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MEDITATION

The Rich Fool

"And He spake a parable unto them saying: The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:16-21.

"...for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say."

That was the conclusion of a beautiful speech of the Son of man to His followers. The Lord Jesus had spoken to them of very important things, indeed, the most important things for the children of men: it had to do with the Christian life which we are to live on this earth. And even if we were to be brought before the judges and the magistrates, we need not worry, for the Holy Ghost would help us in such terrifying hours.

But the Lord had made no impression on one of His hearers. That is plain from his sudden question. From the lofty sphere of witnessing for Christ and for God in the midst of the wicked, we are suddenly brought to the mundane sphere of money and earthly possessions. That one carnal man said: "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me"! What a question, and at such an hour!

We can tell by Jesus' answer that He is very much displeased at this question: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

And as a warning against such worldlimindedness, He continues: Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth!

And, secondly, He tells them the parable of the Rich Fool.

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We hear the word of a fool; the answer of God; and the conclusion of Jesus.

But is he a fool?

He sounds rather wise. What he says, and plans and does is done every day in our world of things and men. He is a rather careful man. He is laying up for old age. Is he really a fool?

He was rich to start with. And his lands brought forth abundantly. Well, that was God's doing, not his. God giveth the increase. It was a crop such as only happens once in a great while. That is first of all plain from the words: the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. But it is also plain that we have to do with an unusually large crop from the fact that the barns were too small for this crop. The size of the barns are reckoned for the average size crops.

Now then what is wrong with providing larger storage for his bumper crops? Who among the farmers would act differently?

And yet: he is a fool. First of all because the Bible says so. That is really enough. But truth is also reasonable. God is never arbitrary.

Note that his wealth breeds anxiety. That is the first indication that he is a fool. A sudden or a gradual increase of worldly goods need not bring anxiety. But it shows at once what kind of a man this is. When and as soon as he saw that his barns could not hold the wonderful gifts of God, he should have looked around him, and I assure you that he would have found plenty of barns to store his goods. Listen to what father Augustine says of this point: "God does not desire that thou shouldest lose thy riches—but that thou shouldest

change their place—bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not.”

According to father Augustine he should have changed the place of these additional riches. What places did Augustine have in mind? The widows and the orphans. There are plenty of those. There was ample place there. Attend to the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows, and the mouths of orphans, rich man!

But no, he is going to build larger barns. For he is a fool.

But there is much more.

He has an arrogant sense of possession. In this very short soliloquy he uses the personal pronoun, first person, 18 times, that is either in the form I, me, thou or thine. And also the word *soul*, which has the same import here. For with all these words, either in the first or the second person, or with the word “soul,” he has himself in mind. And that is the namecard of the fool. He is concerned with himself exclusively. And that makes him one of the worst of liars. Listen to him: these are my fruits! Also this: Soul, thou hast much goods! That makes him a liar, for God is owner and all he is is steward.

There is still more ground for calling him a fool.

Without the least foundation does he reckon on many years of life. Again, let us listen to him: Soul thou hast laid up much goods for many years! How did he know that? He did not. He knew nothing of the days of the years of his life. Anyone of us knows exactly nothing about his life span that is still to come. It may be many years; but it also may be one second: we are overcome by a sudden heart-attack, and we are gone. What a fool!

And do you think, my dear friends, that there are no such people? That he is the only fool? Or do you think that this failing is only found among the reprobates? Do not be deceived. You find it also in the church. Why do you think Christ did say this, and have it drawn up in the Word of God? So that you may scornfully laugh at the fools that be outside the Kingdom of God? Be ye not deceived: you find this in the church also.

Fourth, he is a fool for he tries to feed his soul with corn. That also is the earmark of a fool. He does not know his own soul. You cannot feed your soul with the things of the earth. The soul is the most precious thing he has, and he should feed his soul with God and godly things, not the earth and the wealth of it. He should have learned from Asaph in the 70th Psalm that there is nothing on earth or in the heavens that can feed the soul; that he needed the communion of God more than bread. And yet he says: Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry! With corn? The fool.

He is a stranger to God, to himself and to his

neighbor. It is the foul fruit of the sin of man: he acts as though he were God Almighty. He lives for himself alone, and all things must serve him to have a good time. And there is just One who may do that, and that is the adorable God. For us to attempt to live like that is the fundamental sin: the pride of life!

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But ! ! !

What a terrible word!

In that one word the whole plan of future life of this fool is put in jeopardy. God is speaking. It behooves us to be very still now, and tremble. For this fool is not far off from anyone of us. We have much of this fool in us.

But, God said unto him!

Well, when everything is equal, the word of the Lord is very sweet, sweeter than honey and the honey comb. There is nothing wrong with God's speech, even in the night. But when His word is spoken in wrath, this speech is terrible. But even in its terror, it is still beautiful. But for this fool it was hell.

It was the speech of death. No, God did not come by his bedside in this terrible night to actually talk to him. No, but God's word was equally effective. I think it meant his death struggle. God spoke in the night and the man became very “benauwd.” God spoke to him of death. And there was quite a to do in that house that night. He was a rich man. He must have had many servants. And they ran hither and thither. And the medicine man was summoned. But then, what can we poor earthworms do when God says to us: Come on, die!

Let us listen to God.

He said in that night of all his mighty plans of barns and fruits in great abundance: Fool. That was the proper denomination for himself, his life, his work, his soul and his body. The fool.

What does that word mean?

It means that you walk on a wrong way, and that you stretch out toward a wrong goal. A fool is the opposite of a wise man. And wisdom is the choosing of the right and the best way unto the attainment of the most glorious purpose. And that purpose is the praise and the honor of God. Therefore Christ is called both the Wisdom of God and the Way to God. There was no room in the life of this fool for God or His Christ.

He showed it conclusively in the few words which he spoke in the parable.

He walked upon a way, but it was self-indulgence. He had a purpose, but it was the honor and praise of self.

Let us listen some more to the glorious but terrible speech of God: Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!

How terrible!

This night. What came of all his plans? Where are the "many years" he reckoned on? Listen to Solomon: "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." 27:1 (Proverbs)

This night!

Well, that is not bad at all, if your soul is right with God. Then you have reason to rejoice, for then the pilgrimage through this terrible vale of tears is ended, and you will obtain all the hunger of your regenerated heart.

But this night is terrible for it is the night of death of the fool. And the fool is without God and so without hope in the world. And the death-night of such an one must needs be terrible. The Lord lays hold of him and from out of the midst of his counsels he is brought before the face of God. Did not Paul say: it shall be terrible to fall into the hands of God? And also this in Hebrews: For our God is a consuming fire?

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Thy soul shall be required of thee! Or, more literal: This night do they require thy soul of thee. What is the import of the plural? Who are the "they"? We know that angels came to usher Lazarus into the heaven of glory. Are these perhaps the angels of doom? Or are they the devils? I do not know.

There is something terrible in the plural however. Many come to take him to the throne of God. Some of us have trembled when the auto stopped before our door, and the officers of the Gestapo entered the house. And you went along.

But this is far more terrible. Messengers of doom! And that shall happen this night.

Our days and years, yes, but also our minutes and seconds are counted. We ought to live that. Listen to Moses: So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom! Psalm 90:12.

Here is the truth: God has set the span of our years ere the world was created. And when the last second is given to us, there will be no more. Time has run out. The sands of time may run ever so slowly, but they finally run out, and we do not know how far the sands have dropped in the nether vessel. But God knows. Live that, beloved, and you will apply your hearts unto wisdom.

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Listen to the further speech of God in that terrible night: "then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

O, what untold grief in these words! I have seen a little of this. I have seen fathers and mothers providing and providing again. Fondly counting and counting again! Shall we count it once more with glowing cheeks and shining eyes, mother? Oh yes, they provided. And God came in the night. And whose were those things that were provided by that fond

father and mother? They were the tavern keeper and the harlot.

Beloved, remember the mouth of orphans, the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows. They are God's barns. Fill them.

And they had a splendid funeral. Perhaps some eulogies too. It is a wonderful custom. But his soul was already in the hand of an avenging God. While they sat and mourned at the funeral of the departed fool.

And his body went to the grave, while his soul was given over to the destroyers. Listen to Job: "Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers."

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Here is the life of misers: "He that layeth up treasure for himself." Let us mirror ourselves at these words of Jesus. We began to say and to ask: was this man such a fool? Do not many of us live and plan like he did?

I am tempted to ask again: Was he such a fool? Do not many of us fit this last description in the words of Jesus?

If it is Self, if we lay up treasurer for it, then both it and the treasure are destroyed.

If it is God, we will have treasures in heaven, and the greatest treasure of them all is eternal life, for that is to know God.

Our calling, beloved, is to lay up treasures in heaven, and then we become rich toward God. Then we shall know Him, walk with Him, and grow like unto Him.

But how shall we live so wisely and so well?

And the answer is: through the fight of faith. Our nature is exactly as the nature of this fool in the Bible. We are not any better. We all have the poison of the devil in us: we want to live as though we were God Himself. That shall be the end of sin in the last days.

But we must fight the fight of faith.

With regard to self: Feed your soul with righteousness and holiness, and that is Jesus, our Lord.

With regard to our neighbour: use them as your barns. Christ calls the least of us His brethren. Action or inaction toward the poor and destitute is action or inaction overagainst Christ.

With regard to God: go toward Him ever closer in sweet communion. Become rich in God.

And when the night (or the day) come that He calls you from life's dream away, His coming and your going will not be terrible. And we will weep, not so much that you are gone, as that we are left behind and cannot go too.

For Jesus' sake, Amen.

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS**An Evil Piece of Work**

From three individuals of our former church in Hamilton I received a communication that is worthy of the severest condemnation by all our Protestant Reformed people, and which I do not hesitate to call a very evil piece of work, that certainly cannot have been conceived in the mind and heart of any regenerated child of God.

Under the cloak of an apparently very humble confession they launch one more very slanderous attack upon their former pastor, the Rev. H. Veldman, who because of their crooked and wicked contrivance and action now is deprived of a place in the active ministry of our churches.

Let me first of all here publish the document. It is written in the Holland language; but I will translate it into English, in order that all our readers may be able to judge.

"The Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton, assembled on Thursday, Sept. 6, 1951, reaches the following decisions:

"A, 1. To express to the Rev. Veldman and Elder Reitsma their sincere regret because of the manner in which they were treated by the Consistory in their meeting of Feb. 16, 1951. They now acknowledge that they have come to the conviction that their severance from the church connection factually led to the result that the Rev. Veldman and brother Reitsma were not treated as brethren, which is sin before God. And the Consistory therefore will confess before God and men of the sin against the command of Christ not to let a sinner in the congregation go, except after much admonition and prayer. They acknowledge that they have failed in this, and that, on the contrary, they permitted their action to be too much influenced by the motive to find as soon as possible a solution for the difficulties in which they found themselves at that moment.

"2. All this does not alter the fact that the Consistory still maintains completely the objections they had against the mode of action of the Rev. Veldman, in which it clearly appeared that he wanted to be instructor (leeraar) but not a shepherd of the flock. The Consistory is of the opinion that this public action (optreden) must be rejected, because it appeared that he wanted to introduce and to maintain his own interpretation of the Confession, which is not binding in the churches, whereby he destroyed the congregation and stood in the way of the God-willed unity, according to John 17. The Consistory is of the opinion that the ac-

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tion which it took by denying the Rev. Veldman the right to conduct the ministry of the Word was correct; and they should have continued in that way by maintaining their decision to suspend the Rev. Veldman, with the cooperation of the neighboring church, and to depose him from his office in case he did not repent.

"B. For the execution of that which is mentioned under A, the Consistory decides to send the literal text of this decision to:

1. The Rev. Veldman.
2. Brother Reitsma.
3. Classis East and West of the Prot. Ref. Churches.
4. The Consistory of Chatham.
5. To the Redactions of *The Standard Bearer* and *Concordia* for publication, with the request that all the consistories that also received the well-known decision of Jan. 16, 1951 may take notice of this decision."

(was signed)

L. v. Huizen

L. Klapwijk

J. Ton

COMMENT

In an accompanying letter these three men that call themselves the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church in Hamilton show either their ignorance and complete lack of culture, or their impudent effrontery, by sending it without any form of address or greetings. All they write is: "To Prof. H. Hoeksema, Grand Rapids." There is no address, like "Dear Brother" or "Dear Reverend" or even "Dear Sir." Nor do they finish the letter by any kind of greetings, like "With love in the Lord" or "Fraternally yours" or even "Truly yours" or "Respectfully yours." One cannot help but wonder whether if those same men write letters to a professor in the Old Country, they commit the same error. I feel, of course, offended by such a letter. But I feel much more aggrieved and ashamed that men who have the effrontery to call themselves the Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church in Hamilton show so much lack of propriety and Christian culture. And if it is not this, the case is much worse. For then the offense is intentional.

Secondly, I want to call the attention of those three men to their lawlessness. They call themselves the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hamilton, to which they have no right whatsoever, as they themselves well know. For they themselves admit that they severed themselves from the fellowship and communion of the Prot. Ref. Churches. And only in that fellowship have they the right to the name of

Protestant Reformed Church. Are they not aware that if we would do so, we could prosecute them by law?

But much more serious is what they write under A, 2. Under A, 1 they apparently make a very humble confession before God and men. But be not deceived by that confession; for it is certainly not sincere. When a brother in Christ makes a true and heartfelt confession before God and men, he does not in the same breath heap sin upon sin, as the men that call themselves the Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church in Hamilton actually do. For under A, 2 they lie about and slander the Rev. H. Veldman publicly, and thus commit what according to the Heidelberg Catechism, is called the very work of the devil. Let me make this plain.

Suppose that the three men that signed this communication had actually had the objections which they now state under A, 2 against the Rev. H. Veldman at the time when they were still in the Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church in Hamilton. And suppose that now they desire to confess their sin of having maltreated the Rev. H. Veldman and Elder Reitsma, as well as the sin of having severed themselves from the fellowship of the Prot. Ref. Churches. What would have been the proper procedure? I confess that this is difficult. For it is my experience that it is not often easy to make a thing straight which men made crooked. Yet, it seems to me a possible procedure would have been as follows:

1. That they publicly confess their sins committed against the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma before Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

2. That they request the Classis to reorganize them and those that followed them and agree with them into a Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton.

3. That they request the Classis to reinstate them, together with Brother Reitsma and the Rev. H. Veldman, in their office as elders and deacons and minister in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hamilton that is thus reorganized.

4. That, if then they had any objections against the work of the Rev. H. Veldman, which according to them required suspension and deposition from office, they walk in the legal way, bring their objections to their own Consistory, call a neighboring consistory if necessary, and finally appeal to Classis.

5. In that case, of course, the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma would have an opportunity to defend themselves in their own Consistory, in the Consistory of Chatham, and before Classis East. And the latter would have the final word as to whether or not the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma were worthy of being deposed from their respective offices.

Now, however, the three men that call themselves the Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton

have the brazen effrontery publicly to slander and besmear the good name of Brother Reitsma and the Rev. H. Veldman, without giving them the opportunity to defend themselves, unless they wish to do so publicly in *Concordia* and *The Standard Bearer*. This I call the very work of the devil. And it makes the apparently humble confession which they make under A, 1 a matter of sheer hypocrisy.

In the third place, I want to call the attention of our readers and of the three men that write the above communication to the fact that they simply lie and slander when they state that the former consistory of Hamilton, of which the Rev. Veldman was pastor at the time, had the objections against the Rev. Veldman that he did not want to be pastor, but only instructor of the flock, that he wanted to bind the flock by his own private opinion, and that thus he destroyed the congregation and stood in the way of the God-willed unity. I maintain that this is nothing but evil slander, and I do so on the following grounds:

1. It is not true that the Consistory of Hamilton, when it was still intact, had any such objections against the Rev. H. Veldman as mentioned above. If I am in error, let them inform us from their own official minutes at the time, which certainly are the only proper source. I claim that what the three men that sign the communication now do is simply to present some trumped up charges. These charges were never mentioned to the Rev. H. Veldman or Brother Reitsma in any consistory meeting. They were never mentioned to the classical committee that met with the Consistory repeatedly. Nor were they ever mentioned in the meeting of Classis East. On the contrary, at that time the same men had nothing but praise, and had no objections at all against the labor of the Rev. H. Veldman, as all the brethren of the Classical Committee of Classis East and of Classis East itself will testify.

2. Not only, however, did the Consistory of Hamilton at the time have no such charges against the labor of the Rev. H. Veldman as the three men that sign the communication now allege that they had at the time. But it is also a plain lie, and a distortion of the facts. Briefly stated, the official minutes of the Consistory of Hamilton at the time, the report of the Classical Committee of Classis East, and the minutes of Classis East will show the following facts:

a. That the Consistory of Hamilton had passed a decision to place prospective members before the question whether they would submit themselves to the instruction of the Prot. Ref. Church and whether they would promise not to agitate against the doctrine as taught in the Prot. Ref. Church of Hamilton.

b. That at a later meeting of the Consistory of Hamilton, this body rescinded its former decision and decided to throw open the doors to all that desired to

join the church, meaning, of course, especially the Liberated immigrants.

c. That the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma did not agree with this decision, and that the Consistory themselves brought the matter to the attention of the Classis, asking them for advice.

d. That Classis East advised the Consistory of Hamilton to maintain and abide by its former decision, thus justifying the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma.

e. That in a very illegal Consistory meeting, in the absence of the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma, the remaining consistory members decided to suspend the Rev. H. Veldman from office and to call the neighboring Consistory of Chatham for advice.

f. That in a later consistory meeting, they rescinded this action of suspension and severed themselves from the fellowship of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

I relate all this history from memory, but I am confident that in the main the facts are quite correct.

Now what becomes of the accusation that the Rev. H. Veldman tried to bind the flock to his own private interpretation of the Confessions? If this accusation is true, it also concerns the Classical Committee of Classis East. And in fact it concerns Classis East itself, which sustained the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma and justified them completely. What becomes of the accusation that the Rev. H. Veldman was guilty of destroying the church in Hamilton? It is simply a lie. Of that act the erstwhile Consistory and it alone is entirely responsible, the Consistory, that is, excluding the Rev. H. Veldman and Brother Reitsma.

In conclusion, let me state that I consider this communication of the three men from Hamilton a very evil piece of work. And I am afraid that the motive behind it all is the evil design to cause a further split in our churches. Let the churches beware, and take a firm stand.

H. H.

□ □ □ □ □

CLASSIS EAST will meet in regular session, D.V., Wednesday, October 10, 1951 at the Second Church of Grand Rapids.

D. Jonker, S.C.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXX.

Chapter 3

CONFESSION AND WALK

In the eighty-second question the Heidelberg asks: "Are they also to be admitted to this supper, who, by confession and life, declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly?" This question is quite distinct from the preceding one. There the question was: "For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?" And the implication of the answer was such that it was left to the individual believer to determine whether or not he is a proper partaker of the Lord's supper. To put it in different words, the question was: Who must be included in those that come to the table of the Lord as far as the church is concerned? And although in the answer it was definitely stated that the Lord's Supper is instituted only for believers, yet also hypocrites and those that do not sincerely repent of their sins before God, and that therefore eat and drink judgment to themselves, must be allowed to come to the Lord's table for the simple reason that *de intimis non judicat ecclesia*—the church does not judge about the things that are hidden. But in the present question the matter is different. It is not concerned with the determination of the individual, whether or not he is to come to the table of the Lord, but with the church as institute. It also has a calling with regard to the sacrament of holy communion. Not everybody is to be admitted to the table of the Lord. On the contrary, the Reformed churches believe in what is called "closed communion." Most churches in our day have "open communion." They do not exercise Christian discipline, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven are long covered with rust. Anyone may determine wholly for himself whether or not he shall partake of the Lord's Supper. But Reformed churches believe that they have a calling with regard to this holy sacrament. That calling is expressed by the term "closed communion." It implies that not all who should so desire are permitted to come to the table of the Lord. Hence, the question: "Are they also to be admitted to this supper, who, by confession and life, declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly?" And the answer is negative: "No; for by this, the covenant of God would be profaned, and his

wrath kindled against the whole congregation; therefore it is the duty of the christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and his apostles, to exclude such persons, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life."

In the question the Catechism speaks of confession and walk, that is, of those that by confession and walk declare themselves to be ungodly and cannot be admitted by the church to the Lord's table.

There is a most intimate relation between these two, confession and walk. A true confession reveals itself in a sanctified walk. And the latter is based on and motivated by the former. A false confession, if we may speak of a false confession, is motivated by the desire to cover up and to justify a walk according to the flesh and according to the world. And the former gives rise to the latter. It is certainly utterly false to maintain that it matters not what we believe, if only we do something in life. Principle and practice are most intimately related. Doctrine and life are inseparable. The Scriptures therefore everywhere emphasize the necessity and the obligation of the church and of the individual believer to maintain true doctrine. And everywhere the Word of God warns against heretics and false teachers. Never does it evince any sympathy with them, but rather presents them as wilful destroyers of the church and of the individual believers.

Thus we find already in the Old Testament that the Word of God condemns the false prophets as liars and deceivers. The false prophet is one that deliberately speaks lies in the name of the Lord, and that, too, to entice and deceive the people to wickedness and idolatry. And according to the law that prophet had to die, Deut. 18:20: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." So serious is this matter, that the Lord demanded that if a son prophesy lies in the name of the Lord, his father and mother that begat him shall be the first to stone him or to thrust him through with the sword. Thus we read in Deu. 13:6-11: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shall thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him

with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you." How sadly the old covenant people disobeyed this injunction is well known. But according to the prophesy of Zechariah this shall still be realized, for we read in Zech. 13:3: "And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth." The false prophets are deceivers, that wilfully speak lies in the name of the Lord from the motive of covetousness, and to destroy the people of God. Thus we read of the false prophets in Jer. 6:13-15: "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they shamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord." The people that follow in the way of their wicked lies shall perish with them, for thus we read in Jer. 14:13-16: "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them." A very vivid description of those false prophets we have in Jer. 23: 9-40. Because of them the land is full of adulterers. Because of swearing the land mourneth. Both prophet and priest are profane. They cause the people to err. While they themselves commit adultery and walk in lies, they strengthen the hand of evil doers, so that none repent and return from their wickedness. They promise peace and prosperity unto everyone that walks in the imagination of his own heart. They are the

prophets of deceit, and they cause the people of God to forget the name of the Lord. And they pervert the words of the living God. Cf. also Jer. 27:14-18; 28: 15-17; 29:8, 9; Lam. 2:14. With their lying divinations they make the heart of the people of God sad, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, Ezek. 13:28: "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." When they speak lies in the name of the Lord, their purpose is to devour souls: "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof." Ezek. 22:25.

The New Testament too warns very frequently against false teachers and against false doctrine. The Lord Jesus warns against false prophets in Matt. 7: 15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." He tells us that by their fruits they shall be known. For men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. And every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. And he continues: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:21-23. Always the elements of deceit in these false prophets is emphasized. Thus we read in Matt. 24:5: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." And again, in the 24th verse of the same chapter: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Cf. Mark 13:22. Paul mentions the name of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already; and they attempt to overthrow the faith of many. II Tim. 2:17, 18. And in chapter 4 of the same epistle, verses 3 and 4, he writes: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." False teachers are those that oppose the truth, gainsayers, vain talkers and deceivers, that are motivated by the desire for filthy lucre. Thus the apostle writes in Titus 1:9-11: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught,

that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." They are ministers of Satan, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, II Cor. 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." They are those that pervert the gospel of Christ, and whom the apostle Paul does not hesitate to call accursed, Gal. 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." They are those who are very deceitful in their ways and privily bring in heresies, luring many in their deceitful ways, motivated by covetousness, and making merchandise of the people of God. Thus we read in II Peter 2:1-3: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." Also the apostle John very seriously warns the church against the influence of false teachers. Writes he in II John 7-11: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." And to quote no more, the apostle Paul also characterizes these false teachers in no uncertain words: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with ev-

ery wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. 4:14.

From all these passages it is perfectly plain, in the first place, that it is very dangerous to harbor false teachers and false doctrines in the church. In the second place, it is also evident that the motive of these false teachers is not the love of God and the love of Christ and the love of the truth, but covetousness and the desire to make merchandise of the people of God. In the third place, it is plain what method these false prophets and teachers employ to inculcate false doctrine in the church of Christ. And finally, it is very evident that there is an intimate connection between false doctrine and a walk according to the flesh. And therefore the church of Christ ought not to allow these false teachers to remain in the church and to partake of the Lord's Supper.

It is a striking fact that there is not one part of the doctrine of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord that has not been denied and that has not been gainsaid in the course of the history of the church, and that is not denied and attacked today. Thus it is, for instance, with the doctrine of Holy Scripture, the doctrine that in Holy Writ we have the infallible record of the Word of God is denied by many, and has been denied throughout the ages. And this, of course, strikes at the very root of the Christian faith. The doctrine of the Trinity, that fundamental doctrine, upon which really rests the whole truth of Scripture, has been and is denied and attacked today. The doctrine of predestination, the truth concerning election, the very heart of the church, is gainsaid by many. The truth that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh, and the denial of which according to the apostle John is the mark of the antichrist, the truth that Christ is really God as well as really man and has assumed our human nature, has been and is distorted by many in our own day. The truth of the atonement, that is, the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, the truth that Christ died vicariously for the sins of His people, has been and is distorted and attacked and denied by many in our own day as well as in the past. The truth of the resurrection, and in connection therewith the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, was already attacked in the day of the apostle Paul in the church of Corinth, and is still gainsaid by many that do not love the truth of the gospel. And thus it is practically the case with all other parts of the doctrine of Scripture. The truth of the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God, the truth of His coming again, the truth concerning the church, the truth concerning the means of grace, the truth concerning the sacraments, that of baptism as well as that of the supper of the Lord—all these doctrines have been distorted and attacked and denied by

many false preachers and teachers. Many are the winds of doctrine that always have been trying to prevent the church from steering a straight course along the lines of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Many have been and are deceived by these false doctrines. And being deceived, they are led in ways of corruption and of the world. And therefore the church ought not to allow these false teachers and false doctrines to gain a foothold in the church. And those that propagate those false doctrines ought to be barred from the Lord's Supper, which is essentially the same as to excommunicate them from the church of Christ.

I said that it is also very evident from these passages what motivates these false teachers, and what is for that very reason the method they employ to inculcate their teachings into the church of Christ. Why are there always so many that attack the truth as it is in Christ, revealed in the Holy Scriptures? Are these false teachers simply characterized by intellectual errors? Do they, as it is often alleged, perhaps honestly err? Must they be considered as erring brethren, perhaps? Do they simply present what is their honest conviction concerning the truth of the gospel? This certainly is not the judgment of Scripture. According to the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, a false teacher or a false prophet is a wicked person, is one who pretends that he speaks the Word of the Lord, while he knows that contradicts it. Moreover, he deliberately presents the lie as the truth in order to deceive the people of God and to corrupt the church and to lead the believers astray from the way of righteousness and truth. According to Scripture, moreover, he is one that is motivated by selfish reasons, by covetousness and filthy lucre. He is a minister of Satan that appears as an angel of light. Scripture, therefore, has no sympathy with the false teacher. The apostle Paul characterizes the false teacher as one that has recourse to the sleight of men and to cunning craftiness, whereby he lies in wait to deceive. He gambles with the truth. And he means to fleece the sheep, rather than to feed them. With cunning craftiness they seek to introduce their false doctrine into the church. They never come openly, but try to inculcate their false teaching privily. There is no love of God in their hearts. They love not the Lord Jesus Christ, and they love not the church. But they love their own filthy lucre. And therefore they are enemies of the cause of God in Christ, and they cannot be admitted to the Lord's table. And the same is true for those that are permanently deceived by these false teachers, and that follow after their doctrine. It is possible, of course, that a Christian is temporarily deceived by these false teachers. But if they are really believers and love the gospel of Jesus Christ, they will return to the truth as soon as they see it, and as soon as they learn to know it in the light of Scripture. But for the

rest, both the false teacher and they that follow him cannot be admitted to the table of the Lord, and have no place in the church of Jesus Christ.

The same holds true according to the Heidelberg Catechism for those who in their life and walk in the world declare themselves to be ungodly. We have already pointed out that there is a close connection between doctrine and life. On the one hand, false doctrine leads to a sinful walk and conversation. This stands to reason. False doctrine does not lead to, but denies Christ. And in the way of false doctrine the church loses Christ. In Christ, however, is all our salvation. Without Christ we have nothing. All that we ever have and ever shall have in regard to the riches of the blessings of salvation is literally in Christ. In Him is our righteousness, our knowledge of God, our wisdom, our holiness, our sanctification, our eternal life. Christ is the Head, from Whom flows all the fulness of grace and salvation into His people. The believer, therefore, must abide in Christ and grow into Him. Just as a tree strikes its roots into the soil, to seek its nourishment, so the believer, by the grace of God, has roots that strike themselves into Christ, in order to seek all the nourishment, all the spiritual blessings of salvation in Him alone. And as we grow into Christ, we will also grow in sanctification of life, crucify our old nature, hate sin, fight the good fight, and walk as of the party of the living God in the midst of the world. Growing into Christ we derive everything out of Him. And as we derive all our salvation out of Him, we become conformable to His image, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. From this you can easily gather how dangerous it is to tolerate false doctrine. For false doctrine is a denial of Christ, and therefore leads the church away from Him. For Christ we have only in the truth of Holy Writ. Another Christ than that which is revealed in Scripture we have not. And therefore, as soon as you depart from the truth of Holy Writ, as soon as you leave the truth, and as soon as you follow after false teachers, you lose Christ and strike the roots of your soul into wrong soil. Hence, doctrine and life are inseparably connected with each other. And false doctrine leads inevitably to a life of corruption and sin in the world.

But there is a mutual relation between doctrine and life, and between false doctrine and a walk in sin. While it is true that on the one hand, false doctrine leads to a life of corruption, on the other hand, it is equally true that a life in sin is the motive of corrupting the truth. The false teacher and they that follow in his ways know very well that the truth judges and condemns them. And therefore they hate and corrupt the truth and love and propagate the lie, in order to justify their sinful life and walk. The Lord Jesus says in John 7:16-17: "Jesus answered them, and said,

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The opposite is also true. If any man will not do the will of the Father, he will oppose and deny the doctrine of Christ. Because he loves the darkness and lives in the darkness, he also loves the lie and hates the truth. There is, therefore, a mutual relation between false doctrine and a walk in sin.

That they who by their walk declare themselves to be unbelieving and ungodly have no part with the table of the Lord is evident from all Scripture. The apostle Paul writes in I Cor. 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." Again and again Scripture emphasizes that he that walks in ungodliness and corruption has no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Thus we read in Gal. 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And in Eph. 5:3-7 the same apostle writes: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them." But there is no need to quote more. And it is the calling of the church to bar from the Lord's table all that in confession and walk profess themselves to be ungodly.

H. H.



As To Books

LANGE'S COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, Kings—Esther, two volumes. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price per volume \$3.95.

Dr. Bahr of Carlsruhe, who prepared the commentary on Kings, substituted the title's *Heilsgeschichte und Ethische Grundgedanken* for the usual heading of the second part of the exposition in Lange's Bible-work. The translator has rendered this: *Historical and Ethical*. The fundamental soundness of this

part of the *Commentary* may be judged by what Dr. Bahr writes in the *Historical and Ethical* notes on the revolt of the ten tribes and the division of the kingdom. As to the evaluation of Jehu's character and work we agree rather with the notes by the Rev. W. G. Sumner, who writes that Jehu's zeal was motivated by his carnal ambition of securing for himself the throne. Cf. I, 147 ff. II 114 ff.

The commentary on *Chronicles* was prepared by Dr. Otto Zäckler, that on *Ezra* and on *Esther* by Dr. Fr. U. Schultz, and that on *Nehemiah* by Dr. Howard Crosby.

I do not believe that Dr. Schultz has succeeded to grasp and demonstrate the canonical significance of the book of *Esther*. This, to my mind, must be sought in the fact that God frustrated, by the instrumentality of carnal Jews, the attack of the dragon upon the woman that was to bring forth the manchild, the Christ. Rev. 12.

We highly recommend these commentories to all students of Holy Writ.

H. H.



LANGE'S COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, Psalms. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$4.95.

This commentary on the Psalms on Lange's *Bible-work* was prepared by Dr. Moll, professor of Theology in Halle.

I can do no better, to give the reader a taste of the contents of this commentary, than by quoting the following from the *Introduction*:

"It (i.e. the Psalter) might well be called a little Bible, embracing like a manual in the shortest and finest way, all the rest of the Bible; so that it seems as if the Holy Ghost had taken pains to set together a little Bible, a sample book of the whole of Christianity, or of all the saints, in order that he who cannot read the whole Bible, might here have almost the whole substance of it, in one little book."

No wonder the people of God prize the psalms and love to sing them!

Heartily I recommend this volume to all our readers.

H. H.



EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS, by Bishop J. C. Ryle. The Gospel according to John, two volumes. Published by Zondervan Publishing House. Price per vol. \$4.95.

All that I have said in my review of Ryle: commentary on Matthew, Mark and Luke, is applicable to his "Expository Thoughts" on the gospel according to John. These two volumes are a commentary, indeed;

yet they are more than a mere exposition of this particular book of Scripture. They evince a devout spirit and a profoundly spiritual insight into the truth of Holy Writ. The style is very lucid and makes the contents easily accesible to every student of Scripture.

Bishop Ryle believes in the Scriptural doctrine of election as is evident also from his "Thoughts" on John. The more surprising it is, therefore that, without any sound exegetical reasons, he interprets the term "world" in John 3:16 as referring to all mankind, to every sinner, head for head. With his exposition of this passage we cannot possibly agree.

H. H.



CHRISTUS IN ZIJN LIJDEN; II, Christus in den Doorgang van Zijn Lijden. Dr. K. Schilder. Uitgever J. H. Kok N. V. Kampen, Nederland.

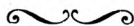
Dit werk van Dr. K. Schilder is bij velen van ons wel bekend, beide in de Hollandsche en Engelsche taal. Dit is de tweede druk van het tweede deel. Het behandelt het lijden van onzen Heiland vanaf Zijn terechtstelling voor Annas en Kajafas tot en met Zijn eindelijke veroordeeling door Pilatus.

Het boek was mij natuurlijk niet vreemd. Maar verscheidene hoofdstukken heb ik nog eens over gelezen. En bij het lezen trof me opnieuw, dat in dit werk de schrijver zich openbaart als een man van een rijken geest en zeer levendige verbeelding. Als een ontoombare stroom schijnen de gedachten zonder moeite uit zijn pen te vloeien. Ik meen ergens gelezen te hebben, dat "Christus in Zijn Lijden" een magistraal werk is. Daarmee kan it het eens zijn. Tevens moet me echter de openbaring van het hart, dat het boek de grenzen van strikte exegese niet zelden overschrijdt. Maar dit is misschien in een werk als dit te verwachten.

Dit tweede deel is aanmerkelijk herzien en ook uitgebreid. Er zijn bijna honderd paginas meer dan in de eerste druk en de bladzijden zijn bovendien van grootter formaat.

Hartelijk aanbevolen bij ons Hollandsch lezend publiek. Prijs f.13.75.

H. H.



GEREFORMEERDEN, WAARHEEN? door Mr. A. Bowman en Thys Booy. J. H. Kok, N.V. Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f7.90

De schrijvers van dit boek, zelf behorende tot de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, en beide betuigende die kerken en de Gereformeerde waarheid en belijdenis lief te hebben oefenen een scherpe kritiek op het leven der Nederlandsche Gereformeerden over de geheele linie.

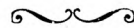
Ik ben niet bij machte als Amerikaan te oordeelen

uit de verte, in hoeverre die kritiek juist en gewettigd is. Indien ze metterdaad waar is, dan staat het Gereformeerde leven er zeer slecht, ik zou bijna zeggen, schier wanhopig voor. Dan hebben de Gereformeerde Kerken haar eerste liefde verlaten en kenmerken ze zich door doode orthodoxie en koud intellectualisme. Dan is den Geest gebluscht en het ware leven zoek. En wie zal de Geest terug roepen?

Maar ofschoon ik daarover niet kan oordeelen, wel wil ik zeggen, dat ik mij ook niet vinden kan in de mentaliteit van de auteurs. Ik verwacht geen heil van aansluiting bij den Wereldraad, noch van "burengemeenschappen", noch van levensverijking door kunst, film, dans, muziek, enz.

Maar wie een zeer ernstige en scherpe kritiek wil lezen over het Gereformeerde leven in Nederland, leze dit boek.

H. H.



HET CHRISTELIJK LEVEN IN HUWELIJK EN GEZIN, door Dr. G. Brillenburg Wurth. Uitgever J. H. Kok, N. V. Kampen, Nederland. Prijs f. 7.90.

Dit boek van Dr. Brillenburg Wurth bevelen we gaarne aan bij ieder, die onder ons Hollandsch kan lezen. Het is waar zooals de auteur schrijft in een "woord vooraf" dat "het inleidende hoofdstuk nogal een technisch-theologisch karakter draagt." Maar het is ook waar, dat dit den gewonen lezer weinig zal hinderen dat hij zonder bezwaar de enkele bladzijden van dit inleidend hoofdstuk kan overslaan.

Op Schriftuurlijk-Gereformeerde grondslag beantwoordt de schrijver de vragen, die in verband staan met het huwelijk en het sexueele leven. Taal en stijl zijn helder, zoodat het boek niet al te moeilijk te lezen is voor ons volk hier in Amerika, voorzooover als het zijn Hollandsch nog machtig is.

Met wat de schrijver zegt op p. 179 over het "moeten trouwen" kan ik het niet eens zijn; evenmin als met zijn opmerkingen op p. 245 over het weer trouwen van "de onschuldige partij."

Hartelijk aanbevolen.

H. H.



IN MEMORIAM

De Hollandsche Mannenvereniging van de eerste gemeente betreurt het verlies van een harer leden:

Mr. O. Faber

en betuigt hiermede hare innige deelneming aan de bedroefde weduwe en kinderen. Moge de Heere hun rijkelijk met Zijne troost bedeele.

Mr. N. Dijkstra, Pres.

Mr. G. Borduyn, Sec.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(6)

THE CREATION OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after his kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."—Gen. 1:20-25.

The animal, in distinction from the tree and plant, is called a "living soul."

The tree and the plant, to be sure, are living creatures. To this we called attention, if we will recall, in connection with the third day of creation. The plant lives. It moves, grows, lives, breathes, draws substances out of the earth and the world of its environment unto itself, out of the earth, out of the air, out of the sunshine and the rain, changes and transforms these substances into a rich and beautiful fruit. Wonderful, to be sure, is the world of trees and plants. However, the tree and plant are bound to the earth and to a very definite part of that earth. They cannot move, have no soul, do not have any desires or aspirations, have no consciousness, are therefore living creatures but not living souls. This distinction between the plant and the animal is thoroughly Scriptural.

The animal, however, is a living soul. It is a fact that man, too, is an animal. Scripture uses the same word, "living soul," in connection with man as well as with the "animals". The word "animal" is derived from a word which means: air, breath, soul. Hence, an animal is simply a living being, or, as defined by the dictionary: an organized, sentient (to perceive by the senses), living being. The distinction between man and the animals is not, therefore, that they are "animals" in distinction from man, but that man, in distinction from the other animals, is a moral-rational animal, the animal that is adapted to the service of the living God. Hence, the animals of the fifth day and also those created on the sixth day before the Lord created man, are living souls, beings with an "anima," a spirit. The Word of the Lord informs us that the soul of the animal is in its blood. This is true of the animal

world (we now use the term as it is commonly used), and particularly applicable to the higher animals. The animal possesses much which impresses us with the thought that it is an image-bearer of man, created in the image of man. An animal has consciousness, senses or sense organs, can see and hear and smell and feel. Moreover, the animal can form or possess a certain conception of the things round about it, has a memory, can retain the things it has learned. An animal knows its master and recognizes the stranger; a sheep hears and recognizes the voice of its shepherd, and a dog will follow its master. In fact, the Word of God even uses this illustration in Isaiah 1 to emphasize the awfulness of the hardness and wickedness of the people of Israel in the Old Dispensation. We are all acquainted with the fact that a bird knows its nest and the horse its rider. In fact, certain animals are characterized by an amazing shrewdness. Well-known among us is the saying: as cunning as a fox. Jesus, when speaking of Herod, speaks of him as "that fox." The squirrel hides its winter supply during the summer and knows the exact place where it has hid it. And we are all acquainted with the Word of God in Proverbs 6:6 "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." It is obvious that these latter animals, within certain limits, make definite plans, proceed with wisdom, make provision for the future. Moreover, the animal is also characterized by a definite sensation of feeling, emotion. It has its likes and dislikes, can "love" and "hate" (I put these words in quotation marks because they denote moral-rational activities), can reveal faithfulness as a dog to its master, but also falseness. A dog is known for its faithfulness and the wolf is known for its falseness or deceitfulness. The animal can leap for joy and gladness when meeting its master but we also know that animals have permitted themselves to die of starvation because of the death of their masters. They have been known to place themselves upon the grave of their master and none has been able to lead them away. Even this is not all. We can also observe that there is a certain reflection of man's moral-ethical life in the life and consciousness of an animal. An animal can be taught what is good or evil, right or wrong, so that, having committed either the good or the wrong, it will reveal a definite consciousness thereof. An animal knows whether it has done something which meets with its master's approval or disapproval. Rebuke a dog, and that animal will reveal in its outward deportment a certain consciousness of guilt. This is undoubtedly the reason why the Lord demands the blood of the animal which has shed the blood of a man, commands that that animal be executed. All this activity of the animal we commonly denote by the term: instinct. The word: instinct, means literally: instigation, impulse, is properly derived from a word which

means: to impel, instigate. Hence, the "instinct" of the animal refers to a certain power or disposition by which, independent of instruction or experience, without deliberation and without having any end in view, animals are unerringly directed to do spontaneously whatever is necessary for the preservation of the individual or the continuation of its kind. However, it is quite obvious that this word explains little. How much better it is to say that even as man was created in the image of God so as to be able to reflect in a creaturely way the perfections of the living and alone adorable God, the animal was created in the image of man. Of course, this does not apply to all animals equally, but to them in an ascending scale. The animal cannot know the Lord, have fellowship with the Most High. It cannot praise the Lord, pray to God, read or understand the Scriptures, the revelation of Jehovah, and it cannot understand the revelation of the Lord in all the works of His hands. Hence, the animal is not responsible, answerable to the Lord, is not righteous or unrighteous, will not be required to give an account to the Lord, Who is the Judge of all the earth and will judge the quick and the dead. The animal does not stand with its moral-ethical existence as turned toward the living God. But it does stand with its own unfathomable existence as turned to man, has been created in the image of man. It can exercise a certain fellowship with man, can speak to man and listen to what man would say to it, if only we bear in mind that this fellowship between man and the animal is exclusively earthy. Wonderful, indeed, is the life of the animal world.

In connection with this is the fact that Scripture calls attention to the animal as mobile. We read in Gen. 1:20-21, 25; "And God said, Let the water bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Hence, the animal, be it in the water or in the firmament or upon the earth, moves about. They are living creatures, living souls, move freely about, and are therefore not like unto the plants and trees which are not mobile but bound to the earth, also in a very literal sense of the word. This is clearly, yea, literally stated in the passage which we have just quoted from Gen. 1. This passage speaks of "every living creature that moveth," of the fowl that fly above the earth," and also of "everything that creepeth upon the earth."

Secondly, God called the animals out of the element in which they live.

This is evident from the Scriptural narrative in Gen. 1: 20-25. The waters, upon the word of the Lord's almighty power, bring forth the fishes and also the fowl that fly above the earth. This, we understand, does not mean that the waters brought forth these various animals or that the earth brought forth the animals that were created upon the sixth day. The only power that brought them forth, of course, was the almighty word of the living God. The text, however, does emphasize that all the animals were called into being by the almighty power of the Lord out of their own respective elements.

These fowl of verse 20 include not only the birds that fly in the firmament of heaven but also all the fowl that walk upon the ground and can also fly (turkeys, chickens, etc.). We should also note that these birds and fowl, as well as the fishes, were called by the Lord out of the waters. Birds and fowl, therefore, are essentially water animals. This does not imply that a bird can therefore live in the water. But the firmament, we noticed in a previous article when we called attention to the second day of creation, was created by God out of the water and belongs, therefore, essentially to the water. Hence, the birds and fowl, as well as the fishes, were called by the Lord out of the water.

The other animals which were called by the Lord into being upon the sixth day of creation week and whereof we read in the verses 24-25 were called by the power of the living God out of the earth and the dust of the ground.

Thirdly, also here the Scriptures emphasize that the animals were created after their kind.

This expression: after their or his kind, also occurs in verse 12 in connection with the creation of the plant-world. This, we understand, is a direct denial of the theory of Evolution. We will have more to say about this theory when we discuss the creation of a man, in our following article.

Already now, however, we may note that Scripture knows of no evolutionistic conception of things as if the one class of animals developed out of another. Each particular animal was created by the Lord, and each animal brings forth its own kind.

The various kinds of animals.

We read in the verses 20-21: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their

kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good." First, therefore, the text speaks of the water animals or fishes. The English text speaks of the great whales. This is also true of the Holland translation of this passage. However, this translation is surely too limited. The text refers to the tremendous sea monsters which move about in the great deep. Mention is also made of every living creature that moveth, which the waters bring forth abundantly. The text speaks literally of the living creatures which swarm in the waters, which the waters, we read, bring forth *abundantly*. Then, in the second place, this particular Scriptural passage speaks of the fowl that fly above the face of the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Here the text refers to all birds and feathered animals which were also called by the word of God's almighty power out of the waters.

In the verses 24-25 we read: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Here the Word of God speaks of the land animals, the animals that were called by God out of the dust of the earth.

Moreover, we should also notice the order in which the animals were created. We read first of the fishes and the birds, then of the cattle and every creeping thing, and finally of the beasts of the earth (literally: the wild animals). The "wild animals," whereof the text speaks in the original, are not to be confused with the wild, destructive animals of today. This should be self-evident. There were no such animals in the state of perfection and righteousness. Wild and destructive animals are, we understand, the result of sin. Surely it was true of God's original creation that there was nothing throughout all the works of God's hands which killed or destroyed. Sin also had its effect in the world of animals. The curse of the wrath of the Lord and the sweeping power of death, which was visited by the living God upon man and the earth, was also proclaimed upon every living creature throughout the world of animals. The wild animal whereof the original text in Genesis 1 speaks refers to the animal that is naturally wild, lives in the wilds, is not dependent upon man and does not seek man's help for its daily sustenance. But, the fishes and birds were created first. They are farthest removed from man. And also the land animals are divided into three great classes or kinds. We read of every creeping thing, that particular animal which is bound and confined to the dust of the earth more than any other living creature. We also read of the beast of the earth, or, the wild animal which, as we have already mentioned, confines itself to the wilds and was not peculiarly adapted to live

in close communion and fellowship with man. And, finally, we read of the cattle, and reference is made to those animals that live closest to man, yea, which have been taken up by man into his own abode, such as several "pet" animals.

God blesses the animals.

This we read in verse 22: "And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth."

The implication of these words is plain. This is completely in harmony with the fact that these animals are living souls, that they must multiply consciously. That the Lord blesses these animals implies that the urge, the desire to multiply was laid by Him in the nature of these animals. He commands them to be fruitful and to multiply. Of course, these animals are fruitful and multiply "after their kind."

We would also, in passing, call attention to the meaning of the word "blessing" as it occurs in this particular passage of the Word of God. The advocates of "Common Grace" believe that the Lord is gracious to all men and blesses all men, elect and reprobate alike, and that these blessings of the Lord consist of various earthly things, such as: health, sunshine, rain, etc. We maintain that the grace and also the blessing of the Lord must not be confined to the things of this present time, that the blessing of our God is particular and only for the elect, that, rather than seek it in the thing as such, we must understand the blessing of God as referring to that act of God whereby He actually "speaks the sinner well," actually makes him well (the Dutch word: *weldaden*, means literally: to do well), and also causes all things to work together unto his eternal good and salvation. The blessing of the Lord is, therefore, not to be confused with earthly things, but must be understood as an almighty, efficacious, irresistible work of the living God. Notice how this is true also in Gen. 1:22. God, we read, blessed the living creature. Blessing the living creature, He caused it to become fruitful; He, by His almighty power, laid in the nature of these animals the urge, the desire to multiply.

The land animals were created upon the sixth day.

This, we know, is the same day which witnessed the creation of Adam and Eve. That these particular animals were created upon the sixth day is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the fact that they stood closest to man.

It is surely a fact that the entire creation narrative is characterized by this ever ascending scale. Gradually, the creation of the world reaches its apex in man, the crowning point of God's handiwork. It is for this reason that the creation of the land animals and that of man occur upon the same day.

The animal world richly symbolical.

We will call attention only to a few examples. I am sure that our readers will be able to add unto these examples.

We all know the place of the lion in the animal world. He is considered the king of the wild beasts. Christ is called in Scripture the "lion of Judah's tribe." The devil, too, is likened to a lion, but then as a roaring lion. That Christ is called a lion is because He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, And we all know why He is called the lion of *Judah's tribe*.

The sheep or lamb also occupies a prominent place in Holy Writ. This animal is characterized by two things. On the one hand, we are all acquainted with the fact that the sheep is characterized by submissiveness; it is dumb before its shearers and opens not its mouth. Christ is called the "Lamb of God," because His suffering was an act of perfect and amazing obedience. However, the sheep has also another characteristic. This, too, is held before us in Holy Writ. We read in Is. 53 that we all like sheep have gone astray. It is characteristic of this animal that, once having gone astray, it can never find the way home. Need I apply this to the people of God, to you and me?

The hog, too, has a place in Holy Writ. We all know the passage which speaks of the hog that wallows in the mire, symbol of the sinner who also wallows, to his heart's content, in the mire of sin. And of the dog we read in II Pet. 3 that it returns to its vomit.

And so we could continue. The animal world is rich in its symbolical significance. For, as we remarked in a previous article, the Lord created the heavens and earth as a mighty symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven. The natural must serve the spiritual, the earthly the heavenly. If only we have eyes that see and hearts that understand.

H. Veldman

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, hereby expresses its sympathy to the wife and relatives, in the sudden death of one of its Deacons,

Mr. Harold M. Tyler

May the God of all grace and mercy comfort their hearts in the knowledge that for him to live was Christ, and therefore to die was gain.—Phil 1:21.

Rev. B. Kok, Pres.

J. Kortering, Clerk

Done in Consistory, Sept. 27, 1951

The Theological Seminary

The Theological Seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches began its 26th academic year on Tuesday, September 11, 1951, with a special convocation held at 9:15 a. m. in First Protestant Reformed Church, Fuller and Franklin Streets, Grand Rapids, Mich. The Rev. G. M. Ophoff presided. Students, faculty and theological school committee members were present.

At the opening service, the Rev. Ophoff read the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew and led in prayer. Rev. Ophoff then took as his text Matthew 28:19, 20 and delivered a thought-provoking and instructive message on the theme: The Purpose of a Theological School. This high and Reformed purpose was set in antithesis to the conception of ecclesiastical modernism which takes the position that it is not important what to think, but to have ability to think. Further, it is said, the school must remain "neutral" with respect to the thinking of its students, permitting them to select for themselves whatever of the multitudinous philosophies they prefer. But the Reformed seminary must teach not only how to think, but what to think; and all learning and scholarship must be placed in the service of faith. Then the professor went on to develop his theme in (1) The Purpose, as expressed in the above text; and (2) The Requirement for the Achievement of this Purpose. Under the latter heading he emphasized that the theological school must be one; it must have a spiritual and doctrinal unity. To effect this, the instructors and pupils together must love Christ and the Truth. They must be one by a common faith in God's Son, Scripture and the Confessions.

Following the rector's sermon, the curriculum was outlined as follows: Old Testament Hebrew, Old Testament History, Old Testament Hebrew Exegesis, Church History, Isagogics, Typology and Poimenics to be taught by Rev. Prof. Ophoff. New Testament Greek Exegesis, New Testament Greek, Ecclesiology, and Practice Preaching to be taught by Rev. Prof. Hoeksema. Rev. G. Vos is instructor in Dutch, and Rev. J. Heys is instructor in Latin. A word of greeting and exhortation was delivered to the student body on behalf of the theological school committee by the Rev. G. Lubbers. With his usual winsome manner he counselled us to faith for the future, and patience and humility for the present.

The eleven enrolled students enthusiastically envision another profitable year of study for the ministry of the Word in the seminary which, under our sovereign God, they are proud to be a part.

R. C. Harbach

IN HIS FEAR

Back To School

(4)

DWELLING ALONE IN EDUCATION

We concluded last time by calling attention to several passages, from both the Old and the New Testament, in which the principle of our Christian isolation is announced. And it is this principle, which lies at the foundation of all Christian action, inclusive of Christian action in the field of education, to the significance of which we call your attention in the present article. And for the sake of clarity, it is well, perhaps, that we do so especially from the antithetical aspect.

A Spiritual, Ethical Separation

The first question which we face in our present discussion is: what is meant by our Christian isolation? A very important question this is, because upon it depends our understanding of our whole Christian calling in the field of education. The wrong answer to this question might imply logically that we anabaptistically withdraw from any educational activity in so-called secular branches. It might also mean that we may be satisfied with education that is separate merely in the local and purely physical sense of the word. In the latter case, we would have separate schools all right; but that mere physical separation would be of no significance and no value, nor would it be obedience to our calling as Christian parents. Hence, we must clearly understand the nature of this isolation, first of all.

And then we may say that the calling of the people of God to be separate already in the old dispensation did not imply that the *essence* of this isolation lay in a physical and local separation. Apart from the fact that ultimately such physical separation cannot be maintained because the world always arises and develops right in the midst of the church, it would be relatively easy for God's people to find a separate and lonely place to dwell, isolated from the world, having no contact with the modern world, living their own life in a self-sustaining little colony. Such has often been attempted in the history of the church, and it has always suffered shipwreck on the shoals of the flesh which existed and arose and developed right in the midst of the church. But it has often too been temporarily successful—successful, that is, from the point of view of its goal. In that way we are able to avoid contact with other people, with the nations of the world, with the world and all its evil machinations. And

the need of any battle and struggle on the part of God's people is prevented.

According to Scripture, however, not only is this physical and local separation ultimately unsuccessful, but it is also based upon an erroneous understanding of our Christian calling. Nowhere does Scripture admonish God's people to such local separation. Even in the old dispensation this was not the nature of Israel's separation. God did not choose, form, and separate to Himself a people for this purpose. He did not will that His people should withdraw from the world, that they should so live as to prevent the necessity of any battle.

It is true, of course, that Israel in the old dispensation was nationally separate. God's covenant was tied in with the national existence of Israel. It ran in the river-bed of the natural generations of Abraham. It is also true that in connection with this national form of the realization of God's covenant in the old dispensation, Israel lived in a geographically separate land and in a special land. They lived in a land flowing with milk and honey. And in that land, in harmony with the character of the age of shadows, they lived their own national life.

But the essential nature of Israel's isolation did not lie in that outward separation at all. If that had been God's purpose, we may safely say that the separation between Israel and the Gentiles could and would have been much more complete. Israel would have been led then to some remote and unknown corner of the earth. Instead they were led into the land of Canaan. And Canaan was not in some forgotten corner of the world. Rather, it lay in the very center of the world. The eyes of the nations were always on Israel and on their land. That is the history of the entire old dispensation as far as Israel is concerned. And the whole of Israel's history shows very plainly that this outward separation was just so much *form*. Remove from national Israel the essence, the real, spiritual essence of her separation, and Israel was in no respect different from the rest of the nations, except, perhaps, in this, that she was more frequently the foot-ball of the nations and was to be classed as a fifth-rate power. And later history shows that the national and geographically separate form could fall away, and God would still have His people, chosen, separate, and peculiar, in the midst of the world.

Already in the old dispensation, however, the ground of the separation of God's people lay in their very special relation to the only Lord God. It lay in the covenant relation, a relation which ruled all their life—civil, social, and religious. It must become manifest in all their life that they are *of the party of the living God*. For that reason they live apart nationally, but with the eyes of the nations upon them. For that

reason they are surrounded by the nations, but must not intermingle with them, must not intermarry with them, must have no fellowship with them, may form no alliance with them in time of war. They are a spiritually separate people, and therefore they must and do dwell alone. It must become manifest that God, the Lord, the Holy One, had formed a people for Himself. And because He had done this for His own name's sake, Israel must in all their life tell forth His praises.

In the new dispensation this principle remains unchanged, as is clear from the passages from the New Testament which we cited last time, and which apply directly to the church in the new dispensation. God's covenant is no longer nationally limited. God's people no longer dwell in a separate land. They are no longer outwardly a separate covenant nation. They have no separate civil laws and customs. They have no separate earthly throne and king. But the call to separation is still the same. In fact, through the falling away of national boundaries, and due to the fact that thereby God's people are thrown into just a little closer contact with the world, the antithesis is sharpened.

Also today, therefore, this call to separation is not a calling to separate from the world in the local sense. The Christian is not called to withdraw from any department of life. On the contrary, he is called to be busy and active in every department of life. We do not consider the various spheres of national life sinful in themselves. There is no antithesis between nature and grace. If that were the case, we would have to leave the world. Then the ideal would be to leave the world, to go into a cloister, to fast, and pray, and deny ourselves the necessities of earthly existence. But such behavior is as contrary to our calling as it is unsuccessful.

The church, however, still stands in that covenant relation of friendship with the living God. The believers are of God's party in the midst of the world. And therefore they stand antithetically in the midst of the world that lies in darkness, with the calling to be holy as the Lord their God is holy, and to proclaim the virtues of Him Who calls them out of darkness into His marvellous light. That calling is, therefore, the spiritual principle from which they live. In the midst of the world, they live out of the principle of regeneration, and that in every department of life. That principle rules their entire life—their family and social life, their industrial and economic life, their political and religious life. And called they are, to turn away from any other principle or rule than that of God's Word. Hence, they can never unite with the world when that union would imply a denial of their spiritual isolation and a subjection to the carnal will of the world. For, they are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that they should show

forth the praises of Him Who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Separate Education

Confessing the above, you confess the necessity of Christian education. This is true, in the first place, because it follows that also the sphere of education must be ruled by this spiritual separation, and must therefore be in harmony with God's Word. To be sure, this implies that Christian education is more, much more, than education plus a little Bible instruction, an opening and closing prayer, and the singing of a few hymns. It implies that the entire instruction of our children is grounded in God's Word and is ruled by the principle of the fear of the Lord alone.

That means that even if the public school system allows prayer and Scripture reading—something which is neither possible nor desirable really (how shall you read God's Word in the sphere of darkness, and call upon Him Who can have no fellowship with darkness?)—that would not make the instruction Christian. Nor should Christian parents sooth their consciences with this salve of a little added pseudo-religion in the public school. We must firmly take our stand upon the basis of the principle of the antithesis, no matter what may be the policy of a particular public school, and no matter whether that little rural school has a teacher who is a Christian; and we must maintain our isolation. And the only way to do that is to educate our children ourselves, in our own schools, according to God's Word. Nor must we violate this principle of the antithesis by consoling ourselves that the education in the public schools is non-religious, neutral. For, in the first place, that is not true; it is impossible. And in the second place, if it were true, you might not even then send your children there. For your calling is not to be neutral, but to be spiritually separate, to walk as of the party of the living God in the midst of the world. Nor dare we, as Christian parents, ever choose the public school in preference to the existing Christian Schools. No one can ever, on any honest and sound grounds, maintain such a practice in the fear of the Lord.

In the second place, confessing this spiritual separation we confess the necessity of Christian education, because only covenant instruction can prepare our children for a covenant life. Education must prepare for life, in the case of our children for a life out of the principle of God's calling, the life of the covenant. Hence, it lies in the nature of the case that the instruction of our children, if it is to prepare our children for a life out of the principle of the fear of the Lord, must itself be rooted in the fear of the Lord.

H. C. Hoeksema

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Acts 13:32, 33ff

III

In our exposition of this passage from the sermon of Paul, spoken in Antioch of Pisidia, we raise and answer three questions or propositions. These are as follows:

1. What we are to understand by the "Promise made unto the Fathers." To this proposition we gave our answer in the Standard Bearer of September 1.

2. What we are to understand by the "fulfilment of this promise" and how God has done this "in raising Jesus." We began giving our answer to this question in our former article, September 15 issue of the Standard Bearer.

3. The reader can still look forward to what we understand to be the scope and meaning of the text, where it says "and we preach unto you the glad-tidings."

Before we turn our attention to the meaning of this third proposition, we must yet pay attention to some of the particulars in the context of the passage—particulars which shed a great deal of light on the proper method of interpreting the Scriptures, so that we may be certain beyond a shadow of doubt that we grasp and preach the sense of the Holy Spirit.

We refer to the fact, that Paul, in speaking of the raising of Jesus, says that God has raised Him from the dead exactly according to what is written in the Decree: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Since we have entered into the meaning of this marvelous and meaningful statement of Psalm 2:7 in our former article we shall here not delineate upon it, lest we fall into needless repetition. But what we do desire to point out at this place is, that there is here a principle of interpretation employed by Paul which lies at the bottom of the Canon of Scripture. Without seeing this principle and applying it everywhere one cannot rightly divide the Word; then the key to the understanding of the Scriptures is lacking, and we are not led along the sure path pointed out by the Scriptures for all faith and life. The principle of interpretation to which we here allude is that of interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture and that, too, in such a way that the less clear passage be interpreted in the light of the more clear passages!

In the case of our text we are in a happy position in this respect. Very clearly this seemingly obscure passage of what, according to Psalm 2:7, is written in the Decree is interpreted in the light of more clear

passages such as we have in Psalm 16:10 and in Isaiah 55:3. For it is from these passages that Paul here in this sermon refers. He does this not to prove to us from these passages *that the truth of Psalm 2:7 stands*, but rather to show from these clearer passages the meaning of the less clear passage of the Word of God. The Scriptures do not contradict themselves. We must apply the "rule of faith" (*regula fidei*) to hear the one mind of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in all of these passages of the Scriptures. What is stated in them was written many years apart, but the Primary Author, the Spirit of Christ is One and the Same in all, as He searches the deep things of the Mystery of God as it spans the ages. This is principle of interpretation not, as is often very maliciously suggested and whereby the simply are led off the track, a rationalistic principle of interpretation. It is simply the universal meaning of Scripture. And this interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture lies at the very surface here in Paul's sermon, as, in fact, in all the Scriptures.

So let us proceed with the Scriptures passages as found here in the context.

The first passage is Isaiah 55:3, where we read in full "*Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, ever the sure mercies of David.*" In close connection with these "holy things of David and the faithful things," for thus the text literally reads in the Greek, we must consider what we read in the greater part of II Sam. 7. Bible students generally, point to verse 13 of this passage as being the key passage, where we read "*He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.*" In this latter passage Jehovah Himself speaks to David by the mouth of the prophet Nathan. Jehovah forbids David to build a house for His Name in Jerusalem. David had so fervently longed to build a house for the Lord. He had now subdued the enemies, and the ark was resting on the hill of Zion, in Jerusalem, the city of the King. And now it hurts David that the Lord's Ark rests in a tent. He makes the Lord's house his care. But he is told that this will be performed by his son. Of course, typically this son is Solomon, who builds a typical temple, as beautiful an earthly replica of the heavenly as is humanly possible. But the full realization of this Word of God to David is in Christ Jesus, through Whom redemption is to all the people. He builds the temple of God's Church in three days, by rising the third day from the dead. These things are promised to David, and by virtue of this promise of God to David (Compare Acts 13:23) these "holy things" are "truthful things." To this promise the prophet refers in Isaiah 55:3, and Paul tells us that this Prophecy is the same as that spoken of in Psalm 2 according to which word Christ is raised from the dead, and in which the Promise

made to the Fathers is fulfilled once and for all.

In the same light, says Paul (and in this he concurs with Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, see Acts 2:27) we are to understand also Psalm 16:10, where we read "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Although this word too is spoken by David as having application to himself, yet it is evident that the Spirit of Christ was here speaking of the *fulfilment of the Promise* made to the fathers in the *raising of Jesus* from the dead. For it is evident that David died and that his flesh did see corruption. Hence, this text was not realized in David literally. Literally David's flesh saw corruption. Thus is the argument of the Holy Spirit from the facts. Says Paul, "For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was layed unto his fathers, *and saw corruption*, but He whom God raised up saw no corruption." This latter clause "He whom God raised up" refers to none else but to Christ, the Son promised to David, a Savior of His people.

In this man, Jesus our Lord, is salvation proclaimed!

God raised Him from the dead. Through one man sin and death came into the world, and through one man is also the resurrection of the dead, and the fulfilment of the Promise.

Thus it is written in Psalm 2:7!

Thus it is also written in all of the Scriptures!

Let, therefore, no man sever what God has put together. I refer to the eternal Counsel of God and the certain realization of the Promise in Christ Jesus our Lord. Were it not for the Decree there would not be a Promise, nor would there be a certain realization of the Promise. But now the Promise stands certain; it is as certain as its realization in Christ's death and resurrection. And nothing can stand in the way of the realization. All the raging of the peoples is vain. That it is vain is clearly shown at the Cross and Resurrection, where principalities and powers are stripped and made an open shame. Col. 2:15. For the Lord on high laughs with a Divine and holy laughter when through sinful hands the Son of God is crucified at the Cross, and He has all of these enemies in derision when He brings forth His son triumphantly from the Cross, causing the watch to become as dead men!

To this Paul not only by implication alludes in this sermon when he sketches the history of Israel from the fathers to Christ (verses 17-24) but he also calls attention to this very fact in the verses 27-31, where we read in part "For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophet which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him . . . But God raised Him from the dead . . . and we bring you good tidings of the Promise . . ."

Wherefore, I repeat let us beware that we do not separate, what God in His own mind has put together. For who have known the mind of the Lord, meting out His Spirit, or being His counselor hath taught Him, when he wrote in the Decree "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him in the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing . . . All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by Him as less than nothing and vanity! As much as we love our soul's salvation, let us gladly confess that He worketh all things according to the Counsel of His sovereign will; that this will of His sovereign and determined Decree is executed in the raising of Jesus from the dead, and in all of history, in which the Son shall be Lord over all!

Oh, it is true, we must not identify the Counsel of God either with the "Promise made to the fathers." We have said that we may not separate what God has most wonderfully joined together. But just as we may not tamper with this unity, so also we may not change the nature of the relation of Counsel and Promise and identify the two. In our text quoted from Psalm 2:7 the Decree lies back of the Promise. It is, if I may so speak, a prior consideration in God. I say: if I may so speak. I realize that God is simple, and He is eternal. Still I must speak in the categories of time (there is no time-less logic) when I speak of the eternal God. And, what is more, God Himself teaches me thus to speak. He speaks His endless thoughts in the time-limited words and thoughts of man. He speaks of *before* and *after*. And so I too say: The counsel is a prior consideration. It is determinative of all God's works. Eph. 1:11. He works all thing *according* to the counsel of His will. He elected us in Christ to be holy, having *foreordained* us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ. Hence, God's works in time, also the *giving of His Promise*, is according to the Counsel. Hence the Promise and the Counsel are not identical.

Does this mean that the Promise is less certain than the Counsel? Not at all. The Promise is just as certain, because it is God who declares of the Decree "Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten Thee," when He promulgates His Promise to Adam and Eve in the Protevangel, or when He came to Abraham promising him a son, and assuring him that He will be the God of him and of his Seed after Him, that is of Christ and all that are given Him of the Father. Always the Promise rests sure in the faithfulness of Him who has promised. That is the underlying thought in Paul's sermon. God has chosen our fathers; God has led Israel all the way from the time of the patriarchs

till the time of David the king; God has promised to David a great son, and this promise can not be broken. That is the one and ever recurring theme in all the law and the prophets, and that is the jubilant note in this sermon in Antioch of Pisidia.

Must this Promise then not be preached? Must the New Testament in Christ's blood not be administered to the heirs of the Promise? Paul says: And we preach to you glad-tidings.

To this thought we would call attention in our next article, D. V.

G. Lubbers



THROUGH THE AGES

The Arminian or Remonstrant Struggle

As was stated, to understand this struggle especially in its continuation we must have before us all the issues on which it concentrated.

First, there was the doctrinal issue. Here the question was whether grace is resistable.

Second, there was the issue of the authority, that is, the binding power of the Confessions, to wit, the Belgic Confessions and the Heidelberg Catechism.

Third, there was the issue that touched on the relation of church and state.

Regard must now be had to this third issue. Here the question was one of who rules the church, that is, rules the church as to its internal affairs. There was the view that the civil government rules the church as the vicegerent of Christ. Accordingly the government initiates and assumes control of all church-reform. The government determines the membership of the church. It controls her discipline so that no one can be excommunicated out of the church without its consent. The government controls the election of officebearers in the church by designating the persons from whose names the nomination is voted. The government calls together the synods of the church and presides upon their meetings. And the government dictates the creeds of the church.

This is the caesaro-papalism of Constantine the great. At the time of the Reformation these ideas had an ardent exponent in Thomas Liebler, better known by the name of Erastus. According to Liebler the en-

tire body of citizens of a Christian land, the whole of its people without exception, is the church, the kingdom of Christ on earth. The church is thus "volkskerk," people's church. In this church or kingdom or spiritual commonwealth there is under Christ but one ruling power, and this power is the government. It punishes the offenders of both tables of the law. Hence there is no call for Christian discipline as exercised by the church. The consistory therefore is unnecessary. Such was the contention of Liebler.

Liebler had many followers for his ideas also in The Netherlands. Included were several high-placed government officials such as the prime-minister Oldenbarnevelt.

According to these erastian conceptions the reformation of churches was worked in the parish of Saint Jacob in Utrecht. Here the erastian parish priest, Hubert Duifhuis, having become convinced of Rome's errors, desired the reform of his parish. With the permission of the government the Roman hierarchy was officially and publicly repudiated and the entire community or parish, as including the entire body of residents, Catholics and Protestants alike, formerly brought under the yoke of the Gospel. As the government stood watch over the morals of the community, no consistory was chosen. So Duifhuis wanted it.

As could be expected, the reformed Confessions were of little account to Duifhuis. He preached the Gospel of the Reformation in terms and spirit as general as possible. To the communion table he invited all persons who believed themselves to be children of God. What they believed, whether they had broken with the errors of Rome and embraced the principles of truth of the reformation, as formulated in the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism was of no concern to him. He himself had no love for these creeds. They were too pointedly Calvinistic in the matter of election and reprobation. This was plain from his public statements. He said that in doctrine he agreed fairly well with the Reformed but that he did not share their conception of predestination.

However, outside of Utrecht in all the other parishes the reformation of the churches took place in much closer agreement with right principles of church polity, especially in this one respect that the churches were allowed to choose their consistories even without governmental interference. Nevertheless all were community, that is, people's churches, "Volkskerken." Churches they were whose membership included without exception all the residents of the parish, district or town. If the town had formerly been shepherded by Roman Catholic priests and bishops, it was now the flock of reformed protestant pastors. Under the protection of and with the support of the protestant local government the old shepherds—Roman priests and

bishops—had been expelled and their places taken by reformed consistories. What it meant is that especially in the town and villages the entire population was now reformed, but, of course only nominally so. Fact is that only about $\frac{1}{8}$ of the entire citizenry had really forsaken the old errors and embraced the principles of truth of the reformation. The vast majority had not reformed. Of this number the greater part was a combination of Romanists and anabaptists. By their refusal to attend the meetings for public worship of the reformed churches they lived in open rebellion of the Reformation, and had soon therefore to be discounted as members of the Reformed Churches. It was the same in Germany and in all the other countries where the Reformation had taken root.

But there were also other churches, not people's churches but churches "closed and secret." So they were called at the time. On their own initiative and thus not as mandated by the government a number of believers known to one another as inclined to the Reformation came together and organized through their electing them officebearers. The election was free. Church discipline was exercised independent of government control. To belong to the church one had to join. And only such persons of the community were admitted into the fellowship of the church who indicated by their good confession and sanctified walk of life that they were true children of God. It was thus a congregation constituted only of believers and their seed.

Here was a church reform in strict accordance with the principles of Reformed Church Polity. For according to this polity Christ rules His church through the agency not of the civil magistrate but of the ruling and teaching ministry in the church that He instituted for that purpose. And as to church reform, it proceeds from the church. That is, it is a task to which the believers must be addressed by virtue of the office of believers. And neither is the church peoples' church but the assembly of believers, God's spiritual house open to the contrite but closed to the impenitent.

There were many such churches in the land, most of which were found in the cities.]

In 1568 the Reformed churches assembled in a national synod in Wezel and adopted a reformed Church Order. It was set in operation in the churches. But The Netherlands government was strongly inclined toward erastianism. Like the lay rulers in general of that day, it was addicted to the view that a self-governing church is a state within the state and therefore a menace. But how erroneous this view. The church is a heavenly creation, while the state is an institution that is of this earth. The power of the church is spiritual, while the power of the state is of the sword. But of this The Netherlands government was willingly ignorant. Its persistent striving therefore was to re-

duce the church to a branch of the state and in that way break its power and gain control over its organism.

In 1575 it took action. The states of Zeeland instructed the stadholder, the Prince of Orange, to appoint 4 commissioners for the department of religion with authority to supervise the ministers of the Gospel and their work and provide in their support. In addition they requested the Prince to draft a Church Order and set it in working in the churches. It was a bold step, seeing that the churches already had adopted a Church Order, one thoroughly calvinistic. Notwithstanding the Prince appointed the commissioners and the Church Order that they prepared actually proposed that the magistrate appoint the ministers, elders, and deacons who should function as a kind of committee of the government, seeing that there could not well be in one place two magistrates, one ecclesiastical and one worldly. It was now up to the Prince to impose the New Church Order on the churches. But fearing the Calvinists in the land, he took no action, and here the matter rested.

But in 1591 the government in the persons of the prime minister, Oldenbarnevelt, and his supporters again took action. In this year a Staatscommissie, meeting in the Hague, prepared a Church Order.

In the cities the election of ministers of the Gospel shall be by a college of 8 members to be chosen by the Magistrate and the Consistory, each appointing 4. The elected minister shall be presented to the magistrate and the congregation for approbation and thereupon installed in office if no objections are raised.

By eliminating the phrase, "and in the articles of the Christian faith," the second baptismal question was made to read, "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and which is taught here in this Christian Church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation."

Not a word was said about the binding power of the Confessions. The ministers were to preach the Gospel and present no new doctrines.

These are some of the most characteristic rulings of this Staats-Church order. But it was not approved by the government in the Hague. It yielded too much to the Calvinists to suit these gentlemen. That was a relief for the churches.

Such was the state of affairs at the time of the passing of Arminius 1609. But the striving of the erastian government to have the calvinistic church order replaced by one of its own fabrication did not end here. It continued and became more and more radical at every new stage.

The Calvinistic Church Order was a hated

thing. Why was it hated? What was the basic reason? It was this: it vested the *churches* with the key-power. What was wanted is a Church Order vesting not the churches but the government with this power. The church might handle this key (power), but handle it merely as a committee of the government.

It is plain that this effort to reduce the church to a branch of the state was a strategy the purpose of which was the securing of the freedom to cast off the yoke of the hated confession. With the church under its control and as vested with the right to reform the church, the government had but to speak the word and the desired freedom would be there for anyone to use who had need of it. This is stating the matter plainly. But the Arminians chose to veil their real purposes in noble sounding phrases. After the death of Arminius they began to speak openly of their effort, but they called it a striving for the "liberty of the church." What they meant is liberty for themselves to repudiate the Confessions and to proclaim their own heretical doctrines without the Reformed being at liberty to do anything about it. As champions of their cause they formed under the leadership of Wtenbogaert, the court-preacher of the Prince, a formidable band. Judging from their fire, they spoke and wrote under the impulse of a mighty conviction. And their discourses bristled with learning both in the field of dogmatics and church polity. But their opinions were not thought through and superficial.

Gomarus and his supporters never failed to expose these opinions for what they were and to oppose to them the truth of the Scriptures doing so with skill and determination. The result was perpetual debate most disgusting to many in the church including a not insignificant number of sentimental and ostensibly earnest ministers of the Gospel. For seeing that the continuation of the controversy must needs end in a split in the church, they strongly counselled peace. Not that they wanted the churches to discard their confessions and unite on the basis of the Scriptures. Peace could be had, according to their reasoned opinion, by placing upon the Confessions a construction broad enough to enable a man like Wtenbogaert, who certainly preached the Christ, to feel at home in the church. The violent in both camps should be deposed, the hair-splitters silenced, and the pulpits closed to the extreme Calvinism of Gomarus.

Had this advice been followed, Arminianism would have triumphed in the churches legally, there would never have been a great synod of Dort, and the "Declaration of Principles" known as The Five Articles against the Remonstrants (the Canons of Dort) would never have seen the light.

The real Calvinists in the church did not allow themselves to be influenced by the peace-talk of this

Moderate party in the church. They were men of definite and strong convictions. Their Confessions cried out the truth. Their church right was the right of Christ. These Confessions were being corrupted, and this right trampled. Their call therefore was to arms. And the love of God and of the truth and of the neighbor constrained them. Let the assailants of the truth be excommunicated out of the Christian church. And if they keep not silence but insist on making propaganda for their heresies, let them then be banished from the land. Better a land sparsely settled than a land peopled with heretics. Their ideal was: every city a miniature Geneva. For this ideal their brethren in the faith had fought and bled and died for forty long years. It was the ideal by which they now were being inspired. They were men therefore not to be trifled with. Wtenbogaert well realized what fate awaited him and his party, should the struggle end in a Calvinist triumph. Wtenbogaert therefore also called his party to arms. But like Arminius had done, he worked in secret and under cover.

His first move was to arrange a meeting of the leading spirits of his party. The meeting was held on the 14th of January, 1910 in Gouda, a small city in the province Holland. The group assemble was likewise small. It numbered less than 25. Wtenbogaert presided. From the deliberations it appeared that all were agreed on the following.

A national synod, if held at the present time, doubtless would pronounce the new doctrine—their Arminianism—unreformed by a large majority of vote. Measures must be taken to overcome this danger. Notice was taken of the fact that on the classes the Calvinists were insisting that the Formula of Subscription be signed by all without exception, a thing that none of those present could do.

It was agreed that a writing be composed and signed by all wherein assurance is given that their peculiar conceptions do not differ essentially from the general reformed faith. They agreed also not to set forth openly and clearly their position. That would not be tactful. It might even prove their undoing. The thing to do now is to express in writing their abhorance of the extremes of some regarding predestination.

Wtenbogaert has prepared a concept-Act, which is read, discussed and adopted. It was decided to give the document the form of a remonstrance and to place it in the hands of the counsel of the States of Holland. The historical name that was soon to be given to the members of this assembly is "The Remonstrants."

The introduction of this famous document—"Remonstrantie"—sets out as follows:

"It is becoming more and more evident that the ministers of the Gospel, who have agreed to the resolu-



THE STANDARD BEARER

tion of the lords of the states (by which is to be understood The Netherlands government that sat in the Hague) regarding the revision of the Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, and thereby let it be known to their colleges that they have some remarks bearing on these documents, which they will present to Synod—are being slandered! They are being calumniated to greatest extremes. They are accused of seeking a change in religion and of being thereby the cause of all the strife and disturbances in these lands and churches.

“They notice that the minds are being inflamed and disturbed to such an extent, as to cause an understanding that will easily give rise to the greatest difficulties. All their protestations have been without effect. Many will not believe that these ministers are innocent. The slander is that violent that it receives much more credence than it should. If the desired synod could only be held, the contrary would indeed appear. But it may be greatly feared that before synod convenes this slander will triumph to the disservice of land and churches, wherein God has called us to be pastors and teachers, and to the injury of name and fame. Considering that ministers of the Gospel are obliged to prefer these (land and churches, etc.) above all that is dear to them in this world, the undersigned have decided to do all that is possible to remove the heavy blame and quiet the minds. Often they have prayed with fervent hearts. Now they are unanimously decided to deliver a remonstrance and argument to the lords of the States of Holland and West Friesland as to their exalted government and mandating lords.”

In this introduction the Arminians present themselves as a people pure in doctrine, yet greatly slandered. But they were not men pure in doctrine but verily heretics. They taught that grace is resistable, and that the salvation of man is determined not by the counsel and will of God but by the will of the creature. This is incipient Atheism. To say of such people that they sought a *change in religion*, that is, the true religion of the Reformed Confessions, thus sought to change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto the corruptible creature—is not slander; it is the truth. Of that exactly they were guilty.

But had their accusers ever faced them with this charge and called them to repentance? If not, they were being backbited but not slandered. But the accusers had faced them with this charge. Gomarus had over and over. But we have seen with what results. We have taken notice of the duplicity of Arminius, of his evasions and equivocations by which he would disarm Gomarus. We have seen for what blasphemies he was trying to win over his friends in private corres-

pondence, while at the same time avowing in public that he was in full agreement with the reformed confessions. We have seen how guardedly he expressed himself in public, how careful he was about his public utterance. Indeed that careful that no charge could be based on anything he said. Yet the court-preacher of the Prince could present himself and his colleagues as men pure in doctrines yet slandered. But such are the ways of the heretic.

G. M. Ophoff

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IN MEMORIAM

The Hudsonville Mr. and Mrs. Society herewith wish to express their sympathy to their fellow-member, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Schut in the loss of their father:

William VanderMolen

May the God of all grace comfort them and all the bereaved with His precious word of promise that the dead in Christ shall rise again in the resurrection of utmost salvation and glory.

The Hudsonville Mr. and Mrs. Society:

Rev. Gerrit Vos, Pres.

Mrs. Kay Miedema, Secr.

Report of Classis West

MET IN EDGERTON, MINN., SEPT. 5, 1951

Rev. Vis opens the session by having the delegates sing from Psal. 24, reads Ps. 122 and conducts prayer. Credentials show that delegates are present from all the churches. Rev. W. Hofman, present for the first time in Classis West as delegate signs the Form of Subscription. Rev. S. Cammenga assumes the presidency and Rev. P. Vis records the minutes. Minutes of the preceding Session are read and after a few changes are adopted as recorded. Advisory vote is given to Revs. H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff. The Committee for Servicemen's Meditation Booklet gives its report, reporting that the books are published and have been sent out. The treasurer of this Committee reports that the cost of printing this Booklet has been more than covered by the collections asked in the churches.

A joint communication from two pastors is read to the Classis and received for information after which the Classis considers two documents, one from the Hull Consistory and one from its pastor. Originating from these documents Classis re-considers the matter of the Letter of Information which was treated by the last Classis. Last Classis of March had before it a committee report consisting of four points. This Classis expresses that the decisions made at that time in points 1, 2, 3, 4 are to be put into the hands of a committee for report at this meeting. This committee makes its report the substance of which is that the Letter of Information should not have been at Classis and Classis erred in making decisions concerning it. This is adopted. Concerning the protests of four consistory members, appearing at the last Classis of March, and now being reviewed, Classis decided that these should not have been treated by the Classis West until these had been finished with the parties involved. This decision is to be forwarded to the coming Synod. In this connection there were also other documents, present at Classis of March and sent through to Synod, concerning which this Classis decides that inasmuch as they have not been previously treated by the consistories concerned they should not have been treated at the Mar. Classis either. Synod is also to be informed of this decision.

There is a communication also from the Doon Consistory to the effect that there were two matters on the March Agenda of Classis which were never treated, namely the Consistory's instruction to Classis to overture Synod to adopt the Declaration and the protest of a brother against the Declaration together with the Consistory's answer thereto. Classis expresses in this communication that it erred in not answering Doon in this matter and answers also that "by adopting the Protest and Overture of Bellflower by which the action of Synod of 1950 was declared illegal, she exactly did answer the overture of Doon by taking away the ground of her overture." Adopted. Rev. Homer Hoeksema requests to have his negative vote recorded.

Church visitors voted are as follows: For Manhattan, Revs. Doezeema and Vis; for Calif., Revs. Vermeer and Doezeema; for the Minn.-Iowa sector, Revs. De Boer and Hofman. To the Classical Committee were voted Revs. Hofman and De Jong.

The next place of meeting will be Rock Valley. First Wednesday in March. Rev. Doezeema is appointed to thank the ladies for their catering. Questions DKO 41 are asked and satisfactorily answered.

Minutes of the proceedings are read, and Rev. Doezeema closes this session with thanksgiving.

M. Gritters, S. C. Classis West.