

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### De Belijdenis Eens Geslagenen

“De Heere heeft gegeven en de Heere heeft genomen: de naam des Heeren zij geloofd. In dit alles zondigde Job niet en schreef Gode niets ongerijmds toe”—Job 1:21b, 22.

Onze tekst is een van de zoogenaamde klassieke teksten uit Gods Woord. Dit moet niet verkeerd opgevat. Alles wat geschreven staat in den Bijbel is het waarachtige Woord Gods. Van Genesis 1 tot Openbaring 22 is de Bijbel het onfeilbare, geïnspireerde Woord van God. Alle gedachte, als zou het eene gedeelte van dit Woord meer belangrijk zijn dan eenig ander deel moet van den beginne gebrandmerkt als verkeerd. En toch spreekt men en sprak men in Christus' kerk van klassieke teksten. Doch dan bedoelden onze vaders, dat het eene gedeelte ons veel meer toespreekt dan het andere. Er is, b.v., veel onderscheid tusschen de geslachtsregisters in Numeri en het 53ste hoofdstuk van Jesaja, waar de Godsman Jesaja Christus in Zijn lijden schilderde voor het oog van de Oud Testamentische kerk. En zoo zijn er een reeks van teksten die ons het eeuwig Evangelie schilderen, en dan meer dan andere gedeelten van de Heilige Schrift. Zoo komt het ook, dat sommige teksten meer aangehaald werden dan andere, en van die vaak aangehaalde teksten komt dan de uitdrukking van klassieke teksten. Welnu, onze huidige tekst is een van die klassieke teksten. Ik denk, dat bijna ieder kind Gods dien tekst kent, vaak gehoord heeft, en dat bijna een ieder van Gods kinderen direct weet, als hij hem hoort, dat Job de woorden uitsprak temidden van onuitsprekelijke ellende. Zoo groot is de ellende geweest van Job dat hij spreekwoordelijk geworden is voor groote bezoeken. Job en ellende zijn synoniem geworden.

Welnu, toen de Heere hem slag op slag gegeven had, kwam hij lieflijk te voorschijn in de belijdenis

van mijn tekst. Wat onmogelijk is voor vleesch en bloed, werd mogelijk door de rijke genade van God, die hem in zijn groote bezoeking in staat stelde om de belijdenis van mijn tekst uit te spreken.

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Laat ons die belijdenis stuk voor stuk beluisteren, en—ons grootelijks verwonderen over den rijkdom van zulk belijden. Geve de Heere ons ook genade om temidden van alle smarten die ook ons deel zijn, eenigzins die belijdenis op onze lippen te nemen, en dan als de uiting van datgene wat in ons hart woont door diezelfde genade Gods. De Heere heeft gegeven! En de eerste vraag is: wat gaf de Heere. Wel, in het algemeen mogen we zeggen, dat God alles geeft, het maakt absoluut geen verschil wat. Beide goed en kwaad: alles komt van God. Hij is de Absolute Regeerder van het Heelal. Evenwel, onze tekst doelt op het positieve. Het gaat in mijn tekst over de positieve gaven die God aan Job geschonken had. En die gaven waren vele. Hij was een zeer groot man, rijk, aanzienlijk. Hij telde niet alleen mee, doch als we de verdere hoofdstukken aandachtig lezen, en dan vooral hoofdstuk 29, dan blijkt, dat hij een zeer aanzienlijk man was. Men rekende met Job. Hij was een leider in zijn kringen. Luistert naar de opsomming van zijn vee: 7000 schapen, 3000 kemelen, 500 juk ossen en 500 ezinnen. Ook was zijn dienstvolk vele. Vandaag meet men iemands fortuin naar de miljoenen dollars die men vergaderde, doch in die dagen werd iemands fortuin gemeten naar zijn vee en dienstvolk. Ook was Job rijk gezegend in zijn familieleven. Hij had een vrouw en tien kinderen, zeven zonen en drie dochters. En vergeet ook niet den rijkdom die hij in zichzelf mocht bezitten: hij was gezond in lijf en leden. Hij had zijn huid: o ja, gedenk vooral aan die gezonde huid. Indien we het verdere van die historie lezen, zullen we meer hooren van die huid van Job.

Maar zijn belijdenis is rijk. De Heere gaf al die dingen. Hoe eenvoudig is die belijdenis, en toch, hoe diep en kostelijk. We kunnen het zoo grif en gladweg zeggen: God geeft alle die dingen! Maar weten we wel wat we zeggen?

Doch laat ons verder naar Job luisteren. De Heere heeft genomen! Wat was er geschied? Op zekeren dag komt er een mensch aangereden, en hijgend naar zijn adem komt er een vreeselijke boodschap tot Job: De Sabeërs deden een inval, de runderen zijn niet meer en het dienstvolk werd vernield: ik ben de eenige die overbleef. En terwijl die nog sprak zoo kwam een ander en vertelde van het verteerende vuur Gods: de schapen met de herders zijn niet meer, dan ik die het U vertel. Dan de drie hoopen der Chaldeëen, en de vernieling der kemelen. En de vreeselijkste boodschap kwam door den mond van een vierden boodschapper: een groote stormwind verwoestte het huis waar Uwe kinderen feestvierden: ze zijn niet meer. Hoe vreeselijk zijn de slagen des Almachtigen! Hoe zal Job kermen en schreien. Hoe zal hij uitbreken in klacht op klacht. Zouden we dat niet verwachten? En als het geschiedde zou er iemand zijn van Jobs bekenden die het hem kwalijk zou nemen?

Maar neen. Luistert: De Heere heeft genomen! Job ziet niet meer de Sabeërs, de Chaldeëen, het vuur Gods of die wervelwind. O neen. Terwijl men nog sprak van al de bezoeken, richtte Job zijn betrande oogen tot God, en zeide: De Heere gaf mij al dien rijkdom! En nu? De Heere nam alles weer terug. Wat zegt de wereld, de wereldsche mensch in zulke toestanden? De wereld zondigt, en schrijft Gode iets ongerijmds toe. Maar de genade in Job zegt: God gaf, en God neemt weer terug. Die belijdenis, mijne vrienden, is het inbegrip van de ware verhoudingen. God is God. En wij zijn stof en asch. Wij zijn dat ook afgedacht van de zonde. We zijn eenvoudig rentmeesters van alles wat God geeft, lichaam en ziel ingesloten. We zijn absoluut afhankelijk van God. En die God geeft en die God neemt. Dat zijn de ware verhoudingen. En gelukkig de mensch die deze ware verhoudingen *beleeft*, zooals we weten, dat Job ze beleefde. Het staat er, en het staat er als een navolgenswaardig voorbeeld. En, let wel, die verhoudingen zijn verscherpt sindsdien we in de zonde vielen. We zijn nu van nature op weg naar de eeuwige verdorpenis. We hebben alles verbeurd door onze zonde en schuld. De belijdenis heeft daarom een dieperen klank nu, dan voor den zondeval: God geeft, en God neemt. Alles is Zijns. Wat rijke inhoud van Jobs belijdenis!

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De vraag komt op: hoe kwam Job er toe om deze

belijdenis op zijn lippen te nemen? Het antwoord heel aan het begin moet zijn: Job spreekt zijn belijdenis uit vanwege het feit, dat hij God kende. Hij noemt Hem Heere! En God zegt van Job: "die man was oprecht en vroom en God vreezende en wijkende van het kwaad." En nu moet ge wel verstaan, dat al deze rijkdom van oprechtheid, vroomheid en vreeze Gods geen natuurlijke eigenschappen zijn van elk mensch. Juist het tegenovergestelde is waar. Wij zijn allen van nature onoprecht, valsch, onvroom, en snellende naar het kwade. Van ons zegt de Heilige Geest, dat wil zeggen, zooals we van nature zijn: "Het trotsch gedrag des boozen doet mij spreken in 't beklemd gemoed: Gods vrees is uit zijn oogen. Wijl hij zoolang zichzelf vleit, tot God zijn ongerechtigheid niet langer kan gedooogen. Bedrog en onrecht spreekt zijn mond; 't verstand laat na, den waren grond van 't weldoen op te merken; des nachts is 't kwaad zijn overleg; hij stelt zich op een boozen weg, en schuwt geen snoode werken." Dat is het getuigen van Gods Geest aangaande den harden, onwedergeboren mensch der zonde. Doch Job was vroom, oprecht, God vreezende en wijkende van het kwaad. Hoe was dit alles zoo gekomen? Dat zal ik U zeggen: God had Job opgezocht met Zijn wondere genade, en had hem wederomgeboren doen worden. God had hem Zijn Heiligen Geest gegeven, en het Woord van God. Job zou immers later daar van spreken? Later zou hij zeggen tegen God: met het gehoor des oors heb ik van U, o God, gehoord, doch nu ziet U mijn oog! O ja, God had Job rijkelijk begenadigd. En dat maakt al het verschil. Ook is wel duidelijk, dat Job meer genade ontvangen had dan anderen van Gods volk. Als ge een zeer deugdelijk Christen ziet, een voorbeeld voor allen, dan moet ge direct zeggen: God heeft dien man begenadigd meer dan anderen. God is zeer jaloersch op Zijn eer. Het is ook wel duidelijk: Job kende God als den VerbondsJehovah. Hij heeft het over den Heere. En dat is de schoonste naam van God. Heere wil zeggen, dat God van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid de onveranderlijke VerbondsGod is die Zijn Woord en beloften gestand doet. Die nooit laat varen de werken Zijner handen. Heere wil zeggen, dat als Hij U bemint Hij dat deed in de stille eeuwigheid, en doen zal ook dan wanneer geen maan meer schijnt. O, die Naam is openbaring van Hem die trouwe houdt in eeuwigheid. En als zoodanig kende Job zijn God. En wat is ons tweede antwoord op de vraag: Hoe kon Job zoo wonderlijk spreken toen alles hem afgenomen werd? Dit: omdat Job God kende als den Onveranderlijken en Getrouwen VerbondsGod, kende hij Hem ook in Zijn aanbiddelijke deugden van wijsheid, raad en verstand. Hij kende den Heere als den wijzen Bestuurder van ons levenslot, zoodat alles mede moet

werken tot de komst van Gods heerlijk Koninkrijk. Daarom geeft en neemt God. Alles doet God met het oog op het groote einddoel van alle dingen. Job moet daar een diepen en helderen blik in gehad hebben, om te kunnen zeggen: God gaf en God nam! Hier spreekt groote onderworpenheid aan het Godsbestuur. Daar bleef men kalm, wandelende op gebaande of op ongebaande wegen, zooals Job moest bewandelen. En eindelijk, er is ook nog een derde antwoord: uit zijn belijdenis, uit zijn kalme belijdenis: God gaf en God nam, spreekt ook groote liefde tot God. God had Job Zijn Eigen liefde in 't harte uitgestort. Dat blijkt uit vele plaatsen in deze geschiedenis, doch vooral uit hoofdstuk 19, het 26ste en 27ste vers; waar we lezen: "en als zij na mijne huid dit doorknaagd zullen hebben, zal ik uit mijn vleesch God aanschouwen; Dewelke ik voor mij aanschouwen zal, en mijne oogen zien zullen, en niet een vreemde: mijne nieren verlangen zeer in mijnen schoot." En let dan vooral op die laatste clause: mijne nieren verlangen zeer in mijnen schoot. De nieren waren bij de Oostersche volken beeldspraak voor het diepste der gewaarwordingen. En het blijkt daaruit, dat Job den Heere zeer liefhad. En het is door die liefde Gods die in zijn hart uitgestort was, dat hij zijn belijdenis zoo kalm en gelaten kan uitspreken: De Heere gaf, en de Heere nam. Door de liefde Gods weet men het proefondervindelijk: God, mijn God, kan geen kwaad doen! Het diepste ervaren in het hart van Job is: mijn nieren verlangen zeer in mijn schoot. Hetzelfde gevoelen spreekt uit den twee-en-veertigsten psalm: Ik dorst naar God, naar den levenden God. En door die liefde komt er een krachtig belijden! Mocht de Heere het ook aan ons geven. Ik denk aan een liedje van mijn kinderen. Heer ik hoor van rijken zegen. En later: Laat er van die druppelen vallen ook op mij, ook op mij.

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De derde gedachte is: de vrucht van zulk een belijdenis. En die vrucht is de lof Gods. En dat gedeelte van Jobs belijden is het moeilijkste om te begrijpen. Hij buigt het hoofd als God hem slaat. Hij kan er van zeggen: God nam weer van mij af, wat Hij mij eerst gegeven had, en het is goed, want het was en bleef het Zijne. Maar loven? Zingen tot Gods prijs en majesteit als er tien doodkisten in mijn voorkamer staan? Ik weet, dat de goddeloozen hier niets mee doen kunnen, doch denkt U ook niet, mijne vrienden, dat ook Gods volk verwonderd luistert naar Jobs loven en prijzen? Hier spreekt een groote rijkdom van Gods deugden die in Job verheerlijkt zijn. Wat is lof? Lof is wel spreken van iemand. In de Heilige

Schrift wordt het gebruikt beide van God en van menschen. God looft Zichzelf eeuwiglijk. Hij spreekt altijd goed van Zichzelf. Hij is de Algenoegzame en de Volzalige in Zichzelven. En Hij looft Zichzelf in Zijn kostelijk deugdenbeeld. De Schrift is vol van dien lof Gods. God looft Zich, b.v., door Zijn schepping. Die schepping is als zoovele letters en woorden die voortdurend uitroepen: God is goed en lieflijk! En, let wel, dat komt van God. God looft Zichzelf. En dat is ook Zijn einddoel van alle dingen. Daarom kwam het Heelal uit Zijn hand te voorschijn. Daarom kwam de val des menschen en der engelen. Daarom kwam Christus en Zijn wondere openbaring van genade. Alles, letterlijk alles moet dat doel dienen. God moet geloofd en geprezen worden. En God bereikt dat doel ook. Staat er niet ergens, dat God alle dingen schiep om Zijns Zelfs wil, ook den goddelooze tot den dag des kwaads? Welnu, dat wist Job. En zoo komt hij tot die kostelijke vrucht der genade: God nam terug alles wat Hij mij eerst gaf, en daarin loof ik Zijn naam! Den naam des Heeren zij geloofd! Kostelijke vrucht der genade. Ik denk, dat de Engelen Gods gezongen hebben bij dit blijk van Goddelijke liefde in Gods knecht. Job loofde God, en dat beteekent, dat hij wel sprak van God. Daaraan kent ge Gods volk van alle eeuwen. Gods volk looft en prijst God. Zij en zij alleen weten wat het einddoel aller dingen is, zooals we kunnen lezen in Efeze 1: "verordineerd tot aanneming tot kinderen in Christus Jezus . . . tot prijs der heerlijkheid Zijner genade!" O, Job mocht aan dat doel beantwoorden. Geve God, dat ook wij in deze late goddelooze eeuw Hem mogen kennen, lieven en loven den ganschen dag tot prijs der heerlijkheid Zijner genade. Dat, en dat alleen is de zaligheid!

G. Vos.

— : — : —

Tho' troubles assail,  
And dangers affright;  
Tho' friends should all fail,  
And foes all unite:  
Yet one thing secures us,  
Whatever betide;  
The Scripture assures us,  
The Lord will provide.

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## EDITORIALS

### Convention - 1952

More and more we are reminded that the Convention time of our Federation of Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Societies is again at hand. In our mind's eye we see loaded busses with happy and youthfully carefree Covenant youth turning their faces toward Hull, Iowa. From California, Washington, Montana, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan they come. With glad anticipation, as only youth can have, they come to the little city of Hull, Iowa, small when compared with the great metropolises of the world, yet great historically in the annals of our Protestant Reformed Church-life!

We would indeed like to write down a few words of encouragement in the *Standard Bearer* for our Young People and their parents.

Strictly speaking what I am to write might be considered to be the business of the editor of *Beacon Lights*, our good friend Sid De Young. But certainly the *Standard Bearer* and the *Beacon Lights* can walk in happy "concordance". *Beacon Lights* will not, I am certain, think it presumptuous on the part of the *Standard Bearer* that it too would break a lance in behalf of our Covenant youth.

Somehow it has become unnecessary in our circles to give further elucidation when speaking of the "Convention". No one thinks of the Republicans or of the Democrats. All think of the "Convention" of our Protestant Reformed youth. It has become an "institution". Somehow the "Convention" is already a tradition. Our calendar of yearly events is not complete without it. It somehow climaxes the events of the year. And it is with enthusiasm that I hear this Convention sing: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again". Already at the end of the present Convention our youth look forward to the next one.

Convention-time is an institution in our midst.

May it ever abide with us.

But we must add more.

May it always remain true to the ideals and the foundation as this was expressed in the days of the small beginning. Maybe it is a sign of age creeping upon me that my thoughts turn back, and that I like to reminisce just a bit of the past of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Society. Relatively speaking I am growing old among the young people it is true.

I write as one of the earlier generation, who too

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was one of the young people of our churches a quarter century ago.

My thoughts go back to the first Convention. Contrary to the thought of some this first Convention was not held in First Church at Grand Rapids, but it was held in our South Holland, Illinois Church. It was the summer of 1939. In those days there was already a Western League of Young People Societies, but there had not yet been a similar organization in the churches east of the Mississippi. But the eastern societies had visions and plans for a larger organization. They did not desire a League of Eastern Societies. They desired a Federation of all the Young People Societies of all our churches.

With that in mind the First meeting in South Holland, Illinois was called a "Convention". And that it truly was with all the trimmings. Its basic pattern was followed in all the subsequent Conventions: Key-note address, executive sessions, a sight-seeing trip, and last and not least a banquet.

That was the Convention of "Small Beginnings".

It should not, as all small beginnings which are good, be despised for its littleness.

Decisions of far-reaching importance were taken at this Convention.

In the first place some basic principles were tentatively laid down in written statement, which principles the next Convention adopted without basic changes, and which it incorporated in the "Constitution" of the Federation. Some of these basic principles were and we quote from the Minutes, Article 27, as follows:

"1. The basis of the Convention is the Word of God as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity."

"2. The purpose: to unite all Protestant Reformed Young People Societies to work in close unity and in this manner secure a sense of solidarity and to seek the mutual edification and development of talents as becomes christian young people."

"3. Third resolution: that we strive to maintain with united front our specific Protestant Reformed character."

"These resolutions are to be adopted temporarily and are to be submitted to the Constitution Committee."

It can do no harm, that we all be reminded of these splendid resolutions of the first Convention. Our young people do well to write these resolutions upon the table of their hearts and to bind them about their necks. Write them upon the standard and lift it aloft in your Convention, dear conventioners of 1952! Such is the prayer of the Standard Bearer.

On this Convention of small beginnings in South Holland, Illinois there was also the question of having some outlet for our Young People to express them-

selves, their views, their problems. There was no *Beacon Lights* as yet. The only outlet for our youth was that they received space in the erstwhile *Church News*. In this connection the Minutes of this Convention contain the interesting Article, No. 21. We quote:

"Art. 21. It was decided to investigate whether or not the Young Peoples' Societies could secure a place in the Church News and eventually carry a uniform lesson system. This matter was tabled till after recess." And in Article 26 we read the interesting notice: "We returned to the tabled motion that we obtain space in the Church News, and it was decided to have the South Holland Young People Society assume responsibility in regulating the contents to be placed in this column. There was a motion to pass on the following suggestions to the Committee in charge.

a. Someone (or more than one) be chosen to write a few Articles in connection with our Society life.

b. To see to it that each Society in the Federation contribute to the column.

c. To work out this matter also with the Western League and the present writer for our Young People.

d. To send a definite system of Bible-lessons to the various Societies for their approval or ratification."

In passing we may here relate that it was not till two years later that *Beacon Lights* saw the light of day. That was on the Convention here in 1941 at Oak Lawn, Illinois. From a trio of names, to wit, "The Witness For The Protestant Reformed Youth", "Our Youth's Guide" and "Beacon Lights" the last name was chosen by a majority vote.

We see, therefore, that the first Convention performed far-reaching ground-work.

What strikes this writer of these lines is that its progress was not all top-heavy. The Societies are to be taken into consideration with every move of importance. As the name suggests it is a *Federation* of Societies. And no more powers were intended to be given to a "board" than strictly necessary. Delegated power is in the Delegate Board; the power to execute the wishes of the Delegate Board is the duty of the Executive Board. Such was, no doubt, the desire of the Convention of South Holland in 1939.

Interesting facts, indeed.

The "Minutes" of the various Conventions of the Delegate Board contain other valuable data, which the 1952 Convention would do well to consider before making other and different decisions!

Yes, our Young People will be Convention bound. There will be the happiness and care-freeness of youth.

But there will also be serious and earnest debate of the issues of the day. In this connection I am reminded of some of the thoughts spoken by the speaker of the first Convention. He spoke on "The Days Of Our Youth". The speaker emphasized that the days of youth are the time of preparation for life. This is relatively true. For our youth are not only in life's preparation, they already stand in the midst of the battle. Yet battling they are prepared for greater struggles and victories. So we see also our youth at this Convention.

Our youth also live in the days of greatest activity. In these they are to rejoice, yet not to forget their Creator. And, therefore, our youth are in the greatest need of wise and good guidance.

The *Standard Bearer* has attempted to add just a bit to this guidance along the chartered path of the first Convention.

May our ministers, who shall address the Convention be filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom and counsel. May they preach the Word so that our beloved youth may be clad in the full armor of God, and stand in "united front", a phalanx strong!

Convention of 1952, we greet you.

May the occasion long live as a sacred, cherished memory in your life!

Geo. Lubbers



#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the 28th of July 1952, our beloved parents,  
MR. and MRS. DICK KOOIENGA  
celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

We are thankful for their loving care and guidance and we hope and pray they may be with us for many more years to come.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miedema  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kooienga  
Lois  
Donna  
Judith  
Donald  
Betti  
3 grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

#### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Doon, Iowa, the first Wednesday in September.

M. Gritters, *Stated Clerk*

## OUR DOCTRINE

### God's Providence

I

#### INTRODUCTION

*The truth of God's providence is readily admitted.*

It is simply a fact that God alone is God. Out of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. His alone is the glory now and forever. Anyone of reformed persuasion will have no difficulty, as such, with the Providence of God, and will surely answer affirmatively when confronted with the question whether the Lord reigns in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath.

This is particularly true among us as Protestant Reformed Churches. To be sure, the question relative the Providence of the Lord and sin is an intricate question and should be properly explained and clarified. Nevertheless we may say that, as Protestant Reformed Churches, because of our emphasis upon the sovereignty of God and the particular character of the grace of God, we proclaim without hesitation that God *always* reigns and that *all* things work together for the good of the elect people of God.

*However, to live and practice the providence of the Lord is often quite another thing.*

To express agreement with the doctrine of Divine Providence is not too difficult. Scripture, we must remember, is so plain in its teaching with respect to the Divine control over all things. And it is so easy to believe in the Providence of God as long as the waters do not reach unto our lips; so easy to cry out: Whom shall I fear? when there is no enemy in sight.

But, when conditions change and we must personally suffer affliction and misery, it becomes increasingly, yea, very difficult to say this confession, not to mention the difficulty of proclaiming and living it! Indeed, to live and practice this confession is indeed humanly impossible, can be done only through Divine grace. We are of the earth earthy, even irrespective of sin, dependent upon the earth. Also spiritually we are from below. Hence, it requires grace, much grace, even unto the end, to live God's providence, really to receive *all* things out of God's hand, always to rely upon and trust in the Lord, to believe that all things work together unto our good.

*That we can derive comfort from the providence of God only by grace lies in the nature of the case.*

God's grace is exclusively particular, is it not? The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.



This means that this curse is upon the ungodly in all that he is and does and possesses. He is never an object of Divine grace or love, and the curse of the alone living God pursues him relentlessly into the grave throughout his entire life. Never will the wicked be able to point to a single moment or incident in his life and say that at that particular moment he experienced the love and mercy of the Lord. Hence, it lies in the very nature of the case that the comfort of the providence of God is only for the people of God and can be experienced only in the way of grace and faith.

But, if this we may say and confess, then we surely need not fear for, if God be for us, then nothing can be against us.

#### ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CONFESSIONS

##### *The Confessions.*

Our Heidelberg Catechism discusses the Providence of God in Lord's Days 9 and 10. The question of Lord's Day 9: "What believest thou when thou sayest, I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"?, is answered as follows: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; Who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ, His Son, my God and my Father; on Whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body: and further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father." In Lord's Day 10 the truth of the Providence of God is treated properly. Question 27: "What dost thou mean by the providence of God?", is answered as follows: "The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures, so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His Fatherly hand." And question 28: "What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by His providence doth still uphold all things?" receives the following beautiful answer: "That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move."

This truth, as we all expect, is treated in the thirty seven articles of our Confession of Faith. It is

surely mentioned in Art. 12 which discusses the truth of Creation, and we quote: "We believe that the Father, by the Word, that is, by His Son, hath created of nothing, the heavens, the earth, and all creatures, as it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator. That He doth also still uphold and govern them by His eternal providence, and infinite power, for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God. He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from the excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have, by the grace of God, remained steadfast and continued in their primitive state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved, that they are enemies of God and every good thing, to the utmost of their power, as murderers, watching to ruin the Church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments. Therefore we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels: and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted." The following article, Article 13, treats this wonderful truth properly, and again we quote: "We believe that the same God, after He had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment: nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed. For His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that He orders and executes His work in the most excellent and just manner, even then, when devils and wicked men act unjustly. And, as to what He doth surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into, farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only those things which He has revealed to us in His Word, without transgressing these limits. This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; Who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under His power, that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow, can fall to the ground, without

the will of our Father, in Whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded, that He so restrains the devil and all our enemies, that without His will and permission they cannot hurt us. And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing, but leaves all things to chance." end of quote.

#### *Scripturally.*

Calling attention to this truth of the Providence of God as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, it is beautifully set forth by the late Dr. H. Bavink in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, III, pages 1-3, and we quote: "When God had finished His work upon the seventh day, which He hath made, He rested upon the seventh day from all His work which He had made, Gen. 2:2, Ex. 20:11, 31:17. Thus Scripture describes the transition from the work of creation to that of preservation. That this resting of God does not have its cause in weariness, or that it does not consist in an idle looking on is repeatedly plainly and clearly expressed by the Holy Scriptures, Is. 40:28, John 5:17. Creation is for God no work and preservation is no rest. The resting of God merely expresses that He has made an end of the bringing forth of nova genera, Eccl. 1:9, 10; that the work of creation in actual and narrow sense, as productive rerum e nihilo, was finished; and that He rejoiced with Divine pleasure in this completed work, Gen. 1:31, Ex. 31:17, Ps. 104:31. etc. The work of creating now passes over into that of preservation. Both are essentially distinguished in Scripture to such an extent that they are placed over against each other as labor and rest. And then again they are so intimately related and connected that the work of preservation can be called creating, Ps. 104:30, 148:5, Isaiah 45:7, Amos 4:13. For preservation is also a Divine work, not less great and glorious than that of creating. God is no Deus otiosus, He always works, John 5:17, and the world has no existence in itself. From the moment of its beginning it exists only in and through and unto God, Neh. 9:6, Ps. 104:30, Acts 27:28, Rom. 11:36, Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3, Rev. 4:11. Although distinguished from His being, it is in its existence never independent; independence would be non-existence. The entire world stands under God's control with all that is in it and happens in it; summer and winter, day and night, fruitful and unfruitful seasons, light and darkness, everything is His work and is formed by Him, Gen. 8:22, 9:14, Lev. 26:3ff., Deut. 11:12ff., Job 38, Ps. 8, 29, 65, 104, 107, 147, Jeremiah 3:3, 5:24, Matt. 5:45, etc. Scripture does not know an independent creature; this would be a contradiction in itself. God provides for all creatures, for animals, Gen. 1:30, 6:18, 7:2, 9:10, Job 38

:41, Ps. 36:7, 104:27, 147:9, Joel 1:20, Matt. 6:26, etc., and particularly also for men. He beholds them all, Job 34:21, Ps. 33:13, 14 Prov. 15:3, forms their every heart and considers all their works, Ps. 33:15, Prov. 5:21; they are all the work of His hands, Job 34:19, the poor and the rich, Prov. 22:2. He determines the habitation of all, Deut. 32:8 Acts 17:26, inclines every heart, Prov. 21:1, controls all their paths, Prov. 5:21, 16:9, 19:21, Jer. 10:23, etc., does with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth according to His pleasure, Dan. 4:35. They are in His hands as clay in the hand of the potter, as a saw in the hand of him who uses it, Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, Jer. 18:5, Rom. 9:20,21. In a very particular sense does His providential control include His people. The entire history of the patriarchs, of Israel, of the congregation, and of every believer verifies this. What people had meant to be evil God meant it unto good for them, Gen 50:20; every instrument, prepared against them, shall not succeed, Isaiah 54:17; even the hairs of their head are all numbered, Matt. 10:30; everything works together for their good, Rom. 8:28. Thus all of creation stands in the power and under the control of God; both, chance or fate, are unknown to Scripture, Ex. 21:13, Prov. 16:33. It is God Who works all things after the counsel of His will, Eph. 1:11, and renders everything subject to the revelation of His virtues, and the honour of His Name, Prov. 16:4, Rom. 11:36. All this the Scripture summarizes so beautifully when it repeatedly speaks of God as of a King, Who rules over all things, Ps. 10:16, 24:7,8, 29:10, 44:5, 47:7, 74:12, 115:38, Isaiah 33:22, etc. God is a King, the King of kings and the Lord of lords; a King, Who in Christ is a Father for all His subjects, and a Father, Who is also king over His children. Whatever is found among the creatures, in the animal- and human- and angelic world, in the family and society, of care for and love unto and protection of the one for the other, is a faint reflection of God's providential care over all the works of His hands. His absolute power and His perfect love are the proper object of faith in the Providence of God according to Holy Writ."—end of quote.

#### ITS IDEA

##### *The word: providence.*

First, this word occurs in Holy Writ. We read in Acts 24:2: "And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto his nation by thy providence."

Secondly, the word (providence in the English and "voorzienigheid" in the Holland) implies two things. The word itself means literally: to see be-



fore or beforehand. This is the literal meaning of the English "providence" as well as the Holland "voorzienigheid." A second meaning of the word, derived from the first is: to make provision, to provide, and thus to care for someone in his needs and wants. These two meanings are inseparably connected. We make provision, for example, for the winter. This implies that we see beforehand, look into the future, consider what we will need and act accordingly.

*A three-fold interpretation in Christian theology.*

The Providence of God, for example, has been interpreted as a Divine "seeing beforehand". Understanding this not in the arminian sense of the word as if God's knowledge is merely foreknowledge, a knowing of the things before they occur and dependent upon them, but simply in the sense that the Lord knows all things before they occur, even as He knows whatever shall occur in your life and mine, we may safely say that, thus understood, the providence of God is simply one of the Lord's communicable attributes, the Divine attribute of His omniscience, that He knows all things. We will undoubtedly recall that God's omniscience is one of God's communicable attributes. Hence, to say that the providence is simply God's knowing of all things implies that we identify it with this attribute of God.

Others interpret the providence of the Lord as signifying His counsel. They proceed from the thought that the Lord's omniscience is more than merely a "seeing beforehand". They declare that the Lord not only knows beforehand what will happen, but also that He has determined them, that He not only knows what will happen but also that they occur exactly as He knows them. The knowledge of the Lord, then, is not determined by the things that are seen, but the things that happen and are seen are determined by the knowledge of God. God's knowledge is strictly a Divine foreknowledge, not merely because the Lord knows things beforehand, but also in the sense that this knowledge of God is strictly *foreknowledge*, precedes the things and sovereignly determines their existence. Hence, they interpret the providence of God not only as merely "foreknowledge" as if the Lord is merely an idle spectator of all events, but also as that eternal wisdom of the Lord whereby He has sovereignly willed and determined all things from before the foundation of the world. Thus understood, the providence of God is His eternal and sovereign counsel.

A third interpretation of this concept: providence of God, is that which is commonly held today. Fact is, the counsel of the Lord is executed and fulfilled. He realizes the things He eternally determined.

Hence, God's providence is therefore the work of God whereby He controls and sustains and directs all things. According to this view the providence of God must not be identified with the counsel of the Lord but is therein distinguished from it that it is the realization of that counsel and will of Jehovah.

*What it is.*

Now it is simply a fact that the word: providence, does not occur in Holy Writ with reference to God. It is true that the word appears in Acts 24:2, but there it is used with respect to Felix. Moreover, the meaning of the word in Acts 24:2 speaks for itself. The word, however, does not appear in Holy Writ with reference to the Lord. God simply does not know the things as we do, neither is His knowledge merely foreknowledge in the sense that He simply "sees beforehand". The things have no existence apart from God. It is not true that they exist and the Lord now takes cognizance of them. Thus the arminian presents the matter of salvation as if God saw beforehand who would believe and who would not believe, electing then those who believe and rejecting those who believe not. We repeat: nothing exists apart from God and this also includes faith and unbelief. The believer has no existence apart from the Lord; the same must also be said of the unbeliever, and I emphatically mean: unbeliever. Hence, when Scripture speaks of "foreknowledge", as in Romans 9, we must bear in mind that this is strictly *foreknowledge*, that this knowledge, also eternally, precedes the existence of the things. God's foreknowledge is not merely a "seeing beforehand".

Nevertheless, although Scripture does not use the term: providence, its idea surely appears abundantly in the Divine Scriptures. This we have already shown. The word: trinity, for example, does not appear in the Scripture either, but the truth which is expressed by this term is taught throughout the Word of God. The word: providence, denotes God's preservation and government of all things. And it is simply a fact that the term, providence, has become the generally accepted term to denote this Divine preservation and government. We define God's Providence as the almighty and omnipresent power of God whereby He in and through all creatures executes His counsel, sustains all things, and directs all things so that they, without a solitary exception, must work together unto the attainment of the goal which He has set before Himself in His everlasting counsel. As we have seen, and shall also presently see, Scripture speaks everywhere of this almighty and omnipresent power of God.

H. Veldman

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# IN HIS FEAR

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## Looking To The Future

### Chapter 3

#### ON TEACHER TRAINING

Proceeding now on the supposition that the aim of those who seek Protestant Reformed education for their children is also to have teachers with Protestant Reformed training, as has been evidenced by the interest in and activity toward such a project ever since 1948, we still have several important questions to consider.

There is the question: What must be done? And there is the question, closely related: initially what are the minimum requirements of a Protestant Reformed training course? There is the question: how can this goal be attained? And there is a rather fundamental and crucial question: whose responsibility is it to establish such a teacher training institution? And because our answer to the last question will determine to an extent our answers to the other questions, we chose to treat it first.

#### *Ecclesiastical or Parental Responsibility*

These are the alternatives which we face, when we ask the question: by whom must our teacher training facilities be established, controlled, and maintained? The third possibility, namely, state-controlled institutions, I am sure we all rule out from the beginning: state-controlled colleges and parentally controlled grammar and high schools simply do not go hand in hand.

However, history shows that the question which forms our caption is a crucial one. Is it the calling of the church institute to establish, maintain, and control institutions for the training of Christian teachers? Or is it the calling of believing parents to establish, maintain, and control such institutions, and thus to provide the grammar and high schools which they establish for their covenant children with fit teachers? To some of us this matter may be simple. Personally, I have no difficulty at all in concluding that the responsibility is parental, not ecclesiastical. But historically the matter has not been so simple. In fact the stream of history has always favored either state-controlled or church controlled colleges. And this has been true both within our own Reformed circles and outside of them. In fact, as we pointed out previously, the tendency to look to Mother Church for the establishment of teacher-training facilities of our

own has not been missing in our own churches. Hence, it is not amiss to consider this matter carefully.

Turning the pages of history we find almost invariably, first of all, that the institutions of higher learning in our country were established initially for the propagation of the faith, specifically for the training of the clergy. In New England, during the years of colonization, schools such as Yale and Harvard were established with this aim. By this time that original aim has long been discarded, and these schools have become gigantic, worldly institutions of learning. In their formative years, however, they were small and struggling and, by modern standards, I suppose rather amateurish schools which were dedicated to the training of ministerial timber and established by the zealous and pious Puritans. In New Jersey, Princeton was conceived and born with the same goal in view. In fact, during the early history of our country when one wanted to train for any secular profession, he had to study in Europe. And it was mainly through the efforts of the patriotic but unbelieving Benjamin Franklin that schools dedicated to training in the arts and sciences had their beginning in this country, about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Especially in New England, of course, the lines between church and state were dimly drawn, so that even where there was a measure of public education, it was not for democratic, but for religious reasons. However, the point we make here is, that from the earliest history of our country the schools of higher learning for the most part had their inception in the desire for a trained clergy, and for a long time existed solely for the purpose of training ministers.

Gradually, through the press of circumstances, when education in the arts and sciences was demanded, these institutions developed into full-fledged colleges and universities. And today in many of them the theological faculty is only one among many and usually, too, thoroughly modern.

In this same way many colleges and universities had their beginning. The Roman Catholics, of course, are known for their theory of church-controlled education, all the way from the kindergarten to the university. The Lutherans also follow the principle of ecclesiastical responsibility in education, and have not only their own grammar schools, but also maintain many a college, besides, of course, having their own theological schools. But even among those churches which maintain no grammar and high schools of their own, but subscribe to the principle of public education, one will find countless colleges and junior colleges, and even universities that are denominationally established and maintained, even though any trace or

tinge of orthodox Christian religion in those schools is often sought in vain.

So it is evident that the tide of history favors denominationally established institutions of higher learning.

And in Reformed circles the same tendency has prevailed. We are, I believe, most familiar with Calvin College, established and maintained by the Christian Reformed Church(es). Its history was in the main the same as cited above. Originally it was a theological school. From the outset it was devoted solely to the preparation of ministers. In the course of time, as it had expanded to furnish pre-seminary training for future ministers, so it also expanded to furnish normal training for future Christian school teachers. But it continued to develop. And today its facilities are by no means limited to future teachers and preachers. College and seminary have been separated. And in the college, besides educational training, one may, for example, take simply a general college course, a pre-seminary course, a pre-medical course, a pre-dental course, or a pre-engineering course. But,—and this is the point,—Calvin College is still a denominational institution, given, supposedly, to Christian Reformed principles, maintained by the Christian Reformed Church(es); and maintained primarily for Christian Reformed people. Its budget is ecclesiastically determined. Its financial support is from the churches, to the extent that the school is not self-supporting.

Now we, as Protestant Reformed people, will soon, I believe, face this same question very concretely. In fact, the history which we cited in our previous articles shows that we already have faced this question. At least, requests and overtures have been made to our synods to furnish training for our teachers; and these requests have been heeded to an extent. In that respect not only has the question been faced, but an answer has been given.

I believe it is the wrong answer!

To be sure, this question has, to my knowledge, never been faced *consciously* to any great degree. Certainly there has been no prolonged and basic debate on the issue. Synod has not discussed it any length. Synod's committees have not studied it, as far as the records show. In fact, the only attempt at debate on this score, as I recall it, took place in Classis East, at the time when Randolph's overture was under discussion; and I believe the debate on this issue of ecclesiastical or parental responsibility for normal training was finally the reason why Randolph's overture was sent on to synod without classical approval or disapproval.

It is, therefore, time that we give consideration to this question.

And let us decide it, not on the basis of practical considerations, because then, I fear, the outcome will be that we leave it to Mother Church. That is the path of least resistance. It is easy, especially when things can be done by way of synodical assessments, which eventually find their way into congregational budgets, to let the churches establish and maintain a college.

However, it is contrary to Reformed principle.

The calling of the church is to preach the Word. Within the scope of this calling is included, to be sure, the calling to train preachers. The theological training of our ministers, and, to an extent, the pre-theological training of our ministers is the duty of the church institute. Outside of that the church has no calling to educate, except in the pulpit and in the catechism room.

In this connection it has always been Reformed to interpret article 21 of the Church Order in the ethical sense. That article reads: "The Consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the Covenant." Now, certainly, that article must be maintained; and every consistory should be faithful to the requirement of Article 21 with fear and trembling, lest the cause of Christian education in our midst go spiritually bankrupt. But as Reformed people we have never lent ourselves to the interpretation that this article calls for parochial schools. We have insisted on parental schools. And the consistory has not a calling to establish Christian schools, but rather by way of admonition and exhortation, privately and through the pulpit, as well, perhaps, by way of financial support and aid, to see to it that there are good Christian schools wherein parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the Covenant. But by no stretch of the imagination can this article be used to support the principle of a church established college.

Rather should we follow the same principle of parental education which we follow in our grammar schools and high schools. Our normal school, eventually, our college (???), must be parentally established and controlled. Perhaps we may look to the church institute for help. Perhaps there is room for cooperation between Seminary and Normal School. But we must not have a denominational college. Let the church preach the Word! And let our parents fulfill, to the limit, their calling to train their children "in the doctrine of this christian church."

H. C. Hoeksema

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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition of I John 2:12-14

It is of the utmost importance for the correct understanding of I John 2:12-14 that close attention be paid to the exact wording of it. We will, therefore, quote this passage in full. It reads as follows: "*I write you children because your sins are forgiven for His Name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the Evil One. I wrote unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I wrote unto you fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I wrote unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the Evil One.*"

Now what is so peculiar and singular about this passage from the pen of John?

It is, no doubt, this: John tells the church of Jesus Christ, as she is in the midst of this world the *reason* for writing her. There is something that makes this Church of God the object, the recipient of this letter; it is something that the world lacks. And because what is true of this Church, which thing is not true of the world, this Church can receive this letter. However, the world cannot receive it. What John writes in this letter cannot possibly be written of and to the world of unbelieving men.

The implied point of departure in this text is, that there is a twofold people in the midst of this world. Such is the clear teaching on the first pages of Holy Writ in Genesis 3:15 in the Protevangel, and such is also the clear teaching of Scripture in the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

I have reference, of course, to the Word of God spoken to the Serpent in Paradise where God announces to the Temptor that He will put enmity between the Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman. This same truth we read in Rev. 22:11: "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is just let him be *made righteous* still and he that is holy let him be *sanctified* still."

Jesus makes mention of this same truth when He says: He that hath to him shall be given and he shall have more abundance, and he that hath not from him shall be taken what he thinketh to have. Wherefore take heed how ye hear.

Such is also the very warp and woof of this first Epistle of John. Says John in Chapter 3:10 "In this

are manifested the children of God and the children of the Devil." A twofold people therefore. And it is to the former of these that this Epistle is written.

Positively the glad-message of the Scriptures is for the children of God.

Let there be no shred of doubt as to this truth of Scripture. Writes John: "I write you *because, because, because . . .* I wrote you *because, because, because . . .*" This "because" makes us think of the statement of Jesus in the Upper-Room, recorded for us in John 14:16,17 "And I will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, namely, the Spirit of truth, *Whom the world is not able to receive . . .*" The world cannot hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. These have not the mind of Christ. The things of the Spirit and of the Father and the Son are foolishness to them. The children of the Devil do not have the "point of contact" spoken of in the text we are about to consider.

The church alone can receive the Spirit in receiving His Word.

Let us try to understand this better.

First of all, it is important to notice, that the addressees in our text are called "children", "fathers" and "young men". Fact is, that this is repeated in the text. Both times they are given in the same order. Now these names here given and the order in which they are given, tells us an important truth concerning the church.

What is it?

We should notice that the order here given is not that of the natural ascending order of age level. This order would be: Little children, young men, fathers. Or in reverse order it would be: Fathers, young men, children. But the order is broken: children, fathers young men. It seems to us, that this order given in the text by the Holy Spirit points us away from the natural order, and from trying to find here *three distinct groups* in the church. We rather believe that we are here to think of threefold aspects of the same church. Each time the congregation is viewed from a different viewpoint.

But there is still more in the text and in this entire letter which proves conclusively that the Holy Spirit does not refer to three groups, but rather to three aspects of the one church.

To what do we refer?

We refer, of course, to the fact that the term "children" (little children) is the standing term by which the entire congregation is addressed. This term does not refer to children from a natural, from the age-level aspect. Then, too, this term "little children" is interchanged in this letter with the term "Beloved".

Now it should not escape our notice, that this term beloved is not first of all the expression of John's sentiment concerning the church, but that it, no doubt, is expressive of the unchanging attitude of the Father's love for His children in Christ Jesus. If such is the case, then we have here in this name "children" the church addressed as she is the most precious possession and heritage of God. It is the most endearing term. This our interpretation is amply sustained by a comparison of such passages as I John 2:1; 2:18; 3:1, 10, 18. In all of these passages the term "children" and "little children" refers to the entire church. It makes no difference whether the members are ten years old or whether they be eighty years old. In each case when they are the "beloved" of God, they are His dear children. This is abundantly evident from I John 3:1 "Behold the manner of love which the Father hath given us, that we should be *called the children of God*."

Hence, we conclude that the name "Children" refers to the entire church as she is the object of God's sovereign and changeless love, a love that many waters cannot quench, since it is a very flame of Jehovah.

Beautiful, instructive and comforting is also what is added by our text as inspired by the Holy Spirit. And incidently it corroborates what we have above stated as to the meaning of the name "children" when given to the church. We refer to the addition "Because your sins are forgiven for His Name's sake." Or, as the second part of the text has it: because ye have known the Father.

Pray, how do we experience the love of our heavenly Father, if it is not in this, that He removes our guilt of sin from us; that daily we find Him in the sweetness of the forgiveness of sins. He that does not know the forgiveness of sins, does not know the Father, does not have eternal life. Well, the text says that these "children" do know this forgiveness day by day at the Throne of mercy of the Father.

And why do we receive this forgiveness?

Simply for the Father's Name's sake. For the sake of His great and glorious Name He forgives us. Therein the greatness of the glorious Name of God is manifested. It is sovereign grace and boundless forgiveness. For where sin abounded grace does much more abound.

I write you "little children" because you thus stand in the unquenchable flame of the burning "bush". The very flame of Jehovah is this love.

It ought, by this time, to be clear that the term "children" refers to the entire congregation, and not to the natural "children" only in the congregation.

But when this is once established then the names "fathers" and "young men" can no longer be interpreted as referring to the aged and those in the strength of life respectively. These terms refer not to the natural qualifications, but they most emphatically refer to the spiritual qualities in the entire church.

Let us try to see this.

The term "fathers" refers to the entire church from the viewpoint of her stability and maturity in Christ. This maturity may be stronger in some than in others, but nevertheless the church is established in the truth; she is the ground and the pillar of the truth. She knows in whom she hath believed. She has known Him that is from the beginning.

These "fathers" are such stable men and women only because they stand in the love of the heavenly Father and are anchored in His forgiving love. Without this love of the "Father" we cannot be strong in this world, rooted and grounded in the truth. Only when anchored in the love of the Father and having been thoroughly instructed can the church be filled with wisdom, not tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Hence, there is an interpretation of being "little children" and that of being "fathers". The beloved church of Christ is also established in the truth. The "little children" are the "fathers".

Only to such can the Word of God come as John writes it in this Epistle.

But we must proceed.

The term "young men" also comes into consideration here. It is said elsewhere in Scripture that the glory of the young man is in his strength. That is the natural glory of the young men. Soon this strength fades, it is true. But that is the natural glory of the young man. It is noteworthy that the text connects the "young man" with being strong and militant.

We send our young men, the flower of our nation, to the battle fields. Such is also true of God. He has His army in the field of the world. The battle must be fought against Satan, the Evil one, against the spiritual powers of evil and darkness in this world. The church is such young men. Old though its members become physically, yet their strength is renewed like the eagles. The inward man is, indeed, renewed day by day. They are fat and flourishing to proclaim that the Lord is good.

The Word of God abides in the church, and this Word is the sword of the Spirit which lays the enemy low.

The church testifies of the hope that is in her. She proclaims what is "written". Evermore such is her

calling. And fulfilling this her calling she overcomes the Evil one. The church is the militant, triumphing people of God.

Yes, they are "little children"; the apple of God's eye are we.

But being steadfast and immovable we are "fathers."

But strong in the battle we are "young men".

G. C. Lubbers

### The Condition Debate in our Churches

My second observation is, that I am glad that Synod has spoken on this question of the Promise, its scope, its objects and its appropriation. Synod of 1951 was not stranded on the question of "conditions" in the abstract, but rather approached the question from the viewpoint of the Promise. Synod spoke not only of unconditional election, but also speaks of unconditional salvation which is ours by means of faith. That gave clarity to the question and cleared the atmosphere from misunderstandings.

But now the "debate" is again picked up by some of the brethren. It is picked up by brother Kok. I have many wonderful things that I could say about brother Kok. I shall never forget the particular kindness he has shown me in the past; he visited me in my deepest sorrows as none other. The Lord reward him.

However, in all candor I wish to state here as my conviction, that brother Kok does not do well in this matter of debate.

Why? Because the manner of brother Kok's debate cannot be constructive. I wish to believe that you mean well, brother Kok. But that does not make it constructive. And all the talk in general about practicing more love does not help constructively in any way. I know it is the oil in the machinery of our hearts. And love is the fruit of the Spirit. But it does not guarantee correct building in Theological Science. The rule of faith is the Word of God. And this rule is layed down in the Confessions. When we lose sight of this we get off the track. And all the talk and intention and resolutions of love mean nothing until they crystalize in a return to the Law and the Prophets. Unless this is seen and done we simply go down in the maelstrom of subjectivism, that is, the sin of being our own rule of faith!

Now, I believe, that brother Kok does not want this subjectivism.

He abhors this from his heart.

But it is a sin that betakes us when we do not perfectly have the loins of our mind girt up.

Also in connection with the manner of debate this is true. Our loins must be girt up in logical as well as in ethical truth. Rev. Kok fails in the former.

To do the latter is Rev. Kok's privilege. And if Synod erred it is his holy calling to show this: then we can all profit by the gift of the Holy Spirit given to Rev. Kok.

In the light of the above consideration it is deplorable, that Rev. Kok seeks to show that Rev. Ophoff once employed the term condition.

Why?

Because in the manner in which Rev. Kok does this, the confusion that I and many lament, and which confusion Synod removed, is simply perpetuated.

I ask in all candor, suppose Rev. Ophoff did use that term in the past (which has not yet been pointed out) does that mean anything, does that prove that it belongs in the building of Reformed Theology and life as an essential element? Is Rev. Ophoff's use of the term the standard of truth? If I am a contractor and Rev. Ophoff should work for me and if he should insist that ten inches is a foot, would that make it right? Of course not. Then why refer to him, and his writings of the past? Besides Rev. Ophoff has disowned any writing that should use the term in that sense. That is his right. But does that make it right? Not necessarily. Then why glean his writings from this viewpoint if we wish to build?

Did Rev. Ophoff ever use the term "condition" in the sense of a promise for all upon condition of faith? I do not have the time to investigate. If he did, show him, and he will gladly retract, he has told us.

So that is a closed chapter.

Opening it simply means, that we have evil communications that corrupt good manners.

Let us not be like the children that throw our cake in the mud and then bemoan the fact that it is dirty. Let us not raise confusion in the minds of our people and then bemoan the fact in dust and ashes that the people are confused.

What then?

Are you of those who say that you do not want the term "condition"? Well, and good. I too am not in love with the term at all, although no one can take it out of my vocabulary.

Are you one of those who say I don't need the term, and I never use it? Well and good. Then don't insist on its being a good term overagainst those who do not want it.

Has anyone hurt feelings overagainst the brother? Then there is Matthew 18:15-17. Have we hurt any-



one's feeling and done him injustice in the marketplace, let us remove it there.

However, let us not in the name of love fail to see the need of proper tools and methods in Theological Science and preaching. That would be a double catastrophe.

Our God is a God that exhorts us to be good workmen that need not be ashamed.

For Paul did not vainly write: "For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Colleagues, read the blue-print.

In the line of the Reformed Fathers, let us build.  
That will stand in that day.

G. Lubbers

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#### CLASSIS WEST

All delegates in need of lodging during the September meeting of Classis West, please write to Mr. J. Vander Top, Doon, Iowa.

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#### ACTS OF SYNOD

The Acts of the Synod of 1951, including the revisions made on the Declaration of Principles, are now available. Please address your requests to Rev. J. Howerzyl, Stated Clerk of Synod, 515 Third Ave., E., Oskaloosa, Iowa. Enclose \$1.00 for each copy ordered. Please send all remittances for copies received to the above address.

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In heav'n, and earth, and air, and seas,  
God executes His firm decrees;  
And by His saints it stands confessed,  
That what He does is ever best.

## SION'S ZANGEN

### Gods Groote Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 118; Eerste Deel)

Dit is eene lofzang op des Heeren groote goedertierenheid.

Die lofzang moet hier op aarde geleerd worden. In den hemel doet men dat als vanzelf. Daar behoeft men niet te leeren om goed te doen. Daar is men goed.

Doch hier op aarde is men van nature kwaad, boos, verdorven en verkeerd. Hier op aarde vervult men het doel niet waartoe de Heere alle dingen schiep. Er is slechts één doel, en dat ééne doel is de verheerlijking van des Heeren naam.

Dat doel bereikt niemand meer. Dat wil zeggen, niet van nature. Men doet juist andersom: en daarom zijn we verkeerd. Wij stellen ons ten doel om een god te zijn voor onszelf.

En zoo moeten we opgeroepen worden om terug te keeren tot dat verheven doel om God te loven en te prijzen.

En als die oproeping gepaard gaat met wat onze vaders de krachtdadige, of de eigendommelijke roeping Gods noemden, dan is het goed. Want dan luistert de mensch. En dan begint hij hier op aarde eenigzins God to loven.

Die oproeping geschiedt in de kerk.

En die oproeping hebben we hier te overdenken.

Looft den Heere!

De lieflijkste bezigheid voor den mensch.

Loven van God is om het den Heere te vertellen hoe goed en hoe lieflijk Hij is.

Voor al het feit, dat Zijn naam hier Heere is, heeft ons veel te zeggen. Als ik die boodschap uit wilde putten kwam ik er nooit mee klaar. Er zit een eeuwigheid van zaligheid in dien NAAM: De Heere!

Dat is de verbondsnaam van God. Die naam vertelt het ons, dat Hij de eeuwig Getrouwe is die nooit laat varen de werken Zijner handen. Die trouwe houdt en eeuwig leeft: Zijn naam is Heer der Heeren.

Zoo oud God is zoo oud is Zijn verbondsliefde voor Zijn volk, dat Hij van eeuwigheid gekend heeft in onbegrijpelijke, eeuwige, Goddelijke liefde.

En daarvan zal de dichter ons verhalen.

Looft Hem dan, want Hij is immers goed? Want Zijne goedertierenheid is in eeuwigheid.

Hij is goed. En Zijne goedertierenheid is in eeuwigheid.

Gods goedertierenheid hebben we al zoo vaak be-

zongen in deze lange reeks van overdenkingen! En we zullen het nooit zat worden. We zullen het nu weer doen.

Zijn Goedertierenheid is die deugd waarin alles Hem dringt om Zijn volk goed te zijn en Zijn volk goed te doen. Die deugd is zoo rijk en zoo allesomvattend, dat de Heilige Geest elders zegt, dat alle dingen ons medewerken ten goede. De Heere gebruikt het geheele heelal en al zijn volheid om Zijn volk toch maar goed te doen. Hij *is* hun goed. Dat wil zeggen, dat Hij hen liefheeft. En Hij doet hen goed. En dat wil zeggen, dat alles wat God in de historie doet is tot de komst van het Koninkrijk, waar dit volk zal pralen van schoonheid, belonkt met 't Goddelijk oog.

Er is een tekst in Gods Woord waar dit lieflijk gezegd wordt. Ge vindt dien tekst in Deuteronomium 33:26-29, waar we Gods Woord aldus lezen: "Niemand is er gelijk God, o Jeshurun, die op den hemel vaart tot uwe hulp, en met Zijne hoogheid op de bovenste wolken. De eeuwige God zij u tot eene woning, en van onderen eeuwige armen; en Hij verdrijve den vijand voor uw aangezicht en zegge: Verdelg! Israel dan zal zeker alleen wonen, en Jakobs oog zal zijn op een land van koren en most; ja, zijn hemel zal van dauw druipen. Welgelukzalig zijt gij, o Israel, wie is u gelijk? Gij zijt een volk verlost door den Heere, het schild uwer hulpe, en die een zwaard is uwer hoogheid; daarom zullen zich uwe vijanden geveinsdelijk aan u onderwerpen en gij zult op hunne hoogten treden."

Let er op, dat hemel en aarde, vriend en vijand mede moet werken om de welgelukzaligheid van Israel te verwerkelijken.

En zoo is het altoos geweest, en zoo zal het altoos zijn.

Ik denk niet dat er iets heerlijker is dan de overdenking van die gedachte. En zij is ook de betekenis van des Heeren naam voor ons. Zoo is het altoos geweest. Denkt er eens aan: God heeft ons altoos bemind. Nooit is Hij ons tegen geweest. Hij heeft ons gekend in de voorkennis van Zijn liefde, en in die voorkennis heeft Hij ook besloten om ons goed te doen tot in der eeuwigheid.

't Is altoos zoo geweest.

En 't zal altoos zoo zijn.

Wat een onbeschrijflijk rustige gedachte; wat onuitsprekelijke troost voor God volk.

Looft Hem dan. Dat het er zoo bij staat met Gods volk moet ook de spoorslag zijn om Hem te loven en te prijzen. Vertelt het Hem, dat Hij goed is, dat Zijne goedertierenheid tot in der eeuwigheid is.

"Dat Israel nu zegge dat Zijne goedertierenheid in eeuwigheid is."

Dat brengt ons tot een schoone gedachte, een gedachte die ons zal doen zingen in de hemelzalen.

Israel is de Vorst Gods. Israel is het volk Gods van alle eeuwen.

Hoe is dat zoo geworden?

Ziet ge: wij allen waren zondaren geworden in Adam. Er is absoluut geen verschil tusschen de verkorenen en de verworpenen. Onze naam is eenvoudig: kinderen des toorns.

Doch de Heere heeft ons liefgehad van eeuwigheid, zeiden we zoo straks.

Welnu, toen de uitverkorenen in de zonde vielen, toen is God gekomen om hen te roepen uit den dood tot in het leven. En principieel is dat de komst van Jezus Christus in het vleesch. Zonder dien Zone Gods kon God ons niet roepen uit den dood tot in het leven. De straf op de zonde is de dood, en die dood is de eeuwige dood. God had Adam niet kunnen roepen vanuit het kreupelhout indien Jezus niet beloofd had om te komen in de volheid des tijds. God had Zijn volk niet kunnen weldoen in de vier duizend jaren vóór de komst van Jezus, als Jezus niet beloofd had dat Hij stellig komen zou om te doen den wille Gods.

Het zit alles vast op die komst en dat werk van Jezus.

En die komst van Jezus is eigenlijk de komst van God in het vleesch.

En toen is de Zone Gods gestorven in onze plaats. Hij stierf den dood in onze plaats. En toen Hij dan de geheele straf Gods tegen de zonde van Zijn volk geleden had en neerlag in het stof des doods, toen heeft God Hem opgeroepen uit den dood, en Hem gezet aan Zijne rechterhand. En dat is principieel onze roeping, en onze aanname.

En dat maakt ons tot een Israel Gods.

En dat is ook het Evangelie.

En daarin komt ook uit de groote, de geweldige goedertierenheid Gods.

Zal Israel dan niet loven?

"Het huis Aarons zegge nu dat Zijne goedertierenheid in eeuwigheid is."

Het huis Aarons.

Dat is het huis der priesteren. En Aaron zelf is de eerste Hoo gepriester.

Dat had ik eigenlijk niet zoo moeten zeggen, want er is EEN geweest die Hoo gepriester was vóór hem. En die EENE is Jezus.

En dan is het eigenlijk nog niet goed. Want eigenlijk is God Zelf de Hoo gepriester. Hij is het die offert. En Hij offerde Zijn Eigen Eerstgeboren Zoon. Hij had niets liever dan dien Zoon, doch Hij heeft Hem voor ons allen overgegeven.

En nu ziet ge het verband, of, liever, de reden

waarom het huis Aarons vooral den Heere moet loven vanwege Zijn goedertierenheid die in eeuwigheid is.

Indien iemand, dan heeft Aaron dat toch wel gezien. Wat was zijn gedurige bezigheid? Dit: lammeren slachten en offeren. Hij moest zich bekommeren om de zonden van het volk van God. En hij moest gedurig bidden voor dat volk.

Altemaal typische bezigheden die in herinnering brachten de groote zaken van het eeuwig Evangelie.

Want al die lammeren die hij slachtte konden de zonden niet afwasschen. Doch zij wezen vooruit naar het Lam van God, dat de zonde der wereld weg zou nemen. En al zijn bekommerdheid voor het volk Gods was op zijn best gebrekkig. Doch het zag vooruit op de bezorgheid van den grooten Hoogepriester die werkelijk, Goddelijk volmaakt Zich zou bekommeren om de zonden van Gods volk. En Hij zou het bewijzen in Zijn lijden en sterven, in Zijn schreien en brullen, in Zijn angsten en benauwdheden, in Zijn sterven van den eeuwig dood.

Daarom: Gij huis Aarons: looft den Heere! Indien iemand, dan zijt gij in aanraking gekomen met de teekenen een zegelen van Gods wondere, eeuwige goedertierenheid.

“Dat degenen die den Heere vreezen, nu zeggen dat Zijne goedertierenheid in eeuwigheid is.”

Ik zou zeggen: dat is het natuurlijkste van alles. Indien zij het niet doen zouden, dan zouden de steenen in de straten spreken.

Die Hem vreezen is eigenlijk hetzelfde als te zeggen: die Hem liefhebben. En toch is er een ander woord gebruikt, het woord *vreezen*. Het vreezen van God is de uiting der liefde van uit het oogpunt van Gods verhevenheid, majesteit en grootheid. Die deugden Gods maken een indruk op het liefhebbende hart van Gods kind, en de uiting van dien indruk is de vreeze Gods.

Die vreeze Gods is rein; zij opent een fontein van heil dat nooit vergaat.

Zij is ook het beginsel der wijsheid, en op die waarheid moeten we hier wijzen. Het behoort bij die God vreezen om God te loven. Ziet ge, de wijsheid Gods is die deugd waarin Hij de beste middelen kiest en de beste wegen bewandelt tot de bereiking van het hoogste doel, en dat doel is de verheerlijking van Zijn naam. En als die deugd van wijsheid in ons woont, dan bewandelen ook wij de beste wegen en kiezen de beste middelen om dat hoogheerlijke doel te bereiken. Ziet ge nu niet, dat het zeer natuurlijk is om die den Heere vreezen op te roepen tot het verkondigen van Zijn deugden? Want immers, de vreeze Gods is het beginsel van alle ware wijsheid. De cirkel is compleet.

Iemand die God vreest heeft Hem lief. En die

liefde Gods noopt Hem om het den hemel en de aarde te vertellen hoe goed en hoe lieflijk Hij is.

“Uit de benauwdheid heb it den Heere aangeroepen: de Heere heeft mij verhoord, stellende mij in de ruimte.”

Daar hebt ge weer het Evangelie in het klein. Er zit bijna alles van het Evangelie in.

De zanger was in groote benauwdheid.

Benauwdheid: wat een treffend woord. Hoe duidelijk beschrijft het de ervaring van Gods volk.

Benauwdheid wil zeggen, dat men in een plaats komt die te klein is voor ons. Een ieder heeft een zekere inhoudsruimte, en beslaat een zekere plaats. Welnu, als die plaats ontbreekt, als men ergens moet verkeerden waar de ruimte voor onze inhoud ontbreekt; dan, ja dan wordt het benauwd. Dan worden we verpletterd. Zeg, dat men zeven of acht kubieke voeten inhoudsruimte noodig heeft voor zijn lichaam, en als men dan weggedrukt wordt in een ruimte die slechts één kubieke voet groot is, dan wordt men verpletterd, dan wordt men weggepersd, dan komt men jammerlijk om.

En dat is duizendmalen geschied in het bange verleden. Ontelbaar zijn de stakkerds geweest die in een plaats kwamen die te klein, te nauw, te eng voor hen was.

En toch is het erger, banger, benauwder als de ziel en de geest in de engte komen. En dat is het geval hier. Het gaat hier niet over lichamelijke benauwdheid, doch over geestelijke benauwdheid der ziel van Gods volk.

En dat is erg. Dan weet men niet meer wat te doen. Dan wordt men schier radeloos. De psalmen van David zijn vol van beschrijvingen dier benauwdheid. En al Gods volk weet van die benauwdheid.

In dit geval is het tamelijk duidelijk, dat de benauwdheid veroorzaakt werd door de vijanden van den zanger. Zie de verzen 6, 7, en 10-12. Het waren zijn vijanden die het hem aandeden. Zij waren het hie hem haten, hem omringden als bijen.

En de groote vijand van al Gods volk is de duivel.

En hij is hun vijand omdat hij ruikt dat ze den Heere met zich omdragen. God is groot in het binnenste van Sion. God woont temidden van Zijn volk. En daarom haat de duivel dat volk, en gebruikt hij de wereld om de kerk te benauwen.

Maar dan gaat die kerk aan het roepen tot God. Dat zegt de tekst: Uit de benauwdheid heb it den Heere aangeroepen. Daartoe lokt God ons ook. Hij zegt: Roep Mij aan in den dag der benauwdheid en Ik zal U uithelpen, en gij zult Mij eeren. Dat had deze man ook gedaan. Hij had den Heere aangelopen als een waterstroom. En de Heere verhoorde hem, stellende hem in de ruimte.

Hoe dat geschiedde zullen de verdere verzen ons leeren.

Maar de dichter kwam in de ruimte. O ruimte te hebben om te leven!

En dan te leven tot Gods eer in het vertellen van Zijn deugden!

Dat is zaligheid!

G. Vos



## An Open Letter to Rev. B. Kok

Dear Brother:-

I have read your "Apology", that you had printed in the *Standard Bearer* for July 1. It divides into three sections, the first two of which form the first part of your "Apology". It reads and I quote:

"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 it:"

Your "apology", brother, contains one sentence that will not fail to make an impression. The sentence is this, and I quote: "For this I apologize to the author and beg his forgiveness."

But tell me, brother, what is it for which you are really begging forgiveness? On your position you have done no wrong worth mentioning. Let us see how true this is. Attend to the statement from your pen that reads, and I quote: "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." Taking you at your word, you are doubtful whether you are deserving of all the charges, and therefore you submit your case to the judgment of the readers. To your way of thinking you committed but one wrong. And even this wrong you tone down by characterizing it by the word "indiscretion". And you tell us here that at the time you committed it, you didn't realize that you were doing anything amiss. You didn't mean to misinterpret me. And your intention was good, at

least harmless. You wanted to eliminate all the names. So once more, brother. What is it for which you are begging forgiveness? Nothing much, certainly. But you are mistaken brother.

Let us briefly pass in review the charges brought against you—charges of dishonesty—and see whether or not they are true.

*Dishonesty I.* You now say that you were paraphrasing my article, that section of it to which you refer as the "first few lines" (see your "apology", the last section of it). This your paraphrasing placed you under the moral necessity of revealing my name and of informing the readers where my article could be found in order that they could check the correctness of your paraphrase, especially so, because as we shall see in a moment, instead of actually paraphrasing you wholly corrupted the paragraph in my article with which you were occupied. Yet you placed your so-called paraphrase between the quotation marks and thereby you ascribed your corruption to me. It is glaringly obvious, isn't it brother, that this your doing was grossly dishonest.

*Dishonesty II.* Let me now show you how dishonestly you dealt with that paragraph in my article that you say you paraphrased, but which you actually corrupted even beyond recognition. I here place the paragraph as it had left my pen alongside of your corruption of it in order that you may see for yourself what you were up to.

The paragraph as it had left my pen: It reads:

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

This same paragraph as corrupted by you, brother, reads:

Also to the covenant of grace God has attached the following conditional clauses: '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 thou obey my voice indeed.' (bold type mine-O)

Take notice, brother, of what you did. You did this:

a) You removed from the paragraph as it had left my pen the name of De Haan.

b) You removed from the paragraph as it left my pen the section in bold type and placed in the room of it the bold type sentences of your own choosing. Why did you do that? The reason is obvious. You wanted these sentences attached to the expression "covenant of grace," as appearing in the paragraph as it had left my pen. And therefore you did just that—attach these sentences to that expression. And this fabrication of yours you then placed between the quotation marks and thereby ascribed it to me. Why did you do that? The reason is obvious. You there-

by thought to provide yourself with a statement, apparently taken from my writing but actually manufactured by yourself, whereupon to base your equally fraudulent contention that I am a teacher in the church addicted to the theory that there are conditions in the covenant of grace. That this was your purpose is proved by what came from your own pen. Having placed this corruption of yours before the readers as inclosed between the quotation marks, you made this comment: "From the above quotation it is evident that the writer emphasizes that there are conditions in the covenant of grace." This same statement heads your corruption. It reads: "They (meaning also me) emphasized that there are conditions in the covenant of grace. . . (see quotation below)." This last parenthesis is yours, brother, not mine.

No, I am not judging here *hidden* motives of your heart, brother, known to you and God alone. But I am here judging motives that lie on the surface and that lie there glaringly obvious. I am judging motives that you, yourself, reveal by your statements that I last quoted.

*Dishonesty III.* You capitalized the term "conditional" appearing in that section of my article that you quoted and corrupted, thus — CONDITIONAL. And not alone that you failed to inform your readers that this heavy emphasis on this word was yours, but you even went to the extent of telling them *by the printed word* that this emphasis was *mine*. You deny this? But it is true. Attend once more to the statement from your pen that I just quoted. Take notice once more of what you wrote. Verily this: "They (including also me—Ophoff. Parenthesis mine—O) emphasize that there are conditions in the covenant of grace." Then you began quoting me. You set out with corrupting those "first few lines". Coming to the word "conditional," and to provide your false contention with some more manufactured proof, you capitalized the term. Having done quoting me, you made this remark: "From the above quotation it is evident that the writer (meaning me—parenthesis mine—O) *emphasized* that there are conditions in the covenant of grace." (Italics mine—O).

In the last section of your "apology" you "humbly apologize" for not having informed the readers that this emphasis was *yours* and not *mine*. But you should have gone much farther, brother, than to tender your regrets for having withheld from your readers this information. If I tell a gathering of people audibly and by spoken word that *I refuse* to introduce to them an acquaintance of mine with whom I enter their company, later on, if I wish to make amends, I must go much farther than merely apologize to the man for my failure to introduce him. I must beg his pardon for

having said that *I refused* to reveal his identity. You see the point, brother. Not alone that you *failed* to inform the readers that the heavy emphasis on the word "conditional" was yours, but you even went so far as to tell the readers by the printed word that the emphasis was *mine*, and this though you knew better. Here certainly you shall have to admit that you deliberately spoke an untruth, unless you now want to excuse your doing by saying not alone that you had completely forgotten that a second or two previously you were the one who had capitalized the word *conditional* but that in addition you had actually gone to imagining within the space of those few seconds that the emphasis was *mine*. But what do you think? Is this possible?

*Dishonesty IV.* What did you find in my article that could *really* serve you as a basis for your false contention that I am a teacher in the church addicted to the view that there are conditions in the covenant of grace? Nothing, absolutely nothing. O certainly, I do state in that article of mine with which you were occupied that in giving form to the duties and obligations of the covenant of grace the Lord often availed Himself of the conditional sentence. But that you were fully aware that you could do nothing with this statement from my pen as a prop for your false contention that I teach and even emphasize that there are conditions in the covenant of grace is evident from your mutilations of my article, particularly from your heavy emphasis on the term "conditional" and from your ascribing these mutilations and this emphasis to me by including them within the quotation marks.

*Dishonesty V.* You even presented me to your readers as a worse errorist than Dr. M. De Haan. For you told the readers that in opposition to some—and you had reference particularly to De Haan—who insist that grace is unconditional and with it the covenant of grace, I teach and even emphasize that there are conditions in the covenant of grace. Attend once more to your own words already quoted: "They (meaning also me—parenthesis mine—O) *even emphasize* that there are conditions in the covenant of grace *over against those who . . . maintained that grace was conditional*" (italics mine—O).

*Dishonesty VI.* By your mutilations of my writing, by your including your corruptions within the quotation marks, and by your boldly and falsely stating that I teach and even go to the extent of emphasizing that there are conditions in the covenant of grace, you put your theories in my pen and mouth and then you told your readers that your withholding my name would perhaps be unethical, if you had criticised me, meaning my views, but that, seeing you are in whole

hearted agreement with my teaching, it is different. So you wrote brother, though you knew right well from that very article of mine that I loathe your conditional theology like a plague and knew also that I strike at that theology with all my might in that very article. And think, in connection herewith, of your telling the readers that the reason you omitted my name is that you so whole heartedly agree with me. Nay brother, this is not the reason of your omitting my name. There is another reason. But I will leave it to you to state it.

Let us now place side by side the gist of the quotation in its entirety as it had left my pen and the gist of this same quotation as mutilated by you.

The quotation as it left my pen. It reads:

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

Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham, [De Haan admits to be] a covenant of grace. That this covenant as well involves those whom it includes in well defined duties; that the kind of phrase the Lord availed Himself of in formulating these duties was often the [conditional] sentence is evident from the epistles. A single passage: 'And ye that were sometimes alienated and enemies . . . yet now he hath reconciled . . . to present you holy and blameless . . . : **if ye continue in the faith**' — Col. 2:6.

So then, from the above cited Scripture it appears that the covenant of grace, too, as well as the covenant of Sinai, involves those whom it includ-

The same quotation as mutilated by you.

[Also to the covenant of grace God has attached the following conditional clauses: "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his covenant" . . . If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart" . . . 'If ye obey my voice indeed.'] Abraham was commanded to get him out of his country. . . He did so and the Lord made him a great nation. . . Certainly, if Abraham would have cleaved to his father's house . . . he would not have been blessed. At a latter period the Lord again appeared unto him and said: 'I am God Almighty; **walk before me and be thou perfect.**' And I will make my covenant between me and thee . . . And on His way to Sodom, the Lord turned to His heavenly companion and asked him whether he should hide from Abraham the thing which He was about to do; seeing that Abraham would become a great and mighty nation. . . '**For I know,**' the Lord continued, **'that he will command his children . . . that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'** Gen. 18:17-19.

[Mark you, the covenant established with Abraham is] a covenant of grace. That this covenant as well involves those whom it includes in well-defined duties; that the kind of phrase the Lord availed Himself of in formulating these duties was often the [CONDITIONAL] sentence is evident from the epistles. A single passage: 'And ye that were sometimes alienated and enemies. . . yet now he hath reconciled. . . to present you holy and blameless. . . : **if ye continue in the faith**' Col. 2:6. So then, from the above cited Scripture it appears that the covenant of grace as well as the covenant of Sinai, involves those

es in the solemn duty of keeping the way of the Lord. This must follow from the very nature of things. The thought-element entering into the very make-up of the very covenant idea is the concept **friendship, obedience, love.** The covenanting God therefore must insist that the sinner break with the world and, joining himself to God love, serve and obey Him as His Saviour and Benefactor . . . The covenant of grace, therefore, as well as the covenant of Sinai must have its commands to be heeded . . . its God to be loved and adored."

whom it includes in the solemn duty of keeping the way of the Lord. This must follow from the very nature of things. The thought-element entering into the very make-up of the very covenant idea is the concept **friendship, obedience, love.** The covenanting God therefore must insist that the sinner break with the world and joining himself to God love, serve and obey Him as His Saviour and Benefactor . . . The covenant of grace, therefore, as well as the covenant of Sinai must have its commands to be heeded . . . its God to be loved and adored . . ."

Take notice, brother, of the discrepancies between the quotation as reproduced by you and as it had left my pen,—discrepancies that I have enclosed between brackets. Is it not plain as the day that by the way you changed the quotation as it had left my pen you gave to it a thrust that it does not have as originated by me, also by your presenting it to the readers as lifted by you out of its context?

Now these are the dishonesties of your first article. You deny them? But you may not deny them. They are too glaringly true.

Let us now examine more particularly the first part of your "apology". Let us get it before us once more. You write and I quote: "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."

Brother, you were so atrociously dishonest in your treatment of my article that words cannot express it. Yet, you have the courage to appear in print with a statement such as the above? Shame on you brother.

You set out with declaring your intention. You wanted merely to eliminate all the names from the quotation. It seems that you bring this in not alone to explain but also to excuse your dishonesties. For you nowhere condemn this your doing (your elimination of names). It seems that you want to be telling the readers here, that at least your intentions were good, at least harmless. But fact is, brother, that your elimination of the names from the quotation was, for reasons already stated, by itself dishonest. You persist in denying this?



And then you go on to say that you did not mean to misinterpret me. But consider what you did. You deliberately corrupted my article, that section of it with which you were occupied. You deliberately and knowingly — not in your sleep, certainly — included your corruptions within the quotation marks and thereby knowingly ascribed them to me. *And yet you did not mean to misinterpret me?* Is this possible? And then you go on to say that at the time you failed to realize that you were doing anything wrong? Is *this* possible? You may answer. And you characterize your dishonesties by the term “indiscretion”? And you say that you paraphrased while the fact is that you changed the very meaning of the paragraph and thereby corrupted it? And you limit your mutilations of that section of my article with which you were directly occupied to its first few lines while the fact is that you went through the entire section omitting whole sentences, changing the meaning of a paragraph there, striking out the name of De Haan wherever it appears and capitalizing the word “conditional” and thereby placing not only the section of my article that you quoted but in the final instance the entire article of mine in a drastically wrong light?

Let us now attend to the third and last section of your “apology”. You write: “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.” Then follows your so-called paraphrase. With this paraphrase I already have dealt.

What I want to bring out in connection with the above lines from your pen is that here, too, you are not speaking the truth. Please take notice. Here you again tell your readers that you were paraphrasing those last two or three sentences, that is, giving them a different form while reproducing their sense. But the fact is that you erased these sentences and placed in their room sentences of your own choosing. And you now tell the readers that you were *attempting* to convey the thought? Does it look like you were *attempting* to convey the thought? And it is certainly not true that you had to deal with that paragraph in my writing as you did in order to free it of the name De Haan. Your contention here is as untrue as anything can possibly be untrue.

The final statement of you “apology” reads and I quote: “I also offer my humble apology for not having informed the readers that I underscored the word “conditional”. All the rest of the underscoring was by the author.”

This statement, too, is untruthful. You should have written this: “Despite the fact that I capitalized the word “conditional”, I went so far as to tell the

readers that the capitalization of this word was by the author. And there is not another capitalized word in his entire article except one expression. And this is by De Haan.” You see, brother, there is a difference between underscoring a word and capitalizing it. To capitalize it is to place upon it a much heavier emphasis.

Now this is what you would have written here, had you been of a mind to write the truth. So I can't accept this “humble apology” of yours. It is not truthful. And for the same reason I cannot because I may not except the rest of your “apology”. It is not truthful. It is untruthful from beginning to end. In apologizing as you do, you simply add insult to injury.

You must really confess your dishonesties, brother. You should appear in the *Standard Bearer* and in *Concordia* with the following statement:

#### Announcement

I, the undersigned, herewith confess that I was grossly dishonest in my treatment of the author's article contained in *The Standard Bearer* for May 15, 1931, Vol. VII, p. 368-372 and bearing the title: “Dr. M. De Haan on Baptism and the Covenants.” I confess that I *changed* the section of the author's article that I quoted and that I thereby attempted, unsuccessfully however, to make it say that “there are conditions in the covenant of grace”. This statement, much less what it teaches, can nowhere be gotten from the article in question. Fact is that it teaches— teaches plainly and vigorously— the very opposite, namely that God being what He is—God, there can be no such thing as a covenant of God with man dependent for its fulfilment on man and not on God.—B. Kok.

As it is, brother, you beg the “author's” forgiveness without really confessing anything. This is not right. It had been much better, had you apologized not at all, than to apologize the way you do.

I have also read your latest attempt (*Concordia* July 14) to show that I now hold views contrary to those to which I was addicted twenty one years ago. I shall take care of this latest attempt of yours in this direction in an article to appear in the next issue of *The Standard Bearer*. I shall make clear that in that article of mine from which you quote, you have nothing on me, and that all you accomplish is to involve yourself in new difficulties. But I should think, brother, that before continuing your series, you should have wanted first to reach with me an honorable settlement regarding the article of mine in the treatment of which you were so dishonest.

G. M. Ophoff

## The Battle of the Ages

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."  
—Gen. 3:15.

The whole world is engaged in a universal war!

And I would like to emphasize that this war includes every man and woman on earth, be they wicked or good, rich or poor, strong or weak. It also includes all devils and angels, the powers of the air and the good ministrations of the celestial spirits.

It is for that reason that I call this war: the Battle of the Ages! For, mark you, this war has lasted almost as long as the world has existed. The declaration of the war I would like to meditate on was made by God in the very morning of the world's history, and I quote: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen. 3:15.

The occasion for God's declaration of war, as also the designation of the two sides in the conflict, is the fall of man. Adam and Eve, created in the beautiful image of God, were very happy in Paradise. But the devil came, using the serpent as his instrument, and sowed the pernicious lie in the heart of Eve, and through her, in the heart of Adam: Ye shall not surely die! This lie of the devil was diametrically opposed to God's truth: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!" And our first father and mother believed the lie of the devil, rather than the truth of God who created them, and the result was that they indeed died, they died at once, physically, spiritually, and eternally. Oh yes, I will readily admit that it did not look that way immediately, but they died in this threefold way at once, but in principle. Death is enmity against God, rebellion against our Maker, from our side, and the wrath of God, resulting in eternal desolation, from God's side.

Death is horrible.

And in that state God searched them out. He came and looked for them in the garden, and the wonderful voice of God was heard by Adam and Eve: Adam, where art thou? And thereupon the Lord inquires into the sorry state into which they have fallen. You can tell by the responses of Adam and Eve that they have become of the party of the devil: they accuse other than themselves: Adam points to Eve, and Eve points to the devil. They really imply that God is the fault of everything: Adam says: The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat! So it is really God's fault that he ate. And Eve: The serpent beguiled me, and I did

eat! So it was the most glorious of created animals that God had made which was the occasion for her fall. Instead they both should have said: It was the evil of our heart which made us sin against Thy commandment! It shows that God found the creatures that He had made as friends of the devil.

But God remembered His Covenant which covenant is eternal. It is His eternal goodpleasure that the elect human race of man shall stand before His throne in order to praise Him forever. Man shall be His friend servant, and man shall acknowledge Him as his Sovereign Friend.

But it never was God's intention to have His eternal Covenant realized in Adam as the head of the human race. And therefore Adam must fall in order to make room for the real Head of the human race, and that is Jesus Christ the Lord. If you would know more of that, I would like to point you to that wonderful portion of God's Word which we find in Colossians 1:15-19. Mark especially verse 18, the last part, and verse 19. There we read that Christ must have the preeminence in all things, And why? Because it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell! There you have the deep reason both for the fall of man and his restoration. And this restoration is in and through Jesus Christ the Lord. That is the real content of the text which we chose for our meditation.

Let us inquire more in detail, and see Jesus Christ the Lord.

God said: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman!

This was spoken to the serpent first of all. The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And it was, undoubtedly, for that reason that the devil used it in order to ensnare man in the meshes of his lies. By virtue of being the most subtle, this animal stood closest to man.

But that this serpent was an instrument of the devil, so that it was really Satan who tempted Eve, is plain from Rev. 12:9 and 20:2. There we read: "And the great dragon was cast out that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." And: "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." So it is plain from these Scriptures that the devil was behind this serpent, and spoke to our first parents through it.

And the awful state of affairs existed that God's creation, in its very head, was an ally of the devil.

And, in order to maintain His eternal Covenant, God said: But I will put enmity between thee and the woman!

Rightly considered, we have in this decree of God

a wonderful blessing for Eve. It is wonderful if you are an enemy of the devil.

Let us now see what kind of enemy this is. What is the nature of the battle between Eve and the devil, and between his seed and her seed?

Attend that this awful battle is not a battle of flesh and blood. It is of a spiritual nature. Paul will enlighten us. He said: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places".—Eph. 6:12.

From the moment that God spoke these words, Eve and Adam became enemies of the devil and all he stood for. They hated him and also his spiritual wickedness, wherever they would manifest themselves in the subsequent history of the world.

How did this come about? How did God put this enmity between the devil and this woman? The answer is easy: God did this by regenerating Adam and Eve. Their hearts and lives had become corrupt. They had died. That is tantamount to saying that they loved darkness rather than the light. Now darkness is the sum total of all evil and wickedness. And the light is the sum total of all that is good and lovely. That is why God is called a Light, and the Gospel affirms that there is no darkness at all in Him. In other words, God recreated Adam and Eve, so that they became His children spiritually. It means that when Adam and Eve departed from Paradise after this conversation between God, the devil and our first parents, they walked away as friends of God and enemies of the devil and devilish things. They were recreated in the express image of God. I would like to point out that this image of God was not the same image which they had borne in the first days of their existence in Paradise. Oh no. It was infinitely higher than that. They were now recreated. And that means that this second birth, this rebirth, was according to Him of whom I quoted from Colossians. And that is Jesus Christ the Lord. Later on I will have to speak of this again and explain this further. Suffice it here to say that Adam and Eve experienced a life through this rebirth such as they had never tasted before. They received eternal life at this juncture of history. They received essentially the same life which Christ would receive at His glorification. They received the life of God's Covenant in the heavenly, spiritual and eternal measure of the Man Christ Jesus. And that eternal life manifests itself, negatively, in hating the devil and the devil's world, and, positively, in loving God and His world. It is the life of the antithesis. You always say Yes to goodness and God, and you say No to evil and the devil. That is

the meaning of this enmity which God put between the devil and the woman Eve, and, of course, Adam is also included here. That the Lord said this to Eve and not first of all to Adam is undoubtedly because she was the first to fall for the wiles of the devil.

Note further that God will also put enmity between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman.

You will remember that we proved from Scripture that the battle of the ages is spiritual in character. We found that in Ephesians 6:12. Well, it is no different with these two kinds of seeds. They also are the spiritual seed of the two parties.

The devil has a seed. We all know that the devil is a spirit. He is one of the angels which God created and which fell away from God, dragging with him a great host of angels who all became wicked, and are called demons, devils, wicked angels, etc. And a spirit cannot bring forth natural seed. His seed, his offspring is spiritual. We read of that generation very often in the Bible. Attend to the following places of Holy Writ. In I John 3:7-10 John differentiates between children of God and children of the devil. In Ephesians 2:2 we read that we, even as the whole world, once walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh on the children of disobedience! Terrible condition. Imagine to be a child of disobedience! But the clearest passage we find in John 8:44, where we read that Jesus looked upon wicked men and said to them: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it.

There you have an explanation of the term: Seed, that is, children of the devil. Spiritually they have imbibed their whole life from the origin of all evil and the lie. Therefore all men are called liars. It is because they are the offspring of the father of the lie.

And the terrible indictment of God is that the whole human race is the offspring of the devil as they are by nature, as they are born. Every one of us. Because the Bible says that the whole world lieth in darkness.

But there is also a seed of the woman, of Eve.

Centrally that seed is Jesus Christ the Lord. We will speak of that in its place.

But first let us see the woman, that is, Eve, bringing forth her spiritual seed. She has done so, from the very beginning of time. Always there are god-fearing women who with their husbands are bringing forth children that love God and that hate the devil. The enmity which God prophesied in my text



was fulfilled immediately. As soon as the seed of the devil stands overagainst the seed of Eve, we note the enmity. Remember Cain and Abel. The first is the spiritual son of the devil, and the other is the spiritual son of the godfearing Eve. And the enmity is so great that Abel is finally killed, and his blood cries to God in heaven.

But righteous Abel does not die before he has first crushed the head of the serpent. The head is the mind, the intellect, the seat of the notion, the thought, the philosophy of darkness. Cain also had the notion of the devil, and it is this. You will remember from the story in the Bible that the whole battle is about religion. Cain is going to worship God, but he will not take a lamb in order to slaughter it and to sacrifice the bloody sacrifice. No doubt, God had instructed Adam in religion, worthy the term. He must have instructed them in the bloody sacrifice, so that they might show Christ in typology. All religion must be founded in the Man whom God chose eternally to bring His Kingdom to fruition. And this Man Jesus Christ, who is also God, should build that Kingdom on His blood.

Well, Cain refused that. He wanted to act just as though nothing was changed. He was going to worship God of the plain fruits of the ground. No blood theology for him! But Abel reasoned with him. They spoke together in the field before Cain rose up against him and slew him. Note Hebrews 11:4. Abel's offering was accepted because he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. In the sacrifices we see the occasion for the struggle between them.

And thus it shall be for all time, and such it has been for all time.

The woman, the Church of all the ages, is struggling to bring forth her spiritual seed. And the dragon always stands in front of the woman in order to destroy that seed. For the heel of the seed of the woman is wounded. And in the wounding of that heel you have first of all all the suffering of the church in this battle of enmity. There is a stream of blood which testifies to the truth of this statement in my text. They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Heb. 11:36, 37. Throughout the whole long trail of history the church is hated and maltreated by the seed, the spiritual seed, of the de-

vil. They continually bruise the heel of the seed of the woman.

But the fulfillment of this enmity between these two seeds takes place when Jesus is born. He is the Manchild of the woman, the church. Read Rev. 12. There you read the whole story of this battle between the two seeds. The woman, that is, the Old Testament Church, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. They are all the woes of 4000 years of suffering by the church. The devil always remembered the words of God in Paradise. He knew that the fulfillment of this promised seed would come. And he stands in the vision of Rev. 12 before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born! Remember wicked Herod who would kill Jesus a little while after he was born?

Well, this devil has tried to kill Jesus time and time again. But he could not until the time was ripe which God had foreordained in His counsel. And when the time had come, the devil went into Judas and the foul thing was accomplished. The heel of the Seed of the woman, and that is Jesus, was bruised. He was crucified.

But attend also to this. In the same action the head of the serpent was bruised. The notion of the devil, inspiring the whole wicked world of lies and liars, is condemned on the cross. The cross is really the victory for Christ and all who are of Christ. It is the proof of their wickedness and shall damn both the devil and his followers, his spiritual children forever.

By this time the devil knows that he has lost the battle. He also knows that even through his wicked devices he has helped in spite of himself to crush his own head and to bring the spiritual children of God to heaven. We are saved by the Cross of Jesus. We are saved through all the machinations of the devil, and his children, Judas Iscariot included. When the results of their wicked deeds are become manifested and Jesus does hang on the accursed tree, the foundations are laid in history for eternal joy by the throngs of God's saints in the heavenly Jerusalem forever.

Are you at enmity with the devil and his world?

Then your heel is bruised. Then you suffer of the world's hatred. But you are destined to sing forever.

But remember: it is of God, through God, and must be unto God!

Let us praise Him, now and forever!

G. Vos

## Report of Classis East . . . IN SESSION JULY 9, 1952 AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

This meeting of Classis was held at the Creston Church in Grand Rapids.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, the president of the last Classis, conducted the opening exercises. After the credentials were accepted and Classis was declared constituted, Rev. Van den Berg handed the hammer to Rev. R. Veldman, who, according to rotation, was called upon to preside. Rev. Veldman now speaks a few words of welcome to the delegates.

Those delegates present for the first time at Classis sign the Formula of Subscription. Next the minutes of the previous meeting of Classis are read and adopted.

Oak Lawn had an instruction at the last Classis concerning the decision taken April 4, 1951, which reads. Art. 28—"A report of the stated clerk is read that he has obtained the information in regard to Oak Lawn's overture of the last Classis, from the minutes of Aug. 31, 1927 to the effect that the material for Classis must be in the hands of the stated clerk four weeks before Classis."

Oak Lawn asks for a new ruling; or otherwise that Classis abide by the present ruling.

This matter is given into the hands of a committee. This Committee advises Classis to rescind the decision that the material for classis must be in the hands of the Stated clerk four weeks before Classis. And with the grounds given they show that this decision is impracticable, that it cannot be carried out.

Classis decided to rescind the above mentioned decision, and further not to follow the advice of Oak Lawn inasmuch as this request is not practical and does not serve the purpose intended by Oak Lawn to ascertain the length of the meeting.

Grand Haven requests classical appointments. Classis grants this request. Later in the meeting the following schedule of appointments was adopted:

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| July 20—Rev. G. Lubbers  | Aug. 31—Rev. H. De Wolf     |
| July 27—Rev. J. A. Heys  | Sept. 7—Rev. E. Knott       |
| Aug. 3—Rev. G. Vos       | Sept. 14—Rev. Blankespoor   |
| Aug. 10—Rev. M. Schipper | Sept. 21—Rev. G. v. d. Berg |
| Aug. 17—Rev. B. Kok      | Sept. 28—Rev. C. Hanko      |
| Aug. 24—Rev. R. Veldman  | Oct. 5—Rev. H. H. Kuiper    |

A document from the Canadian Reformed Church of Chatham is given into the hands of a committee to report at the next Classis.

A protest of the Creston Consistory against the decision of the last Classis in Art. 19 is read.

Classis decided to abide by its former decision on the grounds:

a) that Classis does not accept the grounds offered by the protestant.

b) that Classis does not offer new grounds.

c) that, nevertheless, if there is sufficient ground for transfer, the consistory should grant membership papers to those requesting them, as expressed in Art. 82 D. K. O.

The church visitors reported that they had carried out their work and that, on the whole they had found that even though we are a militant church on earth, that there was unity and peace in our churches.

The next meeting of Classis will be held Wed. Oct. 1 at the First Church of Grand Rapids.

The minutes were read and approved and Rev. M. Schipper led in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk