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MEDITATION

Utterly Despondent

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said: it is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

1 Kings 19:4

From Carmel to the juniper tree!

From the glorious heights of a victorious faith down into the lugubrious depths of utter despondency!

Out of the consciousness of an exultant assurance that God's cause has the victory into the doleful state of mind of one who is ready to give up because all is lost!

Who of God's people is not more or less acquainted with the vivid contrast and transition?

We have had moments of glorying. Neither was our glorying vain: it was a glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Lord was near and faith seemed strong. We rejoiced, not merely in the assurance of personal salvation, but in the strong conviction that, whatever betide, God's cause in the world will surely have the victory. We were triumphant. God became very great; the enemy dwindled into insignificance. From the heights of a victorious assurance we challenged the enemy. Nothing seemed too difficult. With the psalmist we could sing that by God we would run through a troop, and leap over a wall! With the apostle we boasted that God is for us, and that, therefore, nothing could be against us, that we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us, and that no power on earth, in heaven, or

in hell, present or future, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! . . .

We were on the heights of Carmel!

And then we precipitated into the depths of gloom and doubt and despair that made us seek the mournful solitude of the juniper tree in the wilderness that there we might morbidly implore the Lord to release us from His service, seeing that His is a lost cause and that our labor for that cause is vain! . . .

Nor, indeed, does there seem to be a very gradual descent, sloping from the heights of glorying into the depths of despair.

On the contrary, a very steep incline draws one from Mount Carmel to the juniper tree.

One moment we gloried in the Lord, and almost the next moment, it seems, we despair of His cause!

From the heights into the depths!

Strange contradictions!

It is enough!

Now, O Lord, take away my life!

Thus the man of God, who had been a lonely witness for the cause of Jehovah in a time of great apostasy and wickedness, despairingly beseeched the Lord.

Let us not be too hard on the prophet.

He was a man of like passions even as we, and there were historical circumstances that at least may be said to have occasioned this headlong precipitation from glorious Carmel into the gloom of the juniper tree.

Carmel had been a revelation of the Lord's power, but the revelation had not been permanent; it had been a prefiguration of "the day of the Lord," but not that day itself. The people had been overawed by the revelation of the power of God, and had shouted that Jehovah is the God, but they had not repented with a true sorrow after God. They had slain the Baals-priests at Kishon, but they had not turned their

idolatrous hearts to the Lord. And the king had apparently repented, but his repentance had never been true. Relieved he must have felt when the prophet that ran before his chariot in the pouring rain had not persisted to accompany him to the palace, but had left him at the gates of Jezreel.

And when he came home, he "told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword."

A sinister note we detect in these words.

No longer, we surmise, was there in this report of Ahab to the wicked queen a note of repentance. And whatever may have been his motive in bringing this report to Jezebel, the fear of the Lord was wholly absent from it; nor did the king have any intention to follow up the work of Elijah begun in the name of the Lord, and obliterate completely the worship of Baal from the land of Canaan. Nay more, as we read these words, we fear that the king's report was clothed in words calculated to arouse the fierce wrath of the queen, and suggesting that she take action against the prophet, that "troubler of Israel." Did he not report what *Elijah* had done? And was it, then, the work of *Elijah* that had been the dominating feature of the scene on Carmel? Was it not emphatically the work and power of Jehovah over against the utter impotence and vanity of Baal that had been revealed? And did not the king, forgetful of the fact that Carmel had been the revelation of Jehovah, place an evil emphasis on that part of his report that concerned the slaying of all the prophets of Baal?

In the report of the king, the revelation of the God of Israel became, no doubt, a murderous plot of the prophet of the Lord!

And the effect of it was as might have been expected: the queen was furious!

And she dispatched a messenger to Elijah with the fierce oath: "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time."

And the prophet "went for his life. . . ."

It has been denied that the prophet fled for fear of the queen. A man like Elijah, it is argued, who was not afraid to face the wicked king and announce to him the fierce wrath of God in his very palace; who, moreover, had been the recipient of such mighty revelations, and whom the ravens had fed upon the word of the Lord; who alone had fought the battle on Carmel and gained the victory by faith,—that such a mighty servant of Jehovah should now be afraid of the wrath, of the impotent fury of the wicked queen, and flee to save his life. The original Hebrew, it is pointed out, literally reads: "he went upon his soul," which may have quite a different meaning. And, besides, why should Elijah flee for his life? Did he not

strongly desire to die? Did he not, under the juniper tree, beseech the Lord to take his life from him. . . ?

Yet, we think, that the words have been quite properly rendered by: "he went for his life."

Such is the most simple rendering of the words. This meaning is suggested by the context. And the argument that Elijah was not susceptible to fear for the wicked queen overlooks the fact that he was a man of like passions even as we are. Nor is it true that this would be in conflict with his prayer under the juniper tree. Let us remember, that while the prophet fled on the spur of the moment, evidently taking the impotent threat of the queen quite seriously, his prayer under the juniper tree was uttered later, after he had first gone to Beersheba in Judah, and thereupon had travelled a day's journey into the wilderness.

And as he travelled, and reviewed the situation, the gloom deepened, doubt and despair took more and more complete possession of his soul, till he became utterly despondent.

To Beersheba in Judah he travelled in the company of his servant. There he left him. Henceforth, he would need him no more. Was he not going to hand in his resignation to Jehovah? Alone he travelled on, in the wilderness, a day's journey, contemplating, no doubt, upon the hopelessness of the whole situation and becoming more and more convinced that all his strenuous efforts in the cause of the Lord, all his zeal, all his sufferings, all his labors had been vain!

O, how hopeless the cause of Jehovah appeared to him!

For what, after all, did it signify that the wicked queen was able to utter the threat against his life? It meant that she was still in power, that the king had told her all about Carmel and had not repented, that the four hundred prophets of Baal were still eating at the table of the queen, and that it would not be long before Jezebel's wicked devices would obliterate completely the effects of Carmel's victory, and Israel would be seduced to follow after the Baals once more. . . .

O, looking at the situation from a purely human viewpoint, as, no doubt, the prophet did that entire day of his lonely journey through the wilderness, there could be found plenty of justification for the profound despair and despondency of the man of God!

He longed for fruit upon his labors, tangible, visible fruit! And who does not?

He yearned for the cause of Jehovah to prosper in the world! And what man of God does not know this longing?

He strongly desired to see the victory of God's covenant, and the complete defeat of all the powers of darkness!

And for a moment, on Carmel, it had seemed that

the joy of beholding this victory would be his!

Alas! it might not be so!

The enemy was still in power!

His labors had been vain!

Lord, take my soul!

It is enough!

From Carmel to the wilderness!

Tremendous, apparently strange and inexplicable, yet thoroughly human reaction!

For though the circumstances were, indeed, the occasion of the complete discouragement and utter despondency of the man of God, they cannot explain his state of mind under the juniper tree entirely.

It is true, the situation was bad, and Carmel had evidently failed to bring the final victory for which the prophet longed. But had not conditions been fully as bad, if not much worse, before? Baal had been completely in power. The forces of darkness had had complete sway. All the people had, apparently at least, apostatized from the living God and embraced the cause of the enemy. The faithful were few and had been hid, in danger of their lives. The true prophets were killed. . . .

And then the man of God, rather than pour out his soul under juniper trees, had arisen a mighty warrior, a lonely witness, filled with zeal for Jehovah's cause, mighty in power, strong in the Lord, to fight the battle alone.

Why, then, this sudden collapse? Why this precipitate descent from the heights of victory into the slough of despair?

Partly, at least, strange though it may seem, the answer to this question must be sought, not in Elijah under the juniper tree, but in the mighty man of God on Carmel!

Let us learn the lesson: the juniper tree always stands close to Carmel! It is on the very heights of faith and spiritual victory that the danger of doubt and despair lurks, and threatens to overwhelm our soul! It is in moments of high spiritual tension that God's people in this world, and especially those that are called to battle in the front ranks of God's host, must watch and pray, lest they fall into temptation. For then it is that the desire to remain on those glorious heights, whence we can see the victory of God's cause even here in this world, takes a mighty hold on our soul. And then it is, too, that we are in danger to forget that "the day of the Lord" is not yet come, and to become completely unfit, for a time at least, to grapple with the ever rising forces of darkness once more!

Such, it seems to us, was Elijah's experience!

Carmel had been victory! Visible, tangible victory the prophet had witnessed there!

In a state of high spiritual tension the prophet had been on the mount. A mountain height of faith and spiritual joy Carmel had been for him. O, how he had rejoiced in his battle with the priests of Baal! How certain he had been of victory, when vainly they called upon their god to bring fire from heaven to light the sacrifice, and when he had mocked them, and exposed their vanity in the sight of all the people! How he had been ravished with delight, when, after they had beheld the glory of the Lord, all the people had shouted that Jehovah alone is God, and when, at his word, they had slain the priests of the idol at the brook Kishon! And then there had been the sight of the apparently penitent king, his rapture on the mount when he beseeched Jehovah to fulfill His promise and send rain on the earth, the tremendous tension of soul and body when he ran before the chariot of the king, strong, victorious, to the gates of Jezreel! Every fibre of his soul, his mind and will and all his emotions, had been in a state of ecstatic exultation, kindled by the mighty revelation of the Lord on Carmel! . . .

The day of the Lord it was!

And now? . . .

The reaction had come! The return to normal! And normal was that the day of the Lord, the day of final, visible, tangible victory was still far in the future, that the powers of darkness were still in the land, that they would rise again. . . .

"As the gods live I will kill thee to morrow about this time!"

For that reaction the prophet was not prepared!

And thus, descending from the glorious mount of victory, he sank into the morass of despair!

O, God! take away my life! I wish to resign!

It is enough!

Marvellous ways of God!

For, even Elijah, the mighty servant of the Lord, must learn that he is, after all only a servant!

And a servant of the Lord is one through Whom it pleases the Most High to do *His own* work! And when that servant is not satisfied with the way in which the God of hosts accomplishes His own work, he often must pass through dark valleys and by lonely juniper trees, to become fit for further service!

After glorious revelations Paul received his thorn in the flesh!

After Carmel, God makes His mighty servant very weak and small, to teach him that he is but a servant, dependent utterly on Jehovah's grace, and that he must humbly follow.

His strength is made perfect in weakness!

And His is the victory!

H. H.

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EDITOR — Rev. H. Hoeksema

Contributing editors—Revs. J. Blankespoor, A. Cammenga, P. De Boer, J. D. de Jong, H. De Wolf, L. Doezeema, M. Gritters, C. Hanko, B. Kok, G. Lubbers, G. M. Ophoff, A. Petter, M. Schipper, J. Vanden Breggen, H. Veldman, R. Veldman, L. Vermeer, P. Vis, G. Vos, Mr. S. De Vries.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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EDITORIALS

En Nu: Bileam!

In de rij der Bijbelsch figuren, die worden opgeroepen door Christelijke Gereformeerde theologen, om getuigenis te geven aangaande de realiteit van Gods algemeene genade, heeft nu ook Bileam een plaats ingenomen, hem aangewezen door den ons niet onbekenden voorstander dezer ongereformeerde filosofie, Ds. Zwier.

Het was eigenlijk niet de leeraar van Maple Ave., die op de gedachte kwam om in deze "rogues gallery" van valsche profeten, tyrannen, vervolgers van Gods gemeente, schurken, boeven en andere goddeloozen, ook aan dat afschuwelijkste voorbeeld van een hypocriet, Bileam, een plaats te geven. Een zijner lezers kwam op die geniale gedachte. Maar blijkbaar niet zeker van zijne zaak, of gedreven door de begeerte om ook de lezers van *De Wachter* te laten profiteeren van zijne betekenismatige ontdekking, deed hij de volgende vraag in de Vragenbus, die door Ds. Zwier wordt verzorgd:

"Ik zou, als het u gelegen komt, deze vraag wel eens beantwoord willen zien: Als Bileam een verworpene was en toch door den Almachtige als Zijn profeet werd gebruikt om op zoo treffende wijze Zijn wil te openbaren, hoe men dan de algemeene genade kan wegedeneeren?"

De vraag is leuk gesteld.

Het gaat eigenlijk niet over Bileam in deze vraag. Dat schijnt eerst wel zoo. Maar wie niet oppervlakkig leest ziet aanstonds, dat dit toch niet het geval is. Verondersteld wordt eigenlijk, dat de valsche profeet een treffend voorbeeld is Gods algemeene genade. En de vraag loopt eigenlijk over degenen, die de algemeene genade loochenen: Is het eigenlijk nog wel te verstaan, als men op Bileam ziet, hoe er nog menschen zijn, zóó dom, zóó willens blind, dat ze de algemeene genade meenen te kunnen wegedeneeren?

Dat is de vraag.

En hoe zou Ds. Zwier nu zoo'n vraag kunnen beantwoorden? Had de welmeenende vrager nu nog zijn vraag aan *The Standard Bearer* gestuurd, hij had misschien wel een antwoord kunnen verwachten. Of liever, was het den vrager te doen geweest, niet om *zijn eigen* antwoord, maar om een antwoord, dat hem werkelijk inlichting verschafte en licht wierp over zijn probleem, hoe menschen de algemeene genade kunnen wegedeneeren, dan had hij niet bij *De Wachter* maar bij *The Standard Bearer* moeten aankloppen.

Zwier kan die vraag niet beantwoorden.

Hij weet vandaag nog niet, hoe wij de algemeene

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genade loochenen en wegedeneeren.

Dat zegt hij nu zelf. Hij antwoordt:

“Ook op deze vraag zal ik het antwoord wel schuldig moeten blijven. De Schrift leert de algemeene genade zoo duidelijk, dat het mij steeds grooter raadsel wordt, hoe Gereformeerde menschen deze waarheid kunnen trachten weg te redeneeren.”

Het is hem altijd een raadsel geweest.

En het wordt hem bij den dag nog grooter raadsel!

Let daar even op, lezer! Zwier bekent hier even, dat hij nog nimmer iets heeft begrepen van al de argumenten, die wij tegen de algemeene genade hebben ingebracht. Hij heeft nog nimmer geweten, hoe dit wegedeneeren van de theorie der algemeene genade plaats heeft. Het is hem altijd een raadsel gebleven. Ofschoon hij in het verleden ellenlange artikelen heeft geschreven tegen de gereformeerden, die de algemeene genade loochenen, moet hij thans bekennen, dat hij van hunne argumenten nog nooit iets heeft verstaan!

Met eerbied gesproken, Zwier: ik geloof daar letterlijk niets van!

Dat Zwier onze argumenten niet wil aanvaarden, enfin!

Dat hij zichzelf kan vleien met de gedachte, dat hij onze argumenten heeft ontzenuwd, het laat zich voorstellen.

Maar dat hij nog nooit begrepen heeft, op welke gronden *wij* de algemeene genade verwerpen, dat het hem een raadsel is, hoe *wij* de theorie verwerpen, daar geloof ik letterlijk niets van.

Zwier had de vraag moeten beantwoorden. Dat hij het niet deed, en ook niet kon doen, lag niet daaraan, dat hij onze argumenten niet kent, maar wel hieraan, dat het in de Vragenbus van *De Wachter* niet goed aangaat, om den lezers goed duidelijk te maken, hoe *wij* de algemeene genade kunnen loochenen, d.w.z., om onze argumenten en gronden voor deze loochening aan het De Wachter-lezend publiek voor te stellen. En daarom beantwoordde hij den vrager eenvoudig met een antwoord, dat de vrager verwachtte, en dat hij door zijn vraag suggereerde.

Eigenlijk bedoelt de vrager: kan U er bij, Zwier, dat er menschen zijn, die de algemeene genade wegedeneeren?

En Zwier, heel gedienschtig, antwoordt: neen, broeder, dat gaat mijn petje te boven!

Nog eens: daar geloof ik niets van!

En zeg nu niet, dat ik hier maar openlijk schrijf, dat Zwier liegt.

’k Zal mij er wel voor wachten. Ik schrijf alleen maar over hetgeen ik *niet* geloof.

En dat is mijn zaak.

Zwier ons toch heel wat van de Bileamietische algemeene genade te vertellen. Deze afschuwelijke geldgierige verleider van Gods Kerk, die niet aarzelde om den Heere om permissie te vragen of hij voor Moabitisch loon Gods volk mocht vervloeken, die door zijn ezel moest worden terecht gewezen, en die ten slotte, toen hij door God gedwongen werd om Zijn volk te zegenen inplaats van te vloeken, Israel trachtte te verwoesten door hen te verleiden tot hoererij en afgodendienst, deze gruwelijke hypocriet, zoo leeraart Zwier, was voorwerp van eene gansch bijzondere algemeene gunste Gods!

“Bileam was niet ver van het koninkrijk Gods,” zoo meent Zwier!

Zelfs zou Zwier goede hoop hebben, dat Bileam later nog bekeerd zou zijn, indien we niets anders van hem wisten, dan hetgeen we van hem lezen in Num. 22-24.

En wat lezen we daar van hem?

Dit.

De gezanten van den koning van Moab komen tot hem met het vriendelijk verzoek, dat hij overkome om Israel te vloeken. Gaarne zou hij het verzoek inwilligen, want hij had het loon der ongerechtigheid lief. Hij vraagt den Heere of hij gaan mag, doch het antwoord is: neen; dat volk is gezegend. Hij weigert dus, en de boden keeren terug tot Balak. Deze echter zond andere vorsten, grootere en met rijker aanbod van rijkdom en eer, tot Bileam met hetzelfde verzoek als voorheen. Bileam vraagt nogmaals den Heere, ditmaal natuurlijk naar den bekenden weg. En de Heere antwoordt: ja, ga maar; alleen maar, wat ik wil, dat zal je spreken. De valsche profeet vertrekt in de stille hoop, dat hij toch zijn loon der ongerechtigheid zal kunnen verdienen. En de Heere is schrikkelijk vertoord op den dwaas, ontmoet hem op den weg, bestraft hem door zijn stomme ezel, en beveelt hem dan zijn tocht voort te zetten, hem nogmaals waarschuwend, dat hij niets zal kunnen spreken dan het woord des Heeren. Keer op keer tracht hij daarna, door offeranden en vroom gedoe, den Heere te bewegen om hem Israel te laten vloeken, maar steeds wordt hij gedwongen door den Heere om Israel te zegenen. En de koning van Moab is verwoed op hem en zegt eindelijk: “Pak je weg!”

Een mooie bekeeringsgeschiedenis!

Voeg hieraan nu nog toe, dat het op advies van Bileam was, dat de Moabieten de kinderen Israels verleidden tot hoererij en afgodendienst (Num. 31:16; Openb. 2:14), en dat hij op die wijze toch het loon der ongerechtigheid zocht te verdienen; dat Petrus hem noemt als een voorbeeld dergenen, die “den rechten weg verlaten hebben” en het “loon der ongerechtigheid liefgehad” hebben; en ge krijgt een idee hoe rijke mate van “bijzondere algemeene genade” deze groote wel lusteling en vijand van Gods Kerk wel moet hebben bezeten!

En Bileam dan?

Ofschoon het in de vraag niet over hem ging, weet

God had, volgens Zwier, dezen goddelooze op bijzondere algemeene wijze zeer lief.

En in Zijne bijzondere algemeene gunst over Bileam zond Hij hem naar Balak, en deed Hij hem profeteeren, en den rijkdom van Zijn volk zien.

En zoo ontvangt de valsche profeet dan een eereplaats onder de doorluchtige grooten der algemeene genade goddeloozen.

En hoe wij dan dit alles loochenen?

Hoe het mogelijk is om in weerwil van dit treffend en sterk voorbeeld en bewijs voor de algemeene genade toch de algemeene genade weg te redeneeren?

Och, het is toch zoo eenvoudig voor wie niet in zijn eigen filosofie verstrikt is geraakt! Ik zou haast geneigd zijn om te zeggen, dat Bileams ezel in deze zaak meer licht had dan Zwier. Had de vrager slechts die ezel geadresseerd inplaats van Zwier, hij had selig meer licht ontvangen dan hij thans kreeg. Want let er wel op, dat Bileam zelf (de groote dwaas!) zich inbeeldde, dat hij het voorwerp was van Gods bijzondere gunst, toen hij op weg ging en op weg was naar Balak, van zins om Gods volk te vloeken. Maar de ezel ('t beest was eigenlijk eene ezelin) zag beter dan Bileam. 't Stomme dier zag de engel des Heeren op den weg staan, zag de vlamme toorn Gods over Bileam, en werd verschrikt. Die ezelin had den vrager in *De Wachter* kunnen vertellen, dat het niet in Zijne genade, maar in Zijn brandenden toorn was, dat God, toen Bileam Hem voor de tweede maal om verlof vroeg om Israel te vloeken, hem naar Balak zond; dat Hij zich steeds meer op Bileam vertoornde, toen de dwaas onderweg zich aldoor voorstelde, dat hij wel een kans zou krijgen om Israel te vloeken en zijn loon der ongerechtigheid te verdienen; en dat het nog altijd in gramschap was, dat Hij Bileam de schoonste zegeningen deed uitspreken over Israel ten aanhoore van den woedenden koning van Moab, zoodat deze ten slotte tot hem zeide: "Pak je weg!"

Het zou die ezelin heelemaal niet moeilijk gevallen zijn om de algemeene genade over Bileam weg te redeneeren.

Laat Zwier, en laat ook de vrager, slechts bij 't stomme dier in de leer gaan!

Bij Bileams ezel ligt de oplossing van Zwier's raadselen in dezen!

En zeg nu niet, dat ik schrijf, dat Zwier nog dommer is dan een ezel. Dat zij verre van mij!

Maar hier ligt het punt: *God* deed Bileams ezelin spreken. En Zwier spreekt naar menschenlijke filosofie.

En dat verschil verklaart alles.

H. H.

Religious Liberty and Our Youth

At the present time we hear a good deal about the fascinating subject of liberty. Man aspires after freedom. He hates to be enslaved. He wants freedom of movement, freedom of soul and body, freedom of the mind, of the will, of conscience. Much of the history of the world, especially of its wars and revolution is to be explained from the conflict between this search for freedom and the powers of oppression. And the present world-conflict is said to be such a war for liberty for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from fear and from want. Nazism with its ideal of the absolute State prepared its instruments of destruction for its own aggrandizement, and to enslave the world. And the allied nations rallied around the banner of liberty to meet the foe. When, therefore, I shall try to make a few remarks about the subject that was announced, I may expect your interest and attention from the outset, without any more words of introduction.

However, we must at once call your attention to the fact, that much that is presented as true liberty in our times cannot be accepted as such by those that understand and believe the Holy Scriptures as the infallible source of their knowledge, and who stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. For many centuries there have been in the nominally Christian world two fundamentally different conceptions of liberty, two currents of search after freedom, which, though widely different, are often confused. The one has its source in the Spirit of Christ, its criterion in the Holy Scriptures, and runs over the Reformation of the sixteenth century; the other has its source in the heart and mind of the natural man, its criterion in man's own philosophy, and runs over the Renaissance of pre-Reformation origin. The one declares the authority of the Bible, the other the autonomy of man. And I fear that also today the two are frequently confused, so much so, that when one speaks of religious liberty he often means irreligious liberty. We must, therefore, clearly distinguish the two.

I. Christian Liberty. In order to understand the nature of true liberty, and that is Christian liberty, we must from the outset consider it as a relation to God and to His will. Failure to do this, and merely to look upon liberty as a relation to God, results in a false conception of freedom, and leads to the confusion of liberty with the so-called autonomy of man. According to the latter view, man is really the measure of all things. He is independent. He is his own lord and master. He is his own law, creates his own world, makes his own God, is the criterion of all things. According to this proud philosophy, freedom is the

state in which man thinks as he pleases, wills as he pleases, speaks and acts as he pleases, not only without being interfered with by his fellowmen, especially by the power of the State, but without being limited and determined by any objective norm or standard, except that which man may put up for the common good, the humanly conceived wellbeing of State and Society. The infidel leaders of the French Revolution raised the slogan of "liberty, equality, and fraternity", but what they understood by liberty is evident from this other slogan: "Ni Dieu ni maitre": No God or Master! The so-called freethinker entertains the same conception of liberty, when he proposes to emancipate his mind from the shackles of all objective standards, more particularly from that of the Word of God, and to be an independent source of truth in himself. According to this view, religious liberty is the freedom to worship or not to worship, to confess God or to deny Him, to serve the true God or to make one's own idol. Liberty is merely considered as a relation of man to man. God is not considered.

However, it requires little thought to understand that this is not true freedom, but licentiousness. Man is not his own maker. And, therefore, he is not self-determined, and he cannot be autonomous. God is the Creator, and man is the creature. God only is autonomous, and man's liberty can never be other than a creaturely freedom. God determined him, his being and nature, his soul and body, his mind and will; and God, too, determined man's relation to God and to all the rest of creation. Man is not above the law, but under the law. He is not his own law, but he is bound to the law of God. And liberty for man is not to be lawless, neither does it consist in this that in an external sense he tries to conform his outward life to the code of the law of God; but it consists in this, that his inner nature is in conformity with the will of God, so that he moves and acts and lives, wills and thinks and desires freely within the scope of that law. There is a law of God for every creature. And this law is incised in the very nature of each creature. The law of the fish is to live in the water, of the bird to soar in the sky, of the tree to be rooted in the ground; and this law is quite in harmony with the nature of each creature. Liberty for each of these creatures is that it can live itself out within the scope of its respective laws. And within that law each creature finds its happiness, its true freedom from fear and from want. And the same is true for man. God determined his nature, and the law that is in harmony with that nature; and liberty for man consists in this that he freely moves within the sphere of the law of God.

If we bear this in mind it should not be difficult to determine what is true freedom for man. It is to love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, to serve and glorify Him, and

thus to live in the sphere of His favor and His everlasting covenant-friendship. For God made man after His own image and in His own likeness. His nature was adapted to know God with a true knowledge of love, to will His will, and to seek and find His blessed fellowship. He was made a covenant-creature. Hence, freedom for man is the state in which he willingly subjects his mind to the mind of God, his will to the will of God, and has his delight in the law of God according to the inner man. To be motivated in all his life by the love of God, and thus to walk in true knowledge of God, perfect righteousness and holiness, that is man's liberty!

And this means especially two things, which it is important for us to remember. First of all it means, that for us sinners this liberty is only in Christ, through His Spirit: where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! And, secondly, it implies that for us true freedom can be consciously possessed and enjoyed only through the Scriptures. By nature, man is not free, but in bondage. For he sinned, and he is a sinner. He is in the bondage of condemnation, for there rests upon him a load of guilt which he can never blot out, a debt which he can never pay. He has no right to liberty. He is a child of wrath in himself. And being guilty, he is condemned to be a slave of sin. Under sin's dominion is he. He is shackled with the chains of corruption, not outwardly, but from within. His mind is in darkness, so that he cannot know God; his will is shackled so that he cannot will the will of God. In this true sense of the word, all men are not born free, but they are born slaves. And, therefore, liberty is in Christ only. He obtained the right to set us free through His cross and resurrection, by the which we are justified. And He received from the Father the power to set us free by the Spirit which He received at His exaltation. And, therefore, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And the only criterion or standard of this liberty is the Word of God in the Scriptures. It is the truth that makes us free, and that truth is revealed in the Bible. It is through the Holy Scriptures that the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free is proclaimed to us, that we may know and believe and rejoice in that true freedom by faith. And it is through that Word that we may again have the true knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus, and that we may know what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, to perform which from the heart is to walk in liberty. He, therefore, who is in Christ Jesus, and who lives by the indwelling Spirit of Christ from within, and according to the Word of God in the Scriptures,—he is truly free!

II. Religious liberty. What, then, is religious liberty in the positive sense of the word? You understand, that we may make a distinction between true

Christian liberty, and what is known as religious freedom. The former concerns our true relation to God, that latter concerns our position among men. The former no man or devil or power of darkness can ever take away from us. It is true, that because of that true spiritual liberty and our confession of it, they may deprive us of our civil liberty, may put us in prison or concentration camp: but even that does not affect the liberty which we have in Christ. But the latter concerns a state among men: the right to exercise our Christian liberty in this world without interference on the part of men. You will understand now, too, that what is known as religious freedom in our day is simply the freedom of indifference, of irreligion. The right to serve God or not to serve Him, the right to make of God whatever we please, and to express about Him whatever we wish or think proper, the right to glorify Him or to deny that He exists,—all this is not true freedom of religion, but is rather the freedom of indifference in respect to religious matters. And the only religious liberty is the right to exercise the true Christian liberty, i. e. the right to know and confess and worship and serve God in Christ Jesus according to His Word, as He has revealed it unto us in the Scriptures, without being hindered or persecuted by men.

What does religious liberty imply? It signifies, first of all and above all: freedom of the Bible itself, as the sole authority in matters concerning faith and doctrine. If true Christian liberty is to live from the principle of the indwelling Spirit of Christ according to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures, it is evident that for the exercise of this freedom in the world it is paramount that the Scriptures remain our sole authority. Take the Bible away and you remove the very sphere of Christian liberty and render all religious freedom impossible, just as you make it impossible for a fish to live if you drain the pond in which he swims. By shackling the Bible you destroy religious freedom. Any human authority, whether it be of tradition, or reason, or of experience, that exalts itself above the Bible, is an enemy to all religious liberty in the positive sense of the word. And when they who thus exalt human authority above the Scriptures still speak of religious freedom, they do so ignorantly and falsely. And thus it is evident, too, that it is often the enemies of religious freedom that most loudly boast of it, and that the mockers of religious liberty often pretend to worship most ardently and devotedly at its shrine. Freedom of the Bible is the heart of religious freedom.

In close connection with this first element of religious freedom, must be mentioned a second: freedom to interpret the Scriptures. It is based on the principle that the Scriptures are characterized by perspicuity, and that all that walk in the liberty where-with Christ sets us free are able to read and under-

stand it. And by liberty of interpretation is meant, first of all, that every believer must have free access to the Bible: he must have the right to possess a Bible of his own and to read it; and, secondly, that it must be explained in its own light. Exegesis must be free. It must not be shackled to an accepted code or system of doctrine. And every believer must have the right to interpret it without being hampered or limited by human power or authority. It is true, that this may not be understood in the individualistic sense of the word. No one approaches the holy scriptures in separation from the church of the past and of the present. Also in the past the Holy Spirit led the church in all the truth. And it pleases God to preserve the truth in the line of generations. But even so it belongs to the exercise of Christian liberty, and therefore, to religious freedom that every believer has the right to interpret the Bible.

Then, too, it belongs to religious freedom that the church has the right freely and publicly to preach the Word of God within its own domain, and without in all the world. For this is the calling wherewith she is called: the Church must preach the Word to all the world. She lives under a divine injunction, and it belongs to religious freedom that she be not hampered by human power or institutions to carry out this injunction. It also is the will of her Lord that she confess His name, and publicly call upon His name, and the free exercise of this calling in public worship belongs to religious freedom. And what is true of the church organically and institutionally, is also true of the individual believer: his Lord calls him to confess Him before men, and to walk in the midst of the world worthily of the calling wherewith he is called, not to become conformed to this world, but more and more to be transformed through the renewal of his mind, that he may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And freedom, the right to confess the name of the Lord before men, and to walk according to His will belongs to religious freedom.

III. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We all know that winged slogan. It presupposes that there are always forces at work in the world that are bent upon depriving us of what is known as political liberty, and purpose to enslave us to their own will. There are forces of greed, of oppression, of lust for power and aggrandizement, of proud ambition, that would impose their own will upon the will of all, and deprive the latter of their freedom even to exist. Hence, we must watch over the liberties we have obtained: eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. And this slogan may be applied very well to religious freedom in particular, and with special emphasis.

There are especially three forces in the world that may deprive us of this freedom of religion: the church, the state, and society. When I mention the church

in this connection, I am referring to the institute of the church, with its officebearers and ministry of the Word. It may seem strange that an institution that is especially designed and whose peculiar calling it is to be a pillar of the truth and to watch over the true liberty of the people of God, should become an agent of oppression and slavery. Yet, it is not difficult to understand why this should be true. They that have the calling to watch over and develop the truth are in the best position to corrupt it; they that are appointed to rule and have the oversight over the flock have the best opportunity to lord it over them; and if those that are in high places of the church are devoid of the love of Christ, they will use their high office for their own personal advantage, and the satisfaction of their carnal lusts. This is a matter of history. It was frequently the church that deprived the people of God of their religious freedom, and put upon them the yoke of human authority and precepts. I but have to remind you of the hierarchial yoke of the Roman Catholic Church, and the liberating movement of the Reformation. Nor was this evil completely stamped out by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Always the same tendency reveals itself, and the same hierarchical power develops and attempts to enslave the church to the authority of men.

The State has the sword power. And by this power she has the calling to protect the good and punish evil doers in her own domain. This implies that in her own territory of power she must be the guardian of true religious freedom, and guarantee to the Church the right to worship according to the Word of God. But here, too, the very opposite is often witnessed. Frequently in history the State is not satisfied with her own, God-ordained power, in her own domain. She seeks to become the sole power in all domains of life. And in that case she becomes especially jealous of the power and freedom of the Church, as well as of the individual believer. And she will make an attempt to subject the Church to her authority, and to make her subservient to her purposes. She will interfere with the internal affairs of the church, command her what to preach and what to pray for, and limit her right to worship. And the same authority she will attempt to exercise over the confession and walk of the believer. And because the government bears the sword, suffering and persecution must be the result for all who insist that they must obey God rather than men. The Nazi State in Europe is a modern illustration of this abuse of the sword by the government, and of the destruction of religious freedom.

But also "society" may be an agent for the curtailment and destruction of religious liberty. For, even though "society" has no power and authority, it has many means at its command to impose its will upon the individual. In society we have a name and a place; there we have our position and job; it

is "society" that offers us opportunity to work and to live, that can bestow or withhold its favors. And especially in our day, with its many associations and unions, society is a mighty force. It can seriously limit the exercise of religious freedom by imposing upon the individual members certain requirements and conditions in order to enjoy the opportunity to make a decent living, or even to make a living at all. And if those requirements are such that they would bring the Christian believer in conflict with the Word of God, should he meet and fulfill them, organized society becomes an instrument for the destruction of religious liberty.

Hence, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We must watch lest the church imposes upon us a new yoke of bondage by inventing doctrines and institutions of men. We must be on the alert, lest we yield to the demands of the state, whenever it would interfere with the exercise of our religious freedom. And we should always beware lest our position in society encroach upon the exercise of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free!

IV. It is here that religious freedom comes with a special message to our young men and young women. For how shall we be vigilant, and where shall we place our sentinels? What, after all, is the indispensable condition for all watchfulness? The answer is: we must clearly understand and discern the truth of the Word of God, and that, too, in distinction from all error and false philosophy. We must be able to distinguish true Christian liberty and genuine religious freedom, from the false freedom that is proclaimed on every side in our day, that offers itself to us from pulpit and lecture room, by means of literature and radio, the novel and the stage. We must know, we must be thoroughly grounded and trained in the truth. It is the truth, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and as it is contained in the Scriptures, that makes us free, that brings to us the very atmosphere in which we must move in order to enjoy our freedom. How necessary, then, that we should know that truth, one and all! Only according as we know the truth, shall we be truly free, and be able to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. And only in as far as we enjoy the true liberty in Christ through the Word of God, shall we be able to discern the lie, and detect the error of false philosophy, whenever it would offer the bondage of darkness for the light of liberty. Only then, we shall be able, too, to resist with true spiritual weapons, the weapon of the Word of God, whenever Church or State or Society would encroach upon our freedom and though they may by sheer force and power curtail our religious freedom in the world, they will never be able to deprive us of the liberty which we have in Christ. We must be thoroughly trained in the truth of the Word of God.

And youth is especially the time of training. This is true in the physical sense. How well this is realized today by our government! It was found that the average age of our men in the service is too high. The draft age must be lowered. Veteran soldiers are good enough, but you cannot train new men for modern warfare, when they have passed a certain age limit. This is true mentally: a man must receive his education in his youth, not when he is become old. But the same holds spiritually. Also our religious training for the spiritual battle for religious freedom and Christian liberty in the midst of the world, we should receive in the days and years of our youth, while the evil days are not, nor the years draw nigh in which we shall say: I have no pleasure in them. In youth the mind is plastic, receptive, alert, and we easily learn and understand. It is in youth that we become trained to detect and to meet the enemies of religious and spiritual freedom. Youth is the time to become thoroughly acquainted with and schooled in the principles of the truth as contained in the Word of God!

Hence, my subject appeals especially to our youth. It comes with the message that we should exert all our power, and employ all our time, and use every opportunity, to acquire the knowledge of the Word of God. Yes, that means, of course, that we should make use of the means God offers us through the instituted church: the preaching of the Word, and catechetical instruction. Better training school for the battle for liberty there is none. It means, too, however, that we apply ourselves to personal reading and study of the Word of God. And it implies that we help one another, and meet unto mutual edification and upbuilding in the knowledge of the truth. It is especially for the latter purpose that our young men's, young ladies', and young peoples' societies are organized. And unto mutual edification and training in the use of the Word of God they are excellently adapted. May they ever keep this purpose before them, and never degenerate into mere social clubs where the members seek an evening of pleasure and entertainment in the worldly sense of the word.

Of course, I am well aware that the mere study of Scripture cannot make us free, or cause us to preserve religious freedom; that is the work of the Spirit of Christ. A head full of knowledge, even though it is the knowledge of the Bible, does not liberate us: we must have grace. But given this grace of the Spirit of Christ, I am confident that they will most enjoy and most consistently maintain their freedom that are most thoroughly schooled in the truth of the Word of God. Stand therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free!

H. H.

(*) Address delivered at our last Convention of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Joshua The Son Of Nun

Moses' successor was Joshua. Let us get before us the early career of this man of God—that part of his career that endeth with the death of Moses. In the first book of the Chronicles (1 Chron. 7:20-27) Joshua's pedigree reaches back through eight generations and over a period of four hundred years to Ephraim. He thus had Joseph as his ancestor; and of the two sons of Joseph he was sprung from the one who, though the younger, would be the greater. He was a scion of the chief family of the tribe, as his grandfather, Elishama (1 Chron. 7:26), was head of his tribe and thus also of the whole camp of Ephraim which, in addition to his own tribe, included Manasseh and Benjamin. At Rephidim, in the early days of the wilderness sojourn, the Amalakites, wandering desert tribes, swooped down upon the stragglers—upon the sick and infirm—of the marching host (Deut. 25:17, 18). Joshua was selected by the Lord to repel the attack; and was even allowed to choose the men by which this was to be done. Under his command, God fought for His people and gave complete victory. From God's throne, through Moses' elevated hand, in which was the rod of God, victorious power and confidence flowed into the host of warriors. Amalek's treacherous doing, his discomforture, and the expressed determination of the Lord eventually to put out his remembrance from under heaven, were written in a book and rehearsed in the ears of Joshua—so the Lord had commanded—in token that the future extirpation of the Amalakites was entrusted to him; and so it became evident, even now at this early date, that he was destined to be the successor of Moses. (Ex. 17:8-16). His former name, Hoshea (help or salvation) was enriched by the insertion of a syllable of the divine name. (Num. 13:16). “And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua” or Joshua (Jehovah is help or salvation). It was this present victory that in all likelihood occasioned the change.

After this Moses selected Joshua to be his personal servant and attendant. He was with Moses during the time that the latter received the law on the top of the mount, as appears from the notice at Ex. 24:12, 13. The Lord commanded Moses to come up to Him on the mount (vs. 12). “Then Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God” (vs. 13). Here again Joshua was signally honored. He was placed before the congregation who, in its approach to God, was permitted to progress only to the base of the mount (Ex. 19:12). He was preferred, on this occasion, even above Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy of the elders of Israel. The latter were called to ascend to a certain height and worship afar off; while Moses, accompanied by Joshua, went up into the mount of God (Ex. 24:1, 9-11).

However, it is not clear from the narrative whether Joshua was with Moses all the time, also when the latter was in the *immediate* presence of God. The fact of the matter is probably this: The whole company—Moses, Joshua, Aaron and his sons and the seventy elders—went up to a certain part of the mount, where all came to rest and “saw the God of Israel and did eat and drink” (Ex. 24:8-11). Then Moses was summoned to ascend still higher, and only Joshua accompanied him (Ex. 24:13) and was with him “when the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days” (Ex. 24:16). Again God called Moses to ascend still higher, and “Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount” (vs. 18), with Joshua remaining behind in a place midway between the spot where all had seen and fellowshiped with God and the summit where Moses was alone with God for forty days. But we deal here with a probability. No statements occur in the narrative that militate against the view that Joshua went with Moses even into “the midst of the cloud.” Yet it does not seem likely, that when Moses stood face to face with God in the holiest (the very summit), a third party was present. It would seem that Joshua did not move from his intermediate position on the slope of the mount all the forty days and forty nights when Moses was with God. That, certainly, was a case of remarkable obedience, of a wonderful devotion of a servant to his master and to the cause that the master was espousing—the cause of God and His people.

At long last Moses left God's presence either in company with Joshua or, if the latter of the two views just presented is correct, to rejoin him. As they proceeded to the foot of the mountain, a noise was heard from afar. Joshua thought it was the noise of war in the camp. No, says Moses, who had been told by God what went on below, they are not sounds such as the victorious and the conquered utter but they are the sounds of them that sing, the antiphonies of a new worship, the shouts of unholy and shameful riot. And so it was. For when he reached the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing.

During all the crisis that followed, Joshua remained faithful to Moses. When Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off, Joshua was with him, and departed not out of the tabernacle (Ex. 33:11). Whether he ascended the mount with Moses thesecond time, we are not told. But it is likely that he did. Be this as it may, he was much with Moses at this formative period of his life. His impression of the true nobility of Moses' great soul, of his wisdom and faith, his consecration to God and devotion to His people, his steadfastness and meekness—must have been deep. And, being a child of grace, his desire to be like him, must have waxed stronger and stronger. But his great attachment for

his master was not untainted by fanatical zeal. Moses had complained to the Lord that the burden of the people was crushing him. (Num. 2:11-15). When the Spirit descended upon the seventy elders, appointed to assist Moses in bearing the burden of the people, they prophesied around the tabernacle. Two of the men that had been summoned had remained in the camp; but even they began to prophesy. Joshua, on hearing this, showed great zeal. They seemed not to be ordained by his honored master. Their failure to appear at the tabernacle at the time specified for their ordination struck him as indifference to the presence of their head. So he hurried to inform Moses thinking that he would interfere to forbid them and to censure their irregularity. But the wrong zeal of youth was shamed by amemorable rebuke from the leader. “Wilt thou be a zealot for me? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.” (Ex. 11:29).

Not long after Joshua was appointed one of twelve spies that weresent to search the land of Canaan. When they came back, the ten spies raised their voice against any attempt to take possession of the land. But Caleb resented the notion that the people were not able to take possession and urged them to go up at once. But the mischief had been done.

The cry of the people, “Let us make a captain, and let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt,” shows how strongly the tide of unbelief was flowing. Overwhelmed, Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before the congregation. And the two faithful spies? With rent clothes they made their way among the people, speaking words calculated to arrest fear and stimulate faith in God. “The land is an exceeding good land,” they said. “The Lord will give it us. . . Rebel not against the Lord. . . . Fear ye not the people of the land, for their defence is departed from them.” But it was all in vain. “All the congregation bade stone them with stones.” The cry would have been heeded, had not the spectacle of the glory of the Lord, appearing in the tabernacle, made them afraid.

For this great sin, the penalty was severe. The congregation were to wander in the wilderness for forty years, till all that generation be wasted in the wilderness. The ten unfaithful spies were to die at once from the plague. But Joshua and Caleb were honored. Their lives were preserved and they alone were to enter and be established in the promised land.

Upon the events of the next 38 or 40 years in the life of Joshua an unbroken silence falls. Like Moses he suffers a long burial in the wilderness, and then he reappears on the stage of Israel's history and does a great work, comparable with that of Moses. The first we read of him, after his long eclipse, is in connection with the notice of the death of Moses. (Deut. 31:14). God virtually appoints him to succeed Moses, and orders both of them to present themselves in the

tabernacle of the congregation. The Lord through Moses gives him a charge and says: "Be strong and of good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee." (Deut. 31:23).

We might desire to know how Joshua was further prepared for his work in those thirty and eight years; we might desire to know more of him in the years that follow. But this is denied us. He stands out simply as a military hero of faith, and his faith was not excelled by that of Moses himself.

Was the descent from Moses to Joshua very great? In a sense it was. He was no legislator and no prophet as was Moses who through his revelations laid the foundation of all later prophecy, and whose name therefore reappears constantly, in the psalms, in the gospels and in the epistles. Joshua did not rank with Moses. Of all the prophets, Moses was the preatest. Yet in a sense he did rank with Moses. If Moses brought instrumentally the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, Joshua gave them rest—the rest of the earthy Canaan.

Immediately after Moses' death, the Lord called Joshua to activity—"Arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give unto them. . ." (Jos. 1:1, 2). The history of the conquest of the land of Canaan commences here and forms the first part of the book of Joshua.

God announced further that He was now in the act of fulfilling His promise,—that the land pledged to Abraham was now to become the possession of his seed. Having expatiated on its boundaries, the Lord encourages and admonishes Joshua. There shall not any man be able to stand before him all the days of his life. As the Lord was with Moses, so He will be with him; He will not fail him nor forsake him. Let him be strong and of good courage: for he shall divide for an inheritance the land unto this people. He shall take a careful observance of the law, in order that the great work assigned to him by the Lord may be accomplished. The book of the law shall continually be in his mouth. He must speak to the people the words of the law and impress upon them its sacred design; and he must also ground himself more deeply therein. Therefore it is added: "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night. . ." He is to penetrate into its meaning more deeply and thus become qualified to speak God's word to the people. Observing to do according to all that is written in the law, he shall make his way prosperous, and then he shall have good success. Once more he is commanded to be strong and of good courage, not to be afraid nor to be dismayed in that God will be with him whithersoever he goes. (Jos. 1:1-19).

Joshua now commanded the officers to charge the people. They are to prepare them victuals, as in three days they shall pass over Jordan to appropriate

through warfare the land given them by their God. Now follows vers. 12-18, a special demand of Joshua upon the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manassah. They had, on account of their flocks and herds, been given their portions in the land east of the Jordan on the condition that they should help the others in the conquest of Canaan proper. They are now asked to fulfill that condition, which they also promise to do.

G. M. O.

Rahab And The Spies

On the same day, doubtless, that Joshua received command to cross the Jordan, he sent out the spies to go over Jericho about twenty miles distant. As mention is made of their being young men (Jos. 3:23), they perhaps were taken on account of their youthful vigor and courage. Having been a spy himself, Joshua knew from his own experience that the venture called for courage. Sending these youths into Jericho was like sending them into a den of lions and expecting them to return. For the inhabitants of Canaan were desperate. They knew that an invasion of their country by the Hebrews was pending. And they had heard amazing things about them. Yet they judged that there was hope for them only if the invaders be repelled, so that a Hebrew caught spying out their cities was doomed to a certain death.

It does not appear from the sacred narrative that Joshua, in sending forth the spies, was acting under the constraint of a divine command. Yet, certainly, his doing is not censurable. There could be no reason why the command given to Moses was still not valid. Joshua personally was in the need of encouragement; and this need betokened no unbelief. The godless *will* not believe; they disdain and reject the speech of God's signs that He gives to strengthen faith. But Joshua, uncommon with God's people, wanted to believe; and he prayed that God help his unbelief. From the point of view of nature, his task was hopeless. The people to be conquered were numerous and strong; and their cities were walled. And they would be fighting for their country and homes and wives and children. They would be fighting for their very existence as nations. They had therefore to win that war. They could, of course, refuse to fight and, as penitent sinners, cast themselves upon the mercy of God. This alternative they refused to consider. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites. . . . For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against

Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor." (Jos. 11:18).

Jericho was the gateway to Canaan, the key city of the Amorites west of the Jordan; and its capture was the first objective. The two men were directed to limit their spying to this ancient metropolis. "And Joshua sent out two men, saying, Go view the land *even Jericho*." It was thus not an extensive journey on which the men were sent. For it was only a short distance from the Jordan to this city. The object of this venture was not, as previously, to explore the broad country, to see the land whether it was fat or lean; and the people that dwelt therein whether they were few or many and whether they dwelt in tents or in strongholds (Num. 13:17-20); but the object was to learn all about the morale—the zeal, spirit, hope, and confidence—of a definite Canaanitish community. The state of mind and heart of this community could be taken as an index to the state of mind of all the other peoples. The discovery that confidence was gone and that the spirits of the Canaanites were crushed by paralyzing fear would be encouraging. To the believing Joshua and his spiritual kin it would be a sign that the Lord had indeed given Israel that land.

The spies were sent out secretly (silently, in the original). It is a debated question among interpreters whether this silence is to be understood as referring to the Canaanites or to the Israelites or to both. The correct view, it would seem, is this: The congregation as a whole was kept in ignorance until the spies had fulfilled their mission. This precaution had to be taken with a view to the enemy, who might have learned of the matter all too soon, had it been untimely published, as the distance between the encampment of the Israelites and Jericho was small. Certainly, the good news of the break-down of the morale of the Canaanites was not withheld from the people after the return of the spies.

Did the spies walk the streets of Jericho and mingle with the inhabitants and if so how did they succeed in hiding their identity? Had they disguised themselves? But their speech and the mould of their features would betray them. Perhaps they avoided showing themselves in public places and, knowing of Rahab, made straight for her home along the side streets immediately upon entering the city. For the notice in the narrative is to the effect that they went and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there and that it was evening when they arrived (Jos. 2:2,3). The men were doing what they could to avoid detection. Rahab's house stood on the outskirts of the city near the wall.

But despite this precaution, the two were seen and recognized for what they were—Hebrew spies who had come to search out the country. Their presence in the city, and also their hiding-place was reported to the king.

But the spies must have hoped that they had escaped detection and had found a safe place of retreat. It must not be imagined that they knew from hearsay how this disreputable woman—she was a harlot indeed and not, as some would have it, a reputable keeper of an inn—was disposed to their God and their people and therefore deemed it safe to tell her who they were and to ask her to collaborate with them in making their escape. But the woman saw that they were Hebrews; and the determination formed in her soul to do what she could for them, to see to it that they left the city alive. Surmizing, we may imagine, that the presence of the spies in her house was known to the king and that very soon now the deputies of the king would be standing at her door demanding of her that she produce the fugitives, she warned the men; and they must have wondered at this evidence of her good-will toward them. Even as she spake, she perceived that the deputies of the king were standing at her door. The woman was quick to act. She ordered the men to the roof of her house. The Hebrews did as they were told. The pressing haste of the woman bespoke her sincerity. Having covered them with stalks of flax, she went down to the compartment below to face the king's deputies. They wanted the Hebrews that had come to her; for they were spies. She dared not contradict them. She did not dare to deny that men of that description had entered her house, as she feared that the king had been too well informed. The denial would arouse suspicion; and the house would be searched. So she sent them on a wild goose-chase. "True," she said to them, "there did come to me men, but I wist not whence they were", 'and, certainly', she meant to say, 'it was not my business to find out. The men are no longer here.' "It so happened that, about the time of the shutting of the gate, they left. Whither they went, I know not. Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." The woman was taking her life in her own hands. And this for the Hebrews? It could be expected that her word would be doubted, the house thoroughly searched, and the hiding place of the spies discovered. In this case she would be put to death as a traitor to the cause of her people. The spies, if they overheard her reply, must have marvelled.

But, strange to say, the king's deputies believed the woman. The only satisfying explanation is that it was of the Lord.

With the king's deputies well on their way and before the spies laid them down, i.e., retired for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof. She made to them a wonderful revelation of the inward state of her mind and heart; and it explains all. From her speech we learn that the redeeming grace of God had reached into that pagan community and had drawn out a harlot and her family.

The woman had heard how Jehovah had dried up the water of the Red Sea for His people when they came out of Egypt and what He did to Sihon and Og east of the Jordan. These kings were utterly destroyed. Having heard, the woman was afraid. Having heard, she knew that the Jehovah of the Hebrews is the God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. She knew that He had given His people the land, that He had promised and that the promise would be fulfilled. But her countrymen were afraid too. Their hearts, as well as her heart, melted because of Jehovah and because of the amazing military successes of His people. And they, too, knew, as well as she, that as to the Jehovah of the Hebrews, He is the God, and that it was therefore useless to oppose Him in His purpose. They were as paralyzed by fear as was she. Yet, she received the spies with peace and thus surrendered to the Jehovah of the Hebrews and cast herself upon His mercy. They, on the other hand, holding the truth in unrighteousness, persecuted the spies, and thus continued to defy and make war with the living God and His people to the very end. Thus, to try to account for the reactions and behavior of this woman by appealing to her terror of soul is to be at a loss how to explain the reactions and behavior of her countrymen. She differed from them in this respect that there operated in her a principle of new life. Overlooking this, refusing to take account of it, we cannot explain her at all; and she remains a conundrum. She, in distinction from them, had faith, true, saving faith, whose essence is love of God and His people and thus also necessarily hatred of His enemies, of the world, of Jericho, Babylon, of sinful flesh and the devil. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not—mark you, that believed not—when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:13). And to say that her faith was God's gift is to end with her reactions and behavior solely in God. As with all phenomena, so with the phenomena with which we now deal,—we must end with them in God or they continue to baffle us, continue to defy every attempt on our part to satisfactorily explain them. To say that she believed of herself as driven by dread is again to be at a loss how to explain the unbelief of the others. They were as much afraid as she. God had mercy on her; and the others He sovereignly hardened, as it was His purpose to destroy them. Why bring this in here, someone may ask. If God Himself makes a point of it, in connection with the conquest of Canaan (Jos. 11:19sq.), should we keep silence? Don't we love God?

The woman confessed with her mouth the Jehovah of the Hebrews, the Lord Jesus. Nebuchadnezzar did likewise and perished in his sins (Dan. 3:39 sq.). But Rahab confessed the Lord Jesus unto salvation; and with her heart she believed unto righteousness. For she had faith; and her faith was not dead but living.

It was accompanied by works, by fruits worthy of repentance. She received the spies with peace and delivered them from the hand of the king's deputies. For she loved God's people. James makes a point of this in his epistle. 'Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she received the messengers, and thrust them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead' (Ja. 2:25, 26). Then, she had the spies swear to her that they save her alive—her and her family. She would have put in a plea for all her countrymen, had they not continued defiant. She was no hater of humanity, but a penitent sinner who, under the constraint of her living faith, was forsaking her abominations and quitting the world as represented by Jericho to be joined to God's people. Once incorporated in the commonwealth of Israel, her faith did not cease. It abided and continued to flower so conspicuously, it must have been, that, seeing her faith, a godfearing Jew took her to him for his wife; and she became the ancestress of David, king of Israel. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly. . . . But he is a Jew which is one inwardly" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Her lying to the pagan's king's deputies is, of course, to be denounced. But, one may ask, what was the woman to do, if she might not deliver the spies? She might not lie; but neither was she obliged to tell the deputies that she had the Hebrews in her house. She could have kept silence and left the consequences to God. Under no circumstances may God's people resorting to lying. If the choice is between lying or dying, we must choose to die. She sinned when she lied; confessing her sin, she was forgiven. It was by faith that she received the spies with peace, hid them, and let them down by a chord through the window. But it was not by faith that she lied. Nowhere is it taught us in the Scriptures that a man lies, can lie, by faith.

But it is to be remembered in this connection that there is a vast difference between lying and lying, between sin and sin. There is a sin that is not forgiven.

And how are we to judge about her patriotism? She turned against her own people, didn't she? Christ has something to say about this. "If a man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). The world says, My mother and brother, my countryman, right or wrong. This, according to the world, is patriotism. But it is out of the devil. God says, Mother and brother and country *only* when right. Me *only* shalt thou love. Beside me thou shalt desire nothing at all. The Canaanites were wrong. They were pitted against God. They had to be hated and forsaken. Rahab did so by faith. G. M. O.

“Als Van Eenem Geweldigen Gedreven Wind”

(Psalm 68)

Hoe helder is de openbaring Gods geweest voor David, den Koning Israels! Als we dezen psalm lezen komen we onder den indruk van de heilgeheimen die hem geopenbaard zijn—zoovele jaren voor de komst van Christus. Zelfs de hemelvaart van Jezus staat er in.

Ja, het doet ons aan als het geluid op den Pinksterdag: het geluid als van eenen geweldigen gedreven wind! Het is een opeenstapeling van heilgeheimen, van wondere en groote daden Gods. Ge kunt wel een dogmatiek schrijven van alle groote werken Gods die Hij gedaan heeft door de eeuwen heen, of nog zal doen; werken Gods en daden die in dezen psalm ons bezongen worden.

Voor den opperzangmeester!

Israel heeft daarnaar geluisterd.

Ook onze vaders. Gezegend zij den psalmberijmer die ons den berijmden psalm 68 bood!

Wij ook, wij hebben geluisterd en nog zingen we den wonderen, den heerlijken acht-en-zestiger!

Hoe vaak is het al geschied, dat men gevraagd had: Heeft er iemand ook een versje? dat men zeide: Laat ons het 10de vers van Psalm 68 zingen. En weer ruischte het: Geloofd zij God met diepst ontzag. . . . !

Of ook: hoe vaak heeft men niet gejubeld in de kerk: De Heer zal opstaan tot den strijd; Hij zal Zijn haat'ren, wij en zij. . . . Om dan straks over te gaan in den overwinningskreet: Maar 't vrome volk in U verheugd, zal huppelen van zielevreugd, als zij hun wensch verkrijgen. . . . !

En zoo zit dezen psalm vol van klassieke uitspraken, die Gods volk over en weer bezigt, uit leeft, aanhaalt met innig zielegeluk.

En waarom toch?

Omdat in dezen psalm boven alles en bij den voortduur *de groote werken Gods* bezongen worden. (Denkt ge hier weer niet aan den Pinksterdag?)

Het hoofdthema van den psalm wordt gegeven in de verzen 2, 3, en 4. En dat hoofdthema bevat twee elementen: Gods overwinning over Zijn vijanden; en de groote zaligheid van het volk Gods.

Dwars tegen onze gedurige ervaring zingt David: God zal opstaan, Zijne vijanden zullen verstrooid worden, en Zijne haters zullen van Zijn aangezicht vlieden!

Dat gaat dwars tegen onze gedurige ervaring in: De vijanden Gods hebben nu al voor zes duizend jaren de overwinning gehad. Ik zal maar hier en daar een greep doen: Abel's bloed ligt nog op de aarde. Dat bloed is nog steeds bij ons en dat bloed roept nog om wraak. Psalm 44 getuigt ervan en Romeinen 8:36 her-

haalt het voor de Nieuwe Bedeeling: Gods volk wordt elken dag om Gods wil gedood! Wij worden volgens II Cor. 4:11 altijd in den dood overgegeven om Jezus' wil. Jezus zegt, dat op de goddeloozen komt al het rechtvaardige bloed dat vergoten is op de aarde, van het rechtvaardige bloed Abel's af, tot op het bloed van Zacheria, den zoon van Barachia, welken zij gedood hebben tusschen den Tempel en het altaar. Matt. 23:35. En in het Nieuwe Testament is het niet anders. Alle Apostelen zijn om het leven gebracht, op Johannes na. De een is levend gekookt in kokende olie, een ander is onthoofd, een derde is gekruist, en zoo voort. Duizenden en honderd-duizenden zijn om het leven gebracht door de Romeinsche keizers, door de heidenen, door de Spaansche en andere inquisitie. Er is één groote stroom van bloed die gevloeid heeft van Gods volk, gestort door de goddeloozen. En om U geheel en al te overtuigen, wijzen we op het dierbare bloed van Jezus, dat nog ongewroken ligt op Hoofdschedelplaats. Het Liefste wat God had is vermoord op aarde.

En Gij allen zingt: De Heere zal opstaan tot den strijd; Hij zal Zijn haters, wijd en zijd, Verjaagd, verstrooid, doen zuchten!

Dat hebben we zes duizend jaar gezongen en nog ligt die stroom van bloed daar, mitsgaders al die lichamen, verminkt, mishandeld, gesteenigd, in stukken gezaagd door het zwaard ter dood gebracht. . . .

En dat blijven we zingen totdat geen maan meer schijnt.

Waarom?

Omdat we God kennen die het gezegd heeft. Dat is de reden.

En zoo vast is het getuigenis van die Godskennis in 't diepe hart dat we het niet alleen zeggen, neen, we *zingen* het David na. Er is geen zweem van twijfel. De Heere zal opstaan! Het is alsof we het gezien hebben, alsof we het steeds zien.

Dat, mijn broeder, is de kracht des geloofs.

Niet anders is het met het tweede lid van dit lied.

Door hetzelfde geloof zegt Gods volk in de zangen Israels: Maar 't vrome volk in U verheugd, zal huppelen van zielevreugd, Daar zij hun wensch verkrijgen!

De rechtvaardigen zullen zich verblijden.

Zoo intensief is die blijdschap, dat zij zullen opspringen van vreugde.

Ook staat er: Ze zullen van blijdschap vroolijk zijn.

Men heeft mij een reeks van plaatjes laten zien van Hitler. In die reeks van plaatjes, d.w.z., photographiën ziet men Hitler huppelen van vreugde. En hij heeft gehuppeld, hij is opgesprongen van vreugde, omdat hij hoorde hoe Frankrijk gevallen was voor het aangezicht van zijn helden.

Ik haal dit aan om U het vreeselijke contrast te laten zien tusschen vreugde en vreugde. Gods volk

springt op van vreugde om slechts één oorzaak. 't Wordt gevonden in 't onmiddellijke verband. Die oorzaak is Gods aangezicht. We zingen: "Hun blijdschap zal dan, onbepaald, door 't licht dat van Zijn aan'zicht straalt, ten hoogsten toppunt stijgen!" Doch de goddelooze springt op van vreugde om een bloedbad van menschen, die naar Gods beeld geschapen zijn! Wat vreeselijk contrast!

Gods volk zal eenmaal opspringen van vreugde vanwege het stralend Aangezicht van God.

Wat zit daar in?

Dit: Gods Aangezicht, in gunst tot ons gewend, is juist wat we behoeven om eeuwiglijk en volkomenlijk zalig, vol te zijn. Dat is werkelijk het eenigste wat we werkelijk behoeven. Zoo hoog is onze schepping naar het heerlijk Beeld van God. Eeuwiglijk zonder dat Aangezicht te zijn in gunst tot ons gewend is de hel. Als God echter tot ons glimlacht in groote en oneindige liefde, dan is het overal een hemel, maar het meest in 't diepe hart. Hallelujah!

En zoo komt David tot zijn toepassing: Zingt Gode, psalmzingt Zijn naam; hoogt de wegen voor Hem, die in de vlakke velden rijdt, omdat Zijn naam is Heere; en springt op van vreugde voor Zijn aangezicht!

Waar David eigenlijk om vraagt is, dat ge den hemel openbaren zult. Het vers, het 5de vers, hetwelk we afschreven is een beschrijving van het hemelleven. Zingt Gode!

Dat beteekent, dat ge God kennet! Dat ge Hem ziet in de glorievolle openbaring van Zijn wonderen en schoone en lieflijke deugden. En dat ge die deugden uitspreekt, uitjubelt voor Zijn Aangezicht. Dat ge het tegen Uw naaste zegt: Zie toch al die Trouw, die Rechtvaardigheid, die Genade, die wonderschoone Heiligheid, die glansen van een eeuwige Liefde!

Als ge dat doet, zoo psalmzingt Ge Zijn Naam.

Doch dan moet gij de wegen hoogen voor Hem die in de vlakke velden rijdt.

Wat dat beteekent is doorzichtig.

Onze wegen zijn lang; wij wandelen in het bultachtige en kromme.

Doch God rijdt in de vlakke velden.

God valt nooit tegen. Wij daarentegen vallen altijd tegen.

Verhoogt daarom, verhoogt voor Hem de baan; laat al wat leeft Hem eeren!

Och, mocht ik, in Hem verblijd, altijd mijn wegen hoogen!

En nu zal David ons in het overige van den Psalm aantoonen hoe Gods wegen hooger zijn dan de onze. Hij zal er van zingen, dat Gods Naam liefelijk is en welluidt. Hij zal ons keer op keer aantoonen, dat de werken Gods billijk zijn, gerechtigheid, en hemelsch van schoonheid.

Luistert maar: Hij is een Vader der weezen en een

Rechter der weduwen, God in de woonplaats Zijner heiligheid!

Wie bekommert zich toch om een arme wees of om een zwakke weduwe? De sterke man die altijd en overal voor zijn vrouw en kinderen zorgde was weggenomen door den dood. Voorts stonden ze alleen. Hebt ge nooit eerder gehoord hoe arme weduwen en weezen door de goddeloozen uitgebuit werden? Men kon gerust zijn gang gaan. Er was geen verdediger. En het weinige wat zij overhielden was dra verdwenen.

Doch God heeft alles gezien. En vanuit den hemel zegt Hij: Als die arme weduwe en weezen maar eenigzins tot Mij roepen, zal Ik ze beschermen.

En kunt gij het U voorstellen hoe het in den oordeelsdag met zulke dieven zal gaan? De Wreker Israels sluimert noch slaapt. Hij zal het zoeken.

Diezelfde God zet de eenzamen in een huisgezin en voert uit die in boeien gevangen zijn. Zeer kennelijk hebt ge hier de vervulling van het Vaderschap der weezen en het Rechter-zijn van God der weduwen. Door de goddeloozen werden die arme weezen en weduwen verdrongen in het eenzame en geworpen in de kluisters. Doch God is hun Vader en Rechter. Hij zet de eenzame in een huisgezin en rukt den gevangen uit de boeien.

Dat deed God ook met Israel.

Israel lag in boeien en in de eenzaamheid in Egypte.

En van vers acht tot vers vijftien hebt ge een beschrijving van de uitredding Gods, toen Hij Zijn volk uit Egypte verlost.

Daar in Egypte was Israel gelijk een wees en gelijk een weduwe. Ze lagen tusschen de tichelsteen ter neer en waren gansch ellendig. Gods erfenis, en dat is Israel, was mat geworden. Zie de verzen 10, 11, 14. En de toestand voor Israel was zoo hopeloos als die eener weduwe en wees. Doch God trad te voorschijn voor het aangezicht van Zijn volk. Toen zette Hij zijn voetstappen in de woestijn, opdat Zijn volk Hem daar zou volgen. Toen hebben de bergen gedaverd. Denkt slechts aan het tafereel van Sinaï.

En de Heere heeft Zijn wonderen groot gemaakt in de woestijn. De hemelen dropen en uit den steenrots vloede het verfrisschende water. Het is waar, zij waren zwart geworden van dienstbaarheid bij de goddelooze Egyptenaren, doch de Heere zag op hen neder in genade en zij werden door die beloning gelijk "de vleugelen eener duive, overdekt met zilver, en welker vederen zijn met uitgegraven geel houd."

Dat is geschiedenis.

Doch de koningen, hoe zeer geducht, zijn met hun heiren weggevlucht! En zij kromden zich in het Roode Meer. Want God was Israel een Ontfermer.

Sommige menschen in Israel waren niet mee getogen. Daar waren ook de vrouwen die bij de kinderen moesten blijven. Doch de Heere deelde den roof uit. En allen, allen in Israel werden gebaat.

Want God had hen lief met een eeuwige liefde.

Gods wegen zijn vlak. Die door de vlakke velden rijdt: Zijn naam is Heer der Heeren!

De Koningen der goddeloozen zijn sidderende gevucht; ze zijn door God gegrepen en omgekomen; doch Israel is verlost, werd sneeuwwit als op Zalmon.

Israel is gerechtvaardigd geworden.

Ze werden sneeuwwit als op Zalmon.

Hoe is dat toch zoo gekomen?

Luistert: Er was een ouderling in den hemel die aan Johannes vroeg of hij het wist wie die menschen toch waren met hunne lange witte kleederen. Wel, Johannes wist het niet. Hij antwoordde dien ouderling zeggende: Heere, gij weet het!

Toen antwoordde die ouderling en zeide: Dezen zijn het die uit de groote verdrukking komen; en zij hebben hunne lange kleederen gewasschen en hebben hunne lange kleederen *wit gemaakt in het bloed des Lams!*

Later lezen we in dezelfde Openbaring van Johannes: "Want de bruiloft des Lams is gekomen, en Zijne vrouw heeft zich bereid. En haar is gegeven dat zij bekleed worde met rein en blinkend fijn lijnwaad (denkt aan die duif met goud bekleed); want dit fijn lijnwaad zijn de rechtvaardigmakingen der heiligen."

Als God zoo wonderlijk werkt, als Hij geweldig is in Zijn goedertierenheid over het ellendige Israel, zullen wij dan niet psalmzingen?

G. V.

And let me first try to show you what things Scripture ascribes to the heart.

We adduce a few passages first which show that the heart of man is the organ, the center of his life. Not the mind or the will but very definitely the heart is the center or the hub around which the whole of life is organized. In 1 Sam. 1:13 we read that "Hannah spake in her heart". Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Being pressed for an explanation she answers that she is a woman of a sorrowful spirit and pouring out her soul befor the Lord. Notice that a sorrowful spirit was pouring out its grief through the soul, but that this all was going on in the heart. Very beautifully you find this same thought in Prov. 14:10, but then you must read it in the Hebrew. In the English you read, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." In the original you read, "The heart knoweth the bitterness of his soul." Showing you the heart as being the bathysphere of our life, that which lies below, under, at the bottom of our life, so much so that the heart can speak of "its soul." Again, in II Sam. 14:1 Joab perceives that David's heart "was toward Absalom." Here it is evident that the heart is the center of paternal love and affection. The heart loves. The Lord God claimed that affection when He commanded that we shall love the Lord with all our heart. Again, in 1 Sam. 24:5 we read that, "David's heart smote him", and there the heart is identified we might say with what we commonly call the conscience. When we read of Lydia's conversion we read, "Whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things spoken by Paul." Here the opened heart makes possible a mind which perceives and attends to, the opened heart gives spiritual interest, attention and perception. Again, in Prov. 21:1 it is said that the king's heart is in God's hand. The king's heart is synonymous to his intentions, aspirations and plans. While in Eccl. 8:11 it speaks of a heart which is "Fully set in them to do evil," where the heart is the organ of determination.

These and other such passages convince us how much the heart is the center of all our lives, the center of our sub-conscious life, of perception, of emotion, of affection, intellectual and volition life.

If therefore the heart be evil, all these faculties are evil.

But this brings us to the second general description with which Scripture supplies us concerning the heart. That is, that the heart is also the fountain of our life. It is not only the center, it is also the fountain.

Especially evident is that when in Prov. 4:23 God tells us that "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Issues here are the outgoing things, the things which reach the surface and flow out into active, personal, social life. These things were incubated as it were in the heart, they found their fountain in the heart. This matter is further explained in Matt. 15:19 where we are told that "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts"

The Concept Heart In Scripture

The heart of man is deep. Its depth challenges but at the same time defies description. It has depths which no man can sound and which no pen, however ready, can fathom.

Only God knows the heart. He knows all hearts and He only knows all hearts.

Inasmuch as only God knows the hearts, we will not turn to the medicos and surgeons for a description of the heart, but we shall have to turn to God and His Word. We surely cannot turn to the philosophers and modern educators, since they dwell much on the mind and the will but do not seem to realize that there is such a thing as the heart. Rationalism (and Pelagianism) separate mind and will from the heart. Rationalism, striving as it does to reach the arena of "pure thinking" has erased the word heart from its categories. Neither even can we rely on what seems to be experience, for we would say, "I think with the mind" (or the head) but Scripture would soon enough refute us and tell us that we think with the heart, not with the head.

So we must turn to God Who knows the heart.

Not the mind but the heart is the fountain. And the heart issues forth through and under the direction of the mind. The mind gives direction but the heart is the fountain. In Matt. 12:34 it is, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Not only the mind but also the mouth is fed by and supplied by the issues of the heart. In that same vein it speaks of the, "Thoughts of many hearts" (Luke 2:25) and the "Secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21). Rather interesting also to notice that one of the Hebrew words for the concept "thought" (Sarah) means literally "to extend or stretch out," perhaps like a branch. Our thoughts protrude like a branch, but they spring from the tree. So the thoughts spring from the heart. In that sense it is true that as a man is in his heart, so will his thoughts be.

Thus then the heart is the fountain of our lives.

Perhaps in connection with and as qualification of this last statement Scripture also emphasizes that although the heart is a fountain it is nevertheless not original. For in John 13:2 we read "The devil having put into Judas' heart to betray Jesus." There is thus a power behind the heart, a power which can influence the heart and pour incentives into its treasures. But in Rev. 17:17 we read that "God hath put into the hearts of peoples and nations to fulfil His will." There God reserves for Himself alone the glory of unquestioned sovereignty over all hearts and also the king's hearts are in the Lord's hands as streams of water, He can bend them at will.

Finally Scripture describes that heart as it has become through sin. In Jer. 17:9 the heart of natural man is said to be "deceitful and deadly." Ezek. 11:19 speaks of it as "stony" elsewhere as "hardened" and perverse. Signifying that the heart, both as the center and the fountain of our lives is evil and thoroughly corrupt. And out of that unclean treasury come all manner of unclean thoughts, actions, decisions and desires. Not only our sins but our sinfulness brings down upon us the wrath of Him who commands pure hearts.

In conclusion a remark or two might be beneficial.

If our perversion lay only in our intellect or voluntas, education, discipline and environment might effect improvement in man's conduct. But the heart, which is deeper than intellect and will, cannot be touched. One may pull some obnoxious weed fruit off the twig, even saw off the branch, but the tree remains. So it is with the heart of man. It remains an evil fountain. Until God in His grace brings about, through Christ, new hearts, or, as stated in 1 Chr. 28:9 "Perfect heart and willing mind." When that heart of man is made perfect, the mind becomes willing, the intellect becomes enlightened and the desires become purified. It is then that the tenth commandment begins to find fulfilment in God's people. In regeneration God's wonderful grace reaches down to the fountain and cen-

ter of our life, renewing it and stimulating it with the glorious life of Him Who was raised from the dead.

And lastly, although the heart is principally renewed, the emotions of the flesh still remain in us, the ruts of sin cut deep through mind and will, and it shall be a constant conflict for the newness of heart to express itself in a mind which thinks God's thoughts and a will which desires His will.

Inasfar as, by grace, we arrive at that newness, there comes also peace of heart.

And sometime when we awake, we shall be satisfied with His image.

M. G.

A Reply to Rev. C. Hanco

Dear Mr. Editor,

Will you allow me to reply to the article of Rev. C. Hanco appearing in the July 1 issue of your paper?

We seem to be getting a little closer to an understanding on the strike question. At least it seems to be well understood now that the C.L.A. does not approve of the strike as commonly conceived of, with its accompanying violence, etc. It was because of the presentation as if the C.L.A. did approve of that, in spite of my repeated assertions to the contrary, that I complained. If my complaint has made that clear I have made my point.

It was not my intention to infer that Rev. Hanco's sympathies are with the capitalists. But, his continuous emphasis upon the *rights* of the employer and the *duties* of the employee could easily lead one to that conclusion. No, we must not proceed from the principles of the class struggle. Far from it. But, does Rev. C. Hanco realize that such a presentation as he has repeatedly given intensifies that struggle? It is the one-sided emphasis which does that. That there is class conflict no one can deny. Its solution is not found in setting the rights of the one over against the other, but in recognition of the rights and duties of both. Thus justice can be attained. And, the use of the right to refuse to continue to work under unjust conditions is *not* an illegitimate means by which to secure justice.

I do not see how I beclouded the issue in any way. Certainly I did not accuse Rev. C. Hanco of denying the sovereignty of God over all things. However, it is not at all clear to me that the brother proceeded from that vantage point, and the accountability of employers and employees to God, in arriving at an appeal

to the fifth commandment in condemning the strike. I rather think it was his one sided emphasis upon the rights (authority) of the employer, and the duties (subordination) of the employee which led him to that appeal.

Just a little more on the strike question. I wish we could find another word for it. The word "strike" as used in our day has an ugly sound. Because of the misuse of the strike by unchristian unions the term has acquired a meaning that is revolting. The Dutch term "staking" or "werkstatking" is much milder. It merely indicates the cessation of work. The C.L.A. accepts the right of the "staking" without the bad implication of the strike. Such cessation of work would not be approved of unless there was a real injustice and until everything within reason had been done to secure justice by other means. It would have to be entirely peaceful. There could be no interference with the right of others to work. And the employer would have the right to hire others. But the employees who had ceased to work, in protest against an injustice, would have the right to acquaint prospective new employees with their grievances and by such moral persuasion try to influence them not to *interfere* with their legitimate pursuit of justice. That is the C.L.A. stand.

Allow me to explain also what we mean by a moral claim on a job. When employees have ceased working in the manner approved by the C.L.A. it would be because they were *forced* to do so by the injustice of the employer. We take the position that if they have sought what was reasonable and just, if their demands were fair and the employer was well able to fulfill them, and he in spite of that persists in the imposition of injustice through his control of the means of production, *the employer is using his power of control to force his unjust will upon them.* Employees who refuse to continue to work under such a condition have a rightful moral claim to their job. And it is in accordance with labor laws too. The National Labor Relations Act in some cases even recognizes a legal claim. If an employer is guilty of an unfair, unlawful labor practice, and the employees strike as a result, the National Labor Relations Board can order the employer to pay the employees for time lost while striking as a result of his unlawful practice. We can not see anything unchristian in that.

There is still another angle to that problem. It is this: we believe that employees who cease working because of injustice, and who have laid down certain conditions under which they will return to their jobs, are morally obligated to hold themselves available to the employer for return when their just demands are met. Telling people to quit, with no strings attached, and without recognition of moral claims or obligations, is not the solution. The employee who cannot find another job, and who is thus forced to submit

to injustice, *not because of his Christian confession but because of the sinful use of the economic power of the employer*, is made to suffer. And, lest I be misunderstood, that is *not* the kind of suffering which Christians are exhorted to submit to in the texts so often quoted by Rev. Hanko and others. But, getting back to the employer's side of the problem, what about him? What would happen to an employer of a few hundred men, if all at once they all quit and refused to return? His business would be ruined. It would take him many months, if not years, to break in a new crew of workers. Isn't it much more Christian to recognize rights, duties and moral obligations on both sides, and to work for a solution that will be just for both, even though it may not be entirely in accordance with the unjust will of one of them?

I am convinced that it is a mistaken conception of property rights and of authority of the employer that leads Rev. Hanko to wrong conclusions. Although his statements in his last article are more carefully worded than in a previous one they are still basically the same. Rev. Hanko sums up his stand as follows: "That the employer has the right to his personal property and the free use of it, without outside interference. That he has the moral right to continue production by calling in other help when his men refuse to work. And that he has the right to decide on the wages of his employees without being forced to a decision against his will by his workmen." The only responsibility in the use of property which Rev. Hanko recognizes is accountability to God. But, when that is used as a basis for human responsibility in stewardship, in the use of property, he is not free to use it as he pleased to do! Surely the demand to love one's neighbor implies that one's property must be used in the interest of fellowmen too; that the blessings derived from those possessions must be shared by them? A man who owns a factory is not justified in shutting it down, thereby subjecting hundreds of people to poverty, simply because an excess profit upon his investment is denied him! Nor is he justified in withholding from his employees for his own personal gain that to which they are justly entitled. When such unchristian practices are known outside interference to make him do what the law of God demands concerning his duties toward his neighbors is not only justifiable but imperative.

Even the statement that the employer has the moral right to engage other help in case of a strike is very debateable. It all depends. If the strike is an unjust one, yes, not only the moral but also the legal right. But, if the strike was caused by the employer's unjust practices, NO. Then he has not the moral right to hire others in order thereby to be able to continue his sinful practices. He might then still have the legal right, but the moral right?, never!

And why should anyone, in our day, still contend



that only the employer has the right to determine what his workers' wage shall be? Why should that be his exclusive right because he owns the means of production? Don't the employees own their ability to work, their skill, their brains to use their skill? Isn't that just as important? Why then should he be the only one to determine what the wages of the employees shall be? The answer will be, I suppose, that he has the right to offer a wage and they can take it or leave it. That's the old capitalistic argument. But it is not fair, unless the wage is just and sufficient. And the trouble has always been that generally it was not. And the workers, who had to have work, could take it or starve. Thank God that a change has been brought about in that thoroughly unchristian system. There is the danger, of course, that organizations will go too far the other way, and demand what is unfair. The C.L.A. condemns that too. But if an employer offers an unfair wage, we believe that the workers have the right to use every fair and lawful means to bring him to terms, and to use legitimate pressure to make him do what is right. That is not extortion. Nor is it insubordination.

What then of the employer's authority? Just what authority does he have? That's the question. Here is the answer: He has the right to exercise authority within the bounds of law and justice. That's all. Certainly, he may determine what to manufacture. He has the authority to require a just day's work for a just day's wage. No more. He has the right to hire and fire so long as it is done justly. But when the employer uses his position as owner of the means of production to misuse authority opposition to such misuse is not insubordination. Sometimes it is a good thing to make a man do something against his will, if his will is bent toward doing what is wrong. The results will be good both for him and his employees.

In conclusion I would like to suggest that more attention be given to employer-employee relationships as they are taught throughout the Bible, instead of pointing to the master-servant-slave relationship prevalent among members of the early Christian Church. What about the relationship between Abraham and his servants; between Boaz and his workers; what do the Mosaic laws teach concerning such relationships? Aren't there clear indications in the Parables of Christ that the hiring of free men was then not unknown? Didn't Jesus use an illustration the apparently well known picture of a landlord *agreeing* with free men to work for him at a certain rate? There are principles laid down throughout the Scriptures that ought to be well recognized. The main point is this: that we live as Christians in the particular relationship in which God has placed us. That means an entirely different attitude toward employers of our day than toward masters of the days of the early

Church. With the greater freedom and privileges which the centuries have brought greater responsibilities have come to us. In many ways it is much more difficult to be a Christian today than it was 1900 years ago. The only way in which we can do what God requires is by giving full recognition to the great changes in the social relationships and then applying the principles of the Word of God to them. Those principles are found in the fulfillment of the basic law which demands that we love our neighbor as ourselves. Employers and employees are neighbors.

Finally, I believe we could use our time much better than in an academic, abstract discussion of the strike question. That is not going to be the big problem of the future for us. Our problem will be, how we as Christians will be able to continue to work without affiliation with sinful organizations. The solution of that problem will require the full support of all who desire to be loyal to the Christ.

Thank you, Mr. Editor, for granting me this privilege.

J. Gritter, Sec'y C.L.A.

NOTICE, CONSISTORIES

Classis West, of the Protestant Reformed Churches, will meet in the regular session, in Rock Valley, Iowa, the first Wednesday of Sept. 9 o'clock, D. V. Those desiring lodging will please contact the Rev. P. Vis.

M. Gritters, Stated Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed church of Grand Rapids hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our brother elder J. Miedema in the loss of his brother.

May the God of all grace comfort our brother and his family in this their bereavement.

Rev. R. Veldman, Pres.

H. Meulenberg, Clerk

NOTICE

As is customary, The Standard Bearer was not published July 15, and will not be published August 15.

Report Of Classis East — Convened July 7, 1943 at Grand Rapids, Michigan

Rev. A. Petter called the meeting to order. After the singing of No. 239 from the Psalter, he read a portion of Matthew 18 and led in prayer.

The credentials were read and received, showing that all the churches (except one, where the pastor alone was present), were represented by two delegates.

After Classis is declared constituted, Rev. M. Schipper presides and Rev. A. Petter takes down the minutes. The president speaks a few words of welcome and then asks those who are present for the first time at the Classis to sign the Formula of Subscription.

The minutes of the preceding classical meeting are read and adopted. The stated clerk reports that he has carried out the necessary correspondence referred to in the minutes.

Referring back to these minutes where Classis had advised a certain consistory to straighten out matters between it and two members of the Classis, this consistory reports that it had carried out the advice of the classis to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

A report of the committee to Byron Center in regard to the question of dissolving the congregation is received for information.

The advice of this committee was as follows:

"We advise Classis to ask the consistory of Byron Center to ask for a committee of Classis to labor with them in visiting those in Byron Center who have left the congregation but who have their papers in their possession, as well as those who have affiliated with other churches and are dissatisfied with their communion on account of the truth."

This advise was adopted by the Classis.

A motion is made and adopted that the same committee be appointed to assist the consistory in this matter.

Rev. D. Jonker is given advisory vote.

The protest of Mr. A. Hoeksema, which could not be treated at the previous Classis because there was no answer from the consistory, is read again. The answer of the consistory is read and received for information.

In regard to Point 1 of this protest, Classis declares: that it lacks the necessary evidence to sustain brother A. Hoeksema in his protest that his censure be lifted.

Elder H. A. Van Putten registers his protest against this decision.

In regard to Point II Classis expressed the following: The consistory did wrong in including the alleged neglect of church attendance as a ground of censure, since they had not yet sufficiently admonished him on this point.

In regard to Point III, Classis decides to put this matter into the hands of a committee, who shall come with their advice to the next Classis. The following committee was later appointed: The Revs. P. De Boer, A. Petter and J. De Jong.

A consistory comes with a protest against a decision taken by the Classis in July. The answer of the Classis is as follows: That Classis insists that this consistory carry out the advice of the last Classis, since no evidence has been produced for not abiding by the Church Order.

The consistory of Holland protests against the decision of the previous Classis, nl. when Classis decided not to lift the censure of Mr. A. Hoeksema. The Rev. P. De Boer informs the Classis that he does not agree with his consistory in this matter. Classis decides not to sustain the consistory of Holland in this matter.

The following overture from Fuller Ave. was adopted. That the classical decision be enforced in re instructions

of a general nature which must be in the hands of the stated clerk within the stipulated time or be declared out of order by the Classis.

At the request of Roosevelt Park Classis decides to have the following notice placed in the published report of Classis. "Roosevelt Park comes to Classis with the grievance that at recent Classical meetings some consistories are only partially represented and members of Classis leave the meetings without apparent legitimate excuse."

The sermon committee reports that it has received requests for sermons, (to be read in vacant churches) that it cannot fill because the promised sermons are not forthcoming. Those who have not yet handed them in are urged to do so.

Classis instructs the stated clerk to thank the ladies for their catering services.

The next meeting of Classis will be held in Fuller Ave. the first Wednesday in October.

The questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order are asked and satisfactorily answered.

The minutes are read and approved. Rev. P. De Boer leads in the closing prayer.

D. Jonker, stated clerk.