

THE STANDARD

Bearers

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MEDITATION

The Love of God for the World

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

—John 3:16

A beautiful text indeed! But a text that is almost universally misunderstood, and certainly very often mis-quoted.

You will bear me witness that almost everyone that purports to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will sooner or later quote John 3:16, in order to prove that God loves everyone, that as far as God is concerned, all may be saved from everlasting death. God, so they argue, has provided a way out for absolutely everyone. No one, as far as God is concerned, need be lost. For, God so loved the world, and that means everyone who ever lived, now lives, or will ever live upon this sorry earth, that He gave His only begotten Son to this world, in order that every one that believeth might have everlasting life, and never come into the awful place of torment.

However, it simply is not true that God loves everyone. Is it not a plain truth, which no serious Bible student can deny, that the great majority are lost, that they *do* perish? But how is this possible, if the living God once loved them? Is the love of God changeable? Is there variableness with God after all? If the so-called love of God for everyone of the whole human race is so strong that He will send His only begotten Son into the pangs of eternal death for every one of them, how can He later damn them forever? Again: if the love of God for every man is so wonderfully strong that He will send Jesus into hell for them, paying the price for the sin of every descendent of Adam, how is it possible that He will later exact the same price from those who did not believe on

Jesus? If Jesus paid the price for the totality of all sin which the human race committed, how can God in justice demand any part of that sin for the second time in the damnation of the majority?

The fundamental mistake in this theory is the interpretation of the word *world*. I will prove to you that this word does not mean all men. Indeed, it never means that in Holy Scripture. The word world has different connotations in Scripture. That this is so will become evident by a simple comparison of several texts which speak of the world.

First, there are those texts which speak of the world as the sum total of created things. An example of this use you will find in Acts 17:24. There we read: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelling not in temples made with hands." And the same connotation of the word world you will note in all the texts which speak of God's counsel, thoughts and deeds "before the foundation of the world." Also there the word *world* means the created physical world.

Second, there is the use of the same word in the Bible where it is used to denote the world of men who are fallen away from God and have become wholly corrupt. And of that world, so the Bible tells us, the devil is its prince. It is the sum total of corrupt humanity which turns itself with all it controls against God and His Anointed. Examples of this use of the word *world* you find in I John 5:19; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Note especially John 15:19. There we read: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Now surely, if words mean anything at all to you, it will be very evident that John 3:16 does not mean every man of the human race. Attend to this: John 15:19 tells us that those who believe on Jesus are *not of the world*! And because they are not of the world, therefore the world hates them! Is it

not plain, therefore, that there is more than one interpretation of the word *world*? I assure you that if we are to lay hold of the real meaning of John 3:16, we must very carefully determine the idea of this important concept as it is used in the whole of Scripture. Only then can we determine what is in any particular text. No, the use of this word in the second instance is the world of reprobate men. Allow me to contrast two texts, and I am certain that you will see the difference clearly. John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But now listen to Jesus' own voice in John 17:9: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." Once more: contrast John 3:16 with I John 2:15, "Love not the world!" Is it not crystal clear that we have here two radically different concepts? I would conclude this paragraph with a biblical definition of that wicked and reprobate world, which will never see salvation, as we find it in I John 2:15-17. There we read: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Third, there is the use of the word world which is the object of God's everlasting love. It is the world which will shine unto all eternity because of the radiance of His glory which is given to that world. He loved it, and for it He gave His Son. And for the sake of that Son and all He did in the way of unspeakable suffering and the death of the cross, He has forgiven all the sin of that world, not imputing their trespasses unto them. For that chosen world Christ Jesus is the propitiation and for that world He will pray, not for the world as quoted in His High-priestly prayer in John 17:9.

You will ask me: if these three concepts of the world are so dissimilar, how is it that the same word is used for all three? And the answer is, because of the fact that the word world means a harmoniously related order. And this formal idea lies at the bottom of each of the three concepts. The Holy Ghost uses the word world for created things because the whole of creation is a harmoniously created whole. The same is true of the world of wicked men under captaincy of the devil. Also here the word world is in place. Did not the Lord Jesus tell us that the house of the devil is not divided against itself. Oh no, the whole world of the wicked men and devils are a har-

monious whole and perfect order reigns. Absolutely all things and all men and all devils march in one direction, and are activated and motivated by one common principle: hatred against God and His Anointed. And that is the reason why that wicked mass which is going to perdition is also called by this formal name.

And now view the text again. Note the first word: 'For'. This little word tells us that the content of John 3:16 is a reason for that which was said in the immediately preceding context. There we read that the Son of man must be lifted up even as also the serpent had to be lifted up in the desert by Moses the servant of God. This *must* of Christ's elevation on the accursed tree is explained in our text. He must go the way of the cross because of the love of God for His chosen world.

And here we also have the very heart of the gospel that is eternal. It is the love of God. That love for His own He proved in the sending of the Son for His own sheep, which He knew by name from all eternity. Always remember that the giving of Jesus is substitutional, that is, Jesus died for definite persons, and that death has a definite effect. Is it not clear to you, that if the Cross of Jesus means anything at all, it means that there the awful price is paid for sin and transgression? And if you admit this, you have also admitted that for whomsoever He died, He has freed from sin and the punishment for sin, that is, eternal damnation. The death of Jesus is particular, and restricted to His sheep. Did He not say so Himself? Listen to Him: "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." And in the same chapter, Jesus says to the Jews that hated Him: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." This Scripture teaches plainly that some people are the sheep of Christ and some are not. And they are known by this: the sheep believe on Christ and the wolves do not. Further proof that Jesus' death is the payment for the sin of particular and chosen people is the text which we find in II Cor. 5:19. There we read: "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Note that the trespasses are not imputed unto this world. And again: if words mean anything at all, these words teach us that this world is saved, completely saved. It is another instance where the Bible speaks of the chosen and happy world of God's love. And a third use of the word world in that sense we find in I John 2:2. There we read, "And He (that is, Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Here again these words would have no meaning at all if we do not see that the

world here is the sum total of chosen humanity whose sins are paid for by the propitiation of Christ's suffering and death.

The next question is the "whosoever believeth" of our text. This phrase has been quoted and sung in such a way as though it is entirely up to man, as a work of man pure and simple. They say and sing and preach to you on this wise: Christ paid for your sins; and it is now entirely up to you if you are to benefit by this sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Simply believe on Him and you are saved. And I would say: that is true, but do not forget that no one can or will believe in Christ if nothing more is said and done. We will not believe on God and on Christ, neither *can* we will to believe. Man by nature is a slave of sin and the devil. The Lord Himself is our witness to this awful and dolorous truth. Listen to Him: "No one can come unto Me except the Father that sent Me draw Him!" And if you would have a very clear commentary of the "whosoever believeth" I would ask you to come with me to the Apostle Paul as he explains the way to Christ and to God. You will find it in Eph. 2:8. It were well if you would memorize this text: it is very fundamental to an understanding of the way to God. There we read, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Note here that saving faith is the gift of God. It is the way which God uses to bring His chosen children through Christ Jesus to His bosom. If you receive this gift of faith, you are surely coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you lack this faith, you are never pleasing to God. It is the way which He has ordained to His heart. It may be well to quote the following two verses in Eph. 2 also: "Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we (that is, the believers), are His workmanship created unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." I ask you in all seriousness: what remains of that vaunted ability of any man to believe on Christ and be saved? Yes, I will freely admit that any one believing on Christ will by the same token be saved. But the gift of faith is of God. He gives it to some; and He keeps it from others. There lies the difference. It ought to be plain to everyone that if the matter of faith in Christ would rest with us, those that believe would have something to boast of in the face of those that will not obey the Son. But the Word of God avers that it is not of the works of man, but of God that showeth mercy. Does not the same Apostle Paul tell us in Romans 9 that "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy"? And later he said: "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." You will say to me:

that is an awful truth! Yes, but attend to this: it is God Himself who tells us these things. And where God speaks, it behooves us to listen in absolute subjection, and try not to make the Word of God of none effect by our own foolish philosophies.

Now then, those that believe shall never perish. No, for Jesus did perish in their stead. That and that only is the language of the cross of Christ. Christ paid for our sins by going the way of eternal desolation. It is the reason why we heard His bitter cry: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And the answer, unspoken by God, but taught in His Word nevertheless, is this: Because I love my sheep! Because they shall not perish! Because I have reserved for them untold happiness! Because Thy suffering and death and eternal desolation is the manifestation and revelation of Our wondrous love. To look upon that love, revealed in the Lamb standing as if slain, shall be the eternal task of the church of Christ. So that they may be to God's praises forever.

No, they shall not perish.

But they shall have everlasting life.

Everlasting life is of all things the most wonderful. It is the very heart of heavenly bliss. Elsewhere the Lord has explained the meaning of this concept, this mighty miracle. In John 17:3 we hear Him say: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent!"

To know God. But again we ask: what does it mean to know God? And the answer is: To know God is the expression of the love of God which resides in the heart and mind and soul and all the affections of the people of God. It means that you direct all your heart and thoughts of your heart on the Triune Godhead. In Him you find your all; in Him you see all the beauty and the glory of His adorable virtues. Yes, heaven is this: you may look upon and know the Face of God.

It is for that reason that we know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The only way to know God is through Jesus. Seeing and knowing and loving Jesus is tantamount to seeing, knowing and loving God. As Jesus said to Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayeth thou then, Shew us the Father?"

If you do not believe on Jesus, say: It is I! It is because I am a slave of sin and of the devil!

And if you believe on Jesus say: It is of God! He has given me saving faith in Jesus, so that I should not perish, but have everlasting life!

To God be all the glory for ever and ever!

G. Vos.

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E D I T O R I A L S**The Promise According to the Confessions**

At the close of my last article on the current subject I said that I would refer to the Baptism Form, which according to my conviction is one of the most beautiful and clearly Reformed documents which have come down from our fathers.

In treating the contents of this Baptism Form we must remember that I am still discussing the question of a conditional promise as maintained by Dr. Schilder in his brochure written against the Declaration of Principles. He wants to make the distinction between predictions and promises, and to maintain that while predictions are general, promises are for N.N., but at the same time are conditional.

At the same time I will in the present article also bear in mind the bold statement made by the Rev. Kok in the Sept. 1 issue of the *Standard Bearer* in which he wrote: "Bearing this in mind, there is no one who would dare to maintain that God ever promises salvation unconditionally to anyone, no more than He did to Abraham, the father of believers."

I, for one, not only dare to maintain this, but I maintain that unless God promises salvation unconditionally to the elect, salvation becomes an absolute impossibility.

It is this truth which I will try to show from our discussion of the Baptism Form.

Already from the very first paragraph of this Baptism Form it should be very evident that unless God promises salvation unconditionally, without any prerequisite which man must fulfil, it becomes an impossibility that anyone should ever be saved. For there we read: "That we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except we are born again." Now in the rebirth, or regeneration, the sinner is absolutely passive and is absolutely incapable of meeting any conditions. God regenerates him unconditionally. To this we will refer later in our discussion.

More important, however, for our purpose is the beautiful second part of our Baptism Form, which treats of the significance of baptism in general. There we read: "Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. Therefore we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make

an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit." Notice, in the first place that it is God that establishes His covenant with us. This is the language of Scripture throughout. If it were a covenant between two parties, as in the case of a covenant between men, this would be absolutely impossible. When we read that God establishes His covenant with us, it certainly means that He alone fulfills all the elements that are necessary to realize His everlasting covenant. In the establishment of this covenant there cannot possibly be any conditions which man must fulfill in order to enter into that covenant. It has always been Reformed, and not specifically Protestant Reformed, to maintain that at least in the establishment of the covenant it is unilateral, onesided. Man can do absolutely nothing unto the establishment of God's covenant with him. He cannot possibly perform any conditions. And, as salvation and the covenant are inseparably connected, I maintain that when God establishes His covenant with us, He promises all the blessings of salvation, and that too unconditionally, to the elect.

Secondly, let us note that the covenant which God establishes with us is an eternal covenant. This means that the covenant of God has nothing to do with any contingency or conditions which man must fulfill, either to enter into the covenant or to remain in the covenant. The covenant is God's covenant. It is established by Him. It is eternal, and eternally established with us, and can never be disannulled. Also this truth, that God's covenant is an everlasting covenant, and that it can never be broken, that God will surely maintain it unto the end, is abundantly testified by Holy Writ.

Thirdly, we read in this part of the Baptism Form that God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that He adopt us for His children and heirs. Also this adoption unto children of God is an element of our salvation. When God promises, that is, when He witnesses and seals unto us that He will adopt us for His children and heirs, He promises salvation to us. Is this adoption, perhaps, a conditional adoption? Is it perhaps dependent upon anything that we must do in order to obtain it, or even in order to remain in the state of adoption? God forbid! For first of all, God has adopted us unto His children in His eternal counsel of election. For thus we read in Eph. 1:4-6: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the

praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." And no one, not even Dr. Schilder or the Rev. Kok, would dare to maintain that this predestination unto the adoption of children was conditional, for that would be too plainly Arminian. Moreover, this adoption unto children was objectively realized in Christ, in His cross and resurrection, whereby He obtained the right for all the elect to be children of God and heirs of everlasting salvation. No one will dispute that the adoption unto children and heirs belongs to the salvation, nor will anyone ever dispute that God promises this salvation unconditionally. It is true that this objective adoption unto children must be received by us by a true faith, but to this element we must call your attention in the third part of this paragraph of our Baptism Form.

Fourthly, notice that the Baptism Form in this section tells us that God the Father witnesses and seals unto us that He will provide us with every good thing and avert all evil, or turn it to our profit. This includes, mind you, everything that belongs to our way unto salvation in this present life. He will provide us with every good thing, that is, with every thing that belongs to the means of our salvation: for only that is a good thing that is conducive to our salvation. Moreover, God will avert all evil, or turn the evil to our profit, so that all things must be conducive to our salvation. Is this promise, perhaps, conditional, so that it implies a prerequisite which we must fulfill in order to obtain it? Are prosperity and adversity, sickness and health, peace and war, life and death, and anything that may be our experience or may befall us in this life, conditioned by anything that man must do? Or can man do anything in order to turn all these things unto our profit and unto our salvation? Again I say: God forbid! In His eternal covenant of grace God promises all these things unconditionally.

Finally, notice that according to the Baptism Form in baptism God witnesses and seals all these things unto us. That God the Father seals this unto us is the same as saying that He swears by an oath that He will surely fulfill the promises unto those to whom He promises these things. Will God ever fail to fulfill His promise? Can our sin or our unbelief ever prevent Him from realizing His promise? You answer with me: of course not. If that were the case, He would never fulfill it. For we on our part always violate the covenant of God and make ourselves unworthy of being called His children by our sin and iniquity. Hence, that He seals the promises unto us means the same as saying that all these things are promised to us unconditionally. This is all the more evident from the fact that according to the Baptism

Form He seals all these promises *unto us*, that is, unto the believing church and their spiritual seed. He seals these same promises to the little infants that are baptized, and that cannot even conceive of, still less fulfill, any conditions whatsoever. To this element we must refer later.

In the light of the foregoing, I would ask the Rev. Kok whether he would still maintain this statement: "Bearing this in mind, there is no one who would dare to maintain that God ever promises salvation unconditionally to anyone, no more than He did to Abraham, the father of believers." I kindly and in a brotherly spirit ask him to answer this question. I offer him all the space necessary to reply to this.

The Baptism Form continues that God the Son promises, that is, that He sealeth unto us, that is, that He swears with an oath "that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God."

I ask again: Is this promise, perhaps, conditional?

What does it mean that Christ washes us in His blood from all our sins, and what does it mean that He incorporates us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection?

It certainly means, in the first place, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, and that through His death we were reconciled unto God. Objectively the atoning death of Christ is the washing away of the sins of all the elect. And certainly the atoning death of Christ is not, and cannot be conditioned by anything we can do. Unless we want to make the death of Christ according to God's intention universal, and speak of general atonement, we may certainly say that God fulfilled His promise of the washing away of the sins of all the elect in the death of Christ and that He sealed that promise in His resurrection. The same is true concerning the incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ. All the elect were legally and ideally incorporated into Christ when He died on the cross and rose again from the dead. For this is plainly taught in Eph. 2: 4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The washing away of the sins of all the elect, and their incorporation into Jesus Christ, is an accomplished fact, realized in time long before we were born, and rooted in God's election, according to all our Confessions. And therefore also that part of our salvation cannot be conditional.

It is true that in time this washing away of our sins and this incorporation into Christ must be applied unto us, and that we obtain it only by a true and living faith. But, in the first place, to this I will call attention when I am discussing the last part of this particular paragraph of the Baptism Form. And besides, let me emphasize that when we say that we receive all these blessings and the realization of these promises by faith, that faith, according to all our Confessions, is not a condition, but is only a means, a God-given means, implanted into our hearts and evoked by the preaching of the gospel through the living and abiding Word of God, whereby we obtain part with Christ and all His benefits.

But again I ask: Will the Rev. Kok still maintain that God never promises salvation unconditionally to anyone?

And again I emphasize that the Baptism Form appropriates all these promises for "us and our children", and that these children certainly cannot fulfill any conditions whatsoever.

H.H.

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On October 11, 1952 our, beloved parents,

MR. and MRS. PETER T. BOELEMA

hope to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We, the children, are grateful to our Heavenly Father for having been with them these many years.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that He may continue to bless them in all their way for their remaining years together.

Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Sytsma
Miss Jeanne Boelema
Grandchildren: Sheryl and
Larry

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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40th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Friday, October 10, 1952, our beloved parents

MR. and MRS. John Hofman (nee Hoorn)

hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We thank and praise our heavenly God and Father with them for having kept them and sustained them through the years. It is our earnest hope and prayer that the Lord may grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. A. Vermeer
Rev. and Mrs. W. Hofman
Rev. and Mrs. A. W. Hoogstrate
Mr. and Mrs. W. Barrows
Mr. and Mrs. D. Vant Hof
John Jr.

Fourteen Grandchildren

Open house afternoon and evening of Friday, October 10, 1952.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART III OF THANKFULNESS

Lord's Day 33

1.

Regeneration and Conversion (Cont.)

Moreover, as we have said before, this new birth is a heavenly birth. It is a birth from above, and not from the earth. It is principally resurrection. A new principle of life is instilled in our hearts by the wonder of regeneration, and this new life is not earthy, but heavenly. It is not from below, but from above. In regeneration we have the beginning of the resurrection. It is the principle of the resurrection. It is the life of Christ, the risen Lord Himself. This is evident from the passage in John 5:24, 25: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that hear shall live." From this passage it is evident, first of all, that those that believe on Christ are immortal now, have everlasting life. Moreover, that regeneration is principally a resurrection from the dead is very plain from vs. 25. For when the Lord says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live," it is evident from the expression that the hour "now is" that it does not refer to the final resurrection, but to the spiritual resurrection that is effected in the moment of regeneration. Regeneration is resurrection from the dead. This is also implied in the text in I Peter 1:3, where we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." We are begotten again, of course, in the moment of regeneration. And the fact that this regeneration is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead informs us that the life of regeneration is like the life of Christ, the life of the risen Lord, and therefore, resurrection life. Hence, through regeneration we are empowered not only to seek after righteousness, but to aspire after the heavenly things

of the kingdom of God. We are risen with Christ. And: "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:1-3. In virtue of that new and heavenly life we become principally strangers and pilgrims in the earth and seekers of the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Now in view of all that has been said about the new birth, it should be perfectly evident that it is a sovereign work of God, pure and simple, in which the sinner himself has no part whatever, in which he does not in any sense cooperate with God, but in which man is wholly passive. It is very important that this be emphasized, in order to maintain the truth of salvation by grace only, as we have already said. It is absurd to say that in regeneration man himself is active, just as it is absurd to beg the sinner to become regenerated. As well might a man go to the cemetery and beg the dead to come out of their graves. No more than Adam cooperated in his own creation, no more than Lazarus cooperated in his own resurrection, no more does the sinner cooperate with God in his own regeneration. It is a work of God alone, without our help. Of this wonder-work of God the Canons of Dordrecht teach us in Chapter III, IV, 12: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, a most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvellous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. 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 that grace received." And again, as to the power and faculty of faith which is bestowed upon the sinner in the moment of his regeneration, we read in the same Canons, III, IV, 14: "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 re-

jected 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." Of this latter part of regeneration, that is, of the activity of faith and conversion, we will speak presently; if it only is clear now that according to the Canons, regeneration is like a new creation, is like the resurrection from the dead, and that in the moment of regeneration man is not active, but is entirely passive. Regeneration is solely and sovereignly the work of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This truth is of extreme significance and of great practical importance. For first of all, this work being absolutely a work of God, in which the sinner is wholly passive, it is evident that there is no age-limit to those that may become the recipients of this wonderful blessing of grace. The most hardened sinner, although he be hoary with age, may be regenerated; but also the infant in the cradle and at its mother's breast may receive this grace of God. In fact, as we have developed before, there is good reason to believe that within the sphere of the church God usually, if not always, regenerates the seed of the covenant in their early infancy, unconditionally and without any act of their own. Not only therefore is there no reason to despair of their salvation if they die in infancy, even though they never heard the gospel; but this truth also requires of us as a church and as parents that we bring up our children in the sphere of the gospel and instruct them in the fear of the Lord from their earliest childhood. On mother's breast the child may learn to stammer his prayer. In mother's lap he must be instructed in the first knowledge of the gospel, in the confidence that the elect seed of the covenant not only have the seed of regeneration in their heart, but also that they are efficaciously influenced by the living and abiding Word of God. And as the child grows older, he must consistently be instructed in the doctrine of the Word of God, not only in the home and in the church, but also in the school. Christian instruction is not only a calling, it is also a possibility, thanks be to God and to His wonderful work of the new birth.

One more observation must be made in this connection. Seeing that this marvellous mystery of the new birth is wholly of divine authorship, that it is entirely of God, without the aid or even the activity of man, we may rest assured that it can never be lost, can never be undone. As far as we are concerned it certainly would be destroyed. How often we sin and

make ourselves unworthy of the grace of God! But God never changes: once regenerated is always regenerated! For let us remember that this work of grace is wrought by the God of our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the firstfruit of our being united with Christ. It is only in union with Him that we receive this new principle of life. But even after we are reborn, we do not possess the new life in ourselves. It is always in Christ. Out of Christ it constantly flows into our hearts by the indwelling Spirit. It is never in us. It remains dependent upon our union with the Saviour. But this is exactly why it is safe and secure, why it can never be lost: for Christ will never leave us, and nothing can ever separate us from His love. The gifts of God are without repentance.

One more observation must necessarily be made before we close this chapter. The impression might be left that the regenerated sinner, seeing he has all the power of faith unto conversion, now converts himself, so that the work of grace ceases with the gift of regeneration. This, however, would be a sad mistake. Without Christ we can do nothing. Also conversion is not first of all the work of the sinner, whether he be the natural man or the regenerated child of God. God is always first. And also conversion is first of all the work of God. In regeneration the sinner is, of course, principally converted; but it is not true that after regeneration he now converts himself. This is evident from Scripture. In Jeremiah 31:18 we read: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." And again, in vs. 19: "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." And again, in Lamentations 5:21: "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." In Acts 5:31 we read: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And in Acts 11:18: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." According to Philipians 2:13, "it is God which worketh in you both to will to and to do of his good pleasure." And in II Tim. 2:24, 25 we read: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

It is true, of course, that the call unto conversion does and must proceed to all, elect and reprobate alike. It is also true that man is responsible for that

call, whether he heeds or rejects it. This too is very plain from Scripture. In II Kings 17:13ff., we read that the Lord constantly, continually testified against Israel and against their evil ways, and called them to turn from their idols unto Him: "Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he had made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal." And again, in Isaiah 31:6: "Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." In Ezekiel 18:30-32 we read: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." And in the same book of Holy Writ, 33:11, we find the well-known words: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In Jeremiah 3:12-14 we read: "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." In Jeremiah 25 we find the Word of the Lord which He spake unto all the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the days

of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, as follows: "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of our doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt." vss.3-6. The same is true of the testimony in the New Testament. In Matt. 3:2 we read: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." To the question which the amazed multitude on the day of Pentecost addressed to the apostle Peter, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38. Or, to quote from Scripture the language of this thirty-third Lord's Day, in Eph. 4:20-24 we read: "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

It is very evident, therefore, that the call to conversion does and must come to all, also in the church of Jesus Christ. But this does not mean that man is able to convert himself, whether he is in the unregenerated or in the regenerated state. We must never forget that the mere, external calling to repent can only have the effect of hardening, as was the case with the majority in the old dispensation. Only when through that same external calling God speaks His own, efficacious, powerful Word, can man hear the call to repentance, and so hearing the call, cry out with the publican of the parable once again: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." In the work of grace, God is ever first, and the work of man, also in conversion, is the fruit of the work of God in him.

H.H.



Thru all the downward tracts of time
 God's watchful eye surveys;
 O! who so wise to choose our lot,
 Or regulate our ways!

Two Fundamental Principles in Preaching

Fears have been expressed during the course of our present discussion on "conditions" that this conditional presentation of the truth is vitally necessary if our churches are to continue in the proclamation of a full and complete gospel. Not to stress this "important phase" of the Scriptures would have for its result a calamity of catastrophic proportions and impoverish our churches to the extent that we no longer would enjoy a "full-orbed" gospel.

On the other hand there are others who fear that this stress on conditions itself may be catastrophic and deprive our churches of a preaching of the gospel which has been our heritage as Protestant Reformed churches.

Undue emphasis upon the responsibility of man is dangerous. Undue emphasis upon the responsibility of man is emphasis upon man's responsibility at the cost of the eternal and unconditional sovereignty of the living God. I am alarmed because of the voices which have recently been heard, demanding that we have more "practical" preaching and more emphasis upon man's responsibility. I am alarmed because I have always believed that our churches stressed and maintained this truth of Holy Writ. I am alarmed because I consider undue emphasis upon man's responsibility heresy's "backdoor." I know of no church that has deviated from the truth because they emphasized God's sovereignty. The number of the churches that have departed from the truth of the Word of God by emphasizing man's responsibility is legion. I fear that a greater danger may confront us in the things that are not being said than in the things that are being said.

It is for this reason that the undersigned will attempt in this article to set forth what he believes to be our calling as Protestant Reformed churches with respect to the preaching of the Word of God.

The first truth we wish to emphasize is that a full and complete gospel must proceed from the calling to build up the elect Church of the living God. This truth is sustained by a very common example in life all around us with which we are all familiar. I refer to the example of the farmer whose concern centers in his own corn or wheat, or whatever his crop may be. If we ask a farmer what he has in yonder field he will tell you that he has corn or wheat. He is aware of the fact that there is much chaff among his corn and many tares among the wheat. Nevertheless he will not reply to your question that he has corn and chaff or wheat and tares, but corn or wheat. And he does everything for the sake of his crop. We may safely use this example because Scripture does the same.

Moreover, this truth is verified throughout Holy Writ. Permit us to quote a few passages. We read in Acts 20:26-28: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." In Eph. 4:11-15 we read: "And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." In Col. 2:1-3 we read: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And in I Thes. 1:4 we read: "Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God." In addition to these few passages we would call attention to the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans in which he develops, step by step, the tremendous truth of the righteousness of God, to the epistle of the same apostle to the Ephesians in which he dwells upon the tremendous fulness and riches of the church of God as the body of Christ (and note particularly Eph. 1:1-11) and to the epistle to the Colossians in which the Lord holds before us the tremendous riches of the Christ Who is the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And we would conclude with the observation that throughout our liturgy we are admonished and exhorted to adhere to the truth and fight every heresy repugnant thereto.

What does this mean? This means that in all our labors we must proceed from the truth that we are dealing with the elect Church of the living God. This implies in the first place that the Church of God must be *constantly* directed to the eternal and unchangeable love and faithfulness of God as the sole cause and origin of its salvation. We must be "election-minded". We must live out of the blessed fact of election. This truth must be proclaimed in all its blessed significance.

This does not mean that we must not call attention to the calling of the church to walk in the way of sanctification. Neither, however, must the two be divorced. The calling to walk in sanctification and believe must serve to direct the people of the living God to make their election sure. Faith is not to be considered apart from election, is not a condition for election, but is itself a part of election, belongs to it, and is therefore the only way in which the child of God can know that he has been elected of God from before the foundation of the world. Hence, to preach election and not faith is simply a caricature of the truth of election; but to preach faith and repentance at the cost of election is Arminian corruption of the Word of God. We must be on our guard against any clamor for more "responsibility preaching" and less election preaching. Our election is our sole salvation and only comfort in life and in death. This implies in the second place that that elect Church of the living God must be instructed in all the truth and the mystery of the will of God. We must remain doctrinal in our preaching. To be sure, doctrine without life is dead orthodoxy. But, to divorce the latter from the former must result in spiritual weakness and decay, and is fatal. The church of God must never weary of being led into the fulness of the truth of the living God. To know God in all the fulness of His revelation is and should be eternal life. For, even as the farmer exerts every effort to bring his crop to maturity, so also the preaching of the gospel must purpose to build up the people of God in all the fulness of the truth so that they will be able to reveal and conduct themselves as the people of the living God, who know and love Him, and are able to reveal themselves as His people and party also in the midst of a world which lies in darkness and is constantly attempting to undermine and destroy the truth of the Word of God. Hence, in our preaching we must not address the church as a group of people who must believe and repent in the sense as it is commonly understood today but as the people of the living God who must conduct themselves as such in the midst of the world.

The second truth to which we would call attention is this: this elect church of the living God includes the children. We understand that not all the children born in the sphere of the covenant are elect children of God and will return to this thought later. This, however, does not altar the truth that the elect church which confronts us includes children. God generally regenerates His elect in their infancy. I consider this truth of paramount significance. It is especially on this point that we differ with the Liberated. Permit us to state the question concisely. Do we baptize our children on the basis of a general promise which is be-

stowed by the Lord equally to all and which, as far as its actual content is concerned, will become their's if they believe, or do we baptize and subsequently instruct our children on the basis of a promise which has been realized for them as well as in the elect adults? Do we baptize and later instruct them on the basis of a righteousness which may become theirs or on the basis of a righteousness which has been merited for them and bestowed upon them? The Liberated say the former and we do and must emphatically maintain the latter. There is no difference between the adult and the child as far as their actual participation in the salvation of God is concerned.

This truth, too, is sustained by the reality of life about us. The farmer bestows labor upon his acre because of the seed which he has entrusted to the soil. Why should the Lord command us to bestow labor upon the children except for the fact that the seed of everlasting life is in them?

This truth is also verified by Holy Writ. Has not all scripture been given by inspiration of God for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness in order that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works? see 2 Tim. 3:16-17. This instruction certainly includes the children. And we should notice that the purpose of Holy Writ is the perfecting of the man of God. The man of God is God's man, the Christian, who is called the man of God because he owes his existence to the living God. And this text surely emphasizes the thought that, when instructing our children in the Scriptures, we are instructing exactly the man of God, not someone who may become a child of God but who very definitely is a man of God. In Acts 2:29 we are told that "the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." We need not enter into a detailed discussion of this passage. I merely wish to call attention to the fact that no distinction is made here between the "you" and the children. Who are the "you" in this text? To be sure, they are those who have been pricked in their hearts. However, we would add to this that they are the church, the true Church of the living God, the true Church in distinction from those who had accused the apostle of being full of new wine. They had the promise. They had it in a very real and actual sense of the word. Well, the children possess that same promise in the same sense of the word.

Besides, this is also the truth of the Confessions. Concerning this there cannot be any possible doubt. We do not hesitate to assert that, according to our Reformed Confessions, the adults and the children share equally in the salvation of God. Both are loved of God

from before the foundation of the world; both have been redeemed through the blood of Christ; concerning both we may say that the Holy Spirit dwells and operates in them. This is the teaching of Question and Answer 74 of our Heidelberg Catechism: "Are infants also to be baptized? Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult, etc." To call attention to this answer is surely not necessary at this time; this has been done repeatedly of late. But we must not fail to notice that the same thing is said here of the children as of the adult. This is also true of the teaching of Art. 34 of our Confession of Faith. It is worthwhile to read this answer once more. Having maintained in this article that the sacrament of baptism is a sign of the spiritual and internal operation of the Holy Spirit, the Fathers, in the concluding part of this article, condemn the error of the Anabaptists who condemn the baptism of the infants of the believers as follows: "And indeed Christ shed His blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them." We repeat: again no distinction is made between the adult and the children. And we must all be acquainted with the language of our beautiful form for the administration of baptism which emphasizes the same truth: the child as well as the adult has been adopted by the Father to be heir of everlasting life and of His covenant, has been redeemed by the blood of the Son and presented righteous before God, is the object of the operation of the Holy Spirit and will one day be presented before God without spot or wrinkle as belonging to the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

This truth is of paramount significance. It emphasizes that we baptize and subsequently instruct our children on the basis of a righteousness which they possess, that the Lord generally regenerates them in their infancy, that they belong to the elect Church of God as well as the adult. This truth emphasizes the unconditional character of the promise and of the entire work of salvation, inasmuch as *children* share in the salvation of the Lord. This truth must control all our instruction and preaching and constitutes the basis for the Christian School movement and the erection of Christian Schools. We do not build schools in the hope of what our children may become, but surely on the basis of what they are and have already become.

Do we feel the import of this? Think of all the labor which is bestowed upon the child! There are so many churches which stress "practical" and "sub-

jective" preaching, where the listeners are exhorted and begged to believe in and accept Jesus, and where the training of the child is shamefully ignored. Summer schools are organized for the spiritual instruction of the child as if they would make amends for their gross neglect of the same children from the beginning of September into the following June. We labor with our children from their infancy on, bestow upon them catechetical instruction, and send them to schools of our own. It is well to bear this in mind when the clamor is heard that we, in our preaching, should adapt ourselves more to the child. Where is more done for the child than where the covenant conception is understood?

What does all this imply? It surely implies in the first place, that in our preaching, we are addressing the eternally beloved, redeemed, and sanctified people of the living God, not merely a people who must be called to believe and repent in the current sense of the word, but who have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. This truth implies, in the second place, that in our preaching we may never violate the truth that God generally regenerates His people during their infancy. O, how this truth emphasizes the unconditionality of God's promise and the entire work of salvation! It is indeed wonderful when the Lord calls an adult out of darkness into His marvellous light. In a certain sense we may say that this is more wonderful than when this work of the Lord is performed within a child. Nevertheless, it is so unconditional when an infant is regenerated by the Lord, is united with Christ by a true and living faith. And this is not an exception but the general rule in the development of God's kingdom and covenant. This means that the calling to walk in sanctification may never be presented except as the fruit of Divine grace. To be sure, man must be commanded in the Name of the Lord to repent from his evil because the Lord is God and no man has any excuse to walk in ways of evil. But, the child of God must be exhorted to repent and believe, not to become a child of God but because he is a child of God. The truth that the Lord regenerates His people generally in their infancy demands this explanation and presentation.

Does this do justice to the moral-ethical tenor of the gospel and to the truth that man is not a stock and block? Does it not? Must we not take our children aside, as early as possible, and speak to them of sin and iniquity and also of the everlasting love and mercy of God? We shall speak to them of the fact that we are conceived and born in sin, that it is impossible to save ourselves, that we must serve God, that the Lord loved a people from before the foundation of the world and that He gave His Son to be a propitiation for their

sins upon the cross of Calvary. We shall tell our children that this Jesus also suffered and died for them if they may be sorrowful for their sins, not because the power of the cross will also extend to them if only they believe, but because their sorrow because of their sin and faith is the fruit of the efficacy of the cross, inasmuch as all those whom the Father gave unto Jesus shall surely come unto Him. And we shall emphasize that it behooves them to walk as children of the Lord, at home and in the school and in the world, because when the Lord opens our eyes and ears and mouths we must see and hear and speak. Always we must present our walk in holiness and sanctification as the fruit of Divine grace. However, when we thus busy ourselves with our children we shall soon discover that the reaction of the children to our instruction is not always favorable. We bring forth Esau as well as Jacobs. And we shall discover that there are those who will resent this teaching concerning sin and Jesus and the holy demand of the Lord that we love Him and serve Him alone. With them also we must labor. We shall continue to instruct them in the things of the Word of God and hold forth before them the Divine command to leave their evil ways and turn unto the Lord. And this also applies to the Christian School and the preaching of the Word. The sinner must be warned in the Name of the Lord and admonished to repent because the Lord alone is God, and the child of the Lord must be exhorted to repent (every day anew) not to become a child of God but because he is a child of the Lord. God's grace and fellowship and our walk in all the commandments of the Lord must be proclaimed as inseparably related, not in the sense that the latter is ever a condition for the former but in the sense that it is the fruit of it. Where does the Holy Spirit work? Also in the hearts of the children. And constantly we must bear in mind that we are laboring with the elect Church of the living God who must be built up in all the truth of God's Word and the blessed mystery of His will.

May this continue to characterize the preaching in our Protestant Reformed Churches! May we remain doctrinal and emphasize our practical calling as a Church of the living God, not at the cost of doctrinal preaching but as resting upon it. May we preach election and responsibility, not as independent of each other, neither at the cost of each other, but as inseparably related, so that we may live and fight the good fight of faith as a people of the living God who are anchored in the eternal and unchangeable and wholly sovereign love of God Who loved us before we loved Him, while we were sinners, and Who therefore shall love us even unto the end.

H. Veldman

SIONS ZANGEN

Gods Groote Goedertierenheid

(Psalm 118; Derde Deel)

We zijn toegekomen aan het 15de vers van dezen psalm, en daar staat: "In de tenten der rechtvaardigen is eene stem des gejuichs en des heils: de rechterhand des Heeren doet krachtige daden;" En het 16de vers: "de rechterhand des Heeren is verhoogd, de rechterhand des Heeren doet krachtige daden!"

Dit is een uitroep van verrukking!

En de godvruchtige geslachten van het volk Gods hebben die verrukking verstaan, want ze deelden in dezelfde blijdschap. Later, veel later, zijn er van die godvruchtigen geweest die al die verrukking van dit vers op rijm gezet hebben, en zoo is de blijdschap voortgeplant van geslacht tot geslacht, en heb ik ze ook hooren zingen in mijn prilste jeugd: Gods rechterhand is hoog verheven; des Heeren sterke rechterhand doet door haar daan de wereld beven, houdt door haar kracht Gods volk in stand! De oorspronkelijke verrukking van dezen dichter heeft een vrucht gehad, een kostelijke en rijke vrucht, in al dat zingen van het volk Gods sindsdien hij dichtte en zong. En het zal doorgaan, totdat geen maan meer schijnt. En dan zal dit lied volmaaktelijk gezongen worden met hemelsche klankgeslachten.

Die sterke rechterhand van God!

Men hoort der vormen tent weergalmen van hulp en heil ons aangebracht; daar zingt men blij, met dank'bre psalmen: Gods rechterhand doet groote kracht.

O ja, de dichter van de Hollandsche berijmde psalmen heeft die verrukking verstaan, en in zang gebracht. Hij is allang gestorven, maar zijn vrucht bleef, en zal blijven.

De rechterhand van God is Jesus Christus. Toen alles reddeloos verloren was, is God gekomen en met almachtige kracht heeft Hij heil geschonken. Het scheen onmogelijk, dat Sion ooit gered zou kunnen worden. Sion lag in diepten van zonde en schuld terneer. Maar God is de Almachtige die alles kan wat Hem behaagt. Welnu, het behaagde Hem om Sion te verlossen uit de diepten van den eeuwiggen dood. En die krachtige rechterhand van God heeft het gedaan. Dat is het eeuwig Evangelie.

Dat lied wordt gezongen in de tenten der rechtvaardigen.

Wat beduidt het rechtvaardig te zijn? Zooeven sprak ik van zondige en schuldige mensen. Hoe zijn die zondaars en schuldigen rechtvaardig gewor-

den? Dat zit zoo: zij zijn eerst rechtvaardig in Christus Jezus, Gods Zoon. Uit en van zichzelf zouden ze nooit rechtvaardig kunnen worden. Maar God gaf al Zijn volk aan Jezus van voor de grondlegging der wereld. En Hij gaf Zijn Zoon bevel om al dat volk te rechtvaardigen. Die Zoon beloofde van eeuwigheid om dat te doen. En Hij heeft Zijn belofte gestand gedaan, want in de volheid des tijds is Hij gekomen en heeft alles gedaan wat ter rechtvaardiging van Gods volk noodig was. Gij weet wat dat alles beduidt. Hij leed, stierf, en verrees en voer ten hemel. En Hij deed dat alles plaatsvervangend. Wat Hij verrichtte, werd Zijn volk toegerekend. En zoo zijn Gods volk gerechtvaardigd voor God.

Maar zij zijn ook in beginsel rechtvaardig door de heiligmaking. De deugd van rechtvaardigheid wordt hun geschonken door Gods Woord en Gods Geest. En dat beteekent, dat zij des Heeren wil doen in 't diepste hart. Dat zij dien wil Gods beminnen en trachten te volvoeren in hun spreken en handelen, in geheel hun wandel. En die gedachte ligt op den voorgrond in dezen tekst. Als de psalmen spreken van de rechtvaardigen, dan is meestal die ethische deugd van het volk voor de aandacht van den zanger. Zoo ook hier. Hun rechtvaardigheid blijkt trouwens in hun gezang. De tekst zegt: In de tenten der rechtvaardigen is eene stem des gejuichs en des heils! Welnu, daar blinkt hun gerechtigheid in. Ziet ge niet, dat deze menschen het groote doel van God dienen? Gods eenige doel met de wereld en de historie is, dat de menschen Hem juichend dienen. Welnu, dat doen zij. En er is ook een stem des heils. Heil is die toestand waar al Uwe behoeften vervuld zijn. En de grootste, eigenlijk, de eenigste behoefte die een mensch heeft is om God te hebben tot zijn deel in tijd en eeuwigheid. Welnu, deze zangers van mijn tekst zingen van heil. Zij zijn zalig in beginsel. En daarom de naam van rechtvaardigen past.

Ik moet, echter, nog één ding zeggen, opdat ik niet verkeerd verklaard mag worden. Alleen zij die door Jezus Christus gerechtvaardigd werden, ontvangen de daadwerkelijke deugd van rechtvaardigheid in hun hart en leven. Met andere woorden, de heiligmaking stoelt op de rechtvaardigmaking. En niet omgekeerd, zooals men het in onze dagen, en in dit land vooral, wil. Alleen zij die tot Gods uitverkoren volk behoren ontvangen den Heiligen Geest die door het Woord van God de kinderen heiligt. Joh. 17.

“Ik zal niet sterven maar leven, en ik zal de werken des Heeren vertellen.”

Daar is de vrucht, beide van de rechtvaardigmaking en de heiligmaking

O, te moeten sterven is zoo onbeschrijflijk bang. Te moeten sterven is vreeselijk. Ik zal hier op aarde

nooit gewend raken aan den aanblik van een lijk. Een lijk is een onding. Als heel klein kind heb ik het al gevoeld. Dat koude, kille, afschuwelijke lijk! Later las ik wat er gebeurt met zulk een lijk in de ongewoelige aarde. En ik heb gegruwd.

En toch, dat is slechts een zeer klein deel van het sterven.

IJselijker is de geestelijke dood. Geestelijk te sterven is, dat men zich in haat keert tegen de Bron van alle goed, en dat is God. Dat men zijn leven verwoest door zich tegen God en Zijn Gezalfde te zetten. Een goddeloos mensch is vreeselijker dan een lijk.

En wat zal het zijn als lichaam en ziel en geest in de hel liggen, om dan voorts te sterven, te sterven, te sterven, — eeuwiglijk! Daar woelt en tiert en tandenknarst men door elkander om het hardst; daar hoor ik slangen schuif'len! Ik lijd zoo'n smart in deze vlam; och, dat er toch eens iemand kwam om deze dorst te lesschen. Maar't kan niet, is er mij gezeid; hier blijf ik tot in eeuwigheid; heir, in de plaats der duiv'len!

Stemt gij niet toe, dat we slechts stamelen als we van de hel en de verdoemenis spreken of schrijven? Net zoo min als we de grootte van de zaligheid in den nieuwen hemel en in de nieuwe aarde kunnen meten, kunnen we ook niet verstaan wat het zeggen wil om in de hel en de verdoemenis te verkeerren.

Maar—ik zal niet sterven, zegt de zanger. Ik zal leven, en dat leven is eeuwig leven: ik ga de werken des Heeren vertellen.

Er zijn altijd twee polen in de theologie. De eene pool is de mensch, mitsgaders zijn werken. En de andere pool is God en Zijne werken. Naar welke pool wordt gij getrokken? Hebt ge den mond vol van wat de mensch doet? Dan zijt ge Pelagiaan. Loopt Uw mond over van wat God doet? Dan zijt ge Gereformeerd.

Deze zanger weet wat hij doen zal: hij gaat zingen, zingen van gena. Hij gaat ons in zang vertellen wat de Heere gedaan heeft.

Komt luistert toe, gij Godgezinden! Gij die den Heer van harte vreest! Hoort, wat mij God deed ondervinden; wat Hij gedaan heeft aan mijn geest!

O, ik weet, dat dit een andere psalm is, maar het past, het past.

Laat ons verder luisteren naar den zanger: hij gaat ons vertellen van Gods werken.

“De Heere heeft mij wel hard gekastijd, maar Hij heeft mij ter dood niet overgegeven!”

Daar hebt ge het verschil tusschen Gods werk ten overstaan van de kerk, en ten overstaan van de wereld. De wereld geeft Hij altijd over in den dood. Geslacht na geslacht komt en gaat, en ze komen allen uit in den kuil. God straft de wereld met tijdelijke straf-

fen en met eeuwige straffen. Maar Hij straft hen altijd.

Maar de kerk wordt gekastijd.

Er is een groot verschil, een hemelschbreed verschil. Ik mag zeggen: een eeuwig verschil. Het verschil is zoo groot als het verschil tusschen den hemel en de hel.

Kastijden is de slaande hand Gods die Zijn kind slaat en zeer doet *tot zijn nut*. God kastijdt Zijn kind, *opdat het Zijn heiligheid zou deelachtig worden*.

En gij wordt gekastijd, en weet dat ge gekastijd wordt door God, als ge al Uw smart en al Uw tranen verbindt aan God. Zoo spoedig de verderver Uwe tente nadert, zegt ge: God heeft gezegd: plaag Mijn kind! Ziet het aan David. Toen Simei vloekte en stoof met stof, zeide David: Ja, laat hij vloeken; want de Heere toch heeft tot hem gezegd: Vloek David: wie zoude dan zeggen: waarom hebt gij alzoo gedaan? O, dat gaat diep. Zoo kunt ge het verstaan, dat Gods volk geen wrake doet tegenover zijne wederpartijders. Nog dieper, zoo kunt ge eenigzins verstaan, dat Gods volk kan bidden voor zijn benauwers.

Welnu, God had dezen armen man gekastijd, ja, zelfs *hard* gekastijd. Maar de Heere had hem niet ter dood overgegeven. Ik weet wel, dat de huidige zanger hier het oog heeft op den physischen dood. God maakte hem weer beter, als die kastijding ziekte geweest is. Of: God verlost hem uit de handen van zijn vijanden, als de kastijding bestond uit het overgeven in de handen van menschen die hem benauwd hadden. En toch, we mogen het ook toepassen op den eeuwigen dood. God geeft Zijn volk nooit over in den eeuwigen dood. Dat doet Hij met de verworpenen, doch nooit met de verkorenen.

Neen, met dezen zanger geschiedt juist het tegenovergestelde van het overgeven in den eeuwigen dood. Wat is het? De poorten der gerechtigheid worden opengeworpen, en hij mag binnentreden in den hemel, daarboven bij God.

“Doet mij de poorten der gerechtigheid open, ik zal daardoor ingaan, ik zal den Heere loven. Ik zal U loven, omdat Gij mij verhoord hebt en mij tot heil geweest zijt.”

Hier worden de lijnen liefelijk getrokken.

Poorten hooren in een muur. Een muur behoort rondom een stad. En die stad is het hemelsche Jeruzalem. Het gaat hier over het ingaan in den hemel. Gods stad heeft een muur, en die muur heeft poorten. En die poorten zijn de gerechtigheid Gods. Niemand kan tot God gaan, tenzij hij of zij bekleed worde met de gerechtigheid.

En nu zegt onze zanger: Doet mij die poorten open!

Dat is stoute taal! Kan dat? Mag dat?

Ja, dat mag en dat kan en dat moet zoo gezegd en gezongen. Het zet vast op de verzen 22 en 23: O,

die STEEN! Die steen die de bouwlieden verworpen hebben! Die Steen is Jezus. En die Jezus is onze VerbondsJehovah.

Jezus Christus is het die de poorten der gerechtigheid opengedaan heeft door Zijn borgtochtelijk werk, en als die Jezus in U woont, dan zingt die Jezus in U en met U: Open de poorten der gerechtigheid! Door deze zal ik binnentreden. En zij kunnen en zij zullen en zij moeten door die poorten ingaan, want zij zijn gerechtvaardigd door dien STEEN, door dien Jezus, door dien God. Zij zijn zóó door en door gerechtvaardigd, dat hun naam tot in der eeuwigheid zal zijn: de rechtvaardigen.

En wat doen zij, nadat zij door die poorten der gerechtigheid getreden zijn? Dit: “ik zal den Heere loven!” Leest het in de verzen 19 en 21.

Wat is het om den Heere te loven?

Dat is het hemelleven. Dat is als ge voor het lieflijke Aangezicht komt te staan, om dan al maar te roepen: Heilig, Heilig, Heilig is de Heere der heirscharen. En de dorpelen en de posten der deuren werden bewogen van de stem der zingenden, en het Huis werd vervuld met rook. Schaduwen van Jesaja in den hemel. (Jes. 6:3,4).

Ge looft God als ge Hem vertelt hoe lieflijk, hoe schoon, hoe aanbiddelijk Hij is in majesteit en heerlijkheid. Ge looft God als ge al Uw blijdschap in Hem vindt.

Dat moet ge hier op aarde beginnen. Begint ge hier niet op aarde, dan doet ge het ook nooit in den hemel. Als we straks in den hemel aanlanden, zullen we zeggen: de helft is mij niet aangezegd. Maar we zullen ook zeggen: de kwaliteit, de smaak heb ik geproefd in dat kleine kerkje aan den hoek van die of die straat. O ja, er is meer, ontzaglijk veel meer, maar het zal niet *anders* zijn. God is hier ook. Hij woont in ons midden. Groot is de Heilige Israels in het midden van U, o Sion!

Zal er stof zijn om den Heere te loven?

Gij dwaas! Waarom vraagt ge dit? Kent gij, kent gij, dien Jezus niet?

Laat ons luisteren naar wat deze arme en toch zoo rijke zanger ons leert.

“Ik zal U loven, *omdat Gij mij verhoord hebt en mij tot heil geweest zijt*.”

Daar hebt ge het in eenige woorden. Maar die woorden zijn zwaar. Er zit een eeuwigheid van Gods lieflijkheden in.

God verhoort Zijn volk.

Dat beteekent, dat dit volk tot Hem roept, schreeuwt, schreit, ja, en soms brult.

Weet ge niet, dat een der namen Gods is: o Hoorder der gebeden?

G. Vos

IN HIS FEAR

Looking To The Future

CHAPTER 3

ON TEACHER TRAINING

Having interrupted our train of thought in regard to the subject of teacher training for the past two issues, it will do no harm to try to catch the connection a bit, before plunging into the material itself.

Thus far we have established the necessity of specifically Protestant Reformed training, and are proceeding on the supposition that the aim of those who seek Protestant Reformed education for their children is also to have teachers with Protestant Reformed training. And we trust that the obstacles which lie on the path to the attainment of this goal will not be viewed as insurmountable by those concerned.

In the second place, we have insisted, also in regard to the establishment of our own teacher training facilities, upon the principle of parental responsibility, not ecclesiastical responsibility. The calling of the parents "to instruct their children in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power" includes *the responsibility for good instructors*. This follows from the truth that good instruction is simply impossible without good instructors. Those, parents, therefore, who take no vital interest in the supplying of instructors for their children, who, when they send their children off to school, think that there the parental responsibility ends, very definitely abandon their responsibility. The parent stands responsible for all the instruction which is given in school, for every word spoken, for every method used, for every approach to the subject material taken. And that responsibility can never be abrogated. It follows, then, that the parent individually, or the parents collectively, are responsible to provide their children with proper instructors. And if, as we have established, this responsibility cannot be fulfilled unless those instructors receive Protestant Reformed normal training, then it follows that the parents are ultimately responsible to provide such training.

This stand, as we have seen in our last installment under this chapter, is contrary to the course which has usually been taken in the establishment of higher educational facilities. The principle of ecclesiastical responsibility has been overwhelmingly maintained in the course of history. The church-established normal school and college, and even university, is a very common thing. But this makes fundamentally no differ-

ence. We must not be swept along in this current, but maintain the correct Reformed principle of parental responsibility and of separation, the physical separation, of church and school. I mention this again because it has much bearing on the two remaining questions which we must answer in connection with teacher training, and especially has bearing on the practical question of how we must attain our goal. We had better be realistic from the start, and understand that from the practical viewpoint this principle is simply another obstacle in the road to our own teacher-training facilities. It means we shall have to go against the current. It means we shall have to put out of mind the notion that we can simply look to mother church to provide us with a normal school. It means that any normal school we establish shall not come from funds accumulated by synodical assessment, but by the same old method of saving and scraping and holding drives,—hard work, willing sacrifice, enthusiastic spirit, generous giving. It means, as we have said, that the full and real responsibility for the actual establishment of teacher training facilities, and all that it implies, rests squarely on the very same parents, societies of parents, and school boards who have by dint of much hard labor and sacrifice established our grade schools. The very same problems will be faced, to a large extent. The problem of finance, the multitudinous problems of building, location, etc., the problems of organization, the problems of personnel,—all these will stare you in the face in grimly realistic fashion. Make no mistake about that. Let us be realistic. There is no easy way out.

As has been intimated, two main questions remain to be answered. They are interrelated, and are largely questions of a practical nature. I have no stock answer for these questions. And I believe that they will have to be faced actually by those officially concerned, viz. the societies, and especially the school boards, and eventually those who are charged with the responsibility of executing the plan to establish a normal school. Circumstances will have much to do with the eventual answers to these questions. A happy medium will have to be struck between our ideal of the Protestant Reformed Normal School and the means which are at hand, always, however, keeping in view the ideal. Research and study, careful planning and meticulous execution of plans, will be important elements in answering these questions.

The questions are: 1. What are the minimum requirements of such a Protestant Reformed normal course? What is absolutely necessary in such a course? 2. How can this goal be attained? How can we arrive at the stage where we make an actual beginning in training our own teachers?

As To Minimum Requirements

As I have said, I have no stock answer to this question. To set an absolute minimum as to what courses must be taught, how extensive or intensive they must be etc., is impossible at the present stage. Besides, I am no educational expert, though I have a speaking acquaintance with these matters. Furthermore, we must not forget that a course in education is a unity, a unified whole, with all the various subjects and fields of study closely interwoven and interrelated. In reality, there is no end to the education of a teacher. Nevertheless, just as you can strip a house of all its trimmings and luxuries and non-essentials, so that you have left a mere four walls and roof, so you can strip a course of education of all the non-essentials, and have left nothing but the fundamentals of the course. Mark this, I do not say this is ideal: it is far from it. Nor must we be satisfied permanently with these bare fundamentals,—no more than we rest satisfied with a mere four walls and a roof for a house when and if we have the means to build a modern house, beautifully decorated, conveniently equipped, luxuriously furnished. But...necessity is the mother of invention. And...we are talking now only about beginnings. I am of the opinion that many of us may have to learn, especially in view of the fact that we have become accustomed to using educational facilities of others, and attending full-fledged colleges,—learn to be satisfied with perhaps a rather humble and lowly beginning. But what of it? We are interested in the principle, are we not? Why cannot our own Normal School, if necessary, be as lowly an institution as our Theological School, which is still being conducted, if you will pardon the reference to Fuller Avenue's basement, in a hole in the ground? If only the fundamental thing, *the quality and proper content of the instruction*, may be obtained, then all is well. But in the meantime, let not necessity drive us into a hole either from which we never emerge!

In order, then, to come to some conclusion as to what we should expect in an infant normal school, let us, first of all, get a general view of the course offered in a full-fledged normal school. In doing so we can attempt somewhat to classify the material, and, at the same time come to some understanding as to what is essential.

First of all, we may mention those subjects which belong strictly to a course for teachers. Usually included in this classification are the following:

1) A Course in the Principles of Education. Certainly, such a course is the foundation-stone of any course for teachers. It cannot be excluded. The proper principles of education, Protestant Reformed principles, must before all else be inculcated into our

teachers. In general, such a course would include the delineation of Reformed, Scriptural principles concerning the educand, the education, and the educator, the child, the subject-material and the teacher.

2) Closely allied, and perhaps, for that reason, not immediately essential as a separate course, would be a course in the Philosophy of Education. Especially if such a course concerns the *history* of educational philosophy, it would not be immediately necessary. Nevertheless, it should be added as soon as feasible, I would say, especially from the point of view that it prepares the teacher to defend himself both in theory and practice against the many winds of false philosophy.

3) Certainly to be classified as essential is a thorough course either in general psychology or educational psychology, preferably the latter.

This classification we will continue next time, D. V.

H. C. Hoeksema



IN MEMORIAM

On August 29, 1952, it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother,

MRS. DORA MONSMA

Although her loss is felt keenly by the family, we know that our loss is her gain.

Our earnest prayer is that the Lord will supply our every need for comfort in the hours of loneliness, and that He will be our constant aid.

Mr. Orie Monsma
Children and grandchildren

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REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the R.F.P.A. was held on Sept. 25. New board members chosen were K. Ezinga (Fourth), G. E. Bylsma and H. Velthouse (First). Retiring members: J. Oomkes, P. Dykema and G. Bor-duin. The Society decided to increase the membership dues to \$5.00 effective Jan. 1, 1953.

The board reported to the Society that it was endeavouring to send *The Standard Bearer* gratis to various Christian Colleges throughout the Country. Thus far 22 of these schools have answered our request that they would be willing to place our paper in their libraries.

The annual reports of the secretary and treasurer were read and approved.

—The Board

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Peter 1:1, 2

I

The undersigned intends to write a series of popular expositions on the first epistle of Peter during the next few months. These articles do not intend to be technical exegesis; such is the task of the minister in his study. There will be as little of this "workshop" in these articles as possible. Not that these articles are not based on as careful exegesis as this writer can perform, but these exegetical labors will not stand in the foreground. Rather they will be exegetical sketches keeping in mind the doctrinal and hortatory and practical implications of the text as we progress.

In this first contribution to this series we will devote our attention to the first two verses of I Peter 1. We read the following from the pen of Peter, the inspired writer: "*Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to the elect strangers, dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you and peace be multiplied.*"

The first matter of importance that strikes our attention in this Scripture passage is what we read here of Peter. It is true we do not read a great deal about Peter's person here. This is not a letter of Peter concerning himself; it is a letter concerning all that pertains to the church and her living hope in Christ Jesus in the midst of this world. Hence, nothing about the person of Peter. But for the very reason that this pertains to the hope of God's elect we do read something of Peter's relationship to Jesus Christ.

It is this: Peter, *an apostle of Jesus Christ*.

It is *Peter* who here writes: it is not simply Simon, son of Jonas. It is the Peter whose faith and hope and calling is a "rock" because it is all built and anchored in the Stone laid in Zion, elect and precious with God. "Thou art Peter" our Lord had said to him in the regions of northern Galilee. In this one name we see Peter in all the glory of God's grace; he is a new creature, old things have passed away and all things have become new. He is led by his Lord.

Then too it is Peter who writes, but it should be carefully noticed, that he writes as *an apostle of Jesus Christ*.

In the first place, we notice the truthful implication in the expression *an apostle*, that he is in no sense

of the word *the* apostle. Foolish and trifling men have indeed attempted to fabricate *the* apostle par excellence of Peter. We think here of all the insistence of the Roman Catholics. But Peter himself wrote simple: *an* apostle. He is simply *one* of the twelve. He is indeed in that college of men, formerly Galilean fisher-men, who have been separated to be to be the eyewitness of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, but among these he is simply *an* apostle. No longer is he *trying* to be the "greatest" in self-exaltation. He is great in humility. Peter, *an* apostle. Let it be noticed!

But even as such his stature is great. He is an apostle of *Jesus Christ*. He was called personally by Christ Himself. Already at the beginning of Jesus' ministry Peter was called initially to the apostleship through the instrumentality of Andrew, (John 1:41) later at the sea of Galilee this fisherman from Galilee is called by Jesus and shown that he is to become a fisher of men; all the years of Jesus' suffering, Peter accompanied His Lord. Peter belonged to the inner circle of the three disciples, who might accompany Jesus on special occasions. We think of the event of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the time when Jesus is glorified on the mount, the occasion of the struggle of Jesus in Gethsemane. Peter is called by Jesus Christ to the apostleship. He is a sent one. But he is also qualified by Jesus Christ. He is empowered from on high according to the certain promise of Christ. (Acts 1:5)

Certainly these are good credentials of Peter.

He lays them on the table of the churches addressed in this letter as well as on the table of all the elect saints in all ages.

Shall we reverence these credentials, giving him honor for Christ's sake, yet placing him on a par only with all the other apostles?

That is the first item worthy of notice in this passage we have quoted.

There is, however, still another matter that is worthy of our attention.

We refer, of course, to what Peter here tells us incidentally of the *status quo* of the church in the midst of this world. It is well that this status quo be not overlooked; nor may it be neglected. We may not neglect this since *we believe* an holy Catholic Church. When we take the church of Christ seriously, confessing that we are a member of the same, and trust that we shall forever remain such a member then we will be intensely interested in the status quo of the Church. It is true: Peter does not lay down a formulated dogma here. But it is equally true that a great deal of dogma is incidentally stated here concerning the Church.

In the warp and woof of this address is wonderful material for ecclesiology.

Let us notice this, heeding the various elements in the text.

In the first place, we would notice, that the churches here are not addressed as *being* Pontians, Galatians, Capadocians, Asians, Bithynians. No more is this true than that today we may address the church in Netherlands as *Netherlanders*, or the church in America as *Americans*. The church is not national, nor is it composed of nationalities. She is not composed of *many nations*. She is one new man in Christ. She is gathered *out of every* tongue and tribe and nation. But she is herself not a *composite* of nationalities. She is a new creation, a living body of Jesus Christ, gathered by His word and Spirit. She is a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a redeemed people, called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, a people formed by God for Himself, that it may declare His great and glorious praises.

This negative aspect in this description of Peter here should not be overlooked.

But there is more in this text.

We should also notice the positive statements of Peter concerning God's church in the world; these statements tell us the real status quo of the church.

The Church here is called, addressed as being "elect strangers," scattered in the provinces of the Roman empire in greater Asia Minor. They are in the world yet not of the world. They have another capital city than mighty Rome. This earthly city, mighty though it be, belongs to the "thrones" that are destroyed. But the capital city of the elect strangers is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the great King, Jesus Christ. From the viewpoint of this city the elect are strangers in the world. Thus we are sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who looked for the better country, that is, an heavenly. God is not ashamed to be called our God, for He hath prepared for us this City. It is the Civitas Dei.

This city is there because of the Builder and Maker, who works all things according to the counsel of His will. This predestination, foreknowledge, election is the last and first reason of our being strangers in this world. This we read in the text: Elect strangers! This means that the church does not simply happen to be strangers in this world plus being elect, but that the children of God are strangers *by virtue of election*. Election is the cause and source of this being strangers in the midst of man; only God's foreknowledge is the heartbeat in our spiritual strangerhood in this world. Says Peter: Elect strangers *according to the foreknowledge* of God the Father.

It is true that this foreknowledge has often been

interpreted as though it merely meant God foreknew who would believe, and, therefore, gave to them the gift of faith, and elected them. But such is not the "foreknowledge" of God! Clearly the foreknowledge of God is such that it even logically precedes the "foreordination". At least it is a concomitant of foreordination. Thus we read in Romans 8:29, "Because whom He has *foreknown* he has also *foreordained* to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren." All things in heaven and on earth are as God foreknew them in a divinely causative way! Thus is the "foreknowledge of God" in my text.

The actual efficient cause of our being strangers historically in faith and hope is due to the Spirit of sanctification. God sovereignly calls us unto a state and condition of holiness. He is the Holy One of Israel. And He constitutes us a holy people by the operation of the Holy Spirit Who justifies and sanctifies us. In the sphere of the operation of this Spirit of Christ we are very really constituted saints in the light. Our status quo is that the Spirit of grace and glory rests upon us. Compare I Pet. 4:14. As the "cloud" rested upon Israel in the desert on the way to the land of Canaan, so now the abiding presence of God is in us, because the Spirit of sanctification has made His abode in our hearts. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit! That is her status quo.

By the power of this Spirit of sanctification we are brought to a new obedience. It is not obedience to the law; for that is impossible. Says Peter in the meeting at Jerusalem, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." Hence, this is no obedience to the command of the law. It is a new obedience by which we walk according to the Spirit of sanctification. For it is an obedience which is the effect, the fruit of being "sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ."

Hence, the obedience here is an obedience which is wrought by the Spirit of sanctification through the preaching of the gospel!

Faith obeys the gospel. It reaches out to Christ, lays hold on Him. And faith obeys the gospel.

Faith is wrought by the Spirit of sanctification!

And the Spirit of sanctification and the faith it works together with its obedience is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Thus it all is according to the rule of plant, fruit and its root. From the fruits (obedience) the plant of the Spirit is known to be rooted in the unchangeable, sovereign and only good foreknowledge of God.

What a picture of the church in the world!

What a "status quo"!

And do not forget the order. It is "according to" and "in" and "unto"! The "unto" is never possible without the "in", but neither of these two are a reality without the "according to". Let this be clearly seen and joyfully confessed:

Now our soul rests safely and surely in the eternal elective love of God.

G. Lubbers



THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Moses' Intercession

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

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

As I stated, these words of the Lord had reference to the whole nation including the Israel according to the election. For, as was pointed out, in these words of the Lord the entire nation and Moses appear side by side as excluding the one the other. "That I may consume them," said the Lord, "and make of thee a great nation."

But the Lord cannot destroy His people. And therefore, as was explained, what the Lord was actually saying to Moses is this: "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, which I cannot do, they being my people, but which I nevertheless must do, except thou Moses intercede for them," or in the language of the New Testament Scriptures (Moses typified Christ) "Now therefore, let Me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, which, however, I cannot possibly do, but which I must nevertheless do, I being righteous and holy God, except Thou, the Christ, Mine only begotten, atone for their sins by Thy suffering and death on the cross, and on the ground of Thy atonement everlastingly intercede for them. Therefore, atone Thou for their sins and intercede for them.

And Moses did intercede for the people. And in

his intercession he enumerated all the reasons why the Lord could not possibly destroy His people.

And then we read, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he said that he would do unto His people," *'if Moses had not prayed for them,'* that is, what the Lord said that He would do unto His people—consume them—if He had not raised up Moses, if He had not raised up Christ to atone their sins and to intercede for them on the ground of His atonement, grieved Him. For that people was the object of His eternal love in Christ. Hence, the idea—such is the meaning—of destroying *that* people was abhorrent to Him. For such is the repentance of God. It is not remorse. It is not change of mind and plan as is the repentance of man. But it is grief, here His sovereign determination to be grieved by the idea of His consuming His people and thus to be delighted by the idea of His saving them in Christ.

The Lord repented . . . But as was pointed out, He refrained from telling Moses that He had repented and would spare and forgive His ill-deserving and condemnable people. It means that as far as Moses knew, his intercession went unanswered. It was therefore with a burdened soul that he left the Lord's presence. Again in the camp among the people, his first act was, as we saw, to send the sword among the apostates, and there fell of the people three thousand men.

As was stated, Moses had besought the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. But there had been no answer. To be forgiven, sin must be atoned. Moses understood. So on the morrow he returned to the Lord and offered himself as an atonement for the sins of the people. "Blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written," were his words. But the Lord returned answer: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." And though He next bade Moses to lead the people unto the promised land, and said that His angel would go before Moses, He also let it be known that in the day that He would visit, He would visit their sins upon them.

The Lord's doings continued ominous. He plagued the people because of their sins. And though He again commanded Moses to depart and go up hence, he and his people, unto the land which He, the Lord, had sworn unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and though He repeated His promise to send an angel before Moses to drive out the Canaanites—yet He also let it be known that He would not go up in the midst of them, and giving as His reason that "thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way."

The Lord now did as He had threatened. He and His Angel (the two were essentially one) took up

their residence in a place far removed from the camp, that is, where Moses, as commanded by the Lord, pitched the tabernacle. He pitched it without the camp, afar from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And here the Lord now communed with Moses. And here, too, he received the penitent among the people.

By this doing specially the Lord made it clear that in His heart he had forgiven His people, definitely the penitent among them. Moses therefore continued his intercession.

To all appearance the Lord—He and His Angel—was to go before His people, but was not intending to go up in their midst. Moses therefore said to the Lord, "See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: but Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me," 'as my companion by my side,' he meant. It is clear from the sequel that Moses' complaint was really a request that the Lord and His Angel return to him and his people and dwell in their midst as of yore. As it was, He had separated Himself from His people and was dwelling at a great distance from them. This to Moses was inexplicable and at once intolerable. For had not the Lord said that He knew him by name, him and his people, and that he had found grace in His sight? How then could the Lord be holding them both at arm's length as He was apparently now doing?

And therefore Moses continues: "Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast found grace in my sight," ('thou and thy people,' the Lord meant). Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people."

"If I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy way." Implied in this request is the unexpressed petition, "Return to us, O Lord, and again go up in our midst," so that we must read here, "If I (and Thy people) have found grace in Thy sight, (as Thou sayest), return to us, and shew me Thy way, that I may know Thee."

Moses' request, it is plain, is twofold. For it is not enough for him that the Lord again take up His abode in their midst. That would prove disastrous for his sinful people, should not the Lord also turn from His fierce wrath. So his petition is also and especially that the Lord show him His way with them, reveal that this way is one of love and salvation and not of doom and destruction. "That I may know Thee." The Lord's way with His people being one of forgiving love and salvation, it follows that to see and to know this way is to see and to know the Lord,

know Him in the face of Christ, Who, being the truth and the life, is the way.

The Lord gave answer. He said to Moses for the benefit of the penitent among the people: "My presence (that is, My face) shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." In a word, "I will return and give thee and My people rest, in the final instance, the rest of the new earth, where God's tabernacle will be with men."

But Moses was not satisfied. His awareness of the necessity of the Lord's going up in their midst was that lively that he could not allow the matter to rest here. So he said to the Lord, "If Thy presence (face) go not with us—in our midst—carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest with us? So—if Thou goest with us—we shall be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

The glory of God's people is exactly that the Lord is in their midst as the God of their salvation in Christ Jesus.

The Lord replied, "I will—will indeed—do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for *thou*—thou and thus thy people—have found grace in my sight." Moses in his intercession typified Christ, so that the truth to be drawn out of these words of the Lord is that His mercy is upon Christ and through Christ and for Christ's sake upon His people.

Still Moses was not satisfied. The vital part of his petition that the Lord show him His way that he might know Him, still went unanswered. So he again prayed, "shew me Thy glory," "Thy mercy and grace with regard to Thy sinful people." It was but another way of saying, "Show me Thy way," "supply me with the tangible evidence of Thy forgiving love for Thy ill-deserving people and of me."

The Lord replies to His servant, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." This is the expression of absolute freedom of choice peculiar to God alone. And implied is that He will not have mercy on all. Some He will harden again solely because He wills.

And so He will indeed return but in love only of some and accordingly in hatred of the others, whom He will harden and destroy in His wrath when their measure of iniquity is full. This will be His way with some, and that will be His way with the others. And the two ways in combination is His glory, the revelation of His name, of all His goodness, of the total

of the virtues of His invisible being, of His love as operative in the salvation of His elect and of His hatred of sin as operative in the damnation of the reprobated.

These things Moses had to understand. He had to be made to perceive that all is not Israel that is of Israel, but that the children of the promise are counted for the seed, and that on this Israel alone God will have mercy.

But Moses had asked the Lord that He *shew* him His glory. This the Lord now promises also to do. He will make all His goodness to pass before Moses. He will make to pass before Moses the Angel (the pillar of cloud), and in the face of this cloud—in the face of the Angel, who is Christ—Moses will behold all God's goodness as reflected gloriously in this face, the face of the Angel.

Besides, from out of that cloud will come a voice, the voice of the triune Jehovah and of Christ—proclaiming the name of the Lord before Moses.

But the Lord said to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see Me and live." Doubtless what is meant here is the effulgence of God's glories in which God alone dwells and can dwell, and accordingly the light unto which no man can approach. It is only the "back parts" of this "light," the creatural revelation of God in the face of the Son of God incarnate, here preindicated by the Angel, the pillar of cloud, that Moses can see and live.

And so the Lord says to Moses, "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen."

As the Lord's doing, what He here said, will be the act whereby He will renew the covenant that had been trampled by the people, Moses must hew him two tables of stone like unto the first, that the Lord may write upon them the words that were in the first table that Moses had broken. The Lord further instructs Moses to be ready in the morning to come up unto mount Sinai and present him there to the Lord in the top of the mount. But no man shall come up with him. Neither shall any man be seen throughout all the mount. Neither shall the flocks and herds be allowed to feed before the mount.

Moses did as commanded. He hewed him two tables of stone and went up into the mount with the two tables in his hand. And the Lord did as He had said. He descended in the cloud and stood before Moses there, and proclaimed His own name—the name of the Lord. He said, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in

goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation."

So then, the Lord will keep mercy for thousands. Their sins and iniquities He will forgive. On the other hand, He will by no means clear the guilty. But their sins He will visit unto their children. It is clear and it must certainly have been clear to Moses that the Lord was here speaking of two kinds of people.

In the law of the ten commandments the former people—the thousands for whom the Lord will keep mercy—are described as such who fear God. Yet, whereas the Lord will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, these favored ones in themselves are just as lost and undone as the others, just as depraved and worthy of condemnation, just as hard of heart and stiff of neck. That the Lord in His love nevertheless forgave them and put His fear in their hearts, that was His glory.

And Moses now saw and heard the glory—the glory of the Lord. For the Lord revealed it unto him. And he made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. And in the full assurance of faith, he completes his intercession. "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and sin, and take us for Thine inheritance."

This can now be his prayer. For he had heard with his ear the Lord's proclamation, "The Lord merciful and gracious... forgiving iniquity." And the Lord replied. He said, "And behold, I will make a covenant; before all the people I will do wonders, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee."

As appears from the sequel the reference was in the first instance to the Lord's driving out before His people the Canaanites by the sword of Joshua. Joshua's victories were a new work indeed, a wonder of grace, never before seen and as such prophetic of the return of Christ to judge the quick and the dead in order that His little flock may receive the kingdom.

Moses had received a new vision of God and of His way with His people. The Lord will certainly forgive the great sin that was committed but only in some and not in all. But regarding the question just how sin was to be atoned, and by whom, Moses was as much in the dark as ever. On these questions the proclamation of the Lord had shed no light. That

sin must be atoned in order to be forgiven and also will be atoned, Moses well knew. For that was the great lesson of the animal sacrifices, this lesson namely, that Zion should be redeemed with judgment and her coverts with righteousness. That faith was his in common with all the saints of that day. And as standing in that faith they were saved.

G. M. Ophoff

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The Gospel and the Command

In the Scripture *grace* and the *command* or *exhortation* are always connected, and the former, *grace*, presented as the cause, reason and fountain of obedience to the command in faith and repentance and holy living.

This point is well illustrated by the Scriptures at Phil. 2:5-12. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, And that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of the Father."

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."

Let us take notice of the command or exhortation contained in this Scripture passage directed, as it is, to the believers. It is this:

"Work out your own salvation."

Second, let us take notice of how this command or exhortation does not stand alone, but that, on the contrary, it is logically related to what in the above cited passage preceeds and follows it and this by the two words "wherefore" and "for", so that the reasoning of the apostle here is verily this:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (the command) for, or, because:

a) Christ, having taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and having been made in the likeness of men humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death, even the death of the cross, and God therefore should bow.

b) God worketh in you both to will and to do. highly exalted Him that at His name every knee

In other words, what the apostle says to the elect, historically the believers, and certainly to them alone is this, Brethren, my fellow believers in Christ, *just because* Christ atoned your sins on the cross and in reward of His obedience was highly exalted by His Father, and accordingly has both the power, privilege and ability, as Lord of lords and King of kings and as head over all things in the church to gather His church, and *just because* God, through Christ's Spirit has imparted unto you the fruits of His atonement, working in you both to will and to do, therefore my brethren, beloved in the Lord, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*.

In other words, believe in God through Christ, crucify your members which are upon the earth and put on Christ, *because* it is God who, by imparting unto you the life of Christ and working in you both to will and to do, *makes you* to believe in God through Christ. *Desire* and *will* to walk in every good work and do walk in them actually, *because* it is God who maketh you so to desire, will and do. He worketh in you both to will and to do.

Take notice then, how that in this discourse of the apostle the work of God whereby He worketh in His people both to will and to do, and His command to His people: work your own salvation, and their obedience to it, are linked together not only, but set forth in the relation of cause and effect or fruit. The total of good works of the believer—their willing and doing the will of God, their faith and repentance, their laying aside sin and putting on Christ and their walking worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called with humbleness and meekness and with long-suffering bearing one another—are God's works in them, one and all. For of them all He is the creator. And as a result, and in obedience to His command that they work out their salvation—a command spoken in their hearts by Him, *they* work, walking in all the good works prepared for them by Christ's atonement and worked in them by Christ's Spirit.

To separate in the preaching the exhortations of the Scriptures from the Gospel, the obedience of the believers in repentance, faith, conversion and their holy conversation from the Gospel that God works in them both to will and to do, to fail always to set forth in the preaching how things here are related, or even to lay onesided emphasis on the exhortations of the Scriptures and the obligations under which they bring men, and definitely the believers, is not to preach the Scriptures. It is not to preach as Paul preached, nor as any of the other of the apostles and prophets of the Scriptures preached. In all the Scriptures, Gos-



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pel and the command or exhortation, the work of God whereby He works in His people both to will and to do, and the fruit of this work of God in them are always linked together. In combination, the one with the other, they constitute the Gospel of Christ to the believers.

Let us adduce a few other examples to show how true this is.

Said the Lord to Abraham: "I am thy God." This is Gospel. And the command: "Walk before My face and be upright." And the meaning? Not, certainly, 'I will be thy God on the condition that thou walk before My face and be upright.' Did God speak one language to Abraham and another language to New Testament believers by the mouth of Paul? Certainly not. The meaning, then, is this: Abraham, *just because* I am thy God, the God of thy salvation in Christ Jesus, walk thou before My face and be upright. It was but another way of saying: Work out thy salvation with fear and trembling, *because* it is God that worketh in thee both to will and to do.

Let us now take notice of the law as promulgated from Mount Sinai.

It was a terrible sight that the people were made to behold. We read, "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunderings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the neither part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire; and the smoke thereof descended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice." (Ex. 19:16-19) "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12:21)

What we here behold on Mount Sinai is the face of God—the angel of the Lord, Christ Jesus (the pillar of cloud)—now assuming a most terrible aspect:—a black cloud, streaked by lightnings, followed by peals of thunder, and a quaking mountain, all indicative of God's holy wrath, anger, avenging justice.

The reason for this is found in the character of the covenant that the Lord was instituting with His people here at Sinai. It was a symbolical-typical covenant of grace *in the first instance*, the first covenant, so called in the epistle to the Hebrews. It was a covenant of external law, of law written on two tables of stone and not also in men's hearts. It was a covenant with the law external to men, over and above them and not

also in their inward parts, the reason being that the blood of the sacrifices of this covenant could not atone sin except symbolically. But the law external to man is the law as transgressed by man, for it is not in their hearts. Thus the law external to man curses man. It calls for the revelation of the wrath of God over man. Therefore God's face assumed an aspect so terrible there on the mount.

But the purpose was pedagogical. By those thunderings and cursings of the law the Israel according to the election had to be driven in the arms of Christ. And therefore also the very law called for the sacrifice by blood by which the sins of the people were symbolically atoned, thus a sacrifice that was prophetic of Christ in his suffering and dying for the sins of His people, and in His resurrection and exultation at the right hand of God.

And therefore also Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel went up to God on the mountain, and they saw the God of Israel—His face—and there under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel God laid His hand. And there was a sacrifice by blood on the mount, the flesh of which they did eat in token of their fellowship with God.

God then was not angry with His people to destroy them for their sins. He only wanted to impress them with the fact of His being holy God with eyes to pure to behold sin and with the fact that, being thus disposed, He would redeem them from their sins in the blood of Christ in order that His tabernacle might be with them.

And accordingly He spake to them from the top of the Mount and from out of the dense cloud thus, "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of bondage, that is, in the language of the New Testament Scriptures, "I am the Lord thy God, the God of thy salvation in Christ Jesus, who delivered thee out of the bondage of sin and death and clothed thee with heavenly perfection and glory. *Therefore*, because thou art my people in whom I am working now and everlastingly both to will and to do, thou shalt have no other Gods before me...but Me thy God thou shalt love with all thy heart."

It was again Gospel that the Lord was proclaiming to His people there at Sinai. And this is the way the command and the Gospel is proclaimed in the Scripture, proclaimed to His people, His elect in Christ, namely in combination with each other and with Christ's God the fountain and the cause of obedience to the command.

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