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MEDITATION

Zalig Door Geloof

“Want uit genade zijt gij zalig geworden, door het geloof, en dat niet uit U, het is Gods gave.”

—Efeze 2:8.

Onze tekst is een reden voor datgene wat voorafgaat. In het 7de vers had Paulus aangegeven de diepste reden voor het Evangelie. God wilde, namelijk, den uitnemenden rijkdom Zijner genade betoonen. En die genade Gods omschrijft hij verder als Gods goedertierenheid over ons in Christus Jezus. En die goedertierenheid zal betoond worden in de toekomstende eeuwen. Zoo is het dan niet om 's menschen wil, dat alles is en leeft of dat wij eeuwiglijk gelukkig zullen zijn. Doch louter en alleen om Gods wil. En daarvoor geeft Paulus nu een verdere reden aan, en dat wel uit de praktijk der godzaligheid. Het is duidelijk immers, dat we zalig worden door het geloof; en het is ook duidelijk, dat dit geloof niet uit ons is. Het is de genadegave Gods. Daarom is alle roem uitgesloten. We mogen tot in alle eeuwigheid bezingen onze onverdiende zaligheid welke wij van God genieten.

Het geloof is middel tot de zaligheid. De zaligheid is *door* het geloof. Let er op, dat wij niet zalig worden *om* het geloof; ook niet *op voorwaarde* van het geloof; nog minder *op grond* van ons geloof. Zoo is het wel vaak voorgesteld. Maar het is niet waar. Alle die voorstellingen gaan uit van de verkeerde gedachte van den vrijen wil des natuurlijken menschen. En dat is een gruwelijke gedachte die voortkomt uit het verziekte brein van den natuurlijken en God-hatenden mensch. Daaruit spreekt de vijandschap Gods. De natuurlijke mensch heeft het gif van Satan ingezogen, en dat gif is voornamelijk de hoogmoed. En zoo droomt zich de natuurlijke mensch een vrijen wil die kracht genoeg bezit om Gods Woord aan te nemen, en

zoo zalig te worden. Maar zoo leert ons de Heilige Schrift het niet. Wij worden zalig *door* het geloof. Het geloof is Gods middel om ons zalig te maken. En dat moest duidelijk zijn voor een ieder die Gods Woord kent, en die geleerd heeft om te buigen voor dat Woord. En dan leert dat Woord, dat de natuurlijke mensch dood is in zonden en misdaden. Hij is schuldig voor God en een voorwerp van Zijn toorn. Hij is verdorven in zijn verstand en wil en in alle zijne genegenheden. Hij is maar geen stok of blok, doch erger dan dat: hij is bewust en willend tegenwerkende tegen God en Zijn wil, en tegen alles wat van God is. Daardoor wandelt hij dan ook naar de begeerlijkheden des vleesch es om zijn schuld dagelijks nog meerder te maken. Dat is onze ellende, zooals we van nature zijn. En uit die ellende moeten we verlost zullen we ooit zalig worden.

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Hoe worden we nu uit die ellende verlost?

Hoe worden we zalig? En het antwoord op die vragen is: door het geloof. Om dat nu te verstaan moeten we eerst weten, dat alles wat strekken kan tot onze zaligheid in Christus Jezus is. Hij is onze wijsheid, d.w.z., dat alle wijsheid die we van nature missen in Hem is. En zoo is het ook met de gerechtigheid en heiligmaking en onze volkomene verlossing. Die is geheel en al in Jezus Christus. En zoo staat Hij voor onze oogen uitgeschilderd in het Woord Gods. En nu is het geloof de levensband die ons aan Christus verbindt. Ons geloof is de band des eeuwigen levens en die band wordt door God aangelegd. Hebt ge geloof? Dan zijt ge verbonden door den levenden band des geloofs aan Christus Jezus. En door dien levenden band des geloofs trekken we alles wat tot onze verlossing dienstig is. Zoo staat het immers ook in het verband? We zijn met Christus opgewekt. Toen

Christus opgewekt werd uit de dooden ging dat door de kracht Gods. En diezelfde kracht Gods werkt in ons die gelooven. En zoo is het ook in onzen huidige tekst. We worden zalig *door het geloof*. Laten we U een voorbeeld voorhouden: zet beide een levenden en een dooden boom in den grond. Dan gaat die levende boom aan 't trekken van de sappen en bestanddeelen uit den grond die hij noodig heeft om te groeien. Doch de doode boom wordt dooder. Die doode boom kan niets uit den grond trekken, doch juist het tegenovergestelde gebeurt: de grond die goed is helpt mede tot verrotting van den dooden boom. En zoo is het Woord van God een reuke des doods en ten doode voor degenen die verloren gaan. Doch datzelfde Woord is een reuke des levens ten leven voor die levend zijn. Nog een ander voorbeeld. Indien Uw huis verbonden is door draden met de centrale van licht, dan is er licht in Uw huis. Snijdt den draad door, en het licht gaat uit. En zoo is het geloof gelijk den draad, en de centrale is gelijk den Christus. Hebt ge het levende geloof, dan zijt ge aan de Centrale verbonden, en dat is Christus, en dan trekt ge door dat geloof alles uit den Christus wat ge behoeft om zalig te worden. De elementen nu van dit levende geloof zijn twee: een zeker weten en een hartelijk vertrouwen. En nu moet ge wel verstaan, dat dit weten geen bloot intellectueel weten is. Het is geen historische kennis van den Christus. Zoo zijn er ontelbare scharen geweest die het historische geloof op Christus hadden, doch dat historische geloof kon hen niet zalig maken. Neen, maar het is het geestelijke kennen der liefde Gods, dat in onze harten uitgestort is door den Heiligen Geest. Deze zekere kennis is eigenlijk het ontvangen van een geestelijk vernieuwd en verlicht verstand. Daardoor leert ge Uzelven kennen als een ellendigen zondaar. Daardoor leert ge Christus kennen als den Middelaar Gods en der menschen met al Zijn heil. Door dat geloof begint ge dan te verlangen naar Hem, dorst en hongert ge naar Hem, en kunt niet leven zonder Hem. En door datzelfde geloof leert ge Hem aannemen met alle Zijne weldaden. En dat geloof is ook vertrouwen. En dit geestelijke vertrouwen is de uiting van een vernieuwden wil, waardoor de nieuwe mensch die geschapen is in Christus Jezus leert om niet op zichzelf of op het schepsel te vertrouwen, maar op God in Zijn Zoon Jezus Christus. Door dat geloof, als geestelijk vertrouwen, leert ge om U te verlaten op Jezus' zoen- en kruisverdienste alleen. Door dat geloof verlaat ge U voor tijd en eeuwigheid op dien Jezus. Dat is het geloof van mijn tekst.

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Nu komt er een andere vraag, namelijk, deze: wat

is de oorsprong van dat geloof? En dan moet ons eerste antwoord zijn: niet in den natuurlijken mensch. Zoo spreken wel de Pelagianen, doch niet de Bijbelsche, en Gereformeerde Christenen. De Pelagiaan redeneert aldus: De mensch is geen stok of blok. Hij is niet zóó dood in zonden en misdaden, dat hij hoe genaamd geen goed kan doen. Hij heeft immers natuurlijk licht, en door dat natuurlijke licht kan hij komen tot geestelijke kennis van zijn zonde en tot geestelijke kennis van den Christus die door God gezonden is om zondaren zalig te maken. En door dat natuurlijke licht kan de zondaar ook komen tot geestelijke kennis van het geloof. En als hij dat natuurlijke licht nu recht gebruikt, dan wil God hem helpen en door Zijne genade brengen tot de volle zaligheid. Aldus de Pelagiaan. Doch onze Gereformeerde vaders zeiden: Niet alzóó! Zeker, zeiden die vaders, zeker, de mensch heeft natuurlijk licht: hij heeft zijn verstand niet verloren. Hij kan daardoor ook goed verstaan, wat hem van Christus verkondigd wordt. Hij heeft ook een wil, die formeel vrij is. Wat hij doet, doet hij bewust en willend. Daardoor is hij dan ook zeker verantwoordelijk voor hetgeen hij doet of laat. Maar, zoo zeggen onze Gereformeerde vaders: zijn verstand en wil zijn door de zonde verdorven, werken juist verkeerd, werken in tegen alles wat hem uit Gods Woord van den Christus wordt voorgehouden. En hij verstaat het ook goed. Daarom kan hij dan ook Jezus en God en Gods Woord en Gods volk zoo haten. En als die natuurlijke mensch dan eindelijk voor Gods troon komt te staan, dan zal hij niet te verontschuldigen zijn. En dat is ook zoo naar het getuigenis van de Heilige Schrift. Rom. 8:5-8 leert, dat die naar het vleesch zijn bedenken wat des vleesch is. Joh. 6:44: Niemand kan tot Christus komen tenzij de Vader hem trekken zal. I Cor. 12:3: Niemand kan zeggen Jezus den Heere te zijn dan door den Heiligen Geest. Wat dan? Wat is dan bron van het geloof? De tekst zal U het antwoord geven: het is Gods gave. Zoo is de doorlopende lijn der Heilige Schrift. Zoo was het immers met Lydia wier hart de Heere geopend had, zoodat zij acht gaf op hetgeen van Paulus gesproken werd? Zoo is het immers in het getuigenis van Paulus in II Cor. 4:6, waar hij zegt: Want God die gezegd heeft, dat het licht uit de duisternis zoude schijnen, heeft in onze harten geschenen om te geven de verlichting van de kennis der heerlijkheid Gods in het aangezicht van Jezus Christus. En zoo is het ook in den huidige tekst: "en dat niet uit u, het is Gods gave." En zoo is het ook in den Heidelberger Catechismus: we worden Christus ingelijfd door het geloof, dat door den Heiligen Geest is het hart wordt gewerkt.

En nu moeten we nog ééne vraag beantwoorden in dit verband, en dat is deze: Hoe werkt dan God dat geloof in mij? En dan is het antwoord eerst: in de wedergeboorte, waarin God in beginsel het nieuwe zalige leven uit Christus ons schenkt, en waardoor ons ook het wezen des geloofs geschonken wordt. Dat kan zelfs een heel klein kind ontvangen. Johannes de Dooper ontving dat geloof door de wedergeboort zelfs vóór zijn geboorte. In elk geval, de meesten van Gods volk ontvangen die wondere wedergeboorte in hun prilste jeugd. En dan gaat het zachtjes aan verder met hen uit de wedergeboorte, door de bekeering en bewust geloof tot de heiligmaking. Daarom, en dat in de tweede plaats, God werkt het levende geloof van mijn tekst door de roeping, waartoe beide de inwendige en de uitwendige roeping behooren. Door die roeping Gods, inwendig door den Heiligen Geest van den verheerlijkten Christus in het wedergeboren hart, en uitwendig door de prediking van Zijn dierbaar Woord, begint dat leven des geloofs in het leven der wedergeboorte te werken, in kennis van zonde, honger en dorst naar de gerechtigheid, aannemen en verzekering van eigen zaligheid. En dit laatste nu, kan plotseling of meer geleidelijk geschieden in den weg des verbonds, doch beide groeien op in den weg der kennis Gods en der heiligmaking voor Zijn aangezicht. Dus onze conclusie is: de bron van het zaligmakend geloof is God die het in ons werkt door Zijn Heiligen Geest en Zijn dierbaar Woord. Het is niet uit ons, doch het is Gods gave, opdat geen vleesch roeme voor Hem!

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En nu moeten we nog wat zeggen van de mededeeling van dat geloof, waardoor we zalig worden. Van Gods zijde moeten we zeggen, dat deze mededeeling geschiedt aan de begunadigden. Immers de tekst zegt: uit genade zijn we zalig geworden. Het is alles genade, ook de mededeeling. Genade is die eeuwige, soevereine, rijke en verkiezende gunste en liefde Gods, waarmede Hij van voor de grondlegging der wereld Zijn volk heeft gekend en verordeneerd den Beelde Zijns Zoons gelijkvormig te zijn. Dat is de genade uit welke we zalig worden. Let wel, het is genade van begin tot het einde. En het begin ligt niet in den tijd. De genade is eeuwig; ze is van voor de grondlegging der wereld. Indien gij straks naar den hemel gaat, en de paarlen poorten binnentreedt om tot in alle eeuwigheid te zingen, te zingen van gena, dan zult ge dat doen, omdat God U kende, van eeuwigheid kende, met naam en toenaam in Zijn onbegrijpelijke liefde. Daarom zijt ge zalig geworden. Uit genade waart ge verkoren, uit genade is Christus verordi-

neerd om Uw Zaligmaker te zijn, om Uw Borg en Middelaar te zijn. Uit genade kwam Hij dan voor U, stierf Hij dan en verrees, om U en al de verkorenen in den hemel te zetten op Gods tijd. Uit diezelfde genade heeft Hij U dan opgezocht in het uur der minne, en heeft Hij U de wedergeboorte geschonken, levend gemaakt en U geroepen. En Hij zal U blijven roepen, totdat ge in den hemel zijt daarboven bij God. Zoo is het en niet anders. Het is van begin tot einde genade. Dat is de mededeeling van Gods zijde. Hij wandelt door de eeuwen heen om Zijn volk door Christus te zoeken en te vinden. En met het vinden begint de mededeeling van onze zijde. En dat is, dat ge kennis krijgt aan Uzelven en aan God. Dan leert ge Gods Woord en Gods Zoon kennen. Dan leert ge Jezus en Zijn Heiligen Geest kennen, en dan begint ge eerst te weenen, want bij al het licht van die geschonken en meegedeelde kennis leert ge Uzelven kennen als een ellendigen, doomschuldigen zondaar. En dan begint ge kennis te krijgen van het kruis van Golgotha en dan leert ge om te schuilen bij dat kruis. Dan ziet ge Jezus eindelijk, en dan leert ge stamelen: alles aan Hem is gansch begeerlijk! Ge leert om te bidden. Ge bidt om genade en ontvangt het, en dan aanbidt ge en prijst God om zooveel genade. En dan leert ge om Hem Uzelven toe te eigenen met alle Zijne weldaden. Dan leert ge om te leven naar alle Zijne geboden, want ge hebt geleerd om in heiliging des levens te wandelen. Ge hebt gehoord dat niemand den Heere zien zal zonder de heiligmaking. Want een iegelijk die hope op Christus heeft heiligt zichzelf, omdat Hij rein is. En zoo is dan onze eindelijke conclusie: alles is genade!

G. Vos

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Ever are my longing eyes
Toward the Lord, Whose watchful care
When my foes their plots devise,
Keeps my feet from every snare.

Turn to me, Thy grace impart,
I am desolate indeed;
Great the troubles of my heart;
Save Thou me, O Lord, I plead.

Look on my afflicted state,
Freely all my sins forgive,
Mark my foes, their cruel hate,
Keep my soul and let me live.

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EDITORIALS**Very Clear**

Now, please compare with this so-called definition of Dr. Schilder the simple definition which I always gave of condition: a condition is a prerequisite which man must fulfill in order to obtain the promise of God.

And compare too what the Declaration of Principles has on this score: "That the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer of salvation on the part of God to all men, nor a conditional offer to all that are born in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith."

And again: "That God's promise is unconditionally for them (elect) only: for God cannot promise what was not objectively merited by Christ."

I am not asking now whether the one or the other is true, but only whether the one or the other is clear, so that everyone can understand what we mean. And I claim that, while the Declaration uses clear language, for everyone to understand, Dr. Schilder's definition muddles matters up. I would pity the church that would be bound by such a formulation.

But Dr. Schilder has more to say on this point.

In paragraph 7 on pp. 16, ff., he discusses what he calls a "good condition theory".

In that paragraph he makes the distinction between promises and predictions, to which I have already referred. God does not say to N.N., to Tom, Dick, and Harry: "You will go to heaven"; and to another N.N.: "You will remain eternally outside."

Of the utter untenableness of this distinction between promises and predictions I have already written. All the promises of God are also predictions, and the predictions are promises. But neither the promises nor the predictions are for N.N., for Tom, Dick, and Harry, but for the elect, for the believers, for those that are hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

And then Dr. Schilder refers to the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5, to find there evidently, as he does throughout his brochure, a definition of the promise. Always, according to him, the promise comes with the demand of faith and repentance.

This I most strenuously deny, for then you could not possibly have the promise of God in baptism to little infants. Besides, I deny that in Canons II, 5 we have a definition of the promise. And finally, I deny that Dr. Schilder in paragraph 7 gives a fair and

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true representation of Liberated theology in regard to the promise of God. In order to make all this clear, I will quote him literally.

"And now the conclusion: why should we establish such terms, with which no man can do anything? This entire passage concerning 'unconditional' is being introduced by the remark:

"a. Faith is not a preceding demand;

"b. Faith is not a condition to salvation, no preceding condition.

"But with this we all agree. At least if we well understand it. For it says: faith is not a preceding demand, but a gift of God. Every meaning put in the word condition, in the sense that by it would be meant: it is not given, but it comes of ourselves, is heartily rejected by us all! How can one think differently? Why should we then accept that word: preceding demand? As if faith were a demand the fulfillment of which must precede God's decree? Or even must precede God's maintained, or approximate, or subsequent decree to save us? All that is Remonstrant folly, with which we in the Netherlands will have nothing whatever to do.

"But we do say here indeed, taught by all this interpretation misery: why does one not express himself more clearly? Faith is not a preceding demand? NO, if the meaning is something as when I say: the work of a laborer must PRECEDE, before his employer gives him his wages. And again: NO, if the idea is something like this: the girl must first have pleased the young man, before he proposes to her. Faith does not precede the decree of God concerning our salvation. Nor does it precede God's calling. Of course not. But it certainly precedes our attainment of full salvation. For it even precedes our regeneration according to Article 24 of the Confession. The A does not precede the B in the decree in order to make an alphabet. But it does precede in the life of those whom the Lord according to the common rule will lead to salvation."

All this Dr. Schilder closes with the remark that "colleague Hoeksema will undoubtedly agree with us in all this."

But I do not.

In the first place, I certainly do not agree with what Dr. Schilder states about Article 24 of our Confession. If he means that in that article we are taught that faith precedes regeneration in every sense of that word, I most strenuously disagree with him.

But this is not my most important objection.

My most important objection is in the sentence: "Faith precedes indeed our attainment of the full salvation."

Taken all by itself, we can certainly agree with

this statement. But when we take all this in connection with the entire argument, we can not only not agree with Dr. Schilder, but we also maintain that he nevertheless here defends an Arminian conception of the promise of God, while at the same time he does not do justice to the Liberated theology concerning that promise. Let us not forget that Dr. Schilder in the connection is combatting our position that the promise is unconditional. Instead, he proposes what he calls a good condition-theory. That is his purpose. I can put his argument clearly in the following syllogism:

1. The promise of God is the final and full salvation. (This is not true: for the promise contains much more.)

2. Faith precedes that final salvation. (With this, of course, anybody can agree.)

3. Hence, faith is a condition to that promise. (Again, with this we cannot agree at all. That something precedes something else does not mean that it is a condition to something else.)

Now let us examine that syllogism.

First of all, the promise of God is the 'final salvation. This statement is as un-Reformed as it can possibly be. It certainly is not according to the Reformed Confessions. It is certainly true that the promise includes that final salvation. And it is also true that in Canons II, 5 that final salvation as included in the promise of God. But it is by no means true that the promise of God is limited to this final salvation.

This is really the crux of the whole matter. With this stands or falls our whole Protestant Reformed conception of the promise. And that Protestant Reformed conception is simply the conception that is taught in all of our Confessions concerning the promise of God. And therefore, it is very important that we see this. And I will devote a little time and space to make this clear from our Reformed Confessions.

Note: Schilder says that the promise of God is the final salvation.

The Confessions say that the promise of God includes our whole salvation, objective and subjective.

This I intend to show.

I refer, first of all, to Q. 22 of the Heid. Catechism, where we read: "What then is necessary for a Christian to believe?" And the answer is: "All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us." Notice, that in this answer of the Heid. Catechism mention is made of the promise of the gospel: "all things promised us in the gospel." It is also plain from this answer that the entire contents of our faith are included in that promise of the gos-

pel. In the succeeding Lord's Days these contents of our faith are further exposed along the line of the well-known Apostolic Creed. In that whole creed, therefore, we find the contents of the promise of the gospel. That Creed speaks of God the Father and our creation, of God the Son and our redemption, of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification. And the promise of the gospel is further explained in the succeeding Lord's Days of our Heid. Catechism as it interprets and expounds the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. That promise of the gospel therefore includes that the Almighty Father-Creator is my God and Father for Christ's sake. It includes that He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body, and that He will turn all evils that befall me in this present world to my advantage. That promise of the gospel includes that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, died on the accursed tree for our sins, and rose again on the third day for our justification. It includes that the same Christ is seated at the right hand of God to realize all the promises of God unto His people. It includes that Christ is my Redeemer and my Savior, my Prophet, Priest and King, Who redeemed me body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtained for me the favor of God, righteousness, and eternal life. All this is included in the promise of the gospel. And not only the objective realization of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who died and rose again and is seated at the right hand of God, is included in that promise. But in the same promise is also included the gift of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of promise, Who is given me in order that He may make me partaker of Christ and all His benefits, so that I am and forever shall remain a living member of the church, so that I have the forgiveness of sins and the promise of the resurrection and everlasting life by mere grace. Again, all this is included in the promise of the gospel, according to the Heid. Catechism. Certainly, this is a much broader conception than that which is presented in Canons II, 5. And Schilder certainly does not do justice to the concept of the promise of the gospel in the Heid. Catechism, when he says that the promise is the final and full salvation, a concept of the promise which he needs in order to maintain his conception that faith is a condition unto the promise of God. You will understand, however, that if we take the promise in this more comprehensive, confessional sense of the word, faith is not a condition unto the promise, but faith itself is included in the promise.

But there is more.

I also refer you to Questions 65, 66, 69 and 70 of the Heid. Catechism.

In Q. 65 we read: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?" And the answer is: "From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." Now I want to emphasize that in this part of the Heid. Catechism the Holy Ghost is presented as the author of faith: He alone works faith in our hearts, even though it is through the preaching of the gospel. And let us remember too that according to the rest of the Heid. Catechism the Holy Ghost is included in the promise of the gospel. It is therefore very evident that not only the Holy Ghost, but also faith is included in that promise, not only; but moreover, it is also evident that the promise of the gospel, which includes faith, is absolutely unconditional, and therefore only to the elect, unless we would make the gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by God, itself conditional. And this would be Arminian indeed.

In Q. 66 we read: "What are the sacraments?" And the answer: "The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal unto us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the Cross." Notice that according to this answer the promise of the gospel is sealed to us, that is, to the confessing believers; to no one else but to the believers, and therefore, to the elect, is the promise of the gospel sealed. And what is according to this answer of the Heid. Catechism the promise of the gospel? Is it according to its contents only a future boon, the attainment of the full and ultimate salvation? Or does it also include a present blessing? The answer is: The latter. Here too the promise of the gospel is presented broader in scope than is the presentation of the promise in Canons II, 5. For here not only life eternal, but also the forgiveness of sins is mentioned as included in that promise.

In Q. 69, 70 still more elements of the promise of the gospel are mentioned. There we read: "How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?" And the answer: "Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereunto this promise, that I am certainly washed by his blood and spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away." And in Q. 70: "What is it to be washed with the

blood and Spirit of Christ?" And the answer: "It is to receive of God the remission of sins, freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblameable lives." All this, mark you well, is included in the promise of the gospel which is sealed to us by the sacrament. The promise, therefore, includes the washing away of sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ, according to Q. 69. And this is further explained in the answer to Q. 70 by saying that in baptism is sealed to us freely the remission of sins and the renewal, that is, the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and sanctification to be members of Christ, so that we die unto sin and lead holy and unblameable lives. All this God promises us in the gospel, according to the Heidelberg Catechism. And therefore, I say once more that Schilder is certainly mistaken when he says that the promise of the gospel is our ultimate and final salvation. It includes much more. As I said before, in Canons II, 5 we have no complete definition of the promise of the gospel.

H. H.

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Conditio Sine Qua Non

Under this apparently learned title *Concordia*, through the Rev. Kok, again strikes a very *discordant* note, which I cannot and may not pass without comment.

In the first place, I must express it as my opinion that the article violates the rules of ethics, or, if you please, of Christian love.

In other words, it is dishonest.

For this I offer the following reasons.

1. The article contains a quotation from the Rev. Ophoff without giving the reference. We surmised that it was purported to be a quotation from an article in *The Standard Bearer* by the above mentioned brother, but we had no means of knowing it except by searching all the Standard Bearers from the beginning, simply because *Concordia* did not supply us with any reference. We must, however, find it in order to be able to check whether the quotation was correctly given, and that, too, in its context. It was the Rev. Vos that finally, after searching deep into the night, found that it was, indeed, a quotation from an article in *The Standard Bearer* written about twenty-one years ago. The Rev. Kok, I am glad to say, felt himself that it was "unethical" to withhold

the name of the author, but he did not discern the reason why it was so. Let me enlighten him. The reason is that, by withholding the reference, the original author of the quotation could not check its correctness.

2. The quotation misrepresents the meaning of the Rev. Ophoff. The Rev. Kok makes the quotation to prove that the Rev. Ophoff "emphasized that there are conditions in the Covenant of Grace over against those that erroneously maintained that Grace was unconditional." But the Rev. Ophoff never said or intimated anything of the kind. The latter did not speak of conditions at all but wrote: "that the kind of phrase the Lord availed Himself of in formulating those duties was often the **CONDITIONAL** sentence." Thus the Rev. Kok quotes. But even this the Rev. Ophoff never wrote. He did not write "**CONDITIONAL**" in capital letters, as the Rev. Kok makes him do. Nor did the Rev. Ophoff mean to write it this way. What he, evidently, meant to write was that the Lord availed Himself of "conditional **SENTENCES**". This is evident from the entire article of the Rev. Ophoff. And to emphasize a word in a quotation, without even indicating that the emphasis is not by the original author of the quotation but by him that quotes it, is dishonest and ethically incorrect.

But it is much worse.

The Rev. Kok quotes Ophoff as follows:

"Also to the Covenant of Grace God has attached the following conditional clauses"...

I challenge the Rev. Kok to point out where, in the entire article of the Rev. Ophoff, this quotation can be found. It is nowhere. The Rev. Kok simply fabricates words, boldly, and very dishonestly puts them in quotation marks, and thus ascribes them to the Rev. Ophoff. This I call corrupt.

But there is more.

If the quotation was given correctly it would have been clear to the reader that, in it, the Rev. Ophoff does not present his own view, but criticizes Dr. De Haan. I here offer the entire quotation literally and in its uncorrupted form.

"Dr De Haan then discovers in Scripture covenants of works: the Adamic covenant and the covenant of Sinai. In distinction from the covenant of grace, these covenants, according to De Haan, repose upon the condition that man keeps its requirements.

"What is De Haan's proof that the Lord instituted with His people of old a covenant of this kind? And the answer is ready: the command with which this covenant was interwoven, to wit, the command to obey and to keep covenant fidelity; further, such conditional clauses as: 'If thou shalt hearken unto the

voice of the Lord thy God to keep his covenant..." "If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart 'If ye will obey my voice indeed'."

Is it not clear to every reader, and was it not clear to the Rev. Kok, that the above are not the words of the Rev. Ophoff but that the latter here presents and criticizes the view of Dr. De Haan? How, then, has the Rev. Kok the audacity to introduce this quotation by the sentence: "Also to the Covenant of Grace God has attached the following conditional clauses", words which the Rev. Ophoff never wrote at all, and by which the Rev. Kok, moreover, put the whole paragraph in the pen of the Rev. Ophoff by leaving out the name of Dr. De Haan?

If the cause of "conditions" must be supported by such tactics, it stands condemned on the very face of it.

3. Even if the article of the Rev. Ophoff made mention of conditions in the Covenant (which it does not, and certainly not in the sense in which the Rev. Kok uses the term, and by which he, evidently, means to throw open the doors of our churches to the liberated theology), fact is that the Rev. Ophoff openly and publicly repudiated all that he ever wrote in this vein. Nevertheless, Kok writes that he expresses his "wholehearted agreement" with the article by the Rev. Ophoff, as corrupted, of course, by the Rev. Kok. This also is contrary to christian love.

Any writer certainly has the right to repudiate his former publications, and when he does so openly it is ethically unsound to still quote him and declare agreement with sentiments with which he himself does no longer agree.

For the rest, I may refer the reader to the article from which the Rev. Kok so dishonestly quotes. It is found in the Standard Bearer, Vol. VII, p. 369 ff. I assure the reader that in that article the Rev. Ophoff teaches quite the opposite from a "conditional covenant".

In the second place, I certainly think it very strange that a Reformed man can be so enthusiastic about "conditions", a term which, to say the least, has an Arminian smell, which, in our Reformed Confessions is always put into the mouth of the Arminians, and which, for that very reason, the best Reformed theologians avoided. But the Rev. Kok, evidently, cannot live or teach or preach without using that evilly smelling term.

Finally, it seems to me that it is high time that the Rev. Kok tells the churches plainly what he means, and that he give us a clearcut definition of the term *condition*.

H.H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART III
OF THANKFULNESS

Lord's Day 32

3.

Soli Deo Gloria

Glory to God alone!

That is the purpose, the sole purpose, of the good works of the Christian. This is also expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism, which teaches us that the purpose of good works is "that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings, and that He may be praised by us." The glory and praise of God is not a purpose, nor even the chief purpose, but the soul purpose of the good works which the Christian must and may and can and is delighted to perform. God's glory is the purpose of all things, according to Scripture, and all the works of His hands must praise Him. But this is true in the highest sense of the word of the work of salvation. It is true that the Catechism mentions two more ends of the good works of the Christian. It also mentions "that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof;" and secondly, "that by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ." But it is evident that in these words the fruits of good works for the Christian and for others, rather than the purpose, is denoted.

It is hardly necessary to point out from Scripture that the praise and glory of God is the purpose of all things, and especially of the work of redemption. This is evident from the Old Testament, especially from the Psalms. One can almost quote at random the Psalms to prove that the praise and glory of God is the purpose which God Himself intended, and which the believer must seek to attain in and through the work of salvation and redemption. Take, for instance, Psalm 116, a psalm which sounds the same keynote as the Heidelberg Catechism, and speaks of misery, redemption, and gratitude. In the first part of the psalm David declares that the sorrow of death compassed him, and the pains of hell gat hold upon him. He found trouble and sorrow. But he called upon the name of the Lord, and was redeemed. He found that the Lord is gracious and righteous and

merciful. He delivered his soul from death and his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. And now, in gratitude of heart he seeks to glorify and praise the God of his salvation. He realizes that he can do nothing for the Lord, and that he can render Him nothing in return for the salvation which He has accomplished for him. Writes he: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" And he answers that question as follows: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. . . . I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord." The same note is heard throughout all the Psalms. In Psalm 113:1-3 we read: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised." The first part of Psalm 109 contains one terrible curse upon the wicked that persecute the saints of God. Thereupon, from verse 21, the psalm merges into a most humble and fervent prayer for salvation and deliverance. But the psalm concludes with the praise of the God of salvation in the words of vss. 30, 31: "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Also in Psalm 107, vss. 1-3, the name of the Lord is praised with thanksgiving for His mercy and redemption in the following words: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south." And once more, in Psalm 105:1-3: "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." But why quote more? The entire book of the Psalms is full of the same note of praise and thanksgiving and glory unto the God of our salvation.

But this is no less true of the New Testament. In Matt. 5:16 we read the well-known words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The light of the Christian is not original in

him: it is a reflected light. And the original is in God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That light the believers must not cover up, but they must let it shine forth in the good works which they perform through the grace of the God of their salvation. And the purpose of it all is that their Father which is in heaven may be glorified when men behold their good works. At the end of the exposition of the work of the gathering of the church from Jews and Gentiles, the apostle Paul breaks out in adoration and praise to God in the well-known doxology: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." And in II Cor. 4:15 we read: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." The Epistle to the Ephesians, which is one grand exposition of the blessings of salvation bestowed upon the church, contains the same note of glory and praise to God. In vss. 3 and 4 we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." And after the apostle has expressed that God predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, he continues: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." And again, after the apostle had made mention of the mystery of the will of God, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, and after he has once more pointed to the predestinating purpose of God, Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, he continues: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." And in the end of chapter 3 the apostle breaks forth once more in an exalted doxology in the following words: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." In Phil. 1 the apostle prays for the church that they may abound in love more and more and in knowledge and in judgment, so that they may ap-

prove things that are excellent, and may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. And then he writes: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." vs. 11. And in Col. 3:17 the apostle admonishes the church: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Also in the first epistle of Peter the same note is heard. In chapter one, vs. 3, the apostle begins with a doxology: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." And in vs. 7 he writes: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In chapter 2, vs. 5, the apostle writes: "Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And after he has described the unbelievers and disobedient, which stumble at the stone, whereunto also they were appointed, he writes in sharp contrast to these: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The epistle of Jude closes with the following words: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen." The note of praise to the God of our salvation for the redemption He has wrought is heard continually in the book of Revelation. Thus we read in Rev. 1:5,6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." And in chapter 4, vs. 11, we read of the twenty-four elders, those representatives of the church in heaven, that they fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him, and cast down their crowns before the throne, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." In chapter 7, vss. 9-12, we read of the multitude which no man could number, that stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: "And they cried with a loud

voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." In chapter 15, 2-4, we read of the saints in glory that had gotten the victory over the beast: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." And finally, in ch. 19, 1-6, we read: "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

All these passages of Holy Writ, and many more, teach us that the purpose of the salvation and redemption of the people of God, and therefore also the purpose of their good works, is the glory and praise of God.

But these same quotations also are very instructive because, in the first place, they all point to or presuppose the motive of gratitude. The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that the believer does good works in order thereby to testify his gratitude to God for His blessings.

Now what is gratitude?

It certainly is a form and expression of love.

Gratitude never expresses itself in an attempt to remunerate. Remuneration of God is not only impossible, but the very idea of it is in its deepest sense phariseism. We have nothing, and owe everything to the God of our salvation. God is the absolute proprietor of all things. He declares: "Hear,

O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." There is probably no objection, even in the new dispensation, to pay tithes. But beware, lest, in doing so, we imagine that we give anything to God. Absolutely everything we owe to the God of our salvation, even the privilege and the ability and the desire to do good works. Good works are not a gift of us to God, but they are His gift to us: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. And so, the end of it all is that if we show gratitude to God in our good works, we give thanks for the very gratitude which we express. Nor is it possible for us to do anything for God. We are not even co-laborers with God. The expression that occurs in Scripture, *sun-ergoi tou Theou*, co-laborers of God, does not mean that we labor together with God, but that the apostles and their helpers and all that labor in the kingdom of God are co-laborers with one another in the service of God. God does everything for us. We can do nothing in His behalf, except by His grace express our gratitude and praise His holy name.

But true gratitude can consist only in this, that we show forth the glorious praises of Him that called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is God that redeemed and delivered His people from the guilt and out of the mire of sin and corruption. A beggar that receives a beautiful suit of clothes from his benefactor certainly does not reveal his gratitude by rolling in the mud with it, but rather by showing his new suit and telling all who ask him from whom he received it. This is a homely figure, but it will serve the purpose. The Christian will not show his thankfulness to God by continuing in sin, but rather by purifying himself, putting off the old man and putting on the new, walking in all righteousness, and declaring to all the world that he is able and willing and privileged to do so, because by the grace of the God of his salvation he is redeemed and delivered through the blood of Christ and by His Spirit from all the power and dominion of sin. And the purpose of all this is the glory of God. And this purpose the believer desires to attain.

But there is more:

The passages of Scripture quoted above also point to the contents of this glory and praise of God.

In all the works of His hands God reveals that He is God, and that there is no God beside Him. But He also reveals that He is good, that He is the implication of all perfections, that He is a light and there is no darkness in Him at all. But after sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and the darkness of the curse and of the wrath of God spread its horrible wings over the works which God had made, and that same darkness corrupted the mind of man and filled his heart, God began a new work, the work of salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord. In the accomplishment of that new work He reveals His glorious praises in a far higher degree than ever revealed in the work of creation. In fact, I think we may say that in the work of redemption God reveals His wonders in the highest possible degree. In creation He reveals Himself as the God that calleth the things that are not as if they were, but in the work of redemption He becomes known to us as the God that raises the dead. In Christ He revealed His everlasting covenant love, as He did not and could not have revealed it in the first Adam. He reveals that love as absolutely sovereign, as always first, as incomprehensibly great, and as all-enduring. In Christ He reveals that He is a light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. In the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ He reveals His great wrath over against sin and the sinner, and His unchangeable righteousness. But at the same time and in the same cross God reveals Himself in all the power of His love, His sovereign grace to His own, His abundant mercy, whereby He draws them out of darkness into His marvellous light, out of the desolation of hell into the glory of everlasting life. In Christ He reveals "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

This is the contents of the glory of God.

And these praises the Christian must show forth in word and deed by his good works.

The Catechism says that we must testify our gratitude by the whole of our conduct. This certainly includes the spoken word: for as we hope to see later, it is especially in the spoken word that we express our gratitude to God. Prayer is the highest expression of gratitude. We must declare the praises of God everywhere. We must declare them in our home be-

fore our children, for thus we read in Ps. 78:4: "We will not hide them from our children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." We must show forth the praises of Him that called us out of darkness into His marvellous light in the school, where our children are instructed in the fear of the Lord: in society; before employer and employee; in shop and office; on the street and in the midst of the world. And above all, we must declare His praises in the great congregation, in the midst of the church, and before the angels of God.

But it is not only in our word, but also in the whole of our conduct in the midst of the world that we must declare the glory of the God of our salvation. In the whole of our conduct we must show that we have fellowship with Him: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." I John 1:6, 7. And again: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." I John 3:6-8. And again: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." I John 3:10. This whole of our conduct includes our personal life in soul and body, with all our powers and talents which God hath given unto us. And again, it includes our life in every relationship in the world, in the home, in society, in state, and in church. Walking in the light in every relationship in the midst of the world and of the church, and pointing out that this life in the light is the fruit of the grace of our sovereign God, the God of our salvation, we will show forth the praises of Him that called us from darkness into His marvellous light.

Finally, we must remember that this whole of our life in the light must necessarily assume the form of the antithesis. We cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve God and Mammon. Neither can we serve only one, in exclusion from the other. In this world we must serve the one in antithesis to the other. We must love the one, and at the same time we must hate the other. We must love the light and hate the darkness. And in the midst of the world that lieth in darkness we have the calling to walk

as children of light, and live antithetically from the God. Doing this, we will have to suffer with Christ. principle of regeneration, according to the Word of But even this is a gift of grace: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29. And if we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.

H.H.



IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

Chapter 3

ON TEACHER TRAINING

The reader will remember that after a few introductory remarks concerning the necessity of our own teacher-training facilities, and after mentioning a few of the various aspects of this problem of teacher-training, we made a beginning in our last article of recording the history that has been made in this respect, in as far as we could glean it from the Acts of Synod, beginning with 1948. (Incidentally, it is very well possible that our school boards have put forth other efforts than those which are mentioned in our Acts of Synod. I have no other information on this score. If more has been done, I would be happy to hear of it from persons who know.) At the conclusion of our last installment we quoted a letter from the Society for Prot. Ref. Education, of Grand Rapids, which was addressed to the Theological School Committee and forwarded by it to the Synod of 1949, and also an instruction from the Consistory of Randolph, both of which ask the Synod to do something about providing teacher-training facilities. Cf. Acts of Synod, 1949, pp. 64, 65, 67.

Resuming our narrative from that point, we find the following.

In the first place, the Acts of Synod show some additional material from Classis East in regard to the Randolph Overture. We quote from the minutes of Classis East, April 6, 1949, as quoted in the Acts of Synod, 1949, p. 68: "Art. 19—Classis receives for information an instruction from Randolph. It is moved and supported to place this matter of Randolph in the hands of a committee which will report at our next classical meeting. An amendment is made and supported to request Randolph to refrain

from going to Synod if this matter is given to a committee. This amendment carries. The motion as amended is defeated.

"Art. 20—It is moved and supported that Classis overture Synod, in connection with the instruction of Randolph, to take this matter into study, and report at a following Classis. (That last probably should read: "at a following Synod". H.C.H.)

"A substitute motion is made and supported to send Randolph's instruction through to Synod without our recommendation. This substitute motion carries."

What happened to the request of the Society for Prot. Ref. Education and the Overture of Randolph at the Synod?

On page 66 of the Acts we discover that the committee of pre-advice brought to Synod a rather broad and sweeping proposal, which reads as follows:

"3. Re point 10 (the letter of the S.P.R.E., H.C.H.) and Randolph overture, to accept these proposals in principle, and to place this matter before the Faculty and the Theological School Committee for study and possible execution."

In Article 37, pp. 67, 68, we discover, however, that Synod did not want to go as far as its committee of pre-advice, but elided a rather crucial element of the advice. For there we read:

"Motion is made and supported to adopt advice I, B, 3, "Regarding point 10 (this refers to the letter received from the Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education requesting that a normal course be added to the curriculum of our Theological School this coming year, and the Randolph Overture. . . .)

"The committee advised 'to accept these proposals in principle, and to place this matter before the faculty and the Theological School Committee for study and possible execution.

"An amendment is made and supported to elide the statement, 'to accept these proposals in principle and.' This amendment is carried.

"The amended motion is adopted."

It is evident, therefore, that the Synod of 1949 wanted to adopt no principles in this matter. Yet a motion was adopted which not only referred the matter to the Faculty and the Theol. School Committee for study, but also for possible execution. The latter is plainly in error. The Synod had no right to refer these proposals to a committee for possible execution without first itself adopting any principles: execution implies that certain principles have been adopted. Hence, it is evident that the Synod in this

case allowed an executive committee of the Synod in conjunction with the faculty to study proposals and possibly execute them, which implied the adoption of principles, while the Synod itself did not want to adopt any principles at the time.

On the other hand, already in 1948 the Synod had by implication adopted the principle that it is right and proper for the church institute to provide teacher training facilities even to the extent of furnishing prospective teachers with the "Principles of Education", and giving them guidance in reading specified outside literature upon educational subjects, as produced by our men and others.

These remarks we insert by way of interpreting the history as recorded in the Acta. These facts are important, as we hope to see, because they show that the Synods of '48 and '49 never gave any consideration to the principle question as to whether it is the duty and calling of the church institute to provide teacher-training facilities for prospective teachers in schools that are controlled not by the church institute, but by parents.

Now let us continue compiling the data from the Acts of Synod.

In 1950 the Theological School Committee reported on this matter as follows (Acts, p. 29, Art. 26):

"The material concerning the normal course for teachers is read.

"4. Relative a normal course for teachers in our own schools, in connection with the decision of the 1949 Synod, your committee can give you the following information:

"a. That we have tried to execute the wishes of the Synod. After consulting the faculty we were advised to make arrangements for a course in the Principles of Education. Rev. H. Hoeksema drew up an outline of such principles which can serve as a guide in teaching this subject.

"b. It was further decided to have a six weeks summer course and to contact the School Boards who requested a course of this nature (five in number) for cooperation with the teachers to take this course. It was also decided to make announcements regarding this course in our periodicals, which was done. Rev. G. M. Ophoff was requested to teach this course.

"c. That we received no response from any of the School Boards. We did receive requests from three other prospective teachers for more information. However, they could give us no assurance that they would take this course if it would be given, due to other plans of studying, work, etc.

"d. That two years ago a Teachers' Club was or-

ganized in Grand Rapids which has been meeting once per week ever since, with Rev. Ophoff giving them instruction. According to him this instruction was very much like the proposed outline given by Rev. H. Hoeksema. Consequently the members of this club do not see the need of a summer course of this nature at this time.

"e. The committee took no further action regarding this matter. Since the information under d. reached us shortly before the time of Synod we are submitting the whole matter to your body.

"f. Rev. Ophoff consented to teach this course if it be given during the regular school term."

Concerning this report we may remark the following:

1. It seems rather evident that the committee *ad hoc* busied itself for the most part with the last part of Synod's mandate, namely, the part concerning "possible execution". At least the report indicates that there was little, if any, study made of the proposals in question as such, but that the Theological School Committee in conjunction with the faculty turned its attention to the matter of making arrangements for a possible course of instruction immediately. If there was any study made of the proposals as such, and any study especially of the principles involved in those proposals, the fruits of those studies are not divulged in this report.

2. It also appears from this report that there had been interest expressed in this matter of teacher-training facilities not only by the Board of the Society for Prot. Ref. Education in Grand Rapids and by the Consistory of Randolph, but by no less than five School boards in all. This does not appear in the earlier material from the Acts of Synod. Whether this information means that this interest was expressed already at the time when the Grand Rapids board wrote the school committee in 1949 or in response to a survey by the School Committee does also not appear in the Acts of Synod.

3. It appears, in the third place, that the Faculty of our Seminary agreed in principle with the course which the School Committee followed in this matter, and that they therefore apparently agreed that the matter of teacher-training facilities lay indeed within the realm of the jurisdiction of the church institute, more particularly as that jurisdiction is concerned with the maintenance of a Theological School.

4. As to the particular arrangements which the School Committee proposed in making a beginning at teacher-training, it appears that there was very little actual interest, either on the part of the school boards who had previously expressed interest or on

the part of teachers and prospective teachers in our own schools. The course failed to be given.

5. As to the Teachers' Club mentioned in "d" of the report we may say the following:

a. The undersigned was also active in this club, working as co-chairman with the Rev. Ophoff for a year.

b. I am not acquainted with the outline of Principles of Education spoken of in this connection, and am rather certain that as long as I was active in the Teachers' Club, these Principles of Education were not discussed. Rather did the club busy itself with a somewhat narrower field, namely, a study of world history in the light of Reformed principles. It is possible, of course, that during the second year of its existence this Teachers' Club devoted itself to studying the Principles of Education mentioned.

c. In spite of the fact that at the time the need of a summer course was not seen by the members of that Club, from my own experience I feel free to say that the studies of that Club for one brief evening per week were by no means an adequate substitute for a formal and complete course of study, whether in Principles of Education or in the Principles of Teaching History. On the contrary, it seems to me that the work engaged in by the Teachers' Club just exactly revealed that a full-fledged course was highly necessary.

Finally, as to the action of Synod in this respect, we may quote the following from the Acts, 1950, p. 30, Art. 26: "Your Committee of preadvice advises: 4. That Synod approve the material under 4. (The material under 4 is the report of the School Committee which we just quoted. H.C.H.) Synod decides to receive this report for information."

In other words, the matter was dropped both by Synod and its Theol. School Committee.

H. C. Hoeksema



I long as in the times of old

Thy power and glory to behold

Within Thy holy place;

Because Thy tender love I see

More precious far than life to me,

My lips shall praise Thy grace.

A Glad Occasion In Hope

We write "a glad occasion in Hope". And that it truly was on the evening of May 26 when Mr. Herman Mensch might reach the mile-stone in his life to which he had looked forward for the past six years. It was a glad occasion for brother Mensch, and we surely congratulate him in thankfulness to God. But it was also a glad occasion for the Faculty members of our Seminary, both regular professors and instructors, as well as for the Theological School Committee, which too was present.

A good audience was present. Hope was, of course, represented. We saw brethren and sisters from our Holland Church, Hudsonville, Fuller Ave., Creston, Kalamazoo, Fourth Church also were represented in the audience. Our Second Church had their Annual Social that evening, otherwise they too would have been present. The enlarged auditorium of our Church at Hope was neatly filled.

While the Rev. Heys, pastor *loci* and instructor at our Seminary, played beautiful sacred strains on the Hammond Organ, the Faculty, Mr. Mensch and the Curatorium took their places in Church. Our own beloved Rev. Hoeksema took his appointed place for the evening at the pulpit. He read II Tim. 2, requested of the audience to sing Psalter No. 51 and lead the gathering in prayer, recounting before the face of the Lord all of past faithfulness and present grace and mercy.

There must have been much in the soul of His servant that passed before his mind's eye. For 27 years the Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff have faithfully given time and strength in teaching at our Seminary. (Except during the illness of H.H.). It was on the 16th of June, 1925 that these brethren with the Rev. H. Danhof began to give instruction in what is now the Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Church. Later they held school in the old Oakdale Park Christian School. And for the past 25 years they have given instruction in the basement room of the First Church. Much passed before the soul's eye of the Rev. Hoeksema that evening. The Lord has strengthened these servants in a remarkable manner. Then they were young men in their late thirties and early forties. Now they are men in the sixty. How remarkably the Lord has restored to us the Rev. H. Hoeksema. There he stands again on the pulpit, not as young and robust as in yester-year, but still young in mind and strong in faith and purpose. And the Lord receives all the glory for all His faithfulness and preserving even to this present moment our Seminary—our Seminary which is so vital in the keeping of our Sojourner's Sabbath.

Next the Mr. Mensch takes his place on the platform. It is a great moment in the life of this brother. His being thrills with joy and thankfulness. It is one of these moments in a young man's life which are not forgotten. Brother Mensch expresses his thankfulness to the Faculty, Rev. H. Hoeksema, Rev. G. M. Ophoff, Rev. G. Vos and Rev. J. Heys, and also to the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, who too had been his instructor for two years. Also the Curatorium is recognized in a word of appreciation for having open the doors of our School to him. And not the least is his thanks to the Hope Church for all that they have meant to him and his family during these six years of abode in their midst. Truly Hope is, from a physical viewpoint, nothing more than a "hill of blowsand". But to the Mensch family here on this hill of blowsand the "waters of life never stopped flowing for their thirsty souls" Brother Mensch's thanks is not based, says he, on subjective feelings, but it is achored in; 1. the fixed doctrine taught in our School and Churches 2. and in a fixed and ready heart prepared by God through His Spirit. And so all thanks is to God alone. It was gratifying to hear this heart-warming speech by Mr. Mensch.

The Rector of the School, the Rev. Ophoff then takes the pulpit after the Rev. J. Heys plays skillfully on the Hammond Organ. With bated breath we listen to the beautiful strains presented as a sweet incense to the thrice Holy God. The Rev. Ophoff spoke for nearly an hour on a well-worked-out oration on the subject, "The Significance of Exegesis for the Minister". The Rev. Ophoff made a few remarks relative to the practical Significance of Exegesis of Scripture and then began to analyse his subject and showed us the various elements entering into the science of interpretation. The speaker emphasized also that the exegets, although not bound by the Confessions of the Church certainly will with correct exegesis not come at odds with the confessions, the Reformed Creeds.

The ceremony of handing Mr. Mensch his diploma was without much ado. Visibly brother Mensch was very happy and pleased to receive his well-earned diploma.

The Rev. Hoeksema once more ascended the pulpit to make a few fitting closing remarks to brother Mensch. He reminded the brother that he must expect disappointments in his ministry, especially if he would remain Reformed in his preaching. Many winds blow and will have to be withstood. Brother Mensch is now leaving the fellowship of our churches. It is with pain and regret that we see him go. But we trust that he will go and be a faithful preacher of the Word, preaching the full counsel of God.

Now the Rev. Vos rises to close with a word of prayer and thanksgiving to God, after the audience sings Psalter No. 334.

The brother who graduates is given a warm hand-clasp by brethren and friends, and we return homeward. Into the future we go. God's future. And our hearts are glad. He will be with us even unto the end of the world.

Geo. Lubbers

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SION'S ZANGEN

Universeele Oproep Tot Lof

(Psalm 117)

Dit is de kleinste der psalmen. slechts twee versen.

En toch, wat een enorme waarheid wordt er in bezongen! De geheele wereld van Gods geneugten wordt opgeroepen om den Heere te loven en te prijzen. Want we moeten van meet af verstaan, dat Gods oproep tot lof in den diepsten zin altijd voor Gods volk is. We erkennen geheel en al, dat er een roeping is die algemeen is, die allen menschen en duivelen raakt. Dat is dan de algemeene roeping. Jezus spreekt ervan als Hij zegt: Velen zijn geroepen, maar weinigen uitverkoren.

Doch hier in dezen psalm is geen sprake van die algemeene roeping, zooals duidelijk blijkt uit de aanhaling van onzen psalm in Rom. 15:11. En dan vooral als we het verband zien, waarin Paulus onzen psalm aanhaalt.

In het 8ste vers zegt Paulus: "En ik zeg, dat Jezus Christus een dienaar geworden is der besnijdenis vanwege de waarheid Gods, opdat Hij bevestigen zoude de beloftenissen der vaders, en de heidenen God vanwege de barmhartigheid zouden verheerlijken." Daar gaat het om in het verband. Het is zeer duidelijk, dat Paulus vooral het oog heeft op de belofte die aan Abraham gedaan was, dat, namelijk, "alle volkeren der aarde in hem gezegend zullen worden." Gen. 18:18. Daar heeft Paulus het over. In vers 9 zegt hij immers, dat vanwege de barmhartigheid Gods over de heidenen zij God zouden verheerlijken. En omdat te bewijzen haalt Paulus het Oude Testament aan, en doet hij Mozes, David en Jesaja spreken, want die Oud Testamentische heiligen hebben dat loven der heidenen in de verte gezien en geloofd. En zoo, profeteerende, hebben ze gezegd:

"Daarom zal ik U belijden onder de heidenen, en Uwen naam lofzingen." En: "Weest vroolijk, gij heidenen met Zijn volk!" En: "Looft den Heere alle gij heidenen, en prijst Hem alle gij volken." En deze laatste tekst die Paulus aanhaalt is genomen uit dezen kleinsten psalm.

En daarom is het overduidelijk, dat niet de algemeene, uitwendige roeping, doch de inwendige, krachtdadige roeping bezongen wordt door den psalmist.

We weten hoe de barmhartigheid Gods over Israel was. Alleen zij waren uitverkoren om den Heere te loven. Later zou Paulus tegen de heidenen zeggen, dat God hen voor eeuwen had laten wandelen in hunne booze wegen, doch dat bij de komst van Jezus Zijne gezanten uitgezonden werden om nu ook de heidenen te roepen tot den lof des Heeren.

En van dat heuglijke feit zingt de psalm die we heden tot onze overdenking hebben.

Looft den Heere, alle heidenen, prijst Hem, alle natiën!

De universeele oproep tot lof!

Want ook de krachtdadige roeping is universeel, al is het ook, dat zij slechts de uitverkorenen raakt. God heeft Zijn volk verkoren uit alle volken en natiën. Luistert naar het verrukkelijke bewijs uit het boek der Openbaring: "En zij zongen een nieuw lied, zeggende: Gij zijt waardig dat boek te nemen en zijne zegelen te openen; want Gij zijt geslacht, en hebt ons Gode gekocht met Uw bloed, uit alle geslacht en taal en volk en natie; en Gij hebt ons onzen God gemaakt tot Koningen en Priesteren, en wij zullen als Koningen heerschen op de aarde." Openbaring 5:9, 10.

In onzen psalm is deze waarheid profetie. Want het was nog niet zoo. De heidenen wandelden nog in hunne booze wegen en maakten zich rijp voor het eeuwig verderf. Van geslacht tot geslacht verzondigden de volken en de natiën het voor Gods heilig en rechtvaardig aangezicht. Terwijl mijn dichter deze heerlijke waarheid zong, braken de volken en natiën uit in onbeschrijflijke vuilheid en verkeerdheid. En van geslacht tot geslacht, voor duizende jaren werden ze geworpen in den poel die brandt van vuur en sulfer.

Evenwel, de dagen zouden komen, dat God Zijn Heiligen Geest zou uitstorten over alle vleesch. Overal in het Oude Testament lezen we van die groote, ontzaglijke waarheid: Mozes, David, Jesaja, en alle de profeten. En zoo ook hier.

En ik geloof, dat God Zijn volk in het Oude Testament gedurig onderwezen heeft in die waarheid die geopenbaard zou worden in het Nieuwe Testament. Want keer op keer zien we eerstelingen der volkeren die ingelijfd worden in Israel. We noemen slechts enkelen: Jethro, Rahab, Naäman.

Soms werden zelfs de namen der volkeren genoemd, die deelen zouden in de zaligheid Israels. Luistert: "Ik zal Rahab en Babel vermelden onder degenen die Mij kennen; zie, de Filistijn en de Tyriër met den Moor, deze is aldaar geboren." Psalm 87:4.

Ik noemde het een groote waarheid.

Is het niet groot, dat de geheele wereld deelen zal in de ontfermingen Davids? Is het niet groot, dat alle volkeren en natiën dat heerlijke nieuwe lied zullen zingen met Israel? Is het niet groot, dat de geheele wereld van Gods geneugten ingeënd zullen worden in den edelen olijfboom, en zodoende de vettigheid van den olijf deelachtig zullen worden? Is het niet heerlijk, dat millioenen zullen zingen in dat groote koor, zoodat alle de koninkrijken der aarde hunne heerlijkheid in het Nieuwe Jeruzalem zullen brengen?

Keert tot Uzelven in: is het niet heerlijk, dat ge niet ter helle behoeft te varen met Uwe voorouders? Denkt er toch om, dat Uwe en mijne voorouders zich bogen voor Thor in de bosschen van Noord-Europa, terwijl David aan 't zingen was: 't Hijgend hert der jacht ontkomen, schreeuwt niet sterker naar 't genot, van de frissche waterstroomen, dan mijn ziel verlangt naar God! Terwijl hij zoo lieflijk zong, verdierven onze vadersen het voor Gods aangezicht, en zijn ze ter helle gevaren. Doch nu, nu psalm 117 vervuld wordt, mogen we God loven en prijzen en naar den hemel gaan, daar boven bij God.

Is het niet groot, dat Uwe kinderen God mogen vreezen, inplaats door U rijp gemaakt te worden voor het hellevuur?

Sterke taal? Kijkt rondom U! Het gebeurt terwijl ik aan 't schrijven ben. Alle menschen gaan niet naar den hemel, al is er sprake in mijn psalm van een universeele oproep tot lof. Duizenden bij duizende rondom U maken zichzelf en hunne kinderen rijp voor de hel. Neen, foei toch! zij zijn niet zoo dom als hunne voorvadersen. Ze buigen niet meer voor de stomme afgoden. Ze zijn nu verlicht (!) geworden. Neen, doch nu buigen ze voor geld en goed, have en velden, eer en positie, voor den mensch in zijn waan! 't Is er niet beter op geworden.

En de psalm weerklinkt: Looft den Heere, alle heidenen, prijst Hem, alle natiën!

Die psalm met zijn oproep die universeel is, heeft nu al twee duizend jaren zijn werk gedaan. En ge moogt ervan verzekerd zijn, dat zulk werk compleet is. Als God krachtdadig roept, geschiedt er iets.

God riep voor twee duizend jaren, en de psalm is vervuld geworden. Op dit oogenblik, terwijl ik schrijf, zijn er millioenen die in den hemel God loven en prijzen. Ze leerden het in de groote verdrukking op aarde. Doch ze zijn nu gepromoveerd: ze zijn in den volmaakten hemel. Ze loven en prijzen nu in de vol-

maaktheid. En ook dit: nu, terwijl ik schrijf, zijn er millioenen van heidenen die aan 't loven zijn op aarde. Ik ben er één van. En gij allen die dit leest stemt met mij in. We zijn aan 't loven van God; we zijn aan 't prijzen den Heere.

En dat zal doorgaan totdat alle de heidenen en alle de natiën bekeerd zijn en in den hemel ingeschreven op de rol waarop Hij de volkeren schrijft. En dan zal God zeggen: ze zijn allen dáár geboren! En dan zal Hij wijzen naar het hemelsche Jeruzalem, want de zaligheid is uit de Joden. De Joden zijn de opperzangmeesters. De Joden zijn de beminden om der vadersen wil. Ik heb de Joden lief. Als ik een Jood zie, dan denk ik aan Abraham, den vader aller volkeren. En dan denk ik aan Jezus, want Hij was Joodsch. En dan volgen we de regelmaat van Davids lof van God. Dan luisteren we naar den Jood die ons nu al voor zoo lang toegeroepen heeft: Looft God, alle heidenen; prijst den Heere, alle gij natiën!

O, het is een groote waarheid!

En wat is loven en prijzen?

In het Engelsch wordt er slechts één woord gebruikt: prijst Hem!

Maar het Hollandsch is correct. In het Hebreuwsch worden er twee woorden gebruikt.

En toch kan ik het verstaan, dat het Engelsch slechts één woord gebruikt. De gedachte is essentieel dezelfde van loven en prijzen. Het verschil is een verschil van intensiviteit. Dat hebt ge keer op keer met woorden. Ik zal slechts één voorbeeld noemen: bidden en smeeken. Ze zijn beide gelijk, wezenlijk. Beiden beteekenen bidden, maar smeeken is bidden in den intensieven graad.

En zoo is het hier: loven en prijzen beteekenen beiden hetzelfde, maar prijzen is loven van God met verheffing van stem. Prijzen is loven in het galmen van Uw stem. Als ge stillekens bij Uzelven bidt, met gesloten oogen en gevouwen handen, voor de kerk gaat, dan looft ge God. Straks, als de dominee een psalm opgeeft, kan een ieder Uw galmende stem hooren: ge zingt mee in het loven van God, doch dan ging loven over in prijzen van God.

En wat is loven en prijzen?

O, het is eenvoudig, maar o zoo lieflijk. Het is, dat ge God zegt hoe lieflijk en schoon, hoe schitterend en aanvallig Hij is. Ge vertelt Hem Zijn deugden. Ge doet het stillekens, en ge looft Hem; ge doet het luidkeels en zingend, en ge prijst Hem.

En ge doet het beide tot God en tot den Heere.

God is de Schepper en Onderhouder van het geheele heelal, en daarom ook van U. De Heere is de VerbondsGod, de Vader van onzen Heere Jezus.

Wat een Onderwerp van lof en prijs!

Wat zal ik daarvan zeggen?

De laatste vraag is: waarom zou ik Hem loven en prijzen?

En als ik geroepen zou worden om het volle antwoord te geven, dan zou ik tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid door moeten gaan met schrijven, schrijven.

Ik kan het volle antwoord niet geven. Want ik ken slechts ten deele.

Laat ons luisteren naar de oorzaak van lof en prijs zooals die gevonden wordt in het tweede vers van mijn psalm: "want Zijne goedertierenheid is geweldig over ons, en de waarheid des Heeren is in eeuwigheid. Hallelujah!"

Zijne goedertierenheid!

Ik zal het bekennen voor U: ik gevoel mij het meest aangetrokken tot deze deugd van God! Ik ben haar al zoo vaak tegengekomen in het beschrijven van Gods deugden in den psalmbundel. En keer op keer, als ik deze deugd Gods tegenkom, vaart er een trilling van genot door mijn ziel. Zij is zoo lieflijk, zoo aantrekkelijk, zoo schitterend schoon. En zij geeft ons zoo ontzettend veel troost.

De goedertierenheid Gods is die deugd Gods waarin alles in Hem bruischt en stormt en dringt om Zijn volk goed te zijn en goed te doen. Daarom staat er in den tekst, dat die deugd geweldig is over ons.

Zal ik U een schoon voorbeeld geven van dat bruischen, van dat geweldige van die deugd der goedertierenheid?

Komt dan met mij naar het huis van Johannes Markus, op den dag van het Nieuw Testamentische Pinksterfeest. En weest zeer stil.

Daar komt het: er geschiedde een geluid van den hemel als van een geweldig gedreven wind! God had haast! Hij kwam aangevlogen om Zijn bruid aan het hart te drukken. Het Oude Testament, de dagen van druppelen van goedheid en liefde waren voorbij. God zou het doen stroomen van goedheid en liefde, van zegen en van lieflijkheid.

En zoo is het ook nu. God rommelt in Zijn ingewanden van lieflijke goedertierenheid als Hij U ziet in de ellende en de smart van zonde en onvolmaaktheid. En Hij wil U o zoo gaarne goed doen.

God is goedertieren over U; d.w.z., dat Hij voor U is. Hij is geheel en al voor U. Hij is zóó goedertieren over U, dat Hij Zijn eenigen Zoon gaf. Zal Hij U dan niet met Hem alle dingen schenken?

En dat leidt ons tot de tweede oorzaak tot lof en prijs. Hij is goedertieren over U langs den weg der waarheid.

De waarheid is de rechte relatie tusschen God en mensch, en tusschen mensch en mensch, en tusschen mensch en de schepping rondom hem. De waarheid is de rechte lijn. De leugen is de slang, de slingering, de kromme lijn.

Nu waren we den slang toegevallen, en dat is de duivel.

En zullen we nu verlost worden, dan moet het kromme rechtgemaakt. En zoo zullen we eenigzins verstaan, dat iemand ergens gezegd heeft: De waarheid zal U vrijmaken. En zoo zien we het ook, dat Jezus' naam de waarheid is. En verstaan we dat men in het Oude Testament kon bidden: Verlos ons door Uw naam. En glimlachen we toestemmend als de kinderen zingen: Kent gij? Kent gij, dien Naam nog niet?

O! Jezus is de Naam. Hij is God geopenbaard in het vleesch om ons, om de volkeren en de natiën te verlossen, en te doen loven en prijzen tot in der eeuwen eeuwigheid!

G. Vos



My lips shall in Thy praise delight
When on my bed I rest at night
And meditate on Thee;
Because Thy hand assistance brings,
Beneath the shadow of Thy wings
My heart shall joyful be.



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, our beloved parents,

REV. H. H. and WINNIE KUIPER—nee DeVries

will celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary, June 23, 1952.

For them and their guidance we are grateful; for their continuance with us for many more years we hope and pray, as their grateful children:

Hulda Jane
Henry Warren
Dale Harmon
Celia Ann
Ruth Elaine
Harlow Wayne

Randolph, Wisconsin



CORRECTION—In the June 1st issue under the rubric **The Triple Knowledge**, the subtitle should have read as follows: 2. "The 'Must' of Perfect Freedom." For this error we offer our apology.—Printer,

Rev. B. Kok - His Untruths

The reader will ask: what is this all about? What are these untruths of which Rev. Kok is here accused by you openly in this magazine? I shall lay them bare. They concern me, the undersigned, and they occur in an article from the pen of Rev. Kok—an article that he had printed in the *Concordia* of May 28 1952, under the caption *Conditio Sine Qua Non*.

The article is formed of three main sections: 1. Preliminary remarks by Rev. Kok; 2. a rather long quotation from an article of mine written 21 years ago; 3. concluding remarks by Rev. Kok.

Here follows the gist of the first section (Rev. Kok's preliminary remarks):

"The latin phrase quoted above (the phrase *Conditio Sine Qua Non*—O) means 'indispensable condition,' i.e., a condition which we cannot possibly do without. . . . Today there are those who would have us believe that to use the term 'condition' in connection with the doctrine of salvation is per se Arminian and Pelagian. In spite of all that has been written on this subject in the past few years, I am still convinced that we can speak of a *Conditio Sine Qua Non* in the Reformed sense. . . .

"God forbid that we should ever teach 'conditions' in the Arminian or Pelagian sense as though salvation in any sense ever depends upon the will of the dead sinner. . . . But we do emphatically maintain that in the covenant of grace there are requirements that must be fulfilled, commands that must be heeded . . . Are these conditions that man of his own free-will must fulfill, before God can save him? . . . No, but these are 'conditions' in the Reformed sense, which teaches that man can only fulfil these requirements through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. . . . That is what we mean when hereafter we speak of 'conditions' in the Reformed sense, and anyone who says that that is Arminian is either willfully, or ignorantly speaking an untruth.

"It is my purpose in a series of articles . . . to prove conclusively from our Protestant Reformed literature of the past twenty-five years, that those who now so vehemently, and unreasonably oppose the use of the term 'condition', and deny that it can ever be used in the Reformed sense, that they themselves used it again and again in the past twenty-five years. Time and again they spoke of a conditional, or particular promise, when they defended our Protestant Reformed position over against the 'Three Points of 1924'. They even emphasized that there are conditions in the Covenant of Grace, over against those who erroneously maintained that grace was unconditional. (See quotation below)." So far Rev. Kok.

The italics of this last statement are from my pen. But the statement as such is Rev. Kok's. And an amazing statement it is—amazing on account of the atrocious untruth that it tells. Take notice what it asserts. Verily this: that in the quotation below (a quotation that I shall presently quote) the author (of the quotation. And that author happens to be me) emphasized (mark you, *emphasized*) that there are conditions in the covenant of grace (mark you, *that there are conditions in the covenant of grace*). This is the first untruth as I shall make plain in a moment. But this is not nearly the half of it. The statement asserts also that I emphasized this *over against those who maintain that grace is unconditional*. This is the second untruth.

Having done quoting me, Rev. Kok repeats his untruth in these words: "From the above quotation it is evident that the writer emphasizes that there are conditions in the covenant."

The question is whether I did what Rev. Kok alleges. I certainly did not. To make this clear we must take notice of what I actually wrote.

The question is whether I did what Rev. Kok alleges. I certainly did not. To make this clear we must take notice of what I actually wrote. First it may be well that I state the point that I was arguing in that article of mine. Someone had placed in my hands a booklet displaying the title "Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Common Grace." In this booklet the author, Dr. M. R. De Haan, at the time pastor of Calvary church (undenominational), derided the doctrine of Infant Baptism as claiming that it is a teaching taken not from the Scriptures but fabricated by the fathers of the Christian Church. In putting his thoughts into words, the author used some strong language as for example the following: "This little treatise on the much discussed and little understood subject is sent forth, not for the purpose of starting a controversy or an argument. Rather we sent it forth to show that there is NO ARGUMENT (bold type De Haan's) at all for infant baptism. We firmly believe that the bulk of Christians have just taken for granted that what their church believes must be right." So far Dr. De Haan.

One of the links in his chain of reasoning was the following: The covenant of Sinai, as it depended for its fulfillment upon man's obedience as a condition and not upon the faithfulness of God was a *conditional* covenant; it was, in a word, a covenant of works. And the same is true of the Adamic covenant.

The covenant with Abraham, on the other hand, as it depended for its fulfillment on God's faithfulness and not upon man's obedience as a condition, was an unconditional covenant; it was, in a word, a covenant of grace. So De Haan taught.

I replied to this strange reasoning of Dr. De Haan in an article that I had printed in the *Standard Bearer* for May 15, 1931, (Vol. VII, pp. 368-372). I examined the Scripture passages that he adduced in support of his contention that in distinction from the covenant with Abraham, the covenant of Sinai was a conditional covenant, that is, a covenant of works. I put this question (and now I quote from my article the very passage quoted by Rev. Kok, but which he quoted incorrectly, as we shall see):

"What is De Haan's proof that the Lord instituted with His people of old a covenant of this kind?" A clarifying remark. As appears from the paragraph immediately preceding, I had reference here to the covenant of Sinai that the Lord instituted with His people assembled at the base of this mount. I continued: "And the answer is ready: the command with which this covenant was interwoven, to wit, the command to obey and to keep covenant fidelity; further, such conditional clauses as: 'If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his covenant. . . .' 'If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . .' 'If ye will obey my voice indeed.'"

I continued: "De Haan should know, however, that to the covenant of grace as well the Lord attached a command to obey his voice, to keep his covenant, to hearken unto His voice. Abraham was commanded to get him out of his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, unto the land that the Lord would show him. . . . He did so, and the Lord made of him a great nation, blessed him and made his name great. . . . Certainly, if Abraham would have cleaved to his father's house and continued as a resident in the land of his nativity, he would not have been blessed. At a later period the Lord again appeared unto him and said: 'I am the Almighty God; *walk before me and be thou perfect*. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.' (Gen. 17:1, 2). And on the way to Sodom, the Lord turned to his heavenly companion and asked him whether he should hide from Abraham the thing that he was about to do; seeing that Abraham should surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. 'For I know,' the Lord continued, 'that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'" (Gen. 18: 17-19).

I continued: "Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham, De Haan admits to be a covenant of grace. That this covenant as well involves those whom it includes in well-defined duties; that the kind of

phrase of which the Lord availed himself in stating these duties was often the conditional sentence, is evident from the epistles. A single passage: 'And ye that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight; *if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. . . .*' (Col. 2:6). So far the quotation from my article that Rev. Kok took over and inserted in his writing to prove his allegations.

Now what is the point that I argue in this part of my article? It is as clear as the sun in the heavens that the point I argue is precisely this: the fact that the covenant of Sinai involved all those included in it in well defined duties, that in stating these duties the Lord often availed Himself of the conditional sentence is no proof that this covenant was a covenant of works (De Haan's contention), that is, a conditional covenant, dependent for its fulfilment on man's obedience as a condition, thus a covenant with conditions in it (De Haan's contention). For the covenant of grace (covenant with Abraham) also involved those included in it in well-defined duties. And the Lord often availed Himself of the *conditional sentence* also in stating the requirements of this covenant. Yet, certainly, it was not a covenant of works, that is, a conditional covenant, dependent for its fulfilment on the obedience of man as a condition, thus a covenant with conditions in it. As Dr. De Haan also well understands, and insists on, it was a covenant of grace, dependent for its fulfilment upon the faithfulness of God alone, thus an unconditional covenant without any conditions in it. And so, too, the covenant of Sinai. It was a covenant of Grace and not, in contradistinction to the covenant with Abraham, a covenant of works.

This, to be sure, is precisely the point that I argue also in the section of my article quoted above and which Rev. Kok also quoted.

That this is the point that I argue is as plain as can be from my entire article. It is already plain from the paragraph immediately preceding the above quoted section. This paragraph reads as follows:

"Dr. De Haan then, discovers in the Scriptures covenants of works: the Adamic covenant and the covenant of Sinai. In distinction from the covenant of grace, these covenants, *according to De Haan*, repose upon the condition that man keep its requirements." Let us pause here. We must take particular notice of this phrase "*according to Dr. De Haan*" occurring in this sentence. It gives to the sentence this meaning: According to De Haan the Adamic coven-

ant and the covenant of Sinai, in distinction from the covenant of grace (covenant with Abraham) were conditional covenants. But De Haan is sorely mistaken. Fact is that the Adamic covenant and the covenant of Sinai were as little conditional as is the covenant of grace. All three covenants were unconditional, the one as well as the other.

This verily is the meaning that the phrase "according to De Haan" gives to the sentence. This is as plain as the sun in the heaven especially if the sentence be explained in the light of its context. And of course it must be explained in the light of its context. And the context is the entire article especially its last section. In this section I am addressed to the task of proving this very thing, namely that all three covenants were covenants of grace and thus unconditional. In this section I strike with all my might at the conception of a covenant of God with man reposing upon man's obedience and faith as conditions. I set forth the conception as an insult to God, as destructive conceptionally of God. Allow me to show how true this is by quoting here and there from this last section of my article. (Standard Bearer, Vol. VII, pp. 370-372) :

"It will be seen at once that the kind of Scripture proving that God actually made with Israel a covenant of works is a scripture in which God appears not merely as commanding His people to obey Him, but in which He appears as declaring: Sinner, the power to obey and to serve thy God is not of me but of thee. If by an act of thine own free will thou choosest to keep covenant fidelity, thou wilt come to eternal bliss. The Lord thy God is mighty, but His might is not infinite, so that He is able to work in thee both to will and to do. . . .

"With some such statements the law promulgated from the summit of the mount should have to be interspersed, if it constituted the nucleus of a covenant of works.

"Now then, I ask De Haan in all candor, was this the message of the law? If so God denied Him self. . . ."

Then also this from my article: "Attending to the discourses of Moses, it is seen at once that there was nothing of the pay-master God about the God of the covenant of Sinai. We quote: 'And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen. . . . But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. . . . For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.'" (Deut. 4:28ff). 'Speak

not thou in thy heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee . . . that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; *for thou art a stiff-necked people*" (Deut. 9:4ff).

"These passages teach," so I continued, "that Israel came into the possession of the land of Canaan not because of its own righteousness but because of the word that the Lord sware unto Abraham; because, in a word, this people was included in the covenant of grace. Canaan, such are the unmistakable teachings of these passages, was a gift of grace bestowed by a merciful God upon a people altogether destitute of righteousness."

So I wrote in this same vein throughout my entire article identifying the two covenants—that of Sinai and that with Abraham—and insisting that the one as well as the other was unconditional and as such depended for its fulfilment on the faithfulness of God alone.

Yet, notwithstanding, Rev. Kok, even with the argument of my article before his mind, had the audacity to tell his readers, to tell the world, also Dr. De Haan, that: 1. I emphasized—mark you, even emphasized—that there are conditions in the covenant of grace, and 2. that I emphasized this over against De. Haan who (*erroneously*, says Kok, but I say *correctly*) maintained that grace is unconditional, and that the covenant of grace is unconditional in that it depends for its fulfilment on the faithfulness of God alone. Even with the argument of my article before his mind, Rev. Kok had the courage to tell the world that I denied all this truth and maintained with the heretics of all ages that grace is conditional; and that likewise the covenant of grace is conditional in that it depends for its fulfilment not upon the faithfulness of God but upon the obedience of man as condition. So did Rev. Kok.

And what did he find in my article to use as a basis for his contentions? The statement appearing in the section of my article that he quotes, namely the statement that "the covenant of grace as well as the covenant of Sinai involves those whom it includes in well defined duties; and that the kind of phrase of which the Lord availed Himself in stating these duties was often the *conditional* sentence.

I ask: is the statement that in promulgating the duties of the covenant the Lord often availed Himself of the *conditional sentence* equivalent in meaning to

the statement that the covenant of grace is a covenant of works, in a word, a conditional covenant depending for its fulfilment not on the faithfulness of God but on the obedience and faith of man as a condition? Rev. Kok knows better certainly; he knows that the expression "conditional sentence" was coined by the grammarians to do service as a technical designation of all the various kinds of "if sentences," of those not *truly* conditional as well as of those *truly* conditional, that is, conditional as to the thought conveyed. In a word, Rev. Kok knew that I was simply using the expression "conditional sentence" in that technical sense without at all meaning to say that the Scripture passages that I quoted were *truly* conditional. He knew this from the very point that I argue throughout my article.

A remark in passing. Since the expression "conditional sentence" has once come into use as a technical designation for all the various kinds of "if sentences," it will not do to discard the term. Yet today I have selected for my own personal use the expression "if sentences;" I no longer speak of "conditional sentences," except when the sentence is *truly* conditional. My reason for doing so is precisely such doings as that of Rev. Kok. Think of what he does to me and to the cause of the truth on the mere ground that some twenty-one years ago I used the expression "conditional sentence," merely in that technical sense.

And this brings us to the question whether Rev. Kok told these untruths knowingly and deliberately with the purpose to mislead or unawares. It is difficult for me to believe that he wrote and published these untruths without realizing what he did. It is hard for me to believe this for the following reasons:

1. First, Rev. Kok's failure to reveal that I was controverting in my articles the errors of Dr. M. R. De Haan. This doing of Rev. Kok was deliberate certainly.

2. Second, his failure to reveal to his readers the point that I was arguing in my article that he quoted. Also this doing of Rev. Kok was deliberate certainly.

3. The way he dealt with the section of my article that he quoted.

I wrote this: "*What is De Haan's proof that the Lord instituted with his people of old a covenant of this kind? And the answer is ready: the command with which this covenant was interwoven, to wit, the command to obey and keep covenant fidelity; further, such conditional clauses as: 'If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his covenant. . . . ' 'If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . ' 'If ye obey my voice indeed.'*"

Quoting this same paragraph, Rev. Kok erroneously represents me as having written this: "*Also to the*

covenant of grace God has attached the following conditional clauses: 'If thou shalt hearken unto the Lord thy God to keep his covenant. . . . ' 'If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . ' 'If ye will obey my voice indeed.'"

Let us observe the discrepancies. The sentence in italics of Rev. Kok's quotation does not at all appear in the paragraph as it left my pen. On the other hand the long italicized sentence of the paragraph as I actually wrote it does not at all appear in Rev. Kok's quotation. Yet the sentence was important on account of its revealing that I was controverting Dr. De Haan. The omission of this sentence makes it appear as if the point that I was arguing is simply that the Lord attached to the covenant of grace *conditional sentences and clauses*; that I thought this to be of such vital importance that I wrote a whole article on the subject and had it printed in the *Standard Bearer*.

Further, I wrote this: "De Haan should know, however, that to the covenant of grace as well the Lord attached a command to obey His voice, to keep His covenant, to hearken unto His voice."

This sentence does not at all appear in Rev. Kok's quotation. Yet it should have as it forms a part of the excerpt *as I wrote it*. The insertion of this sentence would have brought to light that the point that I was arguing was not at all that the Lord had added to the covenant of grace conditional sentences and clauses.

Further, quoting my article, Rev. Kok wrote this: "Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham is a covenant of grace. That also this covenant involves those whom it includes in well-defined duties; that the kind of phrase the Lord availed Himself of in formulating these duties was often the **CONDITIONAL** sentence, is evident from the epistles."

Let us take notice of the word "conditional". The bold type in which it appears is of Rev. Kok and not of me.

But hasn't one the right to italicize or print in bold type a word or words of the author whom one quotes? This, of course, is permissible. But then one must inform his readers that the italics or the bold type is his and not the author's whom he quotes. Kok failed to provide his readers with this information, and thus made it appear as if the bold type was mine. And he also failed to indicate that he was omitting certain important sentences and adding others. And he made it impossible for his readers to check on his quotation by his failure to inform them where the article of mine that he quotes could be found.

One more discrepancy. I wrote: "Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham *De Haan admits to be a covenant of grace*." As quoting this sentence

Rev. Kok wrote: "Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham is a covenant of grace."

So we see how Rev. Kok deals with that section of my article that he quoted. He added or changed a sentence here and omitted a sentence there and some other place, changed into bold type the cardinal term "condition" all to make it appear that he was justified in stating: 1. that I "even emphasized that there are conditions in the covenant of grace; 2. that I emphasized this over against those who maintain that grace is unconditional; 3. that from the quotation he quoted it is evident that I emphasize that there are conditions in the covenant of grace."

Mark you well, Rev. Kok says that *I* emphasized while the fact is that not *I* but that he, Rev. Kok emphasized. The bold type is *his* and not *mine*.

Now all this is terrible. It is dishonest.

But this is not all. Having put unto my pen and mouth his own conditional theology, Rev. Kok makes this remark: "I agree with him (meaning me—O), wholeheartedly. He speaks thoroughly Reformed language." So wrote Rev. Kok. Yet he well knows that I loathe his conditional theology like a plague.

And even this is not all. In the first section of his article Rev. Kok writes this: "In spite of all that has been written on this subject in the past few years, I am still convinced that we can speak of a 'conditio sine qua non' in the Reformed sense, and that those who deny this . . . are definitely harming the cause of our Reformed churches . . ." According to this statement, Rev. Kok is of the conviction that the concept "condition" is indispensable to Reformed theology. Well, if this is his conviction how then could he write in the final section of his article: "I know that today the brother (meaning me) would not use the term *condition* to express the same truth but I refuse to strive about words, in which there is no profit, but to the subverting of the readers. (II Tim. 2:14)."

The point is this: if it is Rev. Kok's conviction that the term *condition* is indispensable to Reformed theology, how can he then refuse to strive about the term? On his position he should certainly want to strive about the term in order to save it for Reformed theology. And therefore on his position he should see great profit in striving for the term.

And attend also to this statement from his pen: "If anyone does not agree that the term *condition* is the correct term to express the inseparable connection between promise and demand, faith and salvation etc., he is entitled to his opinion, but he does not have the right to impose his opinion on me." According to this statement of Rev. Kok, it is his stand that whether the term 'condition' is the correct term is a matter of everyone's own opinion to which also

everyone is entitled—entitled, that is, to his own opinion. But if it is Rev. Kok's belief that the term *condition* is indispensable to Reformed theology, how can he allow that the question of whether it is the proper term be a matter of everyone's opinion?

And finally this. To let his readers know what an enemy he is of all Arminianism, Rev. Kok in the first section of his article makes statements such as the following.

"God forbid that we should ever teach 'conditions' in the Arminian or Pelagian sense, as though salvation in any sense ever depends upon the will of the dead sinner." Rev. Kok should know that the Arminians also deny with just as much vigor that salvation in any sense depends upon the free will of the *dead sinner*. I shall prove this with quotations from Ralston. Rev. Kok therefore must not imagine that just because a man denies this, he is Reformed. He may still be an Arminian.

And so it is with the following statement from Rev. Kok's pen, and I quote: "But we do emphatically maintain that in the covenant of grace there are requirements which must be fulfilled. . . . Are these 'conditions' which man (mark you well, Rev. Kok here speaks of the man dead in sin—O), of his own free will must fulfill, before God can save him, as the dammed lie of the Arminians would have us believe?" Rev. Kok is mistaken. This is not the "dammed lie" of the Arminians, as I shall prove from Ralston.

Farther down Rev. Kok continues: "No but these are 'conditions' in the Reformed sense, which teach that man can only fulfill these requirements through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. . . ." This is what the Arminians also affirm and with just as much zeal, as appears from Ralston. The point is that I can affirm and deny all that Rev. Kok here affirms and denies and still be an Arminian.

As I have been saying in my recent articles, Arminianism is a subtle heresy. And let me also repeat my word of warning. It was this: "Well may we watch and pray that we as a Protestant Reformed people, be not deceived and destroyed by it (Arminianism)."

G. M. Ophoff

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Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause his own;
The hope that's built upon his word,
Can ne'er be overthrown.

Seeking the Lord Without the Camp

As was stated (see my previous article) God's people had corrupted themselves. They had turned quickly aside out of the way which the Lord had commanded them. They had made them a molten calf and worshipped it, and sacrificed thereunto, and said, These by thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Ex. 31:7, 8.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."

I am first returning to this saying of the Lord to explain it more fully. As I stated, this saying of God has reference to the whole nation including the Israel according to the election. For, as was stated, in this saying the entire nation and Moses appear side by side as excluding the one the other. "That I may consume them," says the Lord, "and make of thee a great nation." But the Lord cannot destroy his elect.

But how then, it was asked, can he say, even as much as say, that he will do just that.

Fact is, as was stated, that the Lord said no such thing. For then He would have expressed Himself as follows: "Let me alone, for I am *determined* that my wrath wax hot against them, that I may destroy them." Had the Lord said this, it would not have been allowable for Moses to intercede for the people, for then he would have been praying in opposition to the Lord's counsel. The Lord's expressing Himself as he did, Moses clearly perceived in the light of his awareness that the Lord could not destroy His people for reasons that he—Moses—enumerates in his prayer, that the Lord was challenging him to intercede for the people. Thus he understood, did Moses, that what the Lord was actually saying to him is this: "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, which I cannot do, but which I nevertheless must do, *if* thou Moses intercede not for them," or in the language of the New Testament Scriptures (Moses in his intercession typified Christ): "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, which, however, I cannot possibly do, but which I must nevertheless do, I being righteous and Holy God, if Thou, the Christ, Mine only begotten, atone not for their sins by Thy suffering and death on the cross, and on the ground of Thy atonement everlastingly intercede for them. Therefore, atone Thou for their sin and intercede for them."

The Lord could not destroy His people—the Israel according to the election. Of this, as was stated, Moses was also fully aware. For he enumerates the reasons in his intercession. Israel was His, the Lord's people. He had brought them forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand. Again in the language of the New Testament Scriptures, He had redeemed them from all their sins through Christ's blood. Should He now consume this people, He would give occasion to the Egyptians—in the final instance, satan and all his host including the world that lies in darkness—to blaspheme God. For they would say that in bringing them out He was activated by the evil purpose to slay them and to consume them from the face of the earth. And then this, too, He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, His servants — yea, He had sworn to His servant, the Christ, His only begotten Son, that He would multiply His seed as the stars of heaven, and to give Him and His seed all this land—again in the final instance the new earth.

How impossible for the Lord to destroy His people, whom He foreknew in Christ. How far was the Lord, must He have been, from having determined and from *saying* in His wrath that He would destroy this people.

So to explain this saying of the Lord is not to read anything into it; it is simply to explain this Scripture in the light of its context, which in the final analysis is the whole of the Scriptures.

"If thou, Moses, intercede not for them . . ." We must not make of this "if" a condition and accordingly read: "*on the condition*, Moses, that thou intercede for them." For then we corrupt the word of God here. This ought to be crystal clear. If God spared and forgave His people *on the condition* of Moses' praying for them, Moses' prayer, his decision to intercede for the people, was the determining cause, of the Lord's sparing and forgiving them. For that is the proper meaning of condition, namely determining cause.

But Moses' prayer was not the *determining cause* of God's sparing His people. How could it be, seeing that Moses, that Christ, as to His human nature, was God's creation and as such His gift to His people, and if therefore also his intercession was the fruit of the operation of God's Spirit in him.

(to be continued)— G. M. Ophoff

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Blessed be the Lord our covenant God,
All praise to Him accord;
Let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye, praise ye the Lord.