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MEDITATION

Joshua's Resolve

"... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." —Joshua 24:15b.

Joshua was old and stricken in years, but before he died he called for all Israel, for their elders and for their judges and for their officers, and he made a long speech to them, rehearsing in their ears all the deeds of wonder and lovingkindness which the Lord had wrought, giving them the land flowing with milk and honey.

Moreover, he warned them sternly about ever leaving the Lord and going awhoring after other gods, after the gods of the heathen who still dwelled in their midst. He rebuked them sternly and witnessed unto them of the righteous judgment of God that should overtake them if they would turn to other gods and forsake Jehovah-God of Israel.

And toward the end, he exclaims within their ears: But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

It sounds like a challenge! Do what ye will, I am going to heaven, and my house is going with me! At first flush it does not sound like a man who had been commissioned to bring God's people to the Holy Land. It seems as though he is using the wrong kind of pedagogy.

Listen to him, who is called to be a leader, a spiritual leader, of God's chosen Israel: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"

Does it not seem very poor leadership to leave the people, as it were, to the inclination of their own heart? Would it not sound much wiser to say to them: "Don't you ever dare to serve other gods!

Don't let me see the semblance of idolatry in your midst!" Would it not work much better to whip them into shape like a dictator?

Oh, but Joshua is not the leader of a political party which must be kept intact by hook or by crook. He is no dictator who will stand or fall, all according to the size of following he may muster for his schemes and plans. Joshua is the great servant of Jehovah and the type of Jesus Christ the Lord!

And the theme of his discourse is religion, the service of the God of the heavens and of the earth. And I assure you that this makes a tremendous difference.

Religion, the service of God, is entirely a matter of freedom, of liberty, of spontaneous endeavour. There is not an inkling of compulsion in religion. On the great day of the Lord God of Hosts, He will have a people that are very willing and very eager to do His sovereign will. Religion is this: we submerge our will entirely into the will of God. And that will of God is this, namely, that we love Him, know Him and obey Him from the motive of purest love in the heart.

And Israel must learn this. Therefore, Joshua casts the ball their way: Choose ye this day whom ye will serve: either heathen gods and their idols or the living God who brought you from the cruel bondage of Egypt into this blessed land of Canaan.

To serve the Lord!

That is very seemly, that is entirely proper, it is an holy obligation for every man, woman, child, spirit, be he angel or devil. Even the devil has no business to be what he is. All ought to praise the Lord and serve Him in loving fear.

I assure you that we are so hard-hearted by nature, so foolish and indifferent to the truth, that we are getting used to the most profound truths, and to such an extent that the tremendousness of these truths does not touch us anymore. I have in mind the ground for the proposition I mentioned, the proposition, namely, that it is entirely proper, that it is wholly obliga-

tory to serve the Lord God in all our lives, with all our heart, and mind and soul and strength, all the days of our lives.

That ground is this: He is our Creator.

When we hear this we are inclined to say: We know that God is the Creator of all men and that we therefore must serve Him. And then we are inclined to let the matter rest. But that is exactly our failing. We let the matter rest, and hasten to serve ourselves, the lusts of our flesh, the inclinations of our hearts, the cause of humanity, etc. And I assure you that they all are the idols of this horrible age in which we live.

We must serve God for He has made us, He is our Creator.

We think of this truth, if we think of it at all, as if God made us even as a carpenter makes a house. When the man is ready with his work, he walks away. And so also we think often of God who made us. We are all practical deists. Deism, as you may know, is the theory that God is infinitely exalted *above* His creation, but denying the truth of Holy Scriptures that God is *in* His creation, that He is *pervading* the whole Universe with His almighty presence and that His glorious Being touches all things at all moments in history.

For remember, God did not walk away after He had made the Universe. He made us, and we are, as it were, in the very hollow of His hand. He has made us and He sustains us every moment. Suppose the impossible: if God would take away His almighty and provident Hand from you at any moment, that very moment you would cease to exist. You would simply disappear, fall into nothingness, out of which you are taken. He preserves our being, and He it is that gives us our being now and forever, whether we will arrive in the heavens and be gloriously happy forever, or whether we will weep and gnash our teeth in eternal desolation. God's omnipotent and omnipresent power is around us and will be around us and within us forever. In the whole Universe there is not an atom that is not touched by Him. He is so great and glorious that Paul bids us to fear and tremble before Him. He is so close to us every day and all the day that we ought to be filled with awe and reverence forever and ever.

We belong to Him, whether we be good or bad. He made us and keeps us in the hollow of His hand.

We belong to Him for He made us for Himself. The very devil is God's own property. Satan will find that out at the end of time when God shall cast him into the lake of fire. Nobody even owns himself. We all are His. You cannot even call a mere thought of mind or of the heart your own. The Bible tells us

that the thought of the heart and the answer of the tongue is of the Lord.

All that is and breathes is God's own property, and His good-pleasure. That is a truth worth pondering.

Do you now see that it is entirely obligatory and and proper to serve God?

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But there is more.

We ought to serve Him because He is the Ruler, the Judge and End of all things. Whether you are a heathen or a churchman, a man, woman or child, whether we are good or evil spirits, we all ought to serve God, for we are created for His glory.

The definite, determinate, absolute purpose of this whole Universe and its fullness is that it all should be unto the praise of His glory.

That truth is revealed.

Even the brute creation teaches this. God has revealed these things through the things that are made. They all shout aloud of this glorious purpose. They tell, nay, they sing a beautiful song regarding the invisible virtues of God. And singing of them they reveal His eternal power and God-head. Paul has told us these things in the first chapter to the Romans. And you find the same truths in the 19th Psalm of David. There also we hear that the created things sing aloud of the glory of the Lord. And the purpose of the song of brute creation is that we should serve Him and thank Him. We shall have no excuse in the day of Judgment if we have not served and thanked Him all our lives. Paul tells us that too. The Lord has revealed the invisible virtues of Himself, so that they will be without excuse in the day of Judgment.

Think of that when you see the whole world of color, of sound, of form and of the beauties of creation. Think on it when you hear the sounds that pervade the day and the night. It is the song of created things which do sing unconsciously of His praises. And at such times, think on it, that they are the messengers of the Almighty God, telling you, calling unto you that you should serve Him with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength. That is the purpose of creation.

Moreover, He is the Lord!

And that means that He is the God of His everlasting covenant. The Name Jehovah means that He has thoughts, eternal thoughts, of everlasting peace, harmony and unutterable lovingkindness toward the men of His good pleasure and they are the elect.

He has beautifully revealed Himself as such. He revealed Himself as the Covenant God first of all in Paradise. And when man broke that covenant from his side, and fell away from all righteousness, becom-

ing a friend of the devil, God revealed that He was the Lord in going to Paradise and calling out to Adam and Eve who had hid themselves from the face of the Lord, by saying: Adam, where art thou? That call in the morning of history is the second revelation of the Covenant Jehovah. For at the same time He killed an animal so that He might clothe the nakedness and shame of sin of His first children, Adam and Eve. This killing of the innocent animal which suffered for the sin of man, was a clear type of the great Lamb of God who was to come, Christ Jesus the Lord.

Yes, the Lord has revealed Himself as the Covenant Jehovah in that He gave our fathers the sacrificial animals, the altar and the priest of the Old Testament. Moreover, He spoke time and again to our fathers by the prophets and that speech of God regarding His eternal covenant of love and friendship is saved for us in the Holy Bible.

Oh yes, you should serve Him for all such love and lovingkindness.

As the years rolled by in the Old Testament times, the speech of the Covenant God became ever clearer, ever more glorious. Later they saw the tabernacle and the temple of God, telling us that God promised to dwell with us under one roof. They told us of the eternal peace and joy in His communion. Oh yes, God is the Covenant God. And Joshua knew of it. When the people of His choice groaned in bondage in cruel Egypt, the Lord remembered His covenant and bowed down to them in sweetest mercy and gave them Moses so that they might be delivered and go to the land of Canaan which they received for an inheritance.

Shall we then not serve Him?

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But there is more. And remember that Joshua did not have as much of the revelation of this Covenant God as you and I have.

He did send His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The Lord God caused all the sin of His elect Israel to come upon the head of this sacrificial Lamb, and He bore it away, never to return. You sing: Though your sins be as scarlet! I will make them white as wool. And it is well. But remember, the sins of God's people become like wool and freshly fallen snow, only because Jesus went to hell for us. And as a revelation of the eternal covenant love of God. So that He might be praised and thanked forever.

Note the greater glory of this second revelation, rather than the first one in Paradise. Adam and Eve glorified God because of His lovingkindness to them in the gift of created things. But we thank Him and serve Him for the sake of His wondrous love in Jesus, who suffered our hell, damnation and the curse, so that we might be to God's praises forever.

Shall we then not say with Joshua: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord?

I ask you, in the face of such wonderful revelation of power, eternal Godhead, love and mercy in Christ, where shall the man and woman appear that turn their evil and stiff neck against the Almighty and taunt Him to His face, saying: Depart from me, O God! I have no pleasure in Thy ways? Yes, and they say this while they receive life, health, and strength, bread and water, the very air they breathe in their nostrils, from this same God. Can you not justify the Almighty in eternal damnation of the evil and unthankful?

O yes, God is just when He judges. Even Satan will presently admit this.

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I think that I have proven to you, that we all ought to serve Him and thank Him and glorify Him forever.

But here is the sad sequel: we are unable to serve Him as we are by nature. Here is the indictment of human nature and I will quote from God's own mouth: And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. That is the Biblical evaluation of the heart of man, of every man. Such is the case whether you are born in Japan and India, or in America or Europe.

How then could Joshua say: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord!?

Here is the answer: God has made him willing by the operation of His Holy Spirit in his heart and mind, transforming him into a willing child of God. Without that operation, we remain obstinate and rebellious to God, fill up the measure of wickedness and are lost forever.

But Christ Jesus poured out His Holy Spirit on Pentecost and since then that Spirit is working, laboring in order to bring the elect children of God to His eternal Home.

And if you are drawn you will know it. Your name is written in His Word. If you are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, if you are weary and heavy laden, if you are a lover of that which is good and comely, such as God's own virtues of goodness, lovingkindness, power and wisdom, then it is a sign that He is calling you Home. Then you will also find within you the resolve of Joshua. Then you will say: Whatever the world may offer, I choose for God and His Kingdom. The fathers that died for their faith in past ages have proved it in blood and tears. But now they sing in glory! They served Him in misery on earth, but now they serve in great happiness above.

Serve Him with fear!

G. Vos

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EDITORIALS**The Promise According to the Confessions**

In our discussion of the brochure of Dr. Schilder we already touched upon the subject of the term *promise* as it occurs frequently in our Confessions.

This discussion we will now continue.

Qu. 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of infant baptism. It instructs us that infants are to be baptized, "since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult." The promise, therefore, includes the remission of sin by the blood of Christ. But what is more important, it also includes, according to the 74th question of the Catechism, the Holy Ghost as the author of faith. This indeed is very important for the subject under discussion at present. For it certainly makes the promise of God unconditional and for the elect alone. As has been stated before, it is the conception of the Liberated that the promise is for all the children that are baptized, head for head and soul for soul. But that this is not the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism ought to be very plain from this question on infant baptism. For, in the first place, according to this answer the Holy Ghost is promised to the infants no less than to the adult. And certainly, the promise of the Holy Ghost cannot depend on any condition which we must fulfill. The Holy Ghost must operate within us before we are able to fulfill any conditions whatsoever. This is the Reformed conception. Arminians may teach that the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to all that will receive it, or that will use the light of nature aright. But this certainly is not Reformed. Besides, according to this answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Holy Ghost is promised to infants, that are not able to fulfill any conditions whatsoever. Besides, the answer stresses the fact that the Holy Ghost is promised to the infants as the author of faith, which means, of course, that God promises to the infants that He certainly will work faith in their hearts. Faith, therefore, is included in the promise. And it nonsense to say that God promises faith to those that believe. And it is equally nonsensical to state that God promises faith to those that will not reject the promise of faith. From all this it follows that according to the 74th question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, the promise is unconditional and is meant for the elect alone. It is certainly not Re-

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formed to appeal exclusively to Canons II, 5 in order to obtain a Reformed definition of the promise of God, even though in that passage of the confessions the promise is not for all, but for the believers, that is, therefore, for the elect.

Lord's Day 28 deals with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the answer to Qu. 75 we read: "That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ." Also here mention is made of the promise, or of promises, in the plural. And also in this answer it is evident that the promise is only for the believers, that is, therefore, for the elect. This is evident from the very first clause in this answer: "Christ has commanded me and all believers." It is evident also from the personal pronoun *me* in the rest of the answer. Besides, it is evident that the promise here includes much more than future salvation. It includes all the blessings implied in the atonement of Christ. The body of Christ was broken for me, and His blood was shed for me. Such is the promise. Further, it is included in the promise that God will strengthen and nourish my soul to everlasting life. This is also further explained in Qu. and A. 76, where we read: "What is it then to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?" And the answer: "It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body, by the Holy Ghost who dwells both in Christ and in us." Note how much, according to this answer, is included in the promise of God. It implies the pardon of sin, life eternal, the Holy Ghost, and union with Christ. And also in Qu. and A. 84, the question about the preaching of the gospel as a key of the kingdom of heaven, the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's merits is implied in the promise of the gospel. And surely, that this promise is presented here as meant only for the believers does not mean that faith is a condition to receive the promise. For as we have said repeatedly, according to our Confessions the Holy Ghost and faith are included in the promise itself.

In Art. 22 of our Confessio Belgica or Nether-

land Confession, we read: "We believe, that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, appropriates him, and seeks nothing more besides him." If we read this in connection with the rest of our Confessions, it is evident that the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is included in the promise. He, the Holy Ghost, "kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits." And once more I wish to point out that it is impossible, and it is nonsense, to maintain that the Holy Ghost so operates in our hearts that we receive the saving faith on condition of faith. The gift of faith, and therefore, the promise, cannot be conditioned by faith on our part, for the simple reason that faith is included in the promise. God promises faith. Besides, in the same article it is stated literally that faith is nothing but a means or instrument, and, therefore, certainly not a condition. Dr. Schilder may say that a condition is merely something that precedes something else. But although means may precede the end, means and conditions are two entirely different concepts. This is plain from the words of the article: "However, to speak more clearly, we do not mean, that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our righteousness. But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits, and so many holy works which he has done for us, and in our stead, is our righteousness. And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with him in all his benefits, which, when become ours, are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins." Faith, therefore, is not a condition, but an instrument whereby we embrace Christ and stand in communion with Him.

In Art. 33 of the same Confession we are told that God seals to us His promises through the means of the sacraments: "We believe, that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which he hath joined to the word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which he signifies to us by his word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring us and confirming us in the salvation which he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost." Again, this article speaks of the promises of God. What are these promises? As to their contents they are further described in Art. 34, which speaks of holy baptism. It is not necessary for me to quote the en-

tire article, for it is rather lengthy. But as to the contents of the promise of God, it informs us that it includes that "we are received into the church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him whose ensign and banner we bear." It includes further the promise that God will "forever be our gracious God and Father." Further, it implies the washing away of our sins through the blood and Spirit of Christ: "So doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God." It therefore includes the gift of grace that is called regeneration and the assurance of adoption unto sons of God. Further, the contents of the promise of God in this article are described as follows: "the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing and purging of our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts, and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with his deeds." In other words, all the riches and blessings of grace are included in the promise of God.

And as to the baptism of infants, the article states: "And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them." Now mark you well, that the Reformed Confessions over against all Arminians maintain the doctrine of particular atonement. Christ did not die for all men, but only for the elect. Nor are all the children that are born in the historical dispensation of the covenant elect children, as we well know from Scripture and experience. It follows, therefore, when we read in this article that "Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for the adult persons," not all the children of the faithful are meant, but only the elect children. For Christ shed His blood only for the elect, according to all the Reformed Confessions. And since the sacrament of baptism is one of the seals of the promise, it follows too that the promise is not for all, but for the elect only.

H.H.

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CLASSIS EAST of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in regular session, D.V., Wednesday morning, July 9 at 9 o'clock, in the Creston Church.

—D. Jonker, *Stated Clerk*

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

XIV

THE CREATION OF MAN (7)

Continuing our discussion of the creation of man, we would remind the reader that we made the observation toward the close of our preceding article that Adam's relationship to God was a covenant relation. We do not purpose to enter once more into a detailed discussion of the idea of the covenant. At this time we merely wish to emphasize the fact that our covenant conception is also based upon the creation of Adam and the resulting relation in which he stood to the living God. That Adam was the friend servant of the Lord was because of his creation by the Lord. It is simply a fact that Adam did not enter into this friendship; he was created the friend-servant of Jehovah. We can now continue where we left off in our preceding article.

That Adam's relation to the Lord is a covenant relation is Reformed truth and perfectly in harmony with our Confessions. We disagree, as we noted in a previous article, with the Roman Catholic conception which views the image of God in man, not as belonging to his essence, but as added to Adam, an added gift. According to Rome, man is complete without the image. He can lose the image and still remain man, yea, and what is more, a good man. However, viewing the covenant as a relationship of living friendship and proceeding from the truth that this spiritual relationship belongs to our very being and essence, that this relationship of friendship is certainly identical with Adam's true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, we may certainly believe that our covenant conception is fundamentally the teaching of our Reformed Confessions and based four-squarely upon them. It is true that the definition of the covenant as such is not found in our Confessions. Nowhere is the concept "covenant" defined. But this does not mean that our covenant conception is not based upon our Reformed Standards. For, our covenant conception recognizes and is based upon the doctrine of election and reprobation. We say this, of course, without hesitation and without reservation. And that we must proceed from the doctrine of election, that this doctrine is the heart and core of the Church and must determine our belief, is surely based upon the Confessions. Moreover, our covenant conception recognizes the thoroughly Scriptural and Con-

fessional truth that the grace of God is sovereignly particular. It is particular, only for the elect. And, mind you, it is particular sovereignly. This means that the grace of God is particular because God has sovereignly willed it so. And this truth is purely Reformed. Finally, our covenant conception presents the truth that the Lord bestows this grace and salvation upon His elect sovereignly and in the line of generations, and that He generally bestows His grace upon the elect and realizes in them His promise during their infancy. And this means that the promise is particular and purely unconditional.

This presentation of the truth is surely according to our Confessions and, e.g., our Baptism Form. We will not again quote the various passages. This has been done time and again. May it suffice at this time to call attention to the truths as confessed by our Fathers. The beauty of our Baptism Form lies exactly in its positive nature. It stresses the eternal love of God and the vicarious character of Christ's atonement, and applies this not only to the adults but also to the children of the covenant. And the same truth is emphasized in our Reformed Standards. Unconditional election and reprobation, man's hopeless and utter depravity, Christ's vicarious and therefore particular atonement, the irresistible character of Divine grace, and the certain perseverance of the saints are beautifully set forth for us in the Canons of Dordrecht. In addition to this the children are comprehended in the covenant of grace, share with the believing adults in all the blessings of salvation, are objects of the eternal love of God, have been washed upon the cross of Calvary and presented righteous before God, and have the Spirit of promise for unto them as well as unto the adults has the Spirit been promised as the Author of faith. All this, we understand, is thoroughly in harmony with the Scriptures, as, e.g., according to I John 2:12-14 and Acts 2:39, etc. Besides, Adam was created in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Adam's covenant relation of living friendship), lost this completely (did not retain remnants thereof), and we are restored into the blessed friendship with the alone blessed God only through the sovereign and irresistible grace of the living God. And all this is worked only in the elect in the line of succeeding generations.

Adam's relation to the human race.

First, Adam was created as our judicial, representative head. The fundamental idea here is judicial. Sin appears here upon the foreground from the viewpoint of guilt. Sin is guilt because it involves us in the obligation to pay. Guilt is obligation to pay. When we say that Adam was the head of the human

race in this judicial, representative sense of the word, we mean that he occupied that position wherein the Lord viewed him as representing before the bar of Divine justice all of mankind, so that the guilt of the first man would be Divinely reckoned, charged against the whole human race. Adam would thereby involve all of mankind in guilt before the Lord. God's Divine sentence of: Guilty, would be charged against every-one of his descendants. All men were thus legally reckoned in Adam.

This conception of Adam's judicial headship is surely in harmony with the Divine Scriptures. We quote Romans 5:12-19: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

In connection with this passage we should note the following. It is true that the apostle Paul refers not only to the guilt of sin but also to the power and pollution of sin, when we read in verse 12 that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin. However, it should be perfectly plain that all the emphasis in this passage falls upon the one man, Adam. Through the offence of the one man many are dead, according to verse 15. By the one man, we read in verse 16, the judgment was to condemnation. By one man's offence death reigned by one, according to verse 17. Verse 18 informs us that by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Hence, because of the sin of the one man all men are now under Divine condemnation. And very strong and clear is the apostle's statement in verse 19 that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, i.e., many were reckoned as sinners before the bar of Divine justice. This judicial emphasis in the passage we are now considering receives added

emphasis because of what we read of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is drawing a parallel between Adam and Christ Jesus. Even as because of the one man Adam, we are all under condemnation, so also because of the righteousness of Christ Jesus we are made righteous. And the emphasis once more falls upon this righteousness in the legal sense of the word. Christ's work has rendered all men (all the men who are in Christ Jesus, and therefore the elect) righteous, just before the Lord. In the same manner, as all men are condemnable because of the sin of Adam, we are now justified before God because of Christ Jesus. It is rather striking to observe that man has throughout the ages registered his protest before God against the truth that Adam's sin should bring all mankind under condemnation. They claim that it is not fair to hold all men accountable for a transgression which Adam committed. To this we answer, in the first place, that all these protests are surely in vain. All man's reasoning and objections surely do not alter the situation. It is simply a fact that we are all conceived and born dead in sin. All men are accounted guilty before the Lord. This is simply an indisputable fact. Secondly, man knows no objection against the same presentation when applied to Christ Jesus. The reason, of course, why man protests is not because he is interested in a matter of justice, but only because of the principle of self-interest and self-concern. For, in the meantime no man objects to the reality of sin itself. With sin itself he is in perfect agreement.

Secondly, Adam is our head in an organic sense of the word. This means, not only that Adam represented us, but also that we are out of him. This must not be understood as if we were personally in him (all our persons, then, were in him, and in that sense we all sinned in him); neither does it mean that all our various human natures were present in him. But it does mean that we all possess the same human nature, that the one human nature of Adam is passed on to all mankind, that this human nature was corrupted in him and as such is transmitted to all. This is surely the idea of Holy Writ, e.g., in I Cor. 15: 21-22: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." By man, we read, came death, and also by man came the resurrection of the dead. For in Adam all die, i.e., the power of death is in Adam, and in Adam reigned over the entire human nature. For we read that even so in Christ shall all men be made alive. Notice that the text speaks of all men (all men in Christ, who are in Christ, and who therefore are the elect) that they *shall* be made alive. And that in Christ all men shall be made alive evidently means that the

power, whereby all men shall be made alive, is in Jesus Christ, our Head. Hence, when Adam died, we all died, inasmuch as in Him the human nature, which is passed on to all men, became corrupt and completely subject to spiritual death and corruption.

Finally, Adam is also our head in the sense that he stood at the root of the entire human race. What we mean by this as such is not difficult to understand. Adam simply stood at the root, the beginning of the development of the human race. Out of him the entire human race will presently develop in all the riches of gifts and talents, works and acts which will characterize mankind throughout the development of the human race. Adam is as the acorn in its relation to the great oak. We will have more to say about this, the Lord willing, when we discuss the reality of sin. This truth is of the greatest significance also when we discuss the teachings of Common Grace relative the entrance of sin into the world and its subsequent development. Adam sinned, of course, as only Adam could sin. We sin according to our place in the organism of the human race. Out of Adam, as the root, all mankind develops, also in connection with the organic development of all things. But we repeat: we will have more to say about this when we discuss the reality of sin.

Adam's relation to the world round about him—he was king.

This truth, too, is founded upon Holy Writ. We read in Genesis 1:28-30: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." And in Gen. 2:15 and 19-20 we read: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it . . . And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him."

This, however, does not mean that Adam was king

of the entire creation of God. Such he surely was not. And also this is clearly taught in the holy Scriptures. He was made, we read, a little lower than the angels. Beautifully this truth is held before us in Ps. 8:5-9 and again in Heb. 2:6-9, and we quote: "For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field: The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas, O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!" "...But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visited him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." From this passage it appears that the things of heaven were not made subject unto Adam. To be sure, to rule over the heavenly is surely the destiny of man, as is evident from Heb. 2:8-9: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see *not yet* all things put under him. But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Hence, it is man's destiny to rule also over the heavenly, but this destiny was not reached for man in the first Adam. Adam was indeed created in the image of God, but he is not the Lord out of heaven, Whose human nature he does carry in his loins, according to I Cor. 15:45-49: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Hence, Adam was king of the creation from the earthly point of view. This implies, on the one hand, that the earthly was created as completely subject unto Adam. He was its king. He was not dominated by the earthly (as is man today because of the Divine curse upon sin, so that this curse of the Lord sur-

rounds him also in connection with the earthy), but he ruled over the earth. That he ruled over the living creatures appears from the fact that the Lord brought them to him, and he, as their king, gave them their names. He ruled over the garden and was called by the Lord to dress it and to keep it. And this latter word implies a struggle, the antithesis, that it was Adam's calling to keep, preserve, defend the garden also when presently the father of lies would make his appearance. This antithetical thought, that Adam must fight the battle of the Lord, and defend the glory of His Name, would be revealed more sharply presently in connection with the two trees and God's commandment relative the tree of knowledge, good and evil and the tree of life. With respect to this we expect to say more when we discuss the entrance of sin into the world. And, all things were completely subject to Adam, including every living creature. Everything obeyed the king of the earthly creation. On the other hand, however, Adam was the king of the earthly creation as under God. He did not rule in his own name and for his own sake and interest. He ruled over the earth because God had given him that authority and also because the Lord had laid the fear of man in every living creature (this is also relatively true today; that man has been created king of the earthy creation is evident from the fact that all animals are naturally afraid of him). And Adam ruled with the intention of laying all things at the feet of the Divine Creator, and using all things to glorify and extol the Name of his God.

Indeed, Adam, as he was created by the Lord, was highly gifted by his Maker. He is a far cry from Evolution's presentation of the early and primitive man. We need not at this time again enter into a discussion of this wicked and thoroughly anti-Scriptural presentation of the origin of man. This conception identifies man, in his origin, with the animal world. Holy Writ, however, places him upon an exceedingly high plane. Besides, history's record of the wonderful achievements of man thousands of years ago surely verifies the Scriptural narrative of the Divine creation of man. Upon this high plane, however, Adam did not remain. Neither was it the Lord's intention that he should remain upon that high plane. For it is the mystery of God's will that in Christ all things shall be gathered together in one, the things that are in heaven and the things that are upon the earth, and that this should occur upon and out of the ruins of sin and guilt. However, before we call attention to the entrance of sin into the world, we must, first of all, call attention to the truth of God's Providence, which is generally considered at this time.

H. Veldman

IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

Chapter 3

ON TEACHER TRAINING

Evaluation of History

The reader will recall that in our two previous installments we gleaned from the Acts of Synod, '48, '49, and '50, the available material concerning various attempts to establish our own Protestant Reformed teacher training facilities, together with the material concerning the synodical reaction to these attempts.

This is all the data which the undersigned could gather, although it is undoubtedly incomplete. It concerns the record of the attempts toward establishing our own teacher training facilities only in so far as such action has reached into official ecclesiastical circles. And there have been other moves made. Sorry to say, although the undersigned at one time cooperated in that work, I have no record of a very notable attempt in this regard, made by the Teachers' Club. I do not even know whether that group is still in existence. I believe that data concerning it would be valuable in connection with the subject we are treating now. Besides, while visiting the sessions of our synod at South Holland recently, I heard (in a recess period) talk of more action or proposed action about this same subject. To my regret, I cannot furnish the reader with any of this material. And I would at the same time repeat the appeal which I made some time ago: if any person, persons, or official body have ideas, questions, or data pertinent to the subject under discussion, please do not hesitate to send them in. We certainly can all understand that these are matters not merely of local interest, nor at all of interest merely to teachers and school boards, but matters of interest to us all. I think that especially the aspect of our subject now under discussion is an extremely vital one,—certainly a subject in which all our present and future Protestant Reformed schools are deeply concerned. Let's hear from you: it can only be of benefit.

At present, however, we shall have to be satisfied with the data at hand. And this time, in order to get our bearings, let us try to evaluate the history which we have previously recorded. What does it tell us about the problem of teacher training facilities? How much interest has been evinced? What has been the synodical attitude toward the attempts

made in the past? What seems to be the direction in which all these attempts have moved?

The history seems to establish, first of all, that there has been a degree of interest in and concern over this problem. As far back as 1948 the Society for Prot. Ref. Education (Grand Rapids) showed its interest in the form of a request as to the availability of the facilities of our Theological School for the preparation of prospective teachers in our own schools. Notice, that this was only an investigatory move.

In 1949 two much bolder moves were made. The above-mentioned society made an outright request that a normal course be added to the curriculum of the Theological School. And the Consistory of Randolph made a somewhat milder request, that Synod *consider ways and means* of establishing our own Normal Training School.

And finally, we must not forget that according to the Acts of Synod, 1950, there seems even to have been a more or less concerted interest, if not action, on the part of no less than five school boards in this regard.

Now this I deem commendable. It shows a recognition of the need for our own teacher training facilities. And this is certainly the first step. When once we see the need, we have come a long way. Let us by all means not allow the size of the problem and the obstacles along the way bedim our vision of this need. But let our vision of this need be the occasion of continued effort, unflagging interest, and greater understanding of the matter.

In the second place, I believe we may say without fear of contradiction that both on the part of the Grand Rapids Society for Prot. Ref. Education and the Consistory of Randolph, the realization of this need was based on principle. They saw clearly the same principle which we briefly outlined in the beginning of this chapter, namely that a Protestant Reformed teacher must have Protestant Reformed training if we are to maintain distinctively Protestant Reformed schools. This is very clear from the communications which appear in the Acts of Synod, 1949. And this too is commendable. We must by all means establish our own teacher training facilities out of principle and upon principle.

In the third place, it appears from the history recorded that the tendency was to lean upon others in the establishment of such facilities. There seems to have been a feeling that the school boards or societies could not themselves furnish the necessary facilities for the training of teachers. It is clear from the Acts of Synod that the schools looked to the denomination (represented in the Synod) for help in this respect. Now it is plain that a local school society could not

shoulder this burden alone. But it is not clear to the present writer why the school movement as a whole should look to outside sources not merely for help, but for the actual responsibility of establishing teacher training facilities. And a closely allied question is whether it is at all the responsibility of the church institute or whether it even lies in the rightful domain of the church institute to establish a normal school. These are important questions, to which we hope to give full attention somewhat later.

In the fourth place, it appears that the S.P.R.E., at least, as late as 1949 did not look for the establishment of full normal school training, but wanted merely to augment the college training of our prospective teachers with a course in our seminary. We quote from their letter to the Theological School Committee (May 7, '49): "We realized that our greatest need is for teachers, able and equipped, to teach our children the required subjects permeated by the Protestant Reformed life view. For these teachers to do this we feel that they should receive a *specific course of instruction above and beyond that which they receive at Calvin College.*" (italics mine, H.C.H.). From this quotation it appears that the idea of the Board at that time (and I do not know whether it has changed) was to continue to have our teachers receive their training at Calvin College, as most of them do at present, and afterwards to give them, so to speak, a dose of Protestant Reformed instruction. Also this matter will demand our attention later. But even now I would ask the question: would such a course be sufficient to equip teachers to "teach our children the required subjects permeated by the Protestant Reformed life view?" I don't believe it.

The record of the various actions of Synod is of vital importance in this respect, because it reveals a very definite tendency on the part of our churches to comply with the requests made to it in 1948 and 1949. And, concomitant with this tendency, it reveals a tendency to adopt the principle of a synodically maintained and controlled normal school.

In the first place, one looks in vain in the Acts of Synod for any basic study of this whole matter. This is a serious failure on the part of past synods. In 1948 Synod received a request for information about normal training facilities, and without any study of the principles involved, it decided that while it could not furnish a complete normal course, it could supply the necessary Reformed viewpoint by having prospective teachers take "Principles of Education" in our seminary. In 1949 the Synod itself took no action on the two proposals before it, but instead granted the Theological School Committee, in conjunction with the faculty the power not merely to study the proposals,

but also the power of possible execution. Again, the Synod took something for granted, namely, that it was possible and proper for the church institute through its Theological School Committee and Theological Faculty to furnish normal training for our prospective Protestant Reformed teachers. And it appears further from the report of said committee in the Acts of 1950 that no study of the principle involved was made whatsoever, but that the committee simply studied ways and means of adding a normal course of some kind to our theological curriculum. Furthermore, for all the decisions which the Synod took in this regard absolutely no grounds were furnished. The only contrary note to be found on this score is the fact that in 1949 the Synod decided to elide from its full decision the statement "to accept these proposals in principle". This would seem to show that there was at least some hesitation in the matter. Nevertheless, the Synod of 1948 and 1949 took definite and positive action in the direction of church-sponsored and church-controlled normal training. To this principle, as we said, careful attention must be given somewhat later.

In the second place, it is evident, apart from the right and wrong of the synodical decisions, that our synod certainly did recognize the need of Protestant Reformed teachers. That principle it certainly approved by implication when it moved to comply with the requests made by the S.P.R.E. and by the Consistory of Randolph.

In the third place, also our synods in the past seemed to move in the direction of furnishing what I would call a "patch-work" normal course. Circumstances may have prevented anything better. The fact remains that no move was ever made up to 1951 toward furnishing complete teacher-training facilities. Randolph asked Synod to consider ways and means of establishing our own Normal School, it is true. But this was never done. Instead, a single course was suggested in 1948. In 1950 a six weeks' summer course was planned. And to date we have nothing!

H. C. Hoeksema

FINANCIAL REPORT

The treasurer of the Ministers Study Fund Society gave the following report of all contributions and expenditures at their meeting of June 2, 1952:

Contributions	\$12,968.98
Expenditures	12,222.35
Balance	746.63

Our final drive for this worthy cause will take place this coming August with a goal set at \$6,500.00.

G. Pipe, *Secretary*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Esteemed Editor:-

In your last Editorial, of the *Standard Bearer* of May 15th, in which you again write so disparaging (which you, of course, will again deny) about Rev. Kok which to me seems as if you accuse him in an unbrotherly way.

Did you speak to him personally about these things? In the Bible (which is the word of God, not man) it tells me, if a man does wrong tell him about it, and if he does not listen to you take with you one or more witnesses and if he does not still walk in the right way take him to the elders of the Church. Matt. 18:15-17. Is this what you did before you wrote this editorial Rev. Hoeksema? If you didn't you should have.

In the last paragraph of your editorial it seems as if we may not write or talk against the Declaration; and if we do we may be disciplined. If this Declaration then is no fourth form then, what is it? Let's not hide behind a bush, let's come out with it!

What is the difference between your two statements concerning the Declaration that it is not a fourth form, binding as such upon our ministers or other officebearers, so that they could be disciplined on the basis of it, nevertheless, the decision of synod to declare the Declaration the expression of the Confessions and to use it as an instrument for organization of Churches. That decision is settled and binding. To me you are contradicting yourself, as you are using this as a fourth form by trying to discipline our ministers and office bearers.

May we as churches be led by the Spirit of God.

Your brother in Christ,

R. Visser

Hull, Iowa

Reply to brother Visser:-

Yes, yes; Matthew 18! You mean, of course, that only *Concordia* ought to make propaganda in our churches, and that, thereupon, I must treat that public propaganda privately.

This is tantamount to telling me to keep still and to fight no longer for the truth.

Listen, brother: you are knocking at the wrong door!

And listen again, brother: did you treat me according to Matthew 18, before you publicly wrote the above accusation against me? Would not Matthew 7:5 apply to you?

Finally, brother, does not Art. 31 of the Church order mean anything to you?

H. H.

AN APOLOGY

Whereas it was my intention to eliminate all names from the quotation which I quoted in the May 22 issue of *Concordia*, I somewhat paraphrased the first few sentences. In doing so I did not mean to misinterpret the author, but I now realize that it was unethical to change even a single word which was placed between quotation marks. For this I apologize to the author, and beg his forgiveness. Whether or not I am deserving of all the charges brought against me because of this act of indiscretion, I will leave to the judgment of the readers. Here follows the literal quotation, together with my paraphrasing of it:

"You will notice", so De Haan continues, "that these three covenants (Gen. 9:11, Gen. 17:1, Hebrews 8:10-13, B.K.) are unconditional, that they depend for their fulfilment, not upon man's obedience, but upon God's faithfulness.

"We see then that there are two covenants, *Grace* and *Works*. The one is *never broken*, the other is *always broken*. *Grace* is unconditional; *Works* are conditioned by man's obedience. A study of all covenants in Scripture will show that the unconditional covenants of grace are irrevocable, and that all the covenants of works have been broken and always will be." So far De Haan.

"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 keep 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."

"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 . . ."

Instead of quoting the last two or three sentences literally, as I should have done, but did not, because I attempted to convey the thought, without disclosing the names, I paraphrased them as follows:

"Also to the Covenant of Grace God has attached the following conditional clauses: 'If thou shalt hear-ken 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 in-deed . . .'".

All the rest of the quotation was literally taken. I also offer my humble apology for not having in-formed the readers that I underscored the word '*con-ditional*' all the rest of the underscoring were by the author.

B. Kok



DE KLEINE ZONDE

Een vrouw ging ter biecht, want haar hart was be-zwaard;

Zij beleed hare zonden, veelsoortig van aard:
Zij wenschte de rekening eens heel opgeruimd.
Veel groote—die wogen zoo zwaar als een steen;
Eén kleine was kwaadspreken van menigeen.
Doch spoedig vergeten was 't wondende woord
Zoodra 't door een buur, of een vriend, was gehoord.
Want 't kwaad was zoo groot niet, en 't gerucht was
toch waar,

En zulks te vertellen was wel schuld, toch niet zwaar.
De waardige Pater, met goedheid vervuld,
Verleende gewillig vergiffenis van schuld.
Maar die ééne zonde—schoon niet zoo'n groot kwaad
Voor die wist de Pater geen weg, of geen raad.
Om die te vergeven; de schat van de kerk:
Het "meer dan genoeg" van der heiligen werk
Was te arm ter betaling van kwaadsprekers schuld.
Hij weegt, en bedenkt deze zaak met geduld;
En eindelijk vindt hij een weg voor de vrouw,
Die stilzwijgend, wachtte met angst en berouw.
"Ga", zegt hij, "doe boete! wees niet al te bang;
Maar zonden der tong, zij leven zoo lang,
Zijn niet te vergeven voor geld of berouw:
Gij *moet* voor die boeten, daar helpt niet aan, vrouw!
Uw boete is tweeledig:—eerst ga naar een hoek
Waar distelen groeien en bloeien; en zoek
Waar de grootste en rijpste der zaadbollen, pluk
Die gretig, en houdt ze in de windzijde, en druk
De zaadbol in stukken, en strooi ze in de wind

De zaden, tot niemand een korrel meer vindt.
En als ge gedaan hebt zoo als ik beveel,
Kom morgen, dan zeg ik U 't andere deel
Der boete."

De vrouw met een opgeruimd hart,
Liep dadelijk heen; want het viel haar niet hard
Om distels te vinden, of distelen zaad
Te strooien met blijdschap: O! 't deed haar geen
kwaad.

"Ik heb, waarde Pater! alreede verricht
De helft mijner boete.—Wat is verder mijn plicht?"
Zoo sprak zij, verwachtende spoedig ontslag
Van schuld, toen zij kwam op den anderen dag.
De Pater zag ernstig, en hoorde haar aan.
En zeide: "Wel, vrouw! zoo ver welgedaan;
Ofschoon gij niet wist waarom gij het deedt,
Noch dacht of het blijdschap zou wekken of leed,
Naamt gij deze boete gewilliglijk aan;
Gij hebt aan den eisch van de kerk nu voldaan.
Maar de andere helft der boete herstelt
Het kwaad, dat zoo menigeen 't hart heeft gekweld.
Ga heen, en vergaer weer, met vlijt en geduld,
Die zaden—Kom weer dan, en 'k vergeef U de schuld."
De vrouw zag, verbaasd, haren biechtvader aan;
En sprak, onder snikken en menigen traan:
"Maar Pater! Elk zaadje dreef heen op den wind;
Hoe is het dan moog'lijk dat ik ze weer vind?
Niet één—hoe dan allen zoo wijd nu verstrooid.
Is dit mijne boete, dan kan ik ze nooit
Vervullen naar eisch.—Och, Pater! verzoen
Mijn schuld maar om niet,
Want ik kan die niet doen."
De Pater sprak deftig, met dreigende hand:
"Gij hebt zooveel zaden lichtzinning geplant,
Dat velden en akkers er mee zijn vervuld.
Een volgende zomer getuigt van Uw schuld.
Het kwaadsprekers werk wordt lichtzinnig gedaan,
Al brengt het in 't oog der belasterde een traan;
Al breekt het de banden van vriendschap vaneen;
Al weegt het op 't teedere hart als een steen;
Al stoort het den gang van de liefde in haar werk;
Al schaadt het de wereld, al smaadt het de kerk.
Ja, vrouwe! het strooien van distelen zaad:
O, 't gaat zoo gemakk'lijk. Ik hoop gij verstaat
En neemt nu ter harte de les die 'k U gaf:
Nooit wascht ge de schuld van het kwaadspreken af
Door geld of door boete.—'t Gesprokene woord?
Nooit kunt gij herstellen den vree dien gij braakt:
Des kwaadsprekers tong is een vuurvlam, zeer fel;
Is een wereld vol zonde, is een vuurgloed der hel."
"Ga, vrouw! Zonder boete—maar ga met Uw schuld;
Vraag God om vergeving, en draag met geduld
Gods boete. Volbreng die: Houd, dit is Gods wil,
Uw lippen gesloten, en Uw tong voortaan stil!"

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 8:18-30

It is not our intention in this article to give an exposition of any particular portion of these verses; rather we will give a general survey of this section, a bird's eye view of the whole. We trust that this will on the one hand stimulate us to the proper interest in the comforting message here revealed, and on the other hand it will enable us to see the details of this passage in the light of the over-all pattern. We will thus not fail to see the woods because of the trees.

Let each read this passage from his own Bible.

Let us then attend to the setting and the general implication of this section of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

In general we may notice, that Paul in this chapter places very forcibly on the foreground that "those in Christ Jesus" have come to stand in an all-together new legal relationship to God. They, who were by nature children of wrath and subject to condemnation, now stand in the new legal relationship of sons of God. And in this freedom from condemnation those in Christ Jesus walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Because of this new relationship in Christ the justified are not said to walk *according* to the law, but they walk according to the Spirit of Christ. All things have thus become new in our lives. We do not walk according to the *oldness of the letter* but according to the *newness of the Spirit*. Rom. 6:2, 4; 7:6; 8:1, 2. We are not under the law but under grace. Now grace indeed does not abolish the law but establishes it. Rom. 3:31. It is good to see this Biblical emphasis that we are not under law; that we have died unto law in order that we might be saved from dead works unto the service of the living God. For such is the emphasis of Paul throughout this eighth chapter of Romans.

Unless we have the Spirit of Christ we are none of His. And when this Spirit of Jesus dwells in us we may be assured that this same Spirit shall also quicken our mortal bodies. For the Spirit maketh alive and leads to the final glory. In this Spirit we are not under the bondage of the law, but we are in the liberty that is real and wonderful, and we cry in this Spirit: Abba, Father! For this Spirit testifies with our Spirit that we are the children of God. Rom. 8:12-16.

Such is the newness of life.

Such is the freedom given by the Spirit; it is the freedom that walks in the establishment of the law in our hearts. It is the New Testament in Christ's blood. It is the new Covenant enacted upon better promises!

But we must proceed.

This newness of life also makes for a wholly different kind of suffering. The suffering of him in whom the Holy Spirit dwells is altogether different in nature from the suffering of natural man. The man is not simply "old man". The natural man does not have a "new man" and, therefore, strictly speaking neither does he have an "old man". All the suffering of Him who is in Christ becomes a suffering for Christ, a being accounted a sheep for the slaughter! It is a suffering for righteousness sake. And, therefore, those who thus suffer are blessed. The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit; it is foolishness to him. But God's children are blessed; suffering with Christ is inseparably connected with being glorified together with him! Rom. 8:17.

It is concerning this *being glorified together with Christ* that Paul has a few very pertinent things to say in the verses 18-30.

This final glory of God in the saints is the *focus point* of all of history as the unfolding of the plan of redemption in Christ Jesus.

And it is brought concretely into consideration in every step of the way of the children of God as they must suffer with Christ. The glory is always one of the points of the believing consideration of the Christian's comfort. Without this glory all life is simply the vanity of vanities; there is no profit for those who live under the sun. Hence, the consideration of this glory is all-important for our christian comfort. It is highly doctrinal and at once intensely practical! The practical and the doctrinal are not antipoles. To have the practical without the doctrinal is like unto a ship without rudder and compass; it simply means that we go and act, but we know not whither we are bound. Hence, all talk about the practical in distinction from the doctrinal is a very subtle lie of Satan. We need sound doctrine lest we become sick with sin. We need the pure teaching concerning the "glory with Christ" lest we despair because of "suffering of this present age", sometimes called "this life".

Well, if such be the case, then let us pick up the reins of our mind and be sober. Let us by the Spirit that dwells in us give heed to the focus-point of all history, the Spirit's own goal in all things. For the Spirit always seals unto that day, and leads all of the redeemed creation to the final glory to be revealed in

the children of God. Or to say it more exactly: to the final glory to be revealed in us.

Ah, we do not really stand in death and the grave with a stark and horrible future before us. There is condemnation in nothing. Nay, not even in death and the grave. We stand together with the whole of creation as we break forth from the Womb of God's Counsel some First-fruits of God's creation. Our pains are the travail of the birth by water and the Spirit. Birthpains our groanings are. Life breaking forth and conquering death. The dawn of the new day is in all of creation.

There is a threefold groaning spoken of in this section.

First there is the groaning of "the creature itself". Of this we shall write more in later articles.

Secondly there is the groaning of us who have the "first-fruits of the Spirit". This is the groan of waiting for the redemption of our bodies, the final manifestation of our adoption to sons.

Thirdly, there is the groaning of the Spirit of Christ, our High-priest as He intercedes for us, the Church. This is a groaning which cannot be uttered. And yet it is a prayer which the searcher of the hearts knows and answers.

In all of these three distinct groanings, in creation in us who have the First-fruits of the Spirit, and of the Holy Spirit Himself there is the panting, longing expectation of the final glory of God's grace in us the redeemed Church.

Hence, this glory is constantly taken up in all believing reckoning of the meaning and purpose of the suffering of this present time; of the meaning of the suffering of God's children.

And the result: it, suffering, is not worthy to be compared. It does not even fall in the same class with it. It really sinks away into nothing as soon as the comparison is made. And, O glory, thus it registers too in the believing consciousness of the saints.

Such is the general implication of the verses 18-27.

All things look toward the focus-point; the glory of the saints!

But there is more!

We too know that all things work together for good to those who love God!

This "good" is certainly the "glory of God to be revealed in us". It is the "good" as it has been established by God Himself in His eternal Decree and Purpose in the Counsel of Peace and Redemption. When that point of time comes; when the glory shall be revealed in us then God will be once more resting from His labors and saying: it is good. Thus God spoke in the end of the creation-week. And thus God shall speak when the end of the weary toil of this pre-

sent time shall be over and all things be made perfectly new; then shall God say: it is "very good"!

Now we know something very definite concerning all things. It is: that all things in this present time of "sin and grace" work together for good to them that love God!

And what a knowledge this is!

It is the knowledge that takes believing cognizance of all the facts of life and death, things present and things future, sickness, peril and sword. It closes its eyes to nothing. All of these things work together for the final glory of the saints, to the glory, the "good" of those who love God.

Who are they who *love God*?

By nature there is no one that loves God. By nature we are prone to hate God and our neighbor. And, therefore, it is so very true what John says: "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." He who loves God is one who is called efficaciously by the Word and Spirit from darkness into God's marvelous light.

But all things do not work together for our good *because* we love God. Our love is not the reason, it is that which constitutes us the objects (sovereignly constituted) for the good of whom all things work. It is an indication that we have been called according to the purpose. It is in no sense a condition that we fulfil, but rather it is the mercy of God to us indicating that we are the called according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. Not they who love God are in the ultimate sense the called according to the purpose, but the called according to the purpose are those who love. That is the text, and such is the Reformed position.

Such called according to God's purpose, lovers of God, are also the justified ones from sin and death. Theirs is the right to the future glory. And by faith we press our claim for it. And we know that being justified we shall also be glorified.

The focus-point of all history is woven into the very warp and woof of the soteriological dealings of God with His children.

Every eye in hope is directed upon it!

G. Lubbers



Rest in the Lord with quiet trust,
Wait patiently for Him;
Though wickedness triumphant seem,
Let not thy faith grow dim.

Impressions Of Synod

It was on Tuesday afternoon that the undersigned rode with three other delegates from Classis East to attend the Synod of 1952 to be held at South Holland, Illinois.

In the evening of that day we arrived in South Holland shortly before the Pre-Synodical service would be held at 7:30 o'clock. The entire scene in South Holland, a small village on the outskirts of the great Chicago Metropolis, suggests the quiet and peace of the country-side, while at the same time there is the uneasy undertone of the great and restless life of a world city.

Here we are to meet at Synod, although Synod did not here finish all of its work. And here we are to meet together as delegates to Synod together with the calling Consistory and the Congregation of South Holland.

Now my first impression of this Synod was the impression that the Word of God made on my soul as it was preached by the Rev. G. Vos, president of the 1951 Synod. I told the Rev. Vos, and expressed it to others also, that his Sermon on Hebrews 6:16-20 was like cold water on a thirsty soul. The Congregation of South Holland and the Delegates to Synod felt the great comfort of the Word of Promise to all those "taking refuge to God"; we were comforted by the fact, that God in order to make this promise more sure to our consciousness underscores this with an oath, as the end of all contradiction. The delegates went to their respective lodging places impressed by the truth that truly in all of our work as workmen of God we could count on His help. That was refreshing.

My second impression, which I would here record, is, that anyone who goes to Synod as a delegate is overwhelmed by the sense of the littleness of our human might and strength. To be a delegate to Synod is a great honor. And it will not be denied that it is an honor that is sometimes coveted in a sinful way due to the motive of human pride. But this does not remove the element of it being an honor to be counted worthy by the mind of the Church to perform such tasks. But this honor entails also a grave duty and responsibility. I looked about me in Synod. I count sixteen brethren, delegates. Upon these shoulders God places the responsibility of conducting the affairs of our entire denomination in as far as these matters come rightfully before this body. And nearly all of us are men of little learning, and some with not too much experience. Still I could not but feel that all knew, deep in their souls, their own limitations. On the meetings of Synod it was evident that each was

patient with the other, and that there was an evident purpose to profit by the best gifts of God in the brethren. That recognition of the best gifts in the church is also a wonderful gift of grace to us, and a blessed experience.

The third impression that I would here call attention to was that Synod was conscious of the fact that it requires time to perform the Lord's work, and also that much patience is necessary. Synod did not hurry with their work to the extent that decisions were made without due and proper discussion. Our President, Rev. Hanko was very patient. Yet, when possible, all business was performed with dispatch. The discussions on the floor of Synod were honest and forthright. The mutual trust that makes for a lively debate was nearly always in evidence. That made for a happy gathering. It made us feel that we were free in the Lord; that the shackles of sin are broken.

A fourth impression, that I could not escape was the fact, that gradually our churches are growing a bit older. I mean that time marches on also in our churches carrying us on to the end of our life's pilgrimage. Meeting one of the elder delegates I asked him how he was faring. He said: "very well, only I'm getting older." Our ministers present at Synod, who have labored longest in our midst, have grown grey in the ministry in our Churches. The Rev. H. Hoeksema did not attend all the meetings of Synod. He had a busy schedule, but had this been 15 years ago he would, no doubt, have attended. Our Rev. Ophoff too is crowned with the "glory of the aged", not to forget our Rev. Vos. And the men who were in the early twenties not too long ago are now in the middle of life. We are growing older. May we remain youthful and vigorous in the Lord in the midst of this world. We were reminded of this matter too since the entire matter of emeritation of ministers is being placed in the hands of a study-committee. It is true this committee will study the matter of emeritation to our ministers in the present "abnormal emeritation". But the impression that the matter of an Emeritous Fund is ever more a coming necessity, I could not escape.

The final impression, that I wish to record is, that it was indeed refreshing to have met together as delegates of the churches of Classis West and Classis East. There was throughout an evident attempt that the work on the Synod as well as the work of standing Committees be divided among members of both Classes. That was refreshing. And it was with a feeling of satisfaction, together with a tinge of pain that we bade each other farewell, wishing each other the Lord's indispensable blessings for the future. In

God's Church it is not true that "east is east and west is west and ne'er the twain do meet". For we met in the love of Christ and under His injunction.

And I would close with the remark, that certainly all our labors are vain except in the Lord. And we believe that labors were performed in the Lord. It may be that corrections must be made. But in the Lord that too is possible as stipulated in the Order of His Church.

G. Lubbers

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IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself, Tuesday, June 24, our beloved Mother and Grandmother,

MRS. LAMBERT HOLSTEGE, nee VanderMeulen
at the age of almost 67 years.

The assurance that all the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed comforts us in our deep bereavement.

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Henry John Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Bosch-Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Haveman-Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Haveman-Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Brink-Holsetge
and 29 grandchildren.

Hudsonville, Michigan

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IN MEMORIAM

On June 17, 1952 it pleased God, in His infinite wisdom, to take unto Himself the soul of our dear wife and mother,

MRS. TILLIE VAN OVERLOOP
at the age of 51 years.

Her testimony that she was prepared for the mansions above is our consolation in hours of loneliness and we trust that the Lord thru the comforting Spirit, will ever be our source of hope for the day when we shall be reunited, never to sorrow again.

The bereaved family,
John Van Overloop
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Van Overloop
Larry
Ann
Audrey
Loraine
Marian

The Condition Debate in our Churches

It is with some hesitation that we undertake to write our thoughts on the subject which captians this article. And the reason for this is that every man who undertakes to write must beware lest he stumble in words: he that does not stumble in words is a perfect man.

However, there are also reasons why it is entirely proper that the undersigned also expresses his thots on the so-called matter of debate in our churches. (I write advisedly "So-called debate". For properly speaking it is not a debate as I hope to show presently). The reason why it is proper for me to write is that I too have a calling to help give proper leadership and guidance to the members of our churches. Our periodicals are an open forum where we can, and where we should speak our convictions subject to the Word of God and the Reformed Confessions.

What I shall write in this article are some of the impressions that have gradually but surely crystalized into convictions during the past three or four years. During this period of "Sturm und Drang" the undersigned has not entered the debate to any degree. Only one article appeared from my hand dealing with the matter directly. It was entitled "Promise and Promises". However, the rubric "From Holy Writ" has remained true to its intention. But now I feel that the time has come to also express my convictions in regard to the matter of the "condition debate".

My first observation concerning this entire debate of the term "condition" is that those who wrote did for a good part of the time not clearly state what they meant with the term, and still less in what context they would, if they did, employ it. That lack of clarity was tragic. It simply multiplied misunderstanding(s). The effect upon the readers was that they simply were confused in mind.

Let me elucidate upon this point.

It is true that the debate of "conditions" was occasioned by the teaching of the "Liberated Theology" that the "promise is for all upon condition of faith". Instead of debating the question *for whom* is the Promise and the assurances of the Gospel, the debate was stranded on the rather abstract and scholastic construction: is it possible to emply the term "condition" in a good Reformed sense? Now obviously this is fatal for a healthy discussion. It became a question of contention over a term rather than over the place of this term as used by the "Liberated Theology".

To ask can the term "condition" ever be used in a Reformed sense is one thing. To state that the Promise is for all upon condition of faith is so unre-

formed, that in this connection no one with a Reformed hair on his head will wish to contend for it. But since this latter is true, I am certain, that for our very life's sake we should not teach it as sound words of doctrine. For the Canons teach: this promise together with the command to repent must be *preached to all*. The Promise preached to all is not at all the same as the Promise for all upon condition of faith.

Now it is true that the question whether the term "condition" can ever be used in a Reformed, Biblical sense might be suggested when we see how it is evidently employed in the theological construction: promise to all upon condition of faith. And what is still more evidently true is that one instinctively becomes careful with the use of the term when we are in the neighborhood of such theological constructions, which in their formal formulations an out and out Arminian cannot improve upon. But it remains incontrovertibly true, that the propositions: promise to all upon condition of faith is not to be identified with the question: Is it possible to use the term in a Reformed sense?

That was fatal to good discussion.

It beclouded the issue in two directions.

In the first place, the real issue: *for whom is the promise*, did not come to the foreground.

And again, those contending for conditions came in a position where their arguments were vague, and had no seeming direct bearing upon the actual point of controversy.

Why this lack of clarity?

I cannot and will not answer that, for God is the Judge. But I do bemoan this lack of clarity and the subsequent confusion in the minds of many of our people.

—to be continued, G. Lubbers

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 10, 1952, the Lord willing our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. REINDER TIMMER

hope to celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

It is our earnest prayer that the Lord may bless them along the rest of life's pathway and that His grace may ever sustain them.

"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."—Psalm 91:11.

Thankful for their loving care,
their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. George Vink

Mr. and Mrs. John Hoekzema

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timmer

Mr. and Mrs. Seiger Heys

—Manhattan Montana

Mr. and Mrs. Elton Piersma

15 grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Seeking the Lord Without the Camp

And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

—Ex. 33:17

"If thou, Moses, intercede not for them . . ." as I stated, 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.

But neither must this "if" clause be eliminated from Moses' intercession. The Holy Spirit has put these "if" clauses in the Scriptures and with a purpose certainly. As a sentence element in Moses (and in Christ's) intercession, the particle "if" brings out a great truth, namely that God, being righteous and holy God, could choose and love His people, by nature illdeserving and condemnable on account of their sins, only in Christ, and accordingly could save and forgive them only in the way of Christ's atonement and intercession. Certainly without the Christ there could be no election unto life eternal, no pardon and salvation and glory for God's people by nature as stiffnecked as the others. Without the Christ, God would have been under the constraint of His own holiness and righteousness to consume also His people.

But however vile and guilty in themselves this people may be, in Christ they were holy and blameless in love before Him in His counsel eternally. And therefore the thought of His consuming this people, was so utterly repulsive to Him, that He gave His Only Begotten. In the language of the text of the Scriptures (Ex. 32:14): "And the Lord repented of the evil which he said that he would do to his people," *'if Moses had not prayed for them,'* that is, what the Lord said He would do to His people—consume them—if He had not raised up Moses to pray for them, grieved him. For that people was the object of His eternal love in Christ. For such is the repentance of God, as we have seen. It is not also remorse and change of mind and plan, as the repentance of man. But it is grief, here His sovereign determination to be grieved by the idea of His consuming His people, and thus to be delighted by the idea of His saving them in Christ.

Let us now proceed with this sacred story to its climax.

Moses had concluded his intercession. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom

thou swearest by thine own self . . . had been his final words. And the Lord repented . . . But He refrained from telling Moses. The statement: 'I have repented. I will spare and forgive,' does not occur at this juncture in the text. So the prayer went unanswered. With a burdened soul Moses turned and went down from the mount. The Lord could not consume His people. Of that he was confident. But why had He not answered? As he pondered the thing, his attention was arrested by what Joshua, who was again at his side, was telling him: "there is a noise of war in the camp." Moses, too, listened. "That is not the voice of them that shout for mystery," said he to Joshua, "neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but I do hear the noise of them that sing."

Though the Lord had told him that the people had made a molten calf and were worshipping it, Moses was not braced for the sight that now met his gaze as he drew near the camp. He saw the calf and the people dancing. In a paroxysm of wrath, he cast the tables out of his hands with such force that they broke beneath the mount. And they were the tables of testimony on both sides of which God with His own finger had engraven the law of the ten commandments. What mattered any longer these tables? The people had broken in pieces the covenant, trampled it with their feet. Taking the calf, Moses burnt it, ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, so that the people now had to drink of it. The vanity of their prostrating themselves before gods whom they could thus drink!

Moses demanded an explanation of Aaron. What had the people done unto him to get him to bring so great a sin upon them? Aaron implored Moses to be patient with him and he would tell him all. Moses knew this people as well as he, how that they were set on mischief. So they had come to Aaron demanding that he make them gods, which should go before them. For as for this Moses, the man that had brought them out of the land of Egypt, who had any idea of what had become of him? He may have perished. And so Aaron had cast the gold that they had brought him into the fire, and lo! out had come that calf. Aaron had yielded to popular demand, not having had the courage to resist. Yet he was a saint but how weak a saint. Ps. 106:16. And doubtless there were many such saints in the camp; men grieved in their hearts by the innovation but too afraid to raise their voice in protest or perhaps even condoning the idolatry on the ground that after all it was still Jehovah that was being worshipped. Had not Aaron said: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And had he not,

when he saw it, built an altar before it, and made a proclamation, saying: "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord."?

But Moses was of a different mind. The people had committed a great sin. In the words of the psalmist, "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt"—(Ps. 160:19-21).

So standing in the gate of the camp, Moses issued a call: "Who is on the Lord's side," said he, "let him come unto me." If they had only come, one and all! If, in a word, they had only repudiated their idol and returned as penitents to the Lord! But, as it was, only the sons of Levi responded. Moses now issues a fearful command. In the name of the Lord he ordered every man among them to put his sword by his side, and to go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." And the Levites did so, and there fell of the people three thousand men.

As every man had been against his son, and against his brother, the people were commanded to consecrate themselves, that the Lord might bestow upon them a blessing.

As was stated, Moses had besought the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. But there had been no answer. Why this silence? To be forgiven sin must be atoned. Moses well understood. For it was the one lesson driven home to every believer's heart by the sacrifices by blood. But for the sin that the people had committed these sacrifices did not avail. The idolater had to die. And so it seemed that the nation was doomed to extinction after all. But the Lord could not consume His people. Yet there was no atonement.

So on the morrow Moses said to the people: "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I will make an atonement for you." "Peradventure . . ." He realized that he was but a sinful man. But he could at the least offer himself. Returning to the Lord he said: "Oh the people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet, now if thou wilt forgive them, it is well. And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book, which thou hast written," if that will procure for them forgiveness, he meant to say. But the Lord returned answer: "whoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." The innocent might not die for the guilty. The soul that sinneth shall die. But if so, what hope could there be for this people!? The Lord gave no answer except to say to

Moses: "Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sins upon them."

He would visit their sins upon them? What could this mean but that He would destroy them? Yet Moses must lead them to the place of which the Lord had spoken? And he would send an angel before him? How inexplicable!

The aspect of the Lord's doings continued ominous. First He plagued the people, because they made the calf (32:35). And, though He next commanded Moses to depart, and go up hence, he and his people, which he had brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which He, the Lord, had sworn unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying Unto thy seed will I give it; and though He promised to send an angel before Moses (the angel of the Lord, of whom the cloud was the visible manifestation) and promised further that He, the Lord (the *angel of the Lord* and *the Lord* were essentially one; the angel was Christ), would drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite and the Perizzite the Hevite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey, —yet He at once let it be known that He would not go up in the midst of them, as he had been doing (the tabernacle had been given a place in the very midst of the encampment) but at a distance from them, He and the angel, and giving as the reason that "thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way". (Ex. 33:1-3). What evil tidings! When the people heard they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments, 33:4. And this was not a wonder, considering what the Lord had said. This is what He had said: "Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up in the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; therefore now put off they ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee." "And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by mount Horeb."

But had not the Lord repented? He had, but He had not yet let it be known. As a result Moses and the people were still in the dark. And the Lord, as is plain, continued to speak in enigmas in order to incite Moses to continue his intercession in response to which the Lord would finally give him a great new revelation concerning His way with this people.

The Lord now did what He had threatened. He and His angel took up their residence in a place far removed from the camp. Moses, as mandated by the Lord, took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 33:7.

And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the

tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

And it came to pass, as Moses entered the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.

And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door; and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. 33:8-10.

That the Lord and the Pillar of cloud were essentially one is especially evident from this ninth verse. Let us take notice of the statement occurring in this verse: "the cloudy pillar descended . . . and the Lord talked with Moses," talked with him from out of the cloudy pillar. It was the Triune Jehovah speaking through the voice that came to Moses from the cloud. And this voice was the voice of Christ. And the cloud that could be seen was the preindication of Christ's human nature, the man Jesus.

So had the Lord taken up His abode outside the camp. And from there He was threatening to come up in the midst of the people in a moment to consume them. So He had said. So the whole congregation was living in mortal dread of God, thinking that they might be consumed at any moment.

But there was one ray of hope. Every penitent Israelite still had access to the Lord without the camp to appear there before His face to confess his great sin and to receive the Lord's pardon in his heart. For we read: "And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. They seeking the Lord without the camp were the Israel according to the election. This Israel the Lord could not destroy. And to allay their fears and to reassure them He called them to Himself without the camp and spoke in their hearts peace. But without the camp, that is, in separation from the apostate church. So it always must be.

But we have not yet reached the climax of this story. So we close here with a: to be continued.

G. M. Ophoff

IN MEMORIAM

The Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Ladies' Society herewith expresses its sympathy with their fellow-members, Mrs. Steven Holstege, Mrs. Henry John Holstege, Mrs. Andrew Holstege, and Mrs. Gerrit Holstege in the death of their Mother,

MRS. LAMBERT HOLSTEGE

May the God of all comfort console their hearts in the glorious thought that "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

The Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Ladies' Society:

Rev. Gerritt Vos, Pres.

Mrs. Peter J. Lubbers, Sec'y.

The Significance of Exegesis for the Preaching of the Gospel

Implied in my subject is the statement that exegesis has significance for the preaching of the Gospel. However this is not the point that I am going to argue. My purpose is to concentrate on this significance as such as showing what it is and how great it is. It is that great that without it there can be no preaching of the Gospel.

My subject is important. And the reason is that it calls for the treatment of the significance of exegesis for the preaching of the Gospel. What difference would it make that there could be no preaching of the Gospel without exegesis, if the Gospel were the insignificant word of some insignificant man. But the Gospel is not man's word. The Gospel is God's Gospel in the sense that He is the sole author of it. The Gospel is the Gospel of Christ in the sense that it sets forth the Christ in all His significance in relation to God, in relation to His people, and in relation to all things. The Gospel as officially proclaimed is the keys of the kingdom of heaven by which this kingdom is opened and closed, open to the penitent and closed to the impenitent. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. By the preaching of the Gospel the church is gathered, the saints perfected, the body of Christ built, and the man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

So we see how important my subject really is.

Now if we are going to appreciate the significance of exegesis for the preaching of the Gospel, we must have a clear understanding of what preaching of the Gospel really is. Preaching of the Gospel is not mere reading of the Scriptures. Should the minister on the meetings for public worship fill the hour allotted for the sermon with mere reading of the Scriptures, he would not have preached the Gospel. Preaching of the Gospel is explanation, exposition of the Scriptures. Therefore preaching of the Gospel is such a serious business. For that exposition is not the Word of God *as such* but what the human preacher of the word conceives and believes to be the word of God, the truth of the Scripture-passage that he has selected for his sermon. That exposition is no more the word of God *as such* than your photograph of your child is that child *as such*. That photograph occupies some conspicuous place in your home, while your child is elsewhere. During the daytime your child is in

school. In a word, what the Gospel preacher sets forth for the consumption of his hearers is his very own creed. For that is a creed. In her creeds, the Christian church sets forth what she conceives and believes to be the Word of God.

Some people are so much opposed to creeds. More than once I have had people say to me: why preach on the Catechism. Why not give us the Scriptures. These people do not understand what they say. Should their minister do as they desire, he would simply read the Scriptures on the meetings for public worship without adding as much as a word of explanation. Beware of the man who has as his slogan: no creeds but the Scriptures, or no creeds but Christ. That person does not say what he means. What he means is that he does not like the creed that is binding in his churches and therefore wants it replaced by his own creed.

We see now what preaching of the Gospel really is. And just because preaching of the Gospel is what it is, preaching of the Gospel is such a grave business. For mark you well, it is not through the mere *reading* of the Scriptures but through the official preaching of the Scriptures, of the Gospel, that the church is gathered, the saints perfected, the body of Christ built, and the man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

We see then, what it necessarily means if the preacher of the Word has not the right conception of the truth. It means that he is preaching a corrupt Gospel. And this in turn must mean that the church is not being gathered and the saints perfected, at least not through that preaching. And the reason is obvious. You have an artist paint your picture. But it is not a good picture. It does not look like you at all. And therefore men cannot see you in that picture. So it is with a corrupt preaching. Men cannot see Christ in it. And therefore by such preaching the church is not being gathered. For, certainly, the church cannot be gathered by the lie.

How therefore the human preacher of the word should exert himself to get hold of and to hold fast the right conception of the truth of the Scriptures. How eager he should be to preach that conception. How he should rejoice if the communion of churches in which he has a name and a place as a gospel preacher, does have the right conception. How eager he should be that his churches supply themselves with the instrument that is needed for keeping that conception pure and for shutting the door to all such who would enter to corrupt that conception.

Now all this raises an important question. It is this: how does the human preacher come into the right possession of the truth of the Scriptures? Before I

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go into this question, I must explain it. My question contains the expression "The truth". By *the truth* I mean not the heavenly *as such*—the heavenly Father, the heavenly Christ, the heavenly redemption, and the heavenly earth etc., but what I mean is the *revelation* of the heavenly through the earthly language of the Scriptures, thus the heavenly as a conception, idea. Now *the truth* taken in this sense and the holy Scriptures are one. The two can be distinguished but not separated. And therefore my question: how does the minister come into the right possession of the truth of the Holy Scriptures, definitely of the Scriptures—passage that he means to explain to his flock.

How do we come into the possession of the right conception of any object, what ever that object may be,—a stone, a flower, a landscape, or a tree? Only by looking at that object attentively, that is, by examining that object as all the while receiving into our consciousness what that object reveals to us about itself. It is no different certainly regarding the right way by which the minister comes into the possession of the right conception of the Scriptures, of the truth of the Scripture—passage with which he is occupied. It is by his studying the passage, meditating on it and pondering it as all the while receiving into his consciousness what the passage has to say to him. This action is what is called exegesis. Exegesis is from a Greek word that means to *draw out*, here to draw out of the Scriptures the truth embodied in them. Exegesis is that activity by which the minister comes into the possession of the right conception of the Scriptures, of the truth incorporated in them, through his interpreting the text of the Bible according to the principles and laws or rules created by God for that purpose. It is these principles and laws that constitute what may be called the right exegetical apparatus. This apparatus is of great importance. If, let us say, the farmer wants crops, he must cultivate the soil of his land according to the principles and laws created by God for that purpose. So, too, the exegete, if he wants to come into the right possession of the word of God, of the truth of the Scriptures.

Bear with me while I name the essential principles and laws included in this exegetical apparatus.

First that God communicated to the church the truth concerning the things heavenly through language, earthly, human and strictly logical according to the laws of thought by which God also thinks. From this principle it follows that the Scriptures can be exegeted and that through exegesis of the Scriptures we know the mind of God.

The second principle is that the Scriptures are not a concatenation of unrelated and even contradictory

ideas but that they are the one Word of God, implying that what in their totality they set forth is one logically integrated truth-structure, the one Word of God. From this principle it follows that there are no contradictions in the Bible.

The third principle is that the Scriptures are the infallible word of God, which means that they cannot be in error. Were this not true, there would be no point to exegeting the Scriptures.

This exegetical apparatus of which I just spoke contains two laws or rules so essential that without their observance there can be no exegesis worthy of the name.

The first of these is that the Scriptures, like any human writing, must be explained grammatically.

This implies two things.

First that the exegete must acquaint himself with the meanings that the words of the text have by themselves: (and I now have reference to the Greek and the Hebrew Bible), and second, that he must explain the words of the passage with which he is occupied in their connection.

Now these are simply common sense rules. No one invented them. They were given of God with the creation of language. How can I understand your discourse unless I know the meaning of its words? And how can I understand your discourse unless I interpret its words in their connection, that is unless I hear the words of your discourse as a logically connected whole? It is no different, certainly with the discourses of the Scriptures.

The second basic rule contained in this exegetical apparatus is that the Scriptures must be interpreted with the Scriptures. We must look a little closer at this rule. What it means is that each Scripture passage must be explained in its context which in the final instance is the whole of the Scriptures.

What this really means is that before the minister of the Gospel ventures to preach on any one Scripture passage he must know his whole Bible. And I now again have reference to this one truth structure of the Scriptures, formed, as it is, of the principal doctrines of Holy Writ. The minister of the Gospel must know this truth structure. For the Scriptures must be interpreted with the Scriptures. This, of course, would mean that the minister of the Gospel would never get to preaching, that is, if he entered upon his ministerial career as ignorant of the Bible as a heathen who never heard of the Gospel. But the minister does not enter upon his ministerial career as ignorant of the Bible as a heathen, but he enters upon his career as a son of the Holy Catholic church, that we all profess to believe. And the church has been studying the Scriptures through all the ages of the past, and many

years ago already in the second century of our Christian era the Holy Spirit caused the church through her study of the Scriptures to behold in the Scriptures this one truth structure, the one Word of God, and what the church was made to behold—this truth structure—she laid down in the symbol known as the Nicene Creed of 325, 381 and 451, but known more particularly under the honored name of Apostle's Creed, our Twelve Art. of faith of which our Three Forms of Unity are the expansion—our Three Forms of Unity—the Belgic Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort. And the church trained the minister of the Gospel first through his God-fearing parents and other agencies in the church co-operating with the church and officially through the teaching ministry in the church as operative in the pulpit and in the seminary of the church. The church through her teachers took the minister of the Gospel and led him to the Scriptures. She went with him through the Scriptures, exegeting with him the Scriptures, and the result was that he, too, beheld what the church beheld, namely this truth-structure of the Scriptures, this compend of faith of the church. And Christ put it into his heart and thereby adequately furnished him for the work of the ministry.

And so the minister of the Gospel enters upon his ministerial career as one who *in this sense* has exegeted the total of the Scriptures, thus as one who knows his whole Bible and is thus prepared to interpret the Scriptures with the Scriptures. For this truth structure, this compend of faith, is the Scriptures, not, of course, the Scriptures as such, but a correct image, replica of the Scriptures, of this truth structure of the Scriptures and in *this sense*, the very Scriptures. One will ask: can this be proved? It can certainly. Christ by His Spirit witnesses with the spirits of God's children that they are God's sons. How does Christ do that? By speaking this truth structure, this compend of faith, in the hearts of His people. This is the proof.

And now one may still ask: approaching the Scriptures with this compend of faith, with this truth structure as the object of his love, does not the minister approach Holy Writ with a bias? And if so, can he produce exegesis worthy of the name? Certainly the minister approaches the Scriptures with a bias, but it is a good and necessary bias, being, as it is, the bias of the very Scriptures gendered in him by Christ's Spirit.

No man approaches the Scriptures without a bias, least of all those who say that it must be done. A man occupied with the Scriptures as exegete approaches the Scriptures either with the bias of the Scriptures or with the bias of the vain philosophy of men, which

is the lie. And in the latter case, this precisely is what he then reads into the Scriptures, namely the lie. For it has the love of his heart. Any commentary written by any errorist under the sun bears out the truth of this statement.

And this brings us to the question of the right use and true value of this compend of faith. The minister, as exegete, may not allow his compend of faith, any element of doctrine in it, to dominate his exegesis. But this is but another way of saying that the minister may not read one Scripture passage into another. For then he does not allow the Scripture passage with which he is occupied to speak to him its own peculiar message, but imposes upon the text an idea foreign to it. This may never be done, though the idea as such be ever so scriptural. On the other hand, neither will the minister pit the Scripture passage with which he is occupied as exegete against his compend of faith. This he may not do. And this he also cannot do, as according to his firm belief he then would be pitting the Scriptures against the very Scriptures.

The great value of this compend of faith for the minister as exegete can best be brought out by an illustration. You have a son who is far from home in some distant land in the service of his country. He unexpectedly returns. He walks into your presence and you recognize him instantly. For you have in your mind and heart an image of his face which you love. So the minister of the Gospel. He recognizes instantly the truth, the Christ, contained in the Scripture passage with which as exegete he is occupied. For he has in his heart and mind an image of the truth, of the Christ, which he loves. And that image is his compend of faith. What would the minister of the Gospel do with a text like John 3:16, "For God so loved the world. . . .", if he were as ignorant of the Scriptures as a heathen. As it is, he approaches this Scripture passage with his compend of faith, that is, with a definite conception of God, and of His love, and of the world, and of faith and of life everlasting. For he approaches the text as a son of the church. And therefore he can deal with the text, as exegete, in comparatively short time.

With these observations before us I think that we are now able to perceive the significance of exegesis for the preaching of the Gospel.

a. The Scriptures, as we all know, have been explained and are still being explained in many ways. But of all these explanations only one can be correct, and this of necessity as any Scripture passage can have but one meaning. This one meaning may be twofold as when the text is typical or parabolical. But this is then the one meaning of the text. Likewise there is



but one right exegetical apparatus, namely the one just described as to its principles and essential rules. Now as armed with this right exegetical apparatus and as operating with it correctly, the minister, occupied with the Scriptures as exegete, must and will come into the possession of the right conception of the truth of the Scriptures, of the particular passage with which he deals, even though he be an out and out unbeliever. Therefore the errorist is so filled with dread for exegesis. He refuses to explain the Scriptures with the Scriptures and thereby he violates one of the basic rules included in the right exegetical apparatus. And as he progresses in his heresy and gets farther and farther away from the truth, he stops exegeting altogether, and takes to what is known as topic preaching. The minister addicted to topic preaching simply uses the text as a lead to his own vain philosophy. Our only effective weapon against heresy is right exegesis. As armed with this right exegetical apparatus and as operating with it correctly, we can compel any heretic under the sun to admit that his explanation of the Scriptures is a lie. Not that he will admit it in so many words. Yet he admits it, first by refusing to come with exegesis, and second by his refusal to reply to the exegesis of his assailants.

b. But this does not exhaust the significance of exegesis for the preaching of the Gospel. Let us consider that in this one Word of God each Scripture passage has its own place and therefore its own individual instruction, message, comfort. And it is the duty of the minister as exegete to apprehend this message, instruction, comfort, which he does through arming himself with this right exegetical apparatus and through operating with it correctly. Failing in this, his sermons will be characterized by a wearisome sameness. They will inspire neither himself nor his hearers. And the complaint of his hearers will be that they are not being edified and refreshed in God's house under his preaching. Preaching the Gospel will become for him more and more of a chore. And the time will come when he will wish that he never became a minister of the Gospel. The only preventive of these calamities is sound exegesis of the text. The minister of the Gospel must study his text. He must live with the Scriptures day and night. His only salvation as a preacher of the Gospel is sound exegesis.

c. Finally, through exegesis of the Scriptures, Christ prepares the minister for the preaching of the Gospel in such a way that his message leaves his lips as a living testimony—a testimony laden with the conviction that he speaks the Word of God, and a testimony aglow with the love of his heart for the Gos-

pel and for God's people. How does Christ thus prepare him? By speaking the fruits of his exegesis in his heart and thereby furnishing him for his task. And as thus furnished the minister will long for his pulpit. He will be eager for the next sabbath to come round to face his flock with a message straight from the throne into his heart through the Holy Scriptures.

Exegesis is difficult. It is not so that the truth embodied in the text suddenly flashes on the mind of the exegete as a result of just a little effort. It is only through persistent and sustained effort as exegete that the minister comes into the possession of the right conception of the truth embodied in the text on which he concentrates. And even when he is confident that the text has yielded to him its right meaning, he always feels that there are depths remaining that he has not fathomed. And it cannot well be otherwise since what he deals with is the revelation in earthy, human, language of the infinite God.

But this is not his only difficulty. The minister is not in the possession of his mental faculties as unimpaired by sin. His memory is not perfect. It requires effort on his part to perceive the logic of the text of the Scriptures. Second, the minister is a sinful man, though regenerated. His spiritual perception is so likely to be blurred by the sinful biases of his sinful flesh, so that he must be always at it keeping his sinful flesh under subjection in order that he may be able to see the kingdom—the kingdom of God.

But the minister, if a true servant of God keeps incessantly at it—exegeting the Scriptures, doing so under the constraint of his faith, which is living, and under the impulse of the love of God shed abroad in his heart and with the prayer in his soul: Lord lead me into the truth of thy Scriptures in order that more and more I may behold thy glory.

And let this prayer be living in his soul always by all means. Let him not say, when he attains to the right conception of the text with which he deals: By my wisdom. For certainly, the exegete does not by his own effort in the way of exegesis originate the right conception of the text. This view of the matter must be condemned as rank rationalism. The right conception of the text was given him by the spirit of Christ leading him into the truth of the Scriptures by his exegetical effort. Let him then give all credit to Christ and to Christ's God to whom alone all credit is due. For what has the minister that he has not received. Nothing at all.

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