

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### Pentecostal Reaction

"and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."  
Acts 2:4a.

"and that no man can say that Jesus is the  
Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."—I Cor. 12:3b.

"others mocking said, These men are full of  
new wine."—Acts 2:13.

How wonderful are the works of God!

How unsearchable are His judgements and His  
ways past finding out!

See it, and adore it, on this day of Pentecost!

A little band of men, women and children, about  
one hundred and twenty. How little were they re-  
garded at that exact point of time in the history  
of the world. Who took note of that little band at  
the moment when God was about to pour out His  
Holy Ghost upon the New Testament church? And  
the answer is: No one! And if they noted them, it  
was with a shrug of the shoulder, a smile of indul-  
gence. For ten days the people must have seen their  
strange behaviour: why did they not go to work as  
did everybody else? But no: they met, and... they  
waited for the promise of the Saviour: He would  
somehow return to them.

And He did!

Hark! What a strange and mighty sound! We  
all know the sound of a mighty rushing wind. It is  
something like a storm. And yet—there is no sen-  
sation of a storm. It is perfectly still. Yes, I think  
that the Lord had sent a very great calm upon the  
earth in those regions, so that the contrast of that  
sound might speak the louder.

And the sound came from heaven. Well, that  
is right. To heaven Jesus had gone. They had seen  
Him ascend to heaven. And so His promise would  
necessarily have to come from the regions of heaven.

Also, the sound concentrated at a certain spot  
in the great city of David. Otherwise we cannot  
account for it, that so many people came together  
at the place where the little band met. There must  
have come a great many thousands of people at this  
spot, since three thousand were converted that day.  
And the converts are always in the minority, so the  
aggregate must have numbered at least ten thousand.

And what a sight they have come to see! All  
the disciples are filled with the Holy Ghost! And  
there are evidences. There is a great column of  
fire, no, not fire, but something that looked like fire,  
and from it, darting downward, flaming tongues that  
sat upon each of them.

And listen: they speak. And their speech is  
wonderful. They praise the Lord Jehovah. And  
here is the wonder of it all: they speak in all the  
languages and dialects of the multitude that had  
come to the Pentecostal feast: Parthians, Medes,  
Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in  
Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia,  
and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in parts of Lybia about  
Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,  
Cretes, and Arabians: they all heard this little band  
speak in their tongues. Yes, this speech told about  
the wonderful works of God.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost!

And they gave ample evidence to the fact.

Wonderful Pentecost of the New Testament  
Church!

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost!

Who is He?

Is He the Third Person of the great and exalted  
God?

Yes, but He was more.

He was the Holy Spirit such as He was given  
to Jesus Christ at His exaltation.

You see, there never before was such a Holy Ghost on earth as there came on that first day of Pentecost of the New Testament Church.

The Holy Ghost as the Third Person of the Trinity had always been on earth. And it is true that notwithstanding His marvellous and everywhere present work, He had never received the interest and notice from God's people which He so richly deserved. And the reason is simple: His work is so mysterious and mostly hidden.

Oh, the works of the Holy Ghost are so many and glorious! He wrought the mysterious work of *brooding* upon the waters, upon the face of the deep. And after the work of God's creation was established, it was that same Holy Ghost that stayed with all things and wrought again and again. I know but little of His work, but I marvel.

Think of it: it is through the ever present work of the Holy Ghost that as a little child you learn that the stove is hot, the marble hard, the carnation fragrant, and that the honey tastes sweet in your mouth. Through the Holy Ghost everyone that has sense learns that two times two makes four. And I know so little of this *brooding* Spirit!

But there is so much more!

When created things became filthy because of sin, God wrought another work, the work of redemption. And in the fulness of time, the Holy Ghost of God must come to *brood* again upon the work of God's redemption.

And that time became *full* this day of Pentecost.

And that Holy Ghost is not anymore the same Holy Ghost that *brooded* in creation, or that *brooded* in providence, but He is the Holy Ghost as He was given to Jesus Christ in His exaltation at the Father's right hand. When Acts 2:33 says that He received the promise of the Holy Ghost from the Father, then the meaning is that all the blessedness of God's Covenant such as men are able to taste unto all eternity, was given to Christ in His reception of the Holy Ghost. At that moment in heaven Christ became filled with all the blessedness such as the whole new creation that is to come, and now is in principle in the saints, shall enjoy unto all eternity.

And this Christ, filled with that Holy Ghost of promise, came back in that same Holy Ghost to His church on this first day of the New Testament Pentecost. Does not Paul say that Christ *is* that Spirit?

I wrote above this meditation: Pentecostal Reaction. Well, you can plainly see the positive reaction. Christ came back to His church with untold blessedness, the blessedness of God's eternal Covenant of grace, and they plainly showed it.

I ask you: what is the core of the blessed Coven-

ant life such as we shall live it in perfection in heaven? John shall give us the answer in his book: they sing the hallelujah's before the throne of God!

Now look at those simple folk in the house of John Mark: they speak about nothing but the wonderful works of God. They sing in prose, but they sing nevertheless, and their theme is THEOLOGY. God is praised.

Oh yes, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. With the Holy Ghost of Christ.

That Spirit is *brooding* again. He is brooding on the work of redemption.

Glorious Pentecostal reaction.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

And they have proved it.

It is peculiar to the Holy Ghost, both in His function in the Trinity and in the Church, to be the Conveyer of the love of God. He tells the Son that the Father loves Him; and He knows, for He searches the depths of the Father eternally. And returning, He tells the Father that the Son loves Him too, and He knows, for He searches the depths of the Son of God eternally.

And so He is the Harbinger of love, of love of God in God.

God is the loving Covenant God in Himself.

And so it is the Holy Ghost in His *brooding* work of redemption that brings love, the love of God to the church.

Paul speaks of it. Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*.

Henceforth the church will love.

First, they will love God, His truth, His people, His cause in the world.

Second, they will prove that love: their whole life will be an anthem, singing of His marvellous works.

The church began this work already in the Old Testament. They left you their record, their psalms, their tears and blood. Yes, sometimes they were killed for their lovely endeavor.

They continued it on that glorious day when the Spirit came to brood, to brood on the work of God's redemption.

And they will continue until time shall be no more, but then they shall love God and His world as never before. The new world shall be a monument to God, the God of our salvation.

It might be well at this juncture to see some of the proofs of the love of the Holy Ghost.

First, general proof. The Church showed a little bit of heaven: they sold their possessions and gave to the poor. No, it did not last long. Not because it was wrong, but because they lost the erstwhile quantity of grace and love and the Holy Ghost. It is left, but it is small, very small.

You see, in heaven, no one dare say anymore: that is mine; keep away from my possessions. Everything is of everyone; and everyone and everything is of God through Christ and in the Holy Ghost. Of course, that is true today, but we cannot live it, since we are still so evil and sinful.

But the Pentecostal church exhibited for a little while the heavenly life. Did you note how soon the devil interfered? Shades of Ananias and Sapphira!

They exhibited the life of the Covenant of love.

And now proof that is particular. I think it is the most beautiful proof of the whole Bible. Of course, excluding the love of God in Christ. Look upon that fallen man. His name is Stephen. He is being stoned to death. No, not for anything evil that he has done. He is stoned for the fact that he has too much of the Holy Ghost of love. And he shall prove it, just before the last stone breaks his skull. Once more he raises himself and looks on his tormentors; and then he looks toward the heavens. Be still, he prays: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Oh, you may be sure that the Holy Ghost was *brooding*, *brooding* upon the work of God's salvation in Stephen.

Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost of Christ. And his reaction proved it.

Pentecostal reaction.

How beautiful!

★ ★ ★ ★

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

And they proved it.

For they loved.

But how can I know?

Paul says that no one can cry out: "Lord Jesus"! but by the Holy Ghost. That is the way you must read the text.

What does that mean?

It means this: when the Holy Ghost broods within you, He shows you the most wonderful work the Father ever did. And that most wonderful work of God is to go to hell for His church who were sinners like the others. And God went to hell for the church in the Person of the Son, united with our flesh and blood.

This is the love of God.

And now the Holy Ghost comes to you, and after regenerating and converting you, He shows you a picture of that love of God, that is, He shows you Jesus the Lord as He goes to hell for you. He shows Jesus to you in all His loveliness and attractive beauty.

And then that same Holy Ghost of Jesus Christ gives you an appreciation of such love and beauty as it is in Jesus Christ.

And then you cry out in ecstasy: Oh, Lord Jesus!

You really find the same thing in the Old Testament when the Bride of Christ says: "He is altogether lovely!"

When you say, through the Holy Ghost: Lord Jesus! then you cry out because of the great admiration for the wonders of grace and salvation which God has wrought through Him.

It really is the same thing as the eternal blessedness of heaven in the new kingdom.

Why did God determine in His counsel to have this Kingdom? In order to show how wonderful He is. That is the answer. And that is the wonder of our God: that He gave us Jesus. And that this Jesus took our curse and damnation away. For that you will sing unto all eternity.

For you are filled with the Holy Ghost.

They were all filled.

★ ★ ★ ★

But not the *whole* multitude.

Some said, when they looked upon the wonders of God: they are drunk!

Note the folly of the world: when they see something which they do not understand, they become unreasonable. Drunk? It was only the third hour of the day. You might see *one* man in a drunken stupor at that hour, but surely not *one hundred and twenty*.

They show their wickedness.

I pity them.

But we will sing. For the Holy Spirit still broods upon the waters of grace. You sing: Thy Spirit, o God, makes life to abound! Yes, He does that every spring when He kisses the earth. And the grass and flowers blossom.

Thy Spirit, o Lord, makes life to abound!

He does that still in the church. He kisses the church, and the flowers of grace blossom in the church. And God delights Himself in His beautiful work of redemption.

Reactions of Pentecost! O God! give them!

G. Vos.

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## EDITORIALS

### Very Clear

The articles that appeared in the *Refomatie* by Dr. Schilder against the Declaration of Principles are now published in brochure form under the title "Bovenschriftuurlijke Binding — Een Nieuw Gevaar," that is, "Super-scriptural Binding—A New Danger."

On page 82 of this brochure Dr. Schilder writes:

"Lately I received many letters from America, also concerning the question of the well-known 'Declaration'; it was intentional, that I did not answer these epistles (although they did me much good): one must never be able to say that I have tried to drive a wedge between colleague Hoeksema and his own people which were always united with him in hearty love. My opinion about the Declaration I openly expressed when it was deemed publicly necessary. But for the rest I await tranquilly what will be developed or be destroyed yonder."

I can well believe these words of Dr. Schilder (I write about him now as a past author, and therefore it is not necessary for me to say always "the late Dr. Schilder"), as long as the Declaration was not officially and synodically adopted. At that time I could look upon the articles of Dr. Schilder in the *Reformatie* as advice to our churches. And those articles and that advice were carefully considered and studied, and by them we have benefited, although mostly negatively. But now, after the Declaration has been officially adopted by our last synod, and Schilder publishes those same articles in brochure form, I cannot help but doubt that his intention was not to drive a wedge into our churches. But let that be: we cannot judge motives.

When I read again what Dr. Schilder wrote about the Declaration of Principles as it now appears in brochure form, I find it rather difficult to criticize him, for the very reason that there is no logical line in his writings whatsoever. Dr. Schilder always had many words, and he wrote evidently very easily, just as also in his lectures he spoke very readily, without much preparation, and therefore frequently without much of a logical line in his speech. In my opinion he was rather an analytical mind than a synthetic. He could sift words and terms, and criticize them, and say, "If I may understand the term in this sense, I can agree with it; but if in this sense, or another sense, I cannot agree with it." This he does also in his brochure. Besides, he jumps from

one subject to another, and returns to the same subject in different parts of his brochure. All this certainly makes not for clarity, and makes it somewhat difficult to criticize the contents of his pamphlet.

All the more amazing it is, to find that at the very beginning of his criticism of the Declaration of Principles he makes the remark that the Declaration is not clear, and that because of that fact it can never be a binding declaration. Writes he on pages 9 and 10, that the immigrants in Canada cannot and may not let themselves be bound to the Declaration of Principles, because:

"They cannot do this because the thing is not clear; and we believe therefore that they may not do it either... One can contradict what is proposed as a binding formula or accepted declaration on two grounds. The first may be: this declaration is factually untrue. For no one may bind himself or another to what is untrue. The second ground can be: this declaration is unclear, confusing, the choice of words is not lucid."

Now I maintain that the Declaration is very clear, so clear in fact that in our churches all understood it, whether they were opposed to adopting it or whether they were heartily in favor of it. I never heard any complaint in our churches that the Declaration was not clear.

But it is Dr. Schilder who in his brochure muddles matters, and is not only very confused, but also misrepresents our conception of the promise as well as that of the Liberated.

Of this I wish to give a few examples.

On pp. 13 ff, Dr. Schilder writes about conditions and about the conditional promise of God. There he first of all warns us against the use of dictionaries to determine the meaning of a word. With this, of course, I cannot possibly agree. And by taking the stand that we must not consult dictionaries to determine the significance of a term, Dr. Schilder of course makes room for the possibility of making his own definitions. But he also says that it is better to search in theological works of the fathers that have composed the Confessions. And he writes: "The question is: how must we understand that term. 'Condition' (*condition*) can signify a ruling, a state (toestand), ordinance (ordening), institution (inrichting). It can also signify sundry other meanings."

Now I have repeatedly said that the only meaning the word condition can possibly have and does have, both in theological works and in the minds of the Reformed people, is that of *prerequisite*. When

we speak of a conditional promise, we mean a promise that depends on a prerequisite which the one to whom the promise is made must fulfill in order to receive the promise. This is by no means ambiguous, but is very clear, is language which everyone can understand. And it is in this sense that the Declaration speaks of an unconditional promise.

This is the meaning of the term in our confessions.

When we read in Canons I, B, 2 that the Arminians teach that there are various kinds of election of God unto eternal life, the one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite, and that the definite election is either "incomplete, revocable, non-decisive, and conditional, or complete, irrevocable, decisive, and absolute," it is very evident that they mean by the term *conditional* something that is previously required of man in order to be chosen unto eternal salvation. And that something is faith, foreseen faith, or at least the will to believe. *Condition* here simply means a prerequisite.

This is still more clear in Canons I, B, 3, where we read that the Arminians teach: "That the good pleasure and purpose of God, of which Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election, does not consist in this, that God chose certain persons rather than others, but in this, that he chose out of all possible conditions (among which are also the works of the law), or out of the whole order of things, the act of faith, which from its very nature is un-dererving, as well as its complete obedience, as a condition of salvation." Also in this article it is very plain that the term *condition* simply means a prerequisite which man must fulfill in order to be saved.

And this is still more lucid in Article 4 of the same chapter of the Canons, where we read that the Arminians teach: "That in the election unto faith this condition is beforehand demanded, viz., that man should use the light of nature aright, be pious, humble, meek and fit for eternal life, as if on these things election were in any way dependent." You must understand that it is not the question now whether or not anyone believes in those so-called Arminian conditions, but only whether the term *condition* means prerequisite, and nothing else. And that this is indeed the meaning of the term is evident from the fact that the Arminians here teach "that this condition is beforehand demanded." Literally, therefore, the term *condition* here means prerequisite.

Once more, this is also evident from the same chapter of the Canons in Article 5, where we read that the Arminians teach: "That faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election to glory, but are

conditions, which, being required beforehand, were foreseen as being met by those who will be fully elected, and are causes without which the unchangeable election to glory does not occur." Again I want to emphasize that it is not a question whether anyone believes in these Arminian conditions, but the sole question is whether in the Canons the term *condition* means prerequisite. And here the Canons speak of conditions which are required beforehand and which are met by those who will be fully elected. Literally, therefore, in the Canons the term *condition* means nothing else than prerequisite.

The same is true of Canons II, B, 3, where we read that the Arminians teach: "That Christ by his satisfaction merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ unto salvation is effectually appropriated; but that he merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as he might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions." To prescribe conditions in order to receive something is certainly the same as a prerequisite.

And finally, the same meaning of the term is evident from Chapter V, B of the same Canons, where we read that the Arminians teach: "That the perseverance of the true believers is not a fruit of election, or a gift of God, gained by the death of Christ, but a condition of the new covenant, which (as they declare) man before his decisive election and justification must fulfill through his free will." Here too, the term *condition* means nothing else than a prerequisite which man must fulfill.

It is evident therefore, that in the terminology of our Confessions the term *condition* means a prerequisite which man must fulfill in order to obtain salvation.

Now let us see how Dr. Schilder defines the term *condition*.

I find this definition on page 14 of his brochure.

After he has repudiated various definitions of conditions, such as, that a condition is something that could bind God, or that a condition is something for which God must wait before He can go further, or that a condition is something which we must fulfill in order to merit anything, he himself defines condition as follows:

"A condition is something which God has connected with something else, to make clear to us, that the one thing cannot come without the other, and that we cannot be sure of the one thing, unless we are at the same time assured of the other."

I ask the reader: is this a clear definition of condition?

On the contrary, I claim that this is a very ambiguous and vague and utterly meaningless definition.

This is evident already from the fact that Dr. Schilder does not even state, at least does not state definitely, the genus of the definition, the main term, that which must be defined. And this certainly is a prerequisite in all proper definitions. The genus in Dr. Schilder's definition is "SOMETHING". And the term *something* certainly denotes that we do not know what it is: it may be anything. It may be a tree or a house or a cow or a dog or a mountain or an ocean or an abstract concept, like independence or love or mercy, or anything whatsoever.

But this something, then, Dr. Schilder defines as that which God has connected with something else. This, therefore, is the species of the definition. Also this species may denote all kinds of concepts. It certainly may denote that God has connected the means with the end, such as the means of faith with the final salvation. And to this, of course, we can subscribe: God certainly has connected the final salvation with the means of faith. It may also mean the connection between cause and effect. God has connected the shower of rain with the dark cloud, a connection of cause and effect. But no Reformed man would make the statement that faith is the cause of our salvation. So God has connected the sprouting of the seed with the cause of rain and sunshine, the end of death with the cause of cancer or tuberculosis. But it is nonsense to speak of these causes as conditions. Cancer is no condition of death, but simply the cause. In fact, in this definition we may even find the Arminian conception of condition. God according to the Arminian has connected faith, or will to believe, or the good use of the natural light, with the end of salvation: and in that sense, of course, condition is simply a prerequisite which man must fulfill in order to obtain salvation.

But the definition continues, and tells us that God has connected the one thing with the other, to make clear to us that the one thing cannot come without the other. Also this is not clear whatsoever. An effect cannot come without a cause. A conditional promise of man cannot come without the prerequisite being fulfilled. And the end cannot come without the means. What does Dr. Schilder mean? Clear? To me it is all very confusing and ambiguous.

And finally, Dr. Schilder states in this definition that God has connected the one thing with the other in order to make us know that we cannot be sure of the one thing unless we are also sure of the other. In itself this may be true: we cannot be sure of fi-

nal glory unless we are sure of our justification. And we cannot be sure of justification, except by faith. And we cannot have faith, except when we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Does that mean that regeneration is a condition of faith, and faith is a condition of justification, and justification is a condition of our entering into final glory? I should say not! Regeneration is not a condition, but is the God-wrought source in us of all the subjective blessings of salvation. And faith is not a condition unto justification, but is the means whereby God ingrafts us into Christ by Whom we are justified. And justification is not a condition unto eternal life, but is the legal ground of our everlasting glory.

H.H.



Our grateful tongues, immortal King,  
Thy glory shall forever sing;  
Our hymns to time's remotest day,  
Thy truth in sacred notes display.

What pow'r, O Lord, shall vie with thine?  
What name among the saints who shine,  
Of equal excellence possess'd,  
Thy sov'reignty will dare contest?

Thee, Lord, heav'n's hosts, their maker own,  
Thine is the kingdom, thine alone;  
Thee, endless majesty has crown'd,  
And glory ever vests thee round.

Thrones and dominions round thee fall;  
Thy presence shakes this lower ball:  
From change to change the creatures run;  
But all thy vast designs are one.

O wise in all thy works! thy name  
Let all the earth aloud proclaim;  
And grateful thru the length of days,  
In ceaseless songs repeat thy praise.



## ANNIVERSARY

On June 5, 1952, our beloved parents,  
MR. AND MRS. HERBERT VAN HARN  
hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

It is our earnest prayer, as their children, that the Lord  
Who has graciously spared them for us this far, may be with  
them, and bless them for the future.

Their children:

Mrs. F. Nouse  
Mr. and Mrs. P. Schippers  
Mr. and Mrs. S. Van Harn  
Catherine  
Jean  
Johanna  
13 grandchildren  
4 great grandchildren

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg  
Catechism

PART III

OF THANKFULNESS

Lord's Day 32

1.

The Idea of This Third Part (cont.)\*

The thirty-second Lord's Day is introduced by the question: "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?"

The question is: how must we understand the auxiliary verb "must"?

The question can be understood in the sense of an objection by opponents of the doctrine of free grace and free justification. In this sense the opponents of the truth frequently presented this question, even already in the time of the apostle Paul. Thus we read in Rom. 3:7,8: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just." And again, in Rom. 6:1: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" The argument in this question appears to be very logical and stringent. We are delivered from our misery, from hell and damnation. We are completely justified in the sight of God, so that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. We shall surely go to heaven and enter eternal life. And, these blessings of salvation, of righteousness and everlasting glory, are ours only for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. They are ours by mere grace. And grace certainly is opposed to works. We are saved, therefore, without any merit of ours, as the Catechism also emphasizes in Qu. 86. Good works, therefore, can never merit anything at all with God. All that is necessary unto our salvation has been perfectly accomplished by Christ. It cannot make any difference, therefore, whether or not we do good works: for good works can never add anything to our righteousness

\* The similarity of the title of this article with that of the Rev. Blankespoor in the same issue of the S. B. is purely coincidental. My article was written two weeks before I received his.—H.H.

before God. Why, then, must we do good works? Is it not rather derogatory to the truth of free grace and free justification even to speak of good works and to attempt to perform them? Let us rather sin, that grace may abound. Or, let us do evil, that good may come of it.

Thus the question, "Why must we still do good works?" is often presented by opponents, in order to show the folly of the doctrine of free grace and free justification.

It seems, however, that the same question is also asked in all seriousness by those that are called antinomians.

The term *antinomians* is derived from the Greek preposition *anti*, meaning "against", and the Greek noun *nomos*, meaning "law". Literally, therefore, the term denotes those that are opposed to the law.

Now who are the antinomians, and what do they really teach?

There appear to have been some antinomians in a very early age of the history of the New Testament church, perhaps even already at the time of the apostles. It would seem, at least, that the epistle of James is largely directed against a class of Christians whom we in our day would call antinomians, or, against those that emphasized faith without works. And in the fourth century Augustine suggests in one of his works that there were antinomians even before his day. But one of the fathers of more recent antinomians is Agricola, who lived at the time of the Reformation and was a supporter and colaborer of Luther. He died in 1566. Luther himself, in his defense of justification by faith over against Roman Catholicism, sometimes gave the impression of being inclined to antinomianism; but this is probably to be attributed rather to his strong opposition to the Romish doctrine of good works. When, however, Luther and Melancthon enjoined all the pastors that they should diligently teach and exhort their flocks to keep the commandments, Agricola accused them of backsliding and of denying the truth of free grace and justification by faith. He wrote a number of treatises on faith and repentance, in which he declared himself strongly opposed to those who teach that believers have anything to do with the law. He was attacked by Luther, and retracted his doctrines, although he was never quite convinced of their erroneous implications. After his death some others, like Amsdorf and Otto of Nordhausen, propagated the antinomian errors.

There are other theologians reputed to be antinomians, especially among the English Calvinists of the 17th century. But it must not be forgotten that it makes considerable difference who writes about them and characterizes them as antinomians. Many

of the quotations made from their works that are supposed to reflect antinomian errors are thoroughly sound and Scriptural, while others may appear to be erroneous when considered by themselves, but may be interpreted in a sound sense when taken in their proper connection. Thus, for instance, quotations like the following, taken from the sermons of Dr. Crisp, who died in 1642: "The law is cruel and tyrannical, requiring what is naturally impossible." And again: "The sins of the elect were so imputed to Christ, as that, though He did not commit them, yet they became actually His transgressions, and ceased to be theirs." And again: "Christ's righteousness is so imputed to the elect, that they, ceasing to be sinners, are as righteous as He was, and all that He was." The following quotation, however, is rather confusing: "An elect person is not in a condemned state while an unbeliever; and should he happen to die before God calls him to believe, he would not be lost." And again: "Repentance and confession of sin are not necessary to forgiveness. A believer may certainly conclude before confession, yea, as soon as he hath committed sin, the interest he hath in Christ, and the love of Christ embracing him." On the other hand, however, that Dr. Crisp does not deny the calling to live in a new and holy life may be evident from the following: "In respect to the rules of righteousness or the matter of obedience, we are under the law still, or else, we are lawless, to live every man as seems good in his own eyes, which no true Christian dares as much as think of." As I said before, it makes a tremendous difference whether one who writes about those so-called antinomians is himself in sympathy with the truth of sovereign grace and absolutely free justification, or opposed to it; whether he is in an Arminian or a Calvinist. The Arminian Dr. Orme, in his "Life of Baxter", II, 243, certainly shows no sympathy for the doctrines of antinomians, nor, for that matter, of Calvinists in general. He writes that this doctrine "withers and destroys the consciousness of human responsibility. It confounds moral with natural impotency, forgetting that the former is a crime, the latter only a misfortune; and thus treats the man dead in trespasses and sins as if he were already in his grave. It prophecies smooth things to the sinner going on in his transgressions, and soothes to slumber and the repose of death the souls of such as are at ease in Zion. It assumes that, because men can neither believe, repent, nor pray acceptably, unless aided by the grace of God, it is useless to call upon them to do so. It maintains that the gospel is only intended for elect sinners, and therefore it ought to be preached to none but such. In defiance, therefore, of the command of God, it refuses to preach the glad

tidings of mercy to every sinner. In opposition to Scripture, and to every rational consideration, it contends that it is not man's duty to believe the truth of God—justifying the obvious inference that it is not a sin to reject it. In short, its whole tendency is to produce an impression on the sinner's mind that, if he is not saved, it is not his fault, but God's; that, if he is condemned, it is more for the glory of the divine sovereignty than as the punishment of his guilt. So far from regarding the moral cure of human nature as the great object and design of the gospel, antinomianism does not take it in at all, but as it exists in Christ, and becomes ours by a figure of speech. It regards the grace and the pardon of everything, the spiritual design or effect as nothing. Hence its opposition to progressive, and its zeal for imputed sanctification: the former is intelligible and tangible, but the latter a mere figment of the imagination. Hence its delight in expatiating on the eternity of the divine decrees, which it does not understand, but which serve to amuse and to deceive, and its dislike to all the sober realities of God's present dealings and commands. It exalts in the contemplation of a Christ Who is a kind of concretion of all the moral attributes of His people; to the overlooking of that Christ Who is the head of all that in heaven and on earth bear His likeness, and while unconscious of possessing it. It boasts in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, while it believes in no saint but one, that is, Jesus, and neglects to persevere." On the other hand, see what Dr. Kuyper writes in *E Voto*, III, 335, ff., although also he condemns the erroneous tendencies of the antinomians, nevertheless, over against moderns, ethicals, and Arminians he is much more sympathetic to them, and speaks of Dr. Kohlbrugge as his lifelong friend. Cf. also the work by Dr. van Lonkhuyzen on Kohlbrugge. Nevertheless, if by antinomians are meant those that teach that Christ has so fulfilled the moral law, considered as the law of love, that believers have nothing to do with it any more, if we may indeed believe that they deny sanctification and the calling to put off the old man and put on the new man, and to walk in a new and holy life, who, moreover, make such a separation between the old and the new man of the Christian that the believer is no longer responsible for the sins committed in the flesh and does not have to be sincerely sorry for them,—if all this is supposed to be implied in antinomianism, it must be condemned as a very serious error. But at the same time it is safe to say that in this sense no true believer can be an antinomian, either doctrinally or in practice.

I rather think that some sincere antinomians place

a wrong emphasis on justification at the expense of sanctification. They place all the emphasis on the work of Christ for us, in our behalf and in our stead, at the expense of the work of Christ in us and through us by His Holy Spirit. Their motive is, no doubt to fear to derogate the work of free grace, the fear to give any credit to man, and the desire to let God in Christ be all and let the sinner be nothing. Nevertheless, they do not understand that by failing to give due emphasis to the work of Christ in the believer and through him, and therefore, by failing to understand that it is inevitable that those that are justified in Christ and therefore are by faith ingrafted into Him walk in a new and holy life, they detract from the glory of Christ as a complete Savior.

The "must" of the eighty-sixth question of the Catechism, therefore, must not be understood in the sense of the opponents of free grace and free justification, nor in the sense of those that are called antinomians, but rather in the sense of keeping the law of perfect liberty, which is mentioned in the epistle of James.

This is evident from the first part of the answer to Q. 86: "Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image."

What, according to the instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism, is our real misery? Is it that we must suffer the punishment of death, and go to eternal desolation? This certainly is true in itself, and it is unspeakably wretched; but it is not the real essence; the real, essential character and the cause of our misery. It is rather the effect. And before the effect can be removed, the cause must be taken away. That cause is our sin in all its implications. That is why the Catechism taught us in Lord's Day 2 that we learn to know our misery out of the law of God. And thus becoming acquainted from that source of the law of God with our misery, we discover that it consists in this, that we are prone by nature to hate God and our neighbor. Our misery consists, further, in this, that we are guilty in Adam, so that his sin is imputed to us and the whole human race lies under condemnation through him as our head. It moreover consists in this, that because of the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in paradise, we are all conceived and born in sin, and that we have become so corrupt that we cannot do any good and are inclined to all evil unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Our misery, therefore, consists in our sin, in the fact that we trampled and still trample under foot God's covenant, that we became and still are separated from Him, the Fount of all good, and that therefore we are enemies of God,

increase our guilt daily, so that by nature we are children of wrath and seek our own destruction. Such, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, is the essence of our misery.

On the other hand, we may also ask the question: what, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, and according to the whole of Scripture, is the essence of our salvation? And the answer is, negatively, that it certainly does not consist in this, that we are excused from going to hell, and are considered worthy to become citizens of an external state of glory in heaven. Certainly it is true that salvation is deliverance from hell and the being made partakers of heaven. But the essence of heaven is not an external state of glory, but it consists rather of a glory that shall be revealed *in us*. Its essence consists in perfect fellowship of friendship with the living God in Jesus Christ our Lord. It consists in eternal life: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." It is to be like God in a creaturely sense, to be made like unto the image of His Son. It is to be righteous as God is righteous; it is to be made perfectly holy, without spot or blemish; it is to know Him as we are known, and to love Him as we are loved. It is to glorify and praise Him as prophets, to serve Him as priests, walking forever in good works, and to reign in perfect freedom with Him in Christ Jesus our Lord over all the works of His hands. It is eternally to dwell in the everlasting tabernacle of God that shall be with men.

Such is the essence of salvation.

When the Heidelberg Catechism therefore asks, "Why must we still do good works?" it means that he that is in Christ Jesus is already partaker in principle of that essence of salvation even in this life. He feels the beginning of eternal glory in his heart, and therefore he conceives of the "must" of good works not as an obligation to an external law, but as an obligation of perfect love, as the inevitable fruit of grace, as the keeping of the law of perfect liberty. Such is evidently the meaning of the answer of the Heidelberg Catechism. Christ indeed redeemed and delivered us by His blood, and by that redemption and deliverance which we have in the blood of Christ we are made perfectly righteous before God, so that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Before God we are perfectly righteous by an imputed righteousness in Christ that can never be changed or undone. Our sins are blotted out, and they can never be imputed unto us anymore. But this justification is not the whole of salvation. Christ is a complete Savior. As the Catechism expressed it in the very first question and answer of its instruc-

tion: "What is thy only comfort in life and death? That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him." That indeed is the whole of salvation. Christ not only redeems and delivers us by His blood, but He also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image.

The Christian therefore stands in principle in the law of perfect liberty. The "must", the "may", the "can", and the "will" in him are in perfect harmony. In other words, the obligation to do good works, the privilege of doing good works, the ability to do good works, and the free, willing choice to do good works are all one in him through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who renews us by His Spirit and makes us like unto His own image.

To be sure, the "must", the obligation to keep the law of love is universal, and every sinner is responsible for the keeping of that law. We must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. This was the law of love in paradise, and Adam in the state of rectitude lived and walked according to that law of love. This obligation, however, still rests upon every sinner, although by nature he cannot and will not and cannot will to perform that law. God never relinquishes the demand of the law of love. But this same law of love is still valid in the state of grace. It is true that according to Rom. 6:14 we are not under the law, but under grace. But do not forget that it is exactly because we are not under the external obligation to an external code of law, but under grace, that sin shall not have dominion over us. For the apostle continues in the same chapter: "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." The question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, therefore is perfectly correct: "Why must we do good works? Because Christ hath not only redeemed and delivered us by his blood,

but also by his Holy Spirit renews us and makes us like unto His own image." The obligation to love the Lord our God can never be relinquished.

However, although the keeping of the law of love is obligatory upon the sinner, although the "must" is therefore universal, this is not the case with the "may". We must never forget that we may look upon the keeping of the law of God, and therefore upon His service, as a great privilege. It is a great delight and it makes man unspeakably blessed and happy to walk in the love of God and to serve Him with his whole heart. That privilege the sinner forfeited: he has no more the right to that privilege, because he is a slave of sin. The law can no longer make him free because of the weakness of the flesh. Rom. 8:3. And he that committeth sin is a slave of sin. John 8:34. But Christ redeemed us from the slavery of sin. He purchased us free. Through Him God condemned sin in the flesh: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Sin therefore has no more the right to rule over us. We are entirely free from its dominion by the death of Christ. Legally we are delivered from the prison of sin and death. The "may" is in perfect harmony with the "must": the privilege and obligation are all one through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Still more. Not only does the Christian have the privilege to serve God, but he is also principally able to do good works through the same Christ Jesus our Lord. The sinner by nature is dead in trespasses and sins. He is so corrupt that he is incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil. But this is no longer the case with the Christian. He is not only redeemed and delivered by the blood of Christ from the guilt of sin, but he is also renewed by the Spirit of Christ and made like unto the image of the Son of God: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." And on the basis of this fact the apostle Paul can admonish the church: "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The can and the "may" and the "must", the ability and the privilege and the obligation, therefore, are all in perfect harmony in the Christian.

And finally, it stands to reason that therefore

also the "will" to do good works and to keep the law of love is in harmony with the "must". With the natural man this is different: he not only is incapable of doing good works, but he hates the law of love. He cannot and he will not and he cannot will to keep that law and to walk in all good works. But with the Christian this is radically different. He longs to do good works. He has a delight in the law of God according to the inner man. And it is his inmost desire to be pleasing to the God of His salvation. O, it is true, all this is realized only in principle, and as the Catechism confesses in a later chapter, even the holiest of the believers have only a small beginning of the new obedience. Nevertheless, in principle this is perfectly true. The Christian stands in the law of perfect liberty, because he is delivered from all sin and guilt as he is redeemed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and because he is renewed in his inmost heart and made like unto the image of the Son of God. And it is inevitable that the Christian, thus redeemed and delivered and renewed by the Spirit of Christ, shall fight against all sin within and without, and walk in a new and holy life, loving the Lord his God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. Good works, therefore, are not a condition unto salvation, but they are the inevitable fruit of the realization of God's covenant with and in the believer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H.H.



Thou reign'st, O Lord, thy throne is high,  
Thy robes are light and majesty;  
Thy pow'r is sov'reign to fulfill  
The holy counsels of thy will.

Thy will be done on earth below  
At 'tis in heav'n: thy grace bestow  
On us and all; may we and they  
Renounce our wills, and thine obey.

While all the hosts of heav'n rejoice  
To yield obedience to thy voice;  
In constancy, and zeal, and love,  
May we resemble those above.

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# IN HIS FEAR

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## Looking To The Future

### Chapter 3

### ON TEACHER TRAINING

#### *Introductory*

It is already rather evident from our previous chapter, concerning the teacher problem, that the matter of teacher training is a second major problem for the movement for Protestant Reformed education. I mean, of course, *Protestant Reformed* teacher training.

Upon the necessity of such Protestant Reformed teacher training we have touched previously. However, it will do no harm, by way of introduction, to call attention to that matter once more. And we may do so very succinctly in the following propositions:

1. We believe, as Protestant Reformed people, that our schools must not merely be separate from the existing Christian schools and from the public schools in externals, in name, organization, facilities, etc., but that they must be schools in which the instruction from the beginning to end is founded upon and permeated by our Protestant Reformed principles, which to us is the same as saying Reformed principles,—which, in turn, is the same as saying the truth of Holy Scripture.

2. It follows from this fundamental proposition that a Protestant Reformed school is a school that is staffed by Protestant Reformed teachers, men and women who are equipped to bring Protestant Reformed instruction.

3. It is also self-evident that a Protestant Reformed teacher is not a person who, though he be Protestant Reformed in confession and church affiliation, has had some teacher training in any of a number of different teacher-training institutions,—Christian Reformed, Reformed, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist or even so-called non-religious schools, which are in reality modern or pagan,—but that a Protestant Reformed teacher is a Protestant Reformed man or woman who has been trained in Protestant Reformed principles of education, positively and completely, so that he enters upon his teaching career with the equipment necessary to bring Protestant Reformed instruction. (Underlying this proposition are, of course, two facts which we can all see readily: a) The fact that a teacher must be trained. And, b) the fact that his training is not merely formal, but that all his training has doctrinal or ethical content

and is necessarily colored by the spiritual principles of the particular school by which he is trained. Thus for example, the modernists' training in the principles of discipline is fundamentally different from training in discipline based upon Holy Writ: the one bases his instruction upon the lie that man is inherently good, while Holy Writ gives us the principle that a man is incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil, unless he is regenerated by the Spirit of God.

4. Hence, it follows that we must have facilities for Protestant Reformed teacher-training.

Several important questions present themselves in this connection, however, questions of both a principal and a practical nature. There is the question: who is responsible for the establishment of such teacher training institutions? Is it the calling of the churches, of synod, to develop such a normal school, perhaps, as a branch of our Theological School? Or must such a school be established officially independent of the church institute? In the latter case, who must organize such an institution? A second question requiring attention, and which stands in close connection with the practical aspect of the possibility of establishing such a school, is: what are the requirements in the curriculum of such a school? What, ideally, should be offered? What are the minimum requirements, the absolutely necessary subjects, which would have to be taught from the outset? A third, and purely practical, question that might be asked is: how could we go about obtaining our own normal school?

Understand well, at present we are merely asking questions, not answering them. Nor do we guarantee to answer all questions. But certainly, a little study of the matter should bring us some answers, and should at least bring us to some conclusions as to the feasibility of establishing our own facilities for the training of our Protestant Reformed teachers. The undersigned, for one, does not deem it nearly so much of a dream as it is sometimes presented to be, that in the not-too-distant future we could have our own normal school, provided we go about it with a will.

#### *History*

Did you know that in the past few years we have made history in this regard already? Well, we have.

And we will now devote some space to presenting that history, first of all, in order that we may have a complete view of the problem.

That history begins sometime in 1948, at least as far as our churches officially are concerned. In the

Acts of Synod, 1948, p. 63, we read the following item in the report of the Theological School Committee:

"12. We received a letter from the Society for Protestant Reformed Education asking us to what extent the facilities of the Theological School can be made available to prepare persons interested in the teaching profession to qualify them for teaching in schools of our own. This society is planning to build a ten-room grade school in a year or two. We informed them that at present we have no facilities and that we are forwarding their request to Synod. Their letter is herewith attached."

Sorry to say, although the letter mentioned may have been attached to the report of the Theological School Committee, it was not published in the Acts. However, Synod did give attention to this matter, for we read first of all, in the report of the committee of pre-advice, p. 65:

"11. In connection with the letter of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education, which the committee refers to Synod, we advise:

That Synod advise the Society for Protestant Reformed Education that we have no facilities for a complete normal course. However, that we can supply, we hope, the very necessary Protestant Reformed point of view by having prospective teachers take Reformed doctrine and read specified outside literature upon educational subjects, as produced by our men and others."

And on page 68 of the same Acts, we find that Synod itself adopted a slightly different decision in this matter, Art. 80:

"Motion made and supported to adopt the advice of Committee under No. 11 dealing with the request of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education for the institution of a Normal Course in our School.

"Amendment is made, supported and carried that we change the term 'Reformed Doctrine' to 'Principles of Education'.

"The Amended motion is adopted."

The Acts of Synod, 1949, record more action along this same line. Turning to page 64, we find this item in the report of the Theological School Committee for that year:

"10. The following letter was received by our committee, and it was decided to submit this letter to you for your disposal of the matter as you see fit.

"Grand Rapids, Mich., May 7, 1949

"Theological School Committee,

"Grand Rapids, Michigan,

'Esteemed Brethren:

"As you perhaps know, it is our intention, the Lord willing, to open our own school in September,

1950. We realize that our greatest need is for teachers, able and equipped, to teach our children the required subjects permeated by the Protestant Reformed life view. For these teachers to do this we feel that they should receive a specific course of instruction above and beyond that which they receive at Calvin College.

"As you know, some work has been done along this line by our Teachers' Club. The Board, however, deems it necessary that we should have a regular normal course where our prospective teachers would receive their final training. This we feel is very essential in order that our school may indeed reflect the truth as we know and love it.

"This is not only of local importance, for we also have other Protestant Reformed Schools and plans are being made to open more.

"We come, therefore, to your body with the request that, if at all feasible, a normal course be added to the curriculum of our Theological School this coming year. If for various reasons you do not see your way clear to do this, kindly forward this request to Synod with or without your recommendation.

"Board of Society for Prot. Ref. Education

"Sincerely yours,

"(w.s.) D. Jonker, Sec'y.

"Per the Education Committee."

At the same Synod there was an instruction from Randolph's Consistory, via Classis East, which came to Synod without Classical recommendation, pp. 67,68.

"Instruction of Randolph:

"The Consistory of Randolph advises Classis to overture Synod to consider ways and means of establishing our own Normal Training School to train prospective teachers to teach in our own Christian Schools.

"Grounds:

"1. It is simply a fact, that shall our Protestant Reformed Schools be distinctive, that the teachers must be able to teach distinctively. The school is not better than the teacher.

"2 It is a fact that the need of our own schools is being felt more and more, as is attested by our own School Society and the erection of buildings. It would be short-sightedness not to prepare our own teachers.

"By order of the Consistory,

"(signed) Geo. C. Lubbers, Pres.

"W. Huizenga, Clerk."

More belongs to this history, but for that, as well as for our evaluation of it, we shall have to wait until the next issue, D.V.

H. C. Hoeksema

## SION'S ZANGEN

### De Loſzang Der Liefde

( Pſlam 116; Slot)

We zijn nu toegekomen aan een uitroep van blijdschap, van verrukking. Denkt aan zijn groote smarten van de eerste verzen. Maar hij was verlost. De Heere had aan hem welgedaan. Hij was gered van den dood, zijne oogen van tranen, en zijnen voet van aanstoot.

En zoo breekt hij uit in een jubel van roepen.

“Wat zal ik den Heere vergelden voor alle Zijne weldaden aan mij bewezen?”

Dat, mijne vrienden, is de verlegenheid van den wijze.

Alle Zijne weldaden. Och, lieve, waar zal hij beginnen en waar zal hij eindigen in het opsommen van alle de weldaden des Heeren? Er wordt soms gezegd, dat de eeuwigheid te kort zal zijn om op te sommen al de weldaden Gods. Ik weet wel, dat dit niet waar is, niet waar kan zijn, want God heeft die eeuwigheid gesteld tot het “vergelten” van zoo groote zaligheid. En God weet wat Hij doet, en al wat Hij doet is gaaf, af, goed en recht. Ook de zangen, de nieuwe zangen van die groote schare. Maar toch, er zit een schoone gedachte in dat zeggen. Het geeft uitdrukking aan de grootheid, de overweldigende grootheid van des Heeren weldaden aan ons bewezen. Hier in Amerika heeft men een gezang, waaraan ik in dit verband moet denken. Het luidt, vrij vertaald, als volgt: Tel Uw vele zegeningen, tel ze één voor één; en het zal U verbazen wat de Heere aan U gedaan heeft. En dat is waar. Dat is eeuwig waar.

O, we zullen Hem danken, maar we komen er nooit mee klaar. Het danken begint bij de eerste gave van genade, maar de laatste klank van lof en prijs zal nooit gehoord worden. Men zal doorgaan, immer doorgaan met het zingen, dat al jubelende zegt: “Hem die op den troon zit, en het Lam, zij de dankzegging en de eer en de heerlijkheid en de kracht in alle eeuwigheid. En de vier dieren zeiden: Amen. En de vier en twintig Ouderlingen vielen neder en aanbaden Dengene die leeft in alle eeuwigheid.”

Alle Zijne weldaden?

Vraagt het aan de zon, de maan en de sterren. Onderzoekt de diepten der zee die geeft en al maar geeft aan Zijn gunstgenoten. Merkt op de rijkdommen die de ingewanden der aarde U schenkt. Luistert naar de lieflijke klanken en kleurenpracht die Uw oor en oog bekoren. Ge hebt honger en de Heere komt aandragen met vleesch en spijs in overvloed. Hij

maakte immers de opgeploegde voren dronken, en Zijne voetstappen zijn nog steeds vettigheid? Hij verblijdt Uw hart met spijs en vroolijkheid. Driemaal daags komt God aangeloopt en verzadigt en verkwikt U. Vooraleer Uwe oogen het daglicht zagen, was God, d' Algoede God dicht, zeer dicht bij U in Uw moeders ingewand, en Hij bewerkte Uw hart zoodat het begon te kloppen, en het klopt nog steeds, want Hij verliet U nooit. En het zal blijven kloppen totdat alle de uren en stonden die Hij voor U bestemde vervlogen zijn. En als dan Uw hart voor de laatste maal klopte, dan nam Hij U lieflijk in Zijne armen en dan droeg Hij U opwaarts naar Zijn hemel, en zette U neer om Uw eeuwig deel in ontvanging te nemen. En terwijl Hij U naar den hemel bracht veegde Hij U het doodsweet van Uw aangezicht, en veegde de tranen weg.

Ik zou het bovenstaande hebben kunnen vertienvoudigen, verdubbeld in getale. En zelfs dan zou ik niet hebben kunnen zeggen al de weldaden die Hij U op aarde schonk. Ik had kunnen spreken van Zijn bewarende hand te midden van duren tijd en hongersnood, te midden van oorlogen en geruchten van oorlog. Ik had kunnen spreken van Zijn bewarende hand, toen duivelen en kwade menschen hunne listen beeraamden om U schielijk te vernietigen. Denkt aan onze vaders toen zij zeiden: (dat Hij) van alle goed (ons) verzorgen, en alle kwaad van ons weren, of ten onzen beste keeren wil.

Ik zeide zooeven, dat ik de geheele som niet noemen kon van alle aardsche weldaden. En dat moet U duidelijk zijn. We weten zoo weinig van de aardsche dingen. Er komen steeds meer verrassende uitvindingen, die ten baat van den Christen aangewend worden. Denkt aan de zoogenaamde “wonder-drugs”. We weten zoo weinig van ons lichaam, van onze ziel en van onze geest. We weten zoo weinig van beesten en planten en gassen en stoffen. Er is een oceaan van geschapen dingen, en alle die worden door God gebruikt om Zijn kind te zegenen. In de duizelingwekkende hoogten van den hemel is God die op den hemel vaart tot onze hulpe, en in de diepten dan? Wel, daar zegt God: van onderen zijn de eeuwige armen. En van den vijand zegt Hij: Verdelg hem! O, God is zoo goed! En dat waren nog maar de aardsche, tijdelijke zegeningen. Wat zal ik zeggen van “alle Zijne weldaden” die geestelijk, hemelsch, eeuwig zijn? Waar zal ik beginnen? En het antwoord is: in de nooit begonnen eeuwigheid! Daar moet ik beginnen, want in die stille eeuwigheid is het liefhebbend hart van God, dat Zich tot mij wendde in Zijn eeuwigen raad. Daar had Hij ons lief, mijn broeder. Daar zag Hij ons in Zijne handpalmen en daar beminde Hij ons. Ge moogt het zóó zeggen: zou oud als God is zoo oud is

Zijn liefde tot Zijn volk. En vergeet het nimmer: die eeuwige liefde is het substraat voor alle andere weldaden. In die liefde dacht de Goddelijke Wijsheid een weg uit om ons tot de hoogst mogelijke hoogte van prijs en lof van God te brengen. God wilde ons een zeer gelukkig volk maken, dat al zijn blijdschap zou vinden in het loven van God. En zoo dacht de Wijsheid een weg uit. En die weg is de weg van zonde en genade. In die twee woorden hebt ge den weg van het beminde kind Gods naar den hemel heen.

En op den weg van zonde en genade vindt ge de uitstortingen van den beker van Gods zegeningen.

Ik kon mijn weg niet vinden tot een opsomming van alle aardsche zegeningen. Welnu, wat zal ik hier vinden?

Ik vind oceanen van genade en genade voor genade. En al die zegeningen zijn besloten in Jezus Christus, den Heere. En als Hij ons dien Zoon schonk, zal Hij ons dan niet met Hem alle dingen schenken? En het antwoord is: Ja, dat zal Hij doen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid.

Het einde zal zijn, dat ge naar lichaam en ziel vol zult zijn van God. Ge zult tot in der eeuwigheid verzadigd worden met Zijn Goddelijk Beeld. Ge zult aanzitten met God aan Zijn tafel. En dronken worden uit de beken Zijner wellusten. En dat is de uiteindelijke genieting van Zijn trouwverbond.

Al die weldaden ziet de dichter van mijn psalm.

En daarom roept hij uit in de verlegenheid van den begenadigde: Wat zal ik nu den Heere vergelden voor alle Zijne weldaden mij bewezen?

Eigenlijk is er maar één antwoord mogelijk.

En dat ééne antwoord is dit: Ik zal het hemelleven hier op aarde aanvangen! In de woorden van den tekst: Ik zal den beker der verlossingen opnemen en den naam des Heeren aanroepen!

De beker der verlossingen!

Dat is figuurlijke taal voor ons deel, hetgeen ons hier op aarde geschonken werd aan verlossing in het bloed van Jezus Christus.

Het beeld van den beker wordt ook gebruikt voor smart en ellende.

Doch hier is het ons deel aan Christus.

En het opnemen van dien beker ziet op het loven en prijzen van God over zooveel genade aan ons bewezen.

Nu begint dat loven en prijzen van God hier op aarde, en wordt straks voortgezet in den hemel, met dit verschil, dat we er op aarde bitter weinig van zien, doch dat het straks in den hemel volmaaktelijk geschieden zal door geheel die menigte die uit de groote verdrukking zullen komen.

Er wordt bitter weinig van gezien. Ik denk, dat de dichter van den berijmden 103den psalm dit voor

de aandacht had, toen hij zong: Och of nu al, wat in mij is Hem preez'! Er komt weinig van terecht, want het beginsel der nieuwe gehoorzaamheid is bij den alerheiligste zoo gering!

En toch: dat beginsel is er. We roepen den naam des Heeren aan. Dat is geschied van den beginne aan. We lezen ervan in den aanvang der historie, en we doen het ten huidigen dage nog. En we zullen het blijvene doen, totdat de volmaaktheid komt. En dan zal niemand den naaste meer aansporen en zeggen: Komt ga met ons en doe als wij! Want ze zullen Hem allen volmaakt kennen en daarom volmaakt loven en prijzen.

De dichter nam zich voor om er ook mee te beginnen.

Hij voegt er aan toe, ter verklaring van dit opnemen van den beker der verlossingen: Mijne gelofter zal ik den Heere betalen, nu, in de tegenwoordigheid van al Zijn volk.

Mijne geloften, zegt hij.

Ik denk dat dit ziet op zijn geloften die hij den Heere beloofd had toen het hem zoo bang en bedroefd was. Want dat doet Gods volk. We lezen er overal van in Gods Woord, en onze eigen ervaring is er vol van. Ge hoort het overal getuigen in de kerk van Christus. Men was zeer bang te moede; men riep den Heere aan; en men beloofde den Heere, dat we Hem zouden loven en prijzen indien Hij ons genadiglijk uitredden wilde.

Zoo ook hier.

Het is duidelijk, dat deze dichter in groote benauwdheden geweest is, want hij spreekt van verlossingen in het meervoud. Ik denk in dit verband aan den twee-en-veertiger: Menigwerf heeft Hij uw druk doen veranderen in geluk! En: vele zijn de tegenspoeden des rechtvaardigen, maar uit die alle redt hem de Heere.

En dan is het einde van die verlossingen het loven van God. Er is een Schriftuur waar dit proces als in één adem geleerd wordt: Roept Mij aan in den dag der benauwheid: Ik zal er u uit helpen, en gij zult Mij eeren. Ps. 50:15.

Dat was hier ook geschied, want immers de tekst zegt: Ik zal mijne geloften den Heere betalen, nu, in de tegenwoordigheid van al Zijn volk.

In dat laatste zit iets zeer schoons.

We betalen onze geloften te midden van vele getuigen.

We komen te zamen, vooral op den rustdag, om den Heere onze geloften te betalen. Het mag gezien. En het mag gehoord.

Er is een psalm waar we hiervan zingen: De lofzang klimt uit Sions zalen tot U met diepst ontzag; daar zal men U, o God! betalen, geloften dag aan dag!

Eigenlijk is dit de laatste klank van dit lied der liefde. Want het overige van den zang herhaalt de gedachte van het betalen van die geloften in de vergadering van al Gods volk.

Kostelijk is in de oogen des Heeren de dood Zijner gunstgenoten.

Wat mag dit beduiden?

Dit ziet op het feit, dat de Heere Zijn volk niet slaat en tot den dood toe brengt, zonder gewichtige redenen te hebben. De Heere verheugt Zich in het leven Zijner gunstgenoten, doch als zij weenen moeten en klagen in banden des doods, dan is dat Hem kostelijk, dan gaat het Hem aan Zijn hart. En God geeft Zijn volk slechts dan over aan bloed tranen, lijden en den dood als het moet, als het Zijn grootsch plan der verlossing dienen moet. Doch ook dan zingen we: Hun bloed, hun tranen en hun lijden zijn *dierbaar* in Zijn oog! En heeft de Heere groot genoeg in hunne bevrijding als het uur van hunne verlossing slaat in Zijn raad.

Dat "gunstgenoten" brengt de dichter in herinnering zijn eigen heerlijke staat. Hij is des Heeren knecht, een zoon van Gods dienstmaagd. De zanger stamt van een godvruchtig geslacht. Neen, genade is geen erfgoed, en toch is het o zoo lieflijk als men een godvruchtige moeder mag hebben, en als onze vader den Heere vreest. Want dan wordt ons de kennisse Gods van der jeugd aan ingeprent. Als dan de Heilige Geest van Christus ons vindt in het uur der minne, zijn we anderen ver vooruit, die niet mochten deelen in zoo grooten zegen. Want dan is er alreede een groote schat van Godskennisse aanwezig in zulk een kind.

Gij hebt mijne banden losgemaakt!

Hoe vaak zal dat alreede gezongen zijn in de eeuwen die achter ons liggen. En hoevele malen zal dit nog gezongen worden tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid?

En dan gaat hij aan 't offeren van de dankzeggingen.

Neen, we hebben geen letterlijke offeranden meer. Nadat Jezus Zichzelf Gode onstraffelijk opofferde aan het kruis van Golgotha, heeft alle offeren uit. Dat wil zeggen, van dieren. Want er zijn nog wel geestelijke offeranden. Romeinen spreekt ervan: "Ik bid u dan, broeders, door de ontfermingen Gods, dat gij uwe lichamen stelt tot een levende, heilige en Gode welbehaaglijke offerande, welke is uwe redelijke godsdienst."—Rom. 12:1.

Wat is het?

Zeer eenvoudig, en toch zoo onbegrijpelijk diep: We roepen den Naam aan. Dit is zeer diep, want de Heilige Geest zegt: Niemand kan zeggen: Heere Jezus! dan door den Heiligen Geest.

En waar? Overal. Maar toch is er een groote

aantrekking in het Huis des Heeren, in de voorhoven van het 19de vers. We hebben die plaats hartstochtelijk lief. We *wonen* er.

En waarom?

Die plaatsen zijn ons Nieuw-Testamentische Jeruzalem!

De stad des grooten Konings. We beminnen haar tot in der eeuwigheid.

G. Vos



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of Philippians 2:1-4

#### II.

There are two proverbial flies in the apothecary's ointment of God's Church, that are a very pestilent evil. They are indeed the Devil's tools to disrupt the unity in God's church. For, let us not forget, that Satan is our Arch-Foe, who uses sin and our evil lusts as tools for our destruction!

Which two evils do we have in minds?

The text calls them: party-strife and vain-glory. Literally the Greek reads: Nothing (be done) according to party-strife nor according to vain-glory!

We recall that we are all to walk in the likemindedness in the Lord. This is the unity that is wrought in our hearts through the operation of the Holy Spirit. It always and only proceeds from the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. It is not simply a likemindedness of feeling, but it is a subjection of our whole mind and soul and strength to the pure and sound doctrine of Christ our Lord.

In this sound doctrine, which contains precepts of the Gospel (not to be confused with commandments of the Law) we never read that party-strife or vain-glory is a walking in the Spirit, in the unity of faith and heaven's likemindedness. This all must be crucified; it belongs to the mortification of our members.

Party-strife: what is it? The term in the original Greek is quite common in the New Testament Scriptures from the hand of Paul. It is a term which received a new content in the Bible, the term itself was also already employed by the Greeks, who lived before the birth of Christ. It is the term to designate the politician in his activities of gaining the favor of the people for his cause and his person. Such a politician has a political axe to grind. And so he champions his cause at the expense of another. His strife be-

comes that of a party over against another party. And since man is a sinner, who is vain in self-love and personal ambition, this party-strife always involves vain-glory. It is a glory that brings one nowhere except to ruin. It never is constructive; it never builds. Destruction and misery are in its way, and the way of peace it does not know. It never comes to peaceful contentment. Its ideal is nothing but a deceptive and illusionary mirage. It promises much seemingly, but it gives nothing.

It is one of the vanity of vanities observed by the Preacher.

Such it is in this world.

Such it is also when it dwells as a foreign parasite in God's Church.

*Nothing* must thus be done. It saps our life's strength, it robs us of our joys and it dulls the sense of glorious victory over death and hell. For in God's Church none is Lord; all are to be brethren each being an example to the other of willingness to bow before the Word, the sound doctrine as the Rule of Faith. They, who do nothing from party-strife, bow only before the Lord Jesus. They have learned the lesson of Jesus, and taste the "blessedness" of washing their neighbor's feet.

Such we must become more and more.

Wherefore the Apostle adds: "But in lowliness let each esteem the other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others".

Lowliness is the virtue of grace whereby we place ourselves before the face of God and our neighbor and in our whole thought and purpose think of ourselves according to the actual facts; in this lowliness we face reality. We are honest with ourselves and also before God. In the world such a man is often called a brave man. Also here is an element of boasting. Nay, in God's church such a man has received mercy. He grasps that by which he has been apprehended of Christ. He simply works out in the details of his life what God energizes in him from moment to moment. And then he appears before God and lives! He lives and does not die. Yes, he is brave, but with the courage of a Jacob who is given the victory while he supplicates God for His blessing. That is lowliness.

All vain-glory is gone at Peniel. Before the face of God none boast. God alone is great. And, therefore, it is a great boon to be clothed with this humility of mind. It is wisdom, rooted in the fear of the Lord. And the Lord exalts the lowly-minded to see His glory in the Sanctuary. For there is the high-way of our God. Here we tremble in beauty of holiness and worship the Lord.

Everything in the church and in the world, in heaven and hell, comes to stand in its proper perspective. The mirages of sin dispel. Our neighbor we see in a new light. All things become new; old things flee away. We see all in the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as preached in the glorious Gospel. Here in the wondrous grace of forgiveness we learn new lessons. They are the lessons which only Jesus teaches, unto which only the grace of the Holy Spirit can bend us.

What is it?

It is to "esteem the other better than ourselves". Truly, that is a new thing under the sun. It is also as real in God's church as it is new. For the Son of God is come to break the works of the Devil. And the work of the Devil is that we are instigated by our lusts to self-exalting pride; we always and again by nature look with contempt upon the other. We must learn by the mercies of Jesus not thus to think. We must bethink other things. Says the Apostle elsewhere in this Epistle: whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, take account of these things; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

One of the loveliest things under the sun is to think more highly of your neighbor than of yourself! Let this truth sink into your hearts. Put this among the cherished "gems" of your Scrap-Book. Keep this before your mind's eye. It is your life. It is the wisdom that crieth in the streets of Jerusalem and that is justified in her believing children.

But is it really possible to thus think of all of your neighbors? All do not have the same excellency from God, do they? Some are more honorable members than others, are they not? This is still the rule of the "great" and the "small" in God's Kingdom, is it not? Not all have received an equally exalted place in God's church in this world, have they? Not all have received equally talents from God. How then can each esteem the other greater than self? Is this not a false humility?

We think not.

In the first place because the Word of God teaches that such we should be. And we believe that the Word of God will not foster in us that which is false and unnatural. Here too we simply bow our neck under the good yoke of Christ and believe the sound words of God.

Secondly, because the Scriptures certainly make it clear that this is a glorious reality, and thus it also registers in our heart and conscience.

It should not be overlooked, that in Christ all things come to stand in their proper relationship to God, our Father. Legally we are again redeemed from sin. We have been set in the Family of God, brethren and sisters in the Lord in which Christ is the First-born Son among many brethren. Spiritually we have been renewed according to His Spirit so that more and more we become renewed according to His image, from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. And thus all things are made new principally.

Now here in the newness of my relationship to God it is that I learn that He alone is great, and that things and people are all great to me as they are great in the sight of God. Thus they are also to the angels. The "little ones" are very great before the angels and before the redeemed saints because God thinks so highly of them. Since we too have the life of God, since we are no longer estranged from this life of God, we too begin to look at this brother and sister as "great" in the eyes of God. Here the high and the low, the humble and the exalted meet. Here is the harmony of humility. Here is life and joy and peace.

Is this not the lofty Mountain top of Zion? Who does not feel: it is too high, I cannot attain unto it in my own strength?

But we need not do so in our strength. Paul does not appeal to our ingenuity and power. Wherefore he says: "if there be any ground of exhortation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy".

We have here four conditional sentences. They are conditions of fact, determined reality. Whether this reality was true in the church is not determined by this conditional sentence. That cannot be determined by the grammar. But from the view-point of the writer it is stated as being a fact. It could almost be translated by: *since* there is consolation, etc. But that would take out of this text the element of this being a precept of the Gospel together with the warning and constraining note. Here is tender and wise pedagogy of love. It calls to self-examination; it brings us to our *qui vive*, alerting us to spiritual attention.

If there be in you the possibility of being contacted by this admonition to be likeminded in the Lord then it is that you understand the first principles in Christ's teaching according to godliness. If there be any ground of appeal for you in Christ . . .

If the love of God in His salvation whereby your sins are all forgiven means ought to you. If you know what it means to be lifted out of the miry clay and have your feet set upon the way of God and your way established—then fulfil my joy in being likeminded.

If the joy of the Holy Spirit whereby you have tasted life in fellowship with the saints is a real and living entity in your life above all things precious, far more precious than rubies—then fulfil my joy that ye be likeminded, and all esteem the other greater than yourselves.

If you know that bowels of compassion are for your neighbor since by the Spirit you have been filled with a heart of mercy—then fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded.

And what more shall I write?

I have come to the end of my expository observations.

Looking back upon them I am reminded of the song: What more can He say than to you He hath said. Could the Apostle have brought to bear stronger incentives for us to walk in godliness? Nay, those, who see, need no more light, and they, who hear, need no more instruction. It is enough.

Only we pray: Gracious Father, make our hearts filled evermore and ever anew with this Spirit of likemindedness, till we arrive at the perfection in the age to come when Thou shalt be all in all!

G. C. Lubbers

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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### WOMEN SUFFRAGE

When we say that a woman should have the right to vote in the church, then some men quickly raise a few strange objections. They say, that the women are not allowed to speak in the church. The woman sinned first, therefore she must be silent. If they want to know anything, they must ask their husbands, for he is their head and they must submit to him. The women are organically in the men, therefore the Scriptures only speak of "brethren." And they hold fast on this, that if you give the women the right to vote, they have the right to rule.

Now it is not my desire to start a "battle of the sexes." But I have seriously thought about these things for some years, and I cannot come to any other conclusion than to think that there is something wrong in our congregational meetings. And that the men must be wrong in forbidding the women to vote in the church. Their objections are not at all fair.

And the apostle also would contradict himself, for he writes in the same chapter: "Wherefore brethren

ren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." 1 Cor. 14:39. Is he speaking to the men only? That cannot be, for he writes about women that were helpers, and "Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." Rom. 16. And also the daughters of the evangelist, "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Acts 21:9. And also the prophetess Anna. Luke 2:36.

And in the Old Testament time, there were prophetesses, like Debora, who also was a judge and leader of Israel, because the men had become lax in their duty to fight for the cause of God. And the Lord gave the honour of victory to the women and not to the men, even though they had to do the fighting. Judges 4. Please do not call that an exception, because everything is not written and repeated, what has happened in all the history of the church. We all know that.

Are the women organically in the men, and is that the cause why the Scripture speaks of "brethren"? But does not the apostle say that even if the woman is of the man, even so is the man by the woman? "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." 1 Cor. 11:11, 12. Therefore should there be no separations and divisions in the church, "but that the members should have the same care one for the other." 1 Cor. 12: 25. And the head cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of you," for are they not of the same body?

And the apostle writes, not to every man, but to the inner spiritual man in Christ, who is our head: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4:16. "For we are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph. 5.

Not all the men, nor all the women in the church, are true regenerated children of God. And therefore, a woman who is a true regenerated child of God, thru the Holy Spirit, cannot submit to every man, but only when the man submits to his Head Christ, can the woman submit to such a man.

How then can such a woman be organically in the man, if he must vote for her, or speak for her in the church? Each must answer for himself.

The women today have all the right in our church that she should have, except the right to say yes or no to God in the things pertaining to the church, and the welfare, or condemnation of her own soul. That

right should be given her. And that does not at all give her the right to rule.

In Nehemiah 8:2 and 10:28, we also read of congregational meetings where men and women had to answer yes or no to God in all things pertaining to the church. "And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell at Jerusalem the holy city and nine parts to dwell in other cities. And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem." Neh. 11:1, 2.

And in Jeremiah 44:15 to 28, "Then all the men, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude,—answered Jeremiah saying: as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee." etc.

You see, even if the women have the right to vote, that does not give them the right to rule, unless it is given unto them by the consistory. But if it would be necessary for the Lord to use them as rulers in some cases, because the men had become lax in their duty, that would be another thing. But if possible they should unite to a true church, where men are still in the ruling body. A woman should not strive for such a position in the church. In the Holland Bible we do read, that a widow be chosen of not less than sixty years. 1 Tim. 5:9. And the references refer us to 1 Tim. 3:2, meaning a bishop or overseer. I would like to see that new Bible about this, that suppose to be more true than the King James Virsion.

The right to rule, can be given the women now too, if the consistory would place some names of women on the list for nomination of elders and deacons. Then I would not be surprised at all, that some women would be chosen, without even one vote from the women. For we hear more and more men that would want some women as deaconesses. But then the women would be in the consistory and that is a ruling body. That is not a woman's place. It would be inelegant and a shame, as the apostle would say.

The reason the Bible uses the word "brethren" is because God created the woman as the weaker vessel, she is more quickly to fall, and therefore the man as the head, must be the leaders and protectors of the woman. That is their duty.

In the whole letter of Jude, you do not once read the word "brethren." And John writes to a woman: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." 2 John 8.

We should remember, not to look at the things

which are seen, they are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, for they are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18.

Yours in the Lord,

Dorothy De Vries.

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## THE MUST OF FAITH

This title, which may seem to be somewhat vague, I will immediately try to explain. First of all I am referring strictly to the christian, hence one who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and has the life of Christ in his heart. In this work of regeneration God implants an entire new life in the heart of His child, on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, which principally includes faith, justification, sanctification, etc. By the term faith I am referring to the activity of faith, an active living faith, which on the one hand means a constant living and seeking out of Christ and on the other hand a manifestation of this power of Christ in a sanctified walk. Now the question is sometimes asked whether such a person must be told to live in faith. That the unbeliever is also called upon to serve the Lord, though he be a reprobate, is certainly also very Scriptural. But at this time I'm referring to God's people. Must the christian, in other words, be warned, exhorted and admonished and that not only a few times, but constantly? Must this also be given in the preaching of the Word? Must he also be told that if and when he does not live in faith the Lord does not bless him? Or, to use a terminology commonly discussed in our day, is such a living in faith a condition to the enjoyment of the blessings of the Lord? Finally, is this what is meant by the responsibility of the christian?

In discussing the truth of salvation by sovereign grace and the child of God's responsibility one finds various opinions. To me it is certain that both must receive the proper emphasis. It is very well possible that this isn't done. Possible it is that when you ask someone acquainted with Reformed truth whether he believes in sovereign predestination he will almost be insulted by the very question and yet not give it its proper emphasis. On the other hand it is possible that when you ask someone whether he believes in the responsibility of man he will answer with an emphatic yes, but whether he gives it the proper place and emphasis is another question. Often many of these things are no more than a mere theory.

In Reformed doctrine, which of course is also Prot. Ref. doctrine, we have the precious heritage of Calvinism. In catechism we teach our children that this consists mainly in five points: 1) Total deprav-

ity. 2) Unconditional election, which of course includes unconditional reprobation. 3) Limited atonement. 4) Irresistible grace. 5) Perseverance of the saints. They can easily be remembered when we bear in mind that the first letters of each point spell TULIP. This is Calvinism in a nutshell. From these points it is plain that God receives all the emphasis. The work of salvation is His and His alone and man in no way does anything of himself. As soon as we lose these points or even one of them (if it is possible to lose one and not the others) we have surely drifted into Arminian waters. And the danger of doing this is always great. History teaches this very plainly. Therefore these truths must certainly be emphasized in our preaching. Neither must people say that we know these things and therefore don't have to be told these things time and again. The hopelessly lost sinner who is depraved, worthy of hell, unfaithful even after he has received God's grace, must be told time and again that his only salvation is God's faithfulness and everlasting mercy. Only because Jehovah changes not are the sons of Jacob never consumed. Isn't it our only comfort that we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ? And learning this God will certainly receive all the glory.

But if God so saves us, must we then yet be told to live in faith? If faith is a gift of God must we then still be told and admonished to live in that faith and in the Way of repentance and gratitude? Does not the one exclude the other? Isn't it true that the christian wants to do good works in faith? And yet the Bible is full of such admonitions. One finds them in every book of Scripture. In the epistles of Paul we usually first find what may be called the doctrinal part and then the admonitions to live according to this doctrine. In them the christian is exhorted to be diligent, to choose the good, to fight the good fight of faith, to constantly fight against sin, seek the things above, etc., etc. However, to me our best guide in all these things is the Heidelberg Catechism, which is a complete compendium of the truth. Most of us are acquainted with its three parts, that of misery, redemption and gratitude. Our misery is not only that we by nature are lost and depraved but that we are hopelessly lost. No man or any other creature can possibly save us. We are doomed to die the death of hell. But God saves His own through Christ, through faith, which of course is a gift of God. Thereupon the Catechism goes into detail to explain this Gospel of Jesus Christ, God's Son, as the object of our faith. And it emphasizes that it is Christ who gives us this faith, Lord's Day 7 and 25. This faith is defined to be a certain knowledge and a hearty confidence in

the Christ of the Scriptures. The idea is that through this knowledge and trusting (which implies a constant struggle on the part of the children of God) we receive these things.

In other words in the Catechism we find many musts of faith. In the entire discussion of the Apostles' Creed these truths are explained as the object of the faith of the christians. These are the truths they spiritually know and trust in. But the idea surely is that it is only through knowing and trusting that they can appropriate these things unto themselves. In the discussion of the Sacraments the following question is asked several times: How art thou *admonished* and assured, etc. This is the way in which the Lord works salvation in the hearts of his people. The blessings of salvation are never poured in through a funnel, but given only through admonitions and exhortations, being appropriated by a living faith. The Lord doesn't feed us like a doctor may feed a patient with an intravenous injection. No, He wants us to open our mouths and eat. I repeat, *in this way* the Lord gives grace and faith unto His children. It is His Word of Christ that is brought to us, His calling whereby we are confronted and called to live out of Christ, and it is His grace working through our mind and will whereby we give heed to the admonitions and open our mouths and eat.

But then comes the third part of the Catechism, which incidentally is also the largest one of the three. The idea of this part is that that faith which believes that we are saved only through the riches of God's grace in Jesus Christ must reveal itself in fruits. A good tree must bring forth good fruits. However, fruits grow on a tree only when it is active and living; so the redeemed child of God brings forth fruits only through a living and active faith. In this third part of the Catechism we find all kinds of admonitions or musts of faith. Notice question 86: Why *must* we still do good works? In Lord's Day 33 the subject of conversion is discussed and the idea surely is that we must walk in the way of conversion. Perhaps, with all these musts, someone may ask whether we as children of God must really do something then? Or, can we do something? Doesn't Christ do it all? We surely must do something, we must do much. We must even work out our only salvation, Phil. 2. The Canons teach that it can rightly be said that man repents and believes. We also read of the christians embracing Christ. These things they do as conscious willing creatures. The point of Reformed doctrine is not that man must or can do nothing but that he can do nothing of himself, nothing of his own free will. To come back to the Catechism, in this third part we also find a detailed explanation of the law of God. It

is the same law as treated in Lord's Day 2, only here it is given as the guide to those children of God who have been redeemed from that terrible misery by God's grace in Christ. Now it is a law of love to them. But in the questions of the Catechism with the explanation of the law it is asked time and again: What does God *require* of us, etc. Hence, another must, one of the law of love, but a must nevertheless. In Lord's Day 45 you find the beginning of the discussion of the subject of prayer. And the first question is: Why is prayer necessary for a christian? In other words, why should we or must we as Christians pray? In the answer we are told that God will be acknowledged in gratitude and that He will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to those, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them. Now what does this mean? Is this a condition? I have no objections to the word if only it is understood properly. The same is true of other words such as accept (which we also find in the Bible according to the original, as for example in John 1:12 translated in the Holland language by the word *aāngenōmen*) or the word embrace, found in the Netherlands Confession, Art. 22. Now I don't care about the use of a word, but this concept we must keep, namely, that God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who with sincere desires continually ask them of God. In this word the Lord says to the individual christian that if he doesn't ask for these spiritual things he will not receive them. Does this then imply that God is dependent on us? Never! But it is through this means of confrontation and pedagogy that the Lord makes His people as rational moral creatures a praying people, a people that live in complete dependency upon Him.

Finally we can ask the question why the Lord works in this way. What is the Divine purpose of all these things, the musts of faith? The answer to this question is, to my mind, three-fold.

1) God will have His children bring forth fruits gratitude, which are good works. And good works they are when we do not merely glorify Him in theory, but in our living. The redeemed church must be zealous in good works. He will have a people saved by sovereign grace from a totally depraved condition live unto Him, a people that is willing and able to forsake all and seek Him only. The first two parts of the catechism serve the third part.

2) We must be admonished to do this, even with the law of love, because of our sinful nature. One may ask whether it just naturally isn't the desire of the redeemed child of God to do good works. Can one who has tasted of this marvelous grace in Jesus Christ do any different? No, of course not, not according

to his new principle of life. But we are still in this body of sin, that old nature that always seeks the things below. Therefore we must be admonished and instructed to battle against sin, and the world. And so it is through these musts of faith, through constant battling with the old man of sin, through tensions and struggles, prayers and supplications as wrought<sup>+</sup> in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that the child of God brings forth fruits of gratitude.

3) The final purpose of these musts of faith is that we may learn throughout our lives in God's school that salvation is only of Him. In the beginning of this article I mentioned the five points of Calvinism, stating that all things must serve this truth. This is also true of the musts of faith. Through this way the doctrine of salvation by God's grace becomes a living truth, and doesn't remain a merely objective doctrine. The Lord gives us a life span of sixty or seventy years to learn by experience that He is faithful and that His promises are sure. How does the Lord teach this? With the musts of faith the Lord as it were sets before the Christians a high mountain. To do good works, i.e., to keep the law out of love and live lives of prayer is for the children of God in this world with sinful natures like ascending a steep mountain. O how difficult this is! And yet the Lord requires this of us. We must live and pray perfectly. Experiencing this God's people do not only say that this is difficult, no this is impossible. We realize the must but also that we can't do it. Then we come to the knowledge of what in the Holland language is sometimes called "het moeten maar niet kunnen." The result is that the children of God flee to God, pray that much more fervently and seek their all in Christ. In this way we are driven anew to Christ. This is also the thought of the last question and answer of Lord's Day 44 of the Catechism. There, after the law has been explained to the redeemed child of God, the question is asked why God will have the ten commandments so strictly preached (musts of faith) since no man in this life can keep them. The answer first of all is that through this way we learn more and more to know our sinful natures, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin. In other words, through these exhortations we come ever more to the knowledge that we are saved only and forever through the grace of God in Jesus' blood. The second purpose of this strict preaching of the law is that we may constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that we may become more conformable to His image. The strict preaching of the law (the musts of faith) cause the Christian to ever more bow before God in prayer beseeching Him

for His grace. In short, the musts of faith teach us that salvation is only of the Lord.

Last of all, in the measure that the children of God give heed to these admonitions and live in faith, in that measure they learn that though they may have done some good works (the best still being polluted with sin) by this grace of God that these works can never be the ground of their salvation. The only ground forever remains the one complete sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, the gift of God's love for His chosen people. This we *learn* in this way throughout our lives. This to me is Calvinism, Reformed and Protestant Reformed.

J. Blankespoor

Note. If the Must, the May, the Can, and the Will are presented in the right light and in perfect harmony, there is no danger of going astray. But what is the motive and reason for the above article?—Ed.

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Dear Editor:-

I was very glad that you published the questions and answers of the Ladies' League meeting.

You ask why you were cut off in the middle of your speech? I ask why did the collection for Mrs. Grundy exceed the collection for our own schools when the number of ladies was larger when the latter collection was taken?

Maybe the answer to the one is also the answer to the other.

A sister in Christ,

Mrs. Fred Harbin,  
757 Butternut Dr.,  
Holland, Michigan.

Note: Mrs. Harbin seems to suggest that I was deliberately cut off to prevent the League from hearing my answers on the questions concerning the Chowpatta Mission so-called.

Certain it is that some of the Board had listened to my questions on the wire on the Sunday evening before the meeting of the League.

But I protested to the Delegate Board, and most likely the matter will be brought up at the next meeting of the League. I cannot let this go.

The sister writes me: "The Lord have mercy on us."

And I say: Amen, if this can happen in our Protestant Reformed Churches.

—The Editor.

## Arminianism - A Subtle Heresy

Arminianism is a subtle heresy. This is what I am trying to make plain in these articles.

Let us now posit this question: what is the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism on the subject of salvation?

Let the Arminian Ralston tell us (Thomas N. Ralston, D. D., already introduced to the readers of *The Standard Bearer*). From Ralston's "Element's of Divinity" I quote the following statement: "The plain difference between Calvinism and Arminianism, on this subject (the subject of salvation) is this: Calvinists cannot see how salvation can be entirely of grace, if it has any respect to faith, or anything else, as a *condition*; whereas Arminians, while they understand that 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' are indispensable *conditions* of salvation with all to whom the Gospel is addressed, understand, at the same time, that salvation is entirely, from beginning to end, a work of God through grace."

So then, according to Ralston, the Calvinists say: salvation is entirely out of grace and therefore it can not be suspended on faith or anything else as a *condition*.

But the Arminians say: *though salvation is entirely of grace*, it nevertheless is suspended on faith as a *condition*.

We see then the difference between the Calvinism of the day in which Ralston wrote (circa 1875) and the Arminianism of that day. And of course, such is still the difference between arminianism and Calvinism of *this our day*—that is, of Calvinism worthy of the name.

Mark you well, the Arminian, too, as well as the Calvinist maintains with just as much vigor that salvation itself is entirely, from beginning to end, a work of God through grace. That is what Ralston says. The above quotation from his book contains this statement in it, namely: "Arminians... understand... that salvation itself is entirely, from beginning to end, a work of God through grace."

This is what Ralston and with him all Arminians say, namely that the entire salvation is a work of God through grace. And he basis his teaching on grounds that read as follows, and I quote:

"(1) Man is by nature utterly helpless, incapable of any good whatever, only as he is visited and strengthened by divine grace.

"(2) It is attributable to grace alone that a plan of mercy has been devised and proposed to man.

"(3) Nothing that man can do can avail anything toward purchasing salvation by merit; for 'when we

have done all that we can do, we are unprofitable servants.'"

"(4) The work of salvation, in all its stages, can be performed, either in whole or in part, by none but God; and this is entirely a work of grace, for none can claim it at the hand of God as a matter of right, and it is of his mere grace that God has promised to save the sinner, according to the plan of his own devising.

Can it be, my dear reader, that I quote here an Arminian! Well, I do. Can it be that if an Arminian—any Arminian—were asked to supply us with a statement of his faith on such subjects as total depravity and salvation he would recite the doctrine contained in the total of these propositions? He would certainly.

You say: this is amazing. Yet it is not so amazing. For the fact is that the doctrine of these four propositions, however reformed in some of its parts, is also vitiated by the Arminian lie. This lie is plainly discernable especially in the first of the four propositions. But in order to recognize it we must know that Arminian lie in the various forms that it assumes and in all its ramifications.

One of the forms it assumes is the contention of Ralston with which we are now occupied—the contention that salvation, though entirely of grace, is nevertheless *suspended on faith as a condition*, that, in other words, God saves men *on the condition* of their faith, and that therefore man, and not God, determines man's eternal destiny. This is Ralston's doctrine literally. Attend to the following from his pen: "For nothing can be plainer than that God has promised to save the believer *upon the condition of faith* and threatened to punish the unbeliever in consequence of his unbelief and voluntary rejection of the Gospel. Notwithstanding salvation is thus suspended *on conditions*, and in a certain sense, man, by his own agency, *must determine his eternal destiny*, yet it may easily be shown that salvation itself is all the work of God through grace."

Notice how our author, after stating that *salvation is suspended on faith as a condition*, goes on to conclude from this *that man determines his eternal destiny*. This is correct. For *if* salvation is suspended on faith as a condition (which it is not, of course) then certainly man does indeed determine his eternal destiny. For to say that salvation is *suspended on faith as a condition*, is to say that faith, man's decision to believe, is the determining cause of his salvation, of God's persistently sanctifying him by his grace, and persistently strengthening him for the good fight of faith, and of His finally taking the man up into His heaven. For such indeed is the proper

meaning of the word condition (determining cause) in the statement, "salvation is suspended on faith as a condition," so that Ralston deserves credit for one thing, namely that he used the term *condition* in its proper sense, according to its uses loquendi (the meaning that it has in the dictionary) and was thus not monkeying with words.

We see then how that according to Ralston and all Arminians the salvation of man is suspended *on faith as a condition* and that therefore man and not God determines man's eternal destiny—determines whether he goes to heaven or perishes in his sins. It cannot well be otherwise but that man determines his own destiny, if salvation is suspended *on faith as a condition*. For then man's decision to believe has not God's counsel as its sovereign cause, but man believes because *man* wills and not because God sovereignly so determined. Thus if the salvation of man is suspended upon faith as a condition, the teaching of Paul is a lie, the teaching, namely, that God has mercy upon whom *He* will have mercy and that He hardens whom *He* will.

Man then (according to our author) believes because *he, man*, wills, and if he persists *of himself* in his good decision to believe, God continues to assist him by His grace on the way to heaven and thus the man is finally saved through his cooperating with God and God with him.

This is the horrible heresy concealed in the first of the four propositions cited above. Man, it states, is utterly helpless, incapable of any good whatever. Yet, according to Ralston, however incapable of any good, man can, nevertheless, as strengthened by God's grace, and even before his regeneration, *of himself decide* to be saved. This decision is strictly out of man. It does not have God's counsel as its sovereign cause nor God's grace as its fountain. Thus on the Arminian position, salvation is only partly out of Grace, that is, out of God. Partly it is out of man. *This good decision* to believe is out of man. Thus, Ralston lied when he told his readers that, according to Arminian doctrine, man is incapable of any good whatever and that salvation itself is entirely out of God. Actually it is not their teaching, however sound they may appear to be in the official statements of their beliefs. Arminianism is a subtle heresy, amazingly so. Well may we, as Protestant Reformed people, watch and pray that by it we be not deceived and destroyed.

Ralston, of course, was taken to task by the Calvinists of his day for affirming that though salvation is entirely, from beginning to end, a work of God through grace, it nevertheless is suspended on *faith*

as a condition. The Calvinists insisted that the teaching was contradictory; that, in other words, if salvation is suspended on faith as a condition, it cannot in its entirety be a work of God through grace; and that, on the other hand, if salvation in its entirety be a work of God through grace, it cannot be suspended *on faith as a condition*. Among the Calvinists of that day calling Ralston to account was also one Dr. Hill. Ralston states all Hill's objections. He (in his book) admits that the difficulties that Hill has with the Arminian doctrine are of a grave character. And indeed they are, so much so, in fact, that Ralston's attempt to surmount them ends in dismal failure. He does not, in his counter-argument, reconcile the propositions that though salvation in its entirety is a work of God through grace, it at once is suspended upon *faith as a condition*. And this is not a wonder. The two propositions cannot be reconciled. Of this Ralston, of course, was fully aware. In his despair he threw himself finally on the Scriptures (but of course without right) by the following statement, and I quote: "If it still be insisted that salvation cannot be ascribed to grace, if it be suspended upon a condition, then the charge of inconsistency or heterodoxy must be made upon the Bible itself; for nothing can be plainer (from the Scriptures, he means) than that God has promised to save the believer upon the condition of faith."

Ralston means to say: the Bible is full of conditions, and that settles the matter; why argue.

But the fact is that the term *condition* doesn't appear in the whole of the Scriptures, much less such statements as "Salvation is suspended on faith as a condition." The trouble with Ralston was that he saw "conditions" in all those places in the Scriptures where the particle "if" appears. He refused to admit that this particle "if" may have a half dozen meanings besides the meaning *condition*, and that therefore the meaning of that "if" in all the places where it occurs, must certainly be determined by painstaking exegesis of the text. But the trouble with Ralston was that he refused to do two things: 1) Come with exegesis; 2) reply to the exegesis of his assailants. As we saw, according to Ralston, seeing that salvation is suspended on faith as a condition, man determines his own destiny, which means of course that man's decision to believe has not the counsel of God as its sovereign cause and fountain. Ralston devoted a whole chapter to arguing this point,—the point that man's *decision to believe* does not have the counsel of God as its sovereign cause and fountain.

(to be continued)—G. M. Ophoff