit not only to the erring brother, but also to the mutual relationship of believers and to the church as a whole. When Christian discipline is exercised properly and faithfully, the bond of Christian fellowship will be streng-

thened and believers will be built up in the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And the church as a whole is benefited because by the exercise of Christian discipline it constantly casts off the impure elements of the flesh, grows in the knowledge and grace of Christ Jesus our Lord, and is firmly established in the truth.

H.H.



## As To Books

FEED MY LAMBS, by Henry T. Vriesen. Reliance Publishing Co., Green Bay, Wis. Price \$3.00.

This book is designed to be a help to parents in the biblical instruction of their children. It consists of three hundred and sixty-six brief chapters, one for every day of the year. Narratives of biblical history, both of the Old and of the New Testament, several selections from the Psalms, the prophets, the epistles, and a few from the book of Revelation, comprise the contents of this book. A series of prayers, one for each day of the week, is found in an appendix.

The author uses largely literal quotations from Scripture, even in his narratives of biblical history.

I would suggest that a chapter of this book be read every day in our homes, not instead of, but in connection with our daily Bible reading in our family worship. This will, no doubt, serve to increase our knowledge of Scripture.

For this purpose we can heartily recommend this book.

H.H.



JEREMIAH-LAMENTATIONS, in Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.95.

This volume of Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures was prepared by Dr. C. W. Edw. Naegelsbach. The commentary on Jeremiah was translated by the Rev. Samuel R. Asbury of Moorestown, N.J. and that on the Lamentations by the Rev. Wm. H. Hornblower of Paterson, N.J.

Although the original author of the commentary on the *Lamentations* was, at first, convinced that Jeremiah was the author of this book of Scripture, he later changed his mind for various reasons, chiefly of internal evidence. Cf. pp. 6-16. The translator, however, begs to differ with Dr. Naegelsbach and defends the authority of Jeremiah on the basis of what appear to me weighty considerations.

As far as the commentaries themselves are concerned, we find that they are characterized by thorough exegesis, honest dealing with the text, and, especially in the doctrinal and ethical notes, spiritual and practical application.

H.H.



HET CHRISTELIJK LEVEN IN DE MAATSCHAPPIJ. Prof. Dr. G. Brillenburg Wurth. Uitgever: J. H. Kok, n.v., Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f.8.90.

In een "Woord Vooraf" van dit derde deel zijner Christelijke Ethiek waarschuwt Dr. Brillenburg Wurth "dat men hier met betrekking tot de behandelde problemen niet een laatste woord, een afdoende oplossing" moet verwachten. De lezer van dit belangrijke en in vele opzichten mooie boek houde dit voor de aandacht, vooral de Christelijke lezer in ons eigen land, die, ook op het gebied der maatschappij, de antithese bedoelt te handhaven.

Op p. 73 levert de schrijver eenige kritiek op Dr. Kuyper's beschouwing van de "gemeene gratie" vooral zoo als die betrekking heeft op het leven in de maatschappij. Hij wil blijkbaar van Dr. Kuyper's "terreinleer" niets weten. Wij voor ons houden ons overtuigd, dat heel de gemeene gratie theorie een herschenschim is, die ons verhindert om op eenig gebied de antithetische lijn van zonde en genade zuiver te trekken. Dit geldt ook van het leven in de maatschappij. Wij willen geen aparte maatschappij, maar bedoelen ook in de maatschappij de zake van den Zone Gods voor te staan en te leven uit het beginsel der wedergeboorte.

Hartelijk aanbevolen bij de lezer, die goed Hollandsch lezen kan.

H.H.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

On the morning of February 6, 1952, it pleased our Covenant God to take unto Himself our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother;

Mrs. Edw. Vander Werff, nee Katherine Brunsting at the age of 57 years.

The assurance that she is now with her Lord, whom she loved to serve during her life, takes the sting out of our sorrow. Romans 8:37-39.

The bereaved family,

Mr. Edward Vander Werff

Mr. and Mrs. George Hoekstra (Greda)

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Karsemeyer (Marian)

Mr. William Vander Werff

and five grandchildren.

Hull, Iowa

## SION'S ZANGEN

### De Lofzang Der Liefde

(Psalm 116; Eerst Deel)

Dit is een van de lievelingsliederen van Gods volk van elle eeuwen. Men zegt, dat dit lied gezongen werd bij de viering van het Pascha. Taalkenners zeggen, dat er uitdrukkingen in voorkomen die gebruikt werden na de Babylonische ballingschap. Ik kan er niet over oordeelen. De naam van den dichter wordt niet genoemd. De stijl doet mij denken aan David. Ik weet het echer niet voor zeker wie dezen psalm gedicht heeft. God weet het.

Maar het is een lievelingslied.

In Nederland wordt deze psalm vaak gezongen bij de viering van het Heilig Avondmaal des Heeren. Van mijn prilste jeugd af aan was ik getuige van deze gewoonte, want de eenige Leeraar die ik gekend heb daar, gaf dezen psalm altijd op bij de viering van des Heeren nachtmaal. En dan steeds het 7de vers in de berijming, als de beker rondging: " 'k Zal bij den kelk des heils Zijn naam vermelden. . . "

Het past.

Het is een lievelingslied van Gods kerk, want het verhaalt ons diepste leven, het leven der ellende, verlossing en dankbaarheid. Ge vindt ze alle drie terug in dezen psalm.

Velen, zeer velen, gelooven, dat dit lied zuiver Messiaansch is. Ik ben er zeker van. Vele van de uitdrukkingen zijn slechts in zeer beperkten zin van toepassing op Gods volk in ellende, verlossing en dankbaarheid. Er zijn gedeelten in dezen psalm die ons doen denken aan den twee-en-twintiger. Denkt vooral aan dat vreeselijke derde vers: omvanging der banden des doods; treffing der angsten der hel; het vinden van benauwdheid en droefenis. O ja, ze doen ons direct denken aan den Man van Smarten, den man die zeggen kon door den mond van Jeremia: "Gaaf het ulieden niet aan; gij allen die overweg gaat? Schouwt het aan en ziet, of er eene smart zij gelijk mijne smart die mij aangedaan is, waarmede de Heere mij bedroefd heeft ten dage der hittigheid Zijns toorns."

Ik vraag U: is er iemand die deze laatste uitdrukking op zijn lippen kan nemen, en dan als uitdrukking, als volle beleving (of sterving) van deze laatste woorden? Wie is benauwd geweest vanwege de hittigheid van den toorn van God? Doch Jezus kon dat zeggen. Zoo ook hier.

In Jezus heeft dit lied zijn volle beleving gehad,



en heeft het nog. Denkt aan het 9de vers; en ook aan het 13de, 14de vers, en aan de verzen 17 tot 19. Ze passen zoo schoon op Jezus, zooals Hij ze nu leeft, en leven zal.

Hij is de groote Voorzinger. Hij zong Zijn verschrikkelijke solo's anno Domini 33: en wij waren zeer stille. Hij zong Zijn liefelijke hallels daarna, en we zingen met Hem, al bevende en sidderende. We verheugen ons met Hem, doch we doen het al bevende. En het is als wanneer een ster onder de zangers voorzingt: zijn stem leidt de andere stemmen; men hoort de stem van den voorzanger boven allen uit. En dat hoort zoo.

Zooeven heb ik sommige verzen aangehaald: ik sprak van het vreeselijke derde vers in het bijzonder; en ik sprak van andere verzen, hen noemende. Maar dat behoefde niet. Alle verzen zijn Messiaansch, ontvangen in Jezus hun vervulling.

Ik stem het grif toe, dat wij allen die verzen ook zingen, en nog meer zingen zullen, maar er is verschil, o er is zulk hemelschbreed verschil!

Ga terug naar het begin: Ik heb lief!

En denkt dan aan Uwen oudsten Broeder; past er voor op, dat ge geduriglijk denkt aan Uwen oudsten Broeder. En dat is Jezus Christus.

Want er is niemand in den hemel, of op de aarde, of onder de aarde, die dit kan zeggen in het klankgeslacht van Jezus.

Ik heb lief!

We hebben het duizendmalen gezongen. Hier op aarde. Maar Jezus zong het in de hel. Jezus zong het aan 't kruis. Ge vindt dat "Ik heb lief!" terug in het bezittelijke voornaamwoord: "MIJN", in de bange vraag: Mijn God, Mijn God, warrom hebt Gij Mij verlaten? Dat bezittelijke voornaamwoord is drager van de reine liefde van Jezus tot Zijn Vader in dien bangen nacht aan het kruis. Bange nacht, want de dag werd veranderd in nacht.

Jezus heeft het steeds gezegd en gezongen: Ik heb lief!

En nu weet ik, dat ge met een vraag in 't hart aan 't lezen zijt. Ge vraagt me: wat beteekent het om te zingen: Ik heb lief! Deze artikelen zouden de psalmen verklaren. Och arme!

Hoe zal ik dat verklaren?

De liefde laat zich zoo moeilijk verklaren. Hebt ge wel eens getracht om een opstel te maken over het onderwerp: GOD? De liefde is een van de namen Gods. De Apostel der liefde heeft het ons door inspiratie laten weten: God is liefde. Als ik wat zal zeggen van deze eerste jubelzang, dan zal ik moeten spreken van God in den actieven vorm: God aan 't werk; werkende God. En hoe zal ik dat doen? God is liefde; Zijn Wezen is liefde. Alles wat Hij doet is

liefde en trouw. Schrijven over de liefde Gods is schrijven over het Verbondsleven van God. God heeft Zichzelf lief. Toen Jezus zeide, zong, jubelde: Ik heb lief! toen uitte Hij de liefde Gods, de liefde waarmede God Zichzelf bemint.

En wat is nu zulk liefhebben?

Ik denk, dat het beteekent, dat men zich geeft aan 't voorwerp; dat men dat voorwerp wil, zoekt, en als men het voorwerp gevonden heeft, zichzelf geeft aan dat voorwerp, zich geheel en al aan dat voorwerp overgeeft. In de Goddelijke liefde geeft men zich zoo geheel en al aan het voorwerp, dat men zich verenigt met het voorwerp. Schertsend zegt men van man en vrouw, dat ze één zijn. Dat moesten we nooit schertsend zeggen, want het is waar. Het is eeuwig waar.

Zoo is het toch immers gegaan met God en Zijn volk in Jezus Christus? God heeft ons gezocht in Zijn liefde. En toen Hij ons vond, toen heeft Hij Zich aan ons gegeven in Jezus Christus. Nu zijn we één met God in dien Zoon. En de eenheid van God en Zijn volk is zóó volmaakt in dien Heiland, dat men nog steeds aan 't strijden is over de voorstelling die we ons moeten vormen van de eenheid der naturen; van de eenheid dier naturen in Immanuel.

Ik sprak van geven en overgeven van zichzelf aan het voorwerp. Welnu, als straks de einden der eeuwen gekomen zijn, zal God Zich zóó aan ons overgeven, dat Hij alles zal zijn in allen. Dat is de triumpf der Goddelijke liefde.

Men zegt: liefde kan niet van één kant komen. En dat is waar. Welnu, als God Zich dan geeft aan ons, dan gaan wij uit naar God, en zoeken Hem den ganschen lieven dag. Dat is ons diepste leven.

En dat is zoo, omdat Jezus in ons woont.

Want Jezus is eigenlijk de eenige die God liefheeft.

Wij haten God zooals we van nature zijn. En haten is het tegenovergestelde van liefhebben. Als men God haat, dan wil men Hem niet. Dan zoekt men Hem nooit, en als men dan toch met Hem in aanraking komt, dan neemt men Hem en kruisigt Hem op Golgotha's kruin. En dat doen we, om het toch maar luide te doen weten: Wijk van mij, O God! Ik heb lust in U noch in Uw wegen!

We zingen allen van nature: Ik haat God en mijn naaste haat ik, omdat hij naar Zijn beeld geschapen is. Overal waar ik God zie, hoor of ruik, daar openbaar ik mijn haat tegen dien God.

Maar als Jezus intrek doet in mijn hart, dan wordt alles anders. Dan leer ik Hem liefhebben. Dan luister ik naar Jezus en als Hij zingt: God heb Ik lief, want die getrouwe Heer hoort Mijne stem, Mijn smeeking en Mijn klagen, dan begin ik hetzelfde versje te zingen,

doch dan doe ik dat al bevende, want het is zoo geweldig, zoo groot.

Als Jezus Zijn zangen der liefde in mij zingt, dan begin ik ook te zingen. En dan begin ik te doen wat Hij volmaakt gedaan heeft, dan begin ik Hem te zoeken bij 't kriecken van den dageraad. Dan begin ik te fluisteren; ik dorst naar God, naar den levenden God. Dan begin ik eenigzins te verstaan de woorden die tot ons kwamen uit het grijze verleden: de mensch kan niet rusten, tenzij hij ruste in God. Dan begin ik Hem te zoeken in alles wat ik doe. Dan begin ik te verstaan hoe alles eigenlijk godsdienst is: en de ware godsdienst is het zoeken en vinden van God.

Ik heb lief!

Ja, het staat er niet bij, doch het beteekent wel degelijk: Ik heb God lief. Het verband vertelt dat ons. Ik heb lief want HIJ hoort mijne stem, mijne smeekingen, want Hij neigt Zijn oor tot mij, dies ik Hem in mijne dagen zal aanroepen.

Dat heeft Jezus ervaren.

Ik heb U al vaak gewezen op het heerlijke feit, dat Jezus vaak Zich afzonderde om alleen te zijn met God. En dan koos Hij de wildernis, de woestijn. Ik denk, omdat die woestijn en wildernis symbolisch uitsprak wat in Zijn ontruste ziel woonde. Hij die een lusthof gelijk zij, moest ronddwalen in de wildernissen en woestijnen. Alles aan Hem is gansch begeerlijk. Hij beminde God gelijk nooit één mensch God zal liefhebben, doch Hij moest ervaren de verwerping, de rond-dooling in woestijnen van den last des toorns Gods.

Maar Hij verhief Zijne stem tot God.

Dat heeft Hij alle Zijne dagen gedaan. Vaak brak dan die stem, en weende Hij. Vaak ging dat weenen over in schreeuwen tot God. Vooral aan het einde van Zijn leven. Vaak ging dat schreeuwen over in brullen. Denkt hier aan Psalm 22:2, "Mijn God, Mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten, verre zijnde van Mijne verlossing, van de woorden Mijns brullens?"

Daar staat het. Jezus heeft vaak tot God gebruld. En men brult als de nood op 't hoogst is, en men geen hulpe ziet.

O ja, God heeft Jezus' stem wel gehoord. En ofschoon Jezus geen antwoord ontving, toch wist Hij dat Zijn God Hem hoorde. Daarom had Hij Hem lief.

Ik heb een mensch gekend die schreef: toen Jezus aan het kruis hing toen heeft de Zoon den Vader zeer begeerd; en, omgekeerd, toen heeft de Vader den Zoon grootelijks begeerd. En dat is recht gezegd. God begeert altijd God. Ook dan toen de Zoon persoonlijk vereenigd was met ons. Aan dat bange kruis.

Mijn stem en Mijn smeekingen!

O, die smeekingen van Messias! Leest Hebreëen 5:7, en siddert.

"Die in de dagen Zijns vleesch, gebeden en smee-

kingen tot Dengene die Hem uit den dood kon verlossen, met sterke roeping en tranen geofferd hebbende"

O ja, God heeft vele smeekingen en roepingen van Jezus gehoord.

O Gethsemane! O Golgotha! O wildernissen van Judea en Samaria! De trillingen van die roepingen, dat brullen, die smeekingen zijn nog in het Heelal! Ze trillen nog na, en ze zullen blijven trillen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid. Ze zijn te kostelijk, te glorieus om aan de vergetelheid overgegeven te worden. Als Davids tranen in Gods flesschen bewaard werden; als de dood en de tranen, en het bloed van Gods gunstgenoten dierbaar zijn in Zijne oogen, wat zullen we dan zeggen van Jezus' stem, van Jezus' smeekingen? Job vroeg, neen, smeekte of toch zijne woorden met eene ijzeren griffel en lood voor eeuwig in eene rots gehouden wierden; wat zullen we dan zeggen van de woorden van Messias' smeekingen? O, ze zijn uitgehouwen in eene Rots, en de Rots is God. Ze zijn uitgehouwen in God's harte voor eeuwig. Ze zijn te kostelijk, dan dat ze ooit verloren zouden gaan. Denkt er toch om, hoe in 't harte van den troon Gods een lammetje staat, geverwd in het rood van hartebloed, en dat lammetje zal daar staan om U en mij te doen gedenken aan alle smarten van Messias die Hij geleden heeft vanwege de openbaring der liefde Gods.

Ik heb lief, zegt Messias. En we zingen het met hem zachtjes, zeer zachtjes.

Hij heeft het bewezen. Zijn roepen, Zijn stem, Zijn smeekingen en klagen: ze zijn alle uitingen van een ongekende liefde, de liefde Gods.

Ik heb lief, zegt Jezus, want Hij hoort, Hij neigt Zijn oor tot Mij. Daarom zal Ik Hem aanroepen alle Mijne dagen.

En dat heeft Hij gedaan, en dat doet Hij, en zal het doen tot in der eeuwigheid.

Hij doet dat eerst voor Zichzelf. Want Jezus leeft er voor om God aan te roepen. Er is één onuitsprekelijke genieting in het roepen tot God. Het is uiting van de liefde Gods. Men ervaart die liefde in het roepen. Daarom is bidden en aanbidden het schoonste goede werk des Christens.

Hij doet het, en daarom doen wij het ook. Want we hebben 's Vaders Zoon aan boord.

En omdat Jezus in ons woont door Zijn Geest, Woord en genade, daarom roepen wij ook.

En God hoort.

Hallelujah!

G. Vos

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To save His guilty church, He dies;

Mourners, behold the bleeding Lamb!

To Him lift up your longing eyes,

And hope for mercy in His Name.

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition of Matthew 5:38-42

It has repeatedly become clear to us in these essays on Jesus' interpretation of the law, that He is speaking of the real righteousness of grace, which is the establishment of the law in the hearts of the sons of the Kingdom. These latter are the light of the world, a city on a hill-top, and light on a candle-stick. The sons of the Kingdom come to manifestation in their being a different people than those of this world; theirs is indeed a righteousness that is more abounding than that of the Pharisees and the Scribes.

In view of stimulating us to holy fear as sons of the Kingdom, and also to work in our hearts the true faith revealing itself in a life of good works of sanctification, Jesus warns us to beware against thinking that He has come to destroy the law and the prophets.

Christ did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them!

They must be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle. This does not mean that they must simply be fulfilled as a legal precept, but it means that the law of loving our neighbor as ourselves must come to manifestation as being written in our very hearts, upon the tables of flesh by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Such is the general perspective here in this explanation of the meaning of the law.

Such is also the viewpoint in the passage, which we will consider in this essay. This passage reads as follows: "*Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*"

Jesus here establishes the principle, that we are not to live by the motive of revenge, resentment and evil retaliation for wrongs done to us. As the meek of the earth we are to walk in the wisdom, which is from above, which is gentle, easy to be intreated, without partiality and full of good fruits. We are to live the life of the peace-makers, who shall be called the children of God. See verse 9. And when we are persecuted, it must not be for our wrong-doings (I Peter 3:19-21) that we suffer injustice, nor must we become ensnared in the evil itself that is being done

to us. In this passage we are told the way of heaven's wisdom which it to be as wise as the serpents and as harmless as the doves.

Let us try to understand Jesus' instruction in this our behavior as new-born sons of the Kingdom.

There seems to be a contradiction in the teaching of Jesus here. At the surface, but only at the surface, there seems to be a paradox. Does not Jesus place His teaching overagainst the clear injunction of the law of Moses? In Lev. 24:19, 20 we read: "*And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him, breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done.*" Now, is this not a seeming contradiction when compared with the teaching of Jesus in this passage? For Jesus says: *But, I say unto you, that you resist not him that is evil.* Is this a real contradiction?

I think not.

What then?

The truth of the matter is, that Jesus is not speaking of the execution of justice here *by those who are called upon to do this in God's name*, but He is here speaking of *our personal attitude of heart and mind* toward those who do us injury. We must not avenge ourselves and thus give Satan a place in our lives. We must so walk that we remain pure in an evil world, even when this evil world of men do us injury and injustice. We shall not take justice into our own hands, but we shall always exercise kindness and goodness, abounding in a walk of righteousness, our whole life being full of the love of law, so that we fill up the law and the prophets to the last jot and tittle.

The error of the Scribes and Pharisees was, that they applied, what was meant for those who executed righteous judgment in the name of God, to the personal execution of the individual. And thus the very thing that the law of justice meant to prevent, in just punishment, was encouraged. There was simply more confusion and injustice wrought; injustice was increased many times over in "eye for eye" and "blow for blow." Then there is no end to unrighteousness. It is an endless, vicious circle of unrighteousness. The wind is sowed and the storm is reaped; thus there is no end in sight. Ye have heard this law of retaliation proclaimed in the name of Moses, says Jesus. But this is wrong. That is not the meaning of Moses. It is simply a distorting of Scripture to their own destruction. A very common practice indeed. See II Peter 3:16. Do not listen to this teaching, this corruption of Moses. With this righteousness of Phariseism you will in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Be not deceived!

Jesus has understood the intent of this command-

ment perfectly. He is proclaiming this great precept of "doing good" to the sons of the Kingdom. Says He: "But I say unto you, *Do not resist him who is evil.*"

There is a question about the meaning of the word in the original Greek, which in our text is translated: "Him who is evil". In itself this might be taken to mean: simply *evil*, evil of any kind? It might also refer to: The Evil one, that is, Satan. We believe that the rendering: him that is evil, is a good one. It thus refers to the evil that is done to us by someone, and in this doing he is evil. He may simply be doing this out of weakness, or he may be doing it out of sheer meanness. But in either case he does not do me well. He does evil to me, he does not treat me according to the Golden Rule of doing unto me as he would have me do to him.

Not what must I do?

I must not do to him as he does to me, but I must do to him as I would have him do to me. I must not retaliate in personally afflicting. If it is a matter that becomes one of the legal court, then too it must be no matter in me of personal meanness and evil retaliation, but love for justice and equity.

To bring out this point very clearly, that it may not be personal, evil retaliation, Jesus cites four instances by which He would show us the proper conduct overagainst him who does evil to us, who does not practice the Golden Rule to us.

The first illustration is that of the assumed case in which a man strikes us a ringing blow upon the right cheek. In the face of this smarting, humiliating and offending blow, what are we to do? Hit him back? Jesus says: "*Turn the other cheek to him.* Is this not folly? Is it not inviting trouble? No it is not. For thus the second blow will be slow in forthcoming, if at all. The man will be put to shame. The evil is not resisted with evil. The evil is overcome by a quiet and meek spirit. This is the power that is stronger than he who taketh in a city. Righteousness shines forth, the dignity of meekness. It is meekness that does not stoop to the level of low and mean retaliation. It gives great peace and serenity in the soul. Here is not the exacting justice of eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth in the wrong sense. It is the answering of the fool according to his folly!

The second illustration is that of the imaginary or real case, where one will take me to law to take away from me my coat to pay my debts. Any one who will take away my coat from me, the necessity to cover my nakedness and to protect me from the cold, is not a man who does good to his neighbor out of a merciful heart. This is, of course, only one example, al-

though a very telling one, of the conduct of the evil man, who shows no mercy. It is the mercy of the wicked which is cruel. In this case, when we should be hailed before the judge, what are we to do? Are we to retaliate and try to take the man's coat also? Not at all. We shall then give our cloak also. We shall give full measure of justice and graciousness, believing that God is the Lord, and that He hears the poor man's cry. For He is the Lord Sabaoth, who sends His angels hastening to our help. Faith in God's helping the needy is a mighty tonic to the faltering spirit. So just give him your cloak also. Do not resist evil with evil. Yes, you will call his attention to his evil, but you will not place another evil over against it. More confusion is not the solution to confusion.

The third illustration is that of the assumed case, where one is compelled to go a mile. In this case give double portion, and do it cheerfully. Go with him two miles. This illustration calls for just a word of explanation. The word: *to compel to go* is the translation of the Greek "*aggoreuoo*." This word signifies: to employ a courier, to dispatch a mounted messenger. The "*aggoroi*" were public couriers, stationed by appointment of the king of Persia at fixed localities, with horses ready for use, in order to transmit royal messages from one to another, and so convey them the more speedily to their destination. These couriers had authority to press into their service, in case of need, horses, vessels (ships) even the men they met. Hence, "*aggoreuoo*" denotes: to compel one to go on a journey to bear a burden, or to perform any other service. Compare Thayer, W. P. or A. T. Robertson, Lenski.

If anyone would wish us to perform a service for them, such as a soldier in the army, and when we must suffer hardships, we must give full measure. Such is the law of the righteousness of the Kingdom. Do not ever live by the law of retaliation. God is the judge.

When one comes to borrow from you, or asks from you do not run away from him. Have a liberal heart. The mean man, who retaliates is also the small man. Have a heart full of the bowels of mercy. Sow plentifully and you shall reap plentifully. God is not mocked. Here too God gives an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, only here it is the reward of grace. Those who have, receive more, and have abundantly. The full cup of joy is the portion of the just, who cares for the poor. Then there are two men happy, the man who gave and the man who received. Such is the abundant harvest of grace. But if you turn away then both the one, who turned away, and the man who was not given ought, are unhappy. Then we once

more come in the place where men are tempted to retaliate evil with evil.

Now the righteousness of the Pharisee is to give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth in the evil sense, but such is not the righteousness of the Kingdom of heaven. And it is the latter, that Christ has come to fulfill in us. I can hear Him say: I tell you these things that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. John says: let us love each other. Not as Cain loved his brother and slew him. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Wherefore resist not the one doing evil to you. For the Lord is a just God.

G. C. Lubbers




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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

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### The Covenant of Sinai

I am occupied with proving with the Scriptures that the covenant of Sinai is not of works but of grace. The argument advanced in support of this proposition and appearing in my previous article ran as follows:

What the Lord was saying to His people there at Sinai in the final instance was verily this: that He is the Lord their God, the God of their salvation in Christ Jesus; that as in His love of His people He had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt and would enter with them into the rest of the typical Canaan, so would He in Christ Jesus and on the ground of His atonement save them truly from all their sins and enter with them into His rest—the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

I showed with the Scriptures that this is what the Lord at Sinai was indeed promising His people in the final instance and that therefore the covenant of Sinai was one of grace.

There is more proof that the covenant of Sinai was a covenant of grace and not one of works. It was the same covenant that the Lord had instituted with Abraham four hundred years previous. The proof of this is that the promises of the covenant of Sinai and the promises of the covenant with Abraham were the same promises, namely the promise of the land of Canaan with all that this of necessity implies. "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. 15:18. "And 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." Genesis 17:8.

Turning to the book of Exodus we find this same promise repeated only now as directed to the seed of Abraham in bondage. "Moreover He—the Lord—said (to Moses), I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob... I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey..." Ex. 3:7, 8.

This is repeated in its fulness at chapter 6:2-8. "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by the name of Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have heard the groanings of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage: I am the Lord."

Here the Lord lets it be known to His afflicted people that having delivered them from their bondage He would bring them into the very land that He had vowed to give unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is therefore the same promise and promised good, and the same covenant with which we here deal,—and this covenant the everlasting covenant of grace. For the promise to Abraham was to the effect that he would receive the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

With these Scriptures before us we see how true it is that the covenant of Sinai was the everlasting covenant of grace.

But how is this view of the covenant of Sinai to



be harmonized with what the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says of it? The writer deals with this covenant. He calls it the "first covenant", (Heb. 8:7) and goes on to quote Jeremiah as saying that the Lord made it with the fathers in the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" (8:9). So there can be no doubt that what our writer means by the "first" covenant is the covenant of Sinai. What proves this beyond all questioning is that he describes in his epistle the transaction by which the covenant at Sinai was ratified. "For when Moses," so he writes, "had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you" (9:19, 20).

However, what our writer says about this "first" covenant—the covenant of Sinai—seems to overthrow completely the view that it was the everlasting covenant of grace. For he says that it was made old, that it decayed and waxed old and was ready to vanish away implying that it also did actually vanish away. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (8:13).

To understand these words of our writer and not to be perplexed by them we must know what he means by the "first" covenant. The following passage from our writer's pen contains the cue to his mind: "But now hath he (Christ Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much more also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been found for the second" (8:6, 7).

According to this statement the "first" covenant was one with which the Lord found fault. Our writer also plainly reveals the reason. The promises on which this covenant was established were not as good as those on which the "second" covenant was established. Thus it was a covenant established on inferior promises. What were these promises? The answer to this question is the answer to the question: what is to be understood by the "first" covenant? These promises can be none other than those given by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and four hundred years later to Abraham's afflicted seed in Egypt and somewhat later to this same seed encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai, namely the promise of deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and the promise of the rest of an earthly Canaan and a long and prosperous life in this land (Gen. 15; Ex. 6:3-8; the discourses of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy).

These promises, according to our writer, were inferior as compared to the promises of what he calls the "second," and also the "new" covenant. And the reason is obvious. What these promises of the "first" covenant held forth in the first instance was but shadow, symbol and type. The redemption from bondage of Egypt was but type and shadow and likewise the rest of the earthly Canaan. The promise of these typical things were first in point of time. They being the first promises, the Covenant that the Lord established upon them by vowing to give to His people what these promises held forth to them was also the first covenant and so called by our writer.

Our author has much to say of this "first" covenant. He tells us that it had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. He goes on to say: "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, where was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; which had a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained," our writer goes on to say, "the priest went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But unto the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while yet the first tabernacle was standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed upon them until the time of reformation" (9:1-10).

These are the symbols and types that belonged to the "first" covenant. It can only mean that this covenant itself was typical. Such being its character we can understand all that our writer says about it.

First he says that it waxed old and vanished away. Being typical as to its character it had to wax old and vanish away together with the typical promises on which it was established and all the typical things that belonged to it. Second, he says that the house of Israel did not continue in it. And he also indirectly states the reason. The Lord did not write His laws in their hearts, truly save them from their sins, that is to say, save them from their sins on the ground of

the atonement that belonged to this "first" covenant, seeing that it was but shadow. In the language of our writer: "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (10:1-4). It "could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience" (9:9). So the first covenant with its typical promises and institutions vanished away for these reasons.

But our writer also speaks of a "second" covenant and a "new". According to our writer, peculiar to this "new". According to our writer, peculiar to this covenant is that it is established on better promises. And what are these promises but the promise of true redemption from sin and its bondage and the promise of the rest of a heavenly Canaan and unending life in this land. Upon these promises the "new" covenant is established.

Our writer has much to say also of this "new" covenant. Its great priest is Christ who "being come a highpriest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (8:11, 12). It is His blood alone that cleanses conscience from dead works to serve the living God. "And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament (covenant) that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (covenant) they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (9:15).

And they do receive it. For Christ took away the "first" covenant and He established the "new" (10:9), doing so, according to our writer, by His saying to the Father: "sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not (the reference is to the sacrifices of the "first" covenant), but a body that hast prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (10:5, 6, 7).

And he came. And he did do God's will. And having offered sacrifices for sin forever, He sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. "For by one

offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified". (10:12-14).

The *true* sacrifice now having been offered, "the Holy Ghost also is witness to us: for after that he said before, This is the covenant I will make with them after those days—after Christ will have offered Himself for sin—saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them: and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (10:15, 16, 17).

The meaning certainly is not that the church of the elect did not begin to exist historically until after Christ in the fulness of time had offered Himself. Through all the ages of the Old Dispensation God was gathering His church, writing His laws in men's hearts, saving them from their sins actually but doing so only for the sake of the true sacrifice that was to be offered and not on the ground of the typical atonement of the "first" covenant. Logically the sacrifice of Christ is first, and in this point of view our writer could say that God would write His laws in the hearts of His people "after those days".

Let us now make some remarks.

What we have presented to us in this epistle is two covenants: 1) the covenant of Sinai that our writer calls the "first" covenant; and 2) the "second" or the new covenant established on better promises.

From all that our writer says of these two covenants it is plain that to his mind the covenant of Sinai was the covenant of grace *as shadow*, and that what he means by the "new" covenant is the covenant of grace *as reality* abiding everlastingly.

Yet, as we have seen, the Scriptures also compel us to conclude that the covenant of Sinai was the true and everlasting covenant just as well as not a mere shadow of the true. There is then this question. How are the teachings of our writer to be harmonized with this conclusion?

The solution of our difficulty is exactly this: that what the promises of the "first" covenant *in the first instance* held forth to the heirs of the promises—redemption from the bondage of Egypt and the rest of the earthy Canaan etc.—were, by reason of their being things typical as to their character, prophetic of better things, to wit, the true redemption from the bondage of sin etc. so that, accordingly, when the Lord said to Abraham's afflicted and spiritual seed that He would bring them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and would rid them out of their bondage, and would redeem them with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments; and would take them for His people, and would be unto them a

God and would bring them in unto the land concerning the which He did swear to give it to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He was very actually at once vowing to save His people from all their sins by the blood of Christ and enter with them in His rest—the rest of the heavenly Canaan.

What it means is that there at Sinai the Lord established with His people—the church of the elect—both the “first” and the “new” covenant, the former on the less excellent promises and the latter on what He, the Lord, through the proclamation of these less excellent promises was vowing to give unto Abraham’s afflicted seed there in Egypt and later at Sinai *in the final instance*, namely the true redemption. Through the centuries of the Old Dispensation the “first” covenant was never without the “new”. As according to the Lord’s own arrangement the things set forth by the promises of the “first” covenant were prophetic of better things, it would have been impossible for Him to have established with His people the “first” covenant without by that very doing establishing with them the “new”. What is more, if the saints of the Old Testament had been without the “new” covenant, with its promises, we would be at a loss how to explain how they could be saved, and to explain how, as saved, they too, could be living by the promise of these better things.

There at Sinai, then, the Lord gave to His people both covenants, the “first” and the “new” and the “first” as type prophetic of the “new”. And these two covenants must not be identified. To say that they were one and the same covenant is like saying that the type is the reality and that the reality is the type. It is to be at a loss how to explain the teaching of our author to the effect that the “first” covenant, the covenant of Sinai, waxed old and vanished away. To identify these two covenants is to negate the teaching of our writer to the effect that they were two distinct covenants. And therefore it will not do either to say that the “new” covenant was the “first” covenant as freed from the symbolical-typical apparatus by which it was encumbered. For this is again to identify the two covenants; it is to free conceptionally the “first” covenant from things without which it could have no existence. Why should we not be willing to speak with our inspired writer of two covenants the “first” and the “new”? However, what may be said is that through the centuries of the Old Testament the “new” covenant, that is, the covenant of grace as reality, was veiled in the “first” covenant and the typical things of the law that belonged to it. And what therefore may also be said is that the covenant of grace as reality is the “new” covenant as

freed from that veil by which it was being concealed—concealed and yet revealed.

In the light of these observations it ought to be clear that the teaching of the Hebrews to the effect that the covenant of Sinai waxed old and vanished away is not in conflict with the conclusion that the Scriptures also compel us to draw—the conclusion namely that the covenant of Sinai was the covenant of grace as reality and therefore did not wax old and vanish away but abided everlastingly. When the Scriptures tell us that the covenant of Sinai vanished away they have reference to the “first” covenant and the typical things that belonged to it. These things vanished away because, when Christ, the body, was brought in, they have served their purpose, which was to lead the church to the Christ of the “new” covenant. But as was just explained, the Lord gave to His people there at Sinai also the “new” covenant, be it as veiled in things typical. And it is to this covenant that the Scriptures have reference in compelling us to conclude that the covenant of Sinai was the true and everlasting covenant of grace.

It ought now also to be clear how we are to explain the prophecy of Jeremiah as quoted by our writer (of the Hebrews): “For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them he saith, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (8:10-12).

As was stated, the meaning of this prophecy cannot be that the Lord did not make a beginning with writing His laws in men’s hearts, until after Christ by His suffering and death on the cross had atoned the sins of His people. So to explain this prophecy is to deny the existence of the “new” covenant in the old dispensation; it is to deny the existence of the old testament saints. If we consider that it was not until the “new” covenant was freed from the symbolical-typical apparatus enshrouding it that it became the object of direct vision; and if we consider

further that it was not until this had taken place that the Spirit of Christ was poured out upon *all* flesh (all the nations blessed in Christ) with the result that then all knew (all the members of the house of Israel by which is to be understood the church universal) from the least to the greatest and not merely a few prophets in Israel, it will be seen how right the prophet (Jeremiah) is in expressing himself as he does.

We should perceive the main point to the argument of this prophecy. It is this: that the "first" covenant, being what it was, the covenant of grace *as shadow*, the Lord could not inscribe His laws in the hearts of His elect people on account of their being in this covenant. It was therefore a faulty covenant. Being a covenant of such a character it vanished away and was superceded by the "new" covenant, the covenant of grace as reality.

G. M. Ophoff

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### We Shall Be Like Him

We turn to the first epistle of John, chapter 3, verses 1 to 3 inclusive, omitting the last clause of verse 1. We read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when it shall appear, we shall be like him." "We shall be like Him" is the clause in this Scripture passage that first calls for attention. It is evident from the context that the pronoun *him* is indicative of God. The statement in question is certainly not to the effect that we, God's children, shall be equal with God. Were this true, God's people would become gods and cease to be men, and heaven would eventually be peopled with an innumerable company of deities instead of redeemed saints. Such a teaching, which is nothing short of blasphemy, is certainly nowhere to be found in all the Scriptures. A man child, that has just been born, is a frail creature. It is not, certainly, the equal of its father, who begot the child. But the child is like its father; it resembles, looks like its father; and as the child advances in years, the resemblance may be that strong, that beholding the child, men say that it is the very picture, image of its father. It has its father's eyes, profile, mannerisms and character. In a word, the child takes right after its father. It is like him.

In the light of this observation, we grasp the meaning of the statement from John's pen, "We shall be like" God. The promise with which we here deal is precisely that when we, God's people, shall have appeared with Christ in glory, we shall be like God, our Father, who begat us, and from whose will, not from whose being, we were born. And the resemblance will be perfect then. If God is righteous, so will we be righteous perfectly. If God is holy, so will we be holy perfectly. Every vestige of sin in us will then be wholly obliterated. We will love like God loves, desire like He desires, think and will like He thinks and wills, speak and act like He speaks and acts; which implies, to be sure, that we will love, desire, and will the thing that He loves, desires and delights in, which is His own blessed self, and His people, redeemed in Christ, in whom He beholds a perfect creatural likeness of His blessed self. Thus, we, God's people, will take right after God, so to speak. Beholding God's people in heaven, the angels will see God in their eyes, in their visage, in everything they do and say, in their entire conversation in heaven. They will be the very creatural picture, image, likeness of God, their Father, showing forth perfectly the glories of God's nature, as conformed according to the image of God's Son.

By nature, apart from Christ, we, God's people, were not like God at all but unlike Him spiritually. How could it be otherwise, if by nature we were children of darkness, of disobedience, yes of Satan. And we were that—children of Satan. For we committed sin and were unrighteousness, and, to quote the Scriptures at I John 3:18, "He that committeth sin and doeth unrighteousness is of the devil, and is not of God." Thus we partook of Satan's nature, and therefore believed his lie, and did his lusts and with him were pitted against God, and hated God as does he. Dead in trespasses and sin were we, using now the language of Paul at Ephesians 2:1,2, "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

But God called us, such men as we by nature are, His sons. He adopted us. Contemplating this doing of God, the Apostle John, at the first verse of this chapter exclaims in amazement and holy elation, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we, such men as we by nature are, should be called the sons of God." If rightfully we belonged to Satan, in whose power we were, on account of the guilt of our sins, we now belong to God and are rightfully His, through His adopting us and calling us sons.

G. M. Ophoff

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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Esteemed Editor:

In the *Standard Bearer* of Feb. 1, I was greatly amazed what you wrote in your editorial "Classis, Jan. 9, 1952, Impressions." I am rather surprized at the language you use in stating that the people out west are ignorant. I am sure that if you would take an aptitude test on the knowledge of the "Declaration of Principles", and the Canadian Liberated immigrants, you would be surprized what we here in the west do know. The folks out west have a mind of their own. We, and I know I am speaking for many of our people, think for ourselves. I am sure it would be a good idea if you would first state facts about the ignorance of the west before you print such insults in the paper.

Again we see some more writings against two faithful ministers of the Gospel by the Reverends H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff. Is this edifying to the soul? You may think it is. I am sure that no blessing is or will come out of these writings.

In conclusion, I am afraid you, Rev. Hoeksema, are making a misuse of your position of influence in our churches with respect to some of your fellow ministers. Especially in the way you write about them in the wrong light. You must not forget that your words still carry much weight with a lot of our people. Also when you write about your fellow ministers in a disparaging way.

With malice toward none,  
Your brother in Christ,  
R. Visser  
Hull, Iowa

Reply:

1. I did not write that our people in the West are ignorant, nor that they are ignorant in respect to the Declaration, I wrote that they are ignorant in as far as they do not have the experience we have in Classis East.

2. I did not write anything "against two faithful ministers". I merely asked for an explanation in a matter that vitally concerns all our churches. I will continue to do so.

3. Point out to me that I wrote in a disparaging way.

H.H.

Dear Editor:

Allow me a reflection on your "Impressions". Of course I refer to that part that concerns the Consistory of Randolph. In the main your recalling of in-

formation was correct and we also can agree with your over-all evaluation of this part, tho we reserve thereby the criticism, if we would make any at all, of being too lenient or too charitable with Chatham. More about that later. Here, however, we wish to substantiate the information just as given, with the exception of the material as found on page 221 beginning with the last sentence in the second column. There we read: "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 Randolph to make separation between the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper!" Now I would be able to defend the above evaluation of the matter because of the words "in the proper way", but still would like to give the facts as they transpired here. On a particular Sunday, June 3, 1952, we administered both sacraments in the midst of the congregation. In the forenoon we celebrated the Lord's Supper and in the afternoon service Holy Baptism was administered to another child of the congregation. The "said party" attended the table in the morning, but in the afternoon refused to have their child baptized. The reason, of course, was as you stated in your *Impressions*. This, from the nature of the case, could not be allowed to happen again and therefore the "party" was told that, unless he has his child baptized prior to the next celebration of Communion (which was imminent) he could not very well partake of Communion, because certainly attending the table presupposed the answer which he "could not and would not" give at Baptism. The "party" realized that this was the first step of others to follow and therefore, characteristically, asked for his papers, i.e., drew himself away from his solemn promise at the time of confession of faith. That promise, to "submit to . . . Church discipline" meant nothing at all. Had the Consistory Randolph taken any other stand it would have become guilty of desecrating (or becoming party to same) the Lord's Supper. Therefore we hold that not the Consistory Randolph but the "party" was guilty of making a difference between the two sacraments and that the Consistory Randolph *did* desire to have the "party" make use of both Sacraments, but that the "party" refused to have anything to do with either one. For to demand the celebrating of either upon a wrong basis is tantamount to refusing it . . . unless the Consistory would compromise (in which case it all would become mockery!). And so, we hope, dear editor, that it will have become plain too, that you in your words "they rather have recourse to slander and backbiting" were too charitable. Elide the latter and you have the truth of the matter.





MRS EFFIE MONSMA  
726 FRANKLIN ST SE.  
CITY 7

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We were not driven to write this because of any fear that anyone acquainted with the case might get the wrong impression, but because a one-sided presentation and that unchallenged might have disastrous results if used by the "wrong party"; and also because of your insertion: "and if this is not correct, the Consistory of Randolph can set me straight".

Very fraternally yours,  
H. H. Kuiper  
Randolph, Wis.



### A LITTLE LIGHT, PLEASE!

Esteemed Editor!

"Search the Scriptures!" is the mandate the Lord has given us, and I do not believe that this was only meant for ministers and teachers, but just as well for us, common laymen.

So, after I read and studied your editorial, under the heading: *Promise and Prediction*, I can say that I agree fully, 100%, with it. That is the doctrine we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, have always believed.

But there is one thing I would like to have a little more light on; and that is your statement on page 226 of the *Standard Bearer* of February 15, about the Covenant, and especially that God moved through the pieces of the animals *alone*. In as far as I can see it, the name Covenant becomes then so *unreal*, so *out of order*, and God is a God of order. I cannot imagine a covenant with only one party; and the way you explain it, it looks to me far more: a *pledge*, (toezegging, verzekering), be such a pledge then under oath.

God said to Abraham: "I will make my covenant *with* you, and not *to* you".

When I study the picture of Genesis 15, I look at it this way: according to the customs of those times, God commanded Abraham to take animals and fowls, cut them asunder, and lay their pieces in two rows. Then, at night, there moved through these pieces a smoking furnace (Thanks be to God that this is mentioned *first*), a symbol of *sin, uncleanness, darkness, the wrath of God—God, the righteous Judge!* And also a "flaming torch", symbol of *light, cleanness, purification, salvation—Jesus Christ, our Saviour!*

These symbols we see, in principle, again at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Oh yes, we read that Abraham was fast asleep. O depth of wisdom and abundant grace of God: Abra-

ham was asleep! For if we, the spiritual children of the believing, but nevertheless, very sinful Father Abraham, with him, as a party in the Covenant, would try to go through the midst of the divided animals, we, with Abraham, would have been consumed by the wrath of the Holy, Righteous God.

Scripture teaches us that from eternity, yea, in our Saviour's crucifixion, His death, burial, and His resurrection, we were *in* and *with* Him; so also when He went as a flaming torch through the pieces of the divided animals. We were *in* and *with* Him, and saved.

And so in Christ, as a party in the Covenant, we feel by the grace of God so much more our responsibility to walk as children of our heavenly Father, to the honor and glory of His most Holy Name.

But shall we be able to do that, we must watch and pray lest we fall into temptations.

Please, esteemed Editor, give us more light!

Yes, I know, dominee, I am getting old, but I think not yet too old to learn to understand more clearly our dogmatic problems.

Thank you!

J. Cammenga, Sr.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*Editor's note:*

My answer will appear in the next issue, D.V.

H.H.



### ATTENTION CONSISTORIES

By decision of Synod each congregation is requested to take two offerings a year for Foreign Missions. May our people give liberally so that we as Churches may also in this fulfill the mandate of our Lord. Matt. 28:19, 20.

The Mission Committee  
B. Kok, Corr.-Sec'y.

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Not the labor of my hands,  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.