

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

God's Presence of Grace

"For wherein shall it become known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." — Ex. 33:16

Even so, Lord, as we stand at the beginning of another year let it be.

For above all else, that we have found grace in His sight, is important. That such be known is paramount!

Known that must be to friend and foe; and that very clearly. Of that there may be no doubt!

But then His presence must be with us. That shall prove His grace toward us.

And that presence brings fruit in spiritual separation! Which in itself again is an indication of His favor.

Lord, let that reality be our lot. Then all is well — also in this year. For thus we will be a sanctified people — the people of God! Safe, alone!

* * * *

Such a prayer is proper when again we are reminded of the fact that we face a whole year of untrodden paths and unknown experiences. The fact that history repeats itself in a general way, does not minimize the need of the boon expressed in the text. For, glancing back on the passing years, our one testimony must be: "their strength is labor and sorrow." Upon that we need not elaborate whether we view the past years from the aspect of the individual or the church as a whole.

But, there is more! Of labor, sorrow, grief, affliction, malice and all kinds of evil, there is not a mere continuation, but we must expect an increase of these! There is ever a development also in respect to these things. In 1954 the end of the ages shall be closer upon us than ever, and that as to be evidenced in those experiences of the believer and the church, that cause grief.

How proper: Lord! let us find grace . . . Be Thou near . . . Let us taste the goodness of being at Thy side!

* * * *

For surely so must be understood "God's going with us" of the text.

More, richer in comfort, is this than the virtue of God's omnipresence. O, this attribute of God is not to be denied. Also in this year, which we now enter, that glorious perfection of our God will continue to be factual. That retracted, and there is no God!

Yet, that Moses, the Typical mediator between Jehovah and His heritage, Israel, meant something more than that is plain. Evident this is, first of all, from the fact that it really forms the content of a petition. Moses, the believer, the church . . . covet God's presence continually. But the very fact of prayer for it, presupposes the possibility of lacking it. That is impossible in respect to any of God's perfections. Objectively: God CANNOT GO AWAY. Subjectively there is no doubt of this in the saint either. Therefore it never appears in what is true prayer. To pray thus would be the same as asking: Please, remain God, which in itself is too blasphemous to utter. Moreover, that the virtue of omnipresence cannot be here meant, is plain from the inseparable relation between "presence" and "grace." To join grace to His omnipresence is the same as to say that grace is common to all. And that is just as heretical as to pray that God may remain God. Nay, it is a denial of His being God according to His Own revelation!

The idea here, rather, is that God may attend, accompany, travel in fellowship in a relationship of love.

That was the idea as to Moses and Israel. True, it meant that literally God would travel with them from the place of their present encampment. But then in His favor, in a communion that is only rooted in a friendship relation of eternal love. In, yea, by such attendance safety is assured unto Canaan. Any other presence of God would spell their doom. Of that the bleaching bones in the wilderness of many bore mute testimony!

Spiritually such is ever the same. That people of God is also on a journey as is typically taught in all the elements

of Israel's experience. The church in that journey must also be safeguarded against destruction lurking everywhere. Her path lies thru the howling wilderness of this present dispensation. Danger from within and from without abound. Over against none of them can that church stand in her own strength. And she would surely soon lose her way, left to her own judgment. Only the favorable accompanying of God is the causal safeguard of the church of Christ . . . also in 1954. And that as manifest by giving direction thru Word and Spirit and so continually delivering, until the flow of years ceases, the church enters into the haven of rest.

* * * *

Desirable fellowship! For that presence proves all that is worth knowing for the soul!

And known that proof must be. Now and here.

The object of proof is "finding grace in Thy sight."

And that means that the work of God whereby He beautifies His people shall become apparent. The church must be revealed as the object of God's pleasure. And this is certainly very evidently not a common matter. Not in Moses' and Israel's case. Sins had been committed. The Lord had been displeased. He had threatened punishment by refusal to go along. Moses had interceded. The Lord had heard. They had found grace! The sin had been forgiven and the cause was safe. The failure to find that grace with God would have been their doom. And spiritually for the church it is ever the same. Look back and see the long list of sins! How crowded the last year has been with them! Assurance we must have that we "found" grace in His sight! Without that our case as individual and as church is finished! With it all is well!

O, it is true, that will not in any way alter the fact of the events of the year. Grace does not remove the wilderness dangers; does not remove the temptations we will have to face; does not silence the enemy; does not slay the power of darkness in its nefarious work.

But that relationship of eternal, divine favor paves the highway for the saint upon which he may walk in full assurance that all is well.

That glorious grace becomes known thru God's attendance. Known by Moses and the people of God of the old dispensation thru faith. And they rejoiced in it! But also known by the enemy that surrounded. The foe always said: they shall not enter but we shall destroy them. But, and such is the import of the petition implied in the text, Lord! manifest thru wonderful, miraculous protection that we are the objects of Thy love! Let the enemy experience the impotence of his raging hatred! Let them behold, that, notwithstanding all their evil intent, Israel enters the land of rest!

Known that becomes to us even more gloriously! His presence is sealed to us in Immanuel! and is there, could there be any greater proof of the fact that we have found grace in His sight? Lord, let that be known! Let it become

very evident. Let us taste that grace in respect to Thy guidance, thru our sanctification, thru conscious fellowship with Thee! But let it also become manifest to the world of enemies that we are Thine! That nought the foe may contrive to do, can prohibit "Thy people" from entering into THE rest. And let such become evident thru out this whole year in every event and experience.

So Israel shall be saved; the Church shall be delivered; the saint shall triumph.

* * * *

And this will become evident thru the fruits of grace. Glorious, coveted fruits!

And those fruits for which we look, the results of His accompanying grace are spiritual!

God's presence of grace does not yield prosperity according to the earthly standards. We, the church, will again in this year again have to wend our way thru the midst of the camp of the foe. Shall have to walk in ways wherein it seems that the enemy has the upperhand. Where, mayhaps, we shall have to experience further decimation, further losses numerically. Our chastisement will again, from that point of view, be there every morning. This year, undoubtedly more than ever before, will prove — painfully so — that this life is but a continual death!

But in the midst of it all, we are spiritually safe and that thru the manifest result of God's presence, that is, isolation. For "so shall we be separated." And also here the significance is clear. Moses and Israel would not somehow be geographically separated from the world! In fact the opposite was ever true. True at this very moment. Enemies were lurking behind the rocks on every side. True it would continue to be after being brought into the land of "promise" that was at the very crossroads of the world. Hemmed in they were by all people. Nor does grace remove the church today to island or monastery. God always leaves His people in the midst of the "foes abounding." Their path is ever thru the "waters" and the "fire."

No, their isolation is spiritual. Spiritually their stand is in antithesis over against "all the others upon the face of the earth." From the spiritual-ethical point of view the line divides into two: on the one hand the people of God, His graced ones and on the other "all other nations," movements, groups.

And this is not relative, but absolute.

It is not a matter of chance . . . it is a certainty and inevitable.

That isolation is the inevitable result of God's presence of grace. When God graces His people, there follows division. Former ties are broken. The church separated becomes a royal priesthood over against all foes, open and avowed, but also the subtle and covered. Manifest, this antithesis, becomes in the walk of sanctification. When God works, dwells with His Own, sanctification surely follows!

And that separation, viewed and desired by the enemy, because it hates the manifestation of "grace," is our hope and salvation. That sanctity of life is the work of Immanuel!

Glorious presence of God with us. Marvelous grace with its sure fruit. Privilege unspeakable to be of that people. For God's work it is. And that shall surely stand!

Lord! Jehovah of Thy covenant! If Thy presence go not with us — do not carry us up hence. But attended in grace by Thy presence, our Lord Jesus Christ, we boldly face also this year . . . and the next . . . all our days, until there are no more and we shall sing: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O, Jerusalem." — H. H. K.

The comfort of the believer against the miseries of this short life is taken from the decree of their election, and the eternal covenant of redemption settled in the purpose and counsel of the blessed Trinity for their behoof, wherein it was agreed before the world was, that the *Word* to be incarnate, should be the Savior of the elect: for here the asserting of the eternity of God is with relation to His own chosen people; for "*Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations,*" and "*Thou art God from everlasting to everlasting*" is in substance thus much: Thou art from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God in purpose and affection toward us Thy people, and so Thou art *our God* from everlasting, in regard to Thy eternal purpose of love, electing us, and in regard to Thy appointing redemption for us by the Redeemer.

DAVID DICKSON on Psalm 90:1, 2

O Lord, Thou art our home, to Whom we fly,
And so hast always been, from age to age;
Before the hills did intercept the eye,
Or that the frame was up of earthly stage,
One God Thou wert, and art, and still shall be;
The line of time, it doth not measure Thee.

Both death and life obey Thy holy lore,
And visit in their turns as they are sent;
A thousand years with Thee they are no more
Than yesterday, which, ere it is, is spent:
Or as a watch by night that course must keep,
And goes and comes, unwares to them that sleep.

Thou carryest man away as with a tide:
Then down swim all his thoughts that mounted high;
Much like a mocking dream, that will not bide,
But flies before the sight of waking eye;
Or as the grass, that cannot term obtain,
To see the summer come about again.

At morning, fair it musters on the ground;
At even it is cut down and laid along;
And though it spared were, and favour found,
The weather would perform the mower's wrong:
Thus hast Thou hanged our life on brittle pins
To let us know it will not bear our sins.

— FRANCIS BACON

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EDITORIALS

Bulletin No. 1

The undersigned solemnly swear before God and men:

"THAT CROSS DEFENDANT HERMAN HOEKSEMA WAS FORMERLY A REGULARLY ORDAINED MINISTER IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH AND WAS OCCUPYING A PULPIT IN THE CHURCH KNOWN AS THE EAST STREET HOLLAND CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

"THAT THE SAID HERMAN HOEKSEMA WHILE OCCUPYING THE PULPIT IN THE SAID EAST STREET HOLLAND CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, BY HIS ACTS AND CONDUCT AND BY HIS REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DULY INSTITUTED AUTHORITIES OF SAID CHURCH AND ITS DECREES AND PRONOUNCEMENTS, CAUSED A SCHISM IN SAID CHURCH AND A SPLITTING OF THE MEMBERSHIP WHICH ATTENDED SAID CHURCH WHILE HE WAS ITS PASTOR."

HUBERT DE WOLF
FREDERICK SYTSMA
HENRY KNOTT
WILLIAM STUURSMAN
LAMBERT MULDER
ANDREW DYKSTRA
HENRY BASTIANSE
SIDNEY DE YOUNG
ADOLF VERMEER
GERRIT SIKKEMA
JOHN BOUWMAN
ANDREW VOSS

By HUBERT DE WOLF

The above is from a cross bill filed in Superior Court in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The implications of this sworn statement are plain:

1. They attempt to repudiate all responsibility for our action as churches in 1924.
2. They condemn my action in 1924 as schismatic.
3. They likewise condemn the action of my consistory, that was "deposed" in 1924 and of which FREDERICK SYTSMA, whose signature now appears under the above oath, as schismatic. And they uphold their "deposition."
4. They regard the Synod of Kalamazoo 1924, Classis East of the Christian Reformed Churches, and the "ninety-two" as the duly instituted authorities of the Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Church in 1924.
5. They consider that I and my "deposed" consistory should have submitted to the decrees and pronouncements of those authorities, i.e., to THE THREE POINTS.

6. They confess that they themselves were schismatic as long as they were in the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches, for all of them were elders in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.

7. They consider all our churches schismatic.

Nevertheless, they call themselves the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.!

May the Lord open the eyes of many that are still deceived for such hypocrisy!
— H. H.

The following editorial was written by special request from the editor.

(Re: - Reformed Guardian - Vol. 1, Nov. '27, 1953, No. 9)
— H. H.

In examining the latest issue of the Reformed Guardian, in which the Rev. Petter writes, I felt constrained to make a few observations. These were originally intended for my own use, and the remarks that follow are not to be understood as serving to expose the Rev. Petter and the position he embraces. For, the Rev. Petter, in simple and clear-cut language, exposes himself and reveals to all his readers what his position *always was — is now* and what *it shall continue to be* as long as he embraces his present position. Nevertheless, I feel these observations should be set forth simply because of the possibility that those of our own people who read the Reformed Guardian overlooked the tremendous significance and implications of the contents of this most recent issue (Vol. 1, Nov. 27, 1953, No. 9). For, in this issue, we clearly see the inevitable results of embracing wrong doctrine. We clearly see that once wrong doctrine is embraced and there is an attempt to defend it, the whole question resolves itself into one of *ethics — of faithful and true representation of facts*. Hence, that our people may become keenly aware of this, the following observations are set forth for their consideration.

In the first place, notice, if you will, the title of this issue: "Was the Split Necessary?" Observe, too, that the author readily admits there are many among those who have cast their lots with him who are confronted with this very question: "Was the Split Necessary?" But, what he fails to see is that to ask this question is to immediately imply there is still some doubt as to whether the *right step was taken*. The Rev. Petter continues and indicates this doubt has expressed itself in a number of ways, namely, under the query of: "Is there really any doctrinal difference?" — "Could these things not have been discussed in a brotherly way?" — "Is it anything more than a matter of personalities?"

Now, it is most significant to note that while this question: "Was the Split Necessary?" (in its various forms) has been, and is still being asked by the adherents of conditional theology, not once, has it been heard from those who have declared themselves in opposition to this view, and who understand its implications. From these folks, never once, have we heard the above and related questions and remarks

such as: "What is the difference?" — "We fail to see the difference?" — "What are we quarreling about?" — "We are all fundamentally agreed and this whole controversy is merely a question of personalities."

It is true, as Rev. Petter has written; these questions are being asked by "a great portion of our people"; that is, the adherents of conditional theology. But, as was indicated, this is quite an admission. For, even at this late date, "our people" (as Rev. Petter denotes his followers) are still confronted with the question of whether or not they did the right thing in pledging their support (formally or otherwise) to the movement represented by the Rev. Petter. But, in addition, this also indicates confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the opposition, which will become all the more manifest in due time.

Now, I say, this is quite an admission on the part of the Rev. Petter — especially when we consider the fact that not once have such doubts been expressed among those who constitute the opponents for the Rev. Petter. For, though the congregations may be small, some without Pastors, and worshipping in the best temporary quarters available, those who have been given grace to declare themselves for the historic Protestant Reformed representation of the Scriptures, have done so because they are thoroughly convinced in their hearts that this position most faithfully and consistently sets forth the Word of God. In contrast to the opposition (confronted with questionings and doubts), reflected in these congregations is delight in the administration of the Word of God, comfort, confidence, and a joy and peace that has long since been lacking in days past. There is a genuine peace that prevails in our midst. There is no crying of Peace — Peace when there is no Peace. For, how can there be Peace when the minds of the people are continually confronted with doubts and questionings as to whether they did *the right thing*, and whether the split was necessary? We say, the split was not only necessary, but inevitable. Necessary and inevitable because, although there was much time and opportunity given to the parties concerned for discussion with a view to reconciliation, it became quite apparent that reconciliation was virtually impossible. Necessary and inevitable because peace and harmony within the church must never be sought by way of compromise and hence, the sacrificing of the very basic and fundamental truths for which the Protestant Reformed Churches have been raised to preserve, propagate, and to which they must bear faithful and effective witness. We simply deceive ourselves if we say this division of our churches was not necessary.

In the second place, note Observation No. 2. Rev. Petter makes mention of an excerpt from "Sermon 1," and of this, he writes: "— this scrap of sermon was before the Consistory for two years, went through the process of being considered, being dropped, being taken up again, and after being rescued from the archives of silence was finally forced to Classis East."

Now, the fact that Rev. Petter is aware that the excerpt

from "Sermon 1" was before the Consistory for two years clearly indicates that the Consistory was working with the problem. It clearly indicates there was nothing rash and hasty in the conduct of the Consistory, as is evident in Rev. Petter's own remarks: "— this scrap of sermon was before the Consistory for *two years*." (Italics mine E.E.) Nevertheless, at the same time, Rev. Petter leaves his readers with the impression that "— this scrap of sermon" was treated lightly. He does this when he refers to it as "being considered" — "being dropped" — "being taken up again" — "being rescued from the archives of silence" and "finally forced to Classis East." This is a deliberate and gross misrepresentation on the part of the Rev. Petter. For, *Rev. Petter knows, just as we all know* — this scrap of sermon" was always being considered, it was never dropped, it was *never silent* as far as the Consistory was concerned, and as far as many in the congregation were concerned, and it was certainly never "forced to Classis East." Hence, what Rev. Petter does, as revealed in these remarks, is a most shameful thing for, in substance, he *pokes fun* and *mocks* at all the labours and efforts exerted by the Consistory over this two year period to gain the erring brother and eliminate the problem. *Is this an example of "truth and justice?" Shame on the Rev. Petter and the "truth and justice" he represents.*

In the third place, note Observation No. 3. Rev. Petter is quick to cite the findings of the "pre-advisory study committee," into whose hands protests were placed for consideration, by Classis East. Note, however, the manner in which he presents these findings and advice — as though they were readily acceptable and adopted by Classis. Here, too, we have another instance where the entire picture and story is not faithfully set forth. In other words, where is the other half of the account? Why doesn't Rev. Petter say something regarding the retraction of Rev. Lubbers? Why doesn't he make mention of the fact that the Report *ceased to be a Majority Report*? Why doesn't he tell his readers, as Rev. Lubbers does in the Standard Bearer (Oct. 1, 1953), that Rev. Lubbers repudiated the Majority Report — that he is ashamed of that Report, and that, by his own admission, he believes "the majority report erred." Furthermore, in all fairness, why doesn't Rev. Petter tell us that it was not a question of the Committee needing more time, as he intimates on Pg. 13 of his article (Vol. 1, No. 9). The brethren on that Committee had all the time they required; *they never came to Classis requesting more time*. This Committee simply brought to a *head* all the discussions of the past two years. Even after the Rev. Lubbers repudiated his former stand and there was no further attempt, *on the part of any of the members of that Committee to defend the Majority Report*, Rev. Petter would have liked further discussion. What he was really looking for, however, was *more delays* and *finally compromise*. This was impossible in light of the events that had taken place. The die was cast. There was nothing to do but separate. There was no agreement hence, we could not walk together. If some of these facts were

seriously considered and mentioned, Rev. Petter would not have any difficulty in understanding why the apology of the Rev. De Wolf, which he considered to be "remarkably in accord with the findings of the majority report," could not possibly be accepted. In addition, he would not leave his readers with the mistaken notion that the "Majority Report" speaks in any terms of finality and hence, mis-informed. For, the fact of the matter is, the Majority Report just *ceased to be* when it was openly repudiated and retracted on the floor of Classis, *and without anyone to speak in its defense*. Hence, Rev. Petter should not continue to speak of the Majority Report in such a way as to leave the impression with people that it sustained the error embraced by the accused. Yet, this is not strange for, when one endeavours to defend the error, it is natural that only that which appears to be in his favour is emphasized — and emphasized at the expense and total disregard for all the true facts involved.

Again, we ask, Is this an example of "truth and justice?" Shame on the Rev. Petter.

(To be Continued next time, D.V.)

E. EMANUEL



LYNDEN

Of interest to our Protestant Reformed people will be the fact that also in Lynden, Washington there were those who refused to be deceived and intimidated by the Rev. De Wolf faction in the congregation there. The undersigned was recently called to Lynden to help and advise the few faithful families, and so we can furnish a first-hand report.

For a long time some of us had wondered what was going to happen in Lynden. That, as in the rest of our denomination, there was not unity even in that small congregation had been evident to those who were acquainted there or who had occasion to visit as ministers. But since that notorious September session of Classis West nothing had been heard from the far northwest.

Then, quite suddenly, action came. The consistory, whom we had surmised was pro-De Wolf, made an announcement on Sunday, November 22, that they supported the schismatic group of De Wolf. What their grounds were in detail was never quite clear, since they were merely orally announced, and since in at least one service they did not even announce them fully. That they knew quite well what they were doing, and did it intentionally, became very evident in the afternoon service of that same Sunday, when, in lieu of a reading service, they had a recorded service, very audaciously presenting as the guest minister by recording none other than the supposed leader of the schism, the Rev. H. De Wolf himself.

This was, of course, an act of schism. And the five faithful families and one or two individuals who intended to remain Protestant Reformed, instinctively recognized it as such, and for conscience' sake immediately refused to

worship with the schismatic group on the Lord's day. They did not know yet what the future would bring, or whether perhaps, their church home was being ruthlessly torn away from them, so that they would have to move back to places where there were Protestant Reformed Churches. But they were convinced that as long as the schismatic decision of Lynden's consistory stood in the way, they could not worship together.

Let it be added, for the sake of completeness, that all these families received a visit later from the Rev. J. Howerzyl and one of the elders, G. Buma and D. Scheele, which invariably began with the rather naive question, "We were wondering why you were not in church Sunday?"

Under these circumstances, having no pastor to turn to, nor having a consistory member to aid and support them, these brethren and sisters wrote to the undersigned for advice and help, and asked him to come to their assistance. Having received permission and advice from his own consistory, as well as advice from the consistories of Edgerton and Hull, the undersigned made arrangements to go to Lynden the week of December 6. In the meantime the members concerned presented the following protest and statement of position to the schismatic consistory, which we here quote in full:

Lynden, Washington
Dec. 4, 1953

To the "Consistory of the Lynden Prot. Ref. Church,"
c/o D. Scheele, clerk.

Dear Brethren:

On Sunday, November 22, the consistory announced in the morning service its support of the schismatic group of the Rev. H. de Wolf. And in the afternoon service we already had a recorded sermon by de Wolf. By this action the undersigned families and members are offended. And we want you to understand clearly that we are in all good conscience before God and His church so seriously aggrieved, that unless and until you take back that stand we cannot recognize you as Protestant Reformed anymore, and, though we be few in number, will have to stand alone and to maintain that we are the faithful remnant of the Protestant Reformed congregation of Lynden. In such a case the fault of tearing the church apart will rest only with you, since by your action you depart from our Protestant Reformed churches both in doctrine and in church order in such a serious way that we cannot for conscience's sake go along with you for a moment.

In order that you may thoroughly understand our position, we state it in detail below:

I. We request that the Consistory withdraw its decision in favor of the schismatic group of Rev. de Wolf; that it reject the decisions of Classis West in re the suspension of de Wolf and the deposition of the elders; and that it refuse from now on to recognize any ministers or consistories who have publicly and openly followed the schismatic group of de Wolf.

II. If this request is denied, we, the undersigned, declare that the Consistory:

1. Is guilty of schism.
2. That by this action they have separated themselves from the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches.
3. That the undersigned are the faithful congregation and

members of the Prot. Ref. Church of Lynden, Washington, and will function as such.

III. Grounds:

1. By this stand you have principally adopted the heresy condemned not only by the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, but also by Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches. These heresies are:

a. That God promises to all men, head for head and soul for soul, that if they believe they shall be saved.

b. That our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

2. You have taken sides with those:

a. That were legally suspended and deposed as officebearers by the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., with the advice of the Fourth Church of the above-named city, and on the basis of the previous advice of classis.

b. That, after they were suspended and deposed, illegally presumed to function as officebearers, thereby lost all right of appeal, and placed themselves outside of the communion of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

c. That, at the October session of Classis East, after having had full opportunity to defend themselves, were officially declared by that Classis, the only classis having jurisdiction in the case, to be schismatic and to be outside of the communion of our churches.

3. You have taken sides against those who were rightfully recognized to be Protestant Reformed by Classis East of our churches.

a. Classis East, the only body that could treat the de Wolf case other than the consistory of First Church, did so, and condemned both the doctrine and the disorderly actions of the de Wolf group.

b. Even should you disagree with that decision, the orderly way would have been to submit to the decision and in the meantime bring a protest or appeal against it in the orderly way of consistory, classis, synod. Instead you have refused to recognize the discipline and decisions of sister consistories and a sister classis.

4. The action of Classis West in its September session in regard to the discipline of de Wolf and his elders must be condemned:

a. Because it is illegal, seeing that it was not even on the agenda of the classis, which it should have been by classical decision.

b. Because it is contrary to all Church Order:

1) Art. 36: "The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis and the General Synod over the Particular."

2) Art. 84: "No Church shall in any way lord it over other Churches, no Minister over other Ministers, no Elder or Deacon over other Elders or Deacons."

c. Because the action is schismatic, seeing that they support doctrines that according to the decisions by the Consistory of the First Church of Grand Rapids, and according to the decision of Classis East, are contrary to Scripture and the Confessions, and besides, are directly contrary to the Declaration of Principles, which has been legally adopted as the expression of our Confessions by the Synod of our churches. Besides, by their action Classis West supports schismatics.

d. The action of Classis West was premature, because at the time of the September classis, Classis East had not even made a final decision.

IV. Hence, we declare:

1. That what calls itself Classis West has broken with the fellowship of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

2. That only those churches which reject the stand of Classis West, and refuse to follow the schismatic and disorderly path of

the de Wolf group are the faithful remnant of Classis West.

3. That we the undersigned must for conscience' sake recognize those churches and stand with them, and shall have to ask the Synod to take the same stand with us.

This is the position which we maintain over against your announced decision favoring the de Wolf group. It is the only possible position we can take. And we hereby submit it to the consistory for consideration. Since there has been plenty of time for you to be acquainted with this whole affair, we request that you answer this on or before December 9, 1953. And in case we have no answer by that time, we shall consider that you maintain your schismatic stand in favor of de Wolf, and shall act accordingly.

Respectfully,

To this protest not one word of answer was ever received. This was taken by all concerned to mean that the consistory maintained its stand, and would not even so much as talk about it or try to answer the grounds offered for repudiating their stand. And so, after December 9, the families involved took action.

On Friday, Dec. 11, the undersigned delivered a publicly advertised lecture concerning the split. Opportunity for question after the lecture had also been advertised. But although there was an attendance of about 60 souls, about half of them not from our churches, only one family of "the other side" put in an appearance. And undoubtedly the three questions asked after the lecture, and easily answered, were presented by this one representative of the De Wolf group.

On Sunday, Dec. 13, we held our own services, as the continuation of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church, in the Legion Hall. In the emergency a congregational meeting was held after the morning service, and the elected officebearers were installed in the afternoon.

And so a small, but faithful congregation of Protestant Reformed people remains and continues in Lynden also. They were indeed small, being reduced in numbers approximately to the size of the congregation when it was first organized a few years ago. But they are convinced of the truth, and they are determined, by God's grace, to go on. Encouraged they were by the news that after my departure the Rev. G. M. Ophoff would come for a few weeks' stay in their midst.

The undersigned is convinced, furthermore, that with the blessing of our God and by means of some consistent Protestant Reformed labors by one or more of our ministers the congregation will also grow in numbers. Last May and again during my most recent visit, I saw many indications that there is still much interest in the Protestant Reformed truth in the Lynden area. Attendance both at lectures and at services was one indication.

We commend the little flock at Lynden to your prayers and to your assistance. And especially would we urge that if at all possible they be provided not only with financial help but with pulpit supply from our ministers and candidates.

H. C. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

(Continued)

c. Prophecy regarding Jerusalem called in the text "valley of vision." Chap. XXII:1-7.

The prophet asks the meaning of the inhabitants ascending in a body the roofs of their houses. Although this is not expressly stated, it is to witness the advance of a hostile army against the city. But the universal gaiety and the noise of revelry that prevails in the streets show that the enemy is being viewed with proud disdain. For, as the sequel reveals, the inhabitants, as forgetful of God put their confidence in their defenses (ver. 1. 2a). To beat down their pride the prophet lets them see what lies ahead. Their men will be slain as fugitives from whom the will to face the enemy in courageous combat has departed. All the rulers will take to flight but only to be captured and bound together by the adversary. It will similarly deal with all such that abide in the city (vers. 2a, 3). In contrast to the gaiety that everywhere prevails the prophet is sad and weeps bitterly as he contemplates the ruin of the daughter of his people (Jerusalem). And he wishes to be left alone with his grief (v. 4). For the day will be one of destruction brought on by the Lord Himself through the agency of distant nations, as whose representatives only Elam and Kir are named. Their choicest valleys will be filled with the horses and chariots of the enemy (vv. 5-7).

The prophecy will be progressively fulfilled through the agency of the possessors of the world-power — Assyria, Babylon, Rome, the antichrist of the Gospel period.

But the Lord in the past has already been "uncovering the covering" of Judah, that is intermittently exposing His people to the wrath of invading armies of the heathen. With a view to possible reoccurrences of such catastrophies defences had been built. Already Solomon had erected an armory of cedars, which he called "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings vii: 2; x:17, 2). Jerusalem had been fortified by David and Hezekiah. In our prophecy the inhabitants of Jerusalem are next presented as seriously considering these measures of defence. First they inspect Solomon's armory of cedars (v. 8). They next examine the walls of the city and find that there are many breaches in them. So they break down a specified number of houses in order to provide themselves with materials for repairing the walls (v. 9a, 10). They build a "reservoir between the two walls" and draw into it the water of pools that exist outside Jerusalem. "But they have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had they respect unto him that fashioned it long ago." The reference is to the pools. As natural wells fed by springs they are God's handiwork. Jerusalem is the city of God. He is its Maker and builder. They make use of the city, of its pools

and fortifications in their warfare with the heathen. But as willingly forgetful of the Maker they put their confidence in their own ingenuity to save themselves in time of war (v. 9b, 11). And in defiance of the call to repentance they continue to hold feasts and to make merry as having as their slogan, "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." It is their answer to the announcement of still other judgments to come (v. 12, 13). This is their iniquity from which they shall never be purged. They are men reprobated. The Lord has revealed it in the prophets ear. Hence there is nothing incredible about the ability of the prophet to make such an announcement (v. 14).

d. Prophecy against Shebna the steward of the house. Chap. XXII:15-17.

Shebna is more than a manager of the king's *domestic* or private concerns. He is close to the king. From statements occurring in the sequel it seems that he is vested with the authority of a prime minister over the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But he is proud, insolent, tyrannical, unbelieving and wicked, "the shame of the house of the Lord." He oppresses the inhabitants and is not a father to them. As lifted up by pride he causes a sepulchre to be hewn out for himself in a rock on high, doubtless on the heights of Mt. Zion near the sepulchres of Judah's kings whose equal he imagines himself to be. He is just inspecting his new sepulchre when the prophet as sent by the Lord comes to him and asks, "What hast thou here?" and, "Who hast thou here?" The questions mean: what gives thee the right to lay out for thyself a sepulchre in this selected place?" and, "who do you think to bury here?" (vv. 5, 16). The Lord will violently throw him as a ball into a wide land and there he shall die. But first he shall be cast down from his station (vv. 7-19). The Lord will replace him by Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who will show himself a father to Jerusalem and Judah, and the key of authority of David's house shall be given into his hand (vv. 20-22). He will be for a throne of glory to his father's house. As a nail bears the vessels of the house that are hung thereon, so shall he be the stay of the descendents of his house and of their glory (vv. 23, 24). It is evident that it is Christ of whom the prophet here speaks. He is the true Eliakim.

But in that day the nail shall be removed and all that which was hung thereon shall be cut off (v.25). This looks to the vanishing away of Eliakim as a type of Christ. But according to others the reference is to Christ's suffering. We know of this Eliakim nothing beyond what is stated in this present message and in XXXVI, XXXVII.

9. Prophecy regarding Tyre. Chap. 23.

a. The fall of Tyre. Chapter XXIII:1-14.

In ancient times Phoenicia was a narrow strip of land extending along the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea from the city of Laodicea to the borders of Egypt and forming a part of the country of Canaan. Tyra was the commercial center of Phoenicia and the mart of the civilized world. "It was the nursery of arts and science and the city of of perhaps the

most industrious and active people ever known." It stood at the head of the Phoenician cities and had numerous and extensive colonies including Carthage the rival of Rome. The city was built on an island a mile long that ran parallel with the shore but was separated from it by a strait of the Mediterranean a mile wide. It had two large harbors and the whole island was surrounded by a strong wall 150 feet in height. Its name "tyre," "rock" was thus appropriate. Through the centuries and in fulfillment of prophecy the city was intermittently besieged and spoiled until the very site of it became unknown or undiscoverable by any of its ruins. And as the reasons of this judgment the prophets assign the pride and wickedness of the Tyrians, their joy over the calamities of the Israelites and their cruelty in selling them into slavery. The city was not finally destroyed till the conquest of Syria by the Turks in 1516. The modern Tyra is not this celebrated city but an insignificant place on the mainland.

The prophet calls to the mariners that sail in the ships of Tarshish to break forth in lamentation as the tidings have come from Chittim — the islands and maritime countries of the Mediterranean Sea — that Tyre has been destroyed (v. 1). The attention of the prophet is now concentrated directly on the doomed city (*isle* in the text), at the time the mart of the world, copiously replenished all the while with the rich harvest of Sabor — the river Nile — by trading vessels of Zidon. The prophet enjoins Tyre's inhabitants to be mute with astonishment (vv. 2, 3). The seer next addresses Zidon, the other famous city of Phoenicia situate on its coast about 24 miles to the north of Tyre. There is a voice from the sea, more exactly from the fortress of the sea, by which is to be understood the insular city of Tyre as viewed from the mainland. "I travail not," says the voice, "nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins." It is Tyre personified bewailing the fact that she is as if she has never born children, meaning that she is destitute of inhabitants, in a word, destroyed. All there is now to be seen is the bare rock of the Island on which the city was built. The Zidonians are commanded of the prophet to be ashamed because of the fall of Tyre. (v. 4). Egypt especially shall be sorely pained when the report of Tyre's fall comes to it (v. 5). It will conclude that all that now remains for the inhabitants of Tyre is to flee howling to distant Tarshish (v. 6). The prophet now contrasts what the city is with what it was. He asks, "Is this your joyous (city)," this heap of ruins! Consider the age of the city. "Its antiquity is of ancient days." Its founding was being carried back 2,300 years. Men had come to think of it as the city eternal. But it shall pass away. And its inhabitants shall be carried away to a distant country there to sojourn as captives (v. 7).

From whom does this decree regarding Tyre proceed? — Tyre, the crowngiving city, whose merchants because of their opulence are princes and the honorable of the earth? "The Lord of hosts has purposed it to pollute the pride of all glory," — particularly the ancient temples of Phoenicia and

their idols, — and to render contemptible by casting down in the mire the honorable of the earth (vv. 8, 9).

The mind of the prophet is directed once more to Tarshish. He calls to the city, a colony of Tyre, to pass through its land as a river, seeing that there is no more girdle. The reference is here to Tyre. The proud city is lording it over her colonies. But Tyre shall be destroyed. With this restraint-girdle-removed also Tarshish will again be in a position to dispose of the produce of her soil as she chooses and thus no longer be compelled to transact only with Tyre (v. 10).

But through what agency will the Lord accomplish His purpose against Tyre? The answer is contained in the following verse. He will extend His hand over the sea, that is the nations, and stir up the kingdoms. And He will give command concerning Tyre ("Canaan" in the Hebrew text and "merchant city" in the versions) to destroy her strongholds (v. 11).

As has already been explained, Tyre will not be destroyed hastily within the compass of a few years and by a single conqueror, but gradually through the ages. During all this time Tyre will be an oppressed city that has ceased to rejoice. So the prophet foretells, "Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin of Zidon" (v. 12a). Tyre is comprehended in Zidon the other famous city of Phoenicia. They are partners and will thus be overtaken by a common ruin.

In view of what the future holds in store for Tyre (and Zidon) the prophet calls to its inhabitants to flee to Chittim in general Europe. But there also they shall find no rest because perhaps they are hated by those whom they formerly oppressed (v. 12b).

The Prophet names the Chaldeans as representative of the nations and kingdoms through the instrumentality of which the Lord will realize His Word. The text states that "this people was not," meaning that it did not appear as a world-power until it founded Assyria for the beasts of the wilderness, that is, until it supplanted Assyria as a world-power through the destruction of Nineveh its capital city (v. 13a). "They (the Chaldeans) set up the towers thereof; They raised up (destroyed) the palaces thereof; and brought it (Tyre) to ruin" (v. 13b). And so the prophet concludes this section of his discourse with again calling upon the ships of Tarshish to howl seeing that their "strength (the city of Tyre) is laid waste" (v. 14).

So here we have the prophet foretelling the initial destruction of Tyre by the possessor of the world-power (the Chaldeans) that was not to appear until a hundred years after the prophet's death. This was possible because the *great* prophet speaking here was Christ and not Isaiah. This the rationalistic interpreters deny. Accordingly they insist that the prophecy has reference to the conquest of Tyre by the Assyrians. Isaiah knew about it therefore because it was an event that took place during his own lifetime. Now it is doubtless true that the king of Assyria did besiege Tyre even

for five years; but according to Meander, as quoted by Josephus, he was unable to take the city.

b. Tyre's recovery and impenitence. Chap. XXIII:15-17.

The Chaldean or Babylonian world-power, when it shall once have made its appearance, will make an end of Tyre as the mart of the world. As a result she shall be forgotten of the nations during all the seventy years of her subjugation to Babylonia (v. 15a). But at the end of this period, when Babylon as a world-power shall have been made to pass away, Tyre, as freed from the Babylonian yoke, will employ all her wiles to induce the nations to renew with her the trade-contacts that were broken off. In the imagery of the text, "after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as a harlot," (v. b) that is carry on like a disregarded prostitute that has grown old in the service of sin yet cannot forget her gain and therefore goes about the city to attract men by her music and unchaste songs. The Lord by the prophet commands Tyre, "Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten. Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered (v. 16). Tyra must make an effort to entice the nations to renew with her their commercial intercourse. So God has determined. And the effort shall prove successful because He shall visit the city. By His providence the trade between Tyre and the nations will be renewed. The ancient wealth and grandeur will be recovered. The text reads here, "And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years that the Lord will visit Tyre" (v. 7a). Thus her fornication with the nations will be resumed and continued, "And she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (v. 17b). Such is God's will. For Tyre must fill her measure of iniquity in order that she may finally be blotted from the face of the earth. The city was taken by the Turks in 1516. "Since that time it has sunk into utter decay and is now a bare rock, 'a place to spread nets upon,' as the prophet Ezekiel foretold that it should be." Also this prophecy was progressively fulfilled.

A word must be said about this imagery. Commerce and trade, though not as such sinful, is a totally depraved thing as carried on by the world that lies in darkness, the natural man. For the world is always wholly consecrated to self and God is not in all its thoughts. The activating principle here is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and the means employed deceit and violence. Verily also this business of buying and selling as conducted by the world is sheer idolatry; it is spiritual fornication pure and simple. Reprobated Tyre, as the commercial center of the world, was therefore indeed the chief of harlots. This, to be sure, is a hard doctrine that the prophet did not try mollify by some such theory as that of common grace.

b. The calling of the Tyrians according to the election in the Gospel period (v. 18).

Tyre shall be destroyed but God has His people in the doomed city to be called in the Gospel period. And they shall consecrate the gain of their commerce unto the Lord, and it

shall be used for the support of the Gospel ministry in Tyre. In the words of the text, "And her merchandise and her hire," — this must be made to apply to the Tyre according to the election, — "shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (v. 18).

Underlying this prediction is the prophecy that God shall gather His church also from among the inhabitants of Tyre. Already when Christ was upon earth, converts from the borders of Tyre and Sidon came to see and to hear him; and he on His part honored these borders with His presence (Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17; Matt. 15:21). Paul found there disciples of the Lord (Acts 21:3). In 355 the churches of Syria held a synod there. But the recovered glory of Tyre has completely departed. Today the city — the modern Sur — is a village of fishermen's huts that numbers about 3,000 inhabitants. Thus has come to pass all the Lord has spoken.

— G. M. O.

Excerpt from Dr. Herman Bavinck's Gereformeerde Dogmatiek.

Speaking of the difference between the Christian way of applied salvation which is Theological in nature, and the way of all non-Christian theories and practices, which are anthropological in nature, Bavinck writes the following succinct statement concerning the Covenant of God, as the realized salvation in the hearts of God's elect people:

"The teaching of Scripture is wholly different. Already in the Old Testament it is God who makes enmity between man and serpent out of grace, and brings man to His side, Gen. 3:15, who elects Abraham and Israel, which is born out of him as His possession, Gen. 12:1; Exodus 15:13; 19:4; 20:2; Deut. 7:6ff., who raises up the Covenant with this people and gives them His laws, Gen. 15:1; 17:2; Exodus 2:24. 25; Deut. 4:5-13, who gives the blood upon the altar for reconciliation, Lev. 17:11, and spares no effort upon His vineyard, Isaiah 5, Jer. 2:21. But by virtue of that election and on the basis of that Covenant the people are also obliged, in the fear of the curse of the law, to walk before God's face in uprightness, and to keep His commandments. Deut. 27:6; Gen. 17:1; Exodus 20; Deut. 10: 15, 16 etc.

The Covenant relation was not dependent upon keeping the law as a preceding condition (voorafgaande voorwaarde). It was no Covenant of works, but was anchored solely in God's electing love. However, it nevertheless must receive its proof and seal in a walk according to the Lord's law. For only through such a faith, which has a love and delight to walk in the way of the Covenant, could the Covenant be received from Israel's side with a perfect heart. If the Covenant is no idea but reality, it has implicit in it the obligation and inclination (desire) to live according to the Command of God's Covenant."

Vol. III, Page 486, Heilsorde, H. Bavinck

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Peter 1:22-25

I

It was with more than usual pains that we prepared ourselves to write some expository thoughts on this last section of this chapter, the verses 22-25. The reason for this careful study and preparation is due to two reasons. The first is, that in this passage various concepts call for a rather careful analysis and study. It is of the utmost importance to know the meaning of a term before we can say anything positive and constructive about it. Secondly, this passage required study because it is of importance to understand the relationship of the various clauses to the principle clause in the sentence. And, thirdly, this study is necessary because of the doctrinal consequences that depend upon sound exegesis of the text in question.

We shall not be able to finish our exposition of this section in this one article. Probably this will require as many as three articles. We shall see.

The text itself reads in full as follows: "*Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, (see that ye) love one another with a pure heart fervently; Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*"

We have the text before us now.

First of all we wish to say just a word about the sequence of thought here in this entire section, the verses 14-25. As we have observed in our former essays on this section of Holy Writ, Peter is here speaking of the pilgrim walk of the elect strangers, the Church in the world. And he particularly calls attention to the truth, unto which he also admonishes, that such a pilgrim walk of hope is a walk in sanctification of the Spirit; we are to be holy in all our conversation, even as God is Holy! But such a walk of holiness concretely means for us, that we shall not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; we shall die unto sin and live unto God. In a word: we shall *constantly walk* in conversion, having true and godly sorrow that we have sinned and have a sinful nature, and find true joy in God through Jesus Christ, and with love and delight to serve Him.

Such is the general thrust of this passage.

For this Peter gives two grounds of motivation. And both of these facts related by Peter are the incentive unto a concrete walk in conversion. And we repeat: there are no other incentives unto conversion worthy of the name!

The first ground is that God has done for us on the Cross, establishing for us the new and everlasting Covenant of grace and mercy. We noticed the following chain of graces: (1) That according to God's eternal foreknowledge Christ must come into the world to be the Mediator and Savior of His people, given unto Him by the Father. He was indeed! (men) foreknown from before the foundations of the world, and as the foreknown one of God He is manifested in these last times. (Verses 2, 20) (2) That Christ died for us, that he redeemed us completely through His precious blood. This work is finished, it is wholly complete. Nothing more need be added to it. We are the possession of Christ. He claimed us from the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of the Father. Verses 18, 19. (3) And that by virtue of this death Christ has merited, according to the eternal good pleasure of God, together with the other gifts of salvation, also the gift of faith, so that our faith and hope might be in God. Faith was merited on the Cross for us, and this *merited* gift is freely bestowed upon us by Holy Spirit. It is not simply God's intent that Christ should die, without a definite foreknown number given Him by the Father to die for, but it is most emphatically God's intent to realize faith and hope in the hearts of sovereignly and freely loved Church in Christ. Faith is not simply made possible for us in the Cross. Faith is there merited for us in order that by the power of Christ crucified, dead and buried, faith may be made a reality in our life together with all the blessings of salvation. (4) And we are reminded of this work of God for us and even with the intent to be realized in us, that the faith and hope that is in us may be stirred up, and we walk in *daily* conversion. Thus we indeed have the loins of our mind girded up. The power of the Cross is the incentive for faith to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

The matter is therefore profoundly theological, and yet at the same time eminently practical in our life of faith and hope in God.

Such was the first ground of motivation for a godly walk.

But now we must study the second reason given by Peter for a godly walk of conversion. This second reason is given in the verses quoted above in this article, the verses 22-25.

We notice in passing the following elements.

In the first place let it be observed, that Peter is still speaking here of the life of conversion, not being conformed to the former lusts in our ignorance, but to be holy as God is holy. However, there is a progression here in thought expressed. The matter of conversion is brought down to earth. It is labeled! We may know by the same, and that, too, very concretely, whether we have the "proper marks" of the grace of God in our life or not; whether we have the *required qualities* (called "conditions" by Urzinus, et alii,) and spiritual aspirations in our life, the season of

rich or richer grace! Conversion is here "pin-pointed" as being: fervent love for each other as brethren in the Lord. It is the very essence of the Second Table of the law, which is like unto the First Table. This is the essence of walking in God's Covenant, that is, in our "part" of the Covenant.

Secondly, Peter also indicates the spiritual-psychological incentive. And this incentive is what *God has performed in us* by the power of Christ's resurrection life through the Holy Spirit *in regeneration*. God has not simply redeemed us on the Cross, but He has brought the power of the Cross *into* our life by making Christ the Life-Giving Spirit. And by this Spirit we are to be changed from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us attempt to see this from the various elements in the text.

First of all we must underscore the fact, that the main thought is that we *ought* to love one another. Our text is an exhortation with fundamental motivation; it is a precept of the Gospel. That we must not overlook. There is a possible danger of overlooking this in the text, and treat it as merely a Word of instruction in regard to the Dogmatic construction of mediate or immediate regeneration. We would warn against imagining that this Dogmatic distinction is not of great importance. However, let us beware of letting Dogmatics rule over Exegesis. Scripture is not Dogmatics. And so in our text we are dealing with a precept, exhortation of the Gospel, which we may not identify with *command* of the Law. For these are as different from one another as law is from grace.

Precept of the Gospel this passage is together with the proper grounds and incentives!

We are to walk in the new Commandment of love. Love is the spiritual bond of perfection. It is not mere sentiment. It is not merely an opinion of each other in the abstract. Love is a matter of the deepest attitude of the heart and includes the moral judgments concerning each other. Love is the opposite of hatred, of malice, envy, bitterness and guile and evil-speaking. Love suffers long and is useful in God's church. It believes all things, hopes all things within the ordinances of the Word of God. Love asks: what does the Word of God say. And only where there is a striving to walk according to the Word is love present. Love covers a multitude of sins. Herein shall all men know that you are My disciples if ye have love one for another! It is the sure test. God is not mocked!

Now this love which we have for each other is to be *fervent*. It must be pure fire of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts. Then it will be "stretched out", that is, it will be the *persevering intensity* of love. It will be then the pure love as it is not contaminated with the sinful lusts of the flesh. The purity of the pure of heart it will be. Such love of God in our hearts is strong and constant. Always again the supply is present. But our flesh wars against

the Spirit in us, so that we do not do what we would. And always in this battle we need the admonitions and exhortations: let your love be *fervent*! For "whom God calls, according to His purpose, to the communion of His Son, and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, He delivers also from the *dominion* and *slavery* of sin *in this life*; though *not altogether from the body of sin, and from the infirmities of the flesh*, so long as they continue in this world. Hence spring daily sins of infirmity, and hence spots adhere to the best works of the saints...." Canons of Dort, Art. V, Paragraph 1 and 2.

In view of this infirmity of the flesh in the regenerated children of God the admonition is sounded: love one another fervently *from the heart!* (ek kardias) For it is with the heart that we love. At bottom we do not love out of our soul, mind and strength. But we love *out of the heart*. It is in the heart that God has shed His love abroad. Out of a good heart proceed good things. As our hearts are so are we. In the good heart sin's dominion is broken, and Christ lives by His Spirit. Hence, this is an appeal to our sanctified heart, to the mercies in Christ Jesus, our Lord, in us. It is in no sense of the word an appeal to a natural man to become what he is not. On the contrary it is an admonition to the living church to live out more and more what she is in Christ Jesus, her Lord.

(To Be Continued)

G. Lubbers



Since under the present circumstances many of the Consistories of our Churches, do not know the names of our Clerk and Treasurer, we are herewith showing these names below with the addresses.

Clerk: Peter Schipper, 236 East 11th St.,
Holland Michigan.

Treasurer: James Elzinga, 571 West 19th St.
Holland, Michigan.

The Consistory
1st Prot. Reformed Church, Holland, Mich.
Clerk: Peter Schipper

IN MEMORIAM

Our Ladies' Society herewith expresses its sympathy to our fellowmember, Mrs. John VanOverloop in the death of her

FATHER

John Molenkamp, who died Saturday, December 26, 1953, aged 87 years.

May the God of all comfort give solace and comfort to the bereaved family.

The Hudsonville Ladies' Society:

Rev. Gerrit Vos, President

Mrs. Bert Maring, Secretary.

IN HIS FEAR

Afraid of the Gospel

(9)

Conditional Theology.

Christless preaching.

These, we wrote last time, go hand in hand.

And, then, we do not mean that in sermons which are based on conditional theology the name of Christ is not mentioned. The use of the name of Christ does not save a sermon from being Christless. Even the Modernist will mention the name of Christ repeatedly in his "sermons". And yet The Christ is not in his "sermons" at all! The Christ of the modernist is the imagination of man's mind, not the atoning Christ of God's Counsel.

The same is true of many religions which call themselves the Christian religion.

In sermons based on conditional theology, even though much time is spent and many words are employed to extol and to present the glorious salvation which is in Christ, there is still that Christless element that condemns it as being false doctrine. Listen to all the arminian philosophy that pours as a flood out of your radio! Arminianism as a rule, rather than as an exception, speaks loudly and at length of the salvation that is in Christ. Yet its Christless element nullifies it all. Do not forget that even the Pelagians, against whose heresy the Canons of Dordt were composed, speak of men who "through the grace of the Holy Spirit" believe in Christ. And yet they teach salvation by works rather than by grace.

What makes conditional theology Christless theology is that after all the wonderful things that it says about Christ and the salvation that is in Him, it still leaves the sinner disconnected from that Christ and His salvation. What is more, conditional theology teaches that man makes the connection by fulfilling the condition stipulated by God.

We refer you again to those two statements of Rev. De Wolf which are plain examples of conditional theology and its Christlessness. "God promises everyone of you that if you believe, you will be saved." That is his first statement which he deliberately made—it was no slip of the tongue—and which he still today refuses to condemn as being heretical in its literal form.

Now note, first of all, that, according to this statement, that which brings the salvation in Christ into man is not God in sovereign election or through the instrumentality of His gift of faith, but man's act of believing. God promises that salvation conditionally. He has prepared the salvation in Christ, so the theory in this statement runs. It is all ready and is a present reality. But many men do not have it yet. It is still outside of them. However, God meets these men part of the way and assures them that if they will perform the act of faith and so cross over the

chasm that still separates them from Christ and this salvation, they will be received of God on the other side of the chasm and be crowned with salvation and its glory.

In such a theory Christ is preached, so it is claimed. Salvation in Him is preached, so it is said. And loud voices of murmuring were raised when, last time, we declared that conditional preaching and Christless sermons go hand in hand. And yet, so it is! For in that vital point between man and the salvation in Christ, Christ is not to be found. Instead you find a condition man must fulfill. Our act of faith, or of conversion, becomes the determining factor that brings the salvation into us.

It reminds one of the old arminian figure of throwing out the life line to a sailor fighting against a watery grave. What is wrong with the illustration is that the "struggling sailor" has life and the desire to live, while the natural man is *dead* and can neither struggle nor desire to be saved. But how remarkably well Rev. De Wolf's first statement fits in with this arminian scheme of things. The man *who is not yet saved* and has not faith, is told by Rev. De Wolf in this first statement that if he believes he will be saved. If he will put out his hand in faith across this chasm, where Christ does not stand, he can reach out and take the salvation God offers.

Now he must not say that he never preached anything like that! His first statement teaches just exactly that! As we showed last time, you cannot add to this statement that phrase to which those addicted to conditional theology always resort, when it is made plain that their conditional theology is arminian, namely, that we fulfill these conditions by God's grace. You cannot say, "God promises every one of you that if you by His grace believe you will be saved." You will have to say, "God promises all His elect that He will give them grace to believe and so save them." That is quite different. That statement brings Christ into the very inmost part of the soul of those chosen in Him and brings it into their souls by the work of God without any help from man.

And it is surely a striking thing that Rev. De Wolf made this statement, that God promises everyone that if they believe they will be saved, in a sermon on the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, and also that he made it at the point he did in the "sermon." See the "Reformed Guardian" of August 29 wherein he reconstructs this sermon to try to show that the context will reveal that he had no heresy in mind. It is striking because the parable speaks of those who do not believe and are not saved, namely the brothers of the rich man who is in hell. There is a gulf between him and Lazarus who is in Abraham's bosom. The rich man is desirous to see that his brothers bridge that gulf and do not land in the torment which he suffers. He pleads with Abraham to have Lazarus sent to his brothers to warn them of the awful torment that is in store for them. Abraham says, in the parable, that they have Moses and the prophets: "Let them hear them." The rich man says

that they need more than that. If one would return from the dead to tell them as an eyewitness of these awful things, they would repent. Abraham tells them that it is not so, that if they would not listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not listen to Lazarus either, even though he came back from the dead. It is an important thing to remember that Jesus caused Abraham to say that in this parable. Rev. De Wolf's statement ignores that fact, but it is the truth of the text nevertheless. If one does not heed the preaching that he receives through the living men that God sends to him, he will not hear any messenger that God might send from out of the dead.

We might pause a moment to ask why this is. The answer of Christless conditional theology would surely not be the words of Jesus to the ungodly Jews that refused to listen to Him, "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10:26. Conditional theology would not suggest that, because it is afraid of the Gospel. It is afraid of election. Election brings certain individuals into Christ, makes them one with Him and does not leave a gulf, a chasm, a separation between Christ and His people which they must fill up with certain works which are the condition to their obtaining of the blessedness that is in Him. Conditional theology, as its defenders dare to tell us, is built around the pedagogical approach that if you tell people that the Church is one with Christ in sovereign election and that Christ has united us unto Himself by the *bond* of faith, you will make men careless and profane. You must come to him with the pedagogical approach that his *activity of faith* is necessary to span the gulf between himself and the Christ Who is full of blessedness. That is the underlying, fundamental philosophy of conditional theology.

The point here in the parable is, however, that God, by the Spirit of Christ and on the basis of sovereign election and the cross of Jesus Christ after engrafting them in Christ by the bond of faith, will use the preaching of the Scriptures to bring His elect to repentance and the activity of faith. And the reprobate, who are in no way connected to Christ, either by sovereign election or by the bond of faith, will not believe no matter who testifies to them. Rev. De Wolf should have preached Christ to his audience in this text and shown his hearers that One did return from the dead the third day, and though the evidence of this is indisputable and that though the "brothers" of this rich man were convinced of that fact and could not deny it, they paid the soldiers to silence this testimony of Him.

Of course the "brothers" of the rich man did not believe in Christ, even after He came back from the dead. If you bring that risen Christ next to them and leave as much as one millionth of an inch between Him and them where He does not stand, they cannot reach out even that small distance to take hold of Him by faith. That is still too big a chasm for a dead man to span. Christ must be *IN* us by His Spirit, and we must be *IN* Him by sovereign election and by the bond of faith. And God does not promise

to those who are *OUTSIDE* of Christ that, *if they believe*, they will be brought into such a living relation with Christ and be saved. That is heresy!

Please note, in the second place, that, in this first statement of Rev. De Wolf, *faith* is not promised to the elect, but *everyone* is promised that if he will only believe, then God will save him. Man's act of faith *precedes* salvation, rather than to be a part of it. Jesus taught in the parable that the Scriptures are sufficient as God's means of grace to work faith in His elect. Rev. De Wolf dares to use that same parable to try to teach us that God promises even the unbelieving brothers of this rich man that if they will only meet God's condition and believe, they too can still escape the torments of hell. Reprobates have a promise of salvation!!!! What an insult to God that first statement is in its literal form!

Indeed, he adds that we can believe only because God gives us that faith in His grace and that He bestows it sovereignly upon His elect. That seems to fix it all up, and many are deceived by such procedure. But if he is honest before God and to those for whom he preaches, he will add (1) that since God must give us this faith before we will believe, he was wrong in stating that we must believe *before*. God will save us and that God does not, therefore, promise on the condition of faith but promises faith to the elect. And he should have added (2) that since God promises faith to the elect, his statement that God promises *everyone* salvation on the condition of faith is wrong and must never be defended. Let him still do that. Now he is trying to walk in two directions at one time. He will find that he cannot. No man can.

J. A. Heys



Special Session of Classis West

The consistories of Doon, Edgerton, Hull, and Redlands Protestant Reformed Churches have decided jointly to call a special session of Classis West, D.V., Wednesday, January 20, 1954, at Doon.

All those consistories which repudiate the schismatic stand adopted by the September session of Classis West, and therefore with us constitute the faithful remnants of our Classis are invited and urged to send delegates.

Address all requests for lodging or other correspondence to James Blankespoor, Doon, Iowa.

By order of the above-mentioned consistories,
JAMES BLANKESPOOR, Clerk *pro tem*

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS OF THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM (Cont'd)

Continuing with our discussion of the early views of the sacrament of Baptism, and calling attention to the significance of this sacrament during that early period of the Church in the New Dispensation, we noted that one might easily receive the impression from some expressions of the early Church Fathers that they attributed efficacy to the external rite of Baptism, such as the power of regeneration, cleansing from sin, sanctification. And we concluded our previous article with a quotation from Justin Martyr, a famous apologete or defender of the Christian faith during that early period of the Church of God. The following quotation from the writings of Justin Martyr may also serve to confirm this early view of the Sacrament of Baptism: "By reason, therefore, of this laver of repentance and knowledge of God ("laver" means a font or basin of water) which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's people, as Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life."

Clement of Alexandria expresses himself as follows: "The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ became. Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal.... This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly.... Further release from evils is the beginning of salvation. We then alone, who first have touched the confines of life, are already perfect; and we already live who are separated from death. Salvation, accordingly, is the following of Christ: "For that which is in Him is life. Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life.".... As, then, those who have shaken off sleep forthwith become all awake within; or rather, as those who try to remove a film that is over the eyes, do not supply to them from without the light which they do not possess, but removing the obstacle from the eyes, leave the pupil free; thus also we who are baptized, having wiped off the sins which obscure the light of the Divine Spirit, have the eye of the spirit free, unimpeded, and full of light, by which alone we contemplate the Divine, the Holy Spirit, flowing down to us from above."

Tertullian wrote a separate treatise on the sacrament of Baptism. Although he rejects the notion of a merely magical and mechanical blotting out of sins by baptism, and makes the efficacy of baptism dependent on repentance, yet he takes occasion, from the cosmical and physical significance of water, to adduce numerous analogies. Water is in his view the element in which Christians alone feel at home, as the small fishes which follow the great fish. Heretics, on the contrary, are the amphibious generation of vipers and snakes that cannot live in wholesome water. Water is of great importance for the whole universe. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters—so upon the waters of baptism. As the Church is compared with the ark, so the water of baptism is contrasted with the deluge, and the dove of Noah is a type of the dove—the Spirit. As power is inherent in all water, it is indifferent what kind of water is used. The water of the Tiber possesses the same power as the water of the Jordan; still water produces the same effects as running water. He also compares the baptismal water with the pool of Bethesda; as the latter was troubled by an angel, so there is a special angel of baptism, who prepares the way for the Holy Spirit.

Cyprian spoke of the high importance of baptismal water from his own experience. He does not indeed maintain that water purifies as such, but his comparisons give the impression of a magic efficacy of water. The devil was cast out of Pharaoh, when he and all his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea (the sea is a symbol of baptism, according to I Cor. 10); for the power of the devil only reaches to the margin of the water. As scorpions and snakes are strong on dry land, but lose their strength, and must vomit their poison when thrown into water, so the unclean spirits. In short, whenever water is mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, the Punic (the language of the Carthaginians, akin to Phoenician and the Hebrew—H.V.) symbolism is at once applied to it; it is, therefore, not at all surprising that the rock in the wilderness, as well as the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and many others, are regarded as types of baptism.

We quote the following from the writings of Cyprian: "These were my frequent thoughts (Cyprian is writing of his calling out of darkness into the light—H.V.). For as I myself was held in bonds by the innumerable errors of my previous life, from which I did not believe that I could by possibility be delivered, so I was disposed to acquiesce in my clinging vices, and because I despaired of better things, I used to indulge my sins as if they were actually parts of me, and indigenous to me. But after that, by the help of the *water* of the new birth (the underscoring is of the undersigned), the stain of former years had been washed away, and a light from above serene and pure had been infused into my reconciled heart;—after that by the agency of the Spirit breathed from heaven a second birth had restored me to a new man;... Moreover it is silly to say that

although the second birth is spiritual by which we are born in Christ through the laver of regeneration one may be born spiritually among the heretics where they say that the Spirit is not. For water alone is not able to cleanse away sins and to sanctify a man unless he have also the Holy Spirit But what a thing it is to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies, and the new man is born, saying, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration." But if regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ? . . . But, further, one is not born by the imposition of hands, when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first have an existence. But as the birth of Christians is in baptism, while the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the spouse of Christ alone, who is able spiritually to conceive and to bear sons to God, where and of whom and to whom is he born, who is not a son of the Church, so as that he should have God as his Father, before he has had the Church for his Mother?"

However, these allegorical expressions of the Church Fathers may easily be interpreted without attributing to them the view that the water of Baptism as such is efficacious unto salvation. Speaking of Baptism as they do, the possibility remains that they may refer to the sacrament as far as its symbolic significance is concerned.

We will finally call attention to one more Church Father: Origin. This famous Church Father, one of the most brilliant leaders during the early centuries of the Church of God in the New Dispensation, although also attaching great significance to the sacrament of Holy Baptism, makes a clear distinction between the symbol of Baptism and the thing obnoxious by the symbol, although also considering this sacrament as actually conferring purification upon the recipient of it. Quoting from Reinhold Seeberg, we read the following: "The washing by water, being a symbol of the cleansing of a soul washed from every defilement (which comes) from evil, is no less and precisely to him who surrenders himself to the power of the names of the adorable Trinity, the beginning and fountain of Divine gifts. Baptism is not a "symbol" in the modern sense, but as Christ's miracles of healing were symbols of the healing activity of the Word. Yet, as these miracles nevertheless brought real healing to the individual in whose behalf they were performed, so baptism is for the recipient nothing less than the beginning and fountain of the Divine blessings. It is a symbol of the purifying power of the Word, but for the individual it is actual purification. Through its administration sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit be-

stowed. . . . Above water-baptism stands the fire baptism of martyrdom. This washes away sins, and the priestly intercessions of the martyrs are heard by God." It is evident from this quotation that Origin, although speaking of Baptism as a symbol and therefore distinguishing between the symbol and the things obnoxious, also saw far more in it than a mere symbol. And, indeed, the sacrament of Baptism is surely more than a mere symbol. It is definitely a means of grace.

However, although these expressions of the Church Fathers seem to indicate that they attributed efficacy to the external rite of Holy Baptism, it is also true that they freely made use of allegorical expressions, and these expressions can also be interpreted without attributing to them the view that the water of Baptism as such is efficacious unto salvation. And one thing is sure: the Church Fathers certainly attributed tremendous significance to the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

H. Veldman



Jehovah is my light,
And my salvation near;
Who shall my soul afright,
Or cause my heart to fear?
While God my strength, my life sustains,
Secure from fear my soul remains.

When evildoers came
To make my life their prey,
They stumbled in their shame
And fell in sore dismay;
Though hosts make war on every side,
Still fearless I in God confide.

My one request has been,
And still this prayer I raise,
That I may dwell within
God's house through all my days
Jehovah's beauty to admire,
And in His temple to inquire.

When troubles round me swell,
When fears and dangers throng,
Securely I will dwell
In His pavilion strong:
Within the covert of His tent
He hides me till the storm is spent.

Uplifted on a rock
Above my foes around,
Amid the battle shock
My song shall still resound;
Then joyful offerings I will bring,
Jehovah's praise my heart shall sing.

Psalter 71:1-5

DECENCY and ORDER

Special Admission into the Ministry

To every rule there is an exception!
And to the exception there is a rule!

This is what we find in the eighth article of our Church Order. We have the rule governing the exception. The exception is the admission of certain persons into the ministry in a way different from the usual course prescribed in Art. 4. The rule governing this is set forth in the article. Permit us to quote it in full.

"Art. 8—Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study in preparation for the ministry of the Word, and have, therefore, not been declared eligible according to Article 4, shall not be admitted to the ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts, godliness, humility, modesty, common sense and discretion, as also gifts of public address. When such persons present themselves for the ministry, the classis (if the (particular) synod approve) shall first examine them, and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, according to the general regulations of the churches."

The historical origin and usage of this article makes clear that the provision made therein was never intended as a general practice in Reformed Churches. The Reformed position has always been favorable toward a thoroughly trained and educated clergy which is the product of the theological seminary. This position is substantiated by Scripture as well as sound reason which we will make clear presently. However, this does not preclude the possibility of one specially gifted being admitted into the ministry without the usual course of study and preparation.

This practice began in Reformed Churches in the post-reformation period when there was a great dearth of ministers. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that in the Netherlands at least there were no seminaries and the few that were educated in Geneva and Heidelberg were not sufficient to fill the great demand of many churches. It became a matter of necessity to ordain some without academic training. Even then the Reformers were careful so that the Convent of Wezel in 1568 and the Synod of Emden in 1571 ruled that unschooled persons, seeking admittance to the office should be required to engage for a season in sermonizing in private under the supervision of ordained ministers. In 1574 the Synod of Dordrecht added that only such persons should be admitted who possessed the qualifications of godliness, humility, modesty, intelligence, discretion and gifts of public address.

The Synods from 1574 to 1619 were silent on this matter. This is explained from the fact that this practice more and more fell into disuse as the school at Leiden provided trained men. However, when the influence of Jacobus Harmsen took root in Leiden and the school became

contaminated with Arminianism, the practice of ordaining the unschooled revived with the result that many who were unqualified were put into office. Consequently the Synods of South Holland and Gelderland requested the Synod of Dordrecht in 1619 to make the rules for admittance of these men more rigid. This Synod complied with the following rule:

"School-teachers, craftsmen and others who in the schools have not pursued courses in languages, arts, and theology, shall not be promoted to the ministry of the Word, unless we have undoubted knowledge respecting their exceptional gifts: piety, humility, modesty, superior natural capacity, prudence, and eloquence. As often as such persons seek admittance to the office the Classis in the event the Synod approves shall examine them. In case of successful issue they shall for a set length of time train themselves in the making and in the delivering of sermons. Thereupon Classis shall deal with them as can best redound to the edification of the churches."

This did not rule out the possibility of untrained men entering upon the ministry but it did make such entrance more difficult. Following the Synod of 1619 several theological schools came into existence providing many candidates so that for more than two hundred years the provision of Article 8 became virtually a dead letter. It was at the time of the Secession of 1836 that it again revived though only for a short time as the establishment of a school at Kampen became the solution to the problem. Once more this history repeated itself when following the Doleantie in 1886 there was a scarcity of trained ministers.

Two things became quite evident from all this. The first is that the Reformed position always was favorable toward the trained ministry. The second is that provisions allowing others to enter were honored only during special and abnormal times. Article 8 is, therefore, an emergency measure or exception to the rule and should be used only as circumstances warrant it although it may also be admitted that sometimes God may raise up a man of exceptional ability to serve the churches even though the times are normal.

When such an aspirant to the office presents himself he is to be treated according to the general regulations of the churches. To the knowledge of the undersigned there has never been an instance of this nature in the brief history of our churches and neither have our churches formulated any rules for procedure in the event such a case should arise. In 1922, however, the Christian Reformed Churches drew up and adopted the following set of regulations which we quote from Stuart and Hoeksema's "Rules of Order":

"The examination of candidates for the ministry under this Article differs from the regular examinations only by the omission of the Hebrew and the Greek.

"Rules for Admission to the Ministry according to Art. 8:

"(1) If anyone desires to be admitted to the Ministry of the Word according to Article VIII, he must apply to his Consistory and after that to his Classis. This Classis, in conjunction with the Delegates for Examination of three adjacent Classes; first examines the written credentials of the Consistory concerning the required qualifications as stated in Article VIII, and subsequently itself investigates in this respect. If the preliminary judgment is favorable, he be given the right to speak a word of edification for a limited time in the vacant churches of his Classis. He must also speak a few times in non-vacant churches in the presence of the respective ministers of these churches. Classis shall regulate these appointments in conjunction with the Consistories of those churches. Classis determines the length of this period of probation.

"(2) At the close of the period of probation the Classis, in conjunction with the said Delegates for Examination, takes a final decision regarding the presence of exceptional gifts. If the decision is in the affirmative, then the Classis shall take peremptory examination in the following branches: (a) Exegesis of the Old and New Testaments: (b) Bible History: (c) Dogmatics: (d) General and American Church History.

"(3) In case of favorable issue, he is declared eligible to a call.

"(4) The examination for ordination follows later according to existing rules, except the classical languages."

These rules in themselves are commendable in that they prescribe a rigid course for the candidate who would aspire to the office of the ministry without the usual course of training. They would discourage rather than encourage this practice. However, in spite of the rules, there remains in this article an implication which is undesirable. The article leans toward leaving the impression that the Theological School is only for those of average or below average ability while those who are exceptional or above average have no need of the school as a medium to the ministry. This implication can be removed, it seems to us, by adding a provision to the article which would state that no candidate is to be admitted to the ministry under Article VIII unless he is able to advance very preponderant reasons for which he does not attend the Theological School and seek admittance in the usual way. Then the matter would indeed become an *exceptional* case or an *emergency* measure as it was intended.

Only when Article 8 is kept within its proper confines can the position of the Reformed that a thoroughly trained ministry is essential be held with force. And this it should be for the position is a correct one. For this we may briefly cite various reasons.

First, and above all it is Scriptural. In addition to many examples in Scripture of men who were trained for their ministerial labor we may cite II Timothy 2:2 where

the apostle Paul exhorts Timothy "to commit the things he had heard of him among many witnesses to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." The apostle here points to what he had himself done and what he required of his disciple Timothy. The same thing applies today. Surely the many passages of Holy Writ that exhort to "study" and "meditation" may be said to support the view of theological training.

Secondly, the training itself is to be desired. No honest practitioner in the professional fields (medicine, dentistry, science) would care to indulge in such labor without adequate training. Much less would he who seeks to "rightly divide the Word of truth" do so without being trained by competent, spiritual and experienced teachers. Even as our young men need military *training* to fit them for the battle field, so our ministers need special training to go forth as leaders of the church in the battle of faith and truth.

Thirdly, we may conclude with a quotation from the writing of Thomas M. Nichols: "We contend for an educated ministry. Illiteracy in the pulpit will not do. Cheap books, free libraries, abundant school facilities, have combined to lift the masses out of the dense ignorance of earlier times. To meet the demands of the modern congregation, therefore, the preacher must be in touch with the significant intellectual movements of the day; conversant with the progress of thought. The terminology of the last century is already out of date. Moss-grown arguments, and bald-headed illustrations, will not satisfy the present generation. We are dealing with men, and with women, too, whose expanded minds are stored with all the rich results of the latest scientific research. We must meet them on the same footing."

G. Vanden Berg



In doubt and temptation I rest, Lord, in Thee;
My hand is in Thy hand, Thou carest for me;
My soul with Thy counsel through life Thou wilt guide,
And afterward make me in glory abide.

In glory Thou only my portion shalt be,
On earth for none other I long but for Thee;
My flesh and heart falter, but God is my stay,
The strength of my spirit, my portion for aye.

All they that forsake Thee must perish and die,
But near to my Savior most blessed am I;
I make Thee my refuge, my Lord and my God;
Thy grace and Thy glory I publish abroad.

Psalter 202:1-3

ALL AROUND US

Science And The Bible

In the November issue of *The Witness* we came across an interesting article on Science and the Bible in which the author attempts to show that the Scriptures are not behind but ahead of the times. Here follows the article in full, and we pass it on to you without comment.

"The Bible was thousands of years ahead of the science of the times in which it was written. Look at this statement in Job 26:7—and remember, it was written nearly two thousand years before Christ was born: 'He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing.' Think of the ridiculous myths and legends that have been current in many lands. Some believed that the earth was upheld by a huge tortoise, or a giant, or an elephant. There have been all sorts of ideas. But the Bible gives the only scientific reply to the question as to what upholds the earth. God hung it upon nothing.

We are told that according to one of the latest measurements by the U.S. Bureau of Standards, the earth weighs a little more than six sextillion tons—whatever that is! With the earth turning on its axis so fast that at the equator it attains a surface speed of more than a thousand miles an hour, no bearing conceivable to the human mind could uphold such a weight at such speed. The earth must be made to float upon nothing, as God indicated in His word thousands of years before science had proved it.

For thousands of years people believed that the world was flat and that the sun went around it. But all this time the Bible was speaking of 'the circle of the earth.' Isaiah 40:22

Notice also the scientific fact mentioned in Job 28:24, 25. Speaking of God Job says: 'For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure.'

Now the scientists have proved that it is the weight of the air or atmosphere, or changes in that weight, that causes all our weather. Air pressure at sea level is nearly fifteen pounds to every square inch of surface, an average of fourteen tons upon every person. About one ton of air rests upon every square foot of surface. Remember the fact that air has weight was recorded in the Holy Scriptures at least 2,500 years before Torricelli invented the barometer to measure that weight.

The wonders that science is bringing to our attention impress upon our minds the wonderful God of the universe. The more wonderful nature is the more wonderful the God who created everything in nature. We read in Job 12:7-10 'But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the

hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.'

Dr. Arthur Compton, of the University of Chicago, once said: 'The world is beautiful to the scientist who is opening new vistas continually. The molecules made from atoms, the atoms made from electrons and protons, shows a universe within a universe. And a God who can control a universe like that is mighty beyond imagination.'

This is the God of the Bible, the Creator, the God who balanced the atmosphere with approximately 78 per cent nitrogen and 21 per cent oxygen, with a trace of carbon dioxide, argon, neon, helium, krypton, xenon, hydrogen and ozone. It is proportioned exactly to fit the needs of the human race and all living creatures upon the earth. A change in one direction or another would make life as we know it impossible.

The God of Science is the God who created the honey-bee with its 6,000 sense plates in its two antennae, its five eyes with their thousands of six-sided, fixed-focus lenses, color blind to red but able to see ultraviolet rays invisible to us; with wings that vibrate 11,140 times a minute, making bees complete masters of the air so they can fly forward, backward, up, down, from side to side, or poise motionless like a helicopter.

He is the God who created water which, like all other fluids, becomes heavier when it becomes colder. This, however, is true of water only until it reaches four degrees above freezing, when it becomes lighter and rises to the surface as ice. If it should sink to the bottom, rivers and lakes would become solid. Even the seas in many parts of the world would become frozen from the top to bottom, and all animal and vegetable life would cease.

He is the God of whom we read in Psalm 135:7: 'He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.'

He causes the sun's rays to vaporize water in which condition it occupies a space 1,600 times greater than it does in its liquid state and therefore is much lighter than air, floating readily and ascending into the higher regions, where it is carried all over the earth.

'All the rivers run into the sea yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.' Ecclesiastes 1:7.

God knew all this that the wise men did not know many centuries ago. Science has caught up with the Bible in explaining the circulation of water over the earth, into the sea, out of the sea by evaporation, onto the land in the form of snow and rain, back by way of rivers into the ocean again.

Has anyone ever seen a river running uphill? 'Unto the place from where the rivers come, thither they shall return again,' says the Bible. And it is true. The waters

do go back to the hills and mountains. They go by way of the sky and the clouds.

The God who can carry this mighty earth on a trip of 525,000,000 miles in 365 days, 5 hours, 45 minutes, 46 seconds, on so exact a timing that it does not vary more than a thousandth of a second in a century—He is the God of the Bible.

In Job 38:4, 5 God asks this question: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?'

God made the earth just right for the people living upon it. If the sun were 193,000,000 miles from the earth, the intense cold would kill everybody; if it were only 15,000,000 miles distant, the terrible heat would kill everybody. But, since it is approximately 93,000,000 miles away everything is just right. The range of temperature within which life, as we know it, is possible is very narrow, so God in his creative wisdom set the sun and the earth the right distance apart.

Think of the deadly actinic rays from the sun. Why do they not kill everyone on the earth? Because there is a protective blanket around the earth, a layer of ozone and other gases many thousands of feet thick. Tanning and sunburn are only mild forms of what would happen if this layer were not present. Professor Rudolph Loudenburg of Princeton University says that this layer is from fifteen to twenty miles above the earth and may be nearly 100,000 feet in thickness.

We have mentioned only few of the scientific suggestions in the Bible, but in all these things we see the wisdom and protective power of God.

'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unscheurable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.' Psalm 145:3, 4.

Only an all-wise Creator could know all the requirements of human life, and He made everything fit them. Since God's book of nature and his book of divine revelation came from the same hand, they must agree. One helps to explain the other, and we should be interested in both. We should worship the all-wise heavenly Father who is the author of both. Let us study God's two books. Let us accept the revelations of both where they go beyond human knowledge. They are the utterances of our Creator, who, as we would expect, knows far more than we know. So let us read the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God." So far the article.

As we said at the beginning of this article, we did not plan to make any comment; but we have space left to say this, that we are not particularly a student of science. Yet there is something fascinating, astounding, in scientific data, even that described in this article, that makes one stand in awe before the great universe God has made and declare: Yea, what hath God wrought! Some of our readers, who

have no learning to speak of will no doubt smile at the stupendous figures mentioned in the article, and conclude that they are figments of a deluded mind. We would not join with them in their folly, but rather humble ourselves before the God of creation, and looking in His Book of revelation declare with the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

M. Schipper



Pertinent Quotations from the "Dogmatics" of Rev. H. Hoeksema

Since it is so persistently insisted that the Rev. H. Hoeksema in former years taught a conditional promise, and that now our esteemed professor has shifted in his teaching from that former position, the time has come to let the record speak.

We do not quote from such works where Rev. H. Hoeksema uses the terms of Calvin to show that Calvin with his terminology did not teach a general conditional promise, but that he taught a particular conditional promise. In so doing Rev. H. Hoeksema did not advocate as the warp and woof of his theology a conditional promise, but it was only to show that the promise of the Gospel is particular. For he was not breaking a lance for conditional theology, but was defending the particularness of the Promise over against those who insisted that there is a general offer of salvation to all who hear the gospel with the intent to save.

That was the point in Prof. Hoeksema's polemic.

And now the record as this appears from his "Student Dictaten."

I turn once more to the Fourth Locus of Dogmatics, namely Soteriology. And the subject is "Faith".

I quote:

"Faith is that work of God in the regenerated and called sinner whereby these receive Christ, as He has revealed Himself in His Word, and appropriates Him and all His blessings, relying on Him for time and eternity. (Quoted are Phil. 1:2); Eph. 2:8-10 and John 6:44).

"It is possible to distinguish between the essence and the working, between the **potentia** and the act of faith. Of course, in principle everything is given in the life of regeneration to the elect child of God, also faith. In the various steps of the order of salvation there is no repeated additional something added to this principle of regeneration. On the contrary, this life is brought to conscious operation and full development (voltooing) by the Holy Spirit through the means of the Word of God. Thus understood we speak of the **potentia** of faith. Where regeneration is present there is also the **potentia fidei**; where this fidei is a reality, there is also the essence of faith consisting in a living tie to Christ. Of this essence of faith as the living tie (levensverband) to Christ, the following may still be remarked:

1. That it also exists in the reborn infant children. The conscious act of faith is, of course, not present in their case. "For

faith is out of hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." Rom. 10:17. Still it remains true that such a child lives out of Christ, be it then in a mystical manner. Such a child receives that life out of Christ: "dia pisteos" (Through faith). It is possible to distinguish between the mystical operation of faith in a child, as this occurs in such a manner as to be hidden from us, and the conscious act of this same faith as this is the fruit of the calling of those who hear the Word of the preaching.

2. That this essence of faith cannot be lost. (onverliesbaar is) The tie that binds us to Christ can never again be severed, because it is God, Who preserves this faith in us through Christ. (Quoted are: John 6:37, 39; 10:27-30; I Peter 1:5)

3. That it should be remembered that the operation or act of faith is very divergent. Sometimes this operation is weak, sometimes it is strong, and again it may seem as if this act of faith is indeed absent. Wherefore the distinction is made between the being and the well-being of faith. With this distinction we certainly must reckon in the preaching and instruction of the Congregation of God. We should strive not to depress the small and weak, and that the sick be healed we should labor to bring about. For this reason it is all the more necessary that we never insist in the preaching that the weak and imperfect, which is always sinful, is the normal manifestation of faith, but that we build and heal. Otherwise both congregation and pastor will become sick and weak."

Notice the following in this quotation from Rev. H. Hoeksema's Dogmatics dictaten in the years 1926-30, when Rev. B. Kok and others were students in our Seminary:

1. That in the "definition" given by Rev. Hoeksema of "faith," he does not first of all underscore that it is an act of the believer, but that it is a "work of God." It is solely a gift of God to us. There is here nothing said about faith being a "condition" in this entire section of the "notes" on faith.

2. That even where Rev. H. Hoeksema distinguishes faith as *potentia fidei* and *actus fidei* he does not make the latter in any way conditional, but simply teaches that this actus is brought about by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel. Faith remains even then, according to Rev. Hoeksema, in its *essence* the living tie to Christ.

3. That Rev. H. Hoeksema remains true to his "point of departure" as outlined briefly in the "Introduction" to Soteriology, and thus has no Remonstrant conceptions creeping into the doctrine of Applied Salvation.

Just one more remark. From my own personal notes taken as a student, now almost a quarter century ago, I glean the following:

"What is the distinction between *Potentia* and *Activa*? Is there a distinction between the working and the act of faith? The *working* of faith is never absent and gone because this lies outside of the plain of consciousness. (omdat dit zonder bewustzijn geschiedt.) The *act* is conscious and willing faith and is connected with the knowledge of the Word of God."

Sapienti sat!

Thus taught Rev. H. Hoeksema a quarter of century ago. These are not just some plausible and convenient

"Quotable Quotes," but they are the warp and woof of Rev. Hoeksema's Theology, as we shall point out further in the next issue of the Standard Bearer, D.V.

G. Lubbers



HERDER OF HUURLING?

Spreeken is zilver en zwijgen is goud, is een oud spreekwoord 't welk altijd lang niet genoeg in beoefening wordt gebracht. In vele gevallen om veel moeite te voorkomen is zwijgen dan ook maar het verstandigst, men zegt dan, er is geen praten tegen, we zullen maar zwijgen.

Doch wanneer het spreken zoo druk wordt betracht, en de waarheid in zoo verminkten vorm, ja zelfs in leugen wordt voorgesteld, is zwijgen zonde, en is spreken om der waarheid wil noodzakelijk. Zoo is het hier in Redlands met het kerkelijke leven gegaan, en gaat het nog zoo. De verhalen die niet alleen in doch ook buiten Redlands worden opgedischt, zijn zoo uiteenlopend, en waarheid en leugen zoo vermengd, dat het ware beeld van de kerkelijke gebeurtenissen geheel ontbreekt.

Nu is het niet mijn plan om een volledig beeld van al de kerkelijke gebeurtenissen weer te geven, in de eerste plaats zou ik daarvoor de helft van de S. Bearer nodig hebben, 't welk de geachte Redacteur me niet zou willen toestaan, en in de tweede plaats zijn er dingen en daden gebeurd die voor een oningewijde die de geschiedenis niet heeft mee gemaakt, haast ongelooflijk zijn.

We zullen ons dan bepalen bij het eerste begin, 't welk meer dan twee jaren geleden al is begonnen, en ons bepalen bij sommige hoofdzaken der gebeurtenissen die in die jaren hebben plaats gehad. In het Schoolbestuur wilde het niet vlotten, men was niet eensgeztes, 't welk belemmerend werkte voor de gang van zaken. Sommige Bestuursleden vroegen af en toe al eens raad bij leden der gemeente, doch gaf geen voldoende oplossing in de situatie, waarom het bestuur ten einde raad een verzoek richtte tot drie leden der gemeente om de troebelen te onderzoeken en om dan hen van advies te dienen. De drie leden namen de benoeming aan en vormden een advisory committee met Ds. Vermeer als president, de notulen werden nauwkeurig nagezien, met de board werd vergaderd, en de zaak werd grondig onderzocht. Daarna werd door de Pres. een wel gedocumenteerd advies opgesteld, 't welk eenigszins werd gewijzigd om daarna te worden ondertekend door de drie adviseurs. Weer werd met de board vergaderd en met kracht van redenen werd het advies door de Pres. verdedigd, en men leefde in de hoop dat het nu wel tot een bevredigende oplossing zou komen. Doch helaas dat heeft niet zoo mogen zijn. Zonder de twee adviseurs daarvan kennis te geven werd hij ontrouw aan zijn eigen met kracht en klem verdedigd advies en schaarde zich aan de zijde van macht, en pleegde niet al-

leen verraad tegen zijn twee adviseurs, maar ook verraad tegen een rechtvaardige zaak. Macht kreeg in de Board de overhand boven recht.

Toen is de ellende begonnen met zijn verreikende gevolgen. De meerderheid in de Board voelde zich toen sterk, en men beging de dwaasheid om hun bezwaren op de kerkeraad te brengen waar ze met open armen werden ontvangen, en natuurlijk gehoor kregen, doch die de eensgezindheid in de Board niet bevorderde. In de loop van 't jaar trad de Pres. van de schoolbouw af en twee boardleden gingen met hem heen.

Men meende nu dat de storm was gestild, doch aan de lucht van de kerkelijke hemel zaten meer donderwolken aan de kimme, de afgetreden Pres. van de Schoolboard was ook Superintendent van de Zondagsschool. Men meende daar moest ook wat aan gedaan worden, maar hoe?

De Zondagsschool *bloiede*. Zoolang schrijver dezes (6 jaren) kerkeraadslid was, was er dienaangaande nog nooit eenige klacht ingekomen.

Het reglement van de Zondagsschool luidde, dat alleen in het benoemen van nieuwe teachers de Zondagsschoolstaf een lijst aan de kerkeraad moest inleveren van namen waar de kerkeraad het recht van had ze goed of af te keuren, meer zeggenschap had de kerkeraad over de Zondagsschool niet als alls goed liep, en het liep goed. Toen is er achter de schermen gewerkt; de Zondagsschoolstaf moest na het a.s. Kerstfeest nieuwe teachers hebben, een lijst met meisjes en jongelingen werd tijdig de kerkeraad aangeboden, doch later bleek dat er van die lijst helemaal geen nota was genomen, want toen het Kerstfeest ('t welk een waar succes was) was afgelopen, stond er een nieuwe Zondagsschoolstaf klaar, en kon de Superintendent die zes of zeven jaren met succes zijn vaak moeilijk werk had gedaan, heen gaan. Het doel was bereikt, maar hoe? Macht had ook hier weer boven recht getriomfeerd. In de prediking moesten nu wel de daden die er in het verleden hadden plaats gehad, worden aangetoond en natuurlijk verdedigd, dit geschiedde vaak door een mengmoes van haat en liefde op te disschen, voor velen meer tot ergernis dan tot stichting.

In de loop van dat jaar ontvingen drie respectabele leden der gemeente anonieme brieven, welks inhoud anders niet dan valsche liefde en bedekte haat bevatte.

De dader heeft nog nooit bekend, doch indien hij een kind van God is zal er vroeg of laat wel belijdenis van gedaan worden, daarvan ben ik zeker, doch zoo niet, geraffineerde deugnieten zijn moeilijk tot bekentenis te brengen. Dat de geheele gemeente, de een meer of minder in een zekere spanning verkeerde, behoeft nauwelijks gezegd, en bij velen, misschien wel bij allen kwijnde het geestelijke leven. Zulke ingrijpende gebeurtenissen blijven je niet in de kleeren zitten.

De tijden der middeleeuwen zijn voorbij, zoodat er geen schavot opgericht was in de churchyard der zoogenaamde Eerste Prot. Ref. Church, doch dat er sommigen door de

machthebbers zedelijk zijn vermoord is buiten twijfel.

J. R. Vanderwal.



A TESTIMONY FROM THE RECORDS

Continued

An error crept into the printing of my article entitled above in the Standard Bearer dated Dec. 1, 1953. The year in which the undersigned registered his disagreement with with Consistory's stand taken on Dec. 20, 1950, against Synod adopting the Declaration of Principles should be Feb. 22, 1951 in place of Feb. 22, 1953.

Since it is necessary to call attention to this error, I will add that the former Holland Consistory never retracted their stand taken on Dec. 20, 1950, against the adoption of the Declaration of Principles.

It came up for action the last time on April 30, 1953, when the undersigned made the following motion. Following up our May 22nd 1952 decision, I move that we rescind Consistory's Dec. 20, 1950 decision with reference to the adoption of the Declaration of Principles, and express that Consistory agrees with the Declaration of Principles, as amended and adopted in 1951, including the two premises which Consistory (rejected) in said Dec. 20th 1950 action, namely: 1. The promise of the gospel is not conditional. 2. We repudiate that the promise of the covenant is conditional. The former Elder Bouwman supported this motion. This placed the motion legally on the floor for discussion. The former Rev. Kok immediately objected, and refused to accede to this motion, refused to agree with the Declaration of Principles as amended and adopted officially by said Synod of 1951. He wanted to make amendments giving his own interpretation, rather than accept the official document as amended and adopted by said Synod. This resulted in long arguments against the Declaration, and counter arguments, with the result that Consistory tabled that motion and did not act upon it. This motion was still not acted upon on the evening of Oct. 9, 1953, when the former Consistory became schismatic and lost their office and fellowship in the Protestant Reformed Church.

In the action above you see the former Rev. Kok refusing to accede and objecting to the motion, that the Holland Consistory officially went on record as expressing agreement with the Declaration of Principles, as amended and adopted by the Synod of 1951. He refused to agree to the Declaration of Principles as amended, and succeeded in keeping the Consistory from so publicly expressing themselves, by tableing the motion.

Approximately one week later on May 7, 1953, the Consistory officially adopted the answer that was sent to Classis East on my protest. This answer is now filed in the archives of Classis East. Quoting from a mimeographed

copy that was distributed publicly you read the following beginning top of page 7. Quote: "nevertheless, now that our Synods of 1950-51 have adopted these Declarations, as revised, and whereas to my (singular) knowledge they are not in conflict with the Word of God, we (plural) will maintain them as the official declaration of our Churches, (plural) as long as they are not changed by a General Synod." End of quote. Words in brackets above are my own.

The above was composed and read in the same Consistory room, by the same Rev. Kok, by the same Members of Consistory, that only a week earlier had witnessed that same Rev. Kok, object to and refuse to accede to adopting that same Declaration of Principles, when it was on the floor of Consistory, by a legal motion made and supported legally to so express itself. But that is not all, that same confession was also part of the answer written on that piece of paper, the former Rev. Kok kept in his pocket, when my protest first appeared on the agenda of the Jan. 7, 1953 Meeting of Classis East. He kept this confession in his vest pocket as long as he was sure my protest would not be treated by Classis. He kept this confession in his vest pocket on that evening just referred to on April 30, 1953 Consistory Meeting when a legal motion was on the floor to express publicly that the Holland Consistory agreed with the Declaration of Principles, as adopted by Synod, choking out this confession by loudly objecting to its adoption. But he took this confession out of his vest pocket, inserted it in Consistory's answer to my protest, when the waters began to run deep at Classis East in May 1953, as the hour of Classical judgment on my protest was approaching.

It should be clear even to a little child, that anyone so dishonest with his own Consistory, certainly was worthy of being suspended from office. For he used the Consistory as a public spectacle. Over the good names of these Brethren he published that vest pocket confession. Every member of that Consistory could know, that the former Rev. Kok was not telling the truth when he incorporated that confession, in that official answer to Classis dated April 30, 1953, adopted by Consistory on May 7, 1953, with one dissenting vote. For only one week previously, April 30, 1953, the motion was on the floor of Consistory, to do exactly what he now publicly inferred he was doing, and to that motion he loudly objected. He objected to Consistory expressing that they agreed with the Declaration of Principles and adopt it as their own, even to the extent that the motion was not acted upon, the motion was tabled, and remained tabled till the day they lost their office.

I repeat any man so dishonest to resort to such swindling tactics, and muddle up everything into such a state of confusion, that no honest man could keep up with it, knew what was going on, certainly should not be in the Ministry, and was worthy of being suspended from office.

—J. H. Kortering.

Excerpt of a sermon on Mark 16:20 by Joseph Irons, preached at the Welsh Chapel, Jewin Crescent, Aldersgate Street on October 27, 1841.

First of all, it must be preaching, that honours all the Persons and perfections of Diety. It must not rob the Father of His sovereignty; it must not rob the Son of His responsibility; it must not rob the Holy Ghost of His efficient ministry. It must not rob either or all of the Persons of the Trinity, nor the Divine essence of the Godhead, of absolute sovereignty; but if it be apostolic preaching, it must be just according to the statement I have so often made in your hearing, that "Christ Jesus is of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"—honor the Lord, exalt the Lord. Then wherever the preaching of the everlasting Gospel comes up to the apostolic standard, the Father's ancient settlements of love must form the base, upon which it rests; the Son's eternal responsibility, undertaking His Church's cause as her covenant Head, must be the sum and substance of it; and the Spirit's ministry, in His invincible power and perpetual operation, personally communicated and felt, must always accompany the statement of a precious Christ and His finished work.

'What!' say you, 'is this to be every thing? I thought this was but a very small part of the Gospel. What! nothing about duties, nothing about exhortations, nothing about broken hearts or how we are to make them so? nothing about the contingencies that depend upon *if* we will believe, and *if* we repent, and *if* we will pray, and *if* we will seek, and *if* we will be faithful?' Oh! my hearers, I had so much of them something like five-and-thirty years ago, so much of these awful things in the first stages of my experience, it became such a stench in my nostrils, that I heaved them to the dunghill, and have had nothing more to do with them. It is no part of the Gospel. 'What!' say you, 'repenting and believing and praying no part of the Gospel?' No, not contingently. They *are*, indeed, as effects and fruits, as things that follow as a necessary part of the Holy Spirit's work; for it is He that gives repentance, and renders it acceptable, and calls it into exercise,—and it is He that gives faith, and He that breathes prayer. But let me remark, that if any or all of these things are preached as conditions, as contingencies, all the Persons of Diety are robbed—all the Persons of Diety are insulted. If my love to God is made a condition, a criterion, a contingency, I shall never have any, never exercise any, and God will be disappointed and cannot save me; but if my love to God is an emanation, a spark of the flame of His own, which He first sheds abroad in my heart, then it is sure and safe in His hands. So also if any thing depends upon my obedience to the law, if any thing depends upon any merit to be found in me, or even any effort to get the salvation that is already procured

and safe in Christ Jesus—if any thing depends upon me in a meritorious sense, then I am finally and entirely lost, and the Father cannot have the object of His love, the Saviour cannot “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied,” nor the Holy Ghost have the pupil He began to teach. But we cannot, we will not rob the Persons of Diety; by preaching apostolically, we will preach that the love is all with the Father, the blood all flowing from the Son, and the power and efficiency entirely of the Holy Ghost. All the power and action, all the enjoyment in doctrine, in attainments, in growth, in usefulness and Christian character, in fellowship with the followers of the Lamb—all flow down from the Lord, are poured forth from the bosom of eternal love, glide down with the waves of atoning blood, and are borne upon the gale of invincible grace. So that we honour all the Persons and perfections of Diety in every doctrine we state.



“REFORMATION IN REDLANDS”

This is what Rev. Vermeer calls the split in Redlands, California congregation. Does Vermeer mean to tell us, that they, namely, Vermeer and his followers have separated themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches, who are become so heretical, that they can no longer go with them?

Is that how a Reformation usually works? Then not two groups have formed, but one, the other simply continues. If Vermeer calls this a Reformation, then Vermeer and his group is not the Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California any more but the other who has remained faithful to the Protestant Reformed truth.

How can he still maintain to be the Protestant Reformed Church? He calls this Reformation “a return to Scriptures as the only rule of faith and walk.” Later he contradicts this statement by stating that the truth is preached as *it always has been*. Further, he states, “In Redlands there has been no departure from our confessions, though our consistory refused to vote for the “Declaration of Principles.” You see that was one of those “pet theological notions of men.”

Also Vermeer writes, “We recognize solely the Word of God, as that Word is interpreted, and brought to us thru the generations of the past, in the “Three Forms of Unity.” Of course, not as we understand the “Three Forms of Unity,” but as others, away with all distinctiveness. Let’s be open-minded, let’s be tolerant, let’s open the doors for all so-called Reformed groups, regardless of their Arminian conceptions.

“Never a protest brought?” What about the criticisms, why refusing of handshaking, why all this opposition, because the preaching was too distinctively Protestant Reformed?

“But they have finally “split” from us, and have organized themselves into a small congregation, claiming to be the Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands.” Which they are, and Vermeer knows it. If this is not so, what becomes of his Reformation idea.

Then as with a sigh of relief, he exclaims with joy to be free to preach unfettered and unhindered the whole counsel of God. Of course, he has done that always, but now also with all these other glorious things, as Responsibility, Conditions, Pre-requisites, admonitions, exhortations, warnings, and call to repentance. What a great comfort for God’s people to hear their responsibility proclaimed, to hear what they *must* do, what are the conditions in the plan of salvation, what is required before we can enter into the kingdom of God.

How much more edifying, and uplifting, and encouraging, is that Word of God, namely, that all is finished once and forever on the cross. That God is all, man nothing. That out of Him, through Him, and unto Him are all things. That salvation is unconditional. That faith is a unconditional gift of Grace. That before we were born, yea, before the foundations of the world, we were engraved in the palms of God’s hands. That all our works are as filthy rags. And that all is because of God’s eternal good pleasure. Call this “pet theological notions of men!”

Yes, I think others could give more facts of what has been going on in Redlands before this so-called Reformation. It looks to me more like a Deformation. But Vermeer may call it that, if he realizes that he and his group are so reformed (?) that they severed themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches.

His conclusion is really interesting. They must especially become active in mission work, in all the world, preaching the Gospel. And the GOSPEL is “good tidings” of what? Of these great things of which they are so glad to be able to preach? No, not in the first place, what God in Christ has done for a lost sinner, but what that sinner *must* do, what is first required of him, etc. and not with “a chip on our shoulders” namely distinct Reformed doctrine.

Finally he writes, “Also we should seek contact with any and all Reformed groups, who stand with us on the Three Forms of Unity as basis.” Regardless of how they explain them. “Contend for the faith.” What faith? As a Condition? “More toleration.” With what? Arminianism? “We must reorganize our Theological School.” (we, meaning Vermeer, etc.) “Our professors must be well-rounded and versed in all the Scriptures, as well as in our Reformed Doctrine. We have such men in our churches.” What he means with well-rounded he does not say, but we shudder, for the future generations.

But God takes care of His church, and not Vermeer and not others like him.

— H. De Jong