

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Appearing Unto Salvation

"And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

—Hebrews 9:28b.

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." That Word of God comes to us with greater emphasis today than ever before.

The end of all things is at hand.

It is the last hour.

All the signs point to the fact that it has already grown very late in this last hour. The voice of Jesus declares louder than ever, "Behold, I come quickly." He is hastening to come.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And he that has eyes to see, let him regard the signs of the times.

We are accustomed to speak of a twofold coming of Christ, a first and a second coming. Scripture also refers to the birth of Christ and His dwelling among us, with its accompanying suffering and death, as a *first* coming. And it refers to His return with the clouds of the heavens as a *second* coming.

It is interesting to note that the prophets of the Old Dispensation spoke of but one coming of Christ. They included in that coming His incarnation, His death on the cross, but also His final coming in judgment. However, this does not mean that they were mistaken on that score. It cannot possibly mean that the Holy Spirit, Who spoke to them of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow, had deceived them. God is not a man that He should lie. When the Spirit spoke to the prophets of the coming of the Son of Man, He displayed before their wondering gaze the broad panorama of the future as one

glorious coming unto salvation. They saw it all as a single moment, without realizing that some two thousand years would elapse before that coming was completed. We might compare them to a traveller approaching a mountain range that looms up in the distance before him. He sees the various snow-capped peaks, one towering above the other, but they all seem to make up one solid formation, without a break anywhere. He may wonder how anyone ever scaled that range, or managed to find a pass through it. Yet as he proceeds on his way, the pass opens up before him and he soon finds himself in a series of mountains with canyons and broad expanses of valleys separating them. He travels many miles before he has left behind that last towering peak that seemed so near when he first saw it. So also the prophets of old saw the whole new dispensation as one great event in the unfolding of the counsel of God. They saw the coming of Christ as one great work of salvation, beginning with the incarnation and reaching its culmination in the day of judgment.

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This places us, as church of the new dispensation, in a very peculiar position. We are living right in the midst of the coming of the Son of Man. On the one hand, we look back and see the fulfillment of prophecy in the birth of Jesus Christ from the virgin. On the other hand, we look ahead into the not too distant future, awaiting His final coming with the clouds. Ours are the last days.

Upon us has come the end of the ages. And the time is short.

Christ came once.

He is coming again.

He shall appear a second time to those who wait for Him unto salvation.

The text speaks of Christ coming as an appearance.

We saw Him for a period of some thirty-three years while He fulfilled His ministry among us, and then we saw Him no more. He is no more among us. But He will return, and we shall see Him again, never to be separated from Him.

Emphasis must necessarily fall on the fact, that it is *Christ* Whose appearance we anticipate. He is the Son of God, Who took on our flesh from the virgin Mary. Of Him the Scriptures say that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." It is true, that not all who saw the man Jesus saw Him as the Son of God. But neither could they ignore Him, or fail to pass judgment upon Him. Many heard Him speak, and marvelled at His words, yet soon turned away in scorn. Many saw His miracles and were impressed, but at the same time they hated Him in the blindness of unbelief. Even His own brothers did not believe on Him for some time. The Scribes and Pharisees called Him a glutton and wine-bibber. They branded Him as a blasphemer, because He called Himself the Son of God. They condemned Him to death as a criminal unfit for human society. They cast their resentment in His teeth, even while He hung on the cross. But there were others who saw Him with an eye of faith and confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. By special revelation, the wise men knew Him, also the shepherds, and Simeon and Anna, they all worshipped before Him. Peter confessed as the spokesman for the other disciples: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." And after the resurrection Thomas addresses Him as, "My Lord and my God."

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He appeared once.

Concerning this appearance the apostle John writes in his epistle, that He is the word of life, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." He revealed Himself as the Son of God in mighty words and works. He did even more. He wilfully took upon Himself the wrath of God against sin, and gave Himself unto the accursed death of the cross. He committed His body to death and the grave. And He arose again on the third day as complete Victor over sin and death. For a period of forty days He made His appearances unto His disciples to reveal to them the glory of His resurrection. And then He did not merely disappear from view, leaving them in the dark as to where He had gone, but He ascended to heaven before their eyes. They saw the heavens receive Him as He was hidden from their sight. And they were

assured by the angel that stood among them at that moment, that this same Jesus that was taken up from them into heaven, "shall so come in like manner".

We saw Him once, and we see Him no more among us. Yet we shall see Him again, for He is coming a second time.

The next major event we expect on God's calendar is that the Son of Man is coming with the clouds of the heavens.

Behold, I come quickly.

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Appearing unto salvation.

Christ will appear a second time unto *salvation*.

This could not possibly be taken to mean that this is the specific purpose of His coming in distinction from His first, implying that His first coming was not unto salvation. That cannot be the case, for all that Jesus ever is and does is unto salvation. His very name Jesus implies this. Jesus means *Jehovah salvation* or *Savior*. He is Jesus-Savior when He comes into our flesh, and lies in the manger. He is Jesus in His public ministry, Jesus in His suffering and death, Jesus in His resurrection and ascension, Jesus as our exalted Lord at the right hand of power and glory. He is Jesus when He comes to judge the living and the dead. In all that He does He is always carrying out the divine program of salvation. He saved His people from their sins.

The contrast between His first and second coming is brought out in the phrase 'without sin.' The text states that He will appear *without sin* unto salvation. This implies that His first coming was *with sin*. He appeared the first time with sin unto salvation. When we see Him again, it will be without sin.

To say that Jesus appeared *with sin* does not mean, of course, that Jesus was a sinner, even as we are. That would be contrary to all the Scriptures, which teach the every opposite. He knew no sin. He was like unto us in all things, sin excluded. All His life He walked among sinful men without participating with them in their sins. Repeatedly He was tempted of Satan, yet He never fell into temptation. At the close of His life He could challenge the whole world with the demand: "Who of you accuses Me of sin?" And the whole world certainly joined together as one man in a last vicious, yet futile attempt to accuse Him. How diligently Annas sought to find some charge against Him. How vainly the Sanhedrin wrestled to build up a case against Him. How reluctantly Pilate admitted over and over again, "I tell you, I find no fault in this man."

When the text says that He came the first time

with sin it means that He bore the sins of many. He was made sin for us. He had taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and humbled Himself to death, even the shameful death of the cross; and all this because of *our Sin*.

We more commonly refer to Christ's second coming as a coming in judgment. This is also entirely according to the Scriptures, which speak of the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Then will the Son of Man come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him, and He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him will be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. (Matth. 25:31, 32). Already there are many forebodings of that day of His coming. Scripture speaks of wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. But Scripture also points to many other signs. Think of the amazing changes and developments that have taken place during the past fifty years. Only a few decades ago people crept along by horse and buggy, or by the slow chugging automobile. Today we race along the highways at a speed of sixty or seventy miles an hour, we fly through the air at hundreds of miles per hour, and we hear of speeds that far exceed the speed of sound. Consider all the inventions of the past few years that are supposed to serve to make our life easier and simpler. Has this all served to give us more time for study and quiet reflection? Has it made our lives simpler? The very opposite is true, for we are busier now than ever. We experience more in a lifetime than Methuselah could ever dream of experiencing in his nine hundred and sixty nine years. Think of the inroads that radio and television have made upon our home life, often helping along to destroy whatever family life is left in the homes. Think of the rapid development of sin. Excess drinking, gambling, vices of every sort are openly condoned. Divorces have become almost as common as marriages. A pleasure mad world is taking her last fling, dashing headlong to destruction, even as she glories in her shame. Consider the apostasy in the church. For much that calls itself church today has become nothing more than a social center which still has the form of godliness, but has lost the power thereof.

Our world is striving for unification to every sphere of life. Nations seek unity, corporations expand, the churches amalgamate together. All are preparing for the coming of the man of sin, the power

of antichrist that must still appear before Christ returns. In the meantime, this world of sin has discovered the power of the atom, but only begins to realize what this harnessed power can do toward her own destruction. As the first world mocked at the idea of a flood with water all around her, so this present world scorns the thought of a judgment with fire, even while the consuming power of fire is impressed upon her every day.

He who cometh will come, and will not tarry.

But for the church of Jesus Christ that spells victory. The Lord saves His church through judgment. As Noah was saved by the waters of the flood, and as Lot was delivered from Sodom before the fire rained from heaven, so the Lord delivers His people out of the midst of His judgments unto their eternal salvation.

Unto those who wait for Him, He shall appear.

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They are those who wait patiently and assiduously for His coming. You can recognize yourself as belonging to these saved, if you bear this earmark.

Their whole attitude is that of expectation. When visitors are expected in the home, we soon notice an air of expectancy about the house. When, for example, a son returns home on a furlough, there is a hustle and bustle everywhere. Mother is making the preparations for supper. Father is getting ready to go to the train. Restlessly every one watches the clock. Likewise the believer prepares himself spiritually waiting and watching in prayer.

Moreover, those who wait for Him grow increasingly eager for His coming. They long to see His day. They do not become swallowed up in the affairs of this life. They do not seek their treasure here, but they seek their treasure in heaven. They do not try to gain all this, and heaven besides. But they are pilgrims, strangers in the world, ever striving to attain to the things that are above. They guard their souls from the snares and temptations of sin.

They wait with patience.

The night often seems long and dark, the enemy presses sorely, the sufferings of this present time burden them. But they bear all these things for Christ's sake. They knew Whom they have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed to Him unto that day!

To such the promise is sure: He shall appear!

He will find them ready, waiting and watching.

Watch ye, therefore. Yea, watch unto prayer.

C. Hanko.

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EDITORIALS

Promises and Predictions*

We will now turn to our Reformed Confessions, in order to examine them with a view to the question whether they, perhaps, make the distinction between predictions and promises such as Dr. Schilder makes, and whether promises, in distinction from predictions, are indeed for N.N., for Tom, Dick, and Harry.

I am afraid that many of the Reformed people, and this certainly includes also the Liberated, are not very well acquainted with their own Confessions, except, perhaps, the Heidelberg Catechism. And even the leaders of the Liberated, with their contention that the promise is for all the children that are born under the dispensation of the covenant and that it is conditional, do not preferably quote the Confessions in support of their view. In all his criticism on the Declaration of Principles Dr. Schilder did not once refer to the Confessions. He did indeed allege that the Declaration of Principles represented the supralapsarian view of the counsel of God, although the basic contention of that Declaration, namely, that the promise of God is unconditional and for the elect only, has nothing whatever to do with the question of supra and infra, but is deduced directly from the infralapsarian Confessions. He also criticized the contention of the Declaration that election is the sole cause and fountain of all our salvation, instead of which he suggested that election is not the cause or fountain, but the ground of our salvation. In this he made an error, for the Confessions literally speak of cause and fountain. But for the rest, I do not remember that in all his criticism Dr. Schilder referred to the Confessions whatsoever. And this, of course, is at the same time a fundamental weakness of his criticism: for the Declaration means to be nothing but an expression of the truth as it is found in our Reformed symbols.

But this in parentheses.

We will now turn to the Confessions themselves, to discover whether they really support the view of a conditional promise for all the children that are born in the dispensation of the covenant.

I will begin with the well-known and often quoted part of the Canons of Dordrecht that speaks of the promise of everlasting life. I refer to Canons II, 5,

* The readers will kindly understand that this editorial was written and set-up, before I heard of brother Schilder's passing.
H.H.

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a part of the Confessions to which also Dr. Schilder preferably refers as defining the real promise of the gospel.

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

It is striking indeed that also the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches, 1924, appealed to this same part of the Confessions to maintain their "puntje van het eerste punt" (the heart of the first point), that, namely, the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear. Not being able to find any Kuyperian common grace in the Confessions, they made the error of presenting the gospel as a well-meaning offer of grace and salvation, well-meaning on the part of God, to all the hearers. In other words, by the very force of circumstances they were deflected into Arminian waters.

But how about this part of the Confessions? Does it indeed teach the distinction between predictions and promises, so that there are no predictions for N.N., for Tom, Dick, and Harry, but there are promises for them? In other words, is the promise of the gospel here presented as for all, and as a conditional promise?

To be sure, this article does sustain the contention of Schilder that there are no predictions for N.N. And we may just as well state at once that such a doctrine is not and could not possibly be found in any of our Confessions, no more than it is ever met with in Holy Writ. The article certainly does not state that N.N. shall have eternal life, or that N.N. shall perish.

However, note too that there nevertheless is in this article a prediction in the form of a promise, or, if you wish, a promise in the form of a prediction. That prediction and that promise is contained in the clause, "whosoever . . . shall not perish, but have everlasting life." This is a promise, for it is stated in the very same article that this is the promise of the gospel. But at the same time it is a prediction, as the future form of the verb plainly indicates. One can also say on the basis of Scripture that one that believes in Christ *hath* eternal life; and in that case it is a statement of a present fact. But here the promise of the gospel is given in the form of a prediction, of a good that is to be attained and expected in the future. We may certainly put this prom-

ise in this form: "Whosoever . . . shall not go to hell, but shall go to heaven."

But note now, in the second place, that this promise in the form of a prediction is not given as a conditional promise to N.N. God does not issue checks on which it is written: "I, Jehovah God, promise you, Tom, Dick, and Harry, eternal life," a promise that for its realization depends on the willingness of him who received it to go to the bank and cash the check. The promise is not to N.N., but to the believers. For: "The promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And this brings us to the question: who are the believers? This question must of course be answered in the light of all our Reformed Confessions. I insist that no one has the right to isolate this part of the Confessions and separate it from the whole. Then indeed you can make the Confessions speak Arminian language. Also the Arminian has no objection to the definition of the promise as contained in Canons II, 5, provided you separate this part from the rest of the Reformed symbols. They also state that he that believeth shall surely be saved. And they even have no objection to maintain that faith is a gift of God, and that it is all of grace. And therefore we must certainly read this part of the Confessions in the light of the rest. I will not take space at this time to quote the Confessions on this score at length. I will only refer to the same chapter of the Canons, Articles 7 and 8. In Article 7 we read: "But as many as truly believe, and are delivered and saved from sin and destruction through the death of Christ, are indebted for this benefit solely to the grace of God, given them in Christ from everlasting, and not to any merit of their own." And in Article 8: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own pre-

sence forever." Here, then, you have the answer to the question: who are the believers? In one word, they are the elect. Hence, the promise here is not to N.N., it is not for Tom, Dick, and Harry. But it is only for those that are ingrafted into Christ, that embrace all His benefits by a saving faith, the believers. And therefore, the promise according to Canons II, 5, in the light of all the Reformed symbols, is only for the elect.

And just as you cannot possibly make the promise of the gospel according to Canons II, 5 a general promise for all, or at least a promise for all the children that are born under the covenant, so you cannot by any stretch of the imagination make this promise a conditional promise, which after all is the same as a well-meaning offer of salvation, and which, by the way, would place the promise exactly out of reach of every sinner. For no sinner can possibly fulfill any conditions in order to receive or attain to the promise of eternal life. But it is not presented as conditional in this part of the Canons. Even the form of the language is not conditional. The form is rather that of general relative clause: "Whosoever believeth in Christ crucified," (*ut quisquis credit in Christum crucifixum*). And *quisquis* does not introduce a conditional sentence, but a general relative clause. It denotes therefore that there is no exception but that all who are included in those who believe in Christ will surely have eternal life. Besides, let me remind you that faith, in our Confessions, is never presented as a condition, not even unto the full and final realization of the promise. It is always presented as an instrument or means, and that too a God-given instrument, whereby we are ingrafted into Christ and whereby we receive all His benefits of mere grace.

We maintain, therefore, that in Canons II, 5:

1. There is certainly no mention of a prediction to N. N.
2. That is the same article there is mention of a prediction of eternal life, but not to N.N., but to believers.
3. That this prediction is at the same time the promise of the gospel, and that also the promise of the gospel is not to N.N., but to the same believers.
4. That in the light of all the Reformed symbols the believers are the elect, and none other.
5. That the promise to them is not conditional, but is an oath of God according to which He leads the elect infallibly to salvation.

But you say: what about the last part of this same article. This last part reads: "This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared to all nations, and to all persons promiscuous-

ly and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel."

Does not this last part make the promise of the gospel conditional, conditional, that is, upon faith and repentance? And may we not say that in this sense the promise of the gospel is to N.N.?

My answer is: positively not! Mark you well, this part of the article does not speak of the promise of God to N.N., to Tom, Dick, and Harry. But it speaks of the general *preaching* of the promise to all nations and to all men promiscuously, that is, without distinction. And according to the article, this preaching must be accomplished by the command to repent and believe. And, mark you well, the scope of this preaching is not determined by man, but by God, Who sends this gospel to whomsoever He wills.

But what is the meaning of this last part?

In answer I will remind you, first of all, of the truth that there is no preaching of the gospel, except as it stands in the service of the efficacious Word of God through Christ. Man cannot preach, unless it pleases God through Christ to speak His Word efficaciously through him. His word is powerless. Only the Word of God is quick and powerful and efficacious. Even though a mere man announces the gospel, and even though that word which he announces is based upon the Holy Scriptures, it will have no effect upon the hearers, either unto hardening or unto salvation.

In the second place, the call to repent and believe must go forth to all men and to all nations promiscuously for the simple reason that the hearers are all moral and rational and responsible creatures. They have not the right to assume and keep on assuming an attitude of unbelief over against the Word of God. All men are obligated to repent.

In the third place, do not forget that only where this announcement of the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe, stands in the service of the efficacious Word of God that announcement can have effect. And the effect is always two-fold: it serves as a savor of death unto death, as well as a savor of life unto life. And thus, by the command to repent and believe, in the service of the efficacious Word of God, the reprobate sinner is hardened, his judgment is aggravated, and God is justified when He judges. On the other hand, through this same preaching of the promise, together with the command to repent and believe, and standing in the service of the efficacious Word of God, the elect are brought to repentance and to a conscious, lively faith in Christ Jesus, and thus they have the right to embrace the promise that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

H.H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART III
OF THANKULNESS

Lord's Day 32

Q. 86. Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?

A. Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.

Q. 87. Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

A. By no means; for the holy scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolator, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

1.

The Idea of This Third Part

In this Lord's Day the Heidelberg begins the third part of its instruction in the truth of the Word of God.

The order of the Heidelberg Catechism, we remember, is experiential and practical.

This does not mean that our little book of instruction is mystical in the morbid sense of the word, so that it is a description of the experiences of the Christian. For throughout it is based on the Word of God as we have it in the Scriptures. But it differs from such symbols as, for instance, the *Confessio Belgica*, in that it does not merely objectively set forth and systematically develop the truth in a dogmatic order. In that case the order would have been entirely different. Then the Catechism could not have begun its instruction with the part concerning the knowledge of sin and misery, but would have introduced it with a setting forth of the knowledge of God, in order then to develop the truth concerning creation and man, concerning Christ (His natures, names, offices, and states), concerning the application of salvation to the elect by the Holy Spirit, concerning the church and the means of grace, and finally the truth concerning the doctrine of the last things. But now the Catechism presents the truth of the Word of God as it is applied

to the Christian by the Holy Spirit, and experienced and confessed by the believer. And in that case you naturally obtain the order of sin and misery, of redemption and deliverance, and of gratitude to God for the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nor must we conceive of this order as merely chronological. It is not simply the order of time, as if the Christian were first of all a man in sin and misery, then that same man as he is redeemed and delivered, and now finally again that same man as he offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. Rather must we conceive of this order as being that of a constant experience. As long as he is in this life, the Christian experiences his sin and misery, his redemption and deliverance, as well as his thankfulness to God, all at the same time. Always he is the sinful, redeemed, thankful Christian.

In this third part we meet in Lord's Days 32 and 33 first of all with a discussion of the conversion of the Christian to God, the necessity of good works, the idea of good works, and the fruits of those good works. Next, we find in Lord's Days 34 to 44 a detailed discussion of the Decalogue as the standard and criterion of all good works. And all this is concluded in Lord's Days 45 to 52 with a discussion of prayer: the necessity of it, the requisites of true prayer, and a discussion of the contents of prayer as briefly represented in the prayer which the Lord Himself has taught us.

It may be well to begin our discussion of this third part of the Catechism with a word of introduction concerning the relation between this third part, which speaks of gratitude to God for the great deliverance and redemption He has wrought for us and in us, to the former two parts, which speak of sin and misery and of redemption and deliverance. We must not conceive of the relation between these parts as if it were such, that now in the part of thankfulness we finally become a party over against the living God. This impression is not infrequently left by preachers on the Heidelberg Catechism. In the first part of our little book of instruction the sinner was presented as hopelessly lost, as prone by nature to hate God and the neighbor, as being conceived and born in sin, and as wholly corrupt, incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness. He is, therefore, in such a state that it is impossible for him to be God's party in the midst of the world. Rather he is the devil's party. Nor are we the party of God in the work of redemption and deliverance. For that work is entirely of God, and the sinner cannot add one tittle or iota to his own salvation. But now, in the third part, we begin to work, and therefore become an active party over against the God of our salvation. Here

finally the Heidelberg Catechism begins to emphasize our responsibility. In the preceding two parts this was lacking, and naturally so. How is it possible that one that always was corrupt, that never was anything else than incapable of doing any good, can be held responsible for any good works which he can never perform? It is true that in Qu. 9 the Heidelberg Catechism had maintained that responsibility by appealing to the organic and forensic relationship of the whole human race to Adam. It stated that God made man capable of performing the law, but that he by the instigation of the devil and his own wilful disobedience deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts. Nevertheless, so it is often objected, the doctrine of total depravity must leave the individual without responsibility before God. Also in the second part of the Heidelberg Catechism, the part concerning deliverance and redemption, the responsibility of man was somewhat obscured. Man is object, not subject, in the entire work of salvation. It is admitted that in Lord's Day 24 in connection with the doctrine of justification by mere grace the Heidelberg Catechism stresses the truth that man can never become careless and profane, seeing that it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness. But after all, these fruits of thankfulness are wholly imputed unto Christ. And again, the responsibility of man is somewhat obscured. But now, in the third part,—thus it is alleged,—the Catechism begins to strike a different note. It asks the question: Why, *must* we still do good works?" It is, therefore, a question of our obligation. Here the responsibility of man begins to be emphasized. Here man becomes a party over against God. It is even said in Qu. 87 that those who are not converted to God and who continue in their wicked lives cannot be saved, because the Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulter, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like shall inherit the kingdom of God. We must therefore do good works. We must flee from sin, and be converted, and convert ourselves, in order to be saved. Conversion is an indispensable condition unto salvation. Here indeed, they say, responsibility is no longer denied, but properly emphasized.

Besides, this entire last part of the Heidelberg Catechism is treated under the caption, "Gratitude to God". It speaks of a gratitude that must be expressed in the whole of our conduct. And the idea of gratitude always implies a certain measure of remuneration. This is often expressed in our relation to one another. When someone bestows a certain gift upon us or does something for us, we often express

our gratitude by saying, "If ever I can do something for you, let me know; I will be glad to do it anytime, in return for what you have done for me." And so, the expression of gratitude on the part of the Christian naturally implies that he now will do something for God or for Christ, Who has done so much for him. He will at least try to save souls and gain others for Christ, as also the Heidelberg Catechism expresses it in Qu. and A. 86.

Thus, on the basis of the third part of the Heidelberg Catechism we can develop real, practical Christendom, that gives the proper place to man as a responsible creature in the economy of salvation; that makes of Christendom a real power in the world; and that demands the whole world, in every department and sphere, for Christ.

And thus, they say, the true Reformed world-and-life view comes to its own.

It used to be different, also in Reformed circles. Many there were that emphasized the Reformed truth of predestination, with its doctrine of election and reprobation, at the expense of a proper emphasis on the responsibility of man. Many there were too that delighted to emphasize the total depravity of man and the doctrine that he is incapable by nature of doing any good and inclined to evil in such a way that there is nothing left of man but a stock and a block. And again, there were always in Reformed circles those that emphasized the grace of free justification at the expense of the grace of sanctification and good works. This was not only the case with the followers of Kohlbrugge, that are often designated as Antinomians, but also in the Reformed churches in the past. Preachers delighted to dwell at length on the first part of the Heidelberg Catechism, and emphasize the fact that the sinner is totally incapable of doing any good. They also dwelt at great length on salvation by sovereign grace alone. But when they reached the third part of the Heidelberg Catechism, they rather superficially skimmed over the material presented there, especially over the part that treats of the law of God. But today Reformed people have turned away from this sickly Antinomianism. They see that there is work to do for the Christian. They must bring America back to God. They must do good works. And man is a responsible creature, not a stock and a block. He cannot inherit the kingdom of God if he continues in his wicked and unconverted life. In return for what God in Christ has done for him, he now must do something for God.

In the light of all this it will be seen that it is by no means superfluous to ask and to try to answer the question: what is the exact and proper relation be-

tween the third part of the Heidelberg Catechism and the first two parts?

In this connection it may be well to face the question: what is meant by the responsibility of man? What is it? And what is its relation to the economy of salvation, and particularly to the sovereign grace of God? And what is its relation to the all comprehensive and unchangeable counsel of the Most High?

And then I want to emphasize, in the first place, that responsibility can never presuppose sovereign freedom. Only God is sovereignly free. And man is dependent, even as a rational, moral creature. He is limited on all sides by the counsel of God.

It is not necessary at this point to dwell at length upon the significance of the counsel of God, and to enter into a detailed discussion of the Biblical representation of God's eternal decree. I just want to make a few remarks concerning that counsel. It is no mere dead plan, even as an architect draws a plan with detailed specification of a proposed structure. But it is the living and eternal will and mind of God with regard to all things in time and eternity. The counsel of the Most High according to our fathers, is the living, counselling God Himself. As far as definition and circumscription is concerned, this must suffice. But we must call attention to certain attributes of that counsel of the eternal God that have a direct bearing upon its relation to the accountability of the moral creature. First of all, we must note that this counsel is all-comprehensive. It does not only imply the things that are made as they are created in the beginning. Such is the nature of an architectural plan. The architect can probably determine in detail how the structure that is to be raised shall be. But he cannot determine what shall become of the building: its history and destiny lie beyond his control. But such is not the case with the counsel of God. When Scripture teaches us that it is all-comprehensive, it signifies that God from eternity counselled how things should be created at the beginning, how they should develop in time, and what should be their eternal destiny. And this must be understood in the strictest sense of the word. It implies that every creature, great and small, had its shape and history in this eternal, divine decree; that therefore nothing happens in earth or in heaven, in the light or in darkness, with respect to brute creation or to God's moral creatures, but it has all been determined from before the world was. Secondly, I call attention to the attribute of God's counsel which, negatively expressed, we call its irresistibility, and positively denoted, is the absolute efficaciousness of God's decree. God is in the heavens. And He performs all His good pleasure. Nothing ever

withstood His counsel, or ever shall be able to thwart it. Every drop of rain surely falls according to that counsel. Every sunbeam shoots its golden shaft into the wide expanse of space in harmony with God's decree. Every tree grows, every flower blooms, every heart beats, every child is born, and every being breathes its last, every mind thinks and every man moves, yea, every angel sings and every devil rages, according to the determinate will of God. It is irresistably executed in all the wide world. And lastly, I want to mention the immutability, the unchangeableness of the counsel of the Most High. What is determined from eternity is fixed forever. And nothing can induce the Lord, Whose name is I Am, to alter His will or to change His mind. With absolute certainty and unchangeableness the entire course of the whole universe and of every last creature in detail is fixed from before the beginning of all things.

In the whole of that divine, eternal, and unchangeable scheme of the universe and its destiny there are intellectual, moral, rational beings, beings that are responsible, accountable to God, and are treated as such. What is a rational, moral being? It is a being with a will, a rational will of his own, a being who is not simply determined, but who in a sense, in some way, also determines himself. He is a being that not simply develops and grows like a tree, whose movements are not simply determined from without, like that of a stone rolling down the mountain-side, but who performs deeds of his own, determinately, consciously, willingly, and rationally. It is a being that stands in a certain relation to the law of God, who knows God and His will, and who determines from within his own attitude to that will of the Most High. He is, therefore, in this respect like God, though not sovereignly but in a creaturely way and measure: for he wills and thinks and acts, and thus becomes the author of certain deeds for the which he is accountable to God because he is a creature and God is his Sovereign. And he is so accountable and responsible that he will be brought into judgment for all he thought and willed and did, and will receive from God according to what he did, whether it be good or evil. The question arises, therefore: how is all this possible if we maintain the all-comprehensiveness and efficaciousness and immutable character of the counsel of God? If all things are determined by the Most High from eternity, then the deeds of these moral creatures are by God determined, unchangeably determined, and efficaciously determined. And if his inmost thoughts and deepest desires as well as his external acts are so fixed from eternity, how can that moral creature still be free, and being free also be accountable for his own

deeds? How can God judge the creature for what He fixed Himself?

But this is not all that must be said about the subject. There is still another element that must be taken into account if we are to see the seriousness of the question of man's responsibility. For God did not only freely and with absolute sovereignty determine all things in His eternal counsel, but He Himself also executes that counsel and does all His good pleasure. He rules and directs all things to their destiny by His providence. And this providence of God is His omnipresent and omnipotent power. He is with and around and in every creature, of whatever form or nature it may be, brute or rational, moral or otherwise. This omnipresent power of God is the all-controlling force of the whole universe, so directing all things that they must cooperate to the realization of the end the Lord has in view. God guides the sun in its course through the heavens. He brings the rain and the sunshine. He is the continual cause of all things. He also directs and controls the mind and will of man in their deliberations and decisions. And nothing can ever resist or escape the guidance of God's providence.

Such is the problem concerning God's eternal decree and His all-controlling providence, on the one hand, and man's responsibility on the other. And I certainly do not flatter myself that a complete and ultimate solution of this problem may possibly be attained,—a solution in the sense that all mysteries connected with it have been cleared away, and our eager intellectual eye can penetrate to the bottom of the matter. It stands to reason,—and we ought never hesitate frankly to confess,—that when we deal with the infinite God, while we may probably, by faithful and prayerful effort, in the light of His own revelation to us, succeed to make the veil recede that divides the incomprehensible from the realm of things comprehended by our intellect, it will only be to make us see that there are always deeper depths in the Most High, and that unto all eternity we shall not fathom Him Whose name is Infinite. Nevertheless, in the light of Scripture we may and we must properly define and circumscribe the limits of our problem. On the one hand, we must be careful that we do not attempt to solve the problem by destroying one of its main elements, either the sovereignty of God or the responsibility of man. Neither must we present the matter of God's decree and man's responsibility as if they were two parallel lines that never meet: man is sovereignly free as well as God, and the decree of God and His providence certainly cannot encroach upon this sovereign freedom of man. For this certainly is not the teaching of Holy Writ. God alone is sovereign.

And man is always a dependent creature, also in his moral life. And therefore, whether we can solve the problem or not, the fact remains that according to Scripture man's rational and moral life and his responsibility must always be thus presented, that it is enclosed, that it is hemmed in on every side by God's sovereign will and counsel.

H.H.



V R A G E N

Mr. J. J. van R. Calif. vraagt:

Ik heb het boekje van Dr. Kuyper "Zijn Uitgang te Jeruzalem" gelezen. En nu heb ik een paar vragen daarover.

1. Op pag. 118 handelt de schrijver over het kruiswoord van Jezus tot den kwaaddoener: "Voorwaar, voorwaar zeg ik u, heden zult gij met Mij in het paradijs zijn." Kuyper zegt daarvan: "Nog niet in het rijk der heerlijkheid. Dat kan eerst na het oordeel uitbreken. Maar in het paradijs, d.w.z., in den voorloopigen gelukstaat, waarin de afgescheiden zielen den dag van Jezus' glorie verbeiden."

Ik had altijd gedacht, dat de zielen van Gods kinderen terstond naar den hemel gaan.

Antwoord:

Zeker, de zielen van Gods kinderen gaan terstond na het sterven naar den hemel. Daarvoor is genoegzaam bewijs in de Heilige Schrift. Maar dat bedoelt Kuyper ook als hij van het paradijs spreekt als "den voorloopigen gelukstaat."

Dat is echter iets anders dan de eindelijke heerlijkheid. Deze is niet bereikt:

(1). Totdat ook het lichaam verheerlijkt is in de zalige opstanding.

(2). Heel het lichaam van Christus (alle uitverkorenen) verheerlijkt zal zijn.

(3). De nieuwe hemel en aarde geformeerd zullen zijn, waarin de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen zijn zal.

2. De tweede vraag betreft de wijze van Jezus' kruisiging.

In het boven aangehaalde boek (p. 101) stelt Dr. Kuyper het voor alsof het kruis eerst in den grond geplant werd en dat daarna Jezus er aan genageld werd. Ik herinner me een preek, waarin het zoo werd voorgesteld, dat men Jezus aan het kruis nagelde, toen

het nog op den grond lag en dat daarna de soldaten het opnamen en het in den grond plantten.

Antwoord:

Beide is waarschijnlijk waar. De toedracht was waarschijnlijk zoo, dat de soldaten eerst den rechteop staanden paal in den grond staken, dat ze daarna Jezus nagelden aan den dwarspaal van het kruis, terwijl deze op den grond lag, en dat ze toen Jezus met dien dwarsbalk, met ladders of touwen hebben opgeheven en aan den rechteop staanden paal bevestigd, terwijl ze daarna voeten nagelden op een stuk hout, dat voor dat doel aan het kruis was bevestigd.

Hiermee hoop ik eenig licht te hebben verspreid over de vragen van broeder J.J.

H.H.

As To Books

SO YOU WANT TO SPEAK, by Mark W. Lee. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

This book presents the basic principles of public speaking in an interesting way, and offers many helpful suggestions to anyone who wants to prepare and deliver a speech.

I find especially interesting what the author has to say in chapter on "Let Them See You Speak". He properly stresses that necessity of "eye-contact" which is indispensable for any public speaker, while, at the same time, it is my experience, in teaching public speech (homiletics), that when once a speaker develops the habit of looking over instead of at the audience, it is almost impossible to break him of it.

A helpful book! Price \$1.50.

H.H.

TUSSCHEN STERVEN EN OPSTANDING door Prof. Dr. K. Dijk. Uitgever J. H. Kok, n.v., Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f.6.90.

Wat mij vooral bevalt in dit boek van Dr. Dijk is de sobere, geestelijke, Schriftuurlijke toon, die heel het boek doorademt. Aan allerlei wilde speculaties, waarvoor natuurlijk bij het behandelen van een onderwerp, als hier besproken wordt, overvloediglijk ruimte is, geeft de schrijver geen oogenblik plaats. De toon blijft geestelijk-bezadigd.

Dit boek wordt aangekondigd als het eerste deel van een trilogie onder den algemeenen titel "Over de Laatste Dingen." Het tweede deel zal behandelen de voortekenen voor Jezus' komst en het duizendjarig rijk, en het derde deel de komst des Heeren en den

eeuwigen staat. In dit eerste deel gaat het hoofdzakelijk over den z.g.n. tusschentoestand.

Dr. Dijk bedoelt in dit boek geen wetenschappelijk werk te leveren. Het is voor ieder, die Hollansch kan lezen onder ons, begrijpelijk.

We bevelen het bij al onze lezers hartelijk aan.

H.H.

CALVINISME EN EXISTENTIE-PHILOSOPHIE door Ds. J. M. Spier. Uitgever J. H. Kok, n.v., Kampen, Nederland,

Dit boek mag aangediend worden als een beknopte geschiedenis van de existentie-philosophie met een kritiek in het licht van de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee. De schrijver behandelt de beschouwingen van verschillende existentie-philosophen zooals Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Lavelle en Sartre, om daarna een tamelijk breede bespreking te wijden aan de beschouwing van A. E. Loen.

In een inleidend woord zegt de schrijver, dat de existentie-philosophie zich mag verheugen in een toenemende mate van populariteit, een feit, dat hij zoo verklaart, dat deze philosophie "een beroep doet op en aansluiting zoekt bij het levensgevoel van de tegenwoordige mens, dat veelszins door vertwijfeling, wanhoop, uitzichtloosheid en nihilisme gekenmerkt is." Dit zal ook de reden zijn waarom, ofschoon deze filosofie in Europa misschien populair mag zijn, zij bij de breede lagen van het Amerikaansche volk niet bekend is.

Wie belang heeft om zich eenigszins te orienteeren op het gebied van de existentie-philosophie, zal wel doen zich dit boek van Ds. Spier aan te schaffen.

H. H.

ANNIVERSARY

On April 4, 1952, our beloved parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents,

MR. and MRS. JAKE SCHUT

hope to celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary.

It is with profound thanksgiving to our heavenly Father that we wish to celebrate this day with them, and pray Him Who has so graciously spared them for us this far, may be with them, and bountifully bless them for the future.

The grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit B. Lubbers-Schut

Mr. and Mrs. Henry John Holstege-Schut
12 grandchildren, among whom:

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lubbers,
and 1 great-grandchild.

Hudsonville, Michigan.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(12)

THE CREATION OF MAN (5)

(Continued from page 210)

From this quotation of Prof. Berkhof we may certainly conclude that the doctrine of a covenant of works includes the following elements. First, when God created man He, by that very act, established a *natural* relationship between Himself and man. This was a relationship like that between the potter and the clay. God is God and man is His creature. Hence, this is a *natural* relationship, simply follows from the act of creation. In this relationship Adam must serve God and could never have merited anything. Had nothing more occurred Adam would never have been able to attain unto the eternal and heavenly. From the fact of creation it simply followed naturally and automatically that man, being a creature and God's creature, must simply serve the Lord and could never do anything which would entitle him to anything extra, such as eternal, heavenly life. Secondly, God establishes with man a covenant of works. This is something added to the natural relationship, something extra. In addition to what Adam must do as God's creature the Lord now gives him an extra injunction. And, by a gracious enactment, the Lord promises Adam eternal, heavenly life if he will also be obedient as far as this new commandment is concerned. Adam was given the promise of eternal life in the way of obedience, and thus, by the gracious disposition of the Lord, he acquired certain conditional rights. We understand, of course, that all this must be understood as a gracious disposition on the part of the Lord. He graciously gave Adam this extra command, and He graciously affixed to this extra command the extra reward of eternal, heavenly life. And so the covenant of works contains the three elements of the probationary command, the promise of eternal, heavenly life, and the threat of death as punishment.

As Protestant Reformed Churches we have grave and serious objections against this conception of a covenant of works and we reject it in its entirety. I say that we have grave and serious objections against this view as Protestant Reformed Churches, inasmuch as we have set ourselves against this conception throughout our existence.

First, the conception of a covenant of works is not Confessional. In connection with this we do well to remember, and this lends added significance to the fact that this conception is not confessional, that the idea of a covenant of works was known at the time of our Synod of Dordrecht of 1618-1619. This appears from the Introduction in the "Staten Bijbel" to the New Testament where we read, and I quote and translate: "The word, covenant, is a Latin word, whereby the Greek word, *diatheke*, has been translated, which the Greek translators use to express the Hebrew word *berith*, which is, covenant. Thereby actually the covenant itself is understood which God has made with men to give them eternal life under certain conditions. The covenant is two-fold, the Old and the New. The Old is that which God made with the first man before the fall, in which eternal life is promised under condition of a completely perfect obedience and keeping of the law, and is therefore called the covenant of the law which God has again held before Israel in order that they should learn therefrom, whereas this condition has been violated by all men and now cannot be fulfilled by no man, that they must seek their salvation in another covenant, which is known as the New, etc." Apart from the meaning which the word "condition" may have in this quotation, it is a fact that the idea of a covenant of works (called here: the covenant of the law) appears here, inasmuch as we read that God promised Adam, *before the fall*, eternal life under the condition of a completely perfect obedience. Of course, we know that the "Introduction" has never been regarded as constituting a part of our Confessions. The fact remains, however, that it does show that the expression or term was known in those days. Nevertheless, the idea of a Covenant of Works does not appear in our Confessions. O, indeed, our Confessions do speak of the creation of man, of his state and condition before the fall of Adam. Art. 14 of our Confession of Faith, speaking of the creation and fall of man and of his incapacity to perform what is truly good reads thus: "We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked,

perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good since Christ saith, No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the divine will and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man; which He teaches us, when He saith, "Without Me ye can do nothing" And the Canons of Dordrecht refer also to this in Art. 1, III, IV, and we quote: "Man was originally formed after the image of God. His understanding was adorned with a true and saving knowledge of his Creator, and of spiritual things; his heart and will were upright; all his affections were pure; and the whole man was holy; but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, and abusing the freedom of his own will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and on the contrary entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections." It is obvious that the idea of a covenant of works does not appear in these articles, and therefore has not been incorporated in our Confessions.

Secondly, the idea of a covenant of works is not Scriptural, i.e., is not taught literally in the Word of God. Even the advocates of this conception admit that the idea, as such, of a covenant of works, is not literally taught in Scripture, although they claim that it does occur in Holy Writ by implication. The very fact, however, that this conception does not appear in the Scriptures, and that we must conclude it from passages in the Word of God, is in itself surely strik-

ing. We must, for example, so they say, conclude the promise of eternal, heavenly life from the penalty of death upon Adam's disobedience, although it is granted that Genesis does not speak literally of such a promise of eternal life. But why should the Scriptures not have spoken of such a promise of eternal life if it had actually been given to Adam? Could Adam, who had been created out of the dust of the earth and therefore earthy, in whose heart and soul the things of the eternal and heavenly could surely never have arisen, have concluded from the Divine announcement of the penalty of death that this penalty included a promise of eternal and heavenly life? How could Adam ever have been able to conclude this, or how could he ever have understood this unless the promise of the heavenly had actually been given him? Besides, Scripture speaks later of the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord! Indeed, one must certainly grant that if Adam had received such a promise of eternal life, that promise would certainly have constituted a very important and essential part of his existence before the fall. And, inasmuch as Adam was created earthy out of the dust of the earth, it lies in the very nature of the case that he, to understand the penalty of death, must have been informed with respect to this promise of heavenly life. Nevertheless, nowhere does Scripture speak literally and positively of such a covenant of works. And nowhere does the Word of God inform us that this covenant of works was something extra added to the natural relationship which had been established with Adam's creation, so that the command not to eat of the forbidden tree was something extra which would bestow upon Adam something extra, namely, everlasting life in heavenly glory.

However, we have more objections to the theory of a covenant of works. But, this discussion must wait until another issue.

H. Veldman

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to elder John Flikkema in the sudden loss of his daughter,

HARRIET FLIKKEMA

May our gracious Covenant God comfort the bereaved family in the assurance that He, in His own time and manner, reached out His hand to take her unto Himself. For a time she was entrusted to their love and fellowship now to be with the Lord.

The Consistory of the First Prot Ref. Church
Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.
J. Bouwman, Clerk.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

Chapter 2

THE TEACHER PROBLEM (SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS SOLUTION)

Having now called attention to what we believe to be the salient aspects of this teacher-problem, it remains yet to point the way toward a solution thereof. And toward a solution we offer some suggestions in the present article. However, I feel that two remarks are in order before the suggestions themselves are presented. In the first place, and this can bear the repetition it is being given, the understanding of a problem is perhaps the most important part of its solution. Our parents, boards, and teachers should make it their task to delve into this teacher-problem and to do so thoroughly. Especially the last element, namely that of procuring teachers qualified to teach specifically in a Protestant Reformed School, must receive much attention from our school boards; and a constant watch must be kept by all concerned, that our schools be maintained in all the power and beauty of their distinctive principles. And I am convinced that the more effort that is put forth to see and understand the various problems connected with our own schools, the more readily the solutions of those problems will present themselves. And in the second place, you will find, as these suggestions are presented, that some of them constitute in themselves another of the problems connected with the future of our own educational system. For that reason, and because we expect to treat these other problems in the future, some of these suggestions will be indeed bare suggestions, without much elaboration at this time. Bearing this in mind, let us ask the question: what can we do about this teacher-problem?

About Our Attitude

The attitude which one assumes toward any difficult problem is of the utmost importance. There is much more hope for the person who, faced by a problem, doggedly and determinedly keeps attacking the difficulty, than for a person who easily gives up and exclaims that the problem is far beyond his ability or that it is hopeless to attempt a solution. Thus it is also with most of the problems concerned with our own schools. They are big ones. In fact, this whole matter of our own schools is a big problem. I, for

one, do not want to be classed with those who can lightly dismiss the whole thing with a wave of the hand, and who think that somehow, by the waving of some magic wand, a Protestant Reformed School can be established. That attitude is both unrealistic and dangerous. And furthermore, it will never contribute toward the establishment or maintenance of a school. I have seen enough of the troubles and trials, the apparently insurmountable difficulties and the heart-breaking disappointments of our school societies and boards, in order to vouch for the fact of that fact. But on the other hand, much as I oppose that attitude of light-hearted and flippant optimism, so much I loath the attitude of cowardly and pessimistic defeatism. It is not by cowardice and defeatism that a Protestant Reformed School is established, but by confidence, determination, and the courage of our Protestant Reformed convictions. Nor is it by flippancy and foolhardy optimism that our schools stand today; they stand as monuments to the hard work, the sacrifice, and the supplications of a people called by the grace of God into the fellowship of His covenant. And let the generations of those who fear His Name never forget it.

And the same is true of the many problems which face us, and which shall continue to face us, once we have established our own schools. Once we have crossed the Rubicon, and set for ourselves the course of separate and distinctive education, we must expect problems, always problems. It may seem at a given time that once we have overcome the problems of the moment then the ideal shall have been reached and we will have the perfect educational system. And I suppose those who are most involved in this work of our own schools often harbor that hope, that sometime in the future they will have no more problems to cope with. But we must not look for that,—not on this side of perfection. If the time should come that the present problems are overcome, there will be other ones,—and perhaps more perplexing.

But the point is that we must not lie down under the burden.

We must face up to the situation at all times, with determination.

And our determination must be the determination of a steady, unwavering, imperturbable, unflinching, and undying faith. A faith that we have a calling. A faith that we have a precious heritage. A faith that our God has given us a place, a peculiar place in the midst of the world and above all other churches. And a faith that ours is a God Who is enthroned above us and our schools and all the problems which we may face, Who is the Author of us and the cove-

nant into which He has called us, of our covenant children and covenant schools, and Who directs both our problems and their solution, Who will give us the final solution of all problems in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!

For let us never forget that our venture is a spiritual one. We establish schools, not as world-citizens, but as citizens of the kingdom of heaven and strangers in this world. And united as a band of pilgrims in this world, with a common Lord, a common heritage, a common truth, a common language, a common bond of faith, only can we labor at the solution of any problem. No matter how mundane and this-worldly our problems may seem at times, let us always remember that their solution is essentially spiritual, and that apart from that spiritual essential they are impossible of solution really.

And thus we shall succeed. No, we shall not be big. We must not look for bigness either. In the eyes of the world our efforts will always seem amateurish. And in the eyes of the church we shall seem narrow, bigoted, intolerant, and un-ecumenical. But never mind. We shall succeed most assuredly. We may be small and insignificant. We may have despised schools and despised children graduating therefrom. But we shall succeed! We shall have covenant generations with covenant training for a covenant life in the fear of His Name. And we shall rejoice in this, that the Lord hath done great things for us! And with that hope controlling us, and that goal set before us, where is the problem that is insoluble?

But by all means, let your attitude be spiritual!

As to Teacher-procurement and Permanence

As we mentioned in outlining these aspects of the teacher-problem, they are in a sense common to the whole educational world today. Nevertheless, this seemingly formal aspect of our problem takes on a peculiar hue for us also. Granted both parents and teachers who are deeply imbued with the principles of Protestant Reformed education, and especially teachers who are convinced of their calling in this regard and who very consciously proceed from the conviction of this calling, the problem will be automatically solved. Such parents we must have and be, because our teachers must be made to feel that they have a place in our schools, a God-given place, not merely a job. And I believe that the bonds must be knit very closely in this respect. Perhaps this is more easily done in a small school, where there are relatively few parents and children and relatively few teachers. A larger school always seems to be more impersonal and distant. But even in a larger institution this is not impossible. And the more both parents

and teachers experience that they are working together in a common spiritual endeavor, the more the problem of teacher-procurement and of the maintenance of a permanent teaching staff will fade away. In such an organization there will be an incentive for teachers to seek a place, as well as a deterrent for teachers to leave.

But I think that especially our teachers must beware that they do not assume a mundane and carnal attitude toward their calling. To do the latter is very easy in our materialistic age. Then your position becomes a job instead of a calling. You look only for the school which offers the best salary and the most ideal working conditions. And if you follow that course to its extreme, you will, of course, teach eventually in a public school, because the world can usually outdo us when it comes to material means, high salaries and magnificent structures and the best of working conditions. Besides, with such an attitude there will be no real bond between you and your pupils; your school will be no more than a factory to you. There will be no consciousness that the particular school in which you teach, the particular grade, the particular children, with all the circumstances of salary, equipment, location, etc., are given you of God. And there will, of course, be no awareness of a deep-seated responsibility in your particular position. There will be no real and fundamental incentive for you come to a school in the first place; and there will be no inner spiritual deterrent to leaving at any time when you think you can better yourself. Such an attitude must therefore be carefully avoided by anyone who teaches or prepares to teach. It is death-dealing for both teacher and school.

In the second place, there is the perennial salary-question. In this regard we must be careful of two extremes. I do not mean the extremes of too high or too low a salary. I mean rather the extreme, on the one hand of an over-pious attitude on the part of those who must pay the teachers, which results in expecting a teacher to labor for a mere pittance just because he or she is a Christian school teacher. One sometimes discovers the attitude: there seem to be some who think that just because a work has the nature of so-called "kingdom-work" it must be gratis, or almost so. And the other extreme is that of a gross materialism, which, regardless of ability or inability on the part of the employer, selfishly insists on a royal living. The proper attitude will lead to mutual sacrifice whenever necessary, and a cheerful sharing whenever possible.

But more on this next time, D.V.

H. C. Hoeksema

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 5:43-48

2.—(Conclusion)

In this essay we will try to say something constructive about the seemingly knotty exegetical question of what is meant by Jesus, when He says "*because He causes His sun to rise on evil and good and rains upon just and unjust*".

It should be kept very sharply before our minds that the *subject* that Jesus is here bringing to the foreground is these verses is not God's *providential acts* in creation and nature, but that He is most emphatically speaking of the *righteousness of the Kingdom of heaven*, as this must come to *full fruition* in our lives as subjects of the Kingdom.

To lose sight of this question of what is really the subject will make it impossible to understand the teaching of Jesus here and what its meaning is concretely in our lives. We must be more than theological scholars; we must here be very quiet and obedient children, sons of God!

Yes, that is it. We must be fully sons of God. We must *become* this. Our whole mind, soul, strength, our whole heart and life must be ruled by Christ's Word and Spirit. The precept of the Gospel must more and more be part and parcel of our life. We must more and more live Christ. That is the thrust of Jesus' teaching us, that the law and the prophets must be fulfilled to the last iota and tittle.

That is the subject here.

Now what has God's *providential dealings* with men to do with Jesus' *subject* that we become more perfect sons of God?

In general we may say, and that, too, without fear of contradiction, that God's dealings with evil and good, righteous and unrighteous must be the *pattern* of our dealings with *our enemies*. To put it more sharply: God's *fatherly providential dealings* in creation with evil and good, righteous and unrighteous, as this is exhibited before my very eyes each day of the year, must be the pattern of my dealings with my enemies as I meet them day by day. As God deals without discrimination so too I must deal without discrimination for one and against the other.

Such is the thrust of this passage. I must not love my neighbor and hate my enemy. I must love and pray for those who hate me.

But now there is a seeming difficulty in the text. It is this: I must love my enemies as God loves *His*

enemies? For such seems to be the natural sequence of thought. For the text speaks of "good and evil and righteous and unrighteous." Two classes of men. The wicked and the righteous, the reprobate and the elect.

Such seems to be the problem here.

On the one hand there are the exponents of the theory of "Common Grace", who clinging to the distinction of "*the good and the evil, and the just and the unjust*", maintain with might and main that here we have a common love, grace,—"*a certain attitude of favor*" over the non-elect. Here, so it is said, we have the perfect proof, an explicit statement of Jesus which both in the light of the context and of the words themselves, cannot be interpreted in any other sense than that of a "Common Grace", without doing violence to the text!

On the other hand there are those who deny this theory of "common grace". These maintain that there is no common grace here at all. The righteous here and the unrighteous, good and evil are both the elect of God. It is true, that God causes His sun to shine upon the non-elect also, the rains also descend upon the fields of the wicked, *but that is not what Jesus is here pointing too*. He is pointing to the *Fatherly providential dealings with His own people*. Thus the text can stand in its power. The pattern of our dealings with our enemies is thus a full pattern; it is not simply an *internal copying* of God's externally *manifested* deeds in Providence, but it is loving as God loves, and seeking to make the neighbor perfect as God does too in His long-suffering.

Hence, I then love my enemies as God loves His enemies.

This is, I am certain, the point Jesus would have us see and emulate in our lives.

In the first place, we should notice that "evil and good, righteous and unrighteous" do not represent *two absolutely different groups* of people. For the terms used by Jesus, as well as the order in which they are arranged, suggest something quite different. In the original Greek, it should be observed, the *article* is lacking. We simply read "evil and good, righteous and unrighteous". No, the text does not say: *the evil and good, the righteous and unrighteous*! This indicates that the *nature of man* is being referred to in relationship to the perfected love, rather than *the class of men* to which they belong is distinction from other men. It is important to notice this. Then too, this is underscored by the chiotic order of the words. We do not read: *evil and good, unrighteous and righteous*, but we read: *evil and good, righteous and unrighteous*. The order is inverted. Why? Be-

cause evidently, no classes of men are meant, but simply the spiritual ethical nature of one group of men is meant, as they live and move and have their being as neighbors. Not two classes, but two kinds in one class. The distinction is very relative, but not absolute.

In the second place, we should notice, that evil and good men, righteous and unrighteous men are here viewed in their capacity of being very concretely *our neighbors*. They are evil and good, righteous and unrighteous as *we* evaluate them; *we* judge of them in our limited judgment (and sometimes faulty) in the light of the law of God, and their treatment of us. But then too conversely it is true, that we ourselves are amongst these evil and good, since we too are *neighbor* of another. These neighbors are, therefore, not the absolutely righteous and unrighteous. For an absolutely unrighteous man, who hates God and rejects Christ, denying that Jesus is the Son of God, is not a neighbor *in* Israel, but he is a Gentile and a Publican. (Compare Matt. 18:17). Such a man is called *the* Gentile and *the* Publican. Hence, the scope of neighbor here is within the domain of Israel, where God says: I am the Lord, thy God who hath delivered thee from Egypt, from the house of bondage. Hence, the righteous and the unrighteous, the good and the evil are such as I see and evaluate them in their imperfect life of faith and godliness, in their "not yet" completely perfected life of love, that casts out all fear. For Christ is here not promulgating the law of the kingdoms of the world, but He is teaching the heirs of the Kingdom and of the Promise, the poor in spirit and those who mourn, the meek and those hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the pure in heart and the peace makers, those who are blessed in being persecuted for righteousness' sake, how love must be without dissimulation, and be perfected to the perfect standard of love as manifested in our heavenly Father's loving dealings. For by all means, this passage must be left to stand in its great and strategic place in Jesus' teaching of the last iota and tittle of the law, in the life of grace and righteousness!

Thirdly, this is corroborated by the contrast which Jesus Himself draws between the Gentile and his accepted code of conduct and the sons of God and their conformation to the life and image of God. Two-fold people we have here. And that absolutely too. The Gentiles are a people with whom we cannot live except with the very peril of our lives. Thus it became clear in the entire history of Israel in relationship to the Canaanite and the surrounding nations. And thus it is given today. We cannot adopt the morals of the life of the teachings of man in his denial of God and of Christ. That is an absolute distinction.

Here we hate those who hate God with a perfect hatred. And we do this in the same measure that we love the brother, our neighbor through sunshine and storm; as long as we practice love toward such a brother we walk the more excellent way. Well, that is what Jesus has in mind here by warning against doing toward *our neighbor*, as *the* Gentiles do to their neighbors, and as *the* Publicans do to their fellow publicans. The men of this world may be wise in their generation with practical wisdom, but they are never just in their generation. Them we must not emulate. We may not be conformed to this world, but must be transformed in the renewal of our minds.

Two matters we have thus established as being the clear teaching of the text. Firstly, the text, while speaking of righteous and unrighteous, is not speaking of two absolutely different classes of men, such as, sons of the Kingdom and *the* Gentiles, but speaks of two ethically-morally different qualifications within the scope of the kingdom of Israel, "thy neighbor". Secondly, that this makes "thy neighbor"—the neighbor whom I am to love, even tho he be *my* enemy.

Now we can proceed.

How must I conceive of God, the Father's dealing with *these* evil and good? That is not hard. It simply means that God in loving-kindness gives us to taste His goodness (Chreestos) in the causing of His sun to rise on us and our neighbors as we are in principle renewed children of the King. We must take God's dealing with these very evil and good, just and unjust as the daily pattern of my dealings with them.

My neighbor does not do me good, it is true. He sins also against God. Yes, he is a brother actual or potential (as I see it) but he sins against me. Must I now cause the light of my countenance to fall upon him and give him to drink? Our Father in heaven surely does not dim the sun upon him, refusing him the light of day, does He? Our Father did not command the clouds to withhold their rain from him, did He? Over these very evil and good, among which I too am, God causes His face to shine in the sunshine and rain in Fatherly care for our needs. He cares for us, more than for the sparrows and the lilies of the field. Shall we do less to this brother, neighbor?

Here is the great alternative.

I can wish my brother (enemy) the light of day and love him returning blessing for cursing, good for evil, or I can curse him, wishing God to withhold from him the very light of day. But if I wish my neighbor, enemy, the light of day, I shall not withhold from him the very things, which God puts in my hands for him by this sunshine and rain. If I see this brother-enemy (that is the viewpoint of the text) suffer hunger and

God has put many things in my hands by means of His sunshine and rain, than I must not withhold these very gifts from this brother but as a faithful steward I must give these to this brother in love. I may not stand in the sunlight so that its rays cannot fall upon him, and that the cheering rain does not become his portion—for whom they were meant!

Yes, it is the last iota and tittle. Let our love be perfect toward the brother whom we see. Then shall all fear and tensions be out of our lives. Then we shall be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and *under Him* we shall seek the perfection of our neighbor.

G. C. Lubbers

IN MEMORIAM

PROF. DR. KLAAS SCHILDER

Early this morning, March 24, I received a telegram from my friend, Arnold Schilder at The Hague, informing me that his brother Klaas, the well-known Dr. K. Schilder had, on the previous day, Sunday March 23, passed into his eternal rest.

I was deeply shocked.

For although I certainly did not agree with him in regard to the question of the covenant and the promise, I nevertheless esteemed him for his work's sake, esteemed him, too, as a highly gifted scholar, and, above all, as a brother in Christ.

And now Dr. Schilder is no more.

It would seem to us that his work was not finished.

Certainly, he himself cannot have been aware of the fact that his end was so near. At least, if we consider the very elaborate set-up of his work on the Heidelberg Catechism (he was writing on the tenth Lord's Day), he must have felt that he still had many years of labor before him.

But the Lord took him out of his busy sphere of labor and pronounced it finished, nevertheless.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved family, with whom we express our heartfelt sympathy.

And may He teach us so to number our days that we apply our hearts unto wisdom.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Covenant of Sinai

We must now take notice more in particular of the strictly sovereign character of this first covenant of Sinai. The question is this: was this covenant a contract or agreement between Israel and the Lord? Did it thus emanate from Israel and from the Lord as from two parties? Or was it strictly onesided and did it thus emanate from God alone? We must allow the Scriptures to answer also this question for us. We turn again to that passage in Hebrews 8:6-13.

In this scripture passage the Greek word used for covenant is not 'suntheekē' but 'diatheekē'. How is this Greek word to be rendered? Let us hear Lemski on this matter. I quote him as follows:

"Monographs have been written on the term 'diatheekē' and its connection with the Hebrew 'berith' 'covenant'. Our versions waver between the translations 'covenant', and 'testament'. We give the sum of the matter. The Old Testament dealt with the promises of God to the chosen people. Thereby God placed himself in 'covenant' relation to Israel (berith). This relation, like the promises and the gifts of God to Israel, is always onesided. It is always God's covenant, not Israel's, and not a mutual agreement, not a 'suntheekē' (but a diatheekē—O.). This promise and covenant indeed obligates Israel, and Israel assumes these obligations, but the covenant emanates entirely from God. The LXX translated, 'berith', 'covenant' in this sense, with diatheekē, 'testament', since this term has the same onesided connotation; a will or testament emanates only from the testator. What is more important is that the Holy Spirit Himself translated in this passage in the Hebrews 'berith', 'covenant' in this sense, that is, in the sense of 'diatheekē', 'testament'—Christ brought about the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. The result is that now God's people have the inheritance and are God's heirs: 'If children then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ'—Rom. 18:17,

Lemski goes on to say: "Riggenbach defines 'diatheekē' as the divine institution of grace which has these features in common with the human testament:

- 1) It rests solely on the determination of its author.
- 2) It aims to bestow a treasure.
- 3) It connects the bestowal with certain conditions in the recipients".

But regarding this last point, Lemski correctly remarks: "This last point is not well worded; it should

be: designates certain persons as the recipients." Lemski is entirely correct here. I would express myself even stronger. I would say: the statement of Riggenbach "it connects the bestowal with certain conditions in the recipients" is sheer Arminianism.

Let us now get the above indicated passage (Heb. 8:6-13) before us. Here follows the literal translation of the original Greek text:

"But now a more excellent ministry He has obtained by so much as also of a better testament (diathēke) He is Mediator, one of a kind that has been given legal force on the score of better promises.

For if the first one (that is, testament) was faultless, a place would not be sought for a second one. For faulting them He says:

Lo the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will consummate a new testament as regards the house of Israel, and as regards the house of Judah.

Not like the testament which I made for their fathers in the day of my taking them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Seeing that they themselves did not remain in my testament and I disregarded them, said the Lord, so that this is the testament which I will draw up for the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will give my laws upon their mind and on their heart will I inscribe them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not each one teach his neighbor, and each one his brother saying: know the Lord. Because I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins will I not remember any longer. In saying: A new one, He has declared the first one old. Now the thing declared old and becoming aged is near to vanishing away."

We see then that the covenant of Sinai was a "testament", not an agreement, a contract.

It emanated from God alone. It was drawn up by Him alone. He alone was the author of its typical salvation—deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; of its atoning sacrifices; of its heir, the typically redeemed people of Israel; of its inheritance—the typical rest of the earthy Canaan; and of all its promises by which these typical things of the law were held forth. The heirs of this testament had nothing to do but to receive it, which they did and could only do by His mercy.

If this was true of the testament of Sinai, it is just as true, certainly of the testament of which this first testament and covenant was the figure—the true covenant of grace. It, too, emanates from God alone. It was drawn up by Him alone. All the things of this covenant and testament are solely of Him and through Him and unto Him—the Mediator and Great

Priest of this covenant; its salvation, its inheritance and also its heirs. He chose them in Christ in whom He also created them unto good works which He prepared for them in Christ. Truly, this covenant and testament is God's alone. The sole duty of these heirs is to receive it, which they do and also choose to do by His mercy. Where then is boasting? Where is the free will of man? Where are conditions? They are excluded, absolutely so.

Thus it is plain that this covenant and testament does not make of its heirs stocks and stones. How can it, if in fulfillment of the promises of this testament God brings them into being as new creatures in Christ, who love their redeemer—God, and cry out His praises and walk in newness of life? It will not do, will it, to call such creatures stocks and stones? A stock and a stone are dead things, incapable of any kind of action.

And so it is also evident that this testament of Sinai and the testament and covenant of which this testament was the symbol and prophetic pre-indication—the true covenant of grace—is not destructive of human responsibility. This is the fault that the Arminian has to find with this testament at Sinai also. The Arminian lodges two charges against this testament.

He says (charge I) that this covenant makes stocks and stones of its heirs. We have already replied to this charge and therefore need take no further notice of it. The Arminian also says of this testament that it is destructive of human responsibility. Let us examine this charge. It verily comes down to this: that this covenant at Sinai (covenant of grace essentially) frees its heirs from the obligation to love and serve their redeemer God and thus allows them to sin with impunity. The absurdity of this charge. Consider that the Testator in His testament says to the heirs named in it. He says to them not only "I am the Lord your God, the God of your salvation in Christ Jesus," but He also says to them "As new born babes, as my regenerated people, love me your God, be holy as I am holy, believe in me through Christ, etc. And in His love He chastizes these heirs for their sins in order that they may become more and more partakers of His righteousness.

How preposterously untrue, then, that this testament is destructive of human responsibility.

Let us get at the real reason why the Arminian says of this testament that it makes stocks and stones of its heirs and is destructive of their human responsibility.

According to this testament, that, according to the Arminian, of course, is not at all taught in the Scrip-

tures but is simply the figment of the imagination of some Calvinists, the *necessity* of the heirs *choosing* to believe and to be saved, is the sovereign and determinate will of God. Such a conception, says the Arminian, reduces the heirs to stocks and stones and is destructive of their human responsibility. For, says the Arminian, if these heirs are necessitated to believe by the sovereign will of the Testator it follows that they are not free in their willing and choosing; it thus follows that they are bound in their willing and choosing, bound by the sovereign determinate will of God. This makes of these heirs stocks and stones and is destructive of their human responsibility. So reason the Arminians.

According to the Arminian then, to make it right for ourselves to say of these heirs of salvation that they are truly free in their choosing and responsible, and thus not stocks and stones, we must allow that their good will to believe and be saved is not necessitated by the sovereign will of God. But why then do they believe? on the Arminian position the answer must be: the believer believes, chooses to be saved, simply because *he* wills. And so, too, the unbeliever. He chooses not to believe simply because *he* wills. But this certainly, is equivalent to saying that man sovereignly determines his own destiny.

But is this true? Of course it is not true. Fact is this: The sovereign will of God is indeed the necessity of these heirs' choosing to believe and to be saved. Yet these heirs for this reason are not stocks and stones. And why not? For the simple reason that God brings these heirs, by nature dead in sin, into being as new creatures with a new nature and heart, and that thus the choice and the good will of these heirs to believe and to be saved is the free and necessary expression of the holy disposition and inclinations and desires of this new nature and heart. In choosing to be saved, therefore, they are anything but stocks and stones. They are freed children of God whose delight is in the law of God whom they serve as activated by the love of their new heart and as constrained by their living faith and as standing in the liberty where with Christ has made them free.

Let us not be confused by this argument of the Arminians. Let us not pick it up and hurl it as an objection at God's testament at Sinai. For then we with the Arminians also are guilty of denying sovereign election and reprobation.

In fine. It is as plain as the day, is it not, that this covenant at Sinai was 1) a Testament emanating from God alone; and 2) a Testament of grace.

Let us understand what it would mean, were this Testament a contract emanating from the Lord and

His people instead of from God alone? In the light of above observations it is as plain as the day what this would mean. It would mean that man's salvation originates partly in God and partly in man. This is precisely the contention of the Arminians. According to the Arminian view, man's good choice and will to believe is *out of man* and is thus supplied by man. God supplies the grace but merely to aid man in making the good choice. If man on his part agrees *out of himself* to persevere to the end in this good choice, God on his part agrees to take the man up into His heaven finally. Thus God promises to save man *on the condition* that he persevere in his good choice to be saved. This is the Arminian view in contradicton to the view of the Scriptures, the truly reformed view. A third view this is not. We are addicted to one of these two views.

In the Arminian conception the testament of God is verily a contract emanating from God and man.

According to the Scriptures the Testament emanated from God alone; it is truly and absolutely a Testament. It is a kind of testament that God alone can make, He being God. All human testaments are that only in a human, creatural sense. For man is a creature; he is not God.

There are still some question to be answered.

1. If the carnal, reprobated Israel was neither in the first nor in the new covenant, how could and can it despise God's covenant? There is no problem here at all. Let us ask: Is it necessary for God to love the reprobated in order to make it possible for them to hate Him? No indeed. Did Christ have to suffer and die for the reprobated in order to make it possible for them to reject Him, despise His atoning blood and crucify Him afresh? Indeed not. No more did God have to include the reprobated in the covenant in order to make it possible for them to reject, despise and trample it. To say that it was necessary for God to include the reprobated in the covenant in order to make it possible for them to despise and reject it, is certainly equivalent to saying that Christ had to suffer and die for the reprobated in order to make it possible for them to reject and despise Him. Consider the covenant of grace. Its author is the God and Father of Christ; its great Priest and Mediator is Christ. Its promise is the promise of everlasting life in Christ. Subtract from the covenant God and Christ and the promise and the promised life, and you have certainly no covenant left. Well now, if the reprobated are not loved of God how can they be in His covenant? And if the reprobated are not included in Christ its Mediator and its great Priest Christ, how can they be included in the covenant of which He is

the Mediator? And if the life that Christ merited was not merited for them, how can the covenant promise them this life? How, in a word, can they be included in the promise and thus in the covenant? This is impossible in the light of the Scriptures.

II. As was explained, the believers of the Old Testament Dispensation did not continue in the first covenant, the typical covenant of Sinai, except in principle. But it may be asked whether the true Israel today does more than keep the true covenant of grace in principle? No, to be sure they do not. According to their sinful flesh they are always forsaking God's covenant. What then may be the difference between the state of the true church then and now? In this respect of course there is no difference. As long as the believers are in this life they forsake the covenant according to their sinful flesh though in principle they keep it. They will not perfectly abide in God's covenant until they are in heaven. Once in heaven they will perfectly abide in it. This is what the church triumphant is now doing. It is abiding in God's covenant perfectly. And consider that the church triumphant is formed of a vast number of saints. The church triumphant includes the departed saints of the Old Dispensation and all the departed saints of the New Dispensation. Together they form a vast number. In comparison with that multitude the true church on earth at any one time is exceedingly small, a small remnant. *The church in heaven is the object of our faith.* When we speak of the church, it is of that vast multitude that we must be thinking. And that multitude, as was said, abides in God's covenant perfectly. For the *covenant* is everlasting. But if that first covenant had not been superceded by the new covenant, there would not be that redeemed multitude, *the church*, abiding in God's covenant, and abiding in it perfectly. For, as has been explained, the Mediator and great Priest of that first covenant was but a shadow.

It is that vast multitude of saints in heaven—*the church*—in whom that prophecy of Jeremiah has reached its perfect fulfillment, namely the prophecy: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." "All shall know me," this is only true in *principle* of God's people as long as they are in this life.

So we must look at these matters, if we want to feel the full force of the fact and truth that this first covenant has been superceded by the new and everlasting covenant of Grace, by the true covenant of grace.

III. What now was the purpose of that first covenant with its typical institutions and ordinances, with

its typical mediator and typical great priest, and typical salvation and typical rest and with its law over the church but not put in the hearts of the elect, that is, not put in their hearts on account of their being in his typical covenant? What was the purpose of it all? In the words of Paul, its purpose was to lead, the drive, the elect of God to Christ, to the true Christ of the new covenant. Its purpose was to serve Christ and His people in this way. And, certainly, it did also actually serve this purpose. By this first covenant with its typical things, and with its law that curses the true believers were indeed driven to Christ even all through the Old Testament dispensation. In connection with this first covenant and its typical things, definitely the symbolical-typical sacrifices by blood, all pointing to Christ, they, as Abel, received testimony in their hearts that they were righteous in Christ, the true mediator of the new covenant, the Holy Spirit testifying with their spirits that they were God's redeemed people and with David, the Psalmist, they jubilantly exclaimed: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."—Ps. 32:1, 2.

G. M. Ophoff

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The Manna of the Desert Period

"And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat.'"

—Numbers 11:4b.

Having brought His people—the people of Israel—out of the land of Egypt, the Lord led them into the wilderness of Sinai. It was, to be sure, a terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, and where there was no water, Deut. 7:15. But the Lord did a new thing. In the words of the sacred writer at Deut. 32:10, He made a way for His people through the wilderness. He led them about, kept them as the apple of His eye, spread abroad over them His wings, took them, bore them upon His wings. This imagery sets forth the Lord's special and tender care over His people on their marches through that wilderness. There was the pillar of cloud—the Lord's wings—that shielded them from the burning heat of the sun. The beams of the sun therefore did not blind their eyes, blister their skin, and parch their mouth. They toiled not on, half senseless of the heat. They were miraculously kept in sound health on the way. Their foot did not swell and their raiment waxed not old upon them,

Deut. 8:4. The Lord fed them with manna from heaven and quenched their thirst with water fetched them from the rocks of the desert. The Lord knew their frame; He remembered that they were dust. He pitied them as a father. Going before them, He sent them plentiful rain, and thus confirmed His inheritance, when it was weary, Ps. 68. What a beautiful picture of the Lord's spiritual care of His church in this world.

The people of Israel were not thankful. Continually did they provoke the Lord by their murmurings. On one occasion, not so long after the departure from Egypt, the mixed multitude among them went to lusting after flesh. They wept aloud, and as they wept they said, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes." Their disease of impatience was contagious. Ere long the whole camp gave way to weeping.

So did they despise the manna and cry for the fleshpots of Egypt. In doing so, those Israelites committed a heinous sin. If we are to have understanding of this, we must have regard to the manna that was despised and loathed. First the purpose of its being sent, This is set forth in Deut. 8:3, in the following words. "And he fed thee with the manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God does man live." The teaching here set forth is that man's true life is not natural bread but every word or out going of God's mouth, which is Christ. It was with a view to preparing the church for the revelation and reception of this truth that the Lord fed the people of Israel with manna—the bread from heaven—during the period of their residence in the wilderness. This doing of God, His suffering the people of Israel to hunger and His feeding them with manna—demonstrates, wonderfully well, that man lives not by bread but by every outgoing of God's mouth, thus lives by God's word, which is Christ.

G. M. Ophoff

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CLASSIS EAST will meet, D.V., Wednesday April 2, at 9 A.M. at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk

De Kloppende Christus

"Zie, ik sta aan de deur en ik klop: indien iemand mijne stem zal hooren en de deur opendoen, ik zal tot hem inkomen, en ik zal met hem avondmaal houden, en hij met mij."—Openb. 3:20.

Nadat Jezus Christus Zich aan Johannes had geopenbaard in Zijn Messiaansche glorie, ontvangt Johannes last en opdracht om zeven brieven te schrijven aan de zeven gemeenten die in Klein-Azië zijn. En mijn tekst is genomen uit den laatsten brief, den brief aan die van Laodicea.

Dat dit zevental gemeenten symbolische beteekenis heeft wordt van alle zijden grif toegestemd. Dat blijkt vooral ook uit het getal zeven. Zeven is het verbondsgetal, en in dit zevental gemeenten zien we de volheid en voltooiing van het lichaam van Christus, zooals dat lichaam op aarde tot openbaring komt, te midden van zonde, verzoeking en vijanden, maar ook zooals die gemeenten schitteren van de schoonheid des VerbondsGods. Er waren meer dan zeven gemeenten in Klein-Azië, doch dit zevental is verkoren om de kerk van Christus te schetsen zooals die kerk in alle eeuwen tot openbaring komt. En dan zal blijken, dat de eene gemeente deze eeuw kenmerkt, en de andere een andere eeuw, enz. Hoewel het toch onze overtuiging is, dat ge dit zevental terugvindt in eenige eeuw der kerkgeschiedenis. Ge moogt zelfs zeggen, dat in elke openbaring van het lichaam van Christus tot op zekere hoogte alle zeven gemeenten gezien worden. Alle karaktertrekken van deze zeven gemeenten vindt ge terug in elke plaatselijke kerk.

De brieven zijn allereerst gericht aan de engelen of sterren der gemeenten, en dat zijn de leeraars. Doch in hen worden die brieven ook gericht aan de individueele leden. En dan niet alleen aan die zeven historische gemeenten, doch aan de kerk van Christus van alle eeuwen. Ze zijn ook tot U en mij gericht.

Welnu, we verkozen een tekst uit de laatste van het zevental. Vooral ook, omdat veel geschermd wordt met Openb. 3:20 in sommige kringen. Deze tekst wordt veel verknoeid, verkeerd uitgelegd en toegepast. En de oorzaak is dat men hem uit het verband rukt, waarin we hem vinden. En dat mag niet. Al Gods Woord moet verklaard in zijn verband. Ik denk, dat ge dit mij zult toegeven. Laat ons dat nu trachten te doen.

Eerst dan Christus en de deur. De algemeene opvatting van die deur is, dat dit het hart van den mensch moet voorstellen, en dan liefst het hart van een onwedergeboren mensch. En dat hart zit dicht. Die deur is gelijk aan een hechte eikenhouten deur, die op slot zit en de grendel er voor. Want, zoo rede-neert, men, Christus staat er voor. Hij is er nog niet

in. Dus heeft zulk een mensch nog geen deel aan den Christus. Hij kwam nog nooit over den drempel van zulk een hart. Voorts wordt Jezus dan voorgesteld als staande bij dat hart met een droevige trek op Zijn gelaat. Hij hunkert om binnengelaten te worden. Maar Hij is machteloos. Meer dan Zijn stem heeft Hij niet. Hebt ge nooit de versjes gehoord die op dezen tekst gemaakt zijn? Och, zend Hem toch niet weigerend heen!

Nu is al zulk toepassen van den tekst verregaande dwaasheid. Van waar zoo plotseling dat hart, en dan van dat onwedergeboren hart? Dat klopt niet met het verband. Er staat: *deur*. En *deur* doet ons denken aan een gebouw, aan een huis. En van waar dat onwedergeboren hart? Christus schrijft immers deze woorden aan Zijn gemeente, een gemeente die Hij nog erkent als een levende gemeente. Een gemeente die, alhoewel de toestand in die gemeente vreeselijk is, toch nog deel uitmaakt van het volmaakt zevental? Mijn tekst is een boodschap van Jezus aan Zijn volk. En het is een boodschap van kastijding en van troost; van straf en belofte. Ook staat het vers niet in het teeken van weigering. Christus staat niet te treuren aan deze deur, doch Hij staat daar als de machtige, de almachtige Koning van het heelal, zooals Johannes Hem in het vorige hoofdstuk zag. En zoo indrukwekkend was de gestalte van dien Koning, dat Johannes als dood aan Zijn voeten viel. Neen, de tekst staat niet in het teeken van weigering, doch in het teeken van hooring. Bovendien zijn deze woorden geschreven aan één van de sterren die Hij in Zijn rechterhand houdt.

Wat dan? Wat mag de verklaring zijn van Christus bij de deur? Die deur, mijne vrienden, is de deur van de kerk, de deur van de gemeente te Laodicea, van het gebouw, dat Hij Zelf daar bouwde. Die deur is de deur van een levende gemeente, die één van de zeven gouden kandelaren is, in welks midden Jezus Christus wandelt door Zijn Woord en Geest. Maar het is de deur van die gemeente zooals zij nog onzuiver op aarde tot openbaring komt. Er is vreeselijke afval in Laodicea's gemeente. Daar zijn menigen ingeslopen die dood waren. En door aanraking van de dooden en door invloed van de dooden is de hitte der heeten lauw geworden, en zijn de kouden en heeten vermengd in een afschuwelijk lauw mengsel. Dit is een lauwe gemeente. De heete waarheid is verkoeld. Allerlei valsche, leugenachtige elementen kwamen er in en er bij. En dat mengsel maakte ook Gods ware volk lauw. Deze gemeente was dor, doodig en lauw, in belijdenis en leven. En Jezus staat bij die gemeente welbewust van Zijn kracht: kalm en koninklijk. Niet treurend staat Hij daar, doch toor-

nend, met vlamme oogen tegenover de dooden doch met liefde in Zijn hart, oog en stem voor de nog levende lauwen. Luistert slechts naar het vers dat aan mijn tekstvers onmiddellijk voorafgaat: "Zoo wie Ik liefheb, die bestraf en kastijd Ik; wees dan ijverig en bekeer u!" Het heft de hand op om te kloppen.

En dat brengt ons tot de tweede gedachte: Christus en het kloppen. De algemeene opvatting, vraagt ge. Dat weet ge evengoed als ik. Men kan het duizendmaal hooren en lezen. De redeneering en de zogenaamde verklaring van den kloppenden Christus is ongeveer als volgt. De zachtmoedige Jezus staat te smeeken aan dat harde hart van den zondaar; Hij tracht te overtuigen dien harden zondaar. Hij hoort het gedartel der zonde daar binnen, en Zijn stem weerklinkt: Och, laat mij toch binnen! Ik Zelf kan de deur niet opendoen. Zoo stelt men het dan voor. En op naam van den Christus Gods, staat men dan te smeeken en te lokken om toch maar zieltjes te mogen ontvangen die eindelijk zullen zeggen: Wel aan dan, kom binnen, Jezus Christus. Ik stem toe om gezaligd te worden.

Door dat kloppen wordt het geraas daarbinnen dan meestal erger. Men spot met dien smeekenden Heiland. En het einde is bij het meerendeel van hen die Hij bezoekt, dat Hij droevig heengaat. En de Zoon van God heeft het verloren. En zegt nu niet, dat wij het te erg maken, dat we het te bont voorstellen, want ik heb het zelf vaak zoo, en erger, gehoord. Een van die predikers zeide eens tot mij, dat er vele menschen in de hel zijn, die Jezus o zoo gaarne in den hemel gehad zou hebben. Zóó wordt het voorgesteld alom: Jezus verliest het tegenover die hechte deur, tegen dat harde hart van den zondaar.

Nu moet gij wel verstaan, dat het afschuwelijk is om het zoo voor te stellen. De Heiland wordt geheel anders beschreven bij de opdraging van dit getuigenis aan Johannes. Leest slechts vers 14 van het eerste hoofdstuk der Openbaring: Zijn oogen zijn als een vlamme vuurs. Hij is de Koning der koningen en de Heere der heeren. En ik mag U op Gods Woord gegrond mededeelen, dat als Jezus naar een onwedergeboren hart gaat, Hij niet klopt, en voorts wacht om opengedaan te worden, doch dan slaat Hij dat hart aan gruzelementen. Hij verbreekt, verbrijzelt het hart dat hard is. Hij neemt het steenen hart weg en geeft een vleeschen hart er voor in de plaats als het Hem belijft om ingang te hebben in het hart der gekenden. En dat is immers altemaal beeldspraak in Gods Woord om ons te leeren, dat als Jezus in iemand wil wonen Hij hem eenvoudig wederbaart door den Geest van Zijn genade. De bovengenoemde verklaring is geen verklaring, doch verminking van Gods



Woord, en Gode onwaardig. Vergeet geen oogenblik: Jezus is God, te prijzen tot in der eeuwigheid. En daarom, wat Jezus wil, gebeurt. Niets is er zoo hard, dat het Hem buiten kan sluiten. De eerder gegeven zoogenaamde verklaring van Jezus en Zijn kloppen maakt den mensch tot God boven Christus.

Wat is dan de juiste verklaring? Ze is deze: deze brief werd verzonden aan den engel der gemeente te Laodicea, en dat was de leeraar van die gemeente. En toen is de brief voorgelezen in de gemeente, en die brief werkte reformatorisch. Christus' Woord kwam weer in al zijn zuiverheid op den kansel. En die brief werkte bestraffend en kastijdend. Hij ontkleedde den zondaar, ontnam hem zijn gewaanden rijkdom, bestrafte zijn lauwheid, en raadde hem aan terug te keeren tot de paden die hij eerder bewandelde in betere dagen. In één woord: Christus raadde Zijn gemeente aan terug te keeren tot hun oorsprong, tot den rotssteen waaruit ze gehouwen waren, en die Rotssteen was Christus. En de zaak staat zoo, omdat er levenden waren in die gemeente, want zooals ik zooveen aanhaalde uit het onmiddellijke verband, er waren in die gemeente nog zielen waarvan Jezus zeide: zoo wie Ik liefheb die bestraf en kastijd Ik. En wat de deur toedoet, er waren daar in die gemeente nog menschen waarvan we lezen: "Die ooren heeft om te hooren die hoore wat de Geest tot de gemeenten zegt." En in de predikatie van de heete waarheid staat Christus te roepen en te kloppen aan de deur van Zijn levende gemeente, de gemeente die leeft in haar levende leden. En het doel van den Heiland is om Zijn afgedwaalde schapen te kastijden, en dan terug te leiden tot Zijn kudde. En Hij staat te roepen en te kloppen, welbewust dat Hij gehoord en gehoorzaamd zal worden.

Nu nog de laatste gedachte: Christus en het opendoen. De algemeene opvatting wordt al erger. Men moet nu wel verder op het eerder ingeslagen pad: Men moet nu wel den onwedergeboren mensch kracht toeschrijven om te hooren en open te doen. Dus zal nu hier en daar een enkele harde zondaar zijn die zich zal laten verteederen door de lokkende stem van Jezus. De doode zondaar staat uit zijn geestelijke graf op. De onmacht van den natuurlijken mensch wordt geloochend. En nu moet men nog verder op dit heilloos spoor, of men wil of niet. Als straks die enkeling die zich bekeeren liet met Christus aan het avondmaal zit, mag Christus wel dankbaar zijn. In elk geval mag deze bekeerde zondaar zichzelf wel danken, dat hij zoo verstandig was om de deur van 't slot te doen, en Jezus er in te laten. En wat is in deze voorstelling het venijnigste vergif? Dit: de

mensch zit dan op den troon en Christus aan zijn voeten.

Laat mij het onomwonden mogen schrijven: deze voorstelling is vreeselijk goddeloos. De onwedergeborene kan niets wat op hooren van Christus' stem, en het opendoen van zijn hart betreft. De natuurlijke mensch is zwaar van oor om te hooren, en onmachtig om te doen wat God en Christus van hem eischen. Juist het tegenovergestelde is waar: hij wordt door het uitwendig hooren van Jezus' stem harder van hart, goddelooser in zijn verzet, en hij vertrapt het bloed van het Nieuwe Testament, hetzelfde onrein achtende. Dat is eenvoudig de waarheid, en een iegelijk Bijbelsch Christen weet het. Op duizend bladzijden van Gods Woord wordt dit verkondigd. Ik noem slechts één enkelen tekst, doch het getuigenis van dien tekst is dan ook overweldigend. Leest het in I Cor. 1:18: Daar wordt geleerd, dat het Woord des kruises dwaasheid is dengenen die verloren gaan. En in den tweeden brief aan de Corinthiërs zegt Paulus, dat het Evangelie een reuke des doods ten doode is voor degenen die verloren gaan. Ze ruiken er zich den eeuwigen dood aan. Er moet een Goddelijk wonder met ons geschieden zullen we hooren, gehoorzamen en gezaligd worden.

De sleutel van de goede verklaring van Christus en het opendoen ligt in het telkens herhaalde: "Die ooren heeft die hoore wat de Geest tot de gemeenten zegt." En, in de woorden: "Zoo wie Ik liefheb, die bestraf en kastijd Ik." Wanneer het harde woord van Jezus voorgelezen wordt, gaat de Geest van Christus van oor tot oor en ven hart tot hart. Dan hoort Gods volk en verootmoedigt zich, omdat zij hoorende gemaakt zijn. En dan ontvangen ze kracht om de deur open te doen. En zoo bekrachtigd komen ze ter kerke uit. Ze openen de deur die hen verbond aan de doode lauwen, en treden reformatorisch op. In mijn tekst vindt ge de roeping tot reformatie en die stem tot reformatie is keer op keer gehoord, en men ging over tot de formatie van zuiverder kerkgemeenschap, naar den stijl van het Woord van God.

En dan komt het Avondmaal. Nu moet ge wel verstaan, dat dit niet ziet op het teeken en het zegel van het Verbond Gods. Dat is wel ingesloten, doch het ziet op intieme verbondsgemeenschap met God door Christus Jezus. Alleen in den weg der bekeering is er gemeenschap met God mogelijk. Hier is sprake van den aangenamen omgang van den Herder en Zijn kudde.

Dat is de verklaring van dezen tekst, naar onze heiligste overtuiging, en zij is ook naar de Heilige Schrift. Geve de Heere ons het geestelijk gehoor om te hooren wat de Geest tot de gemeenten zegt. G. Vos