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MEDITATION

De Gezindheid Gods Jegens Hoovaardigen En Nederigen

"Want God wederstaat de hoovaardigen, maar den nederigen geeft Hij genade."

—I Pet. 5:5b.

In het verband van den tekst had Petrus de gemeente gewezen op hun roeping om den ouderlingen der gemeente onderdanig te zijn. Die ouderlingen op hun beurt werden vermaand om de kudde Gods te weiden. Dat is hun roeping.

De kudde Gods: dat is beeldspraak. En ook het vierde vers gebruikt diezelfde beeldspraak, als we hooren van "den oversten Herder" die straks verschijnen zal. Hij is het die de onder-herders roept, bekwaamt en ondersteunt in hun moeilijk, doch heerlijk werk in de kudde Gods.

In het bijzonder worden de jongen vermaand om den ouden onderdanig te zijn, doch de Heilige Geest, die in Petrus aan het woord is, heeft ook een vermaning tot nederigheid die zelfs den ouden insluit, want Hij zegt: zijt allen elkander onderdanig! Wat een schoon schouwspel: allen elkander onderdanig! Als dat geschiedt, dan is er zeker geen tweespalt meer, geen jaloezie, of wrok, maar dan zou de wereld zeker zeggen bij het zien van zoo lieflijke eenheid: Ziet hoe lief zij elkander hebben! En het kan, als we de volgende vermaning opvolgen die ons toeroept: zijt met de ootmoedigheid bekleed. Ootmoedigheid! Hoe lieflijk is haar kleet. Dan zoeken we niet naar de hooge dingen, doch dan voegen we ons tot het nederige. En dat te doen is heilzaam, want, zegt de tekst: God wederstaat de hoovaardigen, doch den nederigen geeft Hij genade! Geve de Heere het ons!

Wat is hoovaardij?

Het oorspronkelijke woord, dat hier gebruikt wordt komt van een werkwoord, een werkwoord, dat samengesteld is uit twee Grieksche woorden. De stam van dit samengesteld werkwoord beteekent "te schijnen", "in het licht te gaan staan". En het andere woord, dat er voor staat, een voorzetsel is, beteekent over, boven, in de hoogte of in de verte. Voeg die woorden samen, en ik denk, dat de aandachtige lezer reeds gezien heeft wat de beteekenis is. Het is de ondeugd om zich een licht te wanen, dat boven, ver boven alle andere menschen uitschijnt. Daarom is dan ook de hoovaardij afschuwelijk voor God. Want wie is hoog en verheven naast God? Het te denken is Godslastering. God alleen is groot en hoog verheven. De Heere roept ons toe in Jesaja 40: "bij wien dan zult gijlieden Mij vergelijken dien Ik gelijk zij?" Alleen de Naam van God is hoog verheven, en alleen God is een Licht, dat schijnt tot in alle eeuwigheid. Zegt de Heilige Schrift niet, dat Hij in een ontoegankelijk licht woont? Zelfs de Engelen bedekken hunne aangezichten als zij voor Zijn troon staan. Wat zal dan een nietig en vuil menschenkind doen? Zal hij zich een licht wanen; dat boven allen uitschijnt? En zal hij dat doen voor Gods aangezicht? Verzamel alle grootheid die gij U denken kunt, alle macht en autoriteit, alle wijsheid en schoonheid waarop een menschenkind zou willen bogen, en ge benadert nog met geen handbreedte dien Groote wiens naam de Wonderlijke is. Want alles wat ge bijeen verzamelde is het Zijne. Zijns is immers de macht en de kracht van eeuwigheid en tot in eeuwigheid? Er is geen god behalve onze God! Alle dingen zijn Zijne. Trekt Hij Zijn hand terug dan zou alles wegvallen in het niet. Daarom is het aartsdom en dwaas om zich groot te wanen. Hij is groot. Maar wij zijn klein.

Alle menschen en alle werelden tezamen zijn minder geacht bij Hem vergeleken dan een niet en ijdelheid. Wij zijn allen tezamen minder dan een druppel van eenen emmer, en als en stofje aan de weeg-

schaal. Wij worden vergeleken bij een nachtwake, bij een nevel die even gezien wordt en dan verdwijnt.

Als dat zoo is, en het is zoo, wat is dan de hoovaardij toch afschuwelijk! Hoe dwaas is het om trotsch te zijn. Hoe dwaas in de oogen Gods. Trotschheid en hoovaardij zijn zóó dwaas, dat zelfs de menschen er mee spotten. En toch, zoo zijn we allen van nature, niet één uitgezonderd. Het moge hard klinken, maar Gods Woord zegt het ons. Het is de wortelzonde van het menschenlijke geslacht. Of was het niet dwaze hoovaardij van onze eerste ouders om het beter te willen weten dan God? Om te luisteren naar de leugenachtige tong van Satan, liever dan naar de gulden woorden van God den Alwijze?

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O, we mogen een uitwendige gedaante hebben van nederigheid. Ze wordt zelfs veel gevonden, vooral in de kerk, maar ze is zonder waarde, en tot verzadiging des vleesches. Leest slechts de laatste verzen van Coll. 2. Paulus zal het U vertellen. Maar het onwedergeboren hart is niet nederig voor God. God heeft het van voorlang geopenbaard. Hij heeft het hart van den mensch binnenst buiten gekeerd en het ons verkondigd op duizend plaatsen van Gods Woord. Leest vooral Romeinen 3:10-18. Daar vindt ge een catalogus van gruwelen die door ons gedaan worden vanuit het hart. Het hart van den natuurlijken mensch is zelfverhoogend en haat God. Straks zal een ieder het kunnen zien, als Antichrist op zijn troon zal zitten in den tempel Gods, en een ieder doen verkondigen dat hij God is en niemand meer. Dan zult ge den grootsten gruwel der hoovaardij zien.

Er is niet één uitgesloten. We zijn allen vergiftigd door het gif van Satan, wiens wezen hoogmoed is. O ja, laat men het toch erkennen: we zijn allen vergiftigd door de hoovaardij van Satan. De een kan het meer en beter verbergen dan den ander, en de een heeft er meer van dan den ander, maar we zijn allen hoovaardigen voor Gods aangezicht.

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En wat mag de nederigheid zijn, en wie zijn de nederigen?

Wel, de deugd van nederigheid is verwant aan twee andere deugden, en één er van wordt ook in het onmiddellijke verband aangehaald. Ik heb het oog op de zachtmoedigheid en de ootmoedigheid. In verband met die twee deugden is de nederigheid de wijsheid die ons noopt om op onze plaats te gaan staan waar

we behooren. Het is de wijsheid om eerst die plaats te zien, dan te erkennen dat zij onze plaats is, en eindelijk, om op die plaats te gaan staan. En dan om dat te doen van harte en gewilliglijk. Dus als God zegt: ge zijt vergeleken bij Mij niet dan druppeltjes aan de emmer en stofjes aan de weegschaal, dan zegt de nederige: Ja, Heere zoo is het! En als een mensch ook zoo bewust gaat leven, mag hij aanspraak maken op den naam nederige. Dan zal hij zijn plaats zien als beelddrager Gods, en zijn roeping verstaan om in alles te zijn en te leven tot eer van Hem die hem schiep en steeds onderhoudt. Dan zal hij steeds vragen: Heere, wat wilt Gij dat ik, Uw dienstknecht of Uw dienstmaagd, doen zal? Zoo stonden Adam en Eva voor God als nederigen in het paradijs aan den vroegen morgen der historie.

Maar hoe bekomen we dat verloren goed? We zijn toch overeengekomen, dat niet één van ons nederig is? We zijn toch overeengekomen, dat we allen afgeweken zijn en tezamen stinkende geworden, zoodat er niet één meer is die goed doet of God zoekt? We hebben allen onze plaats, ons door God gegeven, verlaten, en we zijn volgelingen geworden van hem die de hoovaardij is in zijn diepste wezen, dwz. Satan's volgelingen geworden. En dat is vreeselijk. Hoe worden we weer nederig? Dat is de volgende vraag die ons bezighoudt.

En het antwoord is het Evangelie. Het antwoord op die vraag is Jezus Christus, de Heere. Er zijn gelukkige menschen op aarde en in den hemel die nederig zijn door den Nederige bij uitnemendheid. En die Nederige is Jezus Christus, de Zone Gods. Dat is een paradox, maar het is toch waar. Een paradox, want Hij behoefde het geen roof te achten Gode evengeliek te zijn. En toch is het die Zoon van God die Zich vernederd heeft zooals geen mensch ooit vernederd zal worden. Om de diepte der vernedering van onzen Heiland eenigzins te waardeeren, moeten we voor den aandacht houden, dat Hij God uit God is, vol van geluk en zaligheid. Elk oogenblik is Jezus naar Zijn Godheid de Volzalige Zoon van God. En die Zoon vernederde Zich tot den dood des kruises. Hij nam de gestalte aan van een slaaf, en in die gestalte ging Hij gehoorzaam den weg van onuitsprekelijke lijden tot den eeuwigen dood toe. Hij ontledigde Zich geheel en al en werd den Vader in alles gehoorzaam. Hij stond daar voor het aangezicht Zijns Vaders met al de schuld en zonden van de kerk beladen, en toen God de eischen van Zijn gerechtigheid deed, heeft Jezus niet weerstaan, doch heeft Zich gewilliglijk gegeven om het Lam van God te zijn.

O het heeft gestormd in het Gethsemane, en toen Jezus de verschrikkelijke muil des eeuwigen doods

voor Zich zag, is Hij beangst geworden en zeer ontroerd. De smarten des doods die als een eeuwige storm op Hem neersloegen, persten het bloedige zweet uit Zijn geheiligd voorhoofd, doch Hij boog Zich en werd gehoorzaam tot den dood. Wel heeft Hij den Vader driemaal gebeden of het mogelijk mocht zijn, dat die drinkbeker voor Hem voorbij mocht gaan, doch Zijn groote nederigheid kwam ook toen tot openbaring bij den sluifsteen van Zijn bidden: niet Mijn, doch Uw wil geschiede!

O, er is nooit iemand geweest die zóó nederig was als onze Heiland. En die nederigheid, en die gehoorzaamheid tot den dood toe in al het buigen van Zijn moede hoofd, wordt de kerk geschonken naar hare waardij. Al het verdienende van die nederigheid wordt de kerk toegerekend in het gericht Gods.

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Maar er is meer. In den tijd ontvangen zij die in Christus begrepen zijn de daadwerkelijke nederigheid van den Christus Gods. Ziet ge, als ge wederom geboren wordt, komt Jezus en neemt Zijn intrek in Uw hart, en door de inwoning Christi komt er een beginsel van al Zijn deugden in U. Zegt Paulus niet: Ik leef, doch niet meer ik, Jezus Christus leeft in mij? En ook dit: Onderzoekt Uzelfen . . . of weet ge niet dat Christus Jezus in U woont? En ook dit nog: Jezus Christus die ons leven is! O ja, als gij door de onwederstandelijke genade op de knieën gebracht wordt, leeft Jezus Christus in U. En die inwoning is de doodsteek voor alle hoovaardij. Dan leert ge het om nederig te knielen. Daar zingt ge van in de psalmen Davids. Die nederig knielen. Nederigheid is één van de fundamenteele wetten van het Koninkrijk Gods. Hoe vaak besloot Jezus Zijn gelijkenissen niet met de uitspraak: Want die zichzelf vernedert zal verhoogd worden!

En wat ontvangen deze tweeërlei soort menschen nu? Wat ontvangen de hoovaardigen, en wat ontvangen de nederigen?

Dit: God wederstaat de hoovaardigen! Een vreeselijk woord is wederstaan. Ge moet beseffen, dat er absoluut geen harmonie is tusschen God en den hoovaardige. Zij staan recht tegenover elkaar. Op een andere plaats vindt ge die gedachte in den meest letterlijken zin: Gods aangezicht is *tegen* degenen die het kwade doen. Hoe zou het ook? Licht en duisternis zijn tegenstellingen. God is het eeuwig Licht, en wij zijn allen van nature duisternis. Let er op: onze naam is duisternis. En duisternis is het inbegrip van alle kwaad, ook, en bovenal, de hoovaardij. Daar-

om zegt mijn tekst, dat God hen wederstaat. Hij duwt hen weg, en zal hen blijven wegduwen totdat ze geheel en al verworpen zijn.

O, het zal vreeselijk zijn om ten leste te vallen in de hand van den levenden God! Hij vernedert straks allen die hier op aarde weigerden om voor God in het stof te bukken. En we kunnen het weten. Hoe heeft Jezus niet gebukt in het stof van de woestijnen en wildernissen, en ten slotte in dien vreeselijken hof van Gethsemane. Dat is een vreeselijke les voor ons. Knielt dan toch voor God! Straks zullen allen en een iegelijk vernederd worden met een vernedering die vreeselijk is, want haar naam is de hel en eindelijke verdoemenis. Wie zal daar iets van zeggen? Ik moet U waarschuwen voor dat vreeselijke woord van mijn tekst: De Heere wederstaat de hoovaardigen! Wat zal ik daar van zeggen? Ik weet er zoo weinig van. Letterlijk beteekent het om zich te scharen tegenover een vijand en hem dan weg te drukken. En ten slotte dit: nooit zal er een einde komen aan dat weg-drukken, dat eeuwiglijk door God geschieden zal tegenover de ongelukkigen die nooit wilden knielen voor God en Zijn Gezalfde.

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En die anderen? Die nederig zijn? De menschen die door genade op de knieën kwamen? Wat zullen zij van God ontvangen? Luistert! Ge kunt, ge moet er van zingen! Maar den nederigen geeft Hij genade. Nu moet ik U eerst waarschuwen voor een ketterij. Dit beteekent niet, dat gij eerst, uit Uzelfen nederig zijt, en dat de Heere, dit ziende, U dan eerst genade schenkt. Neen, maar het volgt den regel van het Koninkrijk: Hij geeft genade voor genade. Het was genade, dat God U beminde van eeuwigheid. Het was genade, dat Hij zulks bewees in Zijn komst in Jezus Christus aan het kruis van Golgotha. Het was genade, dat Hij U die Goël schonk. Het was genade, dat Hij door Geest en Woord in U kwam wonen. En door dezelfde genade spreekt Hij U toe en zegt: knielt voor Mij, Mijn kinderen, en Ik zal U meerdere genade schenken. Zoo loopt de lijn. Aan het einde der eeuwen wil God al de eer hebben. Zoodat geen vleesch ooit zou roemen in Zijn aangezicht.

Laat ons dan knielen voor Israels Heer. Op zichzelf is dat alreede zaligheid. Het is niet zalig om trotsch te zijn. Daar ligt groote bitterheid des levens. Doch de nederigheid is en deugd die lieflijk is. Lieflijk voor Uzelf en anderen, doch lieflijk vooral, want God slaat toch, oneindig hoog, op hen het oog die nederig knielen!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS**Promise and Prediction**

Just a few more passages from Holy Writ I will quote, in order to show that promises and predictions are always the same in Scripture, and that there are neither promises nor predictions for anyone but believers, that is, therefore, the elect.

The first passage I refer to is Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In this verse we have the promise of rest. And rest is, of course, both a present blessing as well as a future boon. It includes rest for the soul in the future. Now to whom is this promise given? Is it given to N.N., that is, to Peter, William, and Charles, etc.? Certainly not. For in the first place, those to whom the promise is given are here designated as those that labor and are heavy laden; and this certainly cannot be said of all men, at least not in the spiritual sense of the word. To be spiritually laboring and heavy laden undoubtedly means to be burdened under sin and laboring with the impossible task of acquiring righteousness by one's own effort and works, and a realizing that the task is impossible. But what is more important is that the Lord promises rest to those that come unto Him. And to come unto Christ is a spiritual act of faith. It implies that one realizes that he is empty of all righteousness, that Christ is the fulness of righteousness for the sinner, that therefore one longs for Christ as the fulness of his own emptiness, and finally that one appropriates Christ and all His benefits. And who are they that thus come to Him? They are the elect. They are those whom the Father draws before they can possibly come to Him. For thus we read in John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth unto me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And again, in vs. 39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And once more in vs. 44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." And the same truth is expressed in vs. 65: "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." The promise and the prediction or rest is therefore not given unto N.N., but only unto those that come to Christ and, therefore, unto the elect, whom the Father gives unto Christ.

In this connection, although I will refer to the Con-

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fessions later on, I must nevertheless quote Art. 8 of Canons III, IV: "As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called should come unto him. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him." Also in this article the promise, therefore, is not to N.N., but to those that come to Christ, that therefore are drawn by the Father, and that are chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world.

Finally, I refer to the promises and predictions that are found at the close of every one of the seven letters that are sent to the seven churches of Asia Minor, recorded in the Book of Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3.

In 2:7 we read: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." That here you have a promise in the form of a prediction,—or you can also say: a prediction in the form of a promise,—and that therefore promise and prediction are exactly identical is clear to all. But again, neither the promise in the form of a prediction, nor the prediction in the form of a promise is addressed to N.N., but only to him that overcometh, to the believer that perseveres. And since perseverance is the fruit of God's preservation, that promise and the prediction both are addressed to the elect. Moreover, the entire address is to him "that hath an ear" to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. It is therefore addressed to him that has a spiritual ear. And the spiritual ear is a gift of grace, and again, is given only to the elect.

Again, in vs. 11 we have the promise: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Also here there is a promise which is positively expressed in the preceding verse: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Also this promise is in the form of a prediction. And again, the prediction is in the form of a promise. But also here the promise is not to N.N., but to him that hath an ear to hear, to him that overcometh, and to him that is faithful unto death. And all these terms, according to the whole Word of God, refer only to the believers, and therefore, only to the elect.

In vs. 17 we read: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone

a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Here again you have both a promise and a prediction. And again, the promise is only to the believers and to the elect, that have ears to hear and that overcome in the battle of faith.

In vs. 26-29 of the same chapter we read: "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Again the promise and the prediction are not to N.N., but only to the faithful believers, and therefore to the elect. It is addressed to him that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. All this is true only of the believers, and therefore, only of the elect.

Again, in 3:5, 6 we read: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This in fact is principally addressed to the few names that are at Sardis that have not defiled their garments and that have the promise that they shall walk with Christ in white, vs. 4. They are the ones that overcome. And they are the same that have ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Also here it is evident that we have a promise and a prediction, and that neither of them is addressed to N.N.

In vss. 12 and 13 of the same chapter we read: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Here also you have a glorious promise in the form of a prediction, that is addressed to him that overcometh and to him that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. It is certainly not addressed to N.N.

And the same note is heard in the promise and the prediction to the church of Laodicea, which is found in Rev. 3:20-22: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith

unto the churches." Here is a present promise, as well as a future prediction. The present promise is that Christ will come in and sup with him that hears His voice and opens the door of the church. The prediction is that Christ will grant to him to sit with Him in His throne. But both the promise and the prediction are not to N.N., but only to the believers. It is to those that hear the voice of Jesus as He stands at the church door of Laodicea and knocks, and that open the door to Him. And it is to those that overcome and that have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

I can, of course, adduce many more passages from Holy Writ. But this is quite sufficient. The distinction which Dr. Schilder makes between promises and predictions is absolutely untenable. And his statement that there are promises for N.N., but no predictions, cannot possibly be maintained in the light of Scripture.

And the same is true of the threats in Scripture, and of everlasting destruction. Dr. Schilder says that there are no predictions in Scripture for N.N. that he will go to hell. And that is, of course, true, no less than there are predictions in Scripture that Tom, Dick, or Harry will go to heaven. But no more than there are promises in Scripture to N.N., no more are there threats of destruction and everlasting damnation in Scripture for Tom, Dick, or Harry. Just as in Scripture those for whom are the promises are mentioned by their spiritual name, so also those for whom are the threats of wrath and destruction are not designated by their natural name, but are denoted as fools, wicked, unrighteous, ungodly, and workers of iniquity.

Also this is very evident from Holy Writ. It is really not necessary for me to quote specific passages from Scripture to prove this. But for completeness' sake I will quote a few texts at random. In Psalm 5:4-6 we read: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." This is the very opposite of the promise. And just as the promise is not for N.N., so the threats of destruction are not for them either. They are called by their spiritual ethical name. They are the foolish, the workers of iniquity, those that speak leasing, bloody and deceitful men. They are, therefore, the reprobate, the very antithesis to the elect.

In Psalm 7:11, ff. we read: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath

bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."

In Psalm 37:9, ff. we read: "For evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming," etc.

In Ps. 73 we read of the foolish and of the wicked, who prosper in the world, in whose death there are no bands, and whose strength is firm, who are not in trouble as other men, nor plagued like other men. Pride compasseth them about as a chain, and violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. And the psalmist is grieved at all this, until he enters into the sanctuary. Then he beholds that God did set them in slippery places, and casteth them down into destruction. They are brought into desolation in a moment, and they are utterly consumed with terrors. When the Lord awakeneth, He shall despise their image. All this is not said concerning the ungodly as N.N., as Tom, Dick, and Harry, but concerning them in their character as ungodly and foolish and wicked. And so it is said in Ps. 92 that the wicked spring as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, but that it is the intention of the Lord even in their prosperity that they shall be destroyed forever.

But I will not quote more. Dr. Schilder knows just as well as I do that this is the fundamental note in all Holy Writ, both in the Old Testament and in the New. Never does Scripture have any promises for N.N., but the promises are always for the elect. Nor does the Bible speak of any threats of wrath and punishment and destruction for N.N., but always these are designated as the wicked and the ungodly.

But perhaps Dr. Schilder was thinking particularly of the sacrament of holy baptism when he wrote these words. In baptism the individual child receives the sign and seal of the righteousness which is by

faith on his forehead. And the individual child is certainly called by his natural name. Does this then not imply that God gives His promise to N.N. in baptism?

This is indeed what Prof. Veenhof writes and strongly emphasizes in his well-known *Appel*. Writes he: (I translate)

"For whenever a genuine baptism takes place, when therefore a little child is baptized according to God's command and in the manner which He ordained, then the real baptizer is the great eternal God Himself!

"This indeed we must especially know and maintain; this must so fill our hearts, that we see it by faith: God, our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself baptizes the little infants in the church! A minister is only a man, through whom God Himself administers baptism. The minister is of no account. Is it of interest to you perhaps, who is the mail-man that delivered a letter to you? Of course not. When you take a letter out of the mailbox, you don't even think about the mail-man! If the epistle is only a genuine letter, written by him or by her! Then we say: 'a letter from him, from her'! And that is sufficient for us, more than sufficient.

"And therefore, because that is the case with regard to baptism, we say with all our power and in all seriousness: We received our baptism from God Himself and from Him alone. God Himself baptized us!

"If this were not the case, the act of the minister would simply be mockery. He would have done nothing else than to speak a few powerless little words and splash with a little water!

"But it is not thus!

"When a child is baptized, the Lord Himself approaches that little child. He Himself sprinkles the water on its little head, and says very really and very personally: John, Mary, Anna, I, the Lord Himself, baptize thee, immerse thee in My holy Name. Thou art now of Me!

"Added to this is something else. Or rather, added to this is very much!

"Baptism, which is given by the Lord Himself, always remains of power, every day, every hour, until our death, yea, in all eternity. The case is really thus that the Lord baptizes us continually. After He sprinkled us with water when we were but a few days old, He keeps that water, so to speak, always fresh and living and powerful on our forehead. And the words, which He at that time spoke, He continues to speak throughout all our life! Every second Jehovah repeats: Carl, William, Mary, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost. Or rather: Jehovah does not repeat that word: *He continues to say it, it remains of unbroken power, it continues to come unto us in all seriousness and grace out of His heart.*"

And a little further:

"What now is this baptism?

"What does God say, what does He do when He baptizes us?

"This can be expressed very simply: baptism is a seal!

"To understand clearly what this sentence means, we must thoroughly understand and always maintain, that the Lord was pleased in His marvelous love to give to *all* the children of believers His *promise*. Or to express it differently: it pleased Him to give to all the children a glorious pledge. He says namely to all those children, head for head, day in day out, seriously and uprightly: I am the Lord your God. I establish my covenant with you. I wash you of all your sins in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. My Holy Spirit will dwell in you. Briefly: I promise you the complete forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation: all the treasures and riches, which I will and am able to give to men."

Is this, perhaps, what Dr. Schilder means when he writes that there are no predictions, but promises for N.N.? This, of course, is the Heynsian view of the promise. And it appears that Dr. Schilder agrees with him.

But let us see whether this be true.

In the first place, I want to call your attention to the fact that certainly the sacrament of baptism cannot mean more or express more than the promise of the gospel. Now, as we have seen, the promise of the gospel is never to N.N., but always to believers, which is saying the same thing as to the elect. The gospel certainly never addresses Carl, Anna, Marie, Tom, Dick, and Harry by their natural name as being heirs of the promise. God certainly never says to them: I promise you that I will be your God forever, that I establish with you my everlasting covenant, that I incorporate you into Jesus Christ, that I wash away your sins and give you everlasting righteousness and life, that I give you my Holy Spirit to apply all the blessings of salvation unto you, until ye shall arrive in the assembly of the elect in life eternal. On the contrary, the gospel always addresses the elect by their spiritual name, as those that are poor in spirit, that mourn, that hunger and thirst after righteousness, that are meek, that are pure in heart, that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that therefore may be assured that they are elect. In fact, when any minister would say to any individual, say that his

name is Carl: "Carl, in the name of God I promise you the forgiveness of sins and eternal life," without knowing anything about Carl as to his spiritual condition, such a minister would simply speak an untruth in the name of God. Is it possible, then, that through baptism God speaks thus to every individual child, head for head and soul for soul? I insist that this is impossible, and contrary to the Word of God.

But Dr. Schilder and also Prof. Veenhof would say undoubtedly that they do not mean this. According to them the promise which God gives through baptism to any individual child is not unconditional, but conditional. The fulfillment of the promise, although sincere on the part of God and even, according to Veenhof, spoken to that individual child in His everlasting love and grace depends on the question whether that child will believe and assume his covenant obligations and so fulfill his part of the covenant. This too Prof. Veenhof writes in his *Appel*, as follows!

"It stands to reason that we may not forget for one second that God speaks His Word of promise never alone and never in separation from something else.

"He says with and in the promise always also something else.

"When He gives His promise, He calls us at the same time to love Him with all our heart, to believe His Word in child-like faith, and to walk in His ways. When the Lord says to Abraham: *I am the Lord your God*, then He adds, as it were in one breath: *Now walk always before my face and be upright*.

"But this command, this demand, does not make the promise poorer or weaker!

"No question about it!

"The demand which by the Lord is always being entwined in His promise and which comes with the promise is exactly a calling to believe His promise, and therefore to trust in the promise and to live out of the promise."

The promise, according to Prof. Veenhof and also according to Dr. Schilder, is therefore conditional.

Let us see where this lands us.

In the first place, it must be very evident that if this is true and the promise of God is conditional, it certainly can mean absolutely nothing for that little child, for the simple reason that an infant of, say, eight days old cannot possibly fulfill any conditions. He knows nothing of conditions. And therefore if it be true that God says to that little infant, say his name is Carl, "Carl, I am your God forever. I establish my everlasting covenant with you. I wash you from all your sins and iniquities. I give you eternal life and

righteousness. I will give you my Holy Spirit, to dwell in you and to apply all the blessings of salvation to you, on condition that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that you love me with all your heart and walk before me and be upright." Then I say: that little infant has no promise of God at all. Then it means nothing to him before he has come to years of discretion and can fulfill the conditions required. In that case we must really repudiate infant baptism and refrain from administering that sacrament until one is capable of fulfilling the conditions.

But there is more.

Prof. Veenhof emphasizes that it is not the minister that baptizes, but God Himself. It is not the minister that speaks, but God Himself, when He says to Carl: "I will establish my everlasting covenant with thee. I will be thy God forever. I love thee with an everlasting love. I give thee my Word of promise in my eternal grace. I incorporate thee in Jesus Christ. And I give thee the living faith. I cleanse thee from all thy sins and forgive all thy transgressions. I give thee my Holy Spirit. And I apply unto thee all the blessings of salvation, sanctifying thee in Christ Jesus, until thou shalt appear in the assembly of the elect in life eternal." Now, mark you well, it is not the minister that speaks these words, but God. And the Word of God is surely always efficacious, in distinction from any word of man. If this were true, therefore, it follows that Carl is surely saved. But according to Prof. Veenhof, Carl is not necessarily saved, but only conditionally. In other words, grace is not necessarily efficacious; and the Word which God speaks may be made of none effect by Carl, that is, by mere man.

But there is still more. Prof. Veenhof does not hesitate to include the Holy Spirit and His work in the promise of salvation which is addressed by God to Carl. And this promise, according to Veenhof, is conditional. From this it follows that also the promise of the Holy Spirit is conditional. And we ask: conditional upon what? Can man before He has been regenerated and before the saving faith has been implanted in his heart, do anything at all to make himself worthy of the promise? This would lead us right into the error of Arminianism and Pelagianism. We know what Heyn's solution is to this question. He distinguishes between the work of the Father and the Son on the one hand, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the other, and separates them. The promise, according to him, then means: the objective bequest that God establishes His covenant of grace with us, makes us His children and heirs, provides us with every good thing, and averts all evil or turns it to our profit; that God the Son incorporates us into His

death and washes us from all our sins. But when it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit, he emphasizes that the Spirit WILL dwell in us and apply all blessings of salvation to us. But whether this will be realized depends upon the covenant child himself when he comes to years of discretion. And he invents the theory of a certain preparatory grace, as we well know, that enables the covenant child either to accept or to reject the promise. I do not know how Veenhof, and for that matter also Dr. Schilder, solves this problem. And I have never seen a solution of it. It is again the same problem: is the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith included in the promise that is given to every child, head for head and soul for soul? And is this promise of the Holy Spirit conditional upon anything that man must do or can do? This, of course, is the Pelagian solution. But if this is not the case, and if Prof. Veenhof and also Dr. Schilder admit that the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith are first and absolutely unconditional, so that man can do absolutely nothing in order to obtain that Holy Spirit; and if they still insist that God nevertheless promises His Holy Spirit and His grace and the gift of faith to every individual child that is baptized, the inevitable question is: does God lie? For it is absolutely certain that there is carnal seed among the spiritual seed of the covenant, that there are reprobate under the dispensation of the covenant. And it is also absolutely certain that God will not fulfill His promise, will not give His Holy Spirit, and will not give His grace and the gift of faith to the reprobate, but only to the elect.

I wish that Dr. Schilder would answer this question, and explain to us how the promise of God can be to N. N., to Tom, Dick, and Harry, even though it be a conditional promise.

On our part, we would offer the following solution.

In the first place, I would insist that the promise of God, which includes the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise of God's grace, and the promise of the gift of faith, is absolutely unconditional and only for the elect. Then, and then only, can we maintain that little infants have the promise of the Holy Spirit and the promise of the gift of faith.

In the second place, I would insist that God never lies, but surely fulfills His every Word of promise, so that He actually gives the Holy Spirit and implants the gift of faith in the hearts of all the children that belong to the spiritual seed of the covenant, that is, the elect.

In the third place, I would emphasize that it is God's own command and revelation that He establishes His covenant in the line of the continued gener-

ations of believers; that therefore, as in the Old Testament the generations of Abraham were circumcised, so in the new dispensation the generations of believers must be baptized.

In the fourth place, however, we must maintain that not all that belong to the carnal seed of Abraham and that belong to the carnal seed of believers are also to be counted as the spiritual seed. For this is very evident from Rom. 9:6-8: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Finally, it is the will of God, therefore, that not only the children of the promise, but also the carnal seed, not only the elect, but also the reprobate shall come under the dispensation of the covenant and under the dispensation of the promise. God certainly does not lie when He brings the carnal children under the seal of baptism. For after all, baptism, like circumcision, is a seal of the righteousness which is by faith. In baptism therefore God does not give the promise to every child, head for head and soul for soul, but only seals the inseparable connection between faith and righteousness. In baptism, therefore, He declares that the believer in Christ shall certainly be justified and receive all the blessings of salvation. And that believer in Christ is the spiritual seed only, that is, the elect. And if you ask the question: why then does God continue His covenant in the line of generations so that even the carnal seed comes under the dispensation of the covenant and of the promise, so that even the reprobate come into closest contact with the promise? my answer is: God wills that they shall become manifest as profane, as violaters of His covenant. It is in the sphere of the dispensation of the covenant that sin becomes manifest as sin in the highest sense of the word. And it is from those that live under the dispensation of the covenant that Antichrist, the Man of Sin, must come, and that the measure of iniquity must be filled.

This is also my answer to the question: why must Esau be firstborn? Why must he whom God hated have the birthright and be placed by God in the position of the elect, of him whom God loved?

But, and it seems to me this is the chief difference between us and Dr. Schilder and the Liberated, if we do not see and do not want to see that God cuts the sharp line of election and reprobation right through the dispensation of the covenant, we certainly will never agree on the question concerning the promise.

H.H.

The Matter Is Simple

In the last *Concordia*, the Rev. De Jong promises to give us an explanation of the matter concerning the letter Prof. Holwerda wrote to the immigrants in Canada.

Of this I am glad.

For I like to have full confidence in the brethren, and this is simply a spiritual impossibility as long as the statements which Holwerda alleges that the brethren De Jong and Kok have made are not contradicted.

In his introductory article the Rev. De Jong expresses the fear that his explanation may evoke more controversy.

I do not see why it should.

The matter, it seems to me, is very simple.

It simply concerns the question whether or not they made the statements which Holwerda reports them to have made.

Or: what did they say?

Brethren, give Holwerda the lie. That is what I sincerely hope the Rev. De Jong will do.

If not, inform us, at least, what you said.

Then we will have no controversy.

Otherwise, we surely must have.

H. H.

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The Unilateral Covenant

Brother Cammenga has some difficulty with my interpretation of Genesis XV, especially, according to him, if I maintain that the covenant is strictly unilateral in its establishment so that we cannot speak of parties in the covenant of God, "the name covenant becomes then so *unreal*, so *out of order* and God is a God of order." And he "cannot imagine a covenant with only one party."

In answer, I would say that I cannot imagine either a covenant with only one party, or that is established by only one party if: 1. we conceive of the covenant as a sort of a contract, or alliance; 2. if we think of a covenant between men.

But neither can I conceive of the possibility that, 1. there can be parties in the establishment or even in the continuance of a covenant of the infinite and sovereign God and mere man; 2. that such a covenant could be established at all if we conceive of the covenant, not as a contract with mutual promises and stipulations, but as an intimate relation of living fellow-

ship and friendship between God and His people in Christ.

But, as to my interpretation of Gen. XV, let me, rather than present my own interpretation once more present the view of others, in order to corroborate my interpretation that, in Gen. XV, the unilateralness of the covenant is emphasized, and that this is indicated by God's passing through the pieces alone.

Keil, *in loco*, explains as follows:

"From the nature of this covenant, it followed, however, that God alone went through the pieces in a symbolical representation of Himself, and not Abram also. For although a covenant always established a reciprocal relation between two individuals, yet in that covenant which God concluded with a man, the man did not stand on equality with God, but God established the relation of fellowship by His promise and His gracious condescension to the man, who was at first purely a recipient, and was only qualified and bound to fulfill the obligations consequent upon the covenant by the reception of gifts of grace."

Gerlach, in *Dächsel's Commentary*, explains (I translate):

"That God alone, and not Abram, passes through the pieces of the sacrifice, occurs, because He here established a covenant of grace, and He Himself begins to promise, before He demands; for the purpose was to instill into Abram a firm confidence in the certain fulfillment of the promise."

Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, III, 210, explains (I translate):

"But also when God and man conclude a covenant, it is but natural that the unilateral character of the covenant appears strongly on the foreground; for there are no two equal parties here, but God is the Sovereign, who imposes his ordinances upon the creatures. When God in Gen. XV:8ff., concludes a covenant with Abram, this covenant is not really a pact, but a promise; God gives his promise, and binds himself to fulfill it, and passes through the pieces. Elsewhere he swears by himself, Gen. 22:16, by His life, Deut. 32:40, by His soul, Am. 6:8, Jer. 51:14, in order to prove to man the unchangeableness of His counsel. This unilateral character of the covenant had to appear ever more clearly in history. For, indeed, the covenant of God also imposed obligations upon those with whom it was concluded; obligations, not as conditions to enter into the covenant, for the covenant was established and rests only in the mercy of God, but as the way, which those who were received into the covenant, henceforth had to walk."

I could quote much more, but the above quotations

ought to be sufficient to prove that I do not stand alone in my interpretation of Genesis XV.

And Reformed theologians generally teach:

1. That the covenant of God is unilateral (one-sided) in its establishment: God alone establishes His covenant, and that, too, unconditionally.

2. That the covenant, when it is first established by God alone, becomes, not bi-partisan, but bi-lateral (two-sided): in all covenants there are contained two parts.

3. That the fulfillment of our part of the covenant is the fruit of God's establishing His covenant with us as rational moral creatures.

H. H.



IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

Chapter 2

THE TEACHER PROBLEM

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

The closing remarks of our last article were not calculated to espouse the idea that we neither have nor can obtain teachers that are qualified to teach in a Protestant Reformed School. If such were our contention, we would also have to contend for the closing of our schools, or at least for the removal of the "Protestant Reformed" from their name. We rather meant to emphasize the idea that this matter of Protestant Reformed teachers is not as simple as we sometimes imagine. The recipe is not: mix one Protestant Reformed person with a desire to teach plus two, three, or four years of a normal course in any of the numerous colleges, plus some practice-teaching. The result may be a teacher,—and, from a formal aspect, a good teacher too,—but it is highly doubtful whether the outcome will be a Protestant Reformed teacher. And I believe that any of our teachers who conducts a bit of honest self-examination will be ready to admit this, and that when they have their college diplomas in hand and then face the task of teaching a room-full of our Protestant Reformed children their grammar and spelling and history and geography and arithmetic from a Protestant Reformed viewpoint, that diploma, as far as signifying that they have received the training and equipment to be *Protestant*

Reformed teachers, is hardly worthy the parchment it is written on. In fact, they will admit, I am sure, that much of the training they have received, while formally it may have been good, was from a material standpoint, from the viewpoint of its spiritual principles, (or, if you will, from the viewpoint of its underlying philosophy), more of a deterrent than an aid. And the reason for this is not difficult to see. In any of the existent schools for teacher-training, whether church-controlled or state-controlled, the principles which we hold dear will not be applied to the subject material nor inculcated in the future teachers. But make no mistake. That means that the training is based upon *other principles*, whether of a pseudo-Calvinism or any other pseudo-religion, or whether they be the out and out modern principles of the worldly college or university. It may be claimed that you learn something by contrast in such a case, if you are strong enough to stand on your own feet and to think independently. The fact remains that you receive nothing positive, and that contrariwise you face the obstacle of overcoming much wrong training. And it certainly must be very plain that the training of the existent normal schools is not producing *Protestant Reformed teachers*.

All of this does not cut off the possibility of obtaining teachers that are qualified to teach in our own schools, however. I certainly believe, first of all, that there is many a *potential* Protestant Reformed teacher in our midst. I believe too that many of our present teachers are potentially qualified to teach in our schools. And I also believe that such potentially qualified teachers, as they enter upon their work in our own schools, can and will develop and are even now developing into fullfledged and fully qualified and capable teachers in our own schools, so that the fruit must be ultimately that they teach a full-orbed Protestant Reformed course of study. But let neither our people nor our teachers underestimate the task. This work is strictly in a pioneering stage as yet. There is much to be done. The field of the application of our principles to the education of our children has barely been entered. And our teachers have a hard row to hoe. At present they must be self-trained, and must exert themselves to get out of many a rut into which they have been led by their own formal education in the normal schools which they have attended.

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What Constitutes A Qualified Teacher?

I suppose one could write a whole book on that question and offer a whole course for teachers on only

that subject. Neither of the two is our intention here. Rather is it our purpose here merely to point to some salient requirements, especially with a view to our own schools.

First of all, from a purely formal viewpoint, we must bear in mind that teachers are born, not made. In other words, teaching is not everyone's calling. A certain amount of native ability is requisite. To use a very blunt example, the person who is of a very mediocre or poor intellectual ability should certainly not consider himself called to be a teacher. One who gets by the eighth grade by "the skin of his teeth" or maybe on the good graces of a softhearted teacher should not think of the teaching profession. One who has a difficult time passing his mathematics courses, while he is perhaps an A-student in history, should not aim at becoming a high school algebra instructor. One who himself has trouble differentiating a subject and a predicate will not be qualified to teach grammar even on the grade-school level.

But more such native qualifications may be mentioned. A teacher must be a good disciplinarian, to be sure. A school without order cannot function. And while training is necessary in this respect, the fact remains that not everyone has the natural ability that is necessary in order to keep order in the class-room. A teacher must also be able "to get along" with children. And a teacher must be able to get down to the level of children. A teacher must have the gift of expression, must be able not only to think clearly but also to express a thought clearly and concisely. And undoubtedly more of these native characteristics of a good teacher could be listed. My point is that we need such teachers. Young people should bear that need in mind for themselves, both in order that they do not mistakenly attempt to become teachers and in order that, if they seem to be so qualified, they do not miss their calling to become teachers. And our schools should seek such teachers, and, if they find them, value them highly. Such a born teacher is an invaluable addition to a school. On the other hand, a school board should not be too long-suffering if it discovers on its teaching staff one who does not seem qualified to teach. A board does both itself and its school and the would-be teacher a favor by not keeping him "on the string". An entire class of graduates can be damaged and retarded in its education, if not spoiled, by being subjected to a teacher that is not a teacher.

In the second place, also from a formal viewpoint, the value of a *completely trained* teacher cannot be emphasized too much. State requirements on this score differ. In some states one can teach with scarce-

ly more than a high school education. Elsewhere a teacher is required to take more training even after he has met the requirement of a four-year college course and received his teacher's certificate. Perhaps at this stage of our own school movement it is difficult to say what should be the requirement. Circumstances may often force us to use teachers with a minimum of training. But we should not fall into the error of being satisfied with the least. Just as a rough and uncut diamond is not acceptable until it is polished, so a born teacher is not acceptable unless he is trained. And all other factors being equal, the more thoroughly trained teacher is the better teacher. We should not be satisfied with teachers who have taken a "quickie" course in education, in order to get a position as soon as possible and make some money. But we should strive, both as teachers and as schools, for a thoroughly trained teaching staff. And if ever the time comes when our schools are well-established and no longer forced by circumstances to accept anything but the best, the school boards should set a high and rigid requirement in that respect.

What specifically, however, are the requisites of teachers in our Protestant Reformed schools?

In the first place, such a teacher must certainly be a *confessing member* of a Protestant Reformed Church. In other words, he must be openly and publicly committed to our Protestant Reformed doctrine. Nothing less will do. One certainly cannot be a Protestant Reformed teacher and be allowed to teach our Protestant Reformed children who is not himself committed to our principles, and that not merely in his own mind, but publicly. As long as the possibility exists that one will say No to the question, whether he believes the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments as taught here in this Christian church to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation, he may not be entrusted with our children.

In the second place, such a teacher must be very definitely committed to the ideal of Protestant Reformed education. We must not be satisfied with teachers to whom it would make no difference whether they taught in a public school, one of the existing Christian schools, or a Protestant Reformed school. Such teachers will never be thoroughly Protestant Reformed teachers. And I believe our school boards should be very insistent and inquisitive on that score. Our teachers must be among the leaders in our school movement, and must be zealous supporters of the ideal of Protestant Reformed education.

And in the third place, I would like to stress that we need teachers who are whole-heartedly consecrated to *teaching* Protestant Reformed principles in our

schools. We must have teachers who will devote their lives to such teaching, who will be content not merely to instruct a certain number of hours per day, and days per week, and weeks per month, and months per year, for a certain number of dollars. Teachers we need sorely who will consider their task not merely a "job", but a God given calling. Teachers we need who will be satisfied not merely to teach and to mark papers and to hand out report cards. Teachers we need who will be content not merely to weed out of a text book some evolutionism or Arminianism or common grace-ism. Teachers who will devote all their ability, all their thinking, all their labors, first of all, to inculcating into our children the Protestant Reformed way of life as much as they are able and as well as they are equipped to do so now; and secondly, who will strive mightily, devote much effort, and put in long hours at developing themselves into better equipped teachers for a Protestant Reformed school, who will strive toward the goal of a complete Protestant Reformed course of study. And among them may God grant us that rarity, someone who is not only a teacher but a real educator, to give us leadership and guidance in this wonderful and blessed venture.

H. C. Hoeksema



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.

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

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Jesus, my love, my chief delight,
For thee I long, for thee I pray;
Amid the shadows of the night,
Amid the business of the day.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 5:43-48

I.

To properly understand this rather well-known passage of the Word of God we must not lose sight of its place in the Sermon on the Mount. It is found in that section of Jesus' teaching in which He sets forth in detail the righteousness of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure of heart and the peacemakers. None must think that such meekness, and being poor in spirit can be brought to perfection apart from the law of God. It is true that no one is justified by works of law. Nevertheless the reborn saints, the church, have this law written in their hearts, and must constantly, in this life, be kept activated in faith by the *precepts of the Gospel*, and by the warnings with which the Gospel confronts us. Such was the case in the Old Testament dispensation. Today this is still true for us, the church of the New Dispensation. Not one iota or tittle of the law shall fall to the ground till all be fulfilled. The law is our guide through life.

Let this truth sink deeply into your hearts!

For this precept of Jesus in this passage is not merely a matter which gives material for dogmatic formulation to be written on paper and then forgotten, but it is the charter and compass of our life as we must steer through the narrow gate-way that leads to life and joy, to our being *fully* sons of our heavenly Father!

Well may our Bible be worn thin in its pages at this section of Scripture as an indication of our consultation of it in our prayerful struggle against sin and unbelief. For all those who wish to press on to perfection this passage will be a treasured gem. Here we exclaim, why does Jesus preach the law so strictly since no man can in this life keep it perfectly!? Here also we always and again say to one another and to our own souls: Since we cannot do this in our own strength, so let us call upon the Name of the Lord for strength, for pardon, for the assurance of someday attaining this perfection *fully* in a life to come, and *in this life in an ever greater measure!* Here the Saint exclaims with the Psalmist: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek!" For Jesus' precept of the Gospel, as the Fulfillment of the law and the prophets asks of us nothing less than that we be *perfected in love*.

Such is Jesus' clear teaching here.

In the verses that we shall try to explain in these essays we read the following: "*Ye heard that it was said, Thou shalt love Thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father Who is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and raineth on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, that reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*"

In our exposition it is well to bear in mind the last sentence of the above quotation. Says Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Certainly this sentence is not only to be our guiding-star in our Christian life of sanctification, but it is also the crux and substance of the teaching of Jesus in this entire interpretation of the law, which Jesus came to fulfill, in general, and of these last verses in particular.

Now, what does Jesus mean when he says "be ye perfect"?

The idea of perfection is not that of perfect sinlessness in this life as an attainable reality. It rather means: that which is the fully developed life, the fully developed fruit. Thus, for instance, a *perfected* apple is not merely one without defects, free from being worm eaten, etc., but it is the apple that is fully developed in all its potentialities in perfect ripeness, flavor, color. It looks at the perfection from the viewpoint of its attainment. When that point is attained it can from its very nature rise no higher. That is perfection in the creature. We could cite many more cases, but we trust that this one example conveys our meaning. This idea of perfection is also applied in Scripture to our life of sanctification, our life of love. And the acid test of perfected love is given in our text by Jesus. It is the test which must show whether love is perfected in us, whether it has taken over in our mind and will. This text is: *that we love our enemy and pray for him!* Love in the saints cannot rise higher than praying for the enemy. Such is the very essence and nature of love. Here the last iota and tittle of the law is fulfilled. For love is the fulfillment of the law! As long as we cannot do this, that is, pray for our enemy, fear will needs fill our hearts. No, we do not need to go to a psychiatrist to have our souls, our emotions analyzed. To the law and the prophets as these are interpreted by Jesus, otherwise we shall never have the dawn of perfected

love and life without fear and anxiety! Perfect meekness, perfect hungering for righteousness is rooted in the perfected love that casts out all fear!

Let this love be perfected in you.

Here is the bread of life in the form of the precepts of the Gospel. Let us not give out our money to that which cannot satisfy. All that is not conformable to this teaching of Jesus concerning perfected love is nothing else than broken pitchers and empty cisterns that hold no water. Here in these precepts is bread for our souls; it is the broken bread in Christ crucified.

Hence, to the law and to the prophets!

This is exactly what the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day were unwilling to do. They could not find rest in the Gospel of blood, the blood of atonement. Neither did the law of God as it demanded perfection give them satisfaction and peace of heart. What did they do? They corrupted the law as they did all of the Scriptures to their own destruction.

What! did they not read: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?*

Forsooth, they did. But this word was too hard, they say. And so, without admitting that they do not love this law of God and still boasting in this law, they nevertheless corrupt it. The result is: they do not really see the law in its fulfillment in the last iota and tittle as meant and maintained by God, but they have their own invention of the same. Listen to this Scribe and Pharisee teach the people, when he says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy."

Now what is wrong in this "interpretation" of the law?

Two things. In the first place, the Scribes left off the very important addition "as thyself". That was not simply a shift in emphasis, but it took the very heart out of this commandment. The Golden Rule, the entire law and prophets simply went by the board. It is only two words, one will say. Yes, that is correct. But on these two words hangs all the "Law and the Prophets". That was the first and principal corruption. And it is such a corruption, that even when reading it at first, is unnoticed. The text looks so genuine that way. And the simple are deceived. But it is a corruption of the greatest magnitude nonetheless. Secondly, the term "*thy neighbor*" is made to mean "*thy friend*". Thus the law is really not even applicable anymore as given and intended by God. It is no longer a correction of the erring, and it is no guide to our feet. It is really no longer necessary. Man has become a measuring rod to himself! It is the sin of Paradise come to full perfection; man has become like unto Us determining good and evil! It is

the leaven of Phariseeism that leaveneth the whole lump!

And this is the interpretation that the people had been taught as being the real truth of the matter!

But overagainst this comes the great Gospel precept: "but I say unto you: Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father in heaven . . ."

We should notice, first of all, that thus the Gospel precept is the very precept of the law of *loving our neighbor as ourselves*. The text as given by Moses is left to stand in all of its scope and application. The matter of "neighbor" is not made "friend", but it includes also "our enemies", that is, it means *every-one whose life touches ours*. We make no selection. The Providence of God sets a man or woman on my path who is my enemy. I have but one thing to do. What is it? Love him! Love him as I love myself. Such is the precept of the Gospel. Such is the *perfected love* that casts out *all fear*. Such is Jesus' Gospel precept. Here is the last iota and tittle. The matter is very concrete and real.

And now that we have seen who this our neighbor is, namely, the one whom God places next and nearest to me, let us also ask: Who is my enemy? According to Jesus' teaching he is the one who persecutes me, who speaks all kinds of lies about me, he reviles me, he hurts my reputation! Oh, it cuts to the quick, what he says and does! That man I must love! I must love him as I love myself and am concerned about my own salvation!

Let us try to understand this just a bit better.

What is the meaning of the term "love" in our text? We are sure that in our text "love" means more than simply "like", to have a kindly feeling for. One can like a friend, but cannot like an enemy. When one does me wrong the feelings of "liking" are no longer present. Then it is either a question of "hatred" or of "love"! Now love is not a question of the feeling, but it is a matter of the mind and will as rooted in the heart. It is the earnest desire to be perfect. Love is the bond of perfection which is like a tie connecting all the Christian virtues of forgiveness and bowels of mercy. Such love cannot rest except it seeks the well-being of the "neighbor". It does not rejoice in iniquity, but it rejoices in the truth. It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and it never fails to bring a well-spring of joy to our hearts. It removes all fear and tensions. It is a balm of Gilead in all our wounds.

With this love we seek the well-being, the salvation of our neighbor. We never seek his ruin, his downfall, but are happy in His salvation, and have grief and sorrow in his sin even when he hates us.

That is perfected love. It drives out all fear. Unless this is seen and practiced there is no dawn of joy and happiness in our souls. God is not mocked. Think not that Christ came to destroy the law and the prophets. The last iota, iota, iota!

Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Such is the very practical, indispensable lesson of the precept of the Gospel in which the whole law is summed up in such a way that we may be admonished to the perfect obedience of perfected love. Do you have this love? Look for the continuation of this subject in the next issue.

G. C. Lubbers



SION'S ZANGEN

De Lofzang Der Liefde

(Psalm 116; Tweede deel)

Ik heb lief, zong de dichter van dit lievelingslied.

We hebben gezien, dat dit allereerst en meest van toepassing is op Messias. En sindsdien Messias in Gods volk woont, zingen zij ook: Ik heb lief!

En waarom?

Omdat Hij mijne stem hoort, mijn smeeingen en mijn klagen.

Waarom?

Omdat Hij Zijn oor tot mij neigt. Dies zal ik Hem in mijn dagen aanroepen.

Ziedaar het schoonste werk des Christens. O neen, zijn geven van geld en goed aan God en voor Goddelijke diensten is niet de maatstaf waarnaar Christen gemeten moet worden. Hoe zou het ook? Wat kon die arme Lazarus Hem geven? De stakkerd had niets. Bovendien zijn er duizenden geweest die groote schatten gegeven hebben aan God, en die toch buiten stonden, en voor eeuwig buiten bleven. Ik heb gehoord van een man die een millioen dollars gaf tot den bouw van een kerkgebouw, en toch: zijn leven getuigde dat hij buiten stond.

Neen, maar het aanroepen van God is de maatstaf van het geestelijk leven. En ook dan moeten we voorzichtig zijn. Want God zegt immers ook: Dit volk nadert tot Mij met hunnen mond, doch hun hart houdt zich verre van Mij! Het gebed is maatstaf van het geestelijk leven, doch dan het gebed des *harten*. En het hart is het diepste in den mensch. Zooals zijn hart is zoo is hij. En dan zal 't gaan.

Alle mijne dagen zal ik God aanroepen.

Dat is ook teekenend. Christen heeft God van noode alle de dagen zijns levens. Hij weet niet van een roepen naar God op Zondag alleen. Of bij gezette tijden. Hij zal Hem aanroepen alle de dagen zijns levens. En dat is teekenend. Was het Luther die zeide, dat men vaak tot God bad met de pet op?

Ook behoeft dat niet altijd met woorden, zelfs niet in woorden die men denkt. Dit aanroepen kan zijn, is vaak, een biddende stemming: een aan God denken. "Mijne overdenking van Hem zal zoet zijn."

En dan zal deze zanger U verhalen van dat dagelijksche aanroepen.

"De banden des doods hadden mij omvangen, de angsten der hel hadden mij getroffen; ik vond benauwdheid en droefenis."

Dan is het erg.

Dit vers vooral doet mij aan David denken. Hij zeide immers in II Samuel 22:5: "Want baren des doods hadden mij omvangen, beken Belials verschrikten mij." En in het volgende vers lezen we: "Banden der hel omringden mij, strikken des doods bejegenden mij." En ook in de volgende verzen worden we herinnerd aan Psalm 116.

Doch wie dan ook dezen psalm gedicht heeft, het was erg met hem gesteld.

Uit den geheelen psalm blijkt, dat deze zanger niet zoo zeer beangstigd was vanwege zijn vijanden, doch dat zijn ziel in groote smart verkeerde. Immers, hij spreekt van een terugkeeren tot de rust zijner ziel; van een uitgeteerd zijn; van een ziel die bevrijd moest worden. Er was duisternis over zijn ziel gekomen; er was inzinking in zijn geestelijk leven. En die toesland wordt in schrille kleuren geschetst.

"De banden des doods hadden mij omvangen"!

De dood heeft banden. De dood is slavernij. De dood is de slavernij der zonde. En de dood heeft daarom dan ook groote smarten voor zijn slachtoffers. En de smarten des doods zijn de straf Gods over de zonde.

Want we moeten wel verstaan, dat die dood een oordeel Gods is. God doodt alle dagen,

En hier rijst een groot probleem. We hebben in ons eerste artikel over dezen psalm gezegd, dat eerst in Jezus deze zang ten volle vervuld is. Dus Jezus zegt dan ook hier, dat de banden des doods Hem omvangen hadden. Doch we weten ook, dat Jezus nooit zondigde. Het is er mee als de vraag: Hoe kon Jezus den toorn Gods dragen, terwijl er nooit een oogeblik geweest is, dat God Hem niet liefhad?

Ik denk niet, dat we dit probleem aan deze zijde van dood en graf geheel en al zullen kunnen oplossen.

Het antwoord op die vraag moet gezocht worden in de Bijbelsche leer van de toerekening onzer zonde-

schuld. Die toerekening van onze schuld is zoo absoluut geweest, dat God met Jezus Christus handelde zooals Hij gehandeld zou hebben met ons, indien er geen verlossing geopenbaard was in Immanuel. Doch hoe nu Jehovah aan de eene zijde op Christus kon toornen, en aan de andere zijde Hem kon verlangen, zie, het antwoord op die vraag, de oplossing van dat dilemma kan ik niet benaderen. We houden vast aan beide waarheden: 1. Jezus Christus heeft den last van den toorn Gods ten volle gedragen en weggedragen; 2. God heeft Jezus grootelijks begeerd en liefgehad, ook toen Hij hing te kermen aan het kruis.

Nu terug tot de eerste vraag: hoe kon Jezus gebonden zijn door de banden des doods? Dat dit plaats vond is duidelijk. Later zou Petrus immers zeggen: "alzo het niet mogelijk was dat Hij van denzelven dood zoude *gehouden* worden." De opstanding uit de dooden is immers juist, dat die banden en koorden des doods losgemaakt wierden? Al wat ik er van zeggen kan is dit: Jezus Christus, alhoewel Hij de geheel Heilige was en bleef, moest behandeld als de Verworpenen; Hij moest ervaren wat de verworpenen tot in der eeuwigheid zullen ervaren. En die ervaring is de dood. En de dood is conflict met God, de ervaring van het tegenstaan van den Almachtige, het verlaten zijn van God. En dat laatste met een eeuwige intensiviteit.

Gij allen begrijpt, dat we heir stamelen, en ik stem dit van harte toe. Een wijs mensch schreef eens: Wie den dichter wil verstaan, moet naar 's dichters land toegaan! Als ge dit nu al bevende toe wilt passen op de zaak waar het over gaat, dan zouden we eerst met Messias onder moeten gaan in den oceaan der eeuwige smarten, naar de hel. En ja, dan zouden we meer kunnen zeggen van die omvanging der banden des doods.

En toch weten we er iets van. Want wij komen ook in aanraking met den dood. Evenwel het is maar een klein beetje. We weten immers niet wat het zeggen wil om van God verlaten te zijn, om onder te gaan in het absolute duister, om in de hel te liggen en een eeuwigen toorn Gods te smaken.

En we mogen, we moeten het dan ook zeggen: de dichter van Psalm 116 heeft het ook slechts in beginsel geproefd wat het zeggen wil om omvangen te zijn met de banden des doods. Het is er mee als met David in Psalm 22. David zong: Mijn God, mijn God, waarom hebt ge mij verlaten? En Jezus zong het hem na toen Hij aan het kruis hing. Doch een iegelijk gevoelt direct, dat David er slechts iets van gevoeld heeft, terwijl Jezus die vreeselijke woorden geheel en al en tot in al hunne diepte doorleefd heeft. (Eigenlijk had ik moeten schrijven, "doorsterven" heeft).

En wij? Wij ervaren er iets van. Er zijn perioden in ons leven, dat het donker wordt voor het oog der ziel. En dat kan geschieden vanwege veel en velerlei. Eén van de oorzaken is vaak de zonde. Dat kan de oorzaak geweest zijn met den dichter van dezen psalm. Daar spreekt veel voor die gedachte, want hij zingt keer op keer van zijn *verlossing*. Het kan geweest zijn zooals we zingen in psalm 65: "On-gerechte dingen hadden de overhand over mij!"

En als het dan donker wordt en de floersen over ons geestelijk oog trekken, dan wordt het bang. En dat schijnt hier het geval te zijn geweest.

"en de angsten der hel hadden mij getroffen!"

Ja, ik kan het niet helpen: ik denk hier weer aan Jezus. O zeker, wij zingen het ook. En als we het zingen denken we vaak aan momenten in ons eigen leven, waarvan wij óók kunnen spreken van een getroffen zijn van de angsten der hel. Doch hoe flauw, hoe zwak is onze ervaring ervan, vergeleken bij de angsten der hel die Jezus ervaren moet hebben.

De hel is het sheool, het rijk der dooden.

En dat is een mistroostig, triestig gebied. Leest psalm 30:9, 10; 69:16; 88:4-8; 143:7. In die gedeelten van Gods Woord kent ge lezen van dien sheool. Als de kuil zijn muil over ons sluit, dan is er geen loven van God meer.

En die sheool is voorportaal van de hel, van het geheena, de plaats der eeuwige foltering.

En ja, het gebeurt, dat de angsten van dien sheool en van het geheena onze ziel verstoren, verontrusten, doen schreien. Wie van Gods volk heeft nooit stilte voor zichzelf gezongen: "Wijl d' angst der hel mij allen troost deed missen"? In zulke ervaringen zien we het zonlicht van Gods liefde niet meer. We missen dan het juiste gezicht op Golgotha's kruin. En zuchten, zuchten.

"Ik vond benauwdheid en droefenis."

Benauwdheid is als de plaats die we beslaan te nauw is voor ons. Dat is erg als het ons lichamelijk, fysisch treft, want dan worden we letterlijk verbrijzeld. Maar het is erger als ons hart, als onze ziel benauwd wordt. Want dan kunt ge het nergens meer vinden. Uw eten en drinken smaakt niet; er is geen slaap voor Uwe oogen, rust en kalmte zijn weggevloten.

En het einde is droefenis. Daar komt men eindelijk tot het zingen van de treurmars: 'k Heb mijn tranen onder 't klagen, tot mijn spijze dag en nacht!

Nog eens: wie van Gods volk kent die tijden niet? Voor het oog der menschen is zulks vaak verborgen. Ik denk, dat eigenlijk ieder Christen boven zijn stand leeft. Er is veel meer benauwdheid en droefenis dan

er gezien wordt. En dat is goed. Men moet er niet mee te koop lopen. Zeide Jezus niet, dat men schreien moet en klagen in het verborgene, en als men dan naar buiten treedt moet men eerst zijn aangezicht waschen, en zich zalven met glinsterende olie?

Maar Jezus heeft deze benauwdheid en droefenis gesmaakt zooals niet één mensch of duivel die zal smaken. Jezus heeft meer droefenis en benauwdheid gesmaakt dan Satan ooit zal smaken. Eén voor allen; de Heilige behandeld als millioenen onheiligen; een eeuwige hel samengeperst in drie-en-dertig jaren! Nooit zullen we weten hoe vreeselijk het verbrijzelen van Jezus geweest is. Nooit zullen we weten hoe heet de tranen van Messias geweest zijn.

"Maar 'k riep den Heer dus aan in al mijn nood: Och Heer, och, wierd mijn ziel door U gered!"

Gelukkig! Het gebed blijft. Als het water tot aan de lippen gekomen is, dan komt er de zuchting des Heiligen Geestes die naar God voor de heiligen bidt. Als wij niet meer weten hoe het moet; als er nergens meer uitkomst schijnt te zijn, dan komt God. Dan komt God door Zijn Heiligen Geest en door Zijn lieflijk Woord en zet ons aan 't bidden, aan 't smeeken, aan 't zuchten tot God. Dat kan achter het stuurrad van Uw auto. Dat kan in de nachtwake. Dat kan achter de ploeg in 't veld. Dat kan onder 't beluisteren van een preek.

Ik riep den naam des Heeren aan.

En in 't roepen is alreede verlossing. Bidden is 't lieflijkste werk des Christens. Het is de uiting der reinste liefde, der liefde Gods.

Hoe triestig moet toch het leven der goddeloozen zijn. Hen treft wel niet de benauwdheid der ziel waarvan in mijn psalm sprake is, doch ze hebben wel smart. Er is groote smart onder de goddeloozen, ook smart der ziel. Het is millioenen malen geschied, dat de harten van goddeloozen gebroken zijn vanwege de slagen des Almachtigen. Ik heb een moeder, een goddelooze moeder, zien schreien bij het sterfbed van een goddeloozen zoon. En ik moet U zeggen, dat het hartverscheurend is om zulk een smart te zien. Maar ze kunnen niet bidden. Ze weten niet wat bidden is. Ze zeggen nooit: o Heere, verlos mijne ziel! Ze kennen God niet: hoe zouden ze dan zeggen: o God! Ik heb diep medelijden met de goddeloozen in hun smarten.

Maar Christen gaat naar God en roept Zijn naam aan.

In Zijn NAAM zien we het WEZEN.

En zoo kan de Kerk bidden: Verlos ons door Uw Naam!

In de openbaring van Gods lieflijken NAAM is de

verlossing van zondaren. En de openbaring van dien NAAM is Jezus.

Bevrijd mijne ziel!

Ja, dat is alles wat bevrijdt wordt hier op aarde. We zullen moeten wachten tot ons lichaam ook verlost en bevrijd zal worden. Ons lichaam ligt besloten onder den dood, en die dood doet zijn werk totdat ons lichaam in de groeve nederdaalt, en dan zullen we moeten wachten totdat de Heilige Geest van Christus ook ons lichaam bevrijden zal uit dien dood. Doch onze ziel is principieel bevrijd. Doch moet nog meer bevrijd worden. En moet gedurig bevrijd worden. In ons diepste hart zijn we vrij, maar de bewegingen der zonde waren nog rond, en die bewegingen, die oude hebbelijkheden der zonde en des doods spelen ons vaak parten. En dan bidden we met den zanger: Heere! bevrijd mijne ziel!

En Hij deed het. Want onze zanger van dit lied is nu in den hemel daarboven bij God.

En Hij doet het. Gij zijt er getuigen van.

En Hij zal het doen, totdat we allen in den hemel zijn, geheel en al bevrijd van de banden des doods, van de angsten der hel, van de benauwdheid en de droefenis.

En we zullen zingen, zingen van gena!

G. Vos.

Submissive to thy will, my God,
I all to thee resign;
And bow before thy chastening rod;
I mourn but not repine.

Why should my foolish heart complain,
When wisdom, truth, and love
Direct the stroke, inflict the pain,
And point to joys above.

How short are all my suff'rings here,
How needful ev'ry cross:
Away my unbelieving fear,
Nor call my gain my loss.

Then give, dear Lord, or take away,
I'll bless thy sacred name:
My Jesus, yesterday, today,
Forever is the same.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Covenant of Sinai

Let us take notice. Speaking of the new Covenant, the Lord says to His people: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put their laws in their mind . . ." This, "I will put my laws in their mind," is a declaration that tells what the Lord will do. We deal here then with a promise not of a shadow salvation but of the true. By this promise the Lord binds Himself to the house of Israel and Judah to truly save them. The first Covenant (better said "testament, Greek *diatheekē*, thus testament, not *suntheekē*, contract) had no such promise. It was a covenant, that is, a testament, certainly. It had promises to be sure, but promises that held forth and pledged things that were symbolical-typical—typical atonement and typical rest in a typical heaven, the earthy Canaan. That is all this testament could possibly promise; for as the writer of the Hebrews emphasizes, the sacrifices of that testament were but a type, shadow, figure. Hence, as was stated, the Lord could not put his laws in the hearts of the heirs of this first testament on the ground of its symbolical-typical sacrifice. And He did not. He would have denied his own righteousness had He done so.

Seeing that the Lord did not write His law in the hearts of this first covenant *on the ground of their being in this covenant*, these heirs, the house of Israel and the house of Judah, did not remain, abide, continue in it, says the sacred writer (Hebrews). "Because they continued not in my testament (*diatheekē*)". This has reference to the House of Israel and Judah according to the election. Whether it also must be made to apply to the house of Israel according to reprobation we shall see presently.

That the house of Israel and the house of Judah did not abide in the first covenant is evident. Israel, including certainly the Israel according to election was finally plucked from the soil of Canaan and permanently dispersed among the nations. And thereafter the house of Judah was exiled to Babylon for a duration of 70 years. But Israel and Judah according to the election were true children of God. Can this people, too, be charged with having forsaken the first covenant? This was also their sin, though it be true, to be sure, that *in principle* and on account of their being at once in the true covenant of grace

they had indeed continued also in the "first" covenant, the symbolical-typical covenant of grace. But according to their sinful flesh they made themselves guilty of the sin in not continuing in the first covenant and accordingly God in His love applied to them His chastening rod; he banished them for a season from His country; and as was stated, Israel's exile was permanent. Not that the Israel and Judah according to the election must be included in the Baal worshipper's and that together with the reprobated Israel and Judah they had been crowding Baal's temples and prostrating themselves before Baal's shrine. But they had sinned as God's believing people—the true Israel and Judah—are always wont to sin in times of great apostacy and material prosperity. (The two always go hand in hand). The lesson of church history is that in such time God's true people become careless spiritually. At such times their light is so apt to be under a bushel. Instead of witnessing for the truth and rebuking the evil-doers they live on much too friendly a footing with their apostate brethren and close their eye to their abominations. And through their silence they become co-guilty. In Israel gross sinning was punishable by death. Such offenders had to be cut off from the commonwealth of Israel through their being put to death. Yet, of course, it was rarely done and through this negligence the guilt of the atrocious sinners in the land became communal. It therefore must not be regarded as a strange thing that in the Scripture passage under consideration the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah are charged with the sin of not abiding in the first covenant, and that on this account Israel and Judah were exiled from God's country.

That the charge "because they continued not in my covenant" has reference also to this Israel and Judah—the Israel and Judah according to the election—is substantiated by the promise, "And I will put my laws in their mind . . . and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people . . . and I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This certainly can have reference only to the Israel and the Judah according to the election. For only the elect are forgiven. And what was the sin and iniquity forgiven in this Israel and Judah? Their sin, according to the preceding verse was that of their not abiding in the first testament. And the reason? The Lord had not put his laws in their heart. How this statement is to be taken has just been explained. The Lord had certainly put His laws in their heart, so that in principle they were His children. But He had not put His laws in their heart on account of their being in this first covenant. This is the only possible way in

which this statement can be taken.

But this question also arises. How could the true Israel become guilty of the sin of not continuing in the first covenant seeing that, according to the Scriptures, the *saints* do not fall away. There is no difficulty here, if it be considered that the true Israel and Judah must certainly be held to have continued in the first testament in principle.

As to the Israel and Judah according to the reprobation, certainly all through the years of the Old Dispensation they did nothing but reject, despise, and trample this first covenant. Yet it may not be said of this Israel and Judah that it did not continue in this first covenant; for this would imply that this covenant included also the Israel and Judah according to reprobation. But this is not true. This can be shown from the Scripture passage with which we here deal—Hebrews 8:8-13. The people on whom this entire passage concentrates is the house of Israel and Judah. And it presents these houses to our view as sinful, depraved, lost and undone in themselves but yet loved by God, and saved and forgiven for Christ's sake. Who else then can this house of Israel and Judah be but the Israel and Judah according to the election?

However, the sacred writer is not arguing here election and reprobation, but he gives all his attention to the two covenants and the reasons why the first covenant waxed old and vanished away and accordingly was superceded by the new. These are the matters on which he wants to concentrate and thus he speaks simply of the house of Judah and the house of Israel as the people included in these covenants without entering into the distinction between the Israel and Judah according to the election and the Israel and Judah according to reprobation. However, when it is a question of who were included in these covenants, the Scriptures, including the scripture passage from the Hebrews with which we are here occupied, allow but one answer: the people included in these covenants was the Judah and Israel according to the election.

That the Israel according to reprobation was not included even in the first covenant—the covenant of Sinai—with its typical promises such as the promise of the earthy Canaan is plain. Consider the following:

First, what is said of this generation in the Scriptures at Hebrews 3:8-19; "Harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation and said, They do always err in their hearts; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter

my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

The passage speaks of what it calls "that generation". Let us take notice of what is said of that generation.

- a) They do always err in their heart (verse 10).
- b) They have not known God's ways (verse 10).
- c) The Lord was grieved with them for forty years (verse 17).
- d) They sinned.
- e) Their carcasses fell in the wilderness (vs. 17).
- f) The Lord sware that they should not enter His rest (verse 18).
- g) They could not enter in because of unbelief (verse 19).

Certainly in the light of what is said in this passage of that generation it was reprobated.

This reprobated generation, according to this Scripture, did not enter with the Lord into the typical rest of the earthy Canaan. The question is: why not? That is, what is the primary, sovereign reason according to Holy Writ. There are two explanations: 1) The Arminian and the true explanation of the Scriptures.

The answer of the Arminian.

The sovereign reason that this reprobated generation did not enter into the typical rest of Canaan is its unbelief. For the passage states at verse 19 that they could not enter in because of unbelief. For, says the Arminian, man as to his choices is sovereignly free, meaning that he originates his own choices, his choice to believe, his choice to make the right use of the grace that God gives him as an aid to salvation; thus his choice to be saved. This choice is of man and not of God, so that if a man once makes of his mind not to believe and be saved, all God's efforts to save him are vain.

This was precisely the case of the men of "that generation." The Lord wanted bad enough to enter with them into His rest. He gave them the promise

and thus the legal right to enter that rest, To them, too, the Lord said: I love you and in my love I give also to you the promise to my rest and thereby bestow upon you all the right to all the blessings of the atonement. Thus this reprobated generation, too was included in the promise and in the covenant.

But what happened. This reprobated generation sovereignly chose not to be saved. And that had to settle the matter for God. For God was powerless to increate in them the choice to be saved. Hence He could not give to this evil generation what he had promised it, namely His covenant, salvation and rest. Hence all there was left for God to do is to resolve finally to reject, reprobate this evil generation and inflict upon it the punishment of an everlasting damnation. Thus, as the passage under consideration states in verse 19, this reprobated generation did not enter into typical rest of Canaan because of its unbelief in the sense that its unbelief was the sovereign cause thereof.

This is the Arminian explanation.

The true explanation.

Certainly, as the passage at verse 19 states, that reprobated generation could not enter into the typical rest of Canaan because of its unbelief. However the Scripture also teaches a sovereign election and reprobation. Thus the fact that the Scriptures must always be interpreted in the light of the Scriptures, compels us to place above unbelief of "that evil generation" the sovereign reprobation of God as its sovereign reason, cause, necessity, and thus compel us to say that the sovereign reason that this "evil generation" did not enter into the typical rest of Canaan was not its unbelief but the fact that God, according to His sovereign reprobation, did not want to enter with them into His rest and accordingly also sovereignly hardened them in preparation of the death and destruction to which He sovereignly had appointed them.

Here you have the two explanations why the Lord did not enter with that "evil generation" the typical rest of the earthy Canaan.

A third explanation there is not

Now if it is true that God according to His sovereign decree of reprobation was the sovereign necessity of the unbelief of that "evil generation," if in addition He sovereignly hardened that "evil generation" in preparation of the death and destruction to which He sovereignly had appointed it, how then can it at once be true in the light of these facts and thus in the light of the very Scriptures that God included also this evil generation in the promise and in His covenant and thereby bestowed also upon this generation the right to Christ and all His benefits, thus

the right to enter with Him into the typical rest of the earthy Canaan and thus also the right to enter with Him into the true rest of the heavenly Canaan. This is impossible.

One or two: Either God did include also this "evil generation" in His promise and covenant and thereby bestow also upon that generation the right to Christ and all His blessings, thus the right to enter with God into His typical rest and also the true rest of the heavenly Canaan, but then there can be no such thing as a sovereign election—and then the will of man is sovereignly free and God is not God but man is God; or there is such a thing as a sovereign reprobation and election but then God did not include also that "evil generation" in the promise and the covenant and thereby bestow upon that generation the right to the benefits of the cross and thus also the right to enter with Him into His rest. We have to chose here. And there are only two choices not three.

Second, the symbolical-typical sacrifices by blood did not avail for the gross sinners in the commonwealth of Israel. That is, these sacrifices did not avail for all such who sinned with the "uplifted hand" thus, such is the meaning, in wanton defiance of God. All such had to be cut off from the congregation of God through the infliction of the punishment of death. "And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him . . . But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously (Hebrews, with an uplifted hand—that is, a hand lifted up toward heaven in defiance of God) whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among His people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him," meaning, he shall die in his sin and thus unforgiven. This, certainly, can only have reference to the reprobated. The Scripture we quote here is contained in Numbers 15: 28-31.

Thus the Lord excluded from His holy land, the earthy Canaan, not only that old reprobated generation that perished in the desert, but He commanded His people to continue to free the holy land—the heaven of the Old Dispensation—from this evil brood. The Holy land was not for them. It had not been promised them. The typical sacrifices by blood had not at all been instituted for them. If now the sacrifices and the typical promises of the first covenant were not for them, it cannot certainly be maintained that they were included in this first covenant. They were not.

But how could God's people know the reprobated,

if God alone knows the heart. Reference here, of course, is to the wicked who through their evil doings become known as wicked.

Third, when the carnal, reprobated seed were in power and when as a consequence the house of Israel forsook the Lord, the Lord would lay upon His people His strokes. Then the Lord, according to the predictions of Moses (Deut. 28 and 29) would smite the nation also with the blasting and with mildew. Then its heaven that was over their heads became as brass (meaning that the sun would steadily with its heat bear down upon them from a cloudless sky) and the earth under them would be iron (hard as iron for lack of rain). Then the Lord would make the soil of their land like powder and dust (for lack of rain). From heaven it would come down upon them until they were destroyed (the air would become laden with fine dust again for lack of rain). Then the Lord would cause them to be smitten before their enemies." Deut. 28:22-25.

In a word, when the nation forsook God's covenant because of the presence of the reprobated, carnal seed in it, the Lord would take His land away from His people and deliver up both them and His holy land into the hand of their enemies. How plain that the holy land and the promise thereof was not for the Israel according to reprobation. How plain that this Israel was not included even in this first covenant.

Fourth, when Israel, again because of the presence of the reprobated, carnal seed in it, had finally filled its measure of iniquity, God uprooted Israel from His land—the land of Canaan—and scattered the nation among the heathen permanently. This has reference to the ten tribes. And thereafter He exiled Judah to Babylon, and only the remnant returned. Again, how plain that the Holy land and the promise thereof was not for the Israel according to reprobation. How plain that this Israel was not included even in that first covenant.

It will do no good to come here with the following counter argument: The Israel according to the election was uprooted from the land of Canaan because of its unfaithfulness; and yet this Israel was included in the covenant and the promise. Hence, the fact that also the reprobate Israel was uprooted from the land of Canaan can serve as no proof that it was not included in the promise and the covenant.

But let us consider this: That also the Israel according to the election was uprooted from the land of Canaan because of its unfaithfulness, and the fact that previously the land of Canaan, as was shown (Deut. 28, 29, 30—chapters recording the blessing for obedience and the curses for disobedience) was taken away even from the Israel according to the election

as often as it became unfaithful, certainly indicates, if it indicates anything at all, that the land of Canaan was not given to sinners and was not for *them*; that thus it cannot be true that the land of Canaan was by promise given to the Israel according to reprobation. The typical land of Canaan as well as its corresponding reality—the heavenly Canaan—was given by promise, could be given by promise only to men absolutely righteous and holy. And that is what the Israel according to the election was and is—righteous and holy not certainly in itself but in Christ. That is the only reason that God can have anything to do with the Israel according to the election, include this Israel in His covenant and promise in His love and give it all things even Himself first of all as its great reward. Thus to maintain that also the Israel according to reprobation, not included in Christ, was actually included in the covenant and the promise and blessed of God is to deny the righteousness and the holiness of God and the necessity of the atonement of Christ. The matter really does run deep here. Fundamentally it is a question whether there is really such a being as the God of the Scriptures and such things as the true religion of the Scriptures.

Nor will it do to appeal to the case of Moses here. True Moses because of his one sin did not have the right to enter the typical rest of Canaan. But from this it does not follow that the reprobated generation of the desert period did have the right to enter this typical rest.

John Henry has no right to the worldly goods of John Peterson. But from this it does not follow that James Robinson does have a right to the worldly goods of John Peterson. He may or he may not have.

Moses did not enter the typical land of Canaan. But he did enter the rest of the heavenly kingdom. He did so because he was included in Christ. But just because Moses was bared from the earthly Canaan, it does not follow that the Israel according to the reprobation had the right to enter this Canaan, and was thus included in the promise and covenant. This logic will not do either.

And consider also this. Abraham had the promise of both the earthy and the heavenly Canaan. One text to prove this. Gen. 13:14. And the Lord said unto Abram, after Lot was separated from him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed after thee." Yet, though Abraham had the promise also of the earthy Canaan, he did not enter the typical rest of this earthy Canaan, but his seed 400 years thereafter. Yet he had the promise and was included in it and in the covenant.

May we say, that because he himself did not actually enter into the typical rest of this earthy Canaan that he did not inherit the promise. We may not say that. For the Scriptures speak otherwise. The Scriptures at Hebrews 6:15 state that "after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise," that is, that which the promise sets forth. And likewise Moses certainly. After *he* had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Fifth, let us take notice of the transaction at Sinai with regard to the promulgation of the first covenant at Sinai. Moses was called up into the mountain, and received from the Lord the ten commandments written on two tables of stone, and in addition a number of ordinances bearing on the decalogue and applying it to Israel's national life. Coming down to the people, Moses read this mass of legislation to the people and with one voice they reply, "All the words which the Lord hath said, we will do." Moses wrote the words of the Lord and names the writing, "The book of the covenant". Thereupon an altar is built; burnt offerings are offered and peace offerings sacrificed. Half of the blood Moses sprinkled upon the altar. Thereupon he took the "Book of the Covenant" and read in the audience of the people. Once more they respond, "All that the Lord hath said we will do and be obedient." And then we read, "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.*"

The line in italics are of utmost importance. What they prove is that the covenant of Sinai was certainly a covenant of grace. For, as we here see, it was a covenant with blood typifying the blood of Christ. But if this blood, as we have seen, could not atone the presumptuous sins of the wicked, reprobated Israel, it can only mean that this Israel was not included even in this first covenant. And not being included in this first covenant, it was not included in the new covenant—the true covenant of grace—already given to the church right after the fall, and including the true Israel assembled there at the base of Mt. Sinai, and this Israel only.

How plain from the above mass of observations that the Israel according to the reprobation was not included even in this first covenant of Sinai, and that therefore this Israel cannot be included in the true covenant of grace.

The Liberated nevertheless insist that this Israel according to reprobation was included in this first covenant and possessed all its promises, and that therefore this Israel must also have been included in the new covenant.

The fallacy of this reasoning should now be ap-

parent. Fact is that the first covenant *did not* include also the carnal Israel. To say that it did is to fly into the face of the Scriptures, definitely the Scriptures with which we are here occupied.

G. M. Ophoff

PERISCOPE

THE PERIL OF ORGANIZATION

From the *Moody Monthly* we quote the following which in turn is a quotation on their part.

"The Church for some reason or other is able to turn out more organizational machinery than any institution known to man. We can draw up by-laws by the ton and appoint committees, bureaus and departments . . . until it is no wonder that people day after day are spiritually mangled in the wheels.

"More and more I am convinced that if we spent half the time with people that we spend with bureaus and departments, the world would marvel at the results.

"The above words are not from some caustic critic of the Church, but were spoken by the rector of Trinity (Episcopal) Church of Boston at the annual convention of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. A national news magazine thought them of sufficient significance to head its religion department, under the title, 'Words of the Week.'

"Probably most of us who number ourselves among evangelical believers will readily admit the truth of the rector's comment—especially with reference to other groups. Yet seemingly these words apply more and more, not only to Protestantism's hierarchy, but to groups proclaiming a vital gospel message.

"The trend of the times—in government, in business, philanthropy, education, welfare work and many other categories—is toward pyramiding organization. Of such trends churches and gospel-bearing organizations should certainly beware.

"There is, of course, a place for organization in the efficient, orderly conduct of Christian affairs. But there is also grave danger of elaborating organization to the point where Christian groups become merely well-oiled machines with better-than-usual motives. God does not work through machines; He works through yielded men and women.

"The church or other Christian groups concerned, because of apparent loss of power, can well afford to think along these lines."

While we personally would not care to be responsible for every implication contained in this article, yet with the basic idea we certainly agree and can also be warned by it. Certainly Classes, Synods, Mission Committees, Theological School Committees, etc., are necessary but all too often they result in the local church and the individual member simply letting them go and ignoring their work. We must once again insist on the importance of the Consistory and the work of the local church and through this also be awakened to a renewed denominational life. But always the local remains and must remain the most important.

REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT

Under the above heading our attention was attracted to a rather unusual article in the *Presbyterian Guardian*. We quote it here:

"Bible-believing Christians are conservative in theology. It is probably only natural that they are usually conservative in politics and economics. The American Council of Christian Churches not only denounces the National Council (formerly The Federal Council) for its modernism but also for its political radicalism. The American Council in its convention resolutions adopts a strictly conservative position in the politico-economic sphere opposing the Fair Deal, the British Labor Party and any and all manifestations of what it regards as 'Socialism'. Reading of the Christian Reformed *Banner* indicates that it is almost necessary to be a Republican to be a member in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church. The name of the great Calvinist party in the Netherlands is The Anti-Revolutionary Party. Historically this means opposition to the principles of the French Revolution. Yet the very name carries with it overtones of a conservative position. The Southern Presbyterian *Journal*, organ of the conservatives in the Presbyterian Church, South, may not have many Republicans among its contributors but certainly their political and social views are anti-administration. We cite these instances as evidence that usually Bible-believers are against the socializing trend in modern times.

"On the other hand, religious liberals tend to be liberal, or, if you will, radical in their politics and economics. Many of them are influenced by Marxist ideas on capitalism and the production of wealth. Hostility to capitalism with its profit among them. E. Stanley Jones has advocated a Christian socialism and The World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948 not only condemned communism but also



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capitalism for its materialism. Until the last five years, apologists for Russian communism have been found among them.

"Is this line-up good? It is necessary? Must a conservative in religion be a conservative in politics?

"Because this writer deplors any idea that the Republicans are on the side of the angels he would point out:

1. In religion we have a revealed Word, infallible and eternal. There are no new revelations. So we are conservatives in theology, holding to that which is given. We believe in progress in understanding of the Word but deny that interpreting the Word away, as do the liberals, can bring new wisdom.

"2. In politics and economics we have no revelation. Neither Karl Marx nor Adam Smith spoke by divine authority. All systems in this field are man made, hence imperfect and relative. This would even be true of a system which sought to build on the principles of Scripture. Much more is it true of those which ignore Scripture. It follows that the old is not necessarily better than the new.

"3. Capitalism as it has existed and still exists today is not Christian. It is materialistic. The profit motive is its god. It is not interested in human beings but in money. It has produced the squalid slums of our great cities. It has reduced the workman to a cog in the machine. It has exploited the worker in the past and perhaps would still do so were he not protected by the labor union and the government until checked by the state. It squandered the natural resources God has given us. It has produced a selfish and aggressive individualism. By these harsh and general criticisms we do not imply that capitalism is necessarily evil or that all capitalists are bad men or that mankind has yet found a better system. We are only saying that capitalism, as is, has often been evil and unchristian. We hold that modifications of capitalism are necessary and inevitable and should not be opposed blindly by orthodox Christians.

"4. If capitalism is not Christian, neither is present day socialism. It too is materialistic. The 'abundant life' is full employment and old age security. Its humanitarianism without the well-spring of Christian love turns out to be no humanitarianism at all. Its concentrations of power make the old time 'trusts' look innocent. It has developed so that government bureaucrats can be as selfish and corrupt as the former 'barons of privilege.' It has increased the power of the state to alarming proportions with serious threat to our personal liberties.

"5. The Christian should recognize that he lives

in an imperfect and sinful world. He should be wedded neither to the old or the new but should be independent in his thinking. He should also allow considerable liberty to other Christians in their assessment of the political and economic situation. And finally he should not do a disservice to the dynamic gospel of Christ by identifying it with political conservatism."

That there are many thoughts in the above with which we agree and which we can well remember especially this year goes without saying.

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A DIFFERENT SLANT ON THE RACE QUESTION

In a recent *Calvin Forum* an article appeared under the title "Some Factors Involved in the Problem of Race." Under the sub-title: "The Sins of the Fathers" a somewhat different angle is presented in this matter. We quote the following:

"The racial problem in general and the Negro problem in particular is largely a matter of the sins of the fathers visited upon the third and upon the fourth generation; and unless we whites begin by recognizing something like corporate guilt, it is doubtful that the American racial problem will be solved at all. 'For I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God . . .' And if the word jealous here means anything at all, it means jealousy of unrighteousness. Once you admit that the Negro is a fellow creature made in the image of God, your course as a Christian is determined. For you can't get away from the fact that the white race has brutally disregarded the image of God in the Negro and has accordingly disregarded God Himself. The Negro problem, however much the practical details may continue to plague us, can be worked out only if we whites view it with utmost Christian humility. And this means that we shall have to come as penitents to a wronged minority. Merely to say that you would not mind sitting next to a Negro brother in church is to betray an unconscious hypocrisy, for that is not the question. The question is: Can we reasonably hope that a sufficiently large number of *Negroes* will be willing to sit next to *us* in church? If and when we finally sit at the conference table with the Negro to discuss practical measures, let us first acknowledge that the problem is of our own making, apologize to the Negro, and then pray to Heaven that there will be enough charitable, practical, and wise *Negroes*."

We thought you might be interested in this rather unusual approach to the race-question.

J. Howerzyl.

Report of Classis West . . . MEETING MARCH 5, 1952 AT ROCK VALLEY, IOWA

The Rev. S. Cammenga calls the meeting to order, Psalter 94 is sung, Scripture is read and the president of the former classis offers prayer. Rev. J. De Jong presides and Rev. Cammenga records the minutes. The credentials are brought to the table and roll call reveals that all the churches are represented, except Bellflower. Lynden is the new-comer among us. The minutes of the former meeting are read and approved as recorded. The Stated Clerk reports that he has finished the work the last Classis assigned him. The church visitors for Manhattan report, also the church visitors for Iowa-Minn. and the reports reflect adherence to the truth and general spiritual growth.

Rev. A. Petter, visiting with us today, is given advisory vote. The classical committee now renders its report, much of which concerns supply for Lynden and Edgerton. Lynden is newly organized and needed supply until Classis and Edgerton's minister, Rev. P. De Boer, is gone from his pulpit for a while, needing a rest, hence Edgerton too needed to be helped. The report is read and accepted. Comes now a motion to send Rev. De Boer a letter of regret that he is unable to be with us today due to illness. Revs. Cammenga and Gritters to draw up this letter. There were also communications from Hamilton and Chatham to which the Classis made answer that it refuses to take cognizance of these letters because they properly belong to Classis East.

A committee is appointed to make classical appointments for Lynden and Edgerton. Committee later gives its report and the schedule is as follows: Edgerton: Mar. 16 Rev. Van Weelden; Mar. 30 Rev. Gritters; Apr. 13 Rev. Cammenga; Apr. 27 Rev. Hofman Lynden: Mar 16, 23, 30, Apr. 6, 13 Rev. Vermeer; Apr. 20, 27, May 4 Rev. De Boer, (if unable, Rev. Gritters to go); May 11, 18 Rev. Doezeema; May 25, June 1, 8 Rev. Howerzyl; June 15, 22, 29 Rev. Van Weelden; July 6, 13, 20 Rev. H. C. Hoeksema; July 27, Aug. 3, 10 Rev. De Jong; and Aug. 17, 24, 31 Rev. S. Cammenga.

The Doon consistory came with an instruction to the effect that a classical agenda be made, that is, that the material for each classical gathering be incorporated into an agenda, to be in the hands of all the consistories not later than two weeks before the meeting of the Classis. For this purpose all material for the Classis shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than the first of February for the March Classis and the first of August for the September Classis meeting. This arrangement, the instruction asserts, would enable the delegates to study the material in advance as well as to do the necessary research work in regard to the matters coming to the Classis. This instruction was decided favorably by the Classis. Classis however decided that the reports of the standing committee be exempted from the Agenda. We shall have an agenda therefore, and all the consistories will kindly see to it that any matters they want at the Classis be in the hands of the Stated Clerk as per the dates decided above. The Stated Clerk is ordered to remind the consistories of this new ruling about an agenda. Doon also invites the Classis to have its next regular

meeting there, and this is so decided. It also asks that Synod meet there for its 1953 session and the Classis overtures Synod accordingly. Synod will therefore be invited to meet in Doon, Iowa for its 1953 session.

Committee for subsidies is appointed and they have before them requests for financial aid from Doon, asking \$500.00, (granted); from Lynden asking \$3120.00 with, and \$2040.00 without a pastor (granted). Lynden also asked for a loan and Classis advised that we have no loan-fund, instead it advises Lynden to ask a collection in the churches of Classis west, and to contact the Classical Committee to forward such a request to Synod to ask for a collection also in the Churches of Classis east. Classical committee empowered to act accordingly. Pella asks \$1000.00 (granted); Orange City asks \$3500.00 (granted) and Sioux Center asks \$1000.00 (\$500.00 granted). These requests are forwarded to Synod with advice to grant as per decisions above.

There are three communications at Classis. Rev. Howerzyl (and his consistory) states that because the Acts of 1951 are not yet available he reserves the right to protest any action of said Synod in 1953 rather than 1952. His consistory reserves this same right for itself. A communication from the Pella church to the effect that it has received no official answer to its objections against the Declaration and asks to reserve the right to re-act favorably or unfavorably when the Acts finally are available. Rev. J. Van Weelden also will reserve for himself the right to present his objections with documentations to the Synod of 1953. These three communications are forwarded to the Synod, however Classis expresses that these requests are not necessary since everyone has the right. But since that request is made Classis decides to send them through to the forthcoming Synod.

Rev. De Jong is voted Deputy Ad Examinator for a three year term and Rev. W. Hofman his alternate. Motion comes to raise the salary of the Stated Clerk from one hundred dollars to one hundred fifty, and an amendment is attached that the expenses of the Stated Clerk be paid over and above said one hundred and fifty dollars. From a nomination of three, Classis votes for Stated Clerk and Rev. Gritters is elected. Three year term. The voting for delegates to the Synod of 1952 resulted as follows:

Ministers		Elders	
Primi	Secundi	Primi	Secundi
L. Doezeema	S. Cammenga	C. v.d. Molen	J. Broek
J. De Jong	M. Gritters	A. Wassenaar	C. De Vries
W. Hofman	L. Vermeer	M. Flikkema	G. Mesman
J. Howerzyl	J. v. Weelden	G. Rijken	Wm. Huisken

C. Vander Molen thanks the ladies of the Rock Valley Church for the excellent lunches and dinner they served the delegates. The questions DKO 41 are asked and answered. Doon is the next meeting place and Classis meets again, first Wednesday in September, D.V.

Motion comes to adjourn. Minutes are read and approved. Classis sings psalm 89:7 and Rev. De Jong, president for the day, closes this session with prayer.

M. GRITTERS, Stated Clerk