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## MEDITATION

### The Pure in Heart

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8

In the very beginning of the Lord Jesus' ministry we read that He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, the land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. And further we read in the same context: From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. And a little further: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people.

The result was that there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

And Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying—and then follows the wellknown Sermon on the Mount.

The beginning of that sermon comprises what is known as the seven beatitudes, the sixth of which I have chosen for my meditation: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

These seven beatitudes do not describe seven kinds of people. For instance, it is not so that you may be-

long to those that are poor in spirit and not to those that mourn, or to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. We find here rather a sevenfold description of the citizens of the Kingdom of heaven. Moreover, this description is not first of all the *outward* behaviour of these citizens of the heavenly Kingdom, as it is a portrayal of their *inward, spiritual* status as children of God. The seven characteristics of these blessed ones are *inner* virtues of the *heart* and not first of all their words and deeds. If their words and deeds are praiseworthy it is because of the fact that they are poor in spirit, meek, hungering, merciful, pure and peacable. And these virtues are virtues of the *heart*.

So also with my text: the pure in heart are blessed. It describes the citizens of heaven from the inner principle of their inmost man. Their *hearts* are pure; therefore they are blessed; and their blessedness is expressed in the wonderful fact that they shall see God.

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What does it mean when we speak of purity in heart?

In order to know that, we will have to know first of all what is meant by the Word of God when it speaks of the heart of man. In Proverbs 4:23 we read the admonition: "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life." And Psalm 64:6 speaks of the heart as very deep. It shows us that the heart of man is the ethical spiritual center of his existence. Because in the Scripture just quoted we heard that out of it are the issues of life. Therefore it is plain that the thoughts, the desires, the imaginations and reflections, together with all your willing and knowing; your loving and hating spring from the heart. It is the fountain of all our conscious and unconscious existence. You are not

what you say and think, but you are as your heart is. As the heart of a man is, so is he.

Secondly, what does it mean to be pure in heart?

It is the most wonderful thing that can happen to you. If my heart is pure, I do not really care what happens to me. Then I am blessed even when in the midst of the flames and smoke of the stake. If my heart is pure, I have heaven in my soul. It is the highest good for man.

And why, you ask? Well, the word purity here means that the heart has no foreign, alien substances in it. It is as we speak of pure gold. In that case we have in mind gold that is purified of all substances that are *not* gold, but are dross and dirt. So we also speak of diamonds of the purest water.

Pure in heart we were when we came out of the hand of our Creator in Paradise. Adam and Eve walked in the garden of Eden with pure hearts. And that has some wonderful implications. It is a heart that is rich in God. A pure heart knows and loves the idea to stand before His blessed face and to be filled with Him as the day is long. A pure heart turns itself to God as the flower turns itself to the warming rays of the sun. A pure heart hates all evil and loves all that is good and praiseworthy. A pure heart is virtuous in the extreme. Hence, a pure heart is heaven in principle.

Where does that leave *us*, dear reader?

Listen and we will hear what the Bible has to say on that score. I find the answer in Jeremiah 17:9. I quote: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" That is a very exhaustive definition of the human heart. Yes, exhaustive and humiliating. And true. It is the definition of the Holy Ghost whose name is the Spirit of Truth. There is no comeback here. Hence, we also read in Gen. 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

How has that come about?

The answer is: the sin of Adam and Eve in Paradise. There the inmost heart of man turned itself from the Eternal and Triune God to the devil and made a covenant with that fallen spirit from hell. Listen again to God's Word: Isaiah 28:15 "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement!" There is the record and it is against all of us, none excepted. There is therefore no one that doeth good, no not one. Ps. 53.

Thus we can understand that when the Holy Spirit must define our hearts, He would testify in the

Word of God: Deceitful is the heart above all things and desperately wicked!

That means also that all the issues of our hearts are wicked. Oh, I know, I know, that this is not always evident. That we often times will smile with a cursing heart. That there are many things that we do and speak which have the name of goodness and virtue. But pray, tell me, what is behind all our so-called nobility but a heart that will not give God the praise and honor that is due Him? Who among the children of man will do virtue and honor *because he loves God*? And that is the only virtue worthy of the name. The Bible tells us, my friends, that all things we do, eating, drinking or ought else, must all be done to His honor and His glory? In another place it says All that is not done out of faith is sin!

Hence, we conclude that we all are impure in heart, none excepted. Such is the testimony of Scripture; such is the testimony which the Holy Spirit writes in our hearts when we are regenerated and converted; and such is our experience in the midst of the world. That is also the reason why a converted soul will cry: O God be merciful to me, the sinner! At such time you will not make any nice distinctions between your so-called good works and your evil works, but when you stand in the light of God's Spirit and when the wisdom of heaven falls into your impure heart, at such times you see nothing but sin, sin, sin. And you find only one name that fits you and that name is sinner!

The best man that ever lived said: I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. He is Job, the man in the land of Uz. We are able to make quite a catalog of the confessions of God's saints in the Bible. They all speak one language. And if that be true of the child of God; I ask you, where shall the wicked appear? One more testimony: and, remember, it is a description of the historical church of God. I find it in Isaiah 64:66 and 7a: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee..." There you have our picture as we are by our natural birth. That is human nature. In this connection I am tempted to ask: what of that celebrated free-will to accept the Gospel? The Holy Ghost tells us that no one on earth stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee. That was so in Isaiah's day; and so it is today.

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We, all of us, are impure of heart. Everyone of us has gone away backward, we have forgotten God.

This impurity may be proven very easily. One simple question: why do you labor and work and sweat in this sorry world? Many answers, most of which would be: I want to earn a decent living on earth and give every one his due. Yes, and what about God? If you have would asked Adam when he still had his pure heart, he would have said: I work and keep the garden of Eden because I love God. I work unto His honor and praises. Ah, you all know that we are selfish by nature. And all that is an expression of the impure state of the heart. The heart is turned to self, our friends, humanity, the world, in short to everything, except to heaven's own God. And that is also our sin.

To whom then does Jesus refer in the 6th beatitude?

Well, dear reader, the answer to that question is the Gospel of God.

My first answer must be: *the* pure in heart is Jesus. Oh, you may rely upon it: all His heart was and is pure. There were no foreign elements in the depth of His heart. That is also the reason why He always spoke for God and unto His honor.

He knew that He was sent into the world to reveal the Father. He knew that He had to show to the whole world how lovable and how full of lovingkindness the Father was. He knew also that this revelation would call for the most horrible suffering for Himself. God wanted to reveal His love: the children of God that were loved from all eternity must be saved from death and hell and the curse. But the way unto that salvation was the payment of justice and righteousness which were outraged by the children of God. And that payment was eternal death for Jesus. And what did Jesus do? He was so pure in heart that He said: Not my will but Thy will be done and He trod the way of eternal suffering where His pure heart broke in the cry: Why, O my God, hast Thou forsaken Me? It was the question of a pure heart which never forsook God. It was His meat and drink to do the will of God. And because He knew that His torment was the explanation of God's great Love and Goodness, He grew still and suffered until the cup of the wrath of God was emptied to the bottom.

Jesus is the pure in heart.

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And, in the second place, this Jesus gives Himself through His Word and Spirit unto the men and women, the children and babes that were given Him of the Father. Go with me to Paul and he will tell you. I quote: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And

again: Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Gal. 2:20 and II Cor. 13:5.

And the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the depth of our hearts is called the new birth, which when coming to our consciousness is called the conversion of the sinner. From that time on the Lord Jesus dwells in us and never departs from us. And He dwells within us by His Holy Spirit that was poured out on Pentecost.

New creatures, indeed. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.

Not as though all the evil and wickedness and impurity of our nature is removed, but so that in the very depth of our evil heart the obedience and the purity of Christ dwells and works and fights against all the remaining evil in our nature, until the time that we are entirely liberated and shall dwell in all purity in the abode of the pure; and *that* is heaven.

Such people are blessed.

And why?

The reason for their blessedness is stated in the text. They shall see God.

I may as well say right at the start that to unregenerated men that means nothing at all. No, that is not correct. It does mean something to them. The more you talk to them of seeing God the more they will hate the very idea. Because by nature we all hate the idea of a God that must be loved and obeyed unto all eternity. We will go out of our way and send messengers after Him saying: We have no pleasure in Thy ways, O God! Do you not know how His name and His day and His church is hated and outraged all through the ages? No, there is no natural love of God. And when He shall come in the day of judgment, then the wicked will say: Mountains fall upon us and hills cover us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne. For the day of His wrath is come and who is able to stand?

But if Christ dwells in you so that your inmost heart is pure, there is nothing sweeter to you than to see His blessed face. Then you say with the poet: When shall I come to appear before God? To see God face to face and to be satisfied with such spectacle in heavenly sphere is the highest good for man. It is the cause of much singing and utmost jubilation.

When I in righteousness at last Thy glorious face shall see, when all the weary night is past, and I awake with Thee: to view the glories that abide, then, then I shall be satisfied!

G. Vos.

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**EDITORIALS****Reply to the Rev. Kok**

2.

Let me now elucidate the statement to which, according to his article in *Concordia*, the Rev. Kok also subscribes, namely, that the gospel preaching is "a general proclamation of a particular or conditional promise".

The Rev. Kok writes in that article: "Let me give just one quotation of the Rev. H.H. taken from the *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 21, Page 434, 'When he explains that in such passages as Ezekiel 18:23 God promises *conditional life* (underscored by the Rev. H.H.) to all, he evidently means that through the gospel God declares that He will give life to all that repent. And since it is God who must give repentance, in reality He promises life only to the elect and none other.' 'And surely, the complainants will have to admit that this differs radically from their view, that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all men, the reprobate as well as the elect.'

"What the reformer here teaches is that although the preaching of the gospel by men is general and promiscuous, the content is always particular. God saves those that fly to Him for pity and redemption; that come to Him, that forsake their wicked ways, repent and believe. And this 'condition' of salvation not one man is able to fulfill of himself. God fulfills His own condition. He gives grace to repent, to believe, to come to Him.'

"That is Reformed; to say that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all that hear the gospel, as the complainants would have the preacher of the gospel proclaim, is Arminian pure and simple."

The reader must remember that when Rev. Kok quotes me as writing "When he explains that in such passages as Ezekiel 18:23, etc.", I refer to Calvin and to a quotation from *Calvin's Calvinism*. And when therefore I underscored "conditional life", the underscoring is really not mine, but Calvin's. It was Calvin that underscored the phrase.

Now we must certainly understand that this writing of mine, and my mentioning of conditions and conditional life, has nothing to do with our present controversy. Even this I wrote in answer to a complaint made against Dr. Clark by some of the brethren in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in which they sought to prove the contention that according to Calvin God seeks the salvation of all, reprobate as well as elect.

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To prove that Calvin taught no such thing I made this quotation from him.

Still more. The same quotation from Calvin was already made in my brochure, "Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper, A Comparison". And also in that brochure I did not mean to emphasize or to defend conditional theology, nor a conditional promise for all. But I agitated against the First Point of 1924, and opposed the teachings of Berkhof and Kuiper that the preaching of the gospel is a well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God to all men. It is in this connection that I quoted Calvin, and agreed with him, that the preaching of the gospel is a general proclamation of a particular or conditional promise. All this is quite different from our present controversy with the Liberated and with the views of the Liberated as they are strongly recommended even by the Rev. Kok.

That Calvin did not believe that the promise of God was promiscuous to all, but was only to the elect, is very evident from the work I quoted, *Calvin's Calvinism*. Let me make just one quotation: "For notwithstanding all your vain talk about it, the truth is that a heart of flesh and a new heart *are not promised to all men promiscuously*, but to the elect peculiarly, that they might walk after the commandments of God." p. 315.

And that also I do not, and never did, teach a conditional promise for all, but always maintained that the promise of God is unconditionally for the elect alone, may be evident from the following quotation from the brochure, "Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper", from which also I quoted Calvin in the *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 21, p. 434. In that brochure I wrote:

"Does not the gospel contain much more than the preaching of what the Lord did *for* us?

"And does it not imply the preaching of the riches of His grace, whereby He applies this salvation to all His elect? Does this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ not belong to the promise of the gospel? I am now thinking of the grace of regeneration, whereby we become partakers of the life of the risen Lord in principle; of the grace of effectual calling, whereby we are translated from darkness into light; of the grace of faith, whereby we know that we are justified before God and have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ; of the grace of conversion and sanctification, the mortification of the old man and the quickening of the new man; of the grace of perseverance, so that no one can pluck us out of Christ's hand. I say, do not all these blessings of grace belong to the promise of the gospel? Surely, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ does not come with a mere message that

He *will* save us (of what avail would it be for us poor, dead, miserable sinners?), but with the very positive glad tiding, that He *did* save us and does save us even unto the end."

A little further I discuss the contention of Berkhof and Kuiper that the gospel they preach is a gospel for *all sinners*. And I write as follows:

"The gospel they preach is a gospel for *all sinners*. On this they both agree.

"But this implies, that they preach, that God promises new hearts, repentance, faith, adoption, forgiveness, justification, conversion, sanctification and perseverance to all that hear the gospel! For all this is surely implied in the gospel.

"Now it is plain that also in this respect they depart from Calvin. The great Genevan reformer does not agree with them. And he expresses his disagreement in the strongest terms. He does not hesitate to assert that *a man must be utterly beside himself* to claim, that God *promises* these blessings of grace to all men generally and indiscriminately."

And on this contention of Calvin I give my own comment in the same brochure, pp. 39,40:

"Niether is Calvin's language too strong. The folly of maintaining that God promises a new heart to everybody, is easily discovered. For why, pray, if God offers the blessing of a new heart to all, if the promises of grace are actually for all men indiscriminately, why does He not fulfill His promise? Surely, a new heart is entirely the work of God. Man can do nothing towards receiving it. He cannot make himself worthy of it. He cannot get himself into a state of receptivity for it. He cannot even make himself will to receive it. He is incapable to induce himself to even pray for it. This is true of all men by nature, of all indiscriminately. A new heart is God's work, His gift only, absolutely. Man cannot work for it if God does not bestow the blessing on him; neither can any men resist the operation of God whereby He renews the heart, if it pleases the Almighty to give him a heart of flesh instead of the stony heart. Now, please, if the promise of the gospel concerning this new heart (not *is preached to all that hear, this is self-evident*) is given by God to all men without distinction, why does He not fulfill His promise?

"Because some do not will to receive it? That is Arminianism. And even then a man must be utterly beside himself to speak thus, for no one is willing to receive a new heart before he possesses it.

"More mysteries perhaps? I fear me, that Kuiper will answer thus. But we say with Calvin: Nay but more nonsense! A man must be utterly beside himself to assert that this promise of the gospel con-

cerning a new heart is made by God to all men generally and indiscriminately!

"But again: if God promises this blessing, which He alone can bestow and bestows *unconditionally* (I now underscore), to all men, and does not fulfill the promise, where is God's truth? Is the promise of God brought to nought? Has His Word become of none effect? God forbid! Nay, but the promise was never made to all by Him, but only to the elect. And Kuiper has no right and no calling to present it differently!"

It is only in this connection that Calvin may be quoted when he speaks of a promise of conditional life.

It is also in the same connection that I quoted him, and quoted him with my consent and approval.

In the above quotations of Calvin and of myself we simply have the doctrine of our Reformed Standards. Moreover, in them we have the same doctrine as was adopted by our Synod of 1951 in the Declaration of Principles.

But this is not the doctrine of the Chr. Ref. Churches of 1924, that supported the Heynsian view of common grace within the covenant, and of a conditional promise to all that are baptized. Nor is it the doctrine as is held by the Liberated Churches, which in principle agrees with the Heynsian view and with the doctrine of the First Point. And it is not the doctrine of an article by Dr. Schilder in *Concordia* some time ago, translated and highly recommended by the Rev. Kok. Nor is it the doctrine of the brochure of Dr. Schilder in which he attacks the Declaration of Principles, also recommended to our readers by the Rev. Kok.

It will now be plain what I meant when I supported Calvin's statement that the preaching of the gospel is a general proclamation of a particular or conditional promise.

First of all, it must be evident that I consider the terms *particular* and *conditional* in this connection as having the same connotation, the same meaning.

It is also very evident from the whole connection that I do not mean: "God promises to all of you salvation, if you believe, that is, if you perform the act of believing."

With such a statement any Arminian would agree.

Nor would I say that God promises salvation on condition that you fulfill the act of believing, and add the camouflage statement that God fulfills the conditions.

But I will say this: the general proclamation of a particular or conditional promise means: the proclamation of a promise to those in whose heart God works faith and repentance, the fruit of which is that by His

grace they believe and repent. And that, of course, is the general proclamation of a promise which is only for the elect.

You can also put it this way: "God promises to you salvation, provided He works in you faith and repentance, the fruit of which you may discern in yourselves by believing and repenting."

But if you preach that God promises to all of you salvation, if you believe, that is, if you perform the act of believing, you camouflage the truth and become Arminian.

O yes, God fulfills all the conditions. But remember, that after He fulfills the conditions, we fulfill conditions no more. Only, when God fulfills the conditions, *His* conditions, and not ours, we bear the fruit of His work of grace in our hearts, repent and believe, and walk in a new and holy life.

That is Reformed, according to our confessions. And nothing else is! If you want to speak of Reformed conditions, you speak of conditions which God fulfills, period.

That this is the truth as taught in our confessions is plain throughout. But I will quote from the Canons, which are composed in order to combat the Arminians.

That faith and believing, that is, the faculty and the power of faith, as well as the act of faith, are not conditions which we must fulfill unto salvation, and unto the reception of the promise, but the work of God throughout, is plain from Canons III, IV, 14. There we read:

"Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure; but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; nor even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will, consent to the terms of salvation, and actually believe in Christ; but because he who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe, and the act of believing also."

This is plain language. It simply means that all is of God, and none of us. It means that there are no conditions or prerequisites which man must fulfill. God absolutely fulfills them all, so that He bestows not only the power of faith and the ability to believe, but also the will to believe and the act of believing. There is nothing of man in it, and there are no conditions which man must fulfill. God fulfills them all.

The same is true of the gift of repentance and the act of repentance in man, according to the confessions.

In the same chapter of the Canons from which we quoted, we read in Art. 10:

"But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversion, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places."

Note that here too God indeed fulfills sovereignly, and absolutely, according to His electing grace, all the conditions of salvation. They are absolutely His conditions, which *He* fulfills, and not our conditions, which *we* fulfill. Conversion is wholly the work of God, from beginning to end, the principle of conversion as well as the act of conversion, the principle of faith as well as the act of faith. And our believing and our repenting is nothing else than the fruit of God's work within us. This is very plain from this article. He chose His own from eternity. He confers upon them faith and repentance. He rescues them from the power of darkness and translates them into the kingdom of His dear Son. It is all of God. But the fruit of that work of God in us is that we show forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The same is taught still more clearly in Art. 11 of the same chapter of the Canons.

"But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumsizes that which was uncircumcized, infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions."

Here too the whole work of salvation is ascribed to God alone. He alone fulfills all the conditions unto salvation, powerfully, unconditionally, and sovereign-

ly. He so operates efficaciously by the Holy Spirit upon the sinner, that his hardened heart is softened, his closed heart is opened, his uncircumcized heart is circumcized. He infuses sovereignly and unconditionally new qualities into the will, renders it good, obedient, and pliable, instead of being evil, disobedient and refractory. And only when God has so fulfilled all the conditions, does man bear the fruit of that work of God in him, when God so actuates the will that the converted man brings forth the fruit of good actions.

Article 12 speaks of regeneration in the wider sense of the word, including conversion. And this too is entirely ascribed to God. I will not quote the entire article, but only refer to the end of this article, which is very relevant to our discussion. After the article has emphasized that the work of conversion and regeneration is such that it is not up to the choice of man to be converted or not to be converted, and after it has stated that all in whose hearts God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallably, and efficaciously regenerated, and do actually believe, it closes as follows: "Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of the grace received."

Once more: God fulfills all the conditions, in such a way that we have to fulfill conditions no more. But when God has fulfilled the conditions, then we bear and experience the fruit of that work of God in us by actually repenting and believing, and that too, "by virtue of that grace received."

H.H.



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—THE BOARD

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART III

OF THANKFULNESS

Lord's Day 33

#### 3. Mortification and Quickening (cont.)

From this it will also be evident that conversion has two aspects. These two aspects the Catechism describes in Questions and Answers 89 and 90. The one aspect is what the Scriptures and the Catechism both call the mortification of the old man, which by the Catechism is described in a profoundly spiritual way as "a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them." And the second aspect is called the quickening of the new man, which again is described in the same deeply spiritual way by saying that "it is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

The first aspect, therefore, is the mortification, or the putting off, of the old man, the mortification of our members which are upon the earth. The first and principal characteristic of this mortification of the old man is, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins, in other words, true repentance. By the experience of this sincere sorrow of heart you may certainly know that you are converted, no matter whether this conversion was gradual or sudden. If you wonder sometimes whether or not you are converted, it is well to ask yourself the question whether you are truly sorry for sin. Surely, the chief characteristic of true conversion in this life, in which we have but a small beginning of the new obedience, is not that you are always on the mountain-tops of faith, and perform many wonderful good works, but that you repent in true sorrow after God. Perhaps you ask: how do I know that my sorrow over sin is genuine? Also that question is really not difficult to answer. There is, indeed, a sorrow that is not after God, a false, a counterfeit sorrow. It is what Scripture calls the sorrow of the world. The two, however, the sorrow after God and the sorrow of the world, may easily be distinguished. True sorrow after God is rooted in the love of God, while the sorrow of the world is really, principally love of self. The former is a sorrow, as the Catechism expresses it, that we have provoked God

by our sins. It is sorrow over sin as sin, because sin is contrary to the will of God. The sorrow of the world, on the other hand, is sorrow not over sin, but rather over the evil consequences of sin for ourselves. Counterfeit sorrow over sin really rejoices in iniquity. And it would freely indulge in it, if it were not for the fact that the wages of sin are always death. It is this that the sorrow of the world regrets. True sorrow over sin is a radical break with all sin. But counterfeit sorrow is a break with certain sins, and that only to the degree that their commitment appears dangerous and harmful for the time being. Therefore, godly sorrow leads to life and salvation. Or as the apostle expresses it in II Cor. 7:10, it "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." But the sorrow of the world worketh death. The latter really plays with sin. It loves the darkness rather than the light. It likes to go the way of sin as far as possible, without experiencing the evil consequences of a life of corruption. And the result is always death. But true sorrow over sin is a sure manifestation of conversion.

But of course, this sincere sorrow after God, that we have provoked Him by our sins, manifests itself in the fact that we more and more hate sin and flee from it. This is the seal upon our true repentance. We may be sure: if this seal is not present, we were never sincerely sorry over sin. To mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify our old nature, and to walk in in a new and holy life in principle is the sure and inevitable sign of true conversion. If we do not really hate sin, we cannot be filled with sorrow after God. And if we do not fight sin and flee from it, but rather seek it, we thereby reveal that we do not hate it.

Again, we must remember that this mortification of the old man is first of all the work of God, and that our act of mortifying the flesh and the deeds of the body is the fruit of God's work. This is evident from all Scripture, but it is emphatically and beautifully taught in Romans 6. There the apostle asks the question: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound"? And he answers that question by teaching that this is impossible, because we were baptized into Jesus Christ, and therefore were baptized into His death. We have been buried with Christ by baptism into His death. And we have been planted together in the likeness of His death. Therefore, the apostle concludes in vs. 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." It is on the basis of this principal crucifixion of the flesh that the apostle continues: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members

as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." vss. 12, 13. But even thus all is not said. It is not so, that God converts us principally, so that we are dead with Christ and crucified with Him, and that now we finish our own conversion. On the contrary, only when God works in us continually to will and to do of His good pleasure, are we able to be active in the mortification of our old man. Never is there any synergism between God and us in the work of salvation and of conversion. It is all the work of God. And our mortification of the old man is the fruit of the operation of the grace of God in us. This is effected by the Spirit of Christ, Who dwells in us, and by the efficacious calling through the preaching of the Word of God.

The other, or positive, aspect of conversion is the turning to God and to the way of His precepts. Or, as the Catechism expresses it, it consists in "a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." This is the quickening of the new man. Of this the apostle Paul writes in Eph. 4:22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Also the quickening of this new man is first of all and principally the work of God. And our active participation in the putting on of the new man is never anything else than the fruit of the work of God's grace in our hearts. This is also taught in the same chapter of the epistle to the Romans from which we quoted above. For we were not only buried with Christ by baptism into His death, but we were also raised with Him unto newness of life: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And again, in vs. 11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is upon the basis of this work of God that the apostle admonishes the church not only to mortify the old man, but also to yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. vs. 13. This yielding of our members as instruments of righteousness unto God is our act of putting on the new man. It signifies the constant endeavor to place ourselves and our whole life under the gracious dominion of the new life in Christ. As the Catechism has it, the quickening of the new man is "a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." And also this putting on of the new man is not accomplished without the opera-

tion of the Spirit of God in Christ. It is not so, that we are once risen with Christ, and that for the rest we put on the new man by our own effort. The contrary is true: God is always first. And only when He continuously works in our hearts by His Holy Spirit can we be active, as the fruit of His grace in us, in putting on the new man. And also this active part of our conversion is accomplished by the Spirit through the efficacious calling in the preaching of the Word.

You will readily understand that conversion is a matter that concerns our whole life as long as we are in this world. Its beginning may be either very sudden and striking, so that you can point to the place and the hour when this wonder of grace was first performed on your soul; or it may be gradual and unnoticeable, bound up with the early years of your childhood, so that you cannot at all remember that you ever were converted. The former is usually the case with those that live in ways of gross sin until they have reached the age of maturity. God suddenly stops them in their pursuit of sin, and turns them radically about. The latter naturally occurs when we are instructed in the truth of the gospel from infancy, learn to stammer our prayers on mother's lap, never depart from the fear of the Lord, but walk in His way from childhood. It should also be remarked that the latter is far preferable to the former, and that he who can mention the date and the place of his conversion has nothing to boast because of it. By all means, let him not make of the experience of his sudden conversion a ground of confidence that he really is converted. Often, it seems, this is done. You may frequently hear people boast that they know that they are converted because some ten or twenty years ago they came to Christ. But the question is not at all how and when you were converted, nor whether you had an experience of conversion several years past, but whether you are converted today. For whether you were converted suddenly or gradually, as far as the beginning of your conversion is concerned, it surely is only a beginning. It must continue throughout your whole life. It is never finished until you close your eyes forever upon things mundane, your body is laid in the grave, and your soul is with Christ in glory. Nor must we ever imagine that conversion gradually becomes less necessary as we grow in grace. The contrary is true. Always there is with the Christian the old man, seeking to regain his former dominion. And never does he get rid of the body of this death. Always the new man in Christ must watch and pray and fight the good fight. We must be converted, and convert ourselves, as long as we live. But remember; the latter is always the fruit of the former. Let no flesh glory in His presence.

## VAN BOEKEN

ZIELSZORG EN PSYCHIATRIE door. B. Chr. Hamer. J.H.  
Kok N.V. Kampen, Nederland Prijs f.8.50.

Dit boek is geschreven door een Christen-arts. Het handelt, zooals de titel reeds te kennen geeft over abnormale psychologie en dat wel in verband met de zielszorg. Het bedoelt vooral hen te helpen, aan wie de moeilijke taak der zielszorg is toevertrouwd, predikanten en ouderlingen. In het eerste hoofdstuk "Het onveilig signaal" schrijft De Hamer:

"Wie op verantwoorde wijze wil omgaan met de 'normale', niet geestes-gestoorde mens, heeft reeds veel mensenkennis en wijsheid nodig, anders gelukt het hem niet door te dringen tot het mensenhart.... Geldt dit voor normale mensen, met te meer drang komt op ons af de bijzondere nood waarin mensen kunnen komen, die niet meer tot de groep der 'normalen' gerekend kunnen worden. Ook zij worden geplaatst op de weg van de zielszorger . . . Wee hen, als deze (symptomen, H.H.) niet als ziekelijk, als afwijkend door de zielszorger worden herkend" . . .

Ik zou dit boek willen aanbevelen, niet alleen aan predikanten en ouderlingen, maar ook aan verplegers en verpleegsters in Cutlerville, voor zoover ze althans nog Hollandsch kunnen lezen; en voorts aan ieder, die in aanraking komt met "abnormale" mensen.

Het boek is zeer helder geschreven. Bovendien is de schrijver blijkbaar een man, die niet alleen kennis van zaken heeft, maar die ook een warm hart heeft voor de "abnormale" mensen, waarover hij schrijft.  
H.H.

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SPREUKEN Deel I, door Prof. Dr. W. H. Gispen. J. H.  
Kok, N.V. Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f.6.90.

Deze commentaar behoort in de serie "Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift".

In eene inleiding behandelt de schrijver de naam van het boek, de schrijver van het boek, inhoud en doel van het boek, de Spreuken als het boek der wijsheid en als dichterlijk boek, en eindelijk de beteekenis van het boek. Het doel van het boek is, volgens den schrijver, duidelijk aangegeven in hoofdstuk 1:1-6. En het thema van Spreuken is uitgedrukt in 1:7: "De vrees des Heeren is het beginsel der wetenschap." Dit staat in nauw verband met de beteekenis van dit boek. Als het boek der Wijsheid wijst het op den Christus: "Ook dit boek behoort tot het Oude Testament, dat van Hem getuigt. Wanneer we b.v. telkens lezen over de tegenstelling, die er bestaat in het doen en het lot der

rechtvaardigen en der goddeloozen, tussen wijzen en dwazen, de Godvruchtigen en de spotters, dan kunnen we in het algemeen zeggen, dat Christus beantwoordt aan het ideaal, dat in dit boek gesteld wordt, en Hij alleen." p. 15.

Ook dit deel van de "Korte Verklaring", dat geschreven is in duidelijke, voor ieder vatbare taal, bevelen we gaarne bij ons Hollandsch lezend publiek aan.  
H.H.

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## OF BOOKS

THIS HAPPENED IN THE HILLS OF KENTUCKY, by John Vogel. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.95.

We probably all heard, by this time, of the "Galilean Children's Home" in the "hills of Kentucky", for it was widely advertised. This book relates the history of its beginnings and growth in a very interesting story form.

According to "Preacher Vogel" the "Home" is a pure venture of faith, and an illustration of the fact that God hears and answers prayer. Often the churches offered him help, but always he refused. However, although he did not want his institution to be supervised by the church, he received help, financial and otherwise, from private sources.

Those who are interested to learn more about this remarkable Home ought to read this story of the author's life and adventures in "the hills of Kentucky."  
H.H.

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## BOUND VOLUME 28

Volume No. 28 is now in the process of being bound in book form. Those who have standing orders and reside in the city of Grand Rapids should have their loose issues in order, ready to be collected by the book committee of the Board. Those residing out of Grand Rapids should forward their loose issues in order to Mr. H. Velthouse 1025 Wealthy St. Grand Rapids 6, Mich., or to Mr. G. Bylsma 904 Adams St., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. Please!

—THE BOARD

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Rite of Expiatory Sacrifice

Under this heading we are here occupied with the spiritual benefits that the Old Testament believers derived from their animal sacrifices. To come to clarity on this point we must allow the Scriptures to instruct us regarding the speech that the Lord imposed upon the animal sacrifices. For it was in response to this speech that was made to dwell richly in the heart of every believing worshipper that he received testimony in his heart that he was righteous.

The Scriptures that bear on this phase of our subject are the following: Lev. 17:10, 11: "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that dwell among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

The animal in common with man has a soul and is also thus capable of thought, volition and memory and of experiencing joy, grief and anger, with this difference, however, that the soul of man is a rational-moral soul, while the soul of the animal is non-rational moral. The animal thus thinks and wills as an animal, not as a human being. Thus the soul of the animal is not also spirit as is the soul of man. As the text states, it is the soul of the flesh and it is therefore in the blood and accordingly dies with the flesh or body of the animal. Now this is also true of the soul of man. But not so with his spirit or ego. This abides.

The animal for the above-cited reason stands close to man, particularly the domesticated animal such as the Lord selected for his altar. As man was created in the image of God, so it may be said of the animal that he was created in the image of man. And therefore the Lord gave the soul of the domesticated animal—one to be selected either from their flocks or from herds—to his believing people upon the altar to make atonement (symbolically) for their souls, that is, to expiate (symbolically) by its death the sins of God's people and to cover their souls with its soul which was done by striking its blood upon the horns of the altar.

"To make a covering for your souls . . . ." We must take notice of this statement. Literally it reads: "I have given it to you—that is the blood wherein is

the soul—upon the altar to cover upon your souls. "To cover". Hebrew—L'kapheer, piel infinitive construct. With his soul covered by the blood of his sacrificing victim, the worshipper, offender, was forgiven. Thus the offender was covered by the blood of his sacrifice as to his sins. How is this to be understood? Not in the sense that his sins were covered up, concealed, hidden, from the eyes of God, but in the sense that they were cancelled, obliterated (symbolically) in the same sense that, let us say, a hundred dollar debt is cancelled by a check on a bank equivalent to that amount. The check cancels, obliterates, the debt. So does the blood of Christ obliterate the moral debt, the minuses, of God's people and in addition God's people are wonderfully rich in Christ. They possess in Him all things. For by His atonement, expiation of the sins of His people, He not alone obliterated their moral debt but in addition begat for Himself and them a heavenly and eternal inheritance.

That as covered by the blood of his animal sacrifice the offender had forgiveness of sin is an idea that receives statement at several other places in the Mosaic legislation of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Lev. 4:26: "And the priest shall make a covering for him as concerning his (here a ruler of the people) sin, and it shall be forgiven him." See besides Lev. 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 16:22 and several other places. The meaning of the animal sacrifices as a symbolical-atypical transaction is well brought out by Aaron's action with the two goats on the great day of atonement. Lev. 16:6-10 and 20-22. The double transaction was this, as we already have partially explained. On this day—one day in the year—Aaron took of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and presented them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Upon the two goats he cast lots, one lot for the Lord, that is for a sin offering, and the other lot for the scape-goat, Heb.—azazel, goat of departure, from the verb azaz to depart. The goat for the Lord was offered for a sin offering and its blood, instead of being struck on the horns of the altar of burnt offering that stood in the outer court of the tabernacle, was brought within the vail of the holy place and thus presented before the face of the Lord as a covering for the accumulation sins of the people.

Then he brought the live goat. Upon its head, as has already been explained, Aaron laid both his hands, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the people—the accumulation of the people's sins of the whole by-gone year—and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. Thereupon he sent the goat away by the hand of some fit man into the wilderness. And then we read: "And

the goat shall bear upon him all the iniquities of the people," that is, bear them away from before the eyes of God and this permanently, which was equivalent to their being cancelled (symbolically).

But this would raise the question how God could allow sin to be lifted from the transgressor and thus borne away. Being God righteous and holy, must He not keep sin before Him and destroy the transgressor? The answer was that other goat selected for the sin offering. By its death sin was paid for (symbolically) and thereby obliterated. It is plain that the two goats must be conceived of as being one.

Further, it is clear—and it was certainly clear also to the Old Testament believers—that the animal sacrifice by blood was vicarious, substitutionary (symbolically). This is particularly plain from the action of Aaron with the scapegoat, from his putting all the sins of the people upon its head in order that it might bear them away. *It was as their substitute and thus as standing in their room*, that their sacrificing victims atoned their sins (symbolically). Instead of imputing all their sins unto them, the Lord put them upon the head of the live goat. Aaron's confessing over it all the iniquities of the people with both his hands on its head was simply a ceremony indicative of God's laying all our sins upon Christ. Accordingly this goat as led into the wilderness bore upon him no sin. What we gaze at here is simply an action symbolizing prophetically the bearing away of our sins by Christ. And the death of the sacrificing animal expiated no sin. It was simply a shadow of the expiation of sin by Christ. And so the priest's striking the blood of the sacrificing victim upon the horns of the altar covered no sin; the action was simply shadow, symbol, prophetic of the covering, the obliteration, of sin by the blood of Christ. All was prophetic symbol here as well as our sacraments are symbols. Certainly, we are not cleansed from our sin by the natural water of holy baptism. Our being sprinkled by this water is simply a ceremony symbolizing our being washed from our sins by the blood of Christ.

The priest of the first covenant must be still brought in here. He covered the sins of the offender but by the blood of an animal sacrifice, thus by a blood other than his own. Here the priest was one and the sacrificing victim another. Christ, on the other hand, saved His people from all their sins by His own blood. Here the priest and the sacrificing victim are one. For Christ, God's only begotten Son, is partaker of the flesh and blood—the human nature—of His brethren. He entered into personal union with our nature. It was therefore God's own Son—Son of God as God—who atoned our sins.

We are now ready to set forth the meaning, idea,

of the animal sacrifice. The meaning, idea is that of a sacrificing victim, God's own merciful gift to His ill-deserving and condemnable yet chosen and contrite people, paying as their substitute for all their sins by His suffering and death and thereby bearing away their sins, covering, cancelling, obliterating them, blotting them out before God's Face. It is thus at once the idea of a sacrificing victim redeeming God's people from all their sins by the price of its life rendered to God as a full satisfaction of His justice.

These are the ideas set forth, symbolized by the animal sacrifice. It formed, did these ideas, the very word of God that He, Himself, imposed upon the animal sacrifice by all such language as the following: "And I have given it (the life of the flesh of the animal) upon the altar to make an atonement (covering, cancellation) for your sins" (Lev. 17:11). "And the priest shall make a covering for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. 4:26). And consider once more the language of the action with the live goat of Lev. 16. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat . . . And the goat shall bear upon him all the iniquities into a land not inhabited . . ."

The only question is whether the saints of the first covenant were made to realize that the animal sacrifice was but symbol and type so that this very language also was symbolical typical and that therefore in employing this language the Lord was really speaking of the true Lamb of God that in His own time He would bring in. All the prayers of the believers of the first covenant plainly reveal that they were indeed made to realize this. Let us attend to some of these prayers while at once taking notice of the words that the Old Testament saints employed in giving expression to the idea of the forgiveness of sin.

1) *nasa*, to lift up and bear away. Ps. 32:1, "O how blessed is he from whom his transgression has been lifted up and born away." *nasu* kal passive part. construct. The English versions translate here "forgive".

2) *kasah*, to cover in the sense of cancelling, obliterating, and not in the sense of concealing, covering up. Ps. 32:1: "Blessed is he whose sin is covered," *kasu*, kal passive part. construct.

3) *chashab* with the negative *lo*, not to impute, reckon, think. Ps. 32:1: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute his iniquity." *yachshob*, Kal imperfect, third person mas.

4) *machah*, to blot out. Ps. 51:1, "Have mercy upon me O God, according to thy lovingkindness: ac-

cording to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out all my transgressions," m'chee, Kal imperative.

5) *kaphar* a) to cover in the sense of cancelling. b) to expiate, that is, to make complete satisfaction for.

6) *kabhas*, to wash. Ps. 51:1, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity," kabbees, Piel imperative.

7) *thaher*, to cleanse. Ps. 51:1, "And cleanse me from my sin," thaher, piel imperative.

8) *phadah*, to redeem, that is, to free from captivity or slavery and the like by the payment of a price. Ps. 130:8, "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," yiphdeh in the text. Kal pret. 3d. per. sing. mas.

Now of course, "to cleanse," and "to forgive" are not the same. As works of God the latter is judicial; it squares a sinner with the law so that, if formerly his state was one of guilt, it is now one of innocence. The divine forgiveness accordingly is the blotting out of sin, the cancellation of sin and implies that sin has been paid for, atoned, expiated by the death of the Lamb that God provided. Hence, as forgiven, God's people stand before Him blameless in love.

God's cleaning, on the other hand, effects a change in the moral-spiritual condition of God's people, so that, if formerly they were dead and polluted in their sins, as cleansed in the blood of Christ, they are now new creatures in Christ, holy and undefiled before God in Him.

Hence, the Hebrew terms *nasa*, *macha*, *kasah*, and *kapher*, signify forgiveness and may be so rendered in our language, but not so the terms *kebhas*, and *thaher*. *padah*—to redeem—as a work of God includes the expiation of sin, its cancellation, and the sinner's cleansing of his sin.

Let us now examine the above-cited prayers. Doing so we discover that in their totality these prayers as to their content are pivoted, so to say, on the very ideas set forth by the sacrifice by blood. Every idea again meets us in these prayers. "Blessed is he whose sins are *born away*," so prays the psalmist. And, "Blessed is he whose sins are *covered*, and to whom God does not *impute iniquity*." And, "Blot out my transgressions O my God," and, "cleanse me from all my iniquities." And finally, "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

What it reveals is in the first place that the saints of the first covenant were indeed made by the Spirit of Christ to grasp the meaning of the animal sacrifice by blood. The word that God imposed upon that sacrifice dwelt richly in their hearts.

But there is still this question whether they were

also made to realize that the sacrifice by blood was but symbol, type, shadow. The above-cited prayers plainly reveal that such was indeed the case. Had in David's mind the animal sacrifice stood out as the true sacrifice he would have petitioned the Lord to forgive him his sin for the sake of that sacrifice, on the ground of its expiation of his sin. But no such prayer is found anywhere in the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. To take the stand that the saints of the old Covenant actually imagined that their sins were expiated and born away, obliterated, by the death of an animal is an insult to their sanctified intelligence.

On the other hand, neither do the saints appear anywhere in the Scriptures as praying that the Lord blot out their iniquity on the ground of the expiation of sin of the "man with Jehovah," or the "seed," or the "Anointed of the Lord" (Messiah), or the "servant of the Lord" (Isaiah), the true Lamb of God still to be brought in, the only begotten and eternal Son, partaker of the flesh and blood of the children, and thus like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted, so that in truth He is our Immanuel, two natures, human and divine united in one single person, the person of God.

So the believers of the first covenant did not pray. Such was not their confession. And this is not a wonder. Christ was not yet revealed in the flesh and the Spirit was not yet, that is, the revelations of God had not yet attained that fulness and clarity that alone make possible the making of such prayers and confessions. Hence, as casting themselves upon the mercy of the Lord in the awareness that He alone is the hope of men such as they in themselves were—men lost and undone in their sins—they besought Him that He redeem them from their sins and blot out their iniquities by his righteousness and here they put the period. So they prayed even by their very act of sacrificing. So they sought, asked and knocked. And in the way of their asking they also received. First they received testimony in their hearts that they were forgiven and thus justified. So it is written of Abel that he "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying with—should be, upon—his gifts."

In this respect, although they were properly no sacraments, yet the sacrifices by blood served the Old Testament believers the same way that the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord's supper serve the New Testament believers. Eating the Lord's supper in faith, they receive testimony in their hearts that Christ bore for them the wrath of God from the beginning of his incarnation to the end of His life and that He has fulfilled for them all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness, that Christ loves them and

has shed His blood for them, and will certainly feed and nourish their hungry and thirsty souls with his crucified body, and shed blood, that by His death He has taken away the cause of their eternal death and misery, namely sin, and obtained for them the quickening Spirit, and that by this same Spirit they are united as members of one body in true brotherly love.

Sacrificing in faith the believers of the first covenant received in their hearts *essentially* this same testimony. It means that they were saved men—saved of God unto God through Christ, and this though Christ stood not yet before them as having come into the flesh.

What could, we ask, have hindered God from saving such men,—hindered Him in the point of view of His own virtues, particularly His righteousness and holiness—considering that they were men that, as enlightened by Christ's Spirit, perceived and believed that their sins were to be expiated by a Lamb that God would provide Him and them, that thus they were men redeemed from all their sins with a price, men redeemed, saved, therefore to the great and everlasting credit of the righteousness of Jehovah, their Redeemer-God in whom they were putting all their confidence. They perceived, did these men, that the meaning of the entire symbolical-typical transaction—the animal sacrifice—was reducible to one basic idea, the idea namely, that Zion's converts are redeemed by righteousness (Isa. 1:27), that is, by the righteous act, work, of a righteous God, it being a work by which sin is paid for, expiated, and thus obliterated, and that such being its aim and achievement, it is and will be to the everlasting glory of the righteousness of a righteous God. And so they also prayed, "Save me, O God, by thy righteousness." So they prayed. What it means is that they were saved, despite the limitations of their knowledge of just how the righteousness of God was to operate in their behalf.

And so it may again be asked, what could hinder God from gathering His church already in that day if in the hearts of the men of His choice was implanted by Him such knowledge and understanding of His method of salvation? What could hinder God from telling such men in answer to their sacrificing and prayers that He loved them and that in His love he forgave them and that He was their covenant God everlastingly and they his heirs destined to dwell with Him in His house, his temple, to behold His beauties and to be satisfied by His likeness.

The whole question really comes down to this: What could hinder God from gathering His church already in that day there in the land of Canaan, seeing that in that land He, the Lord, had instituted the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. For that precise-

ly is what that symbolical-typical transaction—the animal sacrifice—was. With the word of God imposed upon it, it was preaching of the Gospel.

We see then how the Old Testament believers were served by their animal sacrifices. That sacrifice was preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Second, as a prophetic symbol it served the believers as an instrument for the expression of their faith—the faith in which they sacrificed, and a faith to which the Lord responded by witnessing with their spirits that they were righteous.

G. M. Ophoff

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 5, 1952, the Lord willing, our parents,

**Mr. and Mrs. Edward Groenhout, Sr.,** (nee Strooisma)

will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

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

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Groenhout  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Groenhout  
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lanning  
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Groenhout, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Groenhout  
13 Grandchildren

935 Thomas St., S.E.  
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Mary Martha Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to its president Rev. P. Vis and his family in the loss of their grandmother,

**Mrs. A. Brummel, Sr.**

and their cousin,

**Mr. John Brummel**

May the God of grace, Who performs all things according to His own good pleasure, but also in unchanging love to His people, comfort and sustain them in their sorrow.

Mrs. Menko Flikkema, Vice-Pres.  
Mrs. Harry Leep, Sec'y.

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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### God's Providence

(5)

#### GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND SIN

##### *How related*

To understand this relation between God's Providence and sin we must ask and attempt to answer the question: What is freedom? Man is certainly free, or, to express this thought in a better way, he is certainly a free being. The nature of his being and the character of his operation are such that he is never driven to do anything but remains free and unhindered in all his operation. This, we understand, applies to man only from the subjective viewpoint of his own activity. From the viewpoint of the living God Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, man is clay (and what may be the difference between clay and a block of wood, except that in the one instance a person forms something whereas in the other instance that person carves something?). From man's subjective viewpoint he, however, is not a stock and block, but a free, responsible being.

We must never confuse this freedom of man with sovereignty. This is the error of Pelagianism. The pelagian simply identifies the responsibility of man with his free will. That man has a free will he understands in the sense that he must be and is free to choose between good and evil in the sense that he is able to choose either of the two. Notice that we add: "in the sense that he is able to choose either of the two." We must certainly maintain that man chooses between good and evil and also that he is free in that choice. In fact, as Protestant Reformed Churches we have been privileged by the Lord to lay emphasis upon the Scriptural truth of man's responsibility and stress its true significance as set forth in Holy Writ. We have been careful during all these years to expose the fallacy of those who would maintain that we, because of our emphasis upon the sovereignty of the Lord, have failed in our presentation of the Scriptural truth of the responsibility of man. Today, in the church-world about us, it is no longer understood that one can be responsible for his actions without being able to choose the good. However, this pelagian conception of things is surely impossible. It is impossible, first of all, in the light of Scripture. The fact remains that, according to the Word of God, not man determines his course of action but the Lord. This

is a Scriptural truth so clearly stated as to tolerate no contradiction. We are born dead in sins and trespasses, and the flesh cannot desire the things that are of the Spirit. I do not determine the action of my life but my heart determines all my action. Throughout Scripture we have the complete refutation of all pelagians. Every thought and every desire, every emotion of the soul, every action of the will is controlled and directed by God so that there is no action within me independent of God. Particularly in the book of Proverbs do we have this truth clearly set forth. We read, e.g., in Prov. 16:1: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." The meaning of the inspired writer in these words is plain. The preparations of the heart in this text are the considerations of the human heart which lay in order over against each other and between which we must and do make a choice. This is surely the case in the life of every mortal. However, in that choice the Lord rules, inasmuch as the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. This answer of the tongue refers surely to our decisive answer, our choice, how we are to conduct ourselves; and the text informs us that this answer of the tongue is from the Lord. In the same vein we are told in verse 9: "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." Or, we read it so clearly in Prov. 21:1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." We should keep before us the figure of an oriental monarch who had the power to determine the life or death of his subjects, upon whose word a person's life or death depended. And we should also bear in mind that the heart, the foundation and deep source of man's spiritual existence, is ruled by the Lord and governed to perform whatsoever the Lord wills. Then we can somewhat understand the thought of the man of God in this particular word of God when he writes that the heart of the king, the fount of man's spiritual life and existence, is ruled and governed by the Lord, and that He turneth it whithersoever He wills. This thought is verified repeatedly in Holy Writ, as, e.g., in Prov. 19:21: "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Indeed, this truth is taught us everywhere in Holy Writ, as, e.g., in connection with Pharaoh whom God raised up to show His might. It must not escape our attention that the Lord raised up Pharaoh, not merely an Egyptian monarch, but Pharaoh, godless Pharaoh, the Old Testament type of the head of the antichristian power against God and against His Anointed. Hence, that the Lord raised up Pharaoh does not merely mean that He set the Egyptian monarch upon the throne.

Moreover, it is also wholly untrue that true freedom should consist in the being able to choose between the good and the evil, and that in the sense that we are able to choose both. In fact, it is wholly untrue that true freedom should necessarily consist in being able to choose the evil, that man is therefore really free when he is also able to choose that which is evil. We all understand, do we not, that the Lord is surely free in the absolute sense of the word. And we also understand that it is absolutely impossible for the Lord to choose and do the evil. Freedom and the being able to sin do not have necessarily therefore anything in common—in fact, the highest freedom surely excludes the possibility of sin. God is free and He cannot sin. The Church shall be eternally free in heavenly glory and perfection, and God's people shall forever be unable to sin. Hence, to be free does not necessarily imply that we must be able to choose the evil. The freedom of the Lord is that virtue or perfection of the Lord whereby He, unhindered and unmolested, wills Himself, loves Himself, maintains and seeks Himself, without ever being molested or hindered in that Divine loving, willing, and seeking of Himself. The Lord lives His own infinite and Divine and perfect existence freely. This life of God, we understand, is a life of Divine fellowship and communion, a life of covenant-fellowship in which the Three Divine Persons know and love and seek each other in the sphere of Divine perfection. And, in the living of this Divine life the Lord is absolutely free. Besides, and this surely lies in the very nature of the case, that Lord God also determines for us what is true freedom. God determines everything. This, we say, lies in the very nature of the case. True freedom for man is and must be the freedom of the Lord. The question relative our freedom is inseparably connected with the relation in which we stand to the living God. Freedom for me does not imply that I be able to do what and as I please. It is surely not the desire and longing of the new-born child of God to be the master of himself and of all his thinking and willing and desiring, and also to be able to do the evil. It is surely not the longing of the bird to be in the water, or of a fish to move about in the air above us. Birds and fishes are not free when they are able to do either-or. But this is my desire, this is my life: to be able to serve the Lord alone and never be able to will or do anything contrary to the will of the God of my salvation; and I am free when I am able, unmolested, to serve that God in uprightness and perfection of heart and mind. In heaven the child of God will be really and truly free forevermore. Hence, the responsibility of man does not consist herein that I am able to choose and do both: the good and the evil, and that I sovereignly

determine this choice. If this were the implication of responsibility, then we would declare without any reservation: there is no responsibility of man. And we declare this for the simple reason that such human sovereignty does not exist.

At all times, therefore, we must maintain that the responsibility of man is never to be identified with freedom in the sense of sovereignty (*vrijmacht*), that we determine our course of action. It is true that we shall never declare that the child of God is a slave of grace, inasmuch as freedom consists in the service of God, to Whom I am adapted, and the service of the Lord is eternal life. We are therefore not slaves of grace, although it is true that this power of the Lord takes complete charge of all our life and being. Man is a slave of sin as he is by nature, does not possess the freedom of eternal life, is in the absolute sense of the word a slave who must do the evil, cannot desire the good, is wholly darkness in all his thinking and deliberations. This we must clearly understand, also as according to the sovereign counsel of the Lord Who performs all His good pleasure.

However, the providence of the Lord and sin are related in such a way that sin is and remains an act of man, is not an act of God, and man is spiritually-rationally free, unmolested in all his activity. Although it is true that the sinner does not possess the freedom of everlasting life, to live spontaneously with the Lord in the fellowship of His everlasting covenant, he is nevertheless consciously, morally-rationally free. And I do not believe that this is too difficult to understand as such. Man is a moral-rational being, and therefore a responsible being. The animal, as we all know, is not conscious of God, does not understand the language of the Lord revealed in the world about it, and never conducts itself in relation to the Lord. Of the animal it cannot be said that it is either for or against God. It cannot be charged with sin. It simply does not possess the consciousness of God and is never prompted by any attitude toward the living God. How different is man! Whatever man does he does in relation to the Lord. He is conscious of God, is essentially adapted to the service of Him Who alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, can never escape Him. He therefore understands the speech of the Lord in all the works of God's hands and in the Holy Scriptures. And in all his activity he conducts himself in relation to the living God. He loves the Lord or hates Him. He is prompted by love or hatred. He seeks the honour of the Lord or sets himself against the glory of Him Who alone is worthy of all adoration. This is his moral-rational nature; and because he is conscious of the Lord, knows that he must serve the Lord, has knowledge of the living God and

knows how he must conduct himself in the midst of the world, man is a responsible being and is held accountable for all his activity. It is well that we understand this. Man is never free in the true, spiritual, Scriptural sense of the freedom of life, eternal life. This freedom consists of the blessed and unmolested service of the living God. Neither is man free in the absolute sense of the word, free in the sense that he determines his own lot, is the captain and master of his own soul and "fate," is independent of the living God. In this sense he is never free but remains clay even forever. It is surely true that man is always more than a mere instrument. A mere instrument is dead, completely without feeling. Man is and remains a moral-rational being, moral-rational clay. The freedom of man, always subject to the Lord and governed by God, consists herein that he sins consciously, not because he must, but because he wills to sin and desires that which is evil and corrupt. He sins of himself, is never driven to commit evil, never forced to do that which is wrong. He is always the active agent of his own deeds, rejoicing in the iniquity he commits. Sin always remains the object and choice of man's will. This is his ethical freedom and it must always be maintained. This alone establishes man's responsibility and accountability.

This also enables us to understand the distinction between author and origin or source. An origin or source is the willing, decisive cause or source of something—that man sins comes, in this sense, assuredly from the Lord—therefore we confess without a moment's hesitation that the Lord has willed sin and darkness and this entire valley of the shadow of sin and death. Whence came all the host of darkness if not alone from the living God; did He not create the light and the darkness, form the day and the night? How much more comforting it is for the child and the church of the living God that the Lord and not the devil is in supreme command from moment unto moment! And not only is the Lord the sole sovereignly determining Cause of all sin and unrighteousness, but He also realizes His eternal counsel, also as far as the coming of sin into the world is concerned, and operates in the life of every mortal from moment unto moment. Indeed, nothing occurs by chance, and this also refers to all the movements and activities of the powers of darkness. This, however, does not mean that the Lord is also the author of sin. How different is the idea of author! An author is the conscious, active perpetrator of an act, spiritually completely in harmony with that act. An author of sin is therefore one who loves sin and evil, who commits sin and unrighteousness as the fruit and product of his own existence, and who, when committing that evil, is com-

pletely free and unmolested. Therefore we reject all determinism which reduces man to an irresponsible stock and block, without a will and mind, but we maintain with all the powers at our command that man is a responsible, free-ethical being. In this sense, we understand, the Lord is never the author of sin. The very thought is and should be repulsive to us. For sin is never anything else than the wholly corrupt and evil direction of our moral-rational nature and in which man delights with all that he is and possesses. *Man is darkness.* To say this of the Lord would be blasphemy. The Lord God loathes sin with all that is in Him. He is too pure of eyes to behold sin and iniquity. The Lord God loves Himself, hates all sin and unrighteousness, and loves only that which is good and pure and holy. Even when He willed sin in His eternally sovereign counsel He willed it as the holy God, not because He delights in sin but because He loves Himself and would glorify Himself, antithetically, unto the greatest glory of His own adorable Name. The Lord willed darkness not for the sake of darkness but to serve as background for the marvellous revelation of the light.

This truth places us before an unfathomable mystery. Man is a morally free-responsible being. He is a being who performs iniquity and unrighteousness because he loves unrighteousness with all that is in him, be it consciously or subconsciously. (Incidentally, it is well to bear in mind that this truth concerning man's responsibility also applies to the child who is therefore saved by the Lord as a moral-rational being, through whom, and not apart from whom, the Lord glorifies Himself.) Moreover, man, in his sinning, is always free, unhindered. This implies that, although he is and remains a slave of darkness, unrighteousness is always the object of his will and desires. This is man's free will, if only we understand this in this sense of the word. On the other hand, God is God Who performs all His good pleasure. Also this truth must be maintained, without ceasing and uncompromisingly. God is God, Who is also the willing source and sovereign Cause of all things, also of all the iniquity of man and demon. He is Jehovah Who inclines and turns the hearts of kings, Who hardens every wicked heart, Who performs all His good pleasure, Who is the Divine Director of His eternal counsel, through Whom all things are in the most unlimited sense of the word, realizing every curse—word, every evil thought, even into the minutest details. However, how the holy God thus realized His eternal counsel in the all-comprehensive sense of the word without in any way affecting the responsibility of man is an unfathomable mystery. Also our responsibility is of the Lord and of none other. That the Lord hates sin, is

pure light and grace and life, and therefore never can be the author of iniquity, and yet causes all things to happen so that man, in a very real sense of the word, is morally free, unmolested, loving sin and committing it because he loves it, and at the same time rejecting, wilfully and consciously, that which is good, is for us the mystery. The mystery does not consist herein that man is sovereignly free—this is dualism and also the experience of the child of God who confesses that he can perform the good only through the grace of the Lord. How God, however, realizes His counsel also with respect to sin, Himself hating all iniquity and unrighteousness, is unfathomable. But, and this we must, of course, maintain: unfathomably deep are the thoughts of the Lord; He surely exceeds all that we know; His ways are past finding out.

This truth we must maintain with all the power at our command. This truth, that man is a morally-free, responsible being, constitutes the basis for the moral-rational character of the gospel. The difference between the child and the adult is surely not that the Lord realizes His promise unconditionally in the former whereas He realizes His promise in the latter conditionally. The promise of the Lord is always realized unconditionally, and this for the simple reason that it is of the Lord alone. The adult is simply conscious of this unconditional operation of the Lord. Never do the children of the Lord experience the realization of God's promise of salvation except unconditionally. This is the reason why we are saved by faith. How could the Lord, to bestow upon His people the sovereignly free gift of salvation and therein remain God, ever bestow this salvation upon us except through faith. For whosoever believeth comes to the Lord exactly in the consciousness that he is in himself a wholly lost sinner, conceived and born dead in sin and trespasses and the object of eternal wrath and underneath a mountain of guilt which he could never pay. However, he also comes to the Lord because the Lord, through His Spirit and Word, has revealed unto him the marvellous and unfathomable depths of His love revealed in Christ Jesus and upon the cross of Calvary, and whosoever learns to see the love of God to him as revealed to him upon the cross of Calvary, certainly must confess and adore the wholly unconditional character of that love of God in Christ Jesus. In other words, the Lord never bestows His salvation and promise upon His people except in such a way that they receive it as a purely sovereign and free gift of adorable mercy and grace. Hence, the difference between the child and the adult is not a difference in the operation of God. That operation of the Lord and of His grace is equally sovereign in both. The distinction between them lies simply in the fact that the a-

dult of God is privileged to stand consciously in that wholly sovereign work of the Lord. Besides, how can there be a difference between the child and the adult? They are both elect, are they not? Moreover, the work of Divine grace and regeneration has been begun in that adult, has it not, during his infancy? The Lord simply saves His people as moral-rational creatures, does not merely save His people by injecting life into their veins, but enables them to eat and drink of the bread and the water of life freely which He has prepared for them in Christ Jesus. And, this moral-rational nature of man is also the basis for the moral-rational character of the gospel also as far as the wicked are concerned. However, the Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

H. Veldman




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## IN HIS FEAR

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### Looking To The Future

#### CHAPTER 4

#### CONCERNING TEXTBOOKS

In our discussion of the future of our movement for Protestant Reformed education, with its problems and the solution thereof, the matter of proper textbooks occupies a major position. As important as are tools to the carpenter, machinery to the farmer, produce to the merchant, so important are textbooks to teacher and pupil. They are the "tools" with which the finished product of an education are built. And no one can produce a properly finished product with inadequate tools. To me, this means one thing: that if we desire to maintain schools that are Protestant Reformed indeed, we must, as soon as feasible, take steps toward producing proper textbooks of our own. To this proposition I wish to call your attention in the present chapter.

Again I wish to make some introductory remarks about the subject. The intention of this chapter, in the first place, is not to develop an entire scheme, and perhaps even a schedule, for the publication of our own textbooks. I do not believe we have reached that stage yet. Nor, in the second place, do I intend to discuss the entire subject of the making of textbooks in its technical aspects. It is very readily seen, of course, that much detailed study could be and must be made

of this matter alone, before any attempt is made to write and publish any textbook on any subject. What is a textbook? What use must be made of a textbook in the class room? Is it a teacher's function, for example, simply to be a sort of foreman in the class, assigning work from the textbooks, and acting as a quiz-master to see whether or not his pupils have adequately digested and assimilated the material presented in the book? And must textbooks be written to fulfill such a place in the school? Then, of course, the textbook to a large extent displaces the teacher in the school. But questions such as these belong to the technical field, and we shall not attempt to answer them here. They are nice questions for discussion in an educational conference, or for research and treatment in an educational journal. Much rather is it our desire here to treat the question of the spiritual, ethical content of textbooks, and the need for textbooks with a fundamentally Reformed point of departure.

#### *The Need of Protestant Reformed Textbooks*

It is safe to say that the necessity of Christian textbooks has never received its proper emphasis in the Christian school movement in this country. True it is that in recent years the existing Christian schools have taken steps to acquire their own textbooks, and that of late some of these have come into use. But remember that this is but of recent date, and that it is only after a century of Christian education that finally this need is being met,—met, of course, in the traditionally Christian Reformed manner. In my personal experience, from the first to the twelfth grade, the only Christian textbooks that I can recall ever having used were a Bible manual and a couple of church history books. For the rest, all the textbooks in all the branches were of worldly origin, were governed by the godless world-view, and promulgated an ungodly philosophy. Even in my college years, in an institution supposedly Calvinistic, and which had existed for many years, I met relatively few textbooks designed with a view to the teachings of that institution; and again, apart from a Dutch grammar and a course in New Testament Greek, these were all textbooks in such fields as Bible, Reformed Doctrine, and Calvinism. And in that same institution, where many of our teachers have their training even today, the textbooks used in the Department of Education as well were mostly, if not completely, of worldly origin. And I do not hesitate to contend that the use of worldly textbooks in a Christian school, whether on primary, secondary or college level, tends to a secularization of the Christian school, or, at the very best, has its consequence that the Christian character of the instruction becomes incidental, rather than fundamental. It

has had as its result this, that our Christian schools became the more readily "schools with the Bible" rather than "schools based on the Bible."

The reason for this is readily seen.

Let us take as an example the subject of world history, since this is one of the subjects in which the need of distinctively Reformed instruction can be easily seen and most easily met.

With what does a history text-book provide both teacher and pupil? Does it merely supply the necessary historical data? Does it simply relate the *facts* of history? Does it merely give an orderly account of the beginnings, development, and downfall of nations and empires? Any one who is at all acquainted with these questions knows that this is not the case. The duty of a historian,—even if this were possible,—is not simply to present the objective data of history, but to provide an evaluation of the history which he records; to point out reasons, to call attention to the significance of events, to observe the relationships between one event and another, to call the student's attention to the results of various events, etc. However, when the historian begins to do the latter, he cannot possibly avoid being biased by his fundamental view of life. It need hardly be pointed out that it makes a vast difference whether you write history from the viewpoint of the evolutionist or from the Reformed point of view that God is not only the Creator of heaven and earth and the God Who controls and governs the destiny of men and nations, but that it is He Who is our Father in heaven for the sake of Jesus Christ that does these things, and that does them with a view to the realization of His purpose, namely, to glorify Himself through the gathering, defense, and preservation of His elect. In fact, it may be said without fear of contradiction that it is even impossible to write history in such a purely objective fashion that the world-and-life view of the author does not at all creep into the book that he writes. It creeps in willy-nilly. For the proponents of the so-called scientific method to the contrary notwithstanding, there simply is no such thing as a purely objective man. Man not only has a mind and a will, but he is a spiritual being, who in all that he does stands either in the love of God or in enmity against God. And to avoid the fundamental spiritual bias of that love or enmity is in the very nature of the case impossible.

Now what happens when you inject a history book of worldly, godless origin into the classroom of the Christian school? Part One, concerning the origin of civilization, being evolutionistic in the most crass form, falls away, provided the teacher has the good Reformed sense to omit it. And perhaps, at various other stages in the course, the teacher might be able

to cull out certain parts of the text, and tell his pupils that this part or that part of the section or chapter will be omitted. But it is simply impossible to go through the whole textbook and eliminate the author's philosophy of history from the book: by so doing you would destroy the book. What, then, must necessarily happen? Briefly, the following: 1) First the teacher assigns a chapter from the book, the contents of which the pupil must digest and assimilate. Perhaps, by his questions concerning the material, the teacher may succeed to an extent in stressing the objective facts with which the chapter concerns itself. But the fact remains, that the pupil studies the material, and, as pupils will, imbibes the teachings of the author, including, of course, his history of philosophy. Strike one against the textbook, you say? I say: strike one against the pupil and also against the teacher. 2) For now what must be done? The pupil, if he is to receive Christian instruction in world history, must somehow unlearn what he has learned from the textbook, something which presents a variety of obstacles, chiefly because pupils are wont to accept very readily what a supposed expert writes. This means that the teacher is faced with an imposing task. He must first "pump out" the corruption which the author has "pumped in". If the teacher is alert, interested, and Reformed, well and good: he may be able to rescue the floundering pupil. However, consider that this same teacher has also never had anything else in the way of history instruction than such as has used the works of these same godless historians as its tools. The result has been that in more than one case the teacher has either not bothered or not cared to bother to combat this worldly philosophy of history in the classroom. He himself may have already imbibed too much of it, perhaps. Strike two. 3) But supposing, at the very best, that the teacher succeeds in overcoming the worldly, godless, materialistic, evolutionistic evaluation which the textbook has presented, let us say, of the fact that Columbus discovered America in 1492. What has the pupil left? This: the mere fact that Columbus discovered America in 1492. Has he learned his history? By no means. He has a fact in his mind's storehouse, but no evaluation of the significance of that fact. He has received no positive Christian history instruction, as yet. This the teacher, if he is capable thereof, must provide. But the history period is over, or nearly so. The result: a strikeout as far as worldly textbooks as tools in a Christian history class are concerned!

(to be continued)

H. C. Hoeksema

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## PERISCOPE

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### SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

In *Signs of the Times*, Oct. 21, 1952, an article occurred under the heading "Is the Bible Scientific?" From this article I quote the following interesting items:

The mighty advance of science since the beginning of the nineteenth century can hardly be realized. In chemistry, physics, electricity, aeronautics, biology, medicine, physiology, geology, paleontology, the increase of knowledge is tremendous. This is above all, the age of science.

The word "atom," as we have it, comes from *tomos*, a form of the Greek verb *temnein*, meaning "to divide." With an "a" prefix, it means "that which is not divisible." This name is directly contrary to modern science, which claims to have divided the atom.

As far as we know, no one has ever seen an atom. Atoms are so small that one kilogram of gold, weighing 2.2 pounds, contains three quintillion such particles. If a hundred million silver atoms were placed side by side, they would form a line only an inch long.

Think of the power that man now has at his disposal. By atomic fission or uranium 235, an explosive force twenty million times more powerful than TNT is available. The heat of the sun in its interior is twenty-five million degrees, centigrade, compared with the fifty-million-degree radiation from an atomic-energy blast. This is the power that man now has at his disposal. Science, which was to be the savior of the world, threatens to be its destroyer.

Turning to II Peter 3:7-10, we read these startling words:

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Notice: *elements, melted, great noise, fervent heat*. Think of the ocean as a storehouse of latent heat. Disruption of its atoms could produce great heat and energy.

The heavens which will pass away with a great explosion, according to this prophecy, are the atmospheric heavens — in other words, the air that surrounds the earth. Some scientists today have been afraid that a chain explosion might effect the atmosphere to the destruction of the earth. Faraday, the great scientist, once said that there is enough latent electricity in a drop of water to cause an ordinary flash of lightning.

The author of this article does not mean to say that it requires scientific proof to show that the Bible is true. Rather, it seems to me, he wants to expose the folly of the mockers mentioned in the same chapter of 2nd Peter from which he quotes. That the "heavens" mentioned in the text are merely "the atmospheric heavens" I do not believe.

Rather cute is the following reference to the creation of the woman and the use of anesthetics:

Now let us read Genesis 2:21, 22. Describing the creation of the human race, The Holy Scriptures say:

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man."

This statement of Scripture was the cause of much laughter among the skeptics and unbelievers back in the days of Voltaire. They said: "How could a man keep on sleeping while someone cut a hole in his side? Even a pinprick would cause one to awake." But this was before the days of anesthetics. You know as well as I do that if we are going to have an operation, if we must have a rib taken out, or the appendix removed, or any kind of incision made, we would certainly want to be asleep at the time—wouldn't we? Modern science, with its invention of anesthetics, has shown that God certainly knew what He was doing when He put Adam to sleep in order to perform an operation upon him.

#### THE LIBERATED SLAM THE DOOR SHUT

Under this title: "De vrijgemaakten smakken de deur dicht"), deB(ondt) has an article in *De Bazuin*, official organ of the Theological School in Kampen,

the Netherlands. In order to understand the article, we must know that the synod of the Reformed Churches which recently met in Rotterdam sent an invitation to the synod of the Reformed Churches (art. 31 or liberated) to confer with them about the question of reunion. I read the invitation which, to my mind, was cloaked in friendly and very liberal terms. To accept it certainly would not bind the Liberated to anything at all. The conference was to be held on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions. However, the synod of the Liberated which happened to meet at the same time as that of the "synodicals" and that, too, in Berkel, in the neighborhood of Rotterdam, did not accept this invitation. It was given into the hands of a committee which reported as follows (this time I quote from *Gereformeerd Kerkblad vor Overijssel en Gelderland* and, of course, translate):

"In name of committee II the Rev. Knoop reports *in re* an invitation for a conference sent by the churches that call themselves reformed, assembled in synodical gathering in Rotterdam. In order not repeatedly to perform 'the work of monks (monnikenwerk)' the committee proposed not to enter into this matter, for the following reasons: a. that our synods of Groningen, Amersfoort and Kampen have replied elaborately to a similar invitation; b. that the 'bounded' (quotation marks mine, H.H.) churches failed to answer our objections, they always circumvented the questions; c. because our continued and repeated summons to repent of the injustice committed and of doctrinal binding always proved fruitless. With great sorrow the committee wants to commit this cause of strife to the Lord in harmony with Ps. 35:1."

A rather heated discussion followed this report, not because there was disagreement on the floor of the synod about the question itself (all were agreed that they should not accept the invitation), but the question was rather how the reply should be worded. Finally, however, the synod decided by a vote of 17 to 15 merely to receive the invitation for information and, of course, to take no further action.

The above is the occasion for the writing of the article of deB(ondt) under the title: "The liberated slam the door shut." Writes he (I translate):

"As our readers read in the papers, our Synod addressed the Synod of the Liberated Churches in a worthy document. In this address a conference was urged, and the arguments urged by formed Liberated Synods not to accept such a conference were refuted.

"Berkel (the synod of the Liberated, H.H.) did not enter into these arguments. Behind the door one shouted that it was humiliating for them to go to the door once more. He considered it an insult that the Reformed Churches had the courage to ring the door bell once again.

"With a semblance of importance the Liberated twice referred the case back to the Committee.

"It is sad and sinful that there was agreement on this point: Of course, we will not do it.

"The only difference was that one showed his anger about a different point than the other.

"The one said: It is impudent that they have the courage to come once more: slam the door shut!

"Another said: I think it is terrible that they call our Church: Ref. Churches (maintaining art. 31). This last must be elided; it is only a *postal* distinction. We must declare the letter not acceptable.

"About this they debated among one another several times.

"Must it be: Received for information? or: Declared unacceptable?

"With 17-15 votes it was decided: Received for information.

"Then the devil rejoiced.

"Then the world which heard the news over the radio could blaspheme the name of God and reproach God's people.

"But Christ, the king of the church, did not rejoice.

"The door is now slammed shut.

"And in the meantime, the breach continues in the sphere of the school, in politics . . .

"How long?"

We, on our part, cannot understand this attitude of the Liberated. I remember how Dr. Schilder expressed his amazement when the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches (in the Netherlands) refused a conference with the Reformed Churches. I remember, too, how it was especially under his influence that, in 1939, the conference in the Pantlind Hotel was held to discuss the possibility of the reunion of the Christian Reformed Churches and ours. And now

they decline to discuss, on the broadest possible basis, the matters that separate them from the Reformed Churches! Suppose the wrong is all on the side of the Reformed Churches. Suppose the Liberated have suffered gross injustice. Suppose they are the only true church, as they always claim to be. Are all these matters reasons why they cannot even confer with one another? Can they not take minutes, make an official report of their discussion and publish it?

We too have been cruelly maltreated in 1924. Besides, the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924, corrupted the Reformed truth. But I assure you that, if the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches, even at this late date, would have the grace to send us an invitation to discuss all that happened in 1924, on the basis of Scripture and the Confession, I for one would be heartily in favor of accepting such an invitation

Are the Liberated afraid? one is inclined to ask.

H.H.

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I waited for the Lord Most High,  
And He inclined to hear my cry;  
He took me from destruction's pit  
And from the miry clay;  
Upon a rock He set my feet,  
And steadfast made my way.

A new and joyful song of praise  
He taught my thankful heart to raise;  
And many, seeing me restored,  
Shall fear the Lord and trust;  
And blest are they that trust the Lord,  
The humble and the just.

O Lord my God, how manifold  
Thy wondrous works which I behold,  
And all Thy loving, gracious thought  
Thou hast bestowed on man;  
To count Thy mercies I have sought,  
But boundless is their span.

Not sacrifice delights the Lord,  
But he who hears and keeps His word;  
Thou gavest me to hear Thy will,  
Thy law is in my heart;  
I come the Scripture to fulfill,  
Glad tidings to impart.

# FROM HOLY WRIT

## Exposition of I Peter 1:4, 5

(concluded)

Permit us a few remarks concerning the meaning of these verses as we have thus far considered them.

In the first place, we have noticed that we have been born anew unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The power of our hope is the power of God manifested and wrought in His resurrection.

Secondly, we have noticed that our hope reaches out in earnest expectation for the final manifestation of what God has prepared for His saints, the inheritance kept for us in heaven.

Thirdly, we have noticed, that this inheritance is incorruptible, undefilable and that it fades not away. It is wholly different than the present world under the vanity of vanities. It is an inheritance that is gloriously, immortal and everlasting.

Fourthly, we were busy considering the fact, the gospel truth, that God who has begun this good work in us, giving us a new birth unto a living hope, also will complete this work to the very end. No one is able to pluck us out of the hand of the Father, who is greater than all. Jehovah is a man of war. Jehovah is His name! Let us attempt to understand this.

We would remind you, dear reader, that we are considering verse 5, the following clause "*we who are kept in the power of God through faith . . . . unto salvation . . . .*"

The questions, that we face here are the following. We must seek an answer to the question what we are to understand by the "power" of God, and we must also see the proper Scriptural relationship between this power of God and this "faith" of our text.

The word here employed for power in the original Greek really means: ability. It is the potence of God. It is the ability of God which is the strength of all human and creaturely strength. Without this strength there is none. In this strength we live and move and have our being, and it is by virtue of this strength that we believe in Christ.

Further we may say of this "power" of God that it is characterized by all the virtues of God. It is all-wise, just, good, holy, merciful and everlasting. For all God's virtues are one. Upon this we could delineate in detail. But we prefer not to since the text does not call for it.

What we must here point out however, is, that this power of God in my text is not simply to be i-

dentified with the power of creation, of providence. By God's power and might He called the world into existence. In the beginning God spoke His creative word and all things came thus into being by His word. That was the power that emanated from God's will the *Logos not made-flesh*. John 1:1-3. And it is by this same power of the Word not-made-flesh that the world is upheld. Hebrews 1:1-3. Although this power cannot be separated from the "power" in my text, yet this power in creation and providence must be clearly distinguished from the latter.

The distinction?

It is this: the power in my text is the almighty power of God, which God has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, raising Him out of the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand far above all principality and might and every name, that is named both in this age and in that to come. It is wrought in and through the Spirit of Sanctification.

Such is not the case with creation and providence.

But such it is here: here we have the power of God wrought in Him who suffered and died, and rose again and having received the promise of the Spirit sent Him forth to empower us from on high.

Such is the power of which Peter speaks in verse five, such is clearly its nature. It is saving power; that keeps, guards us unto salvation. It is well to see this distinction, and to keep it in mind.

But we must proceed.

The next element calling for attention is the relationship between "faith" and this *power of God in Christ* wrought by the Spirit of sanctification.

It ought to be very clear on the very surface that the relationship is not such as is expressed in the very vulgar and profane quip "God helps those who help themselves". Yes to speak thus is profane speech. Yet, such is exactly the sin of all "Semi-Pelagianism". God gives His power and grace to those who make themselves worthy of His gifts. In this case it would mean: God works His power in those who are willing and who believe. This latter statement indeed speaks a truth, but only a half-truth. It does not teach the full truth. It was exactly thus that the Arminians also expressed this relationship of the power of God and faith. And thus our text does not express it.

Both the *power of God* and the *faith* through which we are kept are solely of God. Salvation is wholly of the Lord. Faith is God's gift not only in its inception, but also in its continuation. Our perseverance is simply *God's perservation* of us. And thus Peter teaches us here. We therefore read: we who are guarded in the *power of God through faith*.

God's power in Christ becomes a saving power in us in this that it works faith in our hearts. It is a



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power in the Spirit of sanctification of Christ, that saves us through the very faith that it works in our hearts. This power works faith, that is, a certain knowledge and a hearty confidence, that Christ has not merely died for others, but that He has died and that He rose again in my behalf. It is a glorious saving power working faith in my heart. And then again He works this faith in my heart in such a way that the very act of faith that we perform is His saving power. O, glorious mystery of faith.

In His power we keep this mystery in a good conscience by adhering to sound words, good christian hygenic instruction for the soul.

Shall we truly be and remain sound in faith and upright in walk that we confess: in His power wrought in His gift of faith in my heart causing me to believe.

Such is the evident relationship between these two elements in the text. Thus alone do we confess the architectural design of God as sketched by Peter in verse two: "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, *unto* (into) the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." But more must be said.

We refer to the *manner in which God causes His power to keep*, guards us to the very final salvation to be uncovered in the last time.

In general we may say, that in the wisdom and justice of God He treats every creature according to its created nature. He treats the plant different than the animal, and the animal different than man, and man different again than the angels. Each one is treated according to its kind, (*kata genos*).

This means that the almighty keeping of God, the power of God unto our salvation is wrought in us working faith in our hearts, in such a way that God does not do violence to our moral-rational creaturehood. Our fathers contending with the Arminians confess "this grace of regeneration does not treat men as senseless stocks and blocks, nor takes away their will and its properties, neither does violence thereto." The Arminians insisted that only when man had an ethically free-will could he be treated according to his nature, while the Reformed Fathers say: *non sequitur*. Man does not have the spiritual freedom to do good, but he remains a thinking willing being. God honors His own creative ordinances in man, while bringing him out of death into life, out of darkness into His marvelous light.

That is the first element to bear in mind, also when thinking of this guarding power of God.

The second element to bear in mind that the "manner of the operation of God" in working salvation in

our heart, and also the manner of the working of this power we cannot fully fathom, comprehend. It is wholly a Divine work. We cannot trace the footsteps of the Almighty. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways are past finding out. That is true of His dealings with nations, but is also true of our own souls. Compare with Psalm 139.

This makes us approach this subject with utmost humility; here too we touch but the "hem of His garment".

However, the Word of God does point out by what means this power of God works faith in our hearts.

This faith is wrought in our hearts by means of the power of God. And this power of God unto our salvation is nothing less than *the Holy Gospel*. This Gospel is power; *power of God it is unto salvation for everyone believing*.

This cuts off the error, on the one hand of the Anabaptist, who, among other errors, clings to the erroneous teaching that God simply works faith in our hearts, that He preserves His church in the midst of this world without "means", with the means of grace, that it, without the means which the Holy Spirit employs to work and strengthen faith in our hearts. The Anabaptist forgets that God deals with the redeemed saints according to their created nature in Paradise. Making this power a blind power. Such it is not. God's power unto salvation is the Gospel, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed out of faith unto faith.

At the same time all Pelagianism, Arminianism and Humanism is cut off for in this preaching of the Gospel there is Mystery. It is the Mystery of faith. This Gospel works faith, strengthens it by the operation of the Holy Spirit in such a way that, although the Gospel is preached by man, its operation and efficaciousness is wholly a matter of God's power. Salvation is never in the power of man, although God uses man to work His salvation. God uses threats, precepts of the Gospel (?) as spoken by the preacher to work His grace in our lives. This is simply the case with this epistle of Peter. It is replete with *precepts of the Gospel!* And in a way that is hidden from our eyes, God works grace through the same. Here the sinner remains impotent, while his created nature is honored. God honors His own work, while he maintains our impotency to in any way effect faith in our hearts.

The manner of God's working is such, that in our believing consciousness too, we experience: Guarded in the almightiness of God working faith in our hearts by the Word, in us who have been born again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Christ.

Geo. Lubbers