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MEDITATION

The Speech Of Love

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

—I Cor. 13:1.

What does Paul mean with this astounding verse?

Well, you must know that things were not as they ought to be at Corinth. There was a division in the church. Some of the household of Chloe had told Paul about the sorry state of affairs at the church of Corinth. There were four different parties there. And it seems as though all the members were included in the four parties that are mentioned. Everyone said: I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ!

A sorry state of affairs, indeed!

They should not speak that way.

Instead of that, Paul tells them that they all should say the same thing. You may read that in the first chapter of the epistle from which we have chosen our text.

And they should say the same thing because of the fact that they all enjoyed the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord. Surely, if the Lord Jesus inspires you with His Holy Ghost, you will not go about, claiming all kinds of allegiance to men whose breath is in their nostrils?

Oh, they did have that unity in the very depth of their hearts. There is no doubt about that. They are "the church of God which is at Corinth, them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's!"

In the inner man they all had the Holy Spirit of Christ and by virtue of that Spirit they were one.

one body, baptized into the Lord and all had been made to drink into one Spirit! Oh, yes, they were one.

But not in the manifestation of their life at Corinth! They were divided, miserably divided, because they allowed the flesh to dominate them.

They were a very gifted church, but they did not realize that all these gifts were wrought by the self-same Spirit of the Lord, and that therefore they all were manifestations of the one body of Christ.

But Paul will teach them. He will tell them in detail how that every diversity of gift is by the Spirit of God which they all have received, and that, therefore, they should be one in that Spirit. Yes, my dear children, (he will say) there are differences of administration, but only one Lord!

There are also diversities of operation, but the same God which worketh all in all!

Yes, the whole preceding chapter speaks of these differences and diversities that are wrought by the one Lord, and the one Holy Spirit, and the one glorious God operates in them all.

Corinth's church should be one. Even with all the differences and variety of gifts and talents.

Yes, they may be zealous unto the obtaining of the best gifts that are showered on the church, but Paul will show them the only way, the better and excelling way to receive and employ them.

And that way is the way of love!

Paul means to make them conscious of the root from which all real gifts grow, without which the gifts will work nothing but discord.

It is the love of God! If that love motivates me and my gifts, I am unto His praises forever. And that, after all, is the only purpose of the universe, mankind, the world and those that live therein, time, space, eternity, everything! Even the wrath of man shall praise Him! Even the devil shall be to the everlasting glory of God. If that were not true, there would be no devil, you may be very certain about that. God has created everything for His own honor and pleasure, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Oh yes, it makes a world of difference whether I

am to His honor and praises positively or negatively. It makes a terrible lot of difference whether I am to His praise in heaven or in hell!

But when I name the Name of Christ I must be divorced from evil. I must praise Him positively, that is, I must sing my song of harmony and beauty. I must speak the language of love.

And that was not found at Corinth. That is, it was not manifested. But Paul will rebuke them and teach them so that haply they may return and begin to seek and to find one another in a symphony of praise of God in Christ.

If I speak the tongues of men and of angels. . . .

What mighty concepts!

The tongues of men!

That includes the spoken, the sung, the written and printed word of man. But also the music of man. Oh, there is a world of speech in the world.

And it does not sound as though it were a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Much of it sounds so beautiful, so smooth, so soothing! Think of the world of literature, of the many arts and sciences, of the world of music!

Do you still remember that wonderful voice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt? I would sometimes forget what he was saying, just so I could hear that voice, that mighty voice!

Especially now, since we all have the radio in our homes, we hear much music which is so near to perfection, I mean, formal perfection.

How can the Holy Ghost call all this speech as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal?

A sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal are mentioned in order to tell Corinth that all speech that has not its root in the love of God, is discordant, ugly, abominable in the ear of a perfect God!

How are these things to be explained?

It will become plain to you, beloved reader, if you know God!

If you know not God, I despair of convincing you of the truth of my text. But if you know and love Him, you will live this text every day.

There are only two fundamental principles of the life of man. The one is the principle of the love of God; and the other is the principle of the hatred against God and His anointed, and that is Christ.

Now Paul means that if you speak from the principle of the hatred against God, you are a discordant note in the universe. In such case it is abomination to listen to you. And if that is the case you will be muzzled by and by. There will be a time that all the speechmaking, writing, singing and music-making will be stopped. At such time the whole world will stand silent and every mouth will be stopped. God will not suffer discordant speech unto all eternity! Perish the thought!

I hear voices that will defend the beautiful speech

and the wonderful song and music of the world. They will say: Yes, but they do not even think of God; how can they act from the principle of hatred?

Oh, but they do. Every one, always, either acts from the love of God or the hatred of God. There is no neutrality at all.

Let us take the case that was advanced: they do not even think of God! Is that not terrible? Not to think of God? Horrors! He is so near to us that we move in Him and have our being in Him! And He formed us for but one purpose: to speak and to sing and to write to His praises! And if we do not, there is only one other answer: we hate Him!

Sometimes that hatred is conscious: that is bitterness indeed. Sometimes it is not. What of it? When God is utterly ignored and negated by modern man, so that they never even curse Him any more, that is the worst manifestation of hatred ever. Horrible!

Ah, if only we love God! And then listen to your crooners, baritones, tenors, soprano's, and singers of melting loves. Or listen to mellow talkers, spoke they ever so sweetly, or the man with the golden throat and the admirable accent, and then you will grow angry, for they forget God. They use their throat which is a gift of God. They use and employ the "laws" of music and the vocal cords which He made, but they will never think on Him. It calls for the Judgment Day!

And this is true of the whole world of speech of man.

If the love of God is in it, well and good: you will enjoy the speech that is pious and pregnant with God's praises. But if that love is absent from your production, you better be afraid for the consequences. There is only one kind of vibration that will abide forever: it is the sound of adoration of God!

If we would cast the text of Paul into a positive form, we would read this: If I speak with the tongue of man, motivated by the love of God, I shall be as the sound of a sweet melody *in the ears of God!*

And why?

The answer is easy: because I shall be an echo of His own song of eternal Covenant Love!

Love: what is it?

The key-word in the text is *love*. Improperly translated *charity*.

Love: what is it?

Love is God, and God is love! I John 4:8.

Paul has given us some sort of definition of love. You will find it in Coll. 3:14. There he says: "And above all these things put on charity (that must be translated: love) which is the bond of perfectness."

Therefore, we may say, first of all, that love, the love of God, is the bond of perfectness. If you are perfect you are bound to the perfect God.

The same Paul tells us in Coll. 2:2 that love is the action that knits us together as brethren of Christ.

The same language is used when the love of David

and Jonathan is described. They were knit together in love.

I think that we may say that the love of God, in Himself, is that virtue where He is bound together, knit together in His own glorious eternal being. God is One in Himself, because He is love. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are knit together in the sphere of infinite perfection, the perfection of their Covenant Life.

That life of God's love is manifested in the Gift of Jesus Christ our Lord. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life! There you have the manifestation of the love of God.

God wanted to show to you and me how utterly lovely He was and is and shall be unto all eternity. Therefore: the world, the fall, the redemption and the glorification of all things.

And the end will show that being "knit together" and that "bond of perfectness"!

You will see that all things shall be united in Christ, of things that are in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth. And in and through Christ that new, glorious, *lovely* world shall be united to God, so that God may be all and in all.

Now then, if you have that love of God in you, you better speak with the tongue of man. And it will be well. You may not say it with so many words, but I assure you that your speech will be an expression of that world and life view of which we spoke just now. You will search and find the connection between all things and the God who created them, and who is rushing all things to their rebirth.

They warble in the world: Speak to me of love!

Indeed, that is exactly what God is singing to His saints!

And He has a wonderful Right to sing that song and demand that you speak with the tongue of man of that eternal love.

He has done it! Did He not do it?

Go to the Place of a Skull! It is a little way from the old Jerusalem. And there the Lord God has sung His song of love! Have you not heard it? I assure you that the sound of it has gone out over all the earth. You have heard of that song of love from your earliest infancy.

And He wants to hear the echo from out of your heart.

They tell me that when man is smitten with a great love, he will hear nothing but of that love and bring all things in connection with it. It is well. Only God has the right to demand just that, and He does. He wants you to always speak to Him of love, and to connect all things in heaven and on earth with that central story of Jesus and His love!

Listen to the heavenly scene in the revelation of John the Divine.

Everything you hear in heaven is about that wonderful Lamb of God, the gift of His heart. Everything you hear is about the love of God. And with faces that are beaming with love they turn themselves to the heart of heaven, to the throne of God, and they tell Him in a great variety of voices and of music that they love Him in their turn. And that turn is eternal.

So: speak to Him of love, and you shall not be a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

I would beg of you not to divorce the creation and its fulness from the central story of time and of eternity. For that is what the world is doing. No, they do not speak of God anymore. They neither curse, nor do they bless. They do something that is worse still. They have taken the world over and have placed God outside the door of the Universe. And they speak no more of Him.

Oh yes, they speak. With tongues of men, and sometimes it sounds as though the angels are singing, so beautiful, so sweetly melodious!

But let us not be deceived. They know not God, neither will they know Him. They hate Him. But they will use His "laws" and creation material. And they have made their compositions. They speak and they do sing. They will also sing of love, but it is not the love of God in Jesus Christ.

But their speech and their music shall damn them forever!

But thou? Speak thou to Him of love! Speak of it in accents sweet. Sing, oh sing, of your Redeemer!

No, you may not be able to sing and to speak as fluently and as sweetly, as to form, as the world speaks and sings. It is well. We must wait a while. Continue to sing and to speak of His love. The time will come that your song and your speech will be more beautiful than the speech and the song of the angels in the night of Bethlehem.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia!

It is the echo, the everlasting echo, of God's song of love!

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging "Bidt en Werkt" der Protestantsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Orange City, Iowa wenscht door dezen hare sympathy te betuigen met haren leeraar en Zijne familie in het verlies van hunne moeder,

MRS. JOHN PETTER

trooste de Heere hen allen met Zijn Woord en beloften dat zalig zijn de dooden die in den Heere sterven.

Namens onze Vereeniging,
Mrs. M. De Jager, Sec.

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CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session at the Second Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan on Wednesday, October 15 at 9 o'clock A.M.

D. Jonker, S. C.

EDITORIALS

Wheat And Tares

In *The Banner* of July 11 and also of July 18, the Rev. Ghysels writes about the parable of our Lord which is commonly called the parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

He writes as follows:

“Our Lord’s warning against judging—his counsel to let wheat and tares grow together till the harvest comes, does not preclude the necessity of self-judging and self-criticism. We must not let them grow together in our own life. We must exterminate the weeds, the sooner the better.

“Neither does his warning preclude the necessity of mutual discipline. Even if we may not judge one another, we may correct one another. Parents correct their children, friends correct friends, ministers correct members, teachers correct scholars, older people correct younger ones, wiser people correct the unwise. In fact, this is our duty as Christians. As the Bible says in Hebrews 10: “Consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works!”

“One rather remarkable thing about the tares in the Master’s field is that they can through the gospel and by the grace of God be changed from tares to wheat. And the wheat that is already such can become a better variety. And this should be our constant endeavor—to make the tares wheat, and the wheat better!”

And at the close of the second meditation on this parable, he concludes:

“We need to remember that in the kingdom of God we do not subscribe to the fatalism that says, “Once tares, always tares.” Tares can become wheat and wheat can be much improved!”

In connection herewith I would like to ask the Rev. Ghysels a few questions.

First, Do tares ever become wheat? Are not the parables true earthly pictures? If they are not true earthly pictures, what, then, shall determine their exegesis?

Second, is not your exegesis impossible? Where do you read that tares may become wheat?

Thirdly, is not your exposition (?) of this parable a denial of election and reprobation? Imagine, if you will, that the preacher may proceed from the viewpoint that all may become wheat?

Fourthly, did you not create an anti-climax in your concluding remark? Is it not clear from your stand-

point that you ought to have concluded thus: Tares may become wheat and wheat may become tares?

Fifthly, do you not see that all this belongs not in the churches that call themselves Reformed, but that it properly belongs among the Methodists, the Remonstrants and the Arminians?

I would conclude that this parable teaches that tares remain tares even until the end of time, and that they shall be destroyed. And the wheat remains wheat and is gathered into the barns of God at the day of the great harvest.

G. V.

Correspondence With The Netherlands

This is the third article, written by the Rev. Doekes of the Reformed Churches, Art. 31, of the Netherlands, in answer to the 4 questions which our Editor asked him, and which are found in Volume 23 of our Standard Bearer, March 15, 1947, page 271. This third article appeared in *De Reformatie*, July 12, 1947, page 325.

U EN UW ZAAD.

(Antwoord aan Ds. Hoeksema)

Hoe spreekt de Schrift? In de taal, die de synodes van 1942 en daarna ons wilden opdringen: dat de volle heilsbelofte "eigenlijk" alleen de uitverkorenen toekomt? En zooals Ds. Hoeksema het sterk heeft uitgedrukt, in woorden die herinneren aan de beruchte taal van Toelichting en Praeadvies: "Het is eenvoudig niet waar, dat God in den Heiligen Doop iets belooft en verzegelt aan alle gedoopten"?

Of is het naar de Schrift, wanneer de bekende groep van indertijd vooraanstaande bezwaarden in de "Verklaring van gevoelen" (Nov. 1943) haar meening o.a. in deze punten formuleerde:

2. dat God in Christus zijn genadeverbond heeft opgericht met de geloovigen en hun zaad (Gen. 17, vs. 7; Gal. 3:14, 29);
3. dat daarom alle kinderen der geloovigen verbondskinderen zijn (Hand. 3:25);
4. dat al die kinderen heilig (1 Cor. 7:14) of in Christus geheiligd zijn (1 Cor. 1:2, Doopsformulier);
5. dat derhalve aan al die kinderen de heilsbelofte van dat verbond toekomt (Hand. 2:39);
6. dat dus voor al die kinderen de doopsbediening is betekening en verzegeling aan hen van het ver-

bond der genade of die heilsbelofte (Gen. 17:11, 13-14; Doopsformulier)?

Deze punten zijn van belang, omdat zij (hoewel geen officieel aanvaarde leeruitspraken van onze Gereformeerde kerken), toch den gedachtengang weergeven, van waaruit bezwaar werd gemaakt tegen de synodale leerbeslissingen.

Het lijkt mij dienstig, allereerst te letten op enkele hier genoemde teksten. Laten wij beginnen met Hand. 2:39, vooral bekend uit ons doopsformulier: want u komt de belofte toe en uw kinderen, enz.

Opmerkelijk is hier de Statenvertaling, die ook in ons doopsformulier gevolgd is. Er staat immers in den grondtekst alleen dit simpele woord: want voor u is de belofte en voor uw kinderen (humini gar estin hé epanggelia). Wie zich dus blindstaart op de letterlijke bewoordingen van den tekst, zonder te letten op den samenhang, kan er zich van afmaken met te zeggen: hier wordt niets verkondigd over de vraag, of die belofte aan elk van de daar aanwezigen geadresseerd is. En wie zich niet weet vrij te maken van de synodale gedachteninfectie, denkt er natuurlijk dadelijk weer bij, wat hem ook voorgehouden wordt bij den doop in de synodale gemeenschap: "u komt de belofte toe", dat is nog maar een algemeene zegswijze; het moet straks blijken, of dat woord wel volle waarheid inhield voor dezen gedoopte!

Maar wie zich gehoorzaam de situatie op den Pinksterdag indenkt, die moet wel terughuiveren voor deze opvatting. Immers, Petrus richt zich in zijn toespraak uitdrukkelijk tot de Joden te Jeruzalem. Wel zegt hij in vs. 14: "gij Joodsche mannen en gij allen die te Jeruzalem woont", maar terecht teekent Grosheide daarbij aan: "van heidenen, al zullen die zich in dezen tijd wel te Jeruzalem hebben bevonden, is in dit verband geen sprake, vgl. vs. 22, 29, 39". Tot deze Joden nu richt Petrus de scherpe beschuldiging, dat zij den Zaligmaker hebben gedood. De toespraak grijpt hen aan; ze worden "verslagen in het hart", en vragen bevend: wat moeten wij nu doen? En dan komt het evangelie voor deze Christusmoordenaars: bekeert u, en ieder van u late zich doopen, en dan zult ook gij den Heiligen Geest ontvangen—want u komt de belofte toe!

Het is duidelijk, dat dit laatste de grond is, waarop Petrus zoo vrijmoedig "een ieder" van die aanwezige Joden roept tot de verzoening en vernieuwing van Christus' gemeenschap. De belofte van den H. Geest, zooals die in Joël 3 is gegeven, maakt deel uit van het geheel der beloften ("de" belofte), die God eertijds aan Israel heeft toegezegd. Daaraan ontleent Petrus zijn aandrang om tot Christus te komen. Maar als het waar is, wat de synodale theorie ons wijsmaken wil, dan zou Petrus die verslagen menschen daar vóór hem gruwelijk hebben misleid. Hij zou ieder van hen hebben opgewekt om met diep berouw over zijn

zonde, maar toch met dankbare vrijmoedigheid tot Christus te komen op grond van de hem toekomende heilsbelofte—terwijl er dan naderhand een dispuut behoorde te worden gehouden, óf die belofte wel waarlijk voor ieder van hen bedoeld was geweest! Voelt men dan niet, dat daarmee aan Gods openbaring gruwelijk onrecht wordt aangedaan? Dat men van Hem een God maakt, die (naar de teekenende uitdrukking bijv. van Ds. Vonk) “een slag om den arm houdt”? Het is dezelfde miserabele gedachtengang dien wij tegenkomen in de Vervangingsformule: “bouwen op de belofte”, maar ondertusschen die belofte disputabel stellen. . . .

Ja maar—zoo hoor ik iemand al zeggen—verliest u nu niet teveel uit het oog, dat uw tegenstanders hun argument ontleenen aan de Schrift, b.v. aan Rom. 9? Inderdaad, men beroept zich daar op; en wij zullen daar volle aandacht aan geven. Het gaat er hier niet om, dat wij bang zijn om Schrift met Schrift te vergelijken (integendeel!); maar om de vraag, of de vergelijking wel zuiver getrokken wordt, of hier geen vooroordeelen van een verdorven menschenlijke logica in 't spel zijn.

In ieder geval moet ieder toegeven, dat onbevangen lezing van den tekst in Hand. 2 ons leidt tot de conclusie, dat de belofte bestemd is voor alle toenmaals aanwezige Israelieten en hun kinderen. Zelfs Dr. Grosheide geeft dat bij den tekst als volgt weer: “De belofte is voor hen, voor allen, die daar staan. De Joden meenden wel, dat de belofte van hen was. . . . maar zij kenden niet den zegen van het feit, dat de belofte voor hen was, hun troost bracht en vreugde; zij zagen de belofte niet goed”. Het blijft onbegrijpelijk, dat iemand, die dit schrijven kon, zoo vinnig heeft meegholpen aan de vervolging van gereformeerde medebroeders, die het precies zoo volhielden als hijzelf het in den hiervóór geciteerden zin had gezegd!

Trouwens, het moet ons niet ontgaan, dat de exegeze, die het “u komt de belofte toe” feitelijk alleen op de uitverkorenen laat zien, met kracht is naar voren gebracht door de Wederdoopers. Calvijn heeft zich er sterk tegen verzet. Bij Hand. 2:39 schrijft hij: “Deze plaats weerlegt afdoende de Wederdoopers, welke de kleine kinderen, geboren uit geloovige ouders, van den doop weren, alsof ze geen leden der kerk waren. Ze trachten er zich uit te redden door een allegorische opvatting en verklaren “kinderen” als “die geestelijk geboren zijn”. Maar zij vorderen niets met zoo groote onbeschaamdheid”. Een dergelijke opmerking maakt Calvijn opnieuw bij Hand. 3:25. En datzelfde verzet tegen de doopersche theorie is ook bekend uit zijn Institutie en zijn polemieek tegen Servet. Natuurlijk zou nu achteraf kunnen blijken, dat die exegeze der Wederdoopers juist was. Maar de oude strijd, die er al over gevoerd is, moet ons dubbel voorzichtig maken.

L. DOEKES.

Here follows the translation:

YOU AND YOUR SEED.

(Reply to the Rev. Hoeksema)

How does *Scripture* speak? In the language which the Synods of 1942 and those that followed would force upon us: that the full promise of salvation “properly” only belongs to the elect? And even as Rev. Hoeksema has strongly expressed it in words that call to mind the notorious language of (the) *Elucidation* and (the) *Preadvice*: “It is simply not true that God promises and seals something in Holy Baptism unto all baptized persons”?

Or is it according to *Scripture*, when the wellknown group of, at the time, prominent aggrieved persons formulated their opinion in the “*Declaration of Opinion*” (Nov. 1943), among other things, in these points:

2. that God in Christ has established His covenant of grace with the believers and their seed (Gen. 17:7; Gal. 3:14);
3. that, therefore, all children of believers are covenant children (Acts 3:25);
4. that all those children are holy (I Cor. 7:14) or sanctified in Christ (I Cor. 1:2, Formula of Baptism);
5. that, consequently, the promise of salvation of that covenant belongs to (toekomen aan) all those children (Acts 2:39);
6. that, therefore, for all those children the administration of baptism is the obsignation and sealing unto them of the covenant of grace or that promise of salvation (Gen. 17:11, 13, 14; Formula of Baptism)?

These points are important, because they (although no officially adopted dogma's of our Reformed Churches) reveal the line of thought out of which objection was made against the synodical decisions of doctrine.

It may serve a good purpose, first of all, to attend to some of the texts that are mentioned here. Let us start with Acts 2:39, especially familiar from our Formula of Baptism: For the promise is unto you, and to your children, etc.

Noteworthy is here the translation found in the version of the Bible, authorized by the States of Holland (*Statenvertaling*), which translation is also followed in our Formula of Baptism. In the original text we find, indeed, only this simple word: For the promise is *unto you*, and to your children (humin gar estin hē epanggēlia). Therefore, whoever stares at the literal wording of the text, not taking into account the context, can dispose of the matter merely by saying: nothing is proclaimed here regarding the question, whether that promise is addressed to each one present there. And he who does not know how to liberate himself from the infectious disease of synodical thinking, at once accompanies that first thought with the other, of course; which accompanying thought is also held

before him at the administration of baptism in the synodical fellowship: "the promise is unto you", that is merely a general expression; it will have to appear presently whether that word contained, indeed, the full truth for this baptized child!

But whosoever endeavors obediently to bring the situation on the day of Pentecost to his mind, must, indeed, shrink back from this conception. Peter addressed himself in his address expressly to the *Jews* at Jerusalem, did he not? He does say in the 14th verse: "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem", but Grosheide correctly observes here: "there is no question of the heathen in the context, even though there must have been such at the time in Jerusalem, compare the verses 22, 29, 39". Now then, to these Jews Peter addresses the cutting accusation that they have killed the Saviour. The address grips them; they are "pricked in their heart", and tremblingly they ask: what shall we do? And then comes the Gospel for these murderers of Christ: Repent, and be baptized every one of you, and then also you shall receive the Holy Ghost—for the promise is unto *you!*

It is clear that the latter is *ground* on the basis of which Peter so boldly calls "every one" of those Jews present unto the reconciliation and the quickening of the fellowship of Christ. The promise of the Holy Spirit, as given in Joel 3, is part and parcel of the whole of the promises ("the" promise) which God had pledged to Israel in former times. From that Peter draws his urgent appeal to come to Christ. But if what the synodical theory would want to make us believe is true, then Peter would have horribly deceived those dismayed men, standing there before him. He would have roused every one of them to come to Christ, with profound repentance for his sins, but also, indeed, with grateful boldness, on the basis of the promise of salvation that belongs to him—while later a disputation ought to be held whether that promise was intended, indeed, for every one of them! Does one not feel that in so doing we inflict a horrible injustice to God's revelation? that we make of Him a God who (according to the graphic expression, f.i. of Rev. Vonk) "fences His answers"? (This Holland idiom leaves no good sense in English when literally translated, but the idea is that a person who "een slag om zijn arm houdt", does not commit himself to a definite answer on which you can at once rely. G.V.) It is the same miserable line of thought which we meet in the Formula of Substitution: "to build on the promise", but in the meanwhile to make that promise disputable. . . .

Yes, but—thus I hear some one say—do you not lose sight of too much that your opponents borrow their argument from the Scriptures; f.i., from Rom. 9? Indeed, they do appeal to that. It is not the question here that we are afraid to compare Scripture with Scripture (the contrary is true!); but the question is

whether the comparison is correctly made, whether or not prejudices of a corrupt human logic come into play at this juncture.

At any rate, anyone will have to admit that an unprejudiced reading of the text in Acts 2 leads us to the conclusion that the promise is destined for all the Israelites that were present at that time and their children. Even Dr. Grosheide renders such when writing on that text, as follows: "The promise is for them, for all that stand there. The Jews indeed thought that the promise was of them. . . . but they did not know the blessing of the fact that the blessing was for them, that it brought them comfort and joy; they did not clearly see the promise". It remains inconceivable that someone who could write the above, so fiercely assisted in the persecution of his reformed brethren, who maintained the above cited sentence exactly as he had said it!

For that matter, it ought not to escape us that the exegesis which virtually reduces the "the promise is unto you" to the elect only, is strongly brought to the fore by the Anabaptists. Calvin has strongly opposed it. Anent Acts 2:39, he says: "This passage conclusively refutes the Anabaptists who keep the little children, born from believing parents, from baptism, as though they were no members of the church. They try to save themselves by an allegorical conception and explain "children" as "those that are spiritually born." But they do not progress at all with so great impudence". A like observation Calvin makes again, anent Acts 2:25. And the same opposition against the Anabaptist theory is also wellknown from his Institutes and his polemics against Servetus. Of course, it could now appear, after all, that this exegesis of the Anabaptists was correct. But the old conflict that was waged about it, must make us doubly cautious.

L. DOEKES.

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society, the Mary Martha Circle, and the Young People's Society of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church hereby wish to express their heartfelt sympathy to the Hager family, who mourn the departure of a beloved wife and mother,

MRS. JOHN HAGER

The sister entered into her eternal rest, peacefully and confidently, on Tuesday, August 19, after an illness of several months. We thank our covenant God for His marvelous grace. May He comfort the bereaved family and teach them to say, "I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it."

OUR DOCTRINE

The Knowledge Of God

The subject of this article, "The Knowledge of God" refers to our knowledge of God Himself. Dogmatics (the subject which would furnish us with a systematic arrangement of all the knowledge of God out of the Scriptures) is commonly divided among the six following loci: Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. These names refer, respectively to the doctrines concerning God, Man, Christ, Salvation, the Church, and the Last Things. As we stated in our first article of Sept. 1, this order is also followed in the 37 Articles, Our Confession of Faith. In a certain and real sense of the word all of dogmatics, all knowledge is Theology, knowledge of God. Of God, and through God, and unto God are all things—Rom. 11:36. Whatever we study should lead us to God. This lies in the very nature of the case and is as it should be. Herein lies and should lie fundamentally the difference between Christian and Public education. God is all and in all. It is well that we thoroughly understand this and also practice this truth. It implies that in all that we are, also in connection with all things, and in all that we do, we must live unto the glory of the living God.

In Dogmatics, however, the name, Theology, applies only to the first of the six loci. Some have questioned this arrangement and have suggested that Theology should appear at the end instead of at the beginning. They argued that the knowledge of God is only possible after we have learned, for example, of Christ and of salvation. Do we not read in Matt. 11:37: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."? It is, of course, a self-evident fact that our knowledge of God depends and follows upon the doctrine of Christ. Neither does it make any difference whether we understand knowledge here merely in an intellectual or also in a saving sense of the word. All knowledge of God comes to us through the Son. However, although it is true that Anthropology and Christology are first as far as our receiving the knowledge of God is concerned, this does not alter the fact that God and the knowledge of God are really first. This is actually true. Of God are we and of God is the Christ. Of God are all things. God is first. Besides, the knowledge of God is first also in the sense that our knowledge of Him determines our knowledge of all things. The conception which we have of Him is basic. If we proceed from the evolutionistic theory or the modern conception of God such will also be our conception of all things. It is for this

reason that the locus of Theology must be given the first place in the orderly treatment of "Our Doctrine". Beautiful is, therefore, the first article of Our Confession of Faith, and we quote: "We believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, uncomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good." Theology treats the doctrine concerning God Himself.

The first matter which we will discuss, as in this article, is the knowledge of God. The knowledge of God has been denied by the agnostic and the mystic. In a certain sense this can also be said of the atheist. Strictly speaking, however, the atheist does not deny the knowledge of God but the very existence of God. The agnostic and the mystic deny His *knowledge*. The word "agnosticism" means literally the denial of knowledge. He denies that God can be known. He proceeds from the principle that he will believe only that which his finite mind can comprehend and understand. The existence of God cannot be proved by logical reasoning. Hence, God is therefore the unknowable. Agnosticism, we understand, rejects the Holy Scriptures as the revelation of the living God and it is rooted in unbelief. It is not honest. It does not reject the knowledge of God because God cannot be known. Fact is, the human mind cannot understand anything. The farmer cannot understand the transformation of a single kernel of corn into a full ear of corn. Yet, he does not doubt in the spring that he will have a crop in the fall. And this applies to everything. Hence, the agnostic does not reject the knowledge of God because God is unknowable, but only because, in unbelief, he rejects the revelation of the living God. He hates that revelation and therefore rejects it.

The false mystic also denies the knowledge of God. We recognize them in the emphasis which they lay upon the inner speaking of the Holy Spirit in distinction from the Word of God. They lay all emphasis upon the "inner voice". The word of Scripture is a dead letter. It all depends upon the inner speaking of the Spirit in our hearts. To understand the fallacy of this conception is of the greatest practical importance. Many children of God deprive themselves needlessly of the only comfort in life and in death because of their adherence to this view. Assurance of faith and of personal salvation, so it is claimed by them, depends wholly on the question whether we have heard this inner voice of the Spirit. Of course, we do not deny the inner speaking and operation of the Holy Spirit. But, and this we must understand, that Holy Spirit speaks unto and in our consciousness only through the Word of God. To reject that Word of God as the only medium of Divine Revelation implies therefore that we separate ourselves from the one and only source of personal assurance and comfort. The false

mystic, therefore, denying the Scriptures as the only source of personal assurance and knowledge of God, is consequently guilty of a denial of the knowledge of God.

God can be known. This is Scriptural. The reader must bear with the undersigned when he, in this article and subsequent articles, quotes profusely from the Scriptures. To quote the Word of God is of the greatest importance. To be sure, not all who quote abundantly from the Scriptures are therefore necessarily well-versed in the Word of God. Neither does spiritual strength always accompany such knowledge of the Bible. On the one hand, it is possible to quote profusely from the Word of God but utterly fail to comprehend the true connection between these various passages. And, on the other hand, mere intellectual acquaintance with the Bible does not necessarily imply spiritual knowledge of the truths of God's Word. Nevertheless, everything else being equal, knowledge of the Scriptures will tend to the increase of our faith and spiritual knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Jesus Himself answered the devil in the wilderness three times with direct quotations from the Bible. We, too, should familiarize ourselves with the Word of God. And the Scriptures certainly teach us that God can be known. We read in Acts 17:23: "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." God was surely unknown to the Athenians. This unknown God Paul would declare and reveal unto them. In Rom. 1:19 we read: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed unto them." In Hebrews 1:1 and 2 we read: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds." In Jeremiah 31:33-34 we read the beautiful words: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Here we read literally that men shall know the Lord. In Isaiah 11:9 appear the well-known words: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This word of the prophet attained unto its partial fulfillment in the New Dispensation when the knowledge covers the earth in distinction from the Old Dispensation when this knowledge of Jehovah was limited to Israel. And this word

of Isaiah will reach its ultimate fulfillment in the hereafter when the knowledge will completely fill the new heavens and the new earth. And well-known are also the words of John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."

The basis for this knowledge of the Lord is His self-Revelation. This lies in the very nature of the case. God is the unfathomable God. Scripture abundantly verifies this. The Lord is high and greatly exalted—Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." He is great and we understand it not—Job 26:14: "Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heart of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?"; Job 36:26: "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." The Lord is incomparable—Is. 40:18, 25: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." He lives in an inaccessible light—I Tim. 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." He is above every creature and every need—Job 22:2, 3: "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect"; every change—James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; time—Is. 41:4, 44:6, 48:12, Rev. 1:8, 22:13: "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am He. . . . Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God. . . . Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called; I am He; I am the first, I also am the last. . . . I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. . . . I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." And the Lord is above all space—Acts 17:27, 28: "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.", etc. etc.

God is, therefore, the unfathomable God. Hence, all knowledge of Him is based only upon Divine Self-

revelation. Divine revelation implies three things. In the first place, the "Self" in "Self-revelation" is subjective. God must do the revealing. He must speak. This is a self-evident truth. God is the infinite, transcendent God. He must tell us who and what He is. We cannot determine who and what He is. This constitutes the sin against the second commandment. To make a graven image of God, of the things in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, implies that we determine the nature and the essence of God. This is fundamentally the sin of Modernism, yea, of all heresy. God must speak to us of Himself. Secondly, Divine revelation is Self-revelation in the sense that "Self" is the Object of this revelation. God must not only do the speaking, but He must speak of *Himself*. And this, too, is a self-evident truth. God is God and besides Him there is nothing. What would or could possibly be the content of this speaking of God but Himself? He alone is the absolute Reality. Apart from Him there is nothing. Hence, also in this sense, Divine Revelation is always Self-revelation. All the works of His hands and all of Scripture speak to us concerning the greatness and power and wisdom and all the virtues of the Lord. He is great and greatly to be praised; His greatness is unsearchable—Ps. 145:3. And, thirdly, Divine revelation implies that the Lord create a creature who is able to receive this revelation of the Lord, understand it as a revelation of the unfathomable God, and sing and speak of it unto the glory of Jehovah. This the Lord did when He created man. For man, although created of the dust of the ground and therefore also adapted to the earth and having things in common with the rest of the living creatures, is herein distinguished from all creatures round about him, that he is adapted to the living God and so created that he can interpret the speech of God in nature and in the Scripture. In brief, therefore, Revelation is the act of God whereby He speaks to us concerning Himself in a speech which we can understand. It must be perfectly clear that all knowledge of the infinite, alone blessed Lord, Who lives in inaccessible light, can only then be known by us if and when He reveals Himself to us. And this He did in all the works of His hands and in His Word.

As far as the content of this knowledge of God is concerned we must not confuse knowledge of God with comprehension of Him. To comprehend the Lord implies that He fits into our human thinking, that nothing of Jehovah is unfathomable. Then all mysteries disappear. He may then be great but His greatness is not unsearchable. This constituted the sin of Paradise and it is repeated throughout the ages. In Paradise man would be as God, determining what is good and evil. There Adam aspired unto the living God, desired and attempted the wiping out of all distinction between himself and the Creator, would put himself upon the same level with his Maker. And

throughout the ages man refuses that God be king over him. He would be a king unto himself. This refusal to acknowledge the living God permeates all modern thinking today. From this sin, however, we have been delivered by Divine grace. Our sinful pride has been destroyed and a spirit of humility and contrition has been created within us by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have not only learned to acknowledge the living God but have also learned to know ourselves as condemnable sinners who had the brazen impudence to rebel against Him and say within our hearts that there is no God. Our proud and stubborn hearts have been broken and crushed. The result is that we now love God and no longer desire to understand Him. It is now our longing that He may ever remain God and that we may know and love Him as such. God we would serve exactly as the Incomprehensible and Unfathomable God.

To know God implies in the first place that we know Him in His revelation. And He has revealed Himself in all the works of His hands and in His Word. We must bow before that revelation. To assume a neutral attitude toward God's speech concerning Himself and permit the natural mind to determine whether the Scripture or any part of that Scripture is the inspired word of the Lord (which in itself is quite impossible) is spiritual folly and conceit. God has spoken and we must listen. Never may we question the revelation of God.

To know God implies in the second place that we know Him with all our being. We must know Him therefore with the heart, in love. This, of course, is the purpose of God in His Self-revelation. It is exactly as God, the Unfathomable One, that He would be recognized and feared and adored. Scripture emphasizes this spiritual knowledge of Love. God knows His own with such a knowledge of love. "For the Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish"—Ps. 1:6. "For whom He did *foreknow*, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"—Rom. 8:29. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord *knoweth* them that are His."—2 Tim. 2:19. And it is evident from the Scriptures that also God's people know the Lord in that spiritual sense of the word. This is evident from the passage of Jeremiah 31:33-34, quoted above, where our knowledge of God is the fruit of that operation of the Lord whereby He puts His law into our inward parts and writes it in our hearts. And this is also expressed in John 17:3 where the knowledge of the Lord as the one, only true God is presented as experienced by us through the Lord Jesus Christ. This latter passage does not merely mean that Jesus revealed the Triune God but also that we know that God through the atoning blood and spiritual power of that Christ as He operates within His own through

His Holy Spirit. The knowledge of God surely implies, therefore, that we know Him in our hearts, that we know Him with a spiritual knowledge of love.

However, we must know the Lord with our entire being. Hence, also with the mind. When discussing the knowledge of God the distinction has always been made between the *Cognitio Dei Insita* and the *Cognitio dei Acquisita*, the Innate Knowledge of God and the Acquired Knowledge of God. The *Cognitio Dei Insita* is the knowledge of God within us, with which we are born. This does not imply, we understand, that every man is born with innate ideas of God. If we were never instructed in the things of God we would never attain unto any knowledge of Him. But, the *Cognitio Dei Insita* does imply that every man is born with the imperishable idea, conviction of the living God. This is due to his peculiar creation. Man is simply born a creature. He has been created. He knows, therefore, that he was made and that he was made by a Creator. Besides, man was created in the image of God. This is an incontrovertible fact. As image-bearer he realizes that he was made after an original pattern, the eternal and Divine Creator. It is true that modern science ridicules this thought, ignores and rejects it, but the fact remains nevertheless. And in addition to this, man was created a servant. This is surely a self-evident fact. He is surely not his own Lord—he did not make himself. He is surely not the Lord of creation—he did not make the heavens and the earth. And it is also certain that he cannot control or determine either his own destiny or the things round about him. He is not lord but a servant. This, too, is indelibly printed in his consciousness. The servant is conscious of his Lord. Then there is finally the general testimony of the Holy Spirit Who does not leave Himself unwitnessed in the hearts of men. We can, therefore, speak of a *Cognitio Dei Insita* in the above sense of the word, although we understand that this knowledge has in itself no spiritual content. The *Cognitio Dei Acquisita* is the acquired knowledge of God. We also acquire knowledge of the Lord through study and instruction. Besides, this is our calling. Surely, we have no higher calling, also as Protestant Reformed young people, to busy ourselves diligently with the things of the Lord, as He has revealed Himself in Nature and in Grace. Only, this *Cognitio Dei Acquisita*, the acquired knowledge of God, must be prompted and motivated by the love of God. God we must love and adore. God must be worthy of all our meditation and study. God is great and His greatness is unsearchable, and it must be the longing of our heart and mind to see Him as such, that He may ever become greater, more glorious and incomprehensible, now and forever. May we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, more and more understand our calling also in this respect, and the blessing of Jehovah will remain with us and upon us.

H. V.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Jonathan's Deliverance

From their vantage point the watchmen of Saul see the Philistine host rapidly diminishing, as it were melting away. They can even see the Philistines beating down one another. Their outlook is that close. Saul, to whom the watchmen doubtless report, suspects that Jonathan has much to do with that wild commotion in the camp of the Philistines. He is mindful of the spirit of his son, knows the feats of daring of which he is capable. So the king orders the people that are with him numbered, and it is found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer are missing. The whole thing must now be clear to him. Jonathan has attacked that Philistine garrison in Michmash. And what the watchmen reported is the result. Saul's task is now clear to him. The Lord has given the enemy into the hands of Israel. Saul's unbelief has been put to shame. He should now pass over and deal the enemy the finishing blow. But apparently the unbelieving king is still afraid. For he delays. The tumult in the camp of the enemy might soon die down. He would then be facing a foe fully recovered from its fright and as self-possessed and formidable as ever. And his own army numbered but six hundred unarmed and trembling men. Besides isn't it just possible that the watchmen are mistaken. The Philistines may not at all be beating down one another. The great noise that rises from their camp may have another explanation. So what is Saul to do? It occurs to him that he can do no better than to pray, seek counsel of the Lord, by means of the Urim and the Thummim. Though there is no need of this since the will of the Lord is plain, the unbelieving king, who has already indicated that he is determined to rule without God and His directing word, decides to do just that—seek counsel of the Lord, but only because he is afraid to do what his hands find to do,—afraid because he makes not the Lord his expectation. Then, too, he may be recalling that it was said to him that his kingdom will not endure and considering that henceforth he had better make a special effort to pacify God. God might change His mind.

So Saul orders Ahiah, the highpriest, whom he has with him there in Gibeah, to bring the ephod (not Ark. The Septuagint had *ehpod*. This, doubtless is the correct text). While Saul talks with the priest, perhaps instructing him what to ask and how to frame the question, the noise in the host of the Philistines continues and even increases in volume. It is plain that the panic is permanent and growing. Already the enemy is as good as beaten. Saul no longer feels any more need of the word of God. He says to the priest, "withdraw thy hand". that is. 'desist'. Perceiving

that the host of the Philistines is being overtaken by a disaster of the first magnitude, the king can muster enough courage to go and see for himself what goes on there in the camp of the enemy. He and his people assemble themselves. They come to the battle and behold! It is as the watchmen reported, "Every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a great discomfiture." Saul's courage revives. He is again the brave king of yore. The Philistines engage in a war of self-extermination. The terrible crisis has passed. He sees with his own eyes. And he lives not by faith but by sight. As to his army, it grows now by leaps and bounds, now, that the enemy is beaten and the danger has passed. The narrative reveals that the host of the Philistines included also Hebrews, prisoners of war, it must be, who had been pressed into service against their countrymen, better said, who had voluntarily joined the ranks of the enemy to save their lives, their homes, and their positions in life. With the Philistines beaten and in flight, they are free men now; and they join the Israelites that are with Jonathan and Saul. The Hebrews who had hidden themselves in thickets, rocks, high places and pits, do likewise. Now they do come forth out of their holes; and they join their brethren in the pursuit of the Philistines. The army of Israel is again a multitude of armed and brave men, now that the enemy flees, and every man's sword among them is against his fellow. Saul, too, is brave now, and he craves action—now.

The writer closes this chapter of his narrative with the statement, "So the Lord saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over to Bethhaven."

There is a big difference discernable between Saul's behavior before and after the discomfiture of the Philistine host by the Lord. Prior to this event Saul sat still in Gibeah, too afraid to bestir himself. Now he is all action in his eagerness to prosecute the war with the Philistines. And nothing less than the complete annihilation of their fleeing armies will satisfy him. Not a man of them must be allowed to escape. Such is his determination (15:36). But the flame of his zeal is being fed by carnal ambition. It is not a zeal of God's house. He is up and doing, now that, to quote his very words, "I may be avenged of mine enemies (14:24). The Philistines are *his* enemies. *He* must be avenged. It is *his* land and *his* people that were spoiled. What the Philistines did, they did to *him*, not to the Lord. Their presence in Canaan was an insult to his person. Accordingly, it is his warfare that must now be warred; his cause that must be advanced; and the ends of his kingdom that must be promoted to his glory. And he is the man to do it.

Saul loves and seeks self. This explains his foolishly charging the people by an oath to abstain from food till the evening. It is an action that he takes under the impulse of his self-seeking love. "Cursed be the man that eateth food until the evening, that I

may be avenged on mine enemies,' are his very words. Does Saul mean to proclaim a religious fast, thinking that the Lord will be pleased at seeing His people struggling on the battlefield, warring His warfare, as unsustained by food? It is not unlikely. Saul still has that war on his hands; and there will be other wars when this one has ended; and Saul needs God's help and favor. And that favor must be bought or merited by acts of penance, such as voluntary hunger and thirst on God's battlefields. Besides, he has doubtless been deeply effected by the announcement that his kingdom will not endure. Henceforth he will be more considerate of God. He will do more for Him. And Saul also carries out his resolution. With Canaan cleared of Philistines, he even goes so far as to build an altar unto the Lord, something that he has never before done. Saul will do anything but humble himself under God's hand, repent of his sin, and resolve to walk in the way of obedience.

Yet it is doubtful whether Saul proclaims a fast at this inopportune time purely in the interest of *his* religion. He must have another purpose, his real purpose. For it's the people of the battle field, pursuing the fleeing remnants of a beaten Philistine army that shall eat no food all that day. It is not difficult to imagine the reasoning that Saul used in arguing himself into the position that it is expedient and even necessary that the people eat no food until evening. While they eat the enemy escapes. This, by all means, must not be allowed to happen. Those fleeing remnants must be run down and slain to a man. The military might of the Philistines must be permanently broken; and the Philistines taught a lesson that will never be forgotten. So let the people forget about food and wholly give themselves to the stern business of the day. They can always eat—eat when it is evening and then eat at their leisure. But let there be no eating and drinking during the day. Just for one day, let them be wholly occupied with getting on with the battle, considering that it is the Lord's warfare that they war. Just for one day let the people forget that they have stomachs. The cause is worth the sacrifice certainly. Having stuffed themselves with food, the people will feel little inclined to again get going, so that far too much time will be spent in eating and drinking. There is but one thing to do: charge the people with an oath to leave food alone for the day.

Such, doubtless, is the argument that Saul uses on himself and also on the people, and by which he persuades himself that it is right and necessary to prohibit the people to eat food today. So he adjures the people, "Cursed be the man that eateth. . . . 'let that man be reprobate, and let him perish by the hand of God'." Saul is zealous for the Lord, yet not for the Lord but for himself. The thing he does—adjuring the people—he does in the inordinate haste of a carnal ambition. Hence, the thing he does is foolish, unutter-

ably so. Anybody can see this. How can the people persistently give themselves to the grim business of the day as unsustained by food? Their task is an arduous one. It spells extreme physical effort in which the wear and tear on the thews and sinews of the body is great. If so, can the people fight on empty stomachs? What ails Saul anyway?! He goes about with a mind warped by carnal ambition, so that he is blind to the needs of his people on the battlefield, and just as unwilling as blind to give these needs due consideration. He is hard and cruel and imperious in his carnal haste to bring the war with the Philistines to a successful issue to his own credit and glory.

But the people stand in awe of Saul's zeal, not being able to discern—God only knows the heart—that it springs from carnal self-love. So it happens that the people obey their king to a man. The one exception is Jonathan.

Jonathan, who is ignorant of his father's adjuration, unwittingly offends by eating a little honey that he happens upon in the wooded region in which the pursuit takes place. One of the people sees. Thinking that what he witnesses is a wilful transgression of Saul's charge, he speaks words that are plainly meant as a rebuke. Says he to Jonathan, "Thy father straightway charged the people with an oath saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food today." But the rebuke is ill-deserved. The fault lies with Saul. Accordingly Jonathan replies, "My father hath troubled the land. See, I pray you how my eyes have been enlightened, because I have tasted a little of this honey. How much more if happily the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found. For had there not been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

As the day draws to a close, Saul receives the first evidences of the foolishness of his adjuration. Having on their empty stomachs addressed themselves all the day long to the grim task of running down and slaying fugitive Philistines, the people are famished and faint. Like ravenous beasts of prey, they fly upon the sheep, and oxen, and calves that form the spoil of war, slay them on the ground and "eat upon or over the blood," blood being on the bodies because they were on the ground, and "so with the blood". The people violate the command of God in Lev. 19:26, "Ye shall not eat on blood," that is, no flesh under which or on which is blood. This is based on the fact that "the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul, (Lev. 17:11). The offence was grave, as is plain from the following scripture, "And whatever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people, (Lev.

17:10). Eating flesh on which or under which was blood, was like murder and adultery, a gross sin, that could not be covered by the blood of Israel's typical sacrifices. The people commit this sin. Though the blame rest on them, it is Saul who has needlessly occasioned their sinning by his adjuration.

Being told what goes on, Saul complains to his informants, "Ye have dealt treacherously (this is the word that is used in the original text), 'dealt treacherously with me,'" he would have them understand. Saul is concerned about himself as always. The people lose for him the help of God against his enemies. That sinning must stop. Saul takes immediate action. He has a great stone brought to him. Next he commands his informants to "disperse themselves among the people," and announce that everyone should bring his beast "hither" and slay them "here," on the great stone, that there be no more sinning against the Lord by their eating flesh with blood. Then Saul builds that altar unto the Lord. He will do all he can to repair the damage that may have been done to the deposition of God.

Saul must realize, though he admits it or not, that in adjuring the people he committed a great blunder. Certainly, in their weakened condition the people have not been able to carry on as they would have, had they been permitted to partake of food. It is as Jonathan said: the slaughter of the Philistines was small as compared to what it would have been, had the people not been prohibited to sustain themselves with the spoil of the enemy. Far too many fugitive Philistines are still alive. They rest now from their mad flight under the cover of the night. Exhausted and worn out by the exertions of the day, they would be an easy prey for Saul and his people. Saul knows—knows that he has opportunity to make good his gross folly. "Let us go down after the Philistines by night," says he to his people, "and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." The people fall in with the idea. "Do what seemeth good unto thee," they say to Saul. The word is passed around, and preparations are made for immediate departure. It occurs not to Saul to ask counsel of the Lord. Perhaps he is too excited by the consciousness of having made a gross mistake. But the priest now comes forward, "Let us draw near thither unto the Lord," is his counsel to the king. Saul hasn't thought of that. The inquiry of the Lord is conducted by the priest through the Urim and the Thummim. "And Saul asked counsel of the Lord." "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?" There is no reply. "But he answered him not that day." The Lord is silent. Some one has offended; and unless the offender is apprehended and punished, the Lord will not help but will be against his people for evil. Saul therefore takes immediate action, for, though he is devoid of saving faith and believes not in wonders,

he is mortally afraid of God as all unbelieving men are. His heart tells him that with the Lord against him, the venture must fail. So he commands the chiefs, "Draw ye hither, all the chiefs of the people; and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die!" The chiefs draw nigh. They disperse themselves among the people and make inquiry but learn nothing. "And there was not a man among the people that answered him." The notice reveals that the people realize wherein the offence consisted, and who the offender is. Some one has eaten food and thereby violated Saul's oath; and the offender is Jonathan. The people know all this. Those who had witnessed Jonathan's eating had told others and these again had told others and so on until in less than no time perhaps the report spread thru the camp. But the people decline to expose Jonathan. For Saul has just decreed with an oath that the offender shall pay with his life. But, as the sequence of the narrative reveals, the people are determined that the sentence shall not be carried out, knowing, as they do, that the offender is Jonathan. So the king takes resource to the lot. He demands that the trial be first between him and Jonathan on the one side and the people on the other. The people raise no objection. They say to Saul, "Do what seemeth good unto thee." Yet they silently decide for Jonathan's exemption from punishment. Saul prays for a perfect lot, "O Lord God of Israel, give a perfect lot," is his prayer. The lot is cast, and Saul and Jonathan are taken, "but the people escaped." The trial is now between Jonathan and Saul, and Jonathan is taken. Facing his son, Saul says to him, "Tell me, what hast thou done?" The question is rudely curt. Saul is bitter and angry. Jonathan replies in words calculated to set forth Saul's adjuration in all its gross folly and wickedness. Says he to his father, "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand," 'I did eat in the heat of battle just a little food to revive my famished and weary soul', "and lo, I must die," 'die, because thou in thy folly and carnal haste didst adjure the people, as if it could possibly be a sin in God's eyes that the people in the heat of battle refresh themselves with the spoil of the enemy? O, the folly of thy adjuration! And now I must die, because I ate, and ate in ignorance of thy oath? As if the Lord on this account is willing my death. To say that He is, is too ridiculous for words, and just as wicked. Nay, my father, the sin is thine. Thou didst distress the people by thy folly. Thou madest the people to sin. The fault that so many of the enemy escaped is thine.' Such is the thrust of Jonathan's brief reply.

What now is Saul to do? God will not help unless Jonathan be put to death on account of his violation of the oath. On the other hand it is not the Lord's will that Jonathan die. This is plain to all, also to

Saul. So the only thing for Saul to do is to spare Jonathan and lose God's help. But he wants God's help. At least he dare not set out on his venture feeling that God is against him. So he wants God to speak and reveal his mind. For Saul wants the fleeing remnant of the Philistine host extirpated. For if the military might of the Philistines is not broken, the Philistines will triumph over him in the end. And Saul is determined that this shall not happen. In a word, he is unwilling to accept the consequences of his foolish and carnal adjuration. Thus he is resolved to retain God's help by all means, resolved therefore is Saul to sacrifice Jonathan to his vile ambitions, and this as willingly ignorant of the fact that if he slays Jonathan he loses God's help anyway. Rightly considered, therefore, there is but one thing for Saul to do: he must spare Jonathan and in true contrition of heart bewail before God the folly of his carnal adjuration and implore the Lord's forgiveness. Then Saul will live and the Lord will be his ever present helper against all his enemies. And the victory will be his, and his victory will be his faith.

But Saul was not the man to acknowledge his guilt. He was not capable of true penitence, as he was devoid of grace. So he keeps him to his resolve that Jonathan die. For he must have God's help against those Philistines. And having heard Jonathan out, Saul is adamant, "God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."

It cannot be too difficult for Saul to decree Jonathan's death. There is every reason to believe that Saul thoroughly hates Jonathan, as he one day will hate David. For Saul is reprobated, while Jonathan truly loves the Lord. The two therefore have nothing in common in a spiritual-ethical point of view. Besides, Jonathan must strike Saul as being a self-willed son, who does much as he pleases in his father's kingdom. Twice he attacked a Philistine garrison without first gaining permission of Saul. This was little to Saul's liking; for being carnal he is proud and jealous of his honor. It must have moved Saul to the quick that in the recent crisis, while he sat still in Gibeah, too afraid to bestir himself because he believed not in wonders, Jonathan was making himself wonderfully conspicuous by his works of faith and spiritual heroism. That was more than Saul could endure. For Jonathan receives all the honor, as appears from the sequence of the narrative. And to climax it all, Jonathan lost for Saul the help of God against those fleeing remnants of the Philistine army. Saul's wrath knows no bounds. Jonathan shall die. "Thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."

It is now time for the people to assert themselves; and so they do. The words that they speak supplement Jonathan's argument. "Shall Jonathan die," say the people, to Saul, "*Jonathan*, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid!" 'How utterly inconceivable that in the sight of God Jonathan is the

real offender!' And now the people, too, take an oath in opposition to that of Saul. They say, "As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not." But it was only by a mighty effort that they succeeded in this. So determined was Saul that Jonathan should die.

That Jonathan is rescued out of his hands by the people according to the will of God certainly, means that Saul shall have to reap the consequences of his vile adjuration. In its flight Saul's curse is made to return to him. He will have to bear it. For the Lord refuses to break his silence this day. The counsel that was sought is not given. His will remains hidden. Saul sets not out on his contemplated venture. He dare not. Those fugitive remnants escape. The military might of the Philistines is not broken, and thus the Philistines do triumph over Saul in the end. For the Lord is not mocked.

What an amazing zeal Saul displayed on that occasion. And much of the language that Saul used seems to indicate that it was the zeal of God that has consumed him. He swore by the name of the Lord God of Israel, "which saveth Israel." Apparently he hated Jonathan, his own flesh and blood for Christ's sake. But whether he realized it or not, actually Saul was in the service solely of his own carnal ambition. Thus it was not the zeal of God's house that burned in his bosom, but a zeal whose flames were fed by influences from the abyss. His heart is the devil's playground, and soon the narrator will be telling how that Saul is wholly in the possession of an evil spirit.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

De Beloften Eens Konings

(Psalm 101)

Dit is weer een psalm van David, en het toont ons iets van zijn hart, van zijn koningshart. Het verhaalt ons, hoe hij van plan is te handelen "in het midden zijns huizes".

Van dezen psalm is gezegd, dat hij gestuurd werd tot een ontrouwen minister van den hertog van Saxe-Gotha wiens ontrouwheid hij uitgevonden had. En van toen aan werd het een spreekwoord in het land. Wanneer een dienaar des lands iets deed, dat verkeerd was, werd er van hem gezegd: Hij zal spoedig des prinsens psalm te lezen krijgen!

Het is een schoone psalm. Hij vertelt ons hoe David van plan is om in zijn koninkrijk te handelen met gerechtigheid en gerichte, doch ook met barmhartigheid en goedheid. Een schoone combinatie!

Toch hebben we hier meer dan net maar Davids voornemen om zich correct te gedragen in zijn rijk. We beluisteren hier het voornemen van Messias om Zijn Koninkrijk te regeeren naar de volmaaktheden Gods. Een echo van dezen psalm beluisteren we in Openb. 21:27, waar gesproken wordt van de vervulling van David's rijk en stad en huisgezin. Daar zien we hoe in dat rijk, stad en huisgezin niets inkomen zal "dat ontreinigt en gruwelijkheid doet en leugen spreekt"!

Direct bij den inzet beluisteren we Davids vreugde over de fundamenten van het eeuwige Koninkrijk Gods. En die fundamenten zijn: de goedertierenheid en het recht Gods. Tezamen spellen zij het eeuwige Evangelie. Bezieet ge dit Evangelie vanuit het oogpunt van God ten overstaan van Jezus Christus, den Heere, dan is dat evangelie een zaak van het onkreukbare recht, en verdwijnt de Man van smarten achter de wolven van een eeuwigen toorn. Bezieet ge hetzelfde evangelie vanuit het oogpunt van God, ten overstaan van het volk Gods, dan is het een zaak van loutere goedertierenheid. Doe ze tezamen en beide recht en barmhartigheid schitteren van de goudglansen der goede boodschap. De vrede en de gerechtigheid kussen elkander. Op het kruis van Golgotha ziet ge ze beiden. Jesaja zegt, dat Sion door recht verlost wordt; en in tientallen van psalmen wordt God geprezen vanwege Zijn goedertierenheid die tot in der eeuwigheid is.

We doen, echter, wel om te gedenken, dat die twee deugden, evenals alle deugden Gods, volmaaktelijk EEN zijn in God. Gods gerechtigheid is een goedertieren gerechtigheid, en Zijn barmhartigheid is altijd naar het reinste recht. Zoo lezen we in het boek der Spreuken, dat de troon gesteund wordt beide door recht en door weldadigheid. Spreuken 16:12 en 20:28. En ook in dezen psalm komt het uit, dat die beide heerlijke deugden Gods in Hem één zijn, want in het eerste vers staat, dat David zal zingen van goedertierenheid en van recht, doch hij voegt er aan toe, dat hij, dat doende, van God psalmzingt. Dezelfde God die Jezus Christus wegdrukt in de vreeselijke Godsverlating, is de God die in en door dien lijdenden Borg, Zijn volk tot zich trekt als uiting van onbeschrijflijke liefde. En die beide werkingen zijn één in God.

Zoo zingt David van recht en gerechtigheid, doch ook van goedertierenheid.

U zal ik psalmzingen, o Heere!

In deze eenvoudige woorden beluistert ge het doel van schepping en herschepping. Dat is het einde van alles.

Eenige dagen geleden hoorde ik een klein jongetje zeggen: "God is nice!" Ik zei tegen zijn vader: Daar hebt ge eigenlijk het inbegrip van alle theologie. Net

maar een paar kleine woorden, door een klein kind gesproken, doch wat wereld, wat eeuwige wereld van gedachten, worden in die drie woorden vertolkt. Er zijn arme stakkerds die zich wel duizendmaal afvragen: Ben ik een van de gekenden? Ben ik een kind Gods? Hoe kan ik toch te weten komen, dat ik binnen ben, en straks niet beschaamd uitkom?

Ik zou willen vragen: wat dunkt U van God? Dat kleine kind had geen problemen nog. Hij zal ze straks wel krijgen. Doch nu gaf hij onbewust uiting aan het antwoord voor de zoogenaamde bekommerden: Wat dunkt U van God?

Werkelijk, daar hebt ge het antwoord, het eenigste antwoord. Als ge van harte Gods lof bezingt op aarde, kunt ge nooit verloren gaan.

Wat anders is er, op aarde of in den hemel? We zijn het er over eens, dat het boek van de Openbaring op verschillende plaatsen het hemel-leven beschrijft. Welnu, valt het U vreemd op, dat die beschrijving van den hemel eigenlijk niets anders is dan het zeggen, het zingen, het uitschreeuwen van onuitsprekelijke vreugde, omdat zij God zien in Zijn wondere deugdenbeeld? Ze spreken toch immers dat deugdenbeeld uit? Ze roepen Hem al maar toe: U zij de dankzegging en de eer en de heerlijkheid en de kracht en de macht en de majesteit tot in alle eeuwigheid! Later hoort Johannes, dat zij al maar zingen met een stem als van groote wateren: Halleluja! En dat woord beteekent eenvoudig dit: Looft den Heere! Welnu dan, hebt ge den hemel in Uw hart? Dat weet ge toch wel? Psalmzingt ge Gode? Waarom mag ik niet zeggen, dat het den man wel zal gaan die den Heere van harte looft en prijst?

Er is evenveel verschil tusschen den man die God vreest en dien Hem haat, als er verschil is tusschen den hemel en de hel, tusschen God en Belial. Die twee soorten van menschen zijn toch kinderen van die beiden? (Ik heb er een hekel aan om God en Satan aan te duiden door het woord *beiden*).

Een psalmzingend mensch behoort bij God in den hemel.

God gaf hem psalmen in den tegenwoordigen nacht.

En dan zegt David, en het is *ver*-vuld in Christus Jezus, "Ik zal verstandiglijk handelen in den oprechten weg".

We hebben hier eigenlijk niets anders dan hetgeen we alreede besproken aangaande het eerste vers, met dit verschil, dat in het tweede vers de waarheid van het eerste vers kalm beredeneert wordt. Verstandiglijk handelen in een oprechten weg is juist het psalmzingen van God. Dat zit zóó: wijsheid en verstand zijn die deugden, waardoor wij de beste wegen kiezen tot het bereiken van het hoogste en heerlijkste doel, namelijk, de glorie van Gods deugden. Daarom wordt Jezus beide den Weg en de Wijsheid genoemd in de Heilige Schrift: John 14 en 1 Cor. 1. Jezus Christus is de Weg waarlangs de VerbondsGod wandelt tot het bereiken

van den lof Zijns Naams. Die weg is de weg der oprechtheid. Het is de deugd waardoor wij *waar* zijn: het binnenste en innerlijke hart paart zich daar met de daden en het woord. En dat is Jezus. Of beter gezegd: dat is God in Jezus Christus.

Dien weg zal David in oprechtheid bewandelen.

Doch dan ziet hij met zijn geestelijk oog, dat hij dat alleen, in eigen kracht, niet doen kan. Zoo kunnen we er in komen, dat hij dien diepen zucht slaakt: Wanneer zult Gij tot mij komen?

Alleen als de Heere tot ons komt kunnen wij dien Weg bewandelen, oprecht en verstandiglijk. Want Hij is de kracht van onze kracht.

En dan zal 't gaan.

Dan zullen we in het midden van ons huis wandelen in de oprechtheid van ons hart. Vers. 2.

Het gaat nog, om een heele vertooning te zijn van wijsheid en verstand in de wereld, buiten ons huis. De mensch wil bedrogen zijn.

We kunnen het ook ver brengen in de kerk, waar 't volk vergaderd is. Niet zoo gemakkelijk als in de wereld waar men verleidt en wordt verleid. Want in de kerk is er het scherpe gezicht en het onderkende hart van de kennis Gods. Maar 't kan ver gaan. Judas werd niet gewantrouwd door zijn mede-apostelen, zelfs nog niet in den nacht toen hij Hem verried.

Maar in ons huis daar kan het haast niet. Daar kent men ons zooals nergens elders. En daarom is het zoo schoon als men deze heerlijkheid vindt in een mensch, dat hij in oprechtheid des harten wandelt in het midden van zijn huis. Gezegend is die woning. Daar woont dan ook vrede.

En zoo wandelde David, maar alleen, omdat Jezus Christus zóó te midden van Zijn Huis gewandeld heeft. David's oprechte wandel is het resultaat van Jezus' oprechten wandel. Zoo loopen de lijnen.

Jezus zal U nooit bedriegen. Met open gelaat, als de heldere spiegel van een oprecht hart, staart Jezus U aan en vraagt: Wat dunkt U van Mij?

Als Vader an Moeder zóó wandelen in het midden van hun huis, dan gaat het goed. Dan wordt het kwade geweerd en dan wordt het goede beloond. Dat is vrucht van oprechtheid.

Zoo kunt ge het verstaan, dat de volgende verzen des Konings gezindheid bezingen in het verdoen van de goddeloozen en het beloonen van de goeden.

Elk huisgezin van Gods volk moest zóó ingericht zijn. Dan zouden de goddeloozen zich grootelijks verwonderen en zeggen: Wat veelheid van vrede!

Ik zal geen belialsstuk voor mijne oogen stellen!

Een belialsstuk is een werk van Satan.

Ik zal het niet voor mijne oogen stellen, wil zeggen, dat hij er een afschuw van heeft. Het toont de innerlijke heiligheid van den Koning. Hetgeen men bemint, stelt men voor zijn oog. Met welgevallen ziet men op het goede en men verafschuwt het kwade. Van Job stond, dat hij was wijkende van het kwaad.

Het is de leugen en het leugenwerk. Spreekt Satan uit zichzelf, dan liegt hij. Welnu, het hart des oprechten wil er zelfs niet op zien.

Ik haat het doen der afvalligen, het zal mij niet aankleven.

Dit past bij het voorafgaande, in tweeërlei zin. De arvallige en belial behooren bij elkaar; en het voor oogen stellen past op de aankleving. Men kleeft datgene aan wat men bemint; men houdt zich verre van hetgeen gehaat wordt. Het doen van afvalligen is het doen Satans. Hij is de groote Afvallige. En zijn doen is hetgeen gruwelijk is en afschuwelijk. Dat doen is verre van het oprechte hart.

Soort zoekt soort, zegt men. Dat is correct. Welnu, als men zóó begenadigd is, dat God tot ons nadert en woning maakt in het hart, dan zullen de concrete gevolgen niet uitblijven. Dan "wijkt het verkeerde hart van ons", en "dan kennen we den booze niet". Het is een veeg teeken, als men door Satan's kinderen bemind wordt. Die den Naam des Heeren aanroept sta af van ongerechtigheid! De Heere heeft voortijds getoond, dat er een diepgaand verschil is tusschen Israel en Egypte. De baren en golven van de Schelfzee waren verschrikkelijke getuigen van dit verschil. Het verschil der harten. Een verkeerd hart is een hart dat verwrongen is. Dat is de gedachte die in het oorspronkelijke woord zit. Het is een hart dat de lijnen van de scheppingsordinantiën verloor, en, meer nog, een hart, dat die lijnen verwrong. Alles in dat hart is in zijn tegendeel veranderd. Armzalige harten!

Die van zijn naaste in het geheim achterklapt, dien zal ik verdelen!

Zelfs de wereld weet van dit euvel. Ze zijn niet zóó blind, dat zij niet weten hoe alles eigenlijk niet is zooals het zijn moest. Maar zij lachen er om. Daar is het verschil tusschen Israel en Egypte.

Niet lang geleden zag ik een spotprent in een der bladen. Vier vrouwen waren tezamen geweest in het namiddaguur. Zij hadden wat gekaart en wat thee gedronken. Maar er moet altijd één zijn, die het eerst weg moet. En de schrijver bij die prent beklagde hem of haar die het eerst weg moet. De plaat stelde het geheele tafereel in het licht. Met de hoed op en de mantel aan, spoedde die eerste vrouw zich naar de deur; en de andere drie wachtten, wachtten! Men kon het op de aangezichten lezen: de drie toonden innerlijke blijdschap in het vooruitzicht van naar hartelust te lasteren; en die ééne toonde angst voor datgene wat ze wist dat volgen zou. Meesterlijk geteekend! Ja, een meesterlijke teekening van een helsch werk! Achterklap!

Achterklap behoeft geen leugen te zijn om zijn helsche oorsprong te verraden. Het kan waar zijn, alles waar, zuivere waarheid, en toch passen in den mond der duivelen. Het komt alles aan op het motief. Men zegt de dingen niet uit liefde, maar uit haat tegen haar die wegging en het niet kan hooren.

Ze moeten verdelgd worden! Dat zegt David en Christus!

Amen, zegt het kind van God, en hij kruisigt de neiging van zijn ouden mensch. Hij bidt: Bewaar, o God! De deuren van mijn mond.

"Die hoog van oogen is en trotsch van hart, dien zal ik niet vermogen."

Ziet ge wel, lezers, dat de duivel achter alle ondeugd zit? Hooge oogen zijn hoogmoedige oogen. En een trotsch hart is letterlijk een opgeblazen, groot hart. Te groot. Veel grooter dan God het maakte. En alle die ondeugden zijn echt duivelsch. Paulus waarschuwt ons om niet hoogmoedig te zijn en te vallen in de verleiding des Satans. De groote hoofdzonde, waaruit alle andere zonden voortkomen, is de hoogmoed.

Wat is eigenlijk de hoogmoed en de trotschheid?

Het is eenvoudig dit: men wil grooter zijn dan men is. God maakte ons zóó groot. Men moest tevreden zijn. Satan in den staat van zijn rechtheid was een schoone engel. Hij had een wondere plaats bij God. Maar hij verstoutte zich en wilde als God zijn. En dat is ook zijn val geworden. God heeft hem verstooten.

En dat helsche gif spuit hij zijn geestelijke kinderen in.

Maar Jezus wil ze niet. Zij zullen niet vermogen bij den Zone Gods.

Waarom niet?

Hij heeft God lief. En God zal eeuwig God zijn.

Dat te zien, te willen en te loven is de hemel!

G. V.

NOTICE

Candidates Gerald Vanden Berg, who has accepted the call of Grand Haven, and Edward Knott, who has accepted the call of Fuller Ave. to become home missionary for the Protestant Reformed Church, will be examined at the October meeting of Classis East according to the following schedule:

Sermons.

Dogmatics I & II—Rev. B. Kok.

Dogmatics III & IV—Rev. H. De Wolf.

Dogmatics V & VI—Rev. J. De Jong.

Controversy — Rev. W. Hofman.

Knowledge of our Confessions—Rev. H. Veldman.

Knowledge of the Scriptures—Rev. M. Schipper.

Practica — Rev. M. Gritters.

Sermon Critics—Revs. J. Heys and R. Veldman.

The Synodical delegates of Classis West are requested to be present.

Classical Committee:

R. Veldman.

PERISCOPE

Christian School. . . .

We came across a Christian School news-sheet recently which attracted our attention. Since the time is at hand that children will return to school, its purpose was to make propoganda for the particular school which issued it and also to attempt to influence parents to send their children here.

While reading this little pamphlet, two things drew our attention. In the first place, we were struck by the great and overwhelming emphasis that was put upon the physical and formal advantages and aspects of the school. From the sheet, these appeared to be, by far, the dominating characteristic of this Christian School. Consequently, in the second place, we were also struck by the lack of spiritual emphasis. It is true, the ordinary and expected remarks were added but the characteristic tone of the entire four pages of information was materialistic.

Let's take a look at it. The important feature of the front page is an artist's sketch of a beautiful proposed new building. This is followed by a series of heading and delineations. The first declares: "Teaching Staff complete". Under this is the announcement that the "Board is prepared to open school in the fall with a complete staff of well qualified teachers. . . . carefully selected". According to further information this means: "Each member. . . . will meet the certification requirements of the State. . . . and be in possession of the proper certificate. . . ." A resumé is then given of the staff. The teacher's are described as: "highly recommended. . . . particularly successful in her work. . . . highly successful in teaching beginning reading. . . . graduate. . . . A.B degree. . . . The educational qualifications and practical experience of these . . . will be a valuable asset. . . . excellent record . . . rich experience in personnel work. . . . candidate for Ph. D. degree." Only an occasional remark is made as to the spiritual qualification or Christian character, as, for example, in the closing paragraph, rather by-the-way, as it were: "We are happy and grateful that we may face the new school year with a full staff of highly qualified, Christian teachers all meeting the requirements of the educational standards of our State. May God bless them richly in their work with our covenant children."

The next heading is: "Textbooks Are Brought Up-to-Date", where we are informed of "new, high quality texts. . . . the best available."

Of great importance, apparently, is the "New Clock and Bell System" which had been the memorial by the last graduating class. It is described at great length both as to appearance and operation as ". . . the latest

and most efficient time system on the market today. It will add much to the efficiency of our school."

"Building and Play-Ground Improvement" is next. Here we are told of: "Extensive alterations and repairs. . . . redecorated in a light, sight-preserving, pastel color. . . . New play equipment. . . . The new, attractive kindergarten room will be a place of joy for our beginners, and a source of pride for our parents and patrons. . . . attention this summer is particularly centered in the playground. . . . When all this work is completed. . . . will have a playground which is second to none in the city."

Finally, after an appeal is made for money to cover the expenses for these improvements, a paragraph of two sentences, entitled: "Appreciation", is added. Even this is not free of the same materialistic note: "The Board is grateful to God for the blessings of the past year and the generous giving of the supporters of. . . . who have made it possible to take care of all our current financial obligations. We face the new school year with faith and courage for continued progress in the furtherance of Christian education of our covenant children, with increasingly better facilities."

It is not our purpose to judge either the Board, teaching staff or the equipment. Nor do we have an argument with this particular school; for that reason we have carefully avoided using its name. But we feel definitely that the emphasis is wrong. The only conclusion one can come to from reading the above-mentioned pamphlet is this: "It's wonderful! Surely as good, or better, than any Public School so why shouldn't I send my children here." But, as far as the information advanced is concerned, the question still remains: Why *should* we send our children to the Christian school? And the still more basic question: What is a Christian School? What determines the qualifications of teacher's text-books and equipment? Must we be guided and judged by the utilitarian standards of efficiency, secular education and materiel? Where is the positive directive?

The general impression left upon us by the reading of this little news-sheet was that it appeared to be an apology and defense of the Christian School plant over-against the Public institutions, rather than a positive statement of basic Christian principles of education and their value. If we do not maintain, and send our children to Christian Schools, for principle reasons, we face a lost cause.

* * * *

Reformed Church in America. . . .

The General Synod of the R. C. A. met in its 141st session this year in Holland, Michigan. Among the more important actions which will be of interest to our readers are the following.

The Synod unanimously decided to remain affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in:

America; a definitely liberal organization. However, as though listening to the voice of conscience, the Synod also instructed its representatives to the council to take a position consonant with Biblical Christianity, which is an indication of the character of the Federal Council. Upon reading this decision two sad situations strike us, neither of which, however, are surprising if one is at all acquainted with the present trend in the Reformed Church. The first is the fact of affiliation itself and the unanimous decision to continue. No Church which desires to maintain the Reformed truth and professes to be Reformed has any business in the Federal Council. In fact, we feel it to be a reflection on the whole of Reformed Truth that a Church which still bears that name is so connected. In the second place, the fact that delegates to the Federal Council *must be instructed* to maintain Biblical Christianity is a sad commentary on conditions within the Federal Council not only, but even more so, on the present state of the R. C. A. and goes far to explain the decision to remain a member of the Federal Council.

Also discussed was the proposed union of the Reformed Church with the United Presbyterian Church. This merger has been "in the process" for some time. Though the General Synod deferred action until its session of 1949, and hence delayed the possibility of actual union until 1950, it nevertheless instructed the committee for union to speed up progress on the issue. The Union Committee was instructed to prepare Articles of Union covering such matters as Constitution, Liturgy, Article of Doctrine and Worship, etc. If these are approved by the General Synod of '49 they will be sent to the 41 Classes of the denomination for ratification and the merger will be consummated in 1950. Previously the U. P. Church had taken similar action.

Finally, of interest, is the instruction to the Board of Education to study the possibility of establishing a new Liberal Arts College in the far West, possibly in Los Angeles. At present the Reformed Church maintains two such colleges, one in Holland, called Hope, and Central College in Pella, Iowa. We might add to this our personal reflection that if the proposed institution is to bear the character of the two existing schools we would consider it an unnecessary duplication and addition to hundreds of like schools already in existence. Reflecting the character of the Reformed Church generally, her schools have also lost their distinction through synthesis.

* * * *

Modernist vs. Modernism. . . .

From the August 18 issue of *Time* magazine we glean the following. It is a report of a speech delivered by Mr. Stanley High, before an interdenominational group in which he indites modernism. Mr. High, according to information furnished, is a Congregationalist and graduate of the Theological School of Boston

University. Though never ordained he served 3 years as pastor and later as Editor of the *Christian Herald*. At present he is on the staff of *Reader's Digest* as roving editor.

The thrust of his speech was that the modern Protestant Church is failing her members. Much of what he said is not only interesting but reveals a striking insight into the evils of modernism. According to *Time* he said, in part, as follows: "I think the first business of the Church is to redeem me. And I don't mean to redeem me in merely a social sense which convinces me that the Golden Rule ought to be my Confession of Faith. By redeeming me, I mean personal redemption—the process by which I'm spiritually shaken apart and spiritually put together again, and from which I—the personal I—emerge a totally different person . . ."

"The first reason for this failure is that the Church—the modern, modernist Protestant Church—rates me altogether too highly. It has been one of the glories of Protestantism that it has put the emphasis on the Individual, on Free Will and Free Choice. But the net result may prove to be disastrous. . . . I'm simply not as good as modern Protestantism assumes me to be. I haven't got the spiritual stuff to do on my own what modern Protestantism expects me to do. The Church has failed me because it has given me too much freedom and too little discipline. . . . It has assumed that all I needed was the right hand of fellowship. . . ."

"Ever since my Sunday School days I've heard it dinned into my ears that I'm a child of God, that I'm made in His Image. It seems to me that those who lay so much emphasis on my bearing such resemblance to the Almighty are not only mistaken about me, they're also mistaken about history."

"Man was made in the image of God in the first chapter of Genesis. He didn't stay that way very long. In fact, he only stayed that way until the third chapter of Genesis. Then he had what the Theologians call a Fall. He's never been the same since—not on his own The whole of the Bible and that whole of the ministry of Jesus, as I understand it, were designed not to persuade man how good he is on his own, but how evil he is on his own. And how good, by the process of redemption. . . . he can become. . . ."

Mr. High closes with the following suggestion as to the solution of the problem: "The Church we need will have. . . . more of the Last Judgment and less of the Golden Rule. It will not only have a Living God, but a Live Devil. Its Heaven will have a Hell for its alternative. Its objective—so far as I'm concerned—will not be my cultivation but my rebirth. I might fail that kind of Church but that kind of Church could not fail me."

* * * *

Russia vs. Religion. . . .

Every now and then reports trickle out of Russia

which give the lie to a great deal of the "propaganda" which we heard during the war years, concerning Russian's attitude toward Christianity. Since we were then Allies much "oil" had to be spread to attempt to quiet the well-grounded fears of many Americans regarding Russia's defiance of God and positive Atheism. Now that the tables are turned, somewhat, and Russia's need for us has been alleviated, the truth again appears that nothing had ever changed.

The most recent report by a British Churchmen's committee states that "the Soviet government is still hostile to all religions". The report, which was delivered to delegates from 53 nations attending a conference of the World Sunday School Association, declared further: "neither persecution nor anti-religious propaganda have been able to exterminate religion in Russia.

"The Atheism of official Russia remains and there is no equality between religious and anti-religious movements. Some freedom of worship exists but it is a static freedom, for there is no freedom of religious teaching and consequently no Sunday Schools, Bible Classes or similar Christian organizations."

* * * *

CLIPPINGS

Playing Church. . . .

In the *Moody Monthly* of July 1947, appeared an editorial under the above title and signed W.F. Though simple and amusing it gives us something to think about. How far are we removed from this sort of thing?—if not in practise yet in principle?

"One is concerned at the lethargy of most Christian people. They are going through some motions Sunday after Sunday, with the enthusiasm of an absent-minded fourth grader during his daily calisthenics session.

"My children play doctor. They play store. Occasionally they play church. They line up the chairs, as many as they can muster, and then put a few dolls here and there to make up the "congregation". There are always vacant seats. They have all of the parts of the service. Sometimes their singing is nothing to write home about, and the offering may be just a few bottons and other odds and ends that happen to be handy.

"These children, if asked what they are doing, guilelessly exclaim, "We are playing church." But the adults who "play church" put on a show that is not funny! They leave the seats empty, while the preacher declares that "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." But they are not concerned. The ushers pass the offering plates, and the people put in whatever happens to be handy.

"When the time for the offering came in one church, a little girl noticed a rather buxom lady fingering over

the conglomerate treasures of her handbag in search of a small coin. Failing in this the woman closed her purse, and folded her hands, intending to appear in an attitude of worship while the plate passed in front of her. The little girl, who had brought her envelope from home, realized the seriousness of the situation—that someone should be at church without an offering. So the little tyke pushed her envelope into the woman's hands with the words, "You may put this in and I'll hide under the bench!"

W. H.

— NOTICE —

Corrected itinerary of Dr. Schilder's lecture tour in the Middle West and West:

WHERE	WHAT?	DAY	DATE
Hull	Lecture	Wed. P.M.	Sept. 17
Orange City	Lecture	Thurs. P.M.	Sept. 18
Sioux Center	Lecture	Friday P.M.	Sept. 19
Orange City	Sermon	Sunday A.M.	Sept. 21
Sioux Center	Sermon	Sunday P.M.	Sept. 21
Hull	Sermon	Sunday eve.	Sept. 21
Doon	Lecture	Tuesday P.M.	Sept. 23
Menno, S. D.	Lecture	Wed. P.M.	Sept. 24
Menno, S. D.	Sermon	Thurs. P.M.	Sept. 25
Edgerton	Lecture	Friday P.M.	Sept. 26
Edgerton	Sermon	Sunday A.M.	Sept. 28
Doon	Sermon	Sunday P.M.	Sept. 28
Rock Valley	Sermon	Sunday eve.	Sept. 28
Redlands	Lecture	Thurs. P.M.	Oct. 2
Bellflower	Lecture	Friday P.M.	Oct. 3
Bellflower	Sermon	Sunday A.M.	Oct. 5
Redlands	Sermon	Sunday eve.	Oct. 5
Manhattan	Lecture	Tuesday P.M.	Oct. 7
Manhattan	Sermon	Wed. P.M.	Oct. 8

Note: Lecture and Sermon in Menno, S. D., will be in the German language.

Committee for the Schilder Lecture Tour
for the Middle West and West.

Rev. G. Vos.

Note:—Due to lack of space in this issue the material of Rev. Heys and Rev. Lubbers has been omitted but will be printed in the next issue of the Standard Bearer.

— BOUND COPIES —

At present consistories or societies of our churches have the opportunity to purchase a complete set of bound Standard Bearers.

Literature, books, and back issues of the R.F.P.A. will now be loaned out to our readers with the permission of our librarian, Mr. M. Woudenberg.

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