

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XX

DECEMBER 1, 1943

NUMBER 5

MEDITATIE

Onuitsprekelijke Vreugde

Denwelken gij niet gezien hebt, en nogtans liefhebt; in Denwelken gij nu, hoewel Hem niet ziende, maar geloovende, u verheugt, met eene onuitsprekelijke en heerlijke vreugde; verkrijgende het einde uws geloofs, namelijk de zaligheid der zielen.

I Pet. 1:8, 9.

Hemelvreugde!

Beginsel eener onuitsprekelijke vreugde, die nog wel niet ten volle is geopenbaard, maar die toch ook thans ons hart vervult!

Vreugde temidden van veel droefheid, blijdschap in de tegenwoordige smart des lijdens, hemelsche zaligheid temidden der ellende, een beginsel van de vreugde des eeuwigen levens, terwijl we nog midden in den dood liggen.

Een vooruitgrijpen in hope, door het geloof, naar de volkomene zaligheid der zielen, die we ook hier in beginsel verkregen!

Daarvan spreekt de tekst.

Van de vreugde, waarvan ook onze Heidelbergse spreekt in zijn antwoord op de acht en vijftigste vraag: "Dat, nademaal ik nu het beginsel der eeuwige vreugde in mijn hart gevoel, ik na dit leven volkomene zaligheid bezitten zal, die geen oog gezien, geen oor gehoord heeft, en in geens menschen hart opgeklommen is, en dat om God waarin eeuwiglijk te prijzen."

Want wel meenen sommigen, dat de apostel hier spreekt van de volkomene vreugde, die in de toekomst wacht, wanneer we zullen verkregen hebben de eendelijke zaligheid der zielen. Doch alles is hier tegen. Het werkwoord staat in den tegenwoordigen tijd: "waarin gij u *verheugt*," het woordje nu kan zeer wel

gelezen worden als eene bepaling bij *verheugt*, zooals onze Hollandsche vertaling dan ook doet: *nu* verheugt gij u; het is eene vreugde, die opkomt uit uw geloof, dat ook tegenwoordig is: geloovende verheugt gij u nu; gij hebt Hem *thans* ook lief naar dezen zelfden tekst; en ook in vs. 6 had de apostel reeds gesproken van eene tegenwoordige vreugde, ook al is het, dat wij een weinig bedroefd worden, als het noodig is, door menig-erlei verzoeking. Vandaar, dat het boven twijfel mag geacht verheven te zijn, dat de tekst gewaagt van eene tegenwoordige vreugde, van "het beginsel der eeuwige vreugde," dat de geloovigen ook in dit leven in hunne harten gevoelen.

Vreugde in de "zaligheid der zielen."

Wel is deze zaligheid der zielen in haar volheid een toekomstig goed, dat eerst verkregen zal worden, en niet verkregen kan worden dan in de "openbaring van Jezus Christus." In Hem toch rust deze zaligheid. Met Hem is deze zaligheid nog verborgen in God. Slechts als Hij zal geopenbaard worden, zal ook die zaligheid eerst ten volle aan het licht treden. Want die openbaring van Jezus Christus zal juist eene openbaring zijn in en met en door allen, die Hem de Vader heeft gegeven. Het is de zaligheid van het zien aangezicht tot aangezicht, van het kennen, zooals we ook gekend zijn, van het Hem gelijk te zijn, van het eeuwig wonen en verkeer in Gods eeuwigen en hemelschen tabernakel!

De zaligheid der *zielen*!

Niet alsof alleen de ziel verheerlijkt zou worden in dien dag der openbaring van Jezus Christus. In die zaligheid zal ook het lichaam deelen, dat immers door Zijne kracht gelijk zal worden gemaakt aan Zijn eigen heerlijk lichaam der opstanding. En tevens zal heel de zuchtende schepping verlost worden, om te deelen in de vrijheid der heerlijkheid der kinderen Gods. Want wij verwachten nieuwe hemelen, en eene nieuwe aarde, waarin gerechtigheid woont. Doch dit alles betreft toch de zaligheid der *zielen*. Want zonder het verheerlijkte lichaam der opstanding, en zonder de nieuwe schepping heeft ook de ziel niet haar volle zaligheid

verkregen. Wel is daar eene aanvankelijke zaligheid der ziel onmiddellijk na den dood, wanneer het aardsche huis dezes tabernakels verbroken zal zijn, en wij een gebouw van God zullen hebben, niet met handen gemaakt, eeuwig in de hemelen. Maar ook in die aanvankelijke zaligheid ziet de ziel nog altijd uit naar "het einde des geloofs," de volle heerlijkheid in den dag van de openbaring van Jezus Christus. Dan, wanneer het lichaam, dat in verderfelijheid en sterfelijheid en zwakheid en oneer gezaaid werd, in onverderfelijheid en onsterfelijheid, in kracht en heerlijkheid zal zijn opgewekt; dan, wanneer ook de laatste der lidmaten van het lichaam van Christus zal zijn toegebracht en verheerlijkt; dan, wanneer alle dingen nieuw gemaakt zullen zijn, en de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen zijn zal in hemelschen glans,—dan zullen we de volkomene zaligheid der zielen verkregen hebben.

Het einde onzes geloofs!

Dat toch is de belofte, die door het geloof wordt omhelsd, het geloof, dat een bewijs is der zaken, die men niet ziet, een vaste grond der dingen, die men hoopt; het geloof waarin de ouden, die de belofte niet verkregen hebben, zijn gestorven in vrede, die belofte, die zaligheid, die de vervulling is der belofte, van verre aanschouwende als het einde huns geloofs; het geloof, door de kracht waarvan ze beleden, dat ze gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde waren.

Op dat einde, maar dan ook als het uiterste einde, ziet het geloof.

Naar dat einde strekt het zich.

Maar dat einde grijpt het ook nu!

Want, ofschoon het waar is, dat deze zaligheid der zielen in hare volle heerlijkheid in de toekomst ligt, het is evenzeer waar, dat we in en door het geloof het beginsel van dat "einde" bezitten! Want wie in Hem gelooft, die *heeft* het eeuwige leven! De eerstelingen des Geestes zijn ons deel. Ook nu bezitten we de vergeving der zonden, de volkomene gerechtigheid van Christus, de aanneming tot kinderen, de hope des eeuwigen levens, en is de Geest des Zoons, de Geest der aanneming tot kinderen, uitgezonden in onze harten, door Welken wij roepen: Abba, Vader!

En wij zijn in hope zalig!

En ofschoon het nog zoo waar is, dat dit beginsel des eeuwigen levens, zoolang we in dit leven zijn, ook bij den allerheiligste, klein is, en klein blijft; en we met dit beginsel in onze harten nog midden in den dood liggen, zoodat wij "die in dezen tabernakel zijn," en die "de eerstelingen des Geestes hebben," zuchten, toch is het waar, dat we uit kracht van dat beginsel en dier eerstelingen des Geestes, ook thans ons verheugen, grijpende door het geloof de zaligheid der zielen!

Onuitsprekelijk is deze vreugde!

Dat kan beteekenen: onuitputtelijk, dat is: deze vreugde is zoo groot, dat we er nooit genoeg van kun-

nen zeggen. En dit is zeker ook waar. Als we straks de volkomene zaligheid der zielen zullen ontvangen, zullen we wel moeten uitroepen, dat de helft ons niet was aangezegd.

Maar *onuitsprekelijk* wil ook zeggen, en dat beteekent het hier allereerst, dat iets zich niet onder woorden laat brengen.

Want immers, het is eene *heerlijke*, eigenlijk, naar het oorspronkelijke, eene *verheerlijkte* vreugde.

Ze is hemelsch!

Ze heeft haar voorwerp in dingen, die geen oog heeft gezien, geen oor gehoord, en die in 's menschen hart nimmer opkwamen.

Daarom is ze thans onuitsprekelijk. Aardsche woorden kunnen wel in aardsche termen iets van deze vreugde zeggen. Doch ze zijn niet bij machte om haar, naar haar eigenlijk karakter, uit te spreken.

Zoo verheugt gij u nu!

Wonderlijke vreugde!

Heerlijke Christus!

Dien we niet zien en nogtans liefhebben!

In Wien we nu, Hem niet ziende, maar geloovende, ons verheugen met eene onuitsprekelijke, heerlijke vreugde!

Want juist in Hem, den Christus, en dat wel in den *ongeziene* Christus, ligt de grond van deze wonderlijke, hemelsche blijdschap.

Neen, het is niet zoo, en dat is ook niet de bedoeling van het oorspronkelijke, dat we Hem liefhebben, *of-schoon* we Hem niet zien of gezien hebben, en dat we, in Hem geloovende, in Hem ons verheugen, *in weerwil* van het feit, dat we Hem niet zien; doch juist andersom: het is die ongeziene Christus, Dien we liefhebben, en het is *omdat* we Hem, in wien we gelooven, niet zien, dat Hij de grond is voor deze heerlijke, hemelsche, onuitsprekelijke vreugde!

Omdat gij gezien hebt, Thomas, hebt gij geloofd; zalig zijn zij, die niet zullen gezien hebben, en nogtans zullen geloofd hebben!

Eenmaal werd Hij gezien!

Want immers, Hij, Die eeuwiglijk in de gestaltenis Gods is, kwam in dienstknechtsgestalte. De Eeuwige kwam in den tijd, de Oneindige kwam in in ons eindig bestaan, de Heer werd *ook* knecht, God kwam in het vleesch! En in die dienstknechtsgestalte *zagen* we Hem, in onze wereld, met onze oogen; en als we Hem alzo aanzagen, had Hij gedaante noch heerlijkheid; er was aan Hem geen gestalte, dat wij Hem zouden begerd hebben. En Hem ziende, in onze wereld, vernederde men Hem, greep men Hem, bespote en bespoog men Hem, bestriemde men wreed Zijn rug tot bloedens toe, kleedde men Hem naakt uit, hing men Hem aan het schandhout, deed men Hem sterven den smadelijken en vervloekten dood des kruises. . . .

Neen, niet zoo, toen we Hem alzo zagen, was Hij

de grond van eene onuitsprekelijke en heerlijke vreugde!

Ach, ook zijn aan Hem meest verknochte jongeren werden toen nog aan Hem geërgerd, waren bevreesd, onwillig om naar Zijn naam genoemd te worden!

Maar Hij werd de Ongeziene!

Want ziet, toen men Hem zoo diep vernederde, vernederde Hij Zichzelven ook; toen men Hem zoo smaadde voor de menschen, droeg Hij die smaadheid voor Gods aangezicht; toen men Hem striemde, nam Hij alle onze krankheden op Zich; toen men Hem met goddelooze handen aan het vloekhout nagelde, stortte Hij Zijn bloed, het plengende op het altaar van Gods recht. En Hij werd gehoorzaam tot den dood, ja, den dood des kruises. En alzoo gehoorzamende, aan de spitse van Zijne Kerk, voldeed Hij aan 't recht des Heeren in hare plaats, en bracht Hij volkomene voldoening aan voor alle hare zonden. . . .

De *geziene* Knecht des Heeren zonk in onze wereld weg in den dood!

Maar juist daarom werd Hij de *ongeziene* Heiland!

Juist daarom heeft God Hem uitermate verhoogd, en heeft Hem een naam gegeven, die boven allen naam is, opdat in den naam van Jezus alle knie zou buigen, en alle tong zou belijden, dat Jezus de Heer is, tot heerlijkheid Gods des Vaders!

De ongeziene Heer!

Want immers, Hij is niet de ongeziene, omdat de dood Hem daar aan het vloekhout verzwolg: Hij is de opstanding en het leven; Hij had macht Zijn leven af te leggen, en het wederom te nemen. Hij is niet de ongeziene, omdat Hij zoo ver weg is, want Hij is met ons tot aan het einde der wereld. Doch wel is Hij de ongeziene, omdat Hij uitvoer uit de wereld van onze waarneming, om in te gaan in de wereld, die afschoon misschien niet zoo ver van ons verwijderd, als wij ons haar dikwijls denken, toch aan onze waarneming ontsnapt, de wereld der dingen, die geen oog heeft gezien, geen oor heeft gehoord, en in geen menschenhart ooit zijn opgeklimmen!

Hij is opgestaan!

En dat Hij opstond wil immers niet zeggen, dat Hij in onze wereld, in de wereld van ons vleesch en bloed terugkwam. Ach, dat hadde niet gebaat! Dan ware Hij nogmaals de geziene geworden! Neen, maar Hij ging *door* dood en graf, den dood verwinneend, het graf verzwelgend, in de hemelsche wereld van het eeuwige, onsterfelijke leven in. En nu is Hij aan de andere zijde van dood en graf, niet om ooit tot ons weer te keeren in onze wereld, maar om ons straks tot Zich te nemen in Zijne heerlijke wereld!

Hij is de eersteling geworden dergenen, die ontslapen zijn!

De verheerlijkte Heer!

En wel werd Hij in zekeren zin nog weer gezien in die wondere veertig dagen voor Zijn opvaart naar den

hemel. Doch dat was niet, omdat Hij nog altijd de geziene Knecht des Heeren was, maar omdat Hij, de niet geziene, zich vertoonde aan hen, die geroepen waren om getuigen te zijn van Zijne opstanding, en den ongeziene Heer aan de Zijnen in de wereld te verkondigen.

En zoo, door hunne verkondiging, en hun woord geloovende, kennen wij Hem toch, hoewel wij Hem niet zien.

En Hem kennende, door het woord des evangelies, gelooven wij in Hem.

Ja, maar dan juist als de ongeziene, de opgestane, de verheerlijkte en verhemelschte Heer!

Ons geloof richt zich juist op Hem, Dien wij niet zien. En door dat geloof zijn wij aan Hem, maar dan juist als den ongeziene, verbonden. Hij, die opgestane Heer, Dien wij niet zien, is de grond, de inhoud, het voorwerp, het een en het al van ons geloof. Hem, den gekruisigde, ja, maar die door God is opgewekt neemt ons geloof aan; en Hem aannemende door het geloof, nemen we ook alle Zijne weldaden aan. . . .

Uit Hem leven we, zooals de rank uit den wijnstok.

Uit Hem trekken we genade voor genade, vergeving, genezing, gerechtigheid en heiligheid, kennis en wijsheid, licht en leven.

En op Hem hopen wij!

Want wij zien nog altijd op naar dien hemel, waarhenen Hij voer, en verwachten Hem uit dien hemel weer, opdat Hij ook ons vernederd lichaam aan Zijn verheerlijkt lichaam gelijk maken zal, en ons tot Zich zal nemen in Zijne wereld van hemelsche dingen.

Daarom die onuitsprekelijke vreugde.

Niet *ofschoon* wij Hem niet zien, maar *omdat* wij, Hem niet ziende, in Hem gelooven!

Heerlijke Ongeziene!

Gij verheugt u!

Verheugt u nu, en dat wel met eene onuitsprekelijke, heerlijke vreugde!

Ja, maar, alleen door het geloof.

Niet ieder verheugt zich in Hem, maar alleen hij, die zijn geloof vestigt op den Ongeziene! En naarmate dat geloof zelfbewust, gezond en krachtig, actief is, zal ook die vreugde zich in het hart doen gevoelen.

Vandaar, dat hier van hen, die in Hem gelooven, ook gezegd wordt, dat ze Hem liefhebben: denwelken gij, Hem niet ziende noch ooit gezien hebbend, liefhebt! En ook die liefde, juist omdat zij liefde is tot den Ongeziene, is een geheel eenige, diepe volmaakte liefde, in onze harten gewrocht door den Geest, *Zijne* Geest, en ons aan Hem verbindend door den band der volmaakteheid. In die liefde levend en wandelend, haten we de zonde, en bewaren we Zijne geboden.

En door het geloof in die liefdesfeer ons bewegend, smaken we het beginsel der hemelsche vreugde!

Als kinderen des lichts!

H, H,

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published by

The Reformed Free Publishing Association
1101 Hazen Street, S. E.

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Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. R. SCHAAFSMA, 1101 Hazen St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. All Announcements and Obituaries must be sent to the above address and will not be placed unless the regular fee of \$1.00 accompanies the notice.

Subscription \$2.50 per year

Entered as second class mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIALS

Nog Eenmaal: DIE Verlatene?

Ik ontving van broeder Cammenga het volgende schrijven:

Hoogeachte Redacteur,

HOE LEEST GIJ?

“Te Odoorn staat een kerk bovenop de toren.” Dit was een 60 jaar verleden, een van die “cachting” zinetjes, in onze leerles op school.

Oppervlakkig gelezen, dan is dat niets als onzin en dwaasheid, maar indien de leestekens, en de klemtoon, op de juiste plaats en lettergreep worden gezet, dan verkrijgt men een goede zin. Zoo staat het, dunkt me, ook eenigzins met Matt. 19:9.

Doch versta mij wel, ik wil heel niet beweren dat, indien Matt. 19:9, niet juist zoo, en niet anders gelezen worrt, dat die tekst dan ook onzin en dwaasheid is, ik wilde alleen maar laten uitkomen, dat het verschil maakt, *hoe* men dezelve leest.

Ik wil kort zijn, daarom verzoek ik den geachte lezer vriendelijk, om de S. B. van 15 Nov. hierbij na te zien.

1. Mij dunkt wel degelijk. Oorspronkelijk ging het over de wegens hoerierij, *onschuldige verlatene*, en niet over de verlatene om allerlei oorzaak.

2a. Ik kan niet zien of we iets gevorderd zijn, door mijn tweede schrijven. In mijn eerste studie heb ik dat al doen uitkomen.

b. Ik kan in den tekst niet lezen, dat de *verlater* alweer getrouwd is, mij dunkt Jezus leert: “*indien* hij een andere trouwt.” Niet tegenstaande de echtscheiding, zijn ze nog steeds een vleesch.

En dan met het oog op de *verlatene*, dan lees ik die tekst zoo: “Indien iemand zijn vrouw verlaat, om allerlei oorzaak, en als die *verlatene* dan trouwt, dan doet zij, zoowel als de man die haar trouwt overspel. Daarmee is dan de eenheid des vleesch met haar eerste man verbroken, zij en haar tweeden man, staan onder het oordeel Gods, volgens Lev. 20:10, en Deut. 22:22, 't welk de *verlater* vrij maakt, hoewel 't zonde hem blijft, zijn wettige vrouw verlaten te hebben.

3. Ik moest werkelijk dit punt wel drie maal overlezen, voordat ik kon gelooven dat Ds. Hoeksema, dien weg met I Cor. 6:16 uitging. Hij heeft ons toch altijd geleerd, dat Schrift met Schrift verklaard moet worden. Een vleesch met een hoer, en tevens ook nog een

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vleesch met zijn wettige vrouw, dus die *drie* een vleesch?

En dan: "vliedt de hoererij!" Gij overspeler vliedt toch weer naar uw wettige vrouw, tegenwelke gij zoo trouwelooslijk hebt gehandeld? 't Is mij bepaald een raadsel.

Ik meende dat dit alleen het oordeel der goddelooze wereld was.

Hoe diep, diep schuldig staat dan menige kerkeraad, tegenover God en de menschen, aangezien zij den overspeler censureerden, ja soms afsneden, wegens de *zonde tegen het zevende gebod*.

Ik heb altijd gemeend, dat de apostel in het: "vliedt de hoererij," de gemeente van Christus vermaant: schuw, houdt U verre van hoererij, want anders is dit, dunkt mij, niet meer dan een welmeenende raad.

4a. Ik bewijs niet, en verklaar niets, ik geef, als leek, alleen maar mijn gedachte.

b. Voorzoover mij bekend is, dan zijn er maar twee directe bevelen in de Heilige Schrift, aangaande de doodstraf, en wel in betrekking tot het zesde en zevende gebod. Aangaande het zesde gebod: Gen. 9:6: "Wie eens menschen bloed vergiet, zijn bloed zal door den mensch vergoten worden, want God heeft den mensch naar Zijn beeld gemaakt." En aangaande het zevende gebod Lev. 20:10 en Deut. 22:22.

In het eene wordt het beeld Gods aangerand in het andere de type van de eenheid van Christus en Zijn gemeente.

c. Nu wordt voor de overtreding van het zesde gebod, in Michigan en in vele andere staten, de doodstraf niet toegepast, evenmin als op de overtreding van het zevende. Maar doet dat het gebod Gods te niet? Mij dunkt van neen.

En hiermede zie ik van verder schrijven over deze zaak af.

't Is er mij in de eerste plaats niet om begonnen, om Ds. Hoeksema te overtuigen. Ik wist wel dat ik dat niet kon doen, maar ik wilde zelf gaarne overtuigd worden, dat ik de plank mis was. Tot die overtuiging ben ik echter nog niet gekomen.

Daarom zoude ik gaarne willen dat Ds. Hoeksema ons dat in de S. B. eens goed duidelijk maakt, met bewijzen uit, en door verklaring van het Woord onzes Gods, in deze zaak.

Hoogachtend,
J. Cammenga, Sr.

vrouw verlaat om allerlei oorzaak, en als dan die verlatene trouwt, dan doet zij, zoowel als de man, die haar trouwt, overspel."

Nu schrijft broeder Cammenga boven zijn ingezonden stuk: "Hoe leest gij?" Maar dat mag ik waarlijk broeder Cammenga wel vragen, want als we zoo mogen lezen, kunnen we met de Schrift precies doen, wat we willen. Immers laat de broeder eenvoudig uit den tekst weg, wat in zijne verklaring niet past, namelijk de woorden: "*en eene andere trouwt*." Zoo krijgt hij dan eenvoudig dit: "Indien iemand zijne vrouw verlaat, anders dan om hoererij, en een ander trouwt dan de verlatene, dan doet deze laatste overspel." Nu, daar zijn we het goed over eens. Maar dat staat er niet, en dat is ook zeker niet de beteekenis van den tekst. Er staat letterlijk: "Maar Ik zeg u, dat zoo wie zijne vrouw verlaat, anders dan om hoererij, *en eene andere trouwt, die doet overspel*, en die de verlatene trouwt, doet ook overspel." Wat recht heeft broeder Cammenga om de onderstreepte woorden er uit te laten? En als ze er blijven staan, is dan de man van de verlatene vrouw een overspeler of niet? Ieder zal mij toestemmen, dat het laatste het geval is. Broeder Cammenga voegt hieraan ten overvloede nog toe: 't welk de verlater vrij maakt." Dit moet dan zeker beteekenen, dat de verlater dan weer mag trouwen, daar immers de verlatene ook weer getrouwd is. *Maar de verlater was reeds weer getrouwd en is een overspeler*, eer de verlatene met ander trouwde, volgens den tekst.

Dit is eigenlijk nog duidelijker uit Luk. 16:18. Daar staat eenvoudig: "Een iegelijk, die zijne vrouw verlaat, en eene andere trouwt, die doet overspel; en een iegelijk die de verlatene van den man trouwt, die doet ook overspel." Hier wordt het "om allerlei oorzaak" niet eens genoemd. Wie ook eene andere vrouw trouwt, terwijl zijne wettige vrouw nog leeft, doet overspel; en wie ook eene verlatene vrouw trouwt, terwijl haar wettigen man nog leeft, die doet ook overspel, ook al heeft haar man reeds overspel bedreven.

Maar bovendien, wat een toestand krijgen we, als broeder Cammenga's verklaring de juiste zou zijn! Stel u voor: Een man wil graag van zijn vrouw af, om eene andere te kunnen trouwen. Al, wat hij te doen heeft, om een andere huwelijk te kunnen sluiten, is "allerlei oorzaak" te zoeken, en zijne vrouw te verlaten. hierdoor "maakt hij, dat zij overspel doet," volgens de Schrift. Hij wacht nu, tot zij dat doet, en met eene andere trouwt. En nu is hij voor God vrij om weer te trouwen, volgens broeder Cammenga. Dat is al erg genoeg. Maar er volgt nog meer uit, ofschoon broeder Cammenga die conclusie niet trekt. Immers zoodra als de verlater nu weer getrouwd is, is de verlatene vrouw, die reeds overspel bedreef, ook vrij, en is ook haar huwelijk wettig voor God. Zoo zijn dan twee overspelers, juist door elkanders overspel, een ander

Antwoord:

1. Allereerst nog een woord over Matt. 19:9. Broeder Cammenga leest die tekst zoo: "Indien iemand zijne

spelers meer! Wie weet hoeveel nog levende vrouwen een man op die manier kan hebben, terwijl hij toch met zijn laatste vrouw een wettig huwelijk voor God heeft aangegaan!

Maar in elk geval mag broeder Cammenga zoo de Schrift niet lezen.

2. Wat nu I Cor. 6:16 betreft, het volgende:

a. Zeker, als de apostel schrijft: "vliedt de hoererijs," dan bedoelt hij: "bekeert u van uwe hoererijs, die gij zoo schandelijk bedrijft, en houdt u bij uwe wettige vrouwen." En hij schrijft dit zeker aan de gemeente des Heeren, maar dan aan eene gemeente van welke men "ganschelijk hoorde, dat er hoererijs onder u is, en zoodanige hoererijs, die ook onder de Heidenen niet genoemd wordt, alzoo dat er een zijns vaders huisvrouw heeft." 5:1.

b. Zeker, op het oogenblik dat iemand de hoer aanhangt, d.w.z., geslachtelijke gemeenschap met haar heeft, is hij één vleesch met haar. Maar hij is dat door eene zondige daad. Daardoor schendt hij de band, waardoor aan zijne wettige vrouw verbonden is. Wil dit nu zeggen, dat hij met die hoer voor God getrouwd is, zooals broeder Cammenga schijnt te meenen, en dat de band met zijne eerste vrouw voor altijd verbroken is? Immers neen! Wettiglijk en voor God is hij één vleesch met zijne vrouw. Hij moet dus de hoererijs vlieden, belijdenis doen van zijne zonde, en tot zijne vrouw terugkeeren. Dat is de weg.

c. En wie heeft nu ooit gehoord van een kerkeraad, die iemand met den ban afsnijdt, als hij hoererijs heeft bedreven, belijdenis doet, en tot zijne wettige vrouw terugkeert? Broeder Cammenga zeker ook niet.

3. Wat de doodstraf betreft op overspel merk ik nogmaals op:

a. Dat ingeval een overspeler gedood werd, de *dood*, en niet het overspel de onschuldige partij vrij maakte. Dat heeft dus in geen geval iets met de onderhavige kwestie te maken.

b. Dat broeder Cammenga bij nadenken ook wel weten zal, dat onder Israel de doodstraf werd toegepast, of in elk geval moest toegepast worden op meer gevallen, dan de twee, die door hem worden genoemd. Zoo moest de Sodomiet gedood worden, Lev. 20:13; bloedschande werd met den dood gestraft, Lev. 20:11, 13, 14, etc.; een wederspannige zoon moest gesteenigd worden, Deut. 21:18-21; wie iemand trachtte te verleiden tot afgodendienst moest gesteenigd worden, Deut. 13:6 vv. etc.

Maar dat ook onze overheid geroepen om in zulke gevallen de doodstraf toe te passen, is in elk geval iets nieuws.

En hierbij zullen we het vooreerst maar laten.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

OF MAN'S REDEMPTION

Lord's Day IX.

Chapter 3 (cont.).

The Eternal Father Creator.

This same truth, that in God's eternal good pleasure Christ is first, and all other things are conceived in Him and unto Him, is also taught in other passages of Holy Writ. We have in mind especially that glorious and profound part of the epistle to the Colossians that expresses the theme of the whole letter: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him all the fulness should dwell; And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." To be sure, He of whom the apostle here speaks has His personal subsistence in the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. And yet, even as was the case with Wisdom in Proverbs 8, it is evident that all that is predicated here of this Firstborn cannot be said of the Son of God in the divine nature. Whatever attempts have been made to explain the expression "the firstborn of every creature" so that it might be applicable to the divine Son of God, it is very clear that this phrase does not apply to the second Person of the Trinity. He is not the "firstborn of every creature," for He is neither born nor a creature: He is the eternally begotten God! Nor is the Son as such the head of the body, of the first begotten from the dead; nor even can it be said of the Son of God in the divine nature, that He has the preeminence in all things, or that by the good pleasure of the Father all the fulness dwells in Him. But all these predicates are readily understood if we apply them to Christ, and that, too, as He appears in God's eternal conception of all things,

that is, in the counsel of God. In that counsel Christ, and that as the firstborn from the dead, the glorified Christ, in whom all the fulness should dwell, is the beginning (the *archee*; the *reshith* of Prov. 8), and the firstborn of every creature, Who in the counsel of God is not only logically first, but Who as the firstborn, also opens the womb of creation, and prepares the way for all creatures; and again, Who as such holds the preeminence above them all. The eternal Son of God, the Word that is with God in eternity, and Who is the express image of His substance, is, as it were, the infinite pattern according to which all things are conceived, and in Whom as the Christ exalted all the fulness must dwell. God is first the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and as such He is also the Creator of heaven and earth. As the Catechism expresses it: "The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" made of nothing the heaven and the earth and all things that are therein, and still upholds them by His eternal counsel and providence!

Now, all this may not completely dispel the mists that hide the deep things of God from our searching eye, but it shows us the direction in which, could we only see far enough, we would find the solution of the two problems we mentioned before: that of God's immutability, and that of God's self-sufficiency in relation to the "beginning" of Gen. 1:1. It is true, even so we cannot fathom the relation of the "beginning" to eternity, because in all our thinking we are strictly subject to and limited by time, and for evermore we are inclined to ask: and what was before the beginning? Nor can we fathom the relation of space to the Infinite, and always we postulate more space beyond space. When we say that God created heaven and earth out of nothing, we speak in mysteries, for we cannot conceive of "creation," but neither can we conceive of "nothing," except as empty space, which is not *nothing*, but itself a creature. But we can at least begin to see that God in Himself, by virtue of His *eternal* counsel, is the Eternal Father Creator, and that the "beginning" and all things in time are eternally in Him, so that they do not postulate a change in God. And, secondly, we can also obtain a glimpse of the truth that God remains the self-sufficient One, and that creation does not add anything to His infinite greatness. The world as it is eternally with God in His eternal conception and decree is far more immense than it can ever be in any moment of its existence in time. Our world of the moment is but a small reflection of the fulness of the world in God's eternal conception!

Thus we can begin to understand the significance of the confession: *I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*. Creation is revelation. It does, indeed, reveal God to us as the *omnipotent One*. The act of creation is an act of omnipotent will! The catechism tells us that God

"of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them." This is hardly meant as a *definition* of the act of creation. As such it would be very defective. It may have value from a pedagogical viewpoint to teach our children that "creation is to make something out of nothing," but as soon as they begin to reflect they should be shown the inadequacy of such a definition or description of the act of creation. For, to be sure, "nothing" is not the source of creation, nor is creation always out of nothing: the plants are called out of the ground, so are the animals, and man is formed out of the dust of the earth. Nevertheless, it may serve to emphasize that apart from God's creative act there is absolutely nothing: God was not limited in His act of creation by some kind of material that existed, and upon which He wrought creatively; and it brings out emphatically that all things are the product of His omnipotent will alone. He called all things that are not as if they were! And by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen are not made of things that do appear! And thus the act of creation reveals God as the absolute Sovereign of all, and as the Father Omnipotent. Only, we must not conceive of omnipotence merely in the vague sense of infinite power, but rather in the concrete sense that there is no power, never was any power, and never will be any power, whether within God or in all the universe, except the power of God. He is *the* power for ever!

Secondly, in this first article of the *Apostolic Confession* we confess that the world is exactly as God willed it. The truth of creation teaches us that God's will and counsel are the only *raison d'être* of the whole universe. There was nothing that limited the will of God. When man makes something, he is limited and determined on every side by the material out of which the proposed article must be fashioned. When an architect draws plans and specifications of an edifice that is to be constructed, he is subject to, and must figure with all kinds of existing laws; and he is limited by the means at hand. Not so with God. Creation means that the universe is solely the product of His omnipotent will, and this will is limited by nothing. He is above all laws, and Himself the sovereign Creator even of them. He proposes the end, and He creates the means; He conceives of the idea, and He calls into being the material of His world. The world is exactly as He willed it to be. Creation is an act of absolute freedom and sovereignty.

This also means that the world, as it was called forth in the beginning, as it develops in time, and as it will be perfected in the "age of ages," is the revelation of perfect divine wisdom, the highest possible revelation of the glory of God. I think we may even say, on the basis of Scripture, that it is a *complete* revelation of God, and in that sense adequate, even

though it is true, of course, that the measure of this revelation is creaturely. For it pleased the Father that in Christ, as the firstborn of every creature *and* the firstborn from the dead, all fulness should dwell. We may say, therefore, that even though God's works are a *creaturely* revelation of Himself, so that He Himself for ever remains the Incomprehensible One, they are not a *partial*, but a full revelation of the living God, through which all His glorious virtues will shine forth and be declared for ever. And it is, no doubt, the highest possible revelation of that glory. You understand, I am not now referring merely to the world as it was formed in the beginning, but to the world as it is in God's counsel. Hence, we must also maintain that this is the best possible world, and for that very reason the only world God could create. In the abstract it may be granted, perhaps, that God could have created an infinite number of worlds. And often this is asserted and considered a statement of great piety and reverence. But if *this* world is the revelation of the highest purpose of God, adapted to the reflection of His greatest glory, this is the only world God, Who can only make that which is characterized by highest perfection, could conceive of: the greatest and fullest revelation of His own excellent virtues.

Further, conceived of as the realization in time and space of God's eternal good pleasure, the end of which is that in Christ, crucified and raised, all things should be reconciled and united, so that in Him all the fulness should dwell, the world in the "beginning" was adapted to the end with perfect wisdom, i.e. was so created that, through the deep way of sin and death, it could be raised to the highest possible glory by the power of grace in Christ. God knows the end from the beginning, and the latter is adapted to the former. When He created the world, He had that end in view: the highest realization and revelation of His tabernacle with men in Christ Jesus our Lord! When God in the beginning saw that all things were good, the meaning is not simply that they were perfect and flawless, without defect, as they had come forth from His hands, but also that they were perfectly adapted to the end He had in view. And that end is the Kingdom of heaven, the heavenly tabernacle of God with men in Christ. It is because of this that the things as they were made in the beginning are an image of things to come, and that things *are done* or take place in parables. It is true, of course, that without God's revelation in Christ as we have it in the Holy Scriptures, we could never see this reflection of things to come in the things that are made; and that Christ only could point out the parables that take place round about us; but the fact remains that the earthy creation reflects the things of the kingdom of heaven, is an image of things heavenly. Adam is an image of

Him that was to come, and Christ is the last Adam. The First Paradise is an earthly picture of the Paradise of God in the new creation, and the original tree of life is to be fully realized in its heavenly beauty when all things are made new. The seed that falls in the earth and dies and is quickened again is a parable of the resurrection, both in its spiritual, and its physical sense. The sun that dispels the darkness of the night is an image of the Sun of righteousness, and the moon that floods the night with its mellow light, and assures us that the sun is still there, though we do not see her, is a silent preacher of the promise of God that the Sun will rise again in all its glory in the Day of the Lord. And so all creation, the lion and the lamb, the soaring eagle and the strong ox, the tall cedar and the sturdy oak, the mighty mountain and the barren desert, the flashing lightning and the rolling thunder, storm and zephyr, earthquake and eruption, color and number; as well as man in all its relations of man and wife, brother and sister, father and son, king and subject,—all speak the language of redemption to us if our ear is only attuned and made receptive by the Word of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And so, all the works of God are one, even as He is One. They were one in the beginning. For God did not create a mere number of creatures, but a kosmos, rising by His creative power from the darkness of the chaos in a succession of creatures higher and higher, until they reached their pinnacle in man, in whose heart the whole kosmos was united with the heart of God; a kingdom, in which all creatures must serve man, that man might serve his God. But they are also one, in that the beginning is connected with and adapted to the end: the new creation that will forever be united with God in the heart of Immanuel, God with us!

And thus, finally, we can fully appreciate and understand the language of the Catechism in this ninth Lord's Day, and that, too, as a firm ground for our only comfort in life and death. "What believest thou when thou sayest 'I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?' That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ, his Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body: and further, that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for he is able to do it, being almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father."

What does it all mean? This is not the place to discuss every element of this glorious confession with respect to God's Fatherhood and our sonship, and the

practical implications of this relationship, in detail. For we shall have occasion to speak of our sonship for Christ's sake in a different connection; and much of what the Catechism here mentions must be discussed as we explain the next Lord's Day. But the central idea the Catechism here expresses must be grasped clearly: it is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that, too, not only as the eternal Father of the eternal Son, but also as the Father of Jesus Christ, that created all things according to His eternal counsel; and Who as such is my God and Father for Christ's sake; hence by faith I may put the present evil moment in God's perfect counsel of wisdom and love, and believe that all is well!

God is the eternal Father of the elect. O, it is true, He is the Father of all in the sense that He brought them forth, created them. But in the true, spiritual sense, He is the Father only of His own, whom He gave in Christ in His eternal counsel. For through sin men became the children of their father the devil, and do his will. They neither have the right nor the power to be children of God. We must not follow modernism in its boast of a universal fatherhood of God. But in Christ, and for His sake, we obtain the right to be called children of God, and by His grace we are also conformed according to the image of His Son. And all this is realized according to God's eternal purpose, that same purpose and good pleasure, according to which He created all things, and governs all things. What then? Knowing that He is my Father for Christ's sake, I know that in His eternal wisdom He so arranged all things that all things must cooperate unto the final revelation of Christ, and the salvation of all that are in Him! Knowing that He is almighty, I am assured that He will surely accomplish all His good pleasure, so that nothing can betide me but by His will. And knowing that He loves me, and that, too, with an eternal and immutable love, manifested in the death of His Son, I trust that He will surely cause all things to work together unto my salvation. And so, the believer in Christ relies on Him entirely, confident that all things always work together for good to them that love God! The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator omnipotent, the only Potentate of potentates, the God of our salvation, is my God and Father!

Lord's Day X.

Q. 27. What dost thou mean by the providence of God?

The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness,

riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Q. 28. What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence still upholds all things?

That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love: since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move.

Chapter 1.

The Idea of God's Providence.

The doctrine of creation postulates that of divine providence. If you open your window to fill your room with the golden light of the sun, that sunlight in your room is constantly dependent for its continued existence on its connection with its source. Draw your shades, shut off the light in your room from its source, and there is no light left in the room. And thus it is with all creation in relation to God. If God *created* all things, if He called them by His omnipotent will, if they were framed by the Word of God, then He remains the Author of their continued existence. That they came into existence was due only to His sovereign will; that same will is the ultimate and only ground of their continued existence. For creation can never mean that God gave independent being to a creature outside of Himself. An independent creature is impossible. To speak of it is a contradiction in terms. If, therefore, after all things were created, they would have been separated from the will and power of God, they would at that very moment have sunk back into nothingness. The world did not develop of itself; it cannot exist by itself. It is from moment to moment dependent on "the almighty and everywhere present power of God." Creation postulates providence.

Hence, the Heidelberg is quite correct in appending to the chapter on the Father-Creator, a Lord's Day on the providence of God. The first article of the *Apostolic Confession* does not speak of this upholding and governing power of God, but only of God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. But realizing that the doctrine of creation postulates, even implies that of providence, our instructor, in explaining the first article of our holy catholic faith, appends a chapter on this important point of doctrine.

H. H.

I to the hills will lift my eyes;
O whence shall come my aid?
My help is from the Lord alone,
Who heaven and earth has made.

Was Jonah Alive In The Fish?

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." Three days and three nights in the belly of a fish!

But how? Was he alive during that three day entombment, as the consensus has always been among students of the Bible? Or is it possible that he was dead, and that the church has been in error on this point?

I should like to begin with a few general observations.

First, we are not questioning the fact as such that the prophet of the Lord was actually in the belly of the fish. Of course not! Neither is there any point in discussing whether there was at that time and is today any kind of known Mediterranean fish capable of swallowing a man whole. That this is precisely what happened is the testimony of Scripture, and that for the Christian is the end of all dispute. I once heard a minister say, "And if Scripture said that Jonah swallowed the whale I would believe that, too." Nor will one, who really believes in miracles and the almighty power of Jehovah have any trouble whatever on this point. If there were no fish with a throat large enough to admit the passage of an entire man, the expression "now the Lord had prepared a great fish" would mean simply, that the Almighty created a fish for this special purpose. However, that need not be the implication, for there are records of fish, species of shark, that are capable of swallowing creatures far larger than human beings. According to Keil and Delitzsch a certain Oken relates as a fact, "that in the year 1758 a sailor fell overboard from a frigate, in very stormy weather, into the Mediterranean Sea, and was immediately taken into the jaws of a sea-dog (shark), and disappeared. The captain, however, ordered a gun, which was standing on the deck, to be discharged at the shark and the cannon-ball struck it, so that it vomited up again the sailor that it had swallowed, who was then taken up alive, and very little hurt, into the boat that had been lowered for his rescue."

Secondly, I am not aware that any Christian Bible student questions the contention, that Jonah was preserved alive during his imprisonment in the belly of the fish. All commentators take this so for granted, that not one, as far as I know, even mentions it as the view of others, that the prophet might have been dead during that time. That does not mean, however, that the matter may not be questioned and that past scholars might not have been in error on this point. Things have been taken for granted in the past which subsequently have been proved wrong.

Thirdly, whether Jonah was alive or dead while in the fish, in either case we have to do with a mighty miracle of the Almighty. For that reason the modern critic accepts neither. To him the whole narrative is fantastic and fabulous, an incredible myth. If Jonah were kept alive in the belly of the fish, this would certainly be a miracle far surpassing all human comprehension. If he were dead in the fish the miracle would be equally great, for then we have to do here with a raising from the dead. Our subject, therefore, in no respect draws the miraculous into question.

The contention, that the prophet Jonah was not alive but dead during that three day entombment in the fish, would have to rest, no doubt, on the following considerations.

1—The natural and ordinary results of such an experience as Jonah had would be death. According to all natural laws no man could survive in such a place as the belly of a fish. Would we not expect, then, that if Jonah were kept alive nevertheless during that period, Scripture would give this special mention? Instead we read, "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

2—The three days imprisonment of the prophet in the belly of the fish was typical of the three days and nights our Saviour was to be in the grave. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matt. 12:39. Would the typical significance of this incident not require, then, that Jonah too was dead? Mind you, "As Jonas . . . , so shall be. . .". Could this mean: 'in the same manner as'?

3—In the prayer of Jonah which is recorded in the second chapter of the book which bears his name, the prophet says, "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." vs. 2. "Belly of hell" is literally "Womb of Sheol." Now Sheol is the land of silence, of rest, of forgetfulness, where man has no part in all that takes place under the sun. It is the dreary abode of the shades, the realm of the dead, the grave. Doesn't Jonah himself, then, suggest that he was dead and is this not strengthened by what he says in vs. 6, "earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up *my life from the pit*"?

4—True, this would mean that the prayer of Jonah could not have been uttered while he was in the fish's belly. However, is it not possible that the prophet prayed this after his release from his strange prison? The entire prayer, you will notice, is not a petition for deliverance at all, as we might expect were Jonah still in the fish, but it is a song of thanksgiving and praise for deliverance already received. You will also ob-

serve that the entire prayer is in the past tense. "I *cried* by reason of my affliction. . . . Out of the womb of Sheol *cried* I. . . ." etc. If he were still in the belly of the fish when this prayer was uttered, would he not have said, "I *cry* by reason of. . . ." In addition, he speaks literally of deliverance already granted. He says, "I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, *and he heard me*; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou *heardest my voice*." Is it possible, then, that this prayer was uttered, not while in the fish, but later? But you object, that we read in the verse immediately preceding the prayer, "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God *out of* the fish's belly." Yes, but could this mean, that Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God (being) out of the fish's belly, i.e., when he himself was out of the belly of the fish? In that same verse we read: "*Then* Jonah. . . ." This "then" follows the words of chapter 1:17, "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." "*Then* Jonah prayed. . . ." After the three days and nights? But how about the verse after the prayer, you say, which reads: "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." However, if we should read "for" instead of the first "and", would this not place this vomiting out of Jonah before the entire prayer?

What about it all? Is there anything convincing about these grounds that might be adduced in support of a view that Jonah was dead during his incarceration in the fish's belly? Is there any reason to altar the age old view?

In general the answer is: Not at all! All things still point to the belief that Jonah was very much alive during his stay in that strange tomb. Consider the following.

1. It is true that according to all laws of nature no man could live longer than a few moments in such a place. With God, however, all things are possible. It is true also that Scripture makes no special mention of the fact, that the natural thing (death) did not happen and that the prophet was kept alive. But neither does Scripture in any way suggest that he might have been dead. Holy Writ simply takes for granted that Jonah was preserved alive.

2. The question whether Jonah was alive or dead has no connection with the typical significance of the incident. The point of comparison is not the fact that both Jonah and the Son of man were dead, but merely the entombment as such. As Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the fish, so the Son of man should be that long in the heart of the earth.

3. It is true, that Jonah speaks of the "womb of Sheol," and that Sheol is the land of silence, the dreary abode of the shades, the realm of the dead, where all

men are cut off from all that pertains to the earth. However, this does not mean that Jonah was actually dead. When the prophet was cast into the sea, the inevitable was death. There was, as such, no other alternative. Death stared him in the face and from its snares there was no escape. In like manner David rejoices in Psalm 30:3, "O, Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."

4. Finally, the prayer of the prophet. It is true, that it is not a prayer for deliverance, but of thanksgiving and praise for deliverance already wrought; that Jonah literally says, that the Lord had already heard him; and that the whole prayer is in the past tense. This does not mean, however, that the prayer was not uttered until after the prophet had been released and was once again standing on dry land. There is another explanation. To Jonah the fish itself was already a refuge, an "ark of safety," wherein the Almighty preserved His prophet alive. When Jonah had been swallowed whole, and when he discovered that he was being kept safely in his strange retreat, he regarded this as a deliverance already effected and a certain *pledge* of further deliverance to come. For that deliverance he praised the Lord then and there. He had been cast into the deep, into the midst of the seas; the floods had compassed him about; all God's billows and waves had passed over him; the depth closed him round about and the weeds were wrapped about his head; the earth with its bars were about him for ever. All seemed lost; utterly hopeless. Then it was that he said, "I am cast out of thy sight; yet will I look again toward thy holy temple." And Jehovah *had heard* him. He had prepared an ark of refuge, a safe if strange retreat, the great fish, to receive and preserve him. Actually, therefore, he was saved by and in the fish. For that reason his prayer, while in the fish, can be one of thanksgiving and praise for deliverance already wrought. The marvelous grace of God had been there to preserve him, for was he not being kept alive in a most extraordinary and wonderful fashion?

5. Furthermore, even though the prayer had been uttered after his release from the fish, this would still be no proof that he had been dead. Even then the verbs "I cried," and "I said," and "I remembered" would allude to the period of his confinement. Besides, the simple meaning of chapter 2:1, "When Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly," is certainly, that his prayer as such proceeded out of the belly of the fish.

Jonah, therefore, was certainly preserved alive in the fish. Not that this either adds to or detracts from the greatness of the miracle involved. But, such is to my mind the clear teaching of Scripture. In the one case the prophet would have been dead and raised

again by the almighty power of Jehovah. In the other he should have been dead according to all the laws of nature, but he was miraculously preserved by the omnipotent wonder of the grace of God. However, even so the victory is definitely over death itself, and thus the entombment and deliverance of Jonah, the prophet, remains a glorious type of Him, who was to come, to die for our sins, to enter into the heart of the earth that He for us might lead captivity captive, and to be raised again the third day for our justification.

R. V.

The Author Of Ecclesiastes

It has always been a safe and established rule to determine the author of a certain book of Holy Writ, if at all possible, from the book itself. What surer guide could we have than the Word of God, which is its own indubitable testimony of its infallibility?

Applying this rule to the book of Ecclesiastes it hardly seems possible that any one should as much as question the fact that Solomon is its author.

The first chapter expresses this very definitely. Its opening statement reads: "The words of the Preacher, the Son of David, king in Jerusalem." Although he calls himself the Preacher, (Koheleth in the Hebrew, Ecclesiastes in the Greek, from which the book derives its name) he adds that he is the son of David and king in Jerusalem. Verse 12 adds to this: "I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." And verse 16 continues: "I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." To assure ourselves that this could only refer to Solomon we need but compare it with I Kings 3:12, where the Lord addresses Solomon, saying, Behold, I have done according to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee."

If more proof were needed we could refer to the second chapter, the verses 4-9, "I made me great works I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit. I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the

peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces. I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me." Comparing this with what is written of him both in Kings and in Chronicles we can only conclude that no one else but Solomon could be the Preacher, who concludes in chapter 12:8-10 by saying: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity. And because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth."

Considering all this we can safely conclude that the Preacher is none other than king Solomon, whom the Lord granted riches and wisdom in adundance. We can even conclude that he wrote this book in the evening of his life after he had experienced all that life could offer to one in his position, and after he had tasted to the full the realities of those things of which he wrote.

Yet, with all this overwhelming evidence before them, the Bible critics, almost without exception, are well agreed that Solomon could not possibly be the author of this book. They quite unanimously insist that some other person, at a much later date, either collected various proverbs of Solomon into one book, or wrote the entire book under the assumed name of the Preacher, as if he himself were king Solomon, "reproducing the thoughts and experiences of the memorable personage, Solomon." (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on Ecclesiastes).

Entirely ignoring the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and ruthlessly exalting their own opinion above the testimony of the Word itself, they reduce this book to the level of a mere piece of fiction.

Their main objection to recognizing Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes is, as they say, that the style of the book is of a much later date, when the Hebrew language was interspersed with many Aramaic words and expressions. This objection is based on the assumption that Solomon could not possibly have made acquaintance with those Aramaic terms which they find in the book. Yet it hardly takes into consideration that as king, the like of whom could not be found, with all the building which he had done, he must have had exceptional amount of contact with the nations round about. Granting that there are many words in Ecclesiastes not found in the earlier writings of the Old Testament, this is still no reason to deny the testimony of the book itself that it was written by Solomon. The style and language must be that of Israel's great king.

The other objections bear even less weight. It is objected that Solomon would never have said: "I, the Preacher, *was* king over Israel." He might have said, 'am king,' but never 'was,' because he remained on the throne until the day of his death. But this objection is more fancied than real. Must we assume that he could not possibly have said that he was king over Israel unless he had abdicated the throne? The only correct explanation is, that he appeals to his rich experience as Israel's anointed king in giving his estimate of life, as he does in the first chapter.

Again it is objected that Solomon would never have said that he was 'king over Israel *in Jerusalem*,' since he had no knowledge of kings over Israel who had not reigned in Jerusalem. The assumption is that only one who was acquainted with Israel's later history would emphasize that Solomon was king in Jerusalem instead of in Samaria. Also the objection is raised that, since Solomon had not proceeded from a long line of kings, he could not have spoken of 'all that were before me in Jerusalem.' These last two objections may well be considered as "begging the question." Taking for granted that the author was acquainted with Israel's later history, it is a simple matter to arrive at the conclusion that must first be proven. There is, on the other hand, every reason to accept that the theocratic king of Israel, conscious of his high calling and having his throne in the Holy City, would not hesitate to mention this in introducing himself to his readers. Nor is it strange that he would say that his wisdom exceeded "all that were before me in Jerusalem," since God Himself had said, "I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee." He is simply stating that God's promise was fully realized.

Having established in our own minds that Solomon is the author of this book, it raises the interesting question; Is Solomon also among the prophets?

We know that no one could hold any office in Israel unless he was an anointed of the Lord. Anointing spoke of the fact that God had ordained and called him to a special office, and that God also qualified him through the Holy Spirit to fill the office to which he was appointed.

We also know that Solomon was anointed to be king over Israel, and that he had been endowed with the special gift of wisdom as theocratic king. The Lord had granted his request when he asked for wisdom to judge the people with an understanding heart, "that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people." This wisdom was not a mere natural gift, or talent, but a special gift of the Holy Spirit to qualify him to the office to which God had called him.

But Solomon received even more than he had asked. Ecclesiastes informs us that this wisdom qualified

him to be a preacher as well as a king in Israel. He writes (1:16) "Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." And again in chapter 2, verse 9, "Also my wisdom remained with me." As in his conclusion, (12:9) "Because the preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs."

This fact is the more significant because the office was generally imposed on separate individuals in the old dispensation. Although the threefold office of prophet, priest and king is essentially one office, as is evident from Adam in paradise, in Christ in His threefold office, and in the office of believers today; yet the old testament prophet was no priest, and the priest was not a king, according to the general rule.

But Solomon presents himself to us as the Preacher-King, who had been endowed with the Spirit of wisdom, not only to rule the people as their king, but also to instruct them as their prophet. A fact which clearly emphasizes that the threefold office as essentially one, even as it was perfected in Christ, the Anointed of God, *par excellence*.

The message of the Preacher carries a special appeal to us in our day because it is so exactly the opposite from all present day philosophies which boast of the wisdom and culture of the world. One keynote rings through the entire book, that all things, outside of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, are subject to vanity. God's curse rests upon the world of fallen mankind, and man himself bows under the bondage of corruption and death. There is nothing new under the sun, nothing that is not branded with death, nothing that is not subject to vanity. Even joy and mirth are empty madness, and natural wisdom brings grief, while all labor is vexation of spirit. The creature runs in a tread-mill as in a "vicious circle." All man's skill and ingenuity, his discoveries and inventions, his labor and his progress end in destruction. War — peace — depression — war stalks man's path wherever he turns. All that is and all that cometh is vanity. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity.

This is the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

C. H.

Eternal is Thy kingdom, Lord,
Forever strong and ever sure;
While generations rise and die,
Shall Thy dominion still endure.

Kerknieuws

Onder dit kopstuk zal ondergeteekende een viertal artikeltjes moeten schrijven in dit Standard Bearer jaar-zeizoen. Hij is er dankbaar voor dat het opschrift een beetje is gewijzigd. Er kan zoo nu en dan eens een uitstapje worden gemaakt. Er wordt meestal geen nieuws opgezonden, ook niet wanneer men er beleefd naar vraagt. Nu behoeft men zich niet zoo uitsluitend bepalen bij eigen kerkverband. Niet alsof dit niet belangrijk genoeg zou zijn, want dit is het wel. Het heeft wel de liefde van ons hart, niet waar? Daarvoor zijn we waarlijk Protestant Gereformeerd genoeg.

Zoo nu en dan wordt de vraag eens gedaan: Wat is er toch terecht gekomen van de eene Candidaat die toch met twee anderen beroepbaar werd gesteld voor de bediening des Woords en der Heilige Sacramenten? Ja vrienden, daar is nog niets van terecht gekomen. Hij keerde terug naar de kerken waar hij behoorde; want ge begrijpt wel hij is nooit Protestant Gereformeerd geweest, want die dit eenmaal waarlijk is, gaat daarvan nooit zich ontrekken.

Het zal me eens benieuwen hoe Ds. G. Vos het bevalt in Edgerton, Minnesota. Ik meen hier natuurlijk niet mee alsof hij niet was de man voor de plaats. Maar wel dat het een groote verandering is: van het zonnige California naar koude Minnesota. Toen ik hem verleden zomer hier eens in Grand Rapids aantrof merkte hij op: dat hij in Redlands zijn laatste dagen als bedienaar des Woords hoopte te sluiten. Ge ziet echter, dat een Dominee ook zijn eigen heer en meester niet is. De mensch wikt, maar God beschikt. De man heeft er echter wel zegen op zijn arbeid gehad. De gemeente groeide, en er kwam in de elf jaren waarin hij zijn werk met vreugde verrichte een flinke Christelijke School tot stand.

Het is wel een beetje spijtig dat ons "Church News" niet meer verschijnt. Nu worden we bijna van alle nieuws beroofd. Zooals me is verteld door de Printer dan kan de Church News niet worden gedrukt voor een poosje. Misschien zal zij niet weer verschijnen zolang de oorlog duurt. Dit is jammer. We hebben er anders wel behoefte aan.

Van tijd tot tijd worden er ook nu nog uit onze kerkengroep jonge mannen opgeroepen voor 's Lands dienst. Onze kerken doen een goed werk om meditatiën te zenden naar de boys in het leger en op de vloot. Van sommigen mochten we hooren dat het wel gewaardeerd wordt. Men stelt het op hooge prijs.

Hebt ge het pamflet al gelezen, dat werd uitgegeven door Ds. R. Veldman? Het heeft de naam van "The Movie." De Ds. waarschuwt voor de verleidende invloed van dit monster van "Hollywood". Moord, doodslag, echtscheiding, vrije liefde en wat dies meer

zij prikkelt de zinnen, trekt de mensch naar beneden, en vermoord hem geestelijk en zedelijk, en is een wegwijzer naar 't eeuwig verderf.

In Hollywood wordt gespot met duivel en hel, met God en Zijn Woord, en met alles wat heilig is. Den Christen, die dan ook mee doet aan "Hollywood's" ongerechtigheid, roept Gods Woord toe: komt uit van haar mijn volk en heb aan haar ongerechtigheid geen deel.

De Kerk en Hollywood kunnen nu eenmaal niet te zamen reizen. De eene verkondigt altijd wat lieflijk is en wel luidt, en de andere leeft van vuil gewin. En hij die u wijs wil maken dat het leerzaam is, weet zelf wel beter; als hij maar eerlijk is. Van Hollywood is geen goeds te zeggen.

Ik weet niet of ge onlangs het leuke stukje ook in the "Banner" hebt gelezen, hetwelk werd overgenomen uit de Sailors Evangel. Het ging over "Two Graces" en maakte melding van twee personen, die leefden in een klein dorpje. Het waren meisjes. Ze hadden een goede reputatie, en leefden een voorbeeldig burgerlijk leven; er viel niets op hen aan te merken. Toen men wat ouder werd, was het dorpje toch wel een beetje klein. Men trok dan ook naar de groote stad met hare vele vermaken en Hollywood's vroolijkheid. Het eene meisje genoot volop van de genietingen, die de wereld biedt; en de andere bleef voortwandelen door Gods genade, in 't spoor der godsvrucht. Nu werd de vraag gedaan: Wat eigenlijk het verschil was tusschen deze beide meisjes zooals we ze aantreffen bij moeder thuis, op 't kleine dorp. En het antwoord luidt: de zonde in de eene werd gestuit door algemeene genade. Mij dunkt het meisje had geen stuitende genade van noode, want er was op 't kleine dorp geen gelegenheid tot zondigen zooals dit het geval was in de groote stad. En wat toch ook een armzalige genade die al niet gaat vergezellen naar een groote stad. Het andere meisje was dan ook alleen met genade be-deeld.

Toen ik dit zoo las, zag ik in mijn voorbeelding twee andere personen. Het waren: de verloren zoon en diens oudste broeder. 't Is waar: de jongste broeder ging de wereld in, en 't liep mis met hem. Hij bracht zijn geld door met hoeren, en werd ten laatste zwijnerhoeder. De man had echter genade in zijn ziel, en bij deze voederbak kwam hij tot inkeer; want Gods genade begon te werken, kwam in zijn hart tot openbaring, en hij zeide: ik zal opstaan en tot mijn Vader gaan en mijn zonden belijden. Hij werd dan ook met open armen ontvangen en het gemeste kalf werd geslacht. En de oudste zoon? De stumpert! Hij deelt niet in de feestvreugde van vader en broeder. In zijn eigen-gerechtigheid snouwt hij zijn vader toe, dat hij nog nooit een bokje had ontvangen van dezen, om met zijn vrienden vroolijk te zijn. Het hielp ook niet dat vader kwam zeggen: al het mijne is het uwe. De man bezat

alleen maar een beetje algemeene genade die de zonde stuitte naar de getuigenis van deze leer. Hij bleef bij vader thuis; werd een gierigaard en haatte zijn broeder. Zoo is het trouwens altijd; Kain haat altijd zijn broeder Abel. De engelen hebben dan ook vreugde bedreven over de arme jongste zoon die verloren was maar van God werd gevonden; en de oudste zoon die rijk was bedeed met algemeene genade goederen, en in wiens ziel de zonde werd gestuit werd ledig weggezonden, want hij reisde als een onbegenadige naar 't eeuwig verderf.

Den 28sten Oct. kwamen we als leden en vrienden van de "Prot. Ref. School Auxiliary" te zamen in de basement van de Eerste gemeente. Ge weet het wel: dit is onze school-beweging. Het bestuur stelde alle middelen in het werk om deze avond genoegelijk door te brengen en m.i. is dit ook gelukt. Eer we ons schaarden aan de gezamenlijken disch zongen we enkelen verzen uit de Psalter en ging Ds. H. Hoeksema voor in gebed. Nu, om gezamenlijk te eten en te drinken, en den God te gedenken die de gever is van alle goede gaven en volmaakte giften is niet verkeerd, ook niet in de ernstige dagen waarin we ons thans bevinden, en die we moeten doorleven ook met duizenden die tegenwoordig van honger sterven; en weer andere duizenden die hun leven laten op 't slagveld. Laat ons er gedurig aan denken dat dit ook eigen vleesch en bloed raakt; wordt ook jonge mannen uit eigen kerken togen ten strijde en sommigen zullen daar misschien moeten sterven. Dat is oorlog. Gelukkig dat er ook nu niets gebeurd bij geval, maar dat ons alles toekomt uit de hand van onzen hemelschen Vader, en dat ook op 't slagveld geen haar van ons hoofd zal vallen zonder Zijn Souvereinen wil. Er gebeurd letterlijk niets bij geval ook al schijnt het tegenovergestelde waarheid te bevatten. Ds. Petter, van Grand Haven, ging voor in dankgebed voor genoten gaven.

De collecte die bijeen verzameld werd was m.i. wel een beetje karig, in aanmerking genomen het doel waarvoor het was bestemd. 't Was toch ten behoeve voor het verkrijgen van een eigen school. Dit raakt ons allen, en we moesten dit eigenlijk een 100 percent bezigheid maken. Het loont de moeite en geeft een geestelijk rijke winst.

De vier jonge mannen die in een samenspraak het heil zochten voor dit goede werk, hadden m.i. een goede kijk op de dingen. Het kwam goed uit dat redeneeringen zooals: we zijn te klein, bezitten niet het geld, of de bestaande scholen zijn goed genoeg, of ook wel, we mogen ze niet verwoesten enz., geen steek houden. En werd tusschenbeide ook eventjes op gewezen dat sommige Dss. en kerkeradsleden wel een beetje meer mochten ijveren voor een zaak als deze, die tenslotte toch ons en onze kinderen raakt tot in de verste geslachten, en daarom ook Gods verbond onder ons, hetwelk Hij met Zijn volk heeft opgericht. En alleen

in dien weg wil Hij ons tot een God zijn.

Het program voor dien avond was eigenlijk nog niet afgewerkt; ook niet nadat er door sommigen muziek en zang ten beste werd gegeven. Er moesten nog vele artikeltjes aan de man worden gebracht. Groote en kleine cadeautjes waren ten geschenke gegeven, en ze moesten bij opbod worden verkocht. Op zijn engelsch zeggen we van "auction sale". Nu de "Auctioneer" was de geschikte man voor dit werk. Hij was vol enthousiasme. Hadden we er maar wat meer van voor onze school-beweging. Persoonlijk had ik het wel een beetje kalmer gezien. Dit is echter een kwestie van smaak. Hij kon de menschen het geld uit de beurs kloppen, en daar was het toch om begonnen. 't Ging beter als met de collecte bak. De vraag komt echter op: is het wel bevorderlijk voor onze school-beweging? Sommigen hebben er zich aan geergerd; weer anderen waren schrikkelijk vertoornd, en nog anderen wisten niet wat er van te denken. Er waren er ook die zoo het scheen zich genoegelijk hebben vermaakt. Er waren er ook die beweerden dat op deze manier Gods huis tot een huis van koopwaar werd gemaakt. Dit is natuurlijk niet waar. Fuller Ave. basement kan niet worden vergeleken met de Oud Testamentische tempel van weleer. Daar, in dien tempel, in het heilige der heiligen woonde God werkelijk. En dit kan niet worden gezegd van een Nieuw Testamentische kerk als de gemeente niet is vergaderd.

Nu ben ik er persoonlijk echter niet voor om een "auction sale" te houden voor een school beweging als de onze. Men betaalt op die manier in sommige gevallen 15 of 20 maal te veel voor een artikel. Men komt onder den invloed van de "Auctioneer". Men raakt de money kwijt, hetwelk men anders in de beurs hield. En men heeft er later misschien spijt van. 't Is geen spontaan geven, en men berooft ook anderen die minder met aardse goederen zijn bedeed, en toch ook zoo'n artikeltje wel zouden willen bezitten. Indien we allen een dollar meer in de collecte hadden gegeven, dan hadden we evenveel geld bijeenzameld.

En nu iets anders: "In the 33rd Annual report of the Christian Psychopathic Hospital Association" komt ook een rede in voor die werd uitgesproken door Ds. H. Hoeksema. Ik was dan ook niet een beetje verwonderd dat de Fuller Ave. Prot. Ref. Kerk werd gekozen voor deze jaarlijksche vergadering, en dat Ds. Hoeksema de hoofdspreker was voor dien avond. Zijn Eerwaarde koos een zeer geschikt onderwerp: "The Salvation of the Insane."

In zijn betoog liet de spreker het goed uitkomen, dat ook onder de krankzinnigen, God Zijn volk heeft. Gereformeerde menschen gelooven dat, en daarom is er dan ook een leeraar in "the Psychopathic Hospital" om deze kranken van zinnen de blijde boodschap des heils te brengen. Ds. wees er op: dat de zaligheid alleen mogelijk is door geloof in Jezus Christus; en om

te gelooven vermag de krankzinnige nu juist niet. Daarom wordt dan ook dikwijls de bange vraag gedaan: Is er zaligheid voor de krankzinnigen, of ook wel laat God het toe dat Zijn kinderen door deze ziekte worden aangetast?

De spreker gaat voort met te zeggen: dat er geen troost is in een dogma van willen, en loopen, en aannemen wat wordt aangeboden. Dan komt de krankzinnige er zeker wel buiten te staan, want hij is beroofd van zinnen, en grijpt dien Christus zeker zoo nooit aan.

Het is zeker waar, dat God een volk heeft verkoren voor Hem zelven om te vertellen Zijne wonderwerken. En ook dit vermag de beroofde van zinnen niet te doen. Doch het is ook even goed waarheid, dat wij die normaal zijn in ons denken hebben nog maar een klein beginsel van deze gehoorzaamheid. Aanstands zullen we Hem verheerlijken in volmaaktheid; en in dat prijzen Gods deelt ook de kranke van zinnen. God heeft verkoren het onedele en het onwijze der wereld, opdat niemand zou roemen.

Het is goed duidelijk geworden in des Ds. betoog, dat we allen voor God dood ter neder liggen in onze zonden en ellenden, en dat het vrije Souvereine genade is, dat we uit dien doodstaat worden gered door de Souvereine God.

Indien dit in Cutlerville anders wordt voorgesteld of anders wordt gepreekt, heeft dit hospitaal voor krankzinnigen geen zielenherder noodig, en komen dezen buiten het koninkrijk Gods te staan.

Het was jammer dat er niet meer belangstelling was. We bevinden ons toch in een oorlog-krankzinnige wereld.

Laat ook ons gebed uitgaan tot den Allerhoogsten God; en laat ons ook vooral als kerken, niet bidden voor de vrijheid der wereld. Ook niet voor victorie en blijvende vrede, maar alleen voor de vrede van Jeruzalem.

S. D. V.

The Great and The Terrible God

(Joshua's wars)

Attention has already been called to the great offence which the history of the conquest of Canaan has given to the opponents of Christianity. As was said, the Manichaeans classified it among "the cruel things which Moses did and commanded," and which went to prove, according to their view, that the God of the Old Testament could not be the God of the New. This is the usual criticism brought against the Jehovah of

the people of Israel. He is a cruel and unjust deity. Thus to identify Him with the God of the Christians is to inflict the followers of Christ with god whom it is impossible to obey and adore.

These opinions every true believer denounces as blasphemy. The Canaanites, as was said, were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Instead of forsaking their abominations, they chose to continue defiant to the end and thus chose death. And what they chose they received from the hand of God.

Being just, the extirpation of the Canaanites was not cruel. But who can read of the military campaigns of Joshua—of the slaying of countless numbers of humans including women and children—without exclaiming, How terrible! And to say that God had commanded it, is not saying enough. It was Jehovah's work, in which Joshua and his army were busy merely as His agents. We will then say of God not that He is cruel but that He is terrible in His holiness. This is the truth about God that receives statement in Holy Writ over and over. "For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth" (Ps. 47:2). By terrible things in righteousness will He answer His people, Ps. 65:5. Terrible are the things which He did by the Red sea, Ps. 106:22. He is the great and the terrible God, Ne. 1:5. With him is terrible majesty, Job 37:22. He drives away His enemies as smoke: as wax melteth before the fire, so the wicked perish at His presence, Ps. 68:2. He shall break them with a rod of iron; and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, Ps. 2:9. The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills were moved and were shaken, because he was wroth, Ps. 18:7.

The God of the New Testament is just as terrible as the Jehovah of the people of Israel, for he is Jehovah. He reveals from heaven His wrath over all unrighteousness of men. He gives them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart, and to vile affection and to a reprobate mind, Rom. ch. 1. The plagues of the book of Revelations, all the torments of the human family of this hour—the torments of war, famine, and death, and every torment that is named—proceed from His counsel. And when the day of His wrath is come, He will do terrible things in righteousness. The stars in heaven will fall to the earth; the heaven will depart as a scroll, and every mountain and island will be moved out of their places.

Some would tone down the severity of God by saying that He would be a kind father to all men but cannot because He stands helpless in the presence of man's unbelief. But God doeth terrible things in righteousness because *He* wills and not because men, through their unwillingness to repent, compel Him. At the end of time, it will again be said of the wicked, who perish in their sins. There was not one of them that willed to be reconciled to God, because it was of God

to harden their hearts, that they should remain unpenitent, that He might destroy them utterly and that they might have no favor.

It is sheer hypocrisy in the natural man that he stands aghast at the severity of the God of the Scriptures. Within the limits of his creatural capacities, man, too, does terrible things, not in righteousness but in unrighteousness. For example, in his mad and unholy scramble for this earth, he goes to war and employs all the fruits of science in the destruction of the life and property of the competitor nation. It has been estimated that in the present conflict 22 million humans—men, women, and children—have already died. Still the war must go on, however the cost in human lives is daily mounting. Yet man will find fault with God because, in His righteous severity, He metes out punishment to the wicked.

Man does not object to the severity of God, if God will only exercise His severity in man's interest to the exclusion of the interest of his fellowmen, in helping man win his wars which he wages with his fellowmen. Each party to the conflict implores the divine aid. Each will conquer with God's help. Each decries in God's ears the sins and atrocities of the other but of which all are equally guilty and in which all glory—glory in their shame. Each thanks God that he is not like (those) other men. Each prays, "Let God arise, let our enemies be scattered." So do men contempt God. And the example is set by the clergy.

It is plain, then, that the reason of the natural man's hatred of the God of the Scriptures is not that He is terrible but that He declines to be terrible in the interests of man, of *his* carnal aims. The reason is that God does terrible things *in righteousness*, is thus terrible in the interest of His *own* cause only, which alone is righteous, and which at once is the cause of all righteous men, His people, chosen in Christ, reconciled to God through the cross, a people constrained by His love to war His warfare and sustained by the gladdening prospect that, through all His terrible doings, God perfects their salvation, and thus promotes the ends of *His* kingdom—the kingdom of heaven—so that it comes and will appear in glory on the new earth where God, who doeth terrible things in righteousness, will tabernacle with its righteous citizens—righteous in Him, Christ Jesus—Who is the righteousness of His people.

It is this God that the world hates. For with this God in heaven in the throne of the universe men must either eschew evil, do righteousness, know Him the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, desire nothing in heaven and on earth beside Him, thus cease hating and killing one another in their mad lust for the things below and set their affections on the things above, or be destroyed, be chased by the curse of God, who doeth terrible things in righteous-

ness, into everlasting desolation. But men—the reprobated world—do not want to be destroyed. What man does! But neither do they want to forsake their abominations, and turn to the living, the great and terrible God, to be saved. What they desire of God is that He bless them in their sins. But this God cannot do. Disappointed they turn to their idol, prostrate themselves before the shrine of a god of their own making, who will go along with them in their sin and bless them in their iniquity.

But we must consider that, as with God there is no respect of persons, He doeth terrible things in righteousness even to His people, in the first instance to Christ, the Saviour, whom He bruised for their iniquities and wounded for their transgressions. And in bruising Him, God was again doing a terrible thing in righteousness. We have but a faint notion of what Christ suffered under the mighty hand of God from His agony in the garden, from the words that He uttered upon the cross, and from complaints such as these, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Ps. 22:12-15).

God doeth a terrible thing in righteousness to His people. In His love He chasteneth them for their correction. Under His mighty hand, they have many tribulations and are in heaviness through manifold temptations. At times His hand may be resting upon them with such weight that with Job they cry that their grief, if laid in the balance together, would be heavier than the sands of the sea.

Yet it is this very God whom believers desire—the God that doeth terrible things in righteousness. With the love of this God shed abroad in their hearts, it is the only God whom they can will to desire. And He is righteous to remember their work and labour, which they shew toward His name. In tribulations they become partakers of His holiness. All things advance their salvation. His mercy is upon them and His goodness followeth them all the days of their life. He prepares for them a table in the presence of their enemies and gives them peace. As executing terrible vengeance upon the wicked who persecute them—He doeth terrible things in righteousness—He delivers them out of all their troubles and crowns them with glory. Therefore do they glory only in Him, the God of their salvation, who answereth them by terrible things in righteousness. This verily is their song:

O clap your hands, all ye people: shout unto God with the voice of the trumpet.

For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.

He shall subdue the people under us, and the

nations under our feet.

He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved (Ps. 47:1-4).

Being God's sons and partaking of His nature, believers, too, do terrible things *in righteousness*. Joshua and the true Israel that with him warred God's warfare did. And not only they but the believers of the gospel age as well. All God's people do, especially the saints in heaven, they who have passed to their reward. The souls under the altar—the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held—cry with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10). When the prayers of *all* saints (Rev. 8:1-5) ascend up before God and are cast on the earth, there are voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. Judgments we are to think of here—judgments with which the saints inflict the habitants of the earth—their faith conquers the world—yet not they but God who answereth them by terrible things in righteousness. And many of the saints are among these habitants and thus participate in the very grief for which they pray. And they do so willingly; for unto them it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Phil. 1:29). "Thy kingdom come," is a petition for the coming of Christ in judgment over the world, and this of necessity, as it is only through judgments that His kingdom can come.

We cannot, therefore, approve the appraisal of Joshua, according to which he and the religion under him did not appear in very close relation to many things that are lovely and of good report; the appraisal that ascribes the zeal and vigor with which Joshua fought God's wars to the spirit of his age which was cruel (the spirit of every age is cruel); and that praises the man for his ruggedness as a soldier but criticizes him for his lack of sweetness and light, charity and gentleness. The cruel, hard, and brutish man is the man who doeth terrible things in unrighteousness. But God's believing people do terrible things *in righteousness*, and therefore they are at once the meek of the earth, who love their enemies, bless them that curse them, pray for them which despitefully use them, and thus bring themselves forward as children of Him—their Father in heaven—who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. True zeal of God's house, certainly, is not demoralizing. If it were, Christ would have been the greatest of sinners. It is sin, and sin only, that injures a man's soul. It does so, because the wages of sin is death and because God, who doeth terrible things in righteousness, pays the sinning soul its wage.

G. M. O.

The Division of the Land in West Palestine

(The inheritance of Caleb)

With the thirteenth chapter begins the second part of the book of Joshua. The description of the division of the land begins with this chapter and continues through chapter nineteen.

As Joshua has become old and stricken in years, and as much of the land is still to be conquered, with no prospect of his completing the conquest, God commands him to wait no longer, but to undertake the division, ch. XIII:117. It will be well to note the land that remains to be subdued. First, there were all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, in the south of Palestine, from Sihor, the brook of Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, the city of the fly-Baal, Baal-zebub, conquered by Judah (Judg. 1:18), afterward lost again and reconquered under Samuel (I Sam. VII:14). Included in this district were the five Lords of the Philistines, residing in Gaza, Ashdod, Ascalon, Gath, and Ekron; and all the Evites. Some of these towns are familiar to every Bible student. Gaza is first mentioned at Gen. X:19, as a border town of the Canaanite peoples. It was conquered by Judah and afterwards lost again, Judg. III:3. Samson carried the gates of Gaza to a hill, Judg. XVI:21-30. Against this city prophesied the prophets Jeremiah (XXV:20; XVII:5), Amos (1:6, 7), Zephaniah (II:4), and Zechariah (IX:5). It was on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza that Philip baptized the eunuch (Acts VIII:30). In Ashdod Dagon was cast down before the ark of God (I Sam. V:1-7; VI:17). Against this city also the prophets mentioned above raised their voices in condemnation, in the same passages which were there quoted. Gath was the home of Goliath (I Sam. 17:4); and is mentioned with Ashkelon in David's lamentation (2 Sam. 1:20). The whole district was "remarkable in all ages for the extreme riches of its soil; its fields of standing corn, its vineyards and oliveyards are mentioned in Scripture (Judg. XV:5); and in the time of famine the land of the Philistines was the hope of Palestine (2 Kings VIII:2).

The other two sections of the country still to be subdued were the land of the Sidonians—the Phœnician territory—and all the hill country toward the east from Lebanon.

In instructing Joshua to divide the land, the Lord first takes account of what Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manassah have received from Moses in the part of the country east of the Jordan, ch. XIII:8-33. First, we have the borders of that part of the country generally; then the territories of the two and a half

tribes. The only part of this district that has not been subdued are the territories of the Geshurites and Maachathites. David must have brought into subjection these tribes in his Syrian war "when he went to recover his border at the River Euphrates," (2 Sam. VIII:3) but without expelling them, for in the days of Absalom there still reigned in Geshur a king to whom that prince, after the murder of Ammon, could flee, 2 Sam. XIII:37. Though the conquest of this district was nearly complete, it was the least secure part of the country. It was continually being invaded by the neighboring heathen; and the two and a half tribes whose request had been granted to settle in this beautiful region, were the first to be carried into captivity by the king of Assyria. It indicates that covenant infidelity was at its worst east of the Jordan.

Now follows the specifications of the allotments. That of Reuben was farthest south. Gad's territory lay north of Reuben's. His lot included the southern part of Gilead; Mahanaim, and Peniel, where Jacob wrestled with the Angel, and Ramoth Gilead. The half tribe of Manassah received the kingdom of Og, and the northern part of Gilead. In this tribe was Jabesh-gilead, whose habitants Saul delivered from the treachery of the Ammonites, I Sam. XI. Here also was the lake of Galilee; here the "desert-place" across the sea, where Christ would repair when in need of rest, here the mountains where he would spend the night in prayer. In the gospel narratives, this part of Palestine bears the name Perea. Here Christ performed many of His miracles. This section of the description ends with the notice, "But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them" (Ch. XIII:33). In this section also occurs the parenthetical statement respecting the death of Balaam. "Balaam also, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them" (ver. 22). The slaying of Balaam had taken place in the days of Moses in the war with the Midianites by whom the Israelites had been drawn into idolatry, Nu. XXXI:2. That the fact is mentioned here is doubtless due to the circumstance that it had occurred on the boundary line between Reuben and Gad.

We now come to the division of the country west of the Jordan among the nine and a half remaining tribes. As distributors Joshua and Eleazar, Aaron's third son and successor to the high-priesthood, are named here, as in Nu. XXXIV:17. But before they have opportunity to address themselves to their task, Caleb approaches Joshua and desired that the mountain of Hebron may be given to him. His demand was well grounded. It was he that "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it for we are well able to overcome it" (Nu.

XIII:30). His fidelity was rewarded. He was exempt from the sentence of exclusion pronounced upon the rest with the exception of Joshua. "But my servant Caleb, because he hath another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Nu. XIV:24). It is this promise that he now puts forward. "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea." "Moses, the man of God." The appellation is significant. Moses was God's prophet whose integrity was known to all. It was this man who had communicated to Joshua what the Lord had decreed. There could be no doubt that he had spoken in the name of God. Having thus fortified his plea, Caleb recalls the service that had led to the promise. At the time he was sent forth, he was forty years old. He brought back a report "as it was in mine heart" (ver. 7). Being a spiritual man and not discouraged as the rest, he had spoken out just as he felt it. Not so his brethren who went up with him. They discouraged the heart of the people. In consequence of this Moses swore to him to give him "*the land whereon thy feet have trodden*" (ver. 9). This must be made to apply not certainly to the whole of Palestine but to a definite locality i.e., the region of Hebron, which he had spied out (Nu. XIII:22, 23). As according to Nu. XIII:21, he had gone much further into the country, he may have spied out this region alone, the other spies having been too terrified to follow him here. Spying out this region was a particularly dangerous undertaking in the point of view of nature. For the giant sons of the Anakins were here. And the Lord decreed that this very region should be his inheritance as a reward of his faith. And God has fulfilled His promise and kept him alive, as He spoke, and that for these forty and five years while Israel walked and perished in the wilderness (ver. 10). The natural force of the hero is unabated although he is now eighty-five years old. He is as strong this day as he was in the day that Moses sent him. His capacity for war is unbroken (ver. 12). On the ground of these facts he now asks for Hebron, and if the Lord be with him, he shall be able to expel from their strongholds those giants. A remarkable old man, this Caleb. The vigor and freshness of youth is in him. He is still ready for military enterprise. The presence of giants in his possession, inhabiting cities great and fenced, holds no terror for him. Joshua blesses the man—who wouldn't—and grants his request. The following chapter contains a brief account of his military expeditions. "And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmaj, the children of Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir. . . ." (XV:14, 15).

Debir, or Kirjathsepher, was another stronghold

of the Anakim, lying in Caleb's possession. To whomsoever should capture it he promised his daughter Achsah in marriage (Ver. 13-20; Judg. 1:10-15). This, it would seem, was like putting her up to public competition. Perhaps the doing would not strike as being strange, if we knew the circumstance. Othniel, who is called Caleb's brother, which may mean his brother's son, took it, and got Achsah for his wife. Achsah had received from her father a portion of land with which she was not satisfied. There was a certain field besides, which she desired, and which she urged her husband to ask of Caleb. But it seems (the text is not plain here) that he had not the courage. Then she herself turned supplicant. On approaching her father, she sprang from the ass on which she was riding, and humbled herself before him. Perceiving that she had something to present to him, he asked, "What wouldest thou. And she said, Give me a present; for thou hast set me in the land of the south; give me also springs of water." She names the springs instead of the field watered by them. The field that had been given to her may have been a dry land. Her wish was granted:—"he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs."

We must apprehend the significance of Caleb's faith and of the manner in which it was rewarded. What Moses in the name of God promised him was Hebron and not merely a portion in the land of Canaan to be determined by the lot of Joshua. Hence, what Caleb desired is "*this mountain*, whereof the Lord spake in that day; . . ." (XIV:12). Caleb's portion, as compared with the lots of the other families in Israel, was uncommonly large. As was pointed out, it included two cities. It thus called, and through all the years would continue to call, for an explanation. It necessitated the telling of Caleb's story to each new generation,—the rehearsing of his covenant fidelity, of the daring undertakings and achievements of his faith, of the reward of faith and thus, by the way of contrast, of the unbelief of the generation that perished in the wilderness. Caleb's inheritance was a memorial of his faith. And so, through the Scriptures, it still speaks—speaks to us. It tells us that God is righteous to remember the work and labour of His servants, which they shew toward His name and that the reward that He has prepared for them is commensurate to what He, through the power of His grace, accomplished through them in this life.

Caleb certainly, was not acting under the impulse of a love of the things below in claiming his reward, but under the constraint of the love of God, of the desire that the memory of God's gracious dealings with him should be kept alive, live on in the memory of the antecedents of his generation. His readiness in granting the request of his daughter for another field forms an episode that may have been inserted in the sacred

narrative to give us an example of the generosity of the man, of his being free from a carnal attachment to his earthly possessions, of his being the kind of a man that possesses as not possessing. Certainly nothing of what the holy men of God have incorporated in the Scriptures, is without significance.

There was truly something remarkable about Caleb's faith. Caleb and Joshua had acted alike, in opposition to the other ten spies; but of the two, Caleb seems to have been the bolder and the more outspoken. It was he that "stilled the people before Moses. . . ." and at first his name occurs alone as exempted from the sentence of exclusion. Caleb was evidently the man who took the lead in the opposition to the ten, not only pointing out the course of duty, but manifesting the spirit of utter disgust toward the cowardice that forgot God was with His people.

The scriptural proof that Caleb was given a large territory over which his descendents spread themselves is, that even in David's time it was named simply *Caleb* and was thus distinguished from the rest of Judah as a peculiar district, I Sam. XXX:14. The Egyptian servant reports to David that his master invaded the south of the Cherothites and upon the coast which belonged to Judah, and upon the *south of Caleb*.

G. M. O.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Nov. 12, 1943, our dearly beloved parents,

MR. WILLIAM VAN WEELDEN

and

MRS. Wm. VAN WEELDEN—Bouma

might celebrate their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children, extend to them our most sincere and hearty congratulations.

Together with them, we bless our Covenant God who has spared them for one another and for us, and it is our sincere prayer that the Lord may continue to bless them in His love and mercy.

Their grateful children

Mr. and Mrs. John Van Weelden

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Kelderman

Mr. and Mrs. Kryn De Ronde

Cpl. and Mrs. Sjoerd H. Van Weelden

James, William Jr., Raymond, Peter,

Ernest, Anna Beth, Harold, Jeanne,

Frances, and eight Grandchildren.