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Meditatie

De Keuze Der Volken

Alzoo zegt de Heere der heirscharen: Het zal in die dagen geschieden, dat tien mannen, uit allerlei tongen der Heidenen, grijpen zullen, ja, de slip grijpen zullen van eenen Joodschen man, zeggende: Wij zullen met ulieden gaan; want wij hebben gehoord, dat God met ulieden is. Zach. 8:23.

Vreugde inplaats van rouw!

Groote blijdschap inplaats van geweën!

De vastendagen zullen tot vroolijke hoogtijden worden!

Dat is ten slotte het antwoord, dat de mannen, die van Bethel naar Jeruzalem waren gekomen, om den Heere te vragen of ze moesten blijven weenen en vasten, gelijk ze gedaan hadden de vele jaren van de ballingschap, in de vierde vijfde, zevende en tiende maand, door den profet ontvingen.

Ach, neen, vasten zonder oorzaak, weenen zonder droefheid des harten was den Heere niet aangenaam! "Hebt gij Mij, Mij eenigszins gevestigd?" Gehoorzaamheid is beter dan offerande! Gerechtigheid en gericht, goedertierenheden en barmhartigheden zijn Gode welbehagelijk. Men hoore dan in Bethel zoowel als in Jeruzalem, des Heeren Woord: "Spreekt de waarheid, een iegelijk met zijnen naaste; oordeelt de waarheid en een oordeel des vredes in uwe poorten. En denkt niet de een des anderen kwaad in ulieder hart; en hebt een valschen eed niet lief; want al deze zijn dingen, die Ik haat, spreekt de Heere". vss. 16, 17. En naar dat Woord wandele men, als het volk van Gods verbond, dat Hij Zich heeft geformeerd, opdat het Zijnen lof zou vertellen.

Dan behoeft men zich verder over vasten en geweën niet te bekommeren.

En bovendien, in dien weg wandelend en het Woord van Gods verbond houdend, zal de vraag naar de noodzakelijkheid van vasten en weenen vanzelf ophouden. Want men zal dan met blijdschap gaan hopen op de vervulling van Gods beloften. En Hij Zelf zal het vasten den huize van Juda tot vreugde, en tot blijdschap, en tot vroolijke hoogtijden maken. vs. 19.

Hij keert immers tot Sion weder!

Hij zal in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen, en Jeruzalem zal geheeten worden eene stad der waarheid, en de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, een berg der heiligheid. Hij zal Zijn volk verlossen uit het land des opgangs en uit het land des nedergangs der zon, en Hij zal hen wederbrengen om in het midden van Jeruzalem te wonen. . . .

Jeruzalem zal vol worden!

En zij zullen Jehova tot een volk zijn; en Hij zal hun tot een God zijn, in waarheid en in gerechtigheid!

Maar nog grooter wonderen zal de Heere voor Jeruzalem doen!

Want vele volken en machtige Heidenen zullen komen, om het aangezicht van den Heere der heirscharen te Jeruzalem te zoeken, en om het aangezicht des Heeren te smeeken. . . .

In groote scharen komen ze aan! Tien mannen uit allerlei tongen der heidenen grijpen de slip aan van eenen Joodschen man, zeggende: "Wij gaan ook naar Jeruzalem!"

Wonderlijk werk Gods!

Groote blijdschap!

Zij zullen komen!

Uit alle landen en talen en volken komen de geweldigen, om het koninkrijk der hemelen te nemen met geweld!

Let toch op het levendige en sterk sprekende beeld van dit Woord des Heeren der heirscharen!

Daar reist een Joodsche man. Hij komt van het land des ondergangs of uit het land des nedergangs der zon. Hij heeft zijn aangezicht naar Jeruzalem

gekeerd, en trekt haastig op, om den Heere te zoeken en Zijn aangezicht met dankzegging te smeeken in Zijn huis, want Jehova heeft hem verlost. En terwijl hij reist, kunt ge hem hooren zingen:

Ik ben verblijd, wanneer men mij
Godvruchtig opwekt: zie, wij staan
Gereed om naar Gods huis te gaan;
Kom, ga met ons, en doe als wij. . . .

Edoch, dit laatste betreft hij alleen op de Joodsche broederen. Hun alleen roept hij toe: Kom, ga met ons! Van een breeder Evangelie weet hij niet, wil hij niet weten. Jeruzalem is voor de Joden. Gods huis is voor Israel alleen. Dat de zaligheid ook voor de Heidenen zou kunnen zijn, vermoedt hij van verre niet. En als hij op zijn weg een groep van Heidenen voorbij reist, verhaast hij zijn tred, en zijn lied verstomt hem op de lippen. En nog haastiger wordt zijn stap, wanneer hij die Heidenen hoort zeggen: "Laat ons ook heengaan, om het aangezicht des Heeren der heirscharen te Jeruzalem te zoeken!" En als dan die Heidenen hem zien, en hem vragen naar den weg, hem verzoeken om hen met hem te laten reizen, zet hij het waarlijk op een loopen, om hen te ontvluchten. Doch, ziet, tien dier mannen grijpen hem bij de slip van zijn jas, vastberaden om met hem te reizen naar Jeruzalem, en zeggen: "Wij zullen met u gaan, want wij hebben gehoord, dat God met ulieden is!". . . .

Zoo is het beeld.

De geweldigen nemen het koninkrijk der hemelen met geweld!

En zoo is het geschied, en zoo geschied het nog. Want "die dagen" zijn de dagen der nieuwe bedeeeling.

Die Joodsche man is metterdaad wel een Jood, doch hij is een ware Israeliet, behoort tot het geestelijk zaad Abrahams. Hij kwam wel uit de Kerk der oude bedeeeling, maar ging toch over in de Kerk van den nieuwen dag. Zoo was het althans bij den ingang van de nieuwe bedeeeling. De "Joodsche man" had gezien met zijn oogen des Heeren zaligheid. Hij had gehoord het Woord des eeuwigen levens. Zijne handen hadden het getast. Want het Woord was vleesch geworden en had onder ons getabernakeld. En men had Hem aanschouwd in Zijne heerlijkheid, men had geluisterd naar Zijn Woord en het erkend als het Woord des levens. Men had gelet op Zijne werken, en beleden, dat Hij was de Christus de Zoon des levenden Gods. En men had Hem zien ondergaan in den smadelijken dood des kruises op het donkere Golgotha; maar men was ook getuige geweest van Zijne opstanding in heerlijkheid en van Zijn opgenomen worden in den hemel. . . .

Ze hadden Zijne heerlijkheid aanschouwd op den berg!

En ze hadden den Geest der waarheid, den Trooster, Die komen zou, ontvangen.

Geroepen waren ze om getuigen te zijn van Hem,

van Zijn dood en opstanding, en vergeving der zonden te verkondigen allen volken. Zij, de vervulling van dezen "Joodschen man", de apostelen, straks ook de profeten en evangelisten, en om overal uit te roepen: "Kom, ga met ons, en doe als wij!". . . .

Laat ons heengaan, om te smeeken het aangezicht des Heeren, en om den Heere der heirscharen te zoeken.

Wij gaan ook heen!

Naar Jeruzalem gaan wij. Niet naar het oude Jeruzalem van hout en steen, want dat heeft uitgediend. Jeruzalem is centraal thans boven en is onzer aller moeder. En op aarde is de Godstad vertegenwoordigd in de Kerk, door Christus, den verhoogden Heer Zelf, vergaderd en tot Zich getrokken. En straks wordt dat Jeruzalem in eeuwige heerlijkheid geopenbaard, als het voltooid zal zijn, en als het van God uit den hemel zal nederdalen. Naar dat Jeruzalem trekken wij op. Daar is zaligheid. Daar is verlossing. Want de wereld gaat voorbij in den grooten dag des Heeren, maar op den berg Sion is behoudenis en ontkoming! Kom, ga met ons!

Zoo spraken ze op den Pinksterdag!

En vele duizenden hoorden hunne stem, en van het land van opgang en uit dat van den nedergang der zon kwamen ze, om met dezen roependen Joodschen man het aangezicht des Heeren te Jeruzalem te zoeken, om den naam des Heeren aan te roepen. . . .

Maar 't waren Joden en Jodengenooten, die allen!

Dat ook den Heidenen ditzelfde woord des Evangelies moest worden verkondigd, dat verstonden ze nog niet. De zaligheid was voor de Joden! Nimmer zou deze Joodsche man iets aanraken, slachten en eten, dat onrein was.

Doch tien mannen uit de velen, tien, het aantal der verkiezing, grepen de slip van dezen Joodschen man, en zeiden: wij gaan ook met u, want wij hebben gehoord, dat God met ulieden is! Let er op: zij komen! Zij grijpen de slip van dezen onwilligen Joodschen man! De geweldigen nemen het koninkrijk der hemelen met geweld! Zoo begon het reeds, toen de Heiland nog op aarde was, en eenige Grieken tot de discipelen kwamen met de bede: Wij wilden Jezus wel zien! Doch het zaad kon toen nog geen vrucht dragen. Het moest in de aarde vallen eerst, en sterven. Maar als, nadat dit "zaad" in de aarde gevallen is en gestorven is, de "Joodsche man" nog altijd maar voortreist, zonder zich om de Heidenen ook maar te bekommeren, ja, in de overtuiging, dat Jeruzalem alleen voor de Joden is, grijpt Cornelius van Cesarea, door gebed en aalmoes en door Goddelijke openbaring zich verstout hebbend, de slip van den Joodschen man te Joppe en zegt: "Wij zijn allen hier tegenwoordig, om te hooren al hetgeen u van God bevolen is!" Hand. 10:33.

Wij gaan ook met u!

Want wij hebben vernomen, dat God met ulieden is!
En de Joodsche man meent, dat hij zich moet haas-

ten, om dezen Heiden te ontvluchten: "Heere, ik heb nooit gegeten, iets, dat gemeen of onrein was!" Doch God bereidt hem: "Hetgeen God gereinigt heeft, zult gij niet gemeen maken".

Hij staat stil op zijn weg.

Hij zegt dezen Heiden en allen, die met hem zijn: "Laat de slip van mijn jas maar los. Ik verneem in der waarheid, dat God geen aannemer des persoons is; maar in allen volke, die Hem vreest en gerechtigheid werkt, is Hem aangenaam".

En hij verkondigt hun het Evangelie: Kom, ga met ons!

En zij komen! Tien uit alle volken!

Want toen die Joodsche man het eenmaal goed verstaan had, dat de zaligheid ook voor de Heidenen was, ging hij met opzet de wereld in, en riep hij het overal uit:

Kom, ga met ons en doe als wij!

En van alle kanten kwamen ze aan!

Al de heid'nen, door Uw handen

Voortgebracht in alle landen,

Zullen tot U komen Heer,

Bukken voor Uw aanschijn neer;

En Uw naam ter eere leven!

Groote blijdschap!

Wondervolle geschiedenis!

De Heidenen, die God niet kennen, willen met Gods volk optrekken naar Jeruzalem!

De Heidenen, die overigens bekend stonden als de vijanden van Israel, die hen immers altijd hadden gehaat en getergd, grijpen de slip van een Joodschen man, om met hem te reizen, om zich af te scheiden van eigen volk en uit eigen huis, en zich te voegen bij dat verachte volk! Wij gaan ook met u!

Zoo is het immers?

Men sluit zich aan bij 't volk, dat gehaat en veracht is in de wereld! Zoo was het toen, zoo was 't reeds lang tevoren, toen Ruth zich aansloot bij Naomi met de belijdenis: "Uw volk is mijn volk". Zoo is het nog altijd. Wie optrekt naar Jeruzalem, blijft geen eenling, blijft ook, blijft vooral niet in de wereld, maar scheidt zich van de laatste af, om zich aan te sluiten bij het gesmade volk van God met zijn gesmaden Heere: Jezus van Nazareth en dien gekruisigd!

Uw volk is mijn volk!

Wondervolle belijdenis; nog wonderlijker om hetgeen volgt als de drangreden van dit verlangen om met dezen Joodschen man te trekken: "wij hebben gehoord, dat God met ulieden is!" De Heidenen, tien uit alle volken, die overigens den God des hemels niet wilden dienen of danken, die Hem afbeelden onder den vorm van mensch en beest en kruipend en viervoetig dier, willen zich thans aansluiten bij den gesmaden Jood, omdat God met hem is! God met U! God heeft gemeenschap met u; Hij heeft Zich aan u geopenbaard;

Hij wordt door u gekend; gij staat in Zijn verbond; Hij is met u, niet tegen u; Gij kent Hem in Zijn groote gunst, niet in Zijn vlammenden toorn; Hij doet Zijn aangezicht over u lichten en zegent u met eeuwige zegeningen: geeft u het eeuwige leven.

Zoo werd het in de volheid des tijds!

Zoo werd het gerealiseerd in de vleeschwording des Woords: "Want het Woord is vleesch geworden en heeft onder ons gewoond". God met ons! Immanuel!

Zoo werd het verwerkelijkt door het kruis: "Want God was in Christus de wereld met Zichzelf verzoenende!". . . . Zoo kwam de tabernakel Gods bij de menschen door de opstanding en verhooging van den Heer en de uitstorting van den Geest. . . .

God met ons! In eeuwige gunst!

Gij woont midden in Jeruzalem!

Daarom wordt Jeruzalem het centrale aantrekkingspunt. De keuze om met den Joodschen man op te trekken wordt gemotiveerd door den drang om den levenden God te kennen!

Uw volk is mijn volk: wij gaan ook met u!

Want uw God is mijn God!

Aanbiddelijk werk Gods!

De Heidenen verkiezen God!

Ach, neen; niet als Heidenen; niet omdat er in die donkere heidenwereld altijd nog een natuurlijke drang is naar God, een zoeken van Hem, Dien ze niet kennen; een verlangen, dat slechts wacht op den verkondiger van goede boodschap om zich te kunnen ontwikkelen in een positieve aanbidding van den levenden God.

Zulk een drang is er in geen natuurlijk mensch.

Hij is een vijand Gods geworden, en bedenkt altijd vijandschap tegen den Allerhoogste. En ofschoon God ook den Heidenen openbaarde, dat Hij God is, wilden ze Hem danken noch verheerlijken, keerden ze zich van den levenden God steeds verder af!

Maar de keuze dezer Heidenen vindt haar diepsten wortel in het verkiezen van den eeuwigen God Zelf; en wordt werkelijkheid door de werking van Zijn almachtige, onwederstandelijke, wederbarende, trekkende, verlichtende genade. Immers: "Alzoo zegt *de Heere der heirscharen*: Het zal in die dagen geschieden, dat tien mannen, uit allerlei tongen der Heidenen, grijpen zullen, ja, de slip grijpen zullen van eenen Joodschen man!" De Potentaat heeft het gesproken, eer het geschied is; niet, omdat Hij het vooruit zag, maar omdat Hij het zou doen!

Daarom ook niet alle Heidenen, maar tien uit alle: vrijmachtige verkiezing!

Daarom konden ze het *hooren*: God is met dezen Jood! En daarom kon het de keuze zijn van hun hart: wij gaan ook met u!

Door God alleen: vrijmachtige genade!

Om 't eeuwig welbehagen!

H. H.

Editorials

The Triple Knowledge

EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

II.

LORD'S DAY I

Question 1. What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer. That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with His precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation; and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready henceforth to live unto him.

Question 2. How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?

Answer. Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance.

1.

The Viewpoint Of The Heidelberger.

The text of the first Lord's Day that is quoted above is the one that occurs in our Psalter and that is most commonly used. The English version that is offered by Schaff, and which, according to him, is much better than the one we quote, was prepared by a committee of the Synod of the German Reformed Church of the United States. Its text of the first Lord's Day differs in some minor details from ours. Instead of "delivered me from all the power of the devil" it has "redeemed me" etc. The German text has: "und mich aus aller Gewalt des Teufels erlöset hat". It is true that "redeemed" is a more literal translation of *erlöset* than "delivered"; yet the latter most probably expresses the thought more correctly than the former. Instead of "all things must be subservient to my salvation", it offers "all things must work together for my salvation". But the former adheres more closely to the German text: "mir alles zu meiner Seligkeit dienen muss". Like the German text it begins a new sentence with

"Wherefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life", etc.; and more correctly than our text it renders "von Herzen willig" by "heartily willing". More important, perhaps, is the difference in the rendering of the second question. Our text has: "that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?" The version Schaff presents translates: "that thou in this comfort mayest live and die happily?" The latter is certainly the correct rendering of the German: "das du in diesem Troste seliglich leben und sterben mögest?" But it is also more objective as to meaning and certainly stronger than "enjoying this comfort". "In this comfort" presents the comfort not merely as a matter of feeling and joy, but as the basis of our living and dying happily, as the sphere and cause of it. Our whole life, our thinking and willing and desiring, our speech and our action, is characterized and spiritually determined by this all comprehensive comfort. And this is expressed much more correctly and forcefully by "in this comfort" than by "enjoying this comfort". Finally, Schaff's text renders the first part of the second answer: "First, the greatness of my sin and misery", where our text, however, is a more correct translation of the German: "Erstlich, wie gröss meine Sunde und Elend seien".

So much about the text.

As to the contents of this first Lord's Day, it will be evident at once that it is designed to serve an introductory purpose. The teacher or preacher who would enter into a detailed interpretation of the various elements of the truth that appear in this first chapter of the Heidelberger, would make a serious mistake. He would find that there would be very little left for him to explain in connection with the rest of our instructor. And so does the preacher err, who, in expounding this first Lord's Day, offers a *general* explanation of all the different parts of the truth that are here mentioned. He would merely scan the surface of many points of doctrine, would lack the time to explain anyone of them sufficiently, surely would fail to present the truth as living reality, and would bring his congregation from the very start in a state of mind in which it will be difficult for him to make them believe that preaching on the Heidelberg Catechism is either important or interesting. In this Lord's Day the Catechism speaks of an only comfort, of life and of death; of body and soul, of not being our own but belonging to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, of satisfaction through the precious blood of Christ, of deliverance from all the power of the devil, of our preservation by our heavenly Father, so that not a hair can fall from our head contrary to His will, and so that all things must serve the purpose of our salvation, of the personal assurance of being heirs of eternal life and of sanctification, so that we are heartily willing and prepared to live unto God, of the Holy Spirit, of

the knowledge of sin and misery, of salvation, and of the gratitude we owe to God for such deliverance. How could a preacher mould all these different elements into the contents of his sermon without sacrificing the unity of his discourse, and without becoming guilty of offering to his audience mere generalities, unless he would commit the foolishness which was, in fact, committed by some, of preaching more than two score times on the first question of our instructor alone? Neither a detailed interpretation of this Lord's Day, nor a general survey of the various doctrines mentioned therein, therefore, is required or expedient, when one expounds this chapter of the Heidelberg Catechism to his congregation. Rather must he understand that this Lord's Day is introductory, and that as such it presents the viewpoint from which the entire system of doctrine is considered, the standpoint from which the instructor would have his audience look at the truth of the Word of God.

This viewpoint is immediately and concisely expressed in the very first question: "What is thy only comfort in life and death?" There can be no doubt about the fact, that the Heidelberg Catechism considers and explains the truth from the viewpoint of the consciousness and subjective experience of the believing Christian in this world. In this respect it differs radically from the Westminster Catechisms, both the larger and the shorter. The Westminster Larger Catechism begins as follows: "What is the chief and highest end of man? Man's chief and highest end is, to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever. How doth it appear that there is a God? The very light of nature, the works of God declare plainly that there is a God: but his Word and Spirit do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation. What is the Word of God? The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only Rule of Faith and obedience". And then it continues to treat the doctrine of God, His virtues, the trinity, the decrees, creation, man, the fall, etc. Now, look at the first Lord's Day of the Heidelberg Catechism. You at once discern the difference. The Westminster starts out from the question of the objective end and calling of man: to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever; the Heidelberg speaks of the subjective appropriation and experience of this truth by the individual Christian: my comfort is that I belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. The viewpoint of the Westminster Catechism is doctrinally objective; that of the Heidelberg Catechism is experientially subjective. The standpoint of the former is general and impersonal: it addresses no one, it speaks of *man*; that of the Catechism is specific and personal: it speaks to the man of God.

Let us not misunderstand this viewpoint of our Heidelberg.

When we insist that our catechism proceeds from the standpoint of the subjective experience of the individual believer in this world, we do not imply at all that it is anthropocentric. This has often been alleged. It is pointed out that this is the characteristic difference between the Catechism of Heidelberg and some other symbols, such as the Netherland Confession, and the Westminster Catechisms. The Heidelberg Catechism is anthropocentric, i. e., it makes man the center and end of all things, his redemption and deliverance, his happiness and eternal life are the things that count. But symbols such as the Westminster Catechisms are theocentric, i. e., they place God in the center of things and present Him as the end and purpose of all existence. But this judgment is not quite correct. And it surely is not our intention to characterize the Heidelberg Catechism in this way, when we claim that its viewpoint is subjectively experiential. It is, we judge, surely not impossible to present a theocentric truth from the viewpoint of its being appropriated by the faith, and experienced in the consciousness of the Christian. And this is what, in our opinion, the Heidelberg Catechism attempts to do. It is not anthropocentric to appeal to the law of God as the criterion and source of the knowledge of man's misery, or to begin a discussion of the contents of the Christian's faith with an exposition of the first article of the "Apostles' Creed, or to teach that man was created rightly to God his Creator, to heartily love Him and to live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him. It is not anthropocentric to describe the quickening of the new man as a "sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works", nor to limit good works to those "which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God and to His glory". Lord's Day 33. And it certainly is not anthropocentric but positively theocentric to present true prayer as the highest expression of thankfulness, or to close the discussion of the subject of prayer with the words: "all this we pray for, that thereby not we, but thy holy name may be glorified forever". Qu. 128. But we do claim that the Heidelberg Catechism considers the truth which, of course, is always theocentric, from the viewpoint of its being appropriated and experienced by the believing Christian in this world, and, more particularly, from the point of view that it is his comfort, his sole comfort in life and death.

This already removes, in part, the danger of another possible misunderstanding. By saying that the Heidelberg Catechism is subjective and experiential in viewpoint, we do not imply that it makes man the criterion and source of the truth. The latter is done in two ways. Man's intellect, his reason, may be presented as the final court of appeal to determine what is truth.

To do so is *Rationalism*. It is not rationalism to present the truth as reasonable, as adapted to the understanding of man. The truth is not illogical or unreasonable, or contrary to the mind of the Christian. But it is rationalism to elevate reason to the position of supreme judge, in order to let man's mind decide what shall be considered truth. The Christian lives by revelation, not by the conclusions of reason. But man may also be presented as the measure and source of the truth in the way of *Mysticism*. In that case the objective revelation and Word of God is replaced by "feeling", by certain states of consciousness, by the "inner light", by the direct whisperings of the Spirit of God to our spirit. There is really no essential or principal difference between Rationalism and Mysticism. Both deny the objective Word or revelation of God as the sole rule for faith and life. Both make man the measure and source of the truth. This, however, is not the method of the Heidelberg Catechism. It does not pretend to derive the knowledge of the truth from the mind or feeling of the individual believer, nor from the consciousness of the Church, but it always appeals to the Word of God. The objective law of God is the source of the knowledge of our misery. The question: "Whence knowest thou this?" (i.e. that Jesus Christ is the Mediator) is answered by pointing to "the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son". Qu. 19. The Decalogue is recommended as a guide for the Christian's life, and the prayer which the Lord Himself taught us is taken as the perfect model for all our prayers. Throughout, therefore, it is the Word of God that is recognized as the sole source and criterion of the truth. The Heidelberg instructor is neither a Rationalistic nor a Mystic.

Yet, we repeat, the viewpoint is that of the subjective experience or, if you prefer, that of the spiritual knowledge of the objective truth of the Word of God as possessed by the believing Christian in this world. There is an evident difference between the questions: "What is the chief end of man?" and "What is thy only comfort?" There is an obvious difference between the threefold division of the Heidelberg: sin and misery, redemption, gratitude, on the one hand, and the well-known six loci of dogmatics. The Catechism treats the truth, not merely as a science, but as the spiritual knowledge that is eternal life. John 17:3. It discusses the system of doctrine from the viewpoint of his faith to whose heart the objective Word of God has been applied by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Who dwells in the Church, and Who leads into all the truth. It is not a theology, it is knowledge of God. The one that speaks here is regenerated and called. The Word,

the truth of which he discusses, has been applied to his heart. He has ears to hear, eyes to see. And as he stands in the midst of the present world, full of misery and darkness, and as he himself, outside of Christ, lies in the midst of death, the clear understanding of that Word, or rather, that Word itself as it reveals to Him God in Christ, redemption and deliverance from the power of sin and death, and as he by faith lays hold upon that Word, is his comfort, his sole and all-sufficient comfort in life and death. In that thoroughly sound sense of the word the Heidelberger is experiential and subjective in its approach of the truth.

In close connection with this viewpoint of the Heidelberg Catechism stands the fact that the Catechism is very personal, and that it addresses throughout the child of the Church as "the man of God", that must be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It speaks in the singular throughout: "What is *thy* only comfort?" How many things are necessary for *thee* to know, that *thou* in this comfort mayest live and die happily?" "Whence knowest *thou* thy misery?" "What believest thou", etc, etc. And the one addressed is the baptised child of the Church, considered as a *living member*. In this respect the Heidelberg Catechism proceeds from the same standpoint as the Baptism Form. The child of the covenant is sanctified in Christ, and is baptized as member of His Church. God has forgiven us and our children all our sins, and received us through His Holy Spirit as members of His only begotten Son, and adopted us to be His children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism. That is the standpoint of the Baptism Form. It is no different with the Heidelberg Catechism. The children of the covenant that must be instructed are living children of God. This does not mean, that the Catechism teaches presupposed regeneration. It does not speak on the basis of a supposition: it speaks with certainty. Neither does it mean that the instructor lives in the illusion that all the members of the church on earth are spiritual members of Christ's body. When it speaks of the keys of the kingdom of heaven it reveals quite clearly that it knows that there is a carnal seed of the covenant. But it does mean that this carnal seed is not addressed, it is left out of view. It is the spiritual seed that must be instructed in the Word of God. This spiritual seed, "the man of God", must be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. It is the only seed that can be instructed and that can be made perfect in the truth. And, therefore, it is to this spiritual seed that the Catechism addresses itself throughout. It has nothing for "the others".

In this respect the Catechism stands far above the level of the Church of our own day, even above the level of those that call themselves Reformed. They administer the sacrament of baptism to the children

of the covenant; and they ask of the parents the confession that their children, though conceived and born in sin, are sanctified in Christ and members of the Church; they lead their people in the thanksgiving, that God has forgiven us and our children all our sins, and adopted us to be His children; but when it comes to actual application of this sound and strong doctrine, they rather deny it all, and, instead of instructing and confirming the true seed of the covenant in the truth of the Word of God, they come with "offers of grace", and altar calls and what not! If many spoke their mind, they would have to confess that they do consider it a rather dangerous practice to confront the children of the Church with the pertinent question: "What is thine only comfort in life and death?" And they would rather substitute another: "Hast thou the only comfort in life and death?" And still more dangerous they would consider the business of placing upon the lips of the congregation, believers and their children, the answer: "That I, with body and soul, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ". Yet, in the age of the Reformation this was a common practice. The Heidelberg Catechism in this respect is no exception. It agrees with other Catechisms. Luther's Small Catechism has a different approach from that of our Heidelberger: it commences with a discussion of the Ten Commandments. But when it discusses the articles of our faith, it becomes very personal and direct. Following the article concerning Jesus Christ our Lord in the Apostles' Creed comes the question in this Catechism: "What does this mean?" And the following answer is placed upon the lips of the pupil: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is *my* Lord; who has redeemed *me*, a lost and condemned man, secured and delivered *me* from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent sufferings and death; in order that *I* might be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead. This is most certainly true".

This Small Catechism of Luther was written in 1529.

The Anglican Catechism, written in 1662, has a peculiar approach, but it proceeds from the same principle: the one instructed is the living child of the covenant. Let us quote a little of it:

"Question. What is your name?"

"Answer. N. or M."

"Question. Who gave you this name?"

"Answer. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the

child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

"Question. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?"

"Answer. They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of the wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

"Question. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?"

"Answer. Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me grace, that I may continue in the same unto the end of my life."

We do not quote all this to express agreement with everything that is here taught, or with the practice of the Anglican Church in the seventeenth century. But it shows how in the period of the Reformation and shortly after the Church instructed its spiritual seed in the truth of the Word of God.

This, then, is the viewpoint of the Heidelberg Catechism. There can be no question about this fact. They that are called to preach from this book of instruction will do well to bear this in mind. Approaching the truth from the standpoint of the conscious experience of the believing Christian in this world, and addressing the living member of the Church, it aims to bring the "man of God" to a conscious knowledge of the living truth, of the only comfort in life and death!

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

De Kerkeraad der Protestantsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Orange City, Iowa, wenscht hiermede zijne hartelijke sympathie te betoonen aan broeder ouderling C. Pals Sr. in het schielijk verlies van zijnen jongsten zoon,

GERALD WM. PALS, age 19

De Heere trooste den bedroefde, en geve hem genade dit zwaar kruis te dragen, gedachtig zijnde dat de Heere Zich ontfermt over degenen die Hem vreezen; want Hij weet wat maaksel wij zijn, gedachtig zijnde dat wij stof zijn.

De Kerkeraad voornoemd.

A Soldier's Morale

By the morale of an army is meant the mental attitude of the soldiers toward their position and service and all that is connected with it: their courage, their willingness to serve, their zeal and enthusiasm for the cause in which they serve.

According to reports the morale of the American Army so far as it was drafted in recent months, that is being trained in the various camps all over the country, is very bad.

So the papers reported.

And the report may be considered corroborated by the fact that it was considered necessary for the Secretary of War Stimson to address the soldiers by radio, and to make an attempt to explain to them the expediency of extending the time of their service to two years and a half.

In the well-known magazine "Life" we read:

"There has never been a democratic Army in which the soldiers did not gripe and grouse. Armies are not run for the pleasure or comfort of their men. But in the U. S. citizen Army there is a rising tide of soldier discontent which goes beyond healthy griping. The Army itself and the press have been reluctant to stress this failure of morale, hoping it would disappear. It has not disappeared. It comes out in letters which the men write home and to newspapers. It appears in their conversation when on leave, ignoring it seems only to increase it, for the soldiers feel their complaints are met by a conspiracy of silence."

This magazine sent one of its staff members to investigate whether these reports are based on facts. The staff member was sent to one of the National Guard divisions, and spent a week there, watched their training and talked with the men. His findings are published in "Life" of August 18, 1941.

According to this report there is a general dissatisfaction among the soldiers. They are dissatisfied with their officers, with their lack of equipment, with their training, and with the apparent lack of purpose and reason for their service. They are not enthusiastic about our government's attitude toward the war, and do not believe that the emergency of which the President usually speaks actually exists. Fifty percent of the men interviewed by the staff member of "Life" assured him they would desert at the end of their one year's service. Another forty percent "rue the day they got in the Army". And the remaining ten percent are far from happy over their position. Some of the sentiments expressed by the soldiers are reported verbally. Leaving out the profanity that is proverbial in the camps, and which, by the way, makes it almost impossible for a Christian young man to endure army life, we reprint here some of the statements made:

"The boys here hate the Army. They have no fighting spirit except among themselves when they get stinking drunk. . . . The regiment had its first mass firing on the field the other day. Everybody was scared to death. I was too. These soldiers don't yet know what war is. Soldiers handling the trench-mortar shells trembled. I thought one would drop a shell on the ground and get killed, he looked so nervous."

"Those rules of war! We've heard the one on influencing Congress so many times we are sick!"

"What I am is an imperialist. I've never expressed a political opinion in the Army till now. But to with fighting Germany. Let's fight a war in which we can win something. All we do if we fight with England is lose a of a lot of money, and then England will say we profited from them."

"So Roosevelt will get our jobs back? The he will! I've already been told that I can't have my job back."

"We'll go over the hill. (This means "desert", H.H.) We'll wait until the suckers get caught and then when things quiet down we'll make a dash for the Mexican border. This is nothing but a concentration camp."

"To with Roosevelt and Marshal and the Army and especially this hole and the Germans and the Russians and the British. I want to get the out of this hole."

I want to say, first of all, that this lack of morale in the army at the present time is perfectly understandable.

Circumstances and conditions, proper or improper living conditions and equipment, efficient officers and, above all the presence or absence of a real cause for which the army is being trained to fight,—these are factors that must inevitably affect the morale of an army.

Even if you attribute a certain percentage of the dissatisfaction evidently existing to the fact, that a large number of American young men never learned the meaning of authority and obedience, that many of them entertain the notion that democracy really means that everybody governs himself and does as he pleases, so that it must be extremely difficult for them to become at all accustomed to military discipline, the fact remains that many factors contribute to depress the spirit of the soldier in the camps.

There certainly has been and still is lack of equipment, guns, ammunition, tanks, proper clothing and housing for the soldiers in training. It appears to be a fact that in some camps the soldiers were drilled shouldering a broomstick instead of a rifle! It is also a fact that in some camps they had to stay out all night in a drenching rain, because of the want of barracks.

But the chief cause of the present lack of morale must, in my opinion, be found in the fact, that there is a wide gulf between the sentiment of a large part, if not of a majority, of the American public regarding the war and our part in it, and the attitude and leadership of the government, particularly of the President.

The people on the whole have not yet been convinced that we are fighting for the cause of democracy by aiding England, in spite of all the English propaganda that was spread among our people, since the beginning of the war. They are not inclined to get the chestnuts out of the fire for Great Britain once more, and pay for it in the end, as we did in the first World-War. The President did not succeed to convince a large number, perhaps the majority, of the American public that a case of emergency exists, and that the Nazi war machine is ready to overrun our country, as soon as it has accomplished the domination of Europe. And they are not enthusiastic over an alliance with communistic Russia, nor are they easily convinced that one can fight on the side of the Reds for the preservation of freedom of religion.

And so, there is no enthusiasm for the present frantic attempt to prepare ourselves for war.

The same spirit or lack of spirit with respect to the war as far as our present part in it is concerned, prevails in the army.

And with a view to all these factors, it is perfectly understandable that the morale among the soldiers is bad.

However, I do not write this to justify the attitude of the men in the camps as expressed in the report of "Life" 's staff member.

Certainly it may not be the attitude of the Christian.

He may be depressed and discouraged, especially with a view to the prospect of spending two and a half years of his young life in the army. He, too, may lack enthusiasm for our part in the present war. He may long for the day that he will be discharged and may return home. He may hate the idea of an alliance with Russia. We can understand this. We feel for him and pray for him.

But he does not rebel, nor talk in a spirit of rebellion, nor suggest that he will "go over the hill".

His morale may be affected by circumstances, it cannot be destroyed by them.

It is rooted in principle. Therefore, it is fundamentally steadfast.

And that principle is that he must be and is willing to be in subjection to authority, to the powers that are placed over him, for they are of God. And for God's sake he respects authority and obeys.

The responsibility he leaves to the government. He cannot be held accountable before God for what-

ever part our government may take in the war. They, too, are accountable before God.

But he may look upon his place in the army as assigned to him by his God. And in that position he is called to serve his God by being in subjection to the higher powers.

He walks in faith, even in the army.

And the morale of faith is always good.

H. H.

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY.

My sincere apology to the Rev. H. De Wolf for my failure to assign to him a share of the work in the proposed outlines for the Standard Bearer of 1941-1942.

I do not know how to explain the omission, except that, as I always emphasized in school: "nihil humanum alienum est mihi" and "errare est humanum".

Rev. De Wolf will, of course, gladly believe of me that the omission was not intentional. It was just a bad blunder on my part.

But it can easily be corrected.

Looking over the outlines, I noticed that the Rev. L. Doezeema was assigned the task of writing "Current Events" six times. Suppose that Rev. De Wolf takes his place in the July 1 and September 1 issues, and, besides, takes the place of Rev. R. Veldman in the issue of May 15 on the subject "Erasmus and the Reformation".

I hope that this may be satisfactory.

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

De Vrouwen Vereeniging der Prot. Geref. Kerk te Hull, Iowa, betuigt met dezen haar deelneming met een harer leden, Mrs. P. Hoekstra, in het overlijden van haar schoonvader,

MARTIN J. HOEKSTRA

Moge de God aller vertroosting haar en de overige familie rijkelijk vertroosten door Zijn Woord en Geest die ons verzekeren: "Zalig zijn de dooden die in den Heere sterven".

Namens de Vereeniging,

Ds. A. Cammenga, Pres.

Mrs. G. Blankespoor, Secr.

NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches meets in Pella, Iowa on September 10, 1941, at 9:00.

De Menschen Hopelooze Ellende

Ellende is de werkelijkheid onzes tegenwoordigen levens. Dit is een ontegensprekelijk feit. Weliswaar is er verschil van opinie betreffende het wezen en eigenlijke karakter dezer ellende. De moderne, de arminiaansche, en de gereformeerde beschouwingen verschillen van elkander als de dag van den nacht. Het feit, alszoodanig, echter, kan niet geloochend. Ziekte en dood, haat en vijandschap en oorlog zijn algemeene en universeele verschijnselen. Niemand zou dan ook durven ontkennen dat er ellende is, dat er iets hapert aan onze tegenwoordige wereld. Waarin bestaat des menschen ellende, ja, des menschen hopelooze ellende?

De moderne beschouwing zoekt de oplossing van dit probleem in het uitwendig leven van het menschenkind. De zonde, aldus leeren sommigen, is slechts eene zwakheid van ons karakter. Het karakter moet gevormd. Door karakter-vorming verstaat de wereld niet een diep inwendige, geestelijke werking des Geestes, maar het uitwendig vormen van een menschenkind in uiterlijke fatsoenlijkheid eerbaarheid eerlijkheid, braafheid, overtuiging van beginselen, en wat dies meer zij. Deze beschouwing heeft geen oog voor het feit der zonde in het hart des menschen, doet hem zijn wat men van hem maken kan en wil (de mensch is zijn eigen product), en moet in al ons onderwijs, ook in onze scholen, bij den wortel afgesneden worden. Andere modernen schrijven des menschen ellende toe aan onkunde. Men zoekt mensch- en wereld-verbetering in den weg van onderwijs. Dit is een algemeen verschijnsel van onzen huidigen dag. De mensch weet niet beter. Hij ziet het onderscheid niet tusschen goed en kwaad. Hij verstaat zijne roeping niet als lid van de maatschappij. Zaligheid moet niet opgevat als verlossing maar als onderwijs. Ook heeft men wel eene plaats voor Jezus van Nazareth. Deze Jezus is dan vanzelf geen Zaligmaker, geen gestorven en opgestane Heiland, maar een groot Onderwijzer, die vroegtijdig gestorven zijnde, beginselen heeft achtergelaten die we dienen te volgen. Men verkondigt u tegenwoordig dat de moordenaars en dieven onkundig zijn, hunne plaats en roeping in de menschelijke samenleving niet verstaan. Ze moeten vroeg en lang naar school. Ze moeten de dwaasheid van de "zonde" leeren inzien, alsmede de wijsheid van een eerbaar en fatsoenlijk burgerlijk leven. Ook deze beschouwing, echter, is geene oplossing van het probleem. Men mag den geestelijken dwaas wel onderwijzen, maar eene dwaas blijft hij.

Op de vraag, Waarin bestaat des menschen ellende?, antwoordt de gereformeerde dat die gezocht moet worden in onze zonde. En dit is juist. Nochtans is hiermede niet genoeg gezegd. Onze hopelooze toestand moet niet beschouwd als slechts bestaande in de geeste-

lijke macht der zonde in ons, onzen geestelijken dood, ofschoon we aanstonds en volmondig toestemmen dat deze macht der duisternis inderdaad in onafscheidelijk verband staat met ons hopeloos lot. Het is zeker door de zonde dat we in ellende verzonken zijn, en het is tevens in de zonde dat we ook gedurig ellendig zijn. Geestelijke vrijmaking van deze macht des duisternis is dan ook absoluut noodzakelijk. De zonde heerscht over ons. Wel is de mensch vrijwillig zondaar. Nooit mag de zaak anders voorgesteld. Hij kiest altoos en geduriglijk het kwade. De zonde is voor hem geen tyran, maar zijn lievelingsterrein. Immers, de banden van haat en vijandschap en duisternis zijn geslagen om zijn hart. En het hart des menschen is het centrum van al de geestelijke uitgangen zijns levens. Daarom moet gehandhaafd dat hij altoos de zonde begeert en liefheeft. Dit neemt, echter, het feit niet weg dat we van nature slaven der duisternis zijn. De mensch wil en moet willen de dingen die beneden zijn. Hij zoekt en moet zoeken de dingen van dezen tegenwoordigen tijd. Hij haat God en den naaste en kan niet anders. Hij heerscht niet over de duisternis maar de duisternis over hem. Hij is der wet Gods niet onderworpen, kan der wet God ook niet onderworpen wezen. Daarom is onze geestelijke vrijmaking van deze macht der duisternis absoluut noodzakelijk. Hierop moet vanzelf alle nadruk worden gelegd. Tenzij iemand door den Geest Gods wedergeboren wordt zal hij het koninkrijk Gods niet kunnen zien. Zeggen we dan dat onze hopelooze toestand niet hoofdzakelijk moet gezocht worden in de geestelijke macht der duisternis dan bedoelen we in geen enkel opzicht des woords iets van de noodzakelijkheid der wedergeboorte en roeping uit de duisternis af te dingen.

Immers, onze geestelijke vrijmaking uit de heerschappij der zonde is niet het allereerste vereischte voor onze zaligheid. Dit moet zeker gehandhaafd. Het Goddelijk werk onzer zaligheid neemt niet eenen aanvang in ons. Alzoo wordt de zaak wel voorgesteld door de methodistische en arminiaansche beschouwing des heils. Bij hen staat het onderwerpelijke op den voorgrond, en dan ook nog als in conflict met de Heilige Schrift. Niet Christus maar wij beslissen. "Geloof in den Heere Jezus Christus en gij zult zalig worden," 'is de eenige voorwaarde voor onze redding. Christus heeft geleden en is gestorven slechts als een voorbeeld van universele Goddelijke liefde. Onze zaligheid wordt alleen dan beslist wanneer we Jezus aannemen of verwerpen. Aldus mag de zaak des heils, echter, zeker niet worden voorgesteld. Onze geestelijke vrijmaking is niet het eerste vereischte voor ons heil. De leer der wedergeboorte mag dan ook niet op den voorgrond staan. Ja, het werk der wedergeboorte, onze geestelijke roeping uit de zonde is niet hoofdzaak, mag zelfs niet besproken worden, is beslist onmogelijk en ondenkbaar tenzij men allereerst afdaalt tot den

wortel onzer ellende. Dit is duidelijk uit de Schrift. Het woord "verlossing", b.v., is niet geestelijk maar rechterlijk wat zijn letterlijke beteekenis betreft, doelt niet hoofdzakelijk op het werk Gods in ons maar legt den nadruk op het werk Gods voor ons in den Heere Jezus Christus op het vloekhout van Golgotha. Bovendien, de Schrift legt nadruk op het feit dat dit werk der verlossing op het kruis een voldongen feit is. Op Golgotha is Sion volkomenlijk verlost. Het kruis van Jezus Christus is onze volkomene zaligheid. Wat thans geschiedt in de harten der kinderen Gods is de noodzakelijke vrucht die uit het verzoenend lijden van het Lam Gods voortvloeit. En in Titus 2:14 lezen we dat Christus, onze Zaligmaker, Zichzelven voor ons gegeven heeft om ons te verlossen van alle ongerechtigheid, en om ons tot Zijn eigen volk te reinigen. Duidelijk wijzen de woorden "om ons tot Zijn eigen volk te reinigen," op het geestelijk werk des heils in ons. Maar het is ook duidelijk, volgens dezen tekst, dat deze geestelijke reiniging door den apostel wordt voorgesteld als vrucht van onze "verlossing van alle ongerechtigheid" en is daarom van die verlossing afhankelijk. Staat dit, echter, vast, dan is ook duidelijk dat onze hopelooze ellende dieper gaat dan slechts onze geestelijke duisternis, hoe volstrekt die macht der zonde in ons ook zij.

Om het hopelooze onzer ellende te verstaan moeten we haar beschouwen in het licht van den levenden God. De ellende van den mensch bestaat niet alleen in de geestelijke macht der duisternis in ons, maar juist in het Goddelijk recht waardoor die duisternis over ons heerscht. De Christen is van nature niet alleen een geestelijke gevangene, maar een geestelijke galei-boef, eene veroordeelde. Zijne hopeloosheid bestaat niet slechts in het niet kunnen maar in het niet mogen. God is, immers, voor den mensch het eenige en het eeuwige leven. De Heere is het eeuwige leven aller-eerst in Zichzelven. Het eeuwige leven Gods is de eeuwige en bewuste gemeenschap van den Drieëenigen God met Zichzelven. God is het eeuwige en absolute goed, het inbegrip van eeuwige volmaaktheden. Aldus kent de Heere Zichzelven uit den Vader, door den Zoon, in den Heiligen Geest. En in dat Goddelijk kennen van Zichzelven verlustigt Jehova Zich in Zichzelven en heeft eeuwige gemeenschap met Zichzelven. Ook is God het eeuwige leven voor den mensch. Immers de mensch is krachtens Zijne schepping op den Heere aangelegd. Dit onderscheidt hem van alle andere aardsche schepselen. De mensch is niet slechts schepsel dewijl de Heere de Souvereine Schepper is. Maar hij is een redelijk-zedelijk wezen. Hij is geschapen zich Gode bewust en heeft een bestaan op het dienen Gods aangelegd. Hij heeft een hart dat op het liefhebben Gods is aangelegd. Hij heeft een oor dat de sprake Gods kan hooren. Een oog heeft hij dat God kan zien in Zijn openbaring. En met zijnen mond

kan hij God loven en van den Heere spreken. Alzo is de Heere voor hem het eeuwige leven. Leven, immers, is de geschiktmaking van het levende, schepsel aan zijne levensfeer—de boom aan den grond, de vogel aan de lucht, de visch aan het water. Het geestelijk en eeuwige leven voor den mensch is de geschiktmaking van gansch zijn bestaan aan den levenden God. Dit moeten we wel verstaan. Het eeuwige leven bestaat niet slechts in een hemelsch eten en drinken, verlossing van alle ziekte en rouw en droefheid en dood. Maar leven, eeuwige blijdschap, het zalig geluk kennen we alleen in het dienen van God en in het heerlijk smaken van de gemeenschap des Heeren. Dan trilt mijn bestaan van leven en blijdschap wanneer ik mag uitgaan tot den levenden God, mag deelen in het liefhebben van Jehova en in het smaken Zijner liefde tot mij.

Hierom heeft de zonde het recht om over den mensch te heerschen en hem te voeren naar een eeuwige wanhoop en rampzaligheid. Want de mensch heeft God verlaten. En God blijft voor hem de eenige Levensbron. De mensch zoekt het leven in den dood, het licht in de duisternis, den vrede in den haat. Hij zoekt water in vaten die geen water houden. Hij heeft moedwillig den ewigen God den rug toegekeerd. En nu, dewijl God alleen het goede is, komt de vloekende adem van Gods toorn over hem. Die toorn raakt hem ook in het diepst van zijn geestelijk bestaan. Vrijwillig de zonde kiezende werd hij vervuld met schrikkelijke duisternis en dood. Den ewigen God verlaten hebbende, moet hij nu den ewigen dood ervaren. Hij heeft moedwillig vaarwel gezegd aan den Eenige die hem met blijdschap en vrede kan vervullen. De dood heerscht en moet heerschen over hem. Ook in zijn geestelijk bestaan. Blijdschap en vrede en leven kan zijns niet zijn in zijne vervreemding van God. Onze ellende bestaat daarom juist in het recht Gods.

En dit recht Gods weet van geen wankelen. Het verbreken van de macht der zonde in ons kan alleen geschieden in den weg van Gods gerechtigheid. God moet als God geopenbaard worden ook in het schepsel dat Hem moedwillig den rug toekeerde. Aan alle gerechtigheid des Heeren moet voldaan. De schuld der zonde moet betaald zal de mensch het leven Gods kennen en smaken. En dit is eeuwiglijk door den mensch onmogelijk. Allereerst is het voor den mensch onmogelijk om den ewigen last van Gods toorn weg te dragen. Wel zal de goddelooze dien last in de hel moeten dragen. Maar van het wegdragen van dien toorn kan geen sprake zijn. Immers die schuld die we moeten betalen is een eeuwige schuld. Hoe zal men dan ooit van opstanding kunnen spreken uit een ewigen dood?! In de tweede plaats is het den mensch onmogelijk om een bedreven kwaad te herstellen. Een bedreven kwaad blijft onherroepelijk in het verleden. Nooit kunnen we iets voor God verdienen. Al wandelen we heiliglijk al de dagen onzes leven, dan zijn we

nog onwaardige dienstknechten—we hebben toch niets meer gedaan dan onze roeping. En het bedreven kwaad blijft onbetaald. In de derde plaats is het den mensch onmogelijk om aan het vereischte van schuld wegdragen te voldoen. Dat vereischte is gehoorzaamheid. De mensch moet den toorn Gods niet slechts ervaren. Maar zijne betaling der schuld moet eene wilsdaad der gehoorzaamheid zijn. God moet geloofd en geprezen ook in de uitstorting van Zijne grimmigheid. Alzoo, immers, kwam de Heere Jezus Christus. Welnu, aan dit vereischte kan de mensch van nature zeker niet voldoen. Hij is, immers, een kind der on gehoorzaamheid, is der wet Gods niet onderworpen, en kan daarom onmogelijk één greintje van zijne schuld voor God betalen. En zoolang dat de mensch aan die gerechtigheid des Heeren niet voldoet blijft hij in zijne zonde en dood. We herhalen het: het hope-looze van onze ellende ligt in het onveranderlijk recht Gods

Deze voorstelling der Schrift moet verkondigd. Het moet steeds den mensch worden aangezegd dat zijn ongeoorloofd haten van God gevolg is van zijn eigen moedwillige keuze, dat hij die zonde en duisternis nog moedwillig kiest, en dat hij verzonken ligt in eene ellende waaruit hij zich onmogelijk redden kan. Opdat in het werk der zaligheid, hem alle roem mag worden ontnomen, en hij die roemt roeme in den Heere.

Immers, aan den eisch Zijner gerechtigheid heeft de Heere Zelf voldaan. Jezus Christus is Immanuel, God met ons. Wat den mensch onmogelijk was heeft God tot stand gebracht. Het Lam Gods heeft in volkomene gehoorzaamheid al onze schuld betaald, Gods toorn weggedragen, ons vrijgekocht uit alle macht der duisternis, en heeft daardoor de zonde veroordeeld in het vleesch, haar het recht ontnomen om langer in ons te heerschen. Thans zijn we schuldenaars, niet aan het vleesch om naar het vleesch te leven, maar aan den Geest om te dooden de werkingen des lichaams, en den Heere te dienen, nu in beginsel en straks in eeuwige volmaaktheid.

H. V.

NOTICE

The Annual R.F.P.A. (Standard Bearer) meeting will be held on Thursday, September 25, at 8:00 p.m. Everybody is welcome, a speaker will give a talk, and matters of importance will be discussed. Three new board members must be elected from the following nomination: A. Dykstra, A. Faber, G. Koster, R. Newhouse, R. Schaafsma, and B. Woudenberg.

Agents will be present to receive membership and subscription fees at 7:45.

The Board.

De Verloste Christus

(Psalm 40; Tweede Deel)

Ja, dat moogt ge zóó zeggen. Christus is door God verlost. En van die verlossing spreekt Psalm 40. Denkt er aan, dat de Heilige Geest eenvoudig twee verzen van dezen psalm in den mond van den Christus Gods legt. Leest maar Hebreë 10:5-9. Let er ook op dat eigenaardige: "Daarom komende in de wereld, zegt Hij," etc. En die "Hij" is Christus. Dus als David zijn 40sten Psalm dicht, dan is dat als het komen van den Christus in de wereld. Het is de Christus Gods die door den Geest Gods in de profetie tot ons komt in de wereld.

En het lijkt wel alsof David geheel en al op den achtergrond geschoven wordt. Er staat niet, zooals op andere plaatsen: "En David, van Hem profeteerende heeft gezegd, etc." Neen, er staat eenvoudig: Hij zegt, dat is, Christus.

Nu is het wel waar, dat al die dingen tot op zekere hoogte door David ervaren zijn. David was in groote benauwdheid geweest en hij had zich tot God gewend in het gebed. Voorts had hij op Hem gewacht. En dat wachten was betrekkelijk lang geweest. Doch eindelijk was God toch gekomen om David te verlossen. En van die verlossing gewaagt David in dezen psalm.

Doch de Heilige Geest past dit alles toe op Jezus Christus, onzen Heere. Daarvan spreekt Hebreë 10.

De vraag hoeveel of David hier zelf van beseftte moet bijna geheel en al in het midden gelaten worden. Hij heeft er wel wat van beseft, want we lezen in Hand. 2:30 en 31: "Alzoo hij (dat is, David) dan een profeet was, en wist dat God hem met eede gezworen had, dat Hij uit de vrucht zijner lendenen, zooveel het vleesch aangaat, den Christus verwekken zoude, om Hem op zijnen troon te zetten, zoo heeft hij dit voorziende, gesproken van de opstanding van Christus, etc." Dus deze tekst bewijst duidelijk, dat David wel degelijk tot op zekere hoogte begreep waarvan en van Wien hij profeteerde.

Evenwel moeten we hier nadruk op leggen, dat David al die gestalten van Christus vooruit geleefd heeft in zijn smart en blijdschap, in zijn ellende en verlossing, enz.

Zoo ook hier. Psalm 40 is wezenlijk een stuk van David's leven, van zijn benauwdheid, zijn roepen tot God en zijn verlossing.

Hoofdzaak echter voor ons is niet het ervaren van David, doch de vervulling ervan in den Christus Gods. Dat nu is de reden waarom de Heilige Geest David eenvoudig niet noemt, zoovele jaren daarna. En die toestand van Psalm 40 wordt eenvoudig aan Christus toegeschreven. Als ge dat niet ziet heeft Psalm 40 (en al de Heilige Schriftuur van het Oude Testament) geen profijt voor U. We moeten steeds voor de aan-

dacht houden die schoone uitspraak van Jezus zelf tot de Emmaus-gangers: Lukas 24:25-27; 32. Hij leidde immers de Schriften uit en toonde hen klaarlijk, dat de Christus alzoo moest lijden en Zijn heerlijkheid ingaan. En dat deed Hij uit alle de Schriften, "begonnen hebbende van Mozes en van alle de profeten. leidde Hij hun uit in alle de Schriften hetgeen van Hem geschreven was." Zoo zoeken en vinden we overal het aangezicht van den Christus, ook in het Oude Testament

Zoo is Jezus door de geheele oude bedeeeling in de wereld gekomen. Zoo kwam Hij in het beeld van het eerste Paradijs. Zoo kwam Hij in de offerande van God Zelf, toen Hij beesten slachtte om voor Adam en Eva rokken te maken van vellen. Dat was een komen van Jezus. Zoo kwam Hij in de wereld in den stroom van het offerbloed der bokken en rammen, der lammeren en koeien. Zoo kwam Hij in schaduwen en typen, in land en tempel en volk. Zoo kwam Hij ook door personen: koningen, profeten en priesters. Hij kwam zelfs door de ervaringen van menschen-kinderen. Hij kwam tot ons in de klacht van David en het jubelen van Asaph; in den kreet van Heman en het lied van Ethan, den Ezrahiet.

En komende in de wereld heeft Uw Heiland tot den Drie-Eenigen God gezegd: Gij hebt geen lust aan al dat bloed van beesten. Daarom hebt Gij Mij het lichaam toebereid en het oor doorboord. Daarom kom Ik om Uw welbehagen te doen. Al wat Ik zie van Mijzelven in het Oude Testament is slechts schaduw en type. Maar Ik kom Zelf, en komende zal Ik Uw wil doen. Ik zal liefhebben in liefelijke gehoorzaamheid. Ik zal liefhebben en gehoorzamen al moet ik dan ook wachtende wachten in de plaats van afgrijzen. Ik zal wachten op Uwe verlossing. Ik zal zoo lang wachten totdat Gij Mij toe zult roepen tot in den eeuwiggen dood: Het is genoeg Mijn Zoon! Kom nu hooger op! En dan zal Mijn God mij op een rots verhoogen uit d' ellend.

Daarvan profeteert David zingende in dezen psalm.

Zoo zult ge ook de heerlijke diepte van de verzen 9-11 eenigszins peilen. Daar zeggen David en Jezus: Ik heb lust, O mijn God! om Uw welbehagen te doen, enz. Betrekkelijk is dat waar van David. En als ik zeg: betrekkelijk, dan bedoel ik, dat zulks in hem gevonden werd als beginsel in 't diepe hart. Dat heeft David ervaren naar de mate der gave der genade. Hij had lust om Gods wil te doen zooals gij en ik en al Gods volk dat hebben. Doch het is slechts een beginsel. Zeker, de wet Gods is in het binnenste van onze ingewanden. Doch vergeet niet, dat er meer is dan die lust tot God. Daar zijn ook de overblijfselen van de oude natuur. Daar zijn de bewegingen der zonde die krijg voeren tegen dat beginsel van liefde en lust, van gehoorzaamheid en trouwe.

Daar komt bij, dat al dat lusten tot God eenvoudig

de inwoning van Jezus is. Van dat lusten zegt Gods volk: Ik leef, doch niet meer ik: Christus leeft in mij!

Doch Jezus Christus zegt dit in Psalm 40 en heeft het gezegd gedurende zijn lijden en sterven op aarde en zal het tot in alle eeuwigheid zeggen als de Midde-laar Gods en der menschen. En als Hij het zegt, dan is het een getuigenis van de volle gehoorzaamheid des Zoons. De tekst wordt eerst *vervuld* in Christus. En Hij heeft het ook bewezen. Hij heeft die lust tot God gehad ook toen Hij door God verlaten werd. Door al het lange en bange wachten van den eeuwiggen dood heeft Christus lust aan God gehad. De wet was in 't binnenste van Zijn ingewand.

Gedreven door die lust boodschapt Hij de gerechtigheid Gods in een groote gemeente.

Die gemeente zijt gij. Die gemeente is de totaliteit van al de uitverkorenen. En gij moogt er zelfs de engelen bij noemen. Hij is ook der engelen Profeet. Hij zal het aan de geheele nieuwe schepping vertellen hoe groot, hoe goed en hoe lieflijk God is.

Neen, Christus heeft nooit Zijn lippen bedwongen. Zelfs als Hij op het aangezicht geslagen werd voor Annas heeft Hij der gerechtigheid getuigenis gegeven.

Het gaat bij Jezus altoos om God. Daarom sprak Hij en zal Hij eeuwig spreken van God.

Daar kunnen en moeten wij, leeraars, een les uit leeren.

O, als we slechts dat elfde vers in beoefening konden brengen!

Dat elfde vers is zóó onvergelijkelijk schoon, dat ik het even moet afschrijven. Daar zegt Jezus: "Uwe gerechtigheid bedek Ik niet in het midden Mijns harten; Uwe waarheid en Uw heil spreek Ik uit; Uwe weldadigheid en Uwe trouw verheel Ik niet in de groote gemeente!"

Is het niet Goddelijk schoon? Ziet ge nu niet, dat het alles om God gaat? Wat blijft er nu over van het menschelijke geknoei? Van veler dominees' geknoei? Van ons eigen geknoei?

O, wanneer zal de leeraar en de groote gemeente het eens gaan beseffen, dat we in den godsdienst dienst hebben van God?

Let er op: eerst de gerechtigheid van God in het midden van 't harte; dan moet ge die gerechtigheid niet bedekken; die gerechtigheid moet haar vrijheid hebben en houden in 't diepe hart. Die gerechtigheid moet daar regeeren en alles wat uit dat hart naar boven en naar buiten treedt beheerschen. Gerechtigheid: de wil tot 't hoogste Goed moet alles in 't denken, spreken en handelen kenmerken.

En dan zoo naar 't spreekgestoelte.

En dan moet ge van God zingen en kwinkeleeren voor 't aangezicht van de groote gemeente. En daar waar 't volk vergaderd is moet ge dan spreken en

zingen van Gods waarheid, van Gods heil, van Gods trouw!

Op de preekstoel moet ge gedurig maar aan spreken van wat waarlijk in God woont. De waarheid Gods is alles wat God moet kenmerken om eeuwiglijk God te zijn. Dat moet ge voor de gemeente uitstallen. Voorts moet ge Zijn heil vertellen. Dat beteekent, dat al de waarheid Gods ook gezegend, schoon, lieflijk is. Ge moet de volzaligheid van God preeken. En eindelijk zult ge eindigen om in liefelijke akkoorden te zingen van Zijn wondere trouw. "Zijn trouw aan Israel nooit gekrenkt". Dan zult ge het der gemeente bekend maken, dat al moet het door Gethsemane en over Golgotha, al moet het door de diepten van een oneindigen oceaan van onuitsprekelijke smart, dat God toch komt om Zijn volk te redden en Zijn Woord gestand te doen. Zegt het dan maar en laat het volk U antwoorden in de reien Israels: 't Is trouw al wat Zijn hand beval!

Daar zal men het nooit moede worden om in herhaling te treden van sommige der psalmen: "dat Zijne goedertierenheid tot in der eeuwigheid is!"

Hebben die verzen Uw hart veroverd zoo zult ge volharden om theologisch te spreken in de groote gemeente.

En zoo komen we tot de laatste phase van den psalm.

En daar worden we ingeleid in de smarten Davids.
En de smarten van Immanuel.

Eerst profeteert David van de verlossing en dan komt er een teruggrijpen naar het lijden.

Christus is verlost doch Hij moet ook verder verlost worden. Zoo was het immers ook gedurende Zijn omwandeling op aarde. Beide Zijn lijden en Zijn verlossing doorloopen een proces.

Let er op, dat zelfs in dezen huidigen oogenblik het Hoofd wel verlost is en ook tot op zekere hoogte het lichaam, doch dit is alles slechts aanvankelijk, voorloopig en gedeeltelijk. Zelfs het Hoofd moet nog wachten op de volle verheerlijking die eerst in de nieuwe wereld zal schitteren gelijk nooit te voren. Vele heiligen zijn nog niet met hun lichaam in den hemel, anderen zijn nog in den strijd, de overigen zijn nog niet eens geboren. En zij allen wachten met Jezus op het Koninkrijk naar zijn uiteindelijke vervulling en verwerkelijking. Dus, alhoewel er veel verlossing geschonken is, alhoewel centraal de overwinning gerealiseerd werd op Golgotha en in den hof van Jozef, toch zullen we allen den 40sten psalm tot het einde toe uit zingen. En dat einde spreekt nog van strijd en moeite.

Daarom leert de Heilige Geest ons, dat Jezus nog steeds doorgaat om voor Zijn arme volk dat in lijden is te bidden.

Doch te midden van al de ellende weten we, dat er verlossing zal komen, dat de verlossing vervuld zal worden. Luistert maar: Gij, o Heere! zult Uwe barm-

hartigheid van mij niet onthouden; laat Uwe weldadigheid en Uwe trouw mij geduriglijk behoeden!

Dat woordje "geduriglijk" verwijst ons naar het proces waarvan we zooeven spraken.

Doch in den gedurigen strijd weten we dat de Heere Zich nederbuigt tot ons en dat Hij bewogen is met onze smart. Dan weten we dat de Heere ons behoedt en bewaart terwijl we nog te midden van de goddeloozen zijn.

Nu zijn er sommigen die vers 13 niet kunnen verstaan in dezen Messiaanschen psalm. Hoe kan Messias spreken van Zijne zonden en Zijne ongerechtigheden?

Wel, geliefden, we moeten voor den aandacht houden, dat Jezus zonde gemaakt is voor ons. Dat beteekent niet dat Jezus zonde gemaakt was in den zin, dat Hij een zondaar werd. Dat kan niet. Doch de zonde kwam op Hem als schuld. En God stortte over Hem uit den last Zijns toorns vanwege die schuld.

En waar David in den psalm denkt aan zijn eigen zonde en daarover klaagt, past de Geest der profetie dit toe aan Christus in den zin, dat Jezus Christus gebogen ging onder de gevolgen der zonde van Zijn volk. Zoo kunt ge ook verstaan, dat de kwaden zoo vermenigvuldigd wierden, dat Hij niets meer zien kon. Op Golgotha ontvangt psalm 40 zijn diepste vervulling. Vanwege de zonde van de kerk Gods kwam er een duisternis van drie uren over Messias. En Zijn hart verliet Hem.

En zoo schreeuwde Jezus en zoo schreeuwt de kerk aller eeuwen tot God: "Het behage U, Heere, om mij te verlossen; Heere, haast U tot mijne hulp!"

En dan volgt er nog een drie-ledig gebed.

Eerst een bede in verband met duivelen en goddeloozen.

Er is een volk, dat rondom Golgotha staat en schik heeft in de smart van Immanuel. Dat volk zegt: Ha ha!

Dat ruikt naar den duivel. Het is echt duivelsch om te lachen als een ander smart heeft. Leest de Evangeliën en merkt hoe de schare, joden en romeinen, lachen en spotten met den Christus Gods. Wel, hier hebt ge de profetie er van.

En Jezus heeft sterk tot God geroepen om de verderving en verwoesting der verworpenen.

Hebt ge er wel eens op gelet, dat ge dezen klank nimmer hoordet in de gezangen?

Dat komt omdat de gezangen menschelijk van oorsprong zijn. Doch hier hebt ge het te doen met de Heilige Schriftuur Gods. Het is God die Zijn raad openbaart. Ook moet ge God zeer liefhebben om zoo te zingen.

Voorts komt er ook nog een bede voor Gods volk.

Immanuel en David vragen den Heere om blijdschap en vroolijkheid te geven aan het volk dat God zoekt. Ook beschrijft Immanuel dat volk, zoodat ge het weten moogt of ge er toe behoort. Luistert: dat volk

wordt hierdoor gekenmerkt, dat zij geduriglijk zeggen: De Heere zij grootgemaakt! Let nu op Uw leven en ziet of die klank gehoord wordt in Uw diepste hart. En dat doet gij, omdat gij een liefhebber zijt van het heil Gods. Ge hebt de lieflijkheid Gods gezien en daarom is er die zucht om God groot te maken.

Eindelijk een bede voor Messias Zelf.

Zoo moogt ook gij bidden.

Zegt dan: Ik ben wel ellendig en nooddruftig. De eindelijke heerlijkheid is nog zoo ontzettend ver af. Honden huilen en een muitgespan omringt mij. Doch de Heere denkt aan mij! O, wat een onbeschrijfelijke troost ligt in die woorden! De Heere denkt aan mij. Hij denkt aan mijne hulp en aan mijne bevrijding. Hij wacht slechts tot het tijdstip van Zijn raad, dat van mijn eindelijke redding en verlossing gewaagt. Hij denkt aan mij!

Het was de smeeeking van den moordenaar aan het kruis: Heere gedenk mijner!

Het is zoo donker, Heere! mijn zonden zijn zoo vele, dat ik ze niet tellen kan. En smart over de zonde is mijn grootste verdriet. Terwijl we allen verlangen met heilig heimwee naar 't land waar nimmer tranen vloeien, omdat we daar Uw lieflijk aangezicht zullen zien.

Daarom, o mijn God! vertoef niet!

G. V.

IN MEMORIAM

Zondag, den 17den Augustus ontsliep in haar Heer en Heiland,

MRS. H. VANDERWAL

in den hoogen ouderdom van 95 jaar. Vele jaren mocht ze een getrouw lid zijn van de vereeniging. Schoon we haar missen, mogen we ons verblijden in haar heengaan. Haar gedurig uitzicht was om ontbonden te wezen en met Christus te zijn om haar Goël en Verlosser in eeuwige volmaaktheid te dienen hier boven.

De Heere trooste de bedroefde familie en geve dat het voor ons een spoorslag mag zijn om ons huis te bereiden.

Namens De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging,
Weest een zegen,

Van de Eerste Prot. Geref. Kerk.

Miss W. Woudenberg, Pres.

Mrs. J. Cammenga, Secr.

Blessed Are The Merciful

(Psalm 41)

We have in this psalm the cry of the merciful. It is the cry of the merciful man in trouble. And he knows that he will be delivered.

The first verse is the main theme: Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble.

The writer is David. David in trouble, but trusting in God.

First, we find a description of the blessedness of a merciful man; second, we hear of the trouble of the merciful; and third, we listen to his pitiful plea, which is at the same time a testimony of firm trust and confidence in his God.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. Yes, indeed. We have heard the same truth from the lips of Jesus: Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

In the light of the following it is plain that David is describing himself. David is that merciful man even though the application of this fundamental truth is as general as the church universal. The truth is to be applied to all God's own.

The man who bows down to his brother who is in misery is blessed because God beholds in such action His own life. God is merciful to His miserable church; and when He beholds us reflecting that same Divine virtue He will beam upon us and cause the whole universe to serve us to our eternal benefit.

The Lord always maintains Himself, hence He will preserve the merciful man. In preserving the merciful He maintains His own virtue which dwells in the merciful man. No one is merciful of himself. You will never find Christian mercy in natural man. The mercy of the wicked is cruel.

The merciful man is blessed upon the earth. Oh no, that does not mean that you will always have a great deal of earthly goods and riches, but it means that you will be blessed. And a blessed man is a man unto whom all things work together to his good. It means that all things tend to draw you ever closer to the fountain of your mercy, that is, God.

The merciful man is never delivered unto the will of his enemies. Does that mean that the merciful man will not suffer at all? Oh no, for many are the afflictions of the righteous and Paul told the newly organized churches in Asia Minor that through many tribulations they would enter into the Kingdom of heaven. What then does it mean?

To be delivered unto the will of your enemies would mean that you perish. You find it expressed a million times in our day when they say: Go to hell! They

will sometimes even ask that God may damn you. And whereas wicked men often do not even realize that such is their will over you, the devil certainly always endeavours to seek your damnation. He is the murderer of man from the beginning.

But when God's image is found in you, when you are of the merciful, you will never be given over unto the will of your enemies.

If you would like to see a definition of the will of your enemies in this very psalm we would direct your attention to the 5th verse: "Mine enemies speak evil of me, when shall he die and his name perish?" There you have the will of your enemies.

But this blessed man does not perish. He will live and praise the name of God forever.

David was sick or had been sick when he composed this psalm.

And in the midst of this sickness he experienced the mercy of the Lord.

Therefore we would say, finally, that the merciful is blessed because the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, He will make all his bed in his sickness.

It means that David experienced the nearness of his God when he was sick. God would hallow all his suffering unto his heart and soul and mind so that his sickness was a blessing in disguise.

That is the first part of the psalm.

The second part speaks of a great infamy.

There are depths of infamy which are really staggering.

An example of such base transgression you will find in this part of the psalm. It is so base that the Holy Spirit has taken it and laid it in the mouth of Jesus when He spoke of Judas' treachery. Read John 13:18.

David received visitors in his sickness. Well, that is rather usual.

But some of these visitors were his enemies, they were evil men. And it is plain that they were godless men too. For they would whisper against the anointed of the Lord. And they would devise his hurt, while he would be unable to defend himself.

In the English translation we find this statement with regard to these evil people! They say: An evil disease cleaveth fast unto David!

But the Hebrew original carries a deeper and a more horrible accusation! Literally they said: "A thing of the devil cleaves unto David". They meant that David had done some grievous and wicked thing in his immediate past and that God for that reason had made him sick.

And among all those evil men there was one who was worse than they all. He was supposed to be the familiar friend of David. The original says of him that he was the man of David's peace! David himself

says of this man that he trusted him. He ate with him from the same table. He ate David's bread.

But now? He also came to David's bedside. And he would speak vanity. In this connection that would mean that he would speak his conventional piece. He would assure David of his sympathy but with a lying heart. Because when he went abroad he would tell his vanity. That means that as soon as the door of the sickroom would close behind him he would laugh and joke about poor David's plight. Worse yet, he would raise up his heel against David. He would try and destroy David's good name and make him an offscouring among the people.

All this is fulfilled in wicked Judas who would so treat the very Son of God.

But it is very dangerous, it is suicidal to so act against the sons of God. Where is Judas? Where are these false friends of David? They are reserved in darkness forever.

Dangerous because the child of God tells it all to his Father. And that is the third part of the psalm. And He will surely requite. Listen to David: I know, Father, that Thou favourest me, because I can plainly see that my enemies do not triumph over me.

Dangerous, for God will requite them. It shall be terrible to fall into the hands of the living God.

But David is blessed because he is a son of the Almighty.

Listen to this testimony: Thou upholdeth me in mine integrity and settest me before Thy face forever.

Of course, they are blessed. It could not be otherwise. In all their affliction they were suffering for God's sake. They suffered because they were the bearers of God's own virtue. And the enemies hated them because they hated God. So God will maintain His own cause in them.

And the end?

The end is heaven itself. Harken to it: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting: Amen and Amen!

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

G. V.

Contribution

Dear Editor:--

Just before the warm weather arrived, we organized in our midst a Protestant Reformed Christian School Society. I had the privilege to attend all the three meetings that were held. The membership of the society is well over one hundred and twenty five, representing the First Protestant Reformed Church,

Roosevelt Park Church, Creston Church and Hope Church. A board of seven men was elected: the Messrs. Zwak (Creston); Piper (Roosevelt Park); J. Kuiper (Hope); D. Monsma, A. Haan, J. Piersma, S. Bylsma (all of the First Prot. Ref. Church). To this board two more men are to be added in the future.

At our second meeting a constitution was adopted, in which the society expresses its purpose to provide Protestant Reformed education for our children. And we all agreed that this means the establishment of a Christian School of our own.

Yes, brethren and sisters, we all agreed that it is high time for us to get busy and realize this thing. The purpose is to begin with a school comprising the lower eight grades, but to bear in mind that we also need our own High School.

We, who are of the same spirit and of the same mind, who love the same principles, find in this work a point of unity; and this is most desirable. We must stand close together. The difficulties that must be faced can only be overcome by united action. For me, and I believe for all of us, it was a pleasure to meet one another with the same purpose in mind. We all agree that we cannot allow the doctrine of common grace or the principles expressed in the "three points" to be taught to our children. We believe that the doctrine taught in our preaching, catechisms, societies, Sunday School, and in our homes, is in accord with the Word of God and the Forms of Unity. It is the aim of our society to have these same principles maintained in the education our children receive in the school. And I repeat: we must all agree to this. It is the will of God. Brethren and sisters, in all the eighteen years of our existence as churches there was no united action to attain to this. We never started anything difficult. But your society decided in its last meeting to provide this education. We desire to have the important matter of educating our children in our own hands.

In order that the board may come with definite proposals regarding the size of the school, the number of grades, the number of teachers required, and the cost of it all, it is necessary to know how many of our people will cooperate and send their children. The society therefore, decided to hold a census to ascertain all this. Each family will be asked for their cooperation. The members of the society have expressed their willingness to do this work, which, the Lord willing, is to be done in the near future. Let us encourage our men when they visit our homes by telling them that you stand behind this cause and will help us. We need this. And as I stated above, we may be assured of the Lord's approval. For, it is only by the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed; for His compassions fail not, they are new every morning; great is His faithfulness.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

S. Bylsma.

CONTRIBUTION

South Holland, Ill.
July 15, 1941.

The Rev. H. J. Kuiper,
Editor, The Banner.

Dear Sir:—

When Luther and Calvin saw that their Roman Catholic Church had lost the TRUTH of the Scriptures, they began to instruct their brethren, within said church regarding the unscriptural ecclesiastical errors, with the result that the Roman Catholic Church cast them out and persecuted them.

The above is a historical fact which neither you nor anyone who has studied history dare deny.

Now, it so happens that in our time, the Christian Reformed Church in America, of which you are a pastor, and I a member; lost also the TRUTH of the Scriptures and instituted in its seminary the doctrine of COMMON GRACE, expressed in THREE POINTS based upon the erroneous philosophy of NATURALISM, a sister of HUMANISM and MODERNISM.

A few ministers of this church objected to this doctrine as being a corruption of the simple and pure Biblical doctrine of SPIRITUAL GRACE.

These pastors, well known and well beloved by the churches, but hated by a younger generation of clergymen, were in an unauthorized meeting of their own brother pastors deposed and cast out of the Christian Reformed Church, while and after its SYNOD had declared them sound and doctrinally reformed.

These pastors, being honored and beloved by the congregations they served, remained their pastors, and what is more natural, sought as a Luther and a Calvin before them, to enlighten their brethren within the Christian Reformed Churches.

Like as the Roman Catholic Church strenuously objected against Luther and Calvin to set the LIGHT OF TRUTH again upon the chandelier, so today does the Christian Reformed Church object to having their own cast-out brethren replace the LIGHT OF TRUTH within the sanctuaries of God.

Such is but natural. It is human, although ungodly and wrong.

That the leading element within the Christian Reformed Church is more interested in the theological phraseology and philosophies of its wise and learned men, than in the unsophistical, plain truth of the Word of God is exhibited upon the pulpits of the churches, with exceptions, but especially in its church organs.

How these publications are used to mislead the unaware can be seen in The Banner of the 11th of July, 1941, for in that number appears a letter of a certain Calvin College student, named A. C. Kett.

This particular letter is not an insult to the pastor whom he tries to blame, but it is an insult to the love of TRUTH, to Biblical Spiritual grace, and to the intellects as well as Banner editors and Banner readers.

This letter is addressed to OUR PEOPLE, and therefore to the writer as well as any other member of the Christian Reformed Churches.

I do object to the sentiment of hatred expressed and the more so because the letter ends with the words, "YOURS FOR THE KINGDOM". No doubt, but the student refers to the SPIRITUAL KINGDOM OF GOD, and that Kingdom is void of malice and hatred.

According to the spirit of that letter this KINGDOM is a Kingdom in which no one but a Christian Reformed student, pastor and layman have a place, which is abnormal and unbiblical.

In a very uncultural way this student informs OUR PEOPLE that "Rev. Kok, of Hoeksema's church" was in the audience when he as student was preaching. Said the student: "No, he, Kok, did not preach. HE CAN'T DO BUSINESS HERE!" Think on that. The Synod of '24 declared Hoeksema sound in doctrine, but this student says: "HE CANNOT DO BUSINESS HERE." In other words,—Sound doctrine is prohibited here, but the doctrine of error, of which I am a student, shall be preached here. Horrible!

That the HOLY SPIRIT has no hold upon this student is evident and plain to any one who reads that letter. For, says the student, I BECAME ANGRY. What a confession. Being angry because a certain preacher is in his audience.

Is it possible that an angry man can preach the Gospel of LOVE and of TRUTH?

I became angry, said he. "No, not at him, because after all, he is paid by his church, must deliver the goods, and to them, the Jesuit saying: "Finis justificat modum" is still in force".

MUST DELIVER THE GOODS. Is such a statement not an insult to the HOLY SPIRIT, to Jesus the Christ and to God?

Shame upon Rev. H. J. Kuiper, who dare to lower his church organ as a means to insult the Triune God, in order to wreak vengeance upon a minister of the Gospel who, as well as himself, is by GOD ORDAINED to preach the Gospel.

An urchin upon the streets of Sodom could not use any worse language to show his disrespect for the Holy things of God, than Rev. H. J. Kuiper sees fit to publish in a publication of which it was oracled that it speaks the language of Canaan.

Not only became this poor Calvin College student angry at Jesus for sending such men as Rev. Kok into His vineyard; but he also became angry at OUR PEOPLE to fall for his TACTICS.

That this student has not the least conception of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, is evident in his street-language. He has succeeded too express his ignorance, his hatred, and his lack of the Spirit of God in such a measure, that I would like to counsel Rev. Kok to remember this student in his prayers, and we ourselves are glad that we may comprehend that Jesus upon the cross prayed, FATHER, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Surely, if Calvin College is able to produce such students who possess such an erroneous conception of the KINGDOM OF GOD, then it is plain that the faculty of Calvin has sunken to the most degenerated spiritual level.

Much more could be said about this scandalous letter, which shows the abnormality of the Christian Reformed Church and its Seminary, but I have said enough to show the ignorance, the foolhardiness and the ontowardness of the class of men now reared up as preachers in the Christian Reformed Church of America.

God may have grace and mercy upon my poor, beguiled MOTHER; its clergy has none, but a worldly grace as expressed in the Three Points, which in total deny the FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM.

Your crying brother,
Jacob H. Hoekstra.

IN MEMORIAM

Onze Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging spreekt hiermede hare hartelijke deelneming uit met Mrs. A. De Vos in het verlies van haar echtgenoot,

MR. A. DE VOS

die tevens ook vice president was van onze vereeniging. De Heere nam hem tot Zich in de hoogen ouderdom van 80 jaar.

Waar zijn leven getuigde van een God-vruchtigen wandel, mogen we gelooven dat hij is ingegaan in de rust die er over blijft voor het volk Gods, waar de Heere Zijn volk ontvangt in Zijn eeuwige tabernacle.

De Heere trooste de bedroefde familie.

Namens De Hollandsche Vrouwen Vereeniging,

Weest een zegen,

Van de Eerste Prot. Geref. Kerk.

Miss W. Woudenberg, Pres.

Mrs. J. Cammenga, Secr.

Two Builders

Matt. 7:24-27.

In a striking way our Lord closes the so-called Sermon on the Mount.

These words are part of the application of this Sermon.

Strange as it may seem, some people, who care little concerning religion, and who scoff at the infallibility of the Word of God, claim to be in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount—especially the Beatitudes.

Strange, because they seem to understand the meaning of the contents of the Words spoken by our Lord. They find them fitting in connection with present day conditions. Besides, the Lord Himself spoke these Words. And so, while the Epistles of Paul and the other Apostles are ridiculed, these same people are always labouring for the Kingdom.

Strange indeed, if you look at the Words spoken by our Lord, because we cannot find nice things in them, as far as natural man is concerned. Besides, these words are not superficial, they do not speak of an easy entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. These so-called beautiful words, speak of persecution at the hand of those who hate the Kingdom and its King. They also speak of self-denial. One must be willing to forsake all for the sake of God and His Christ. He must come to the confession of his sins, be of a contrite heart and of a broken spirit. He must live the life of daily conversion—that continual battle against self, the world and the devil.

Strange also, because the Sermon on the Mount did not leave such a wonderful impression with the multitude, who heard Jesus speak. And the multitude did not say, how easy these words, but to the contrary, they were astonished, afraid, realizing these words cut to the quick and revealed their inmost being. They manifested their spiritual condition and brought out their contempt for the Son of Man, especially when it became plain that the Kingdom was not meat and drink, was not earthly, but heavenly.

When our Lord closes the Sermon on the Mount, this closing consists of a threefold application and through it he separates his audience into two groups of people.

He speaks in the context of the Two Ways. The broad and the narrow way. Anyone, shall he enter the Kingdom of Heaven, must do so by that way. It is the path of many hardships, many difficulties, yes, it may even mean, persecutions. And that entering is not, as some have it, an entering into heaven. Every free-will preacher will tell you, that this entering refers to the end of man's life. You must be saved and it may be your last chance, *now*. No, but the entering is an entering into that fellowship of God Triune, through

Jesus Christ, whereby you reveal to belong to that small band of travellers, who, for the sake of the Kingdom, deny themselves of all that is to be had on the other way. The treasures and pleasures of this present time, the friendship of the world and who, by a consecrated life reveal all the characteristics of the citizens of the heavenly Kingdom as found and expressed in the beatitudes.

Again he speaks of the Two Trees, good and bad. A good, healthy tree brings forth good fruit. A man's behaviour, his works will reveal whether or not he is sound, spiritually healthy (Calvin refers to the doctrines of man, but it is plain that not his teachings, but his daily life will manifest his inward spiritual condition). On the other hand, a bad tree is a tree, whose organism decays with age. Its life's sap is and will become more and more manifest in the rotten fruit it produces. Natural man will reveal himself in all his actions to be like the bad tree. His life is the life of decay and as he progresses his works will manifest this process, so that every one can see it. "De goddelooze wordt steeds goddelooser, terwijl de rechtvaardige steeds meer vruchten der gerechtigheid voortbrengt." Common grace may learn its lesson from this simile. How many unbelievers can find these passages beautiful is inconceivable. The antithesis is clearly brought out in both cases.

And finally, the Lord speaks of two builders. Notice how every man, hearing the Word of God, becomes active. Active so that the fulfilling of his heart's desire is manifested. The hearers of the Word build. And in the process of building the one reveals true wisdom, the other foolishness.

What is the difference between a wise and a foolish man?

Not, of course, that the one builds and the other does not. In fact, the foolish builder is a very busy man. He reveals his ambitions in no uncertain terms. The fact is that this man, according to the standard of this world, is trying to make *this a better world*. He calls for reformation with a view to all kinds of social evils. According to the immediate context, he does these things in the name of the Lord. He expects his Lord to reward him at the end of time. However, his work cannot stand the test of the storm to come. In other words, a foolish man is a man who does not in any way consider the reality. He is not concerned about the fact, that the work he does shall be tested in the day of judgment. Why not? The simple reason is, that God is not The Reality in his life. All he does reveals the one fact, God is not and never was in all his thoughts. Hence, why should he bother himself with a day of judgment to come? He is self-sufficient and the captain of his own destiny.

Looked at right, we find such people always inside

of some church. It is not the world in its crude manifestation of hating God. That world does not hear the Word of God, it lives without the Word. But the foolish builder represents to us the world as it is found in the visible manifestation of the church of Jesus Christ. A glaring example of that class of people we find amongst the so-called great revivalists of our own day. Preachers and their followers who use a text from the Bible and are forevermore preaching the social (?) gospel. It is the gospel of reform, that prepares the way for the coming of the Kingdom and the coming of the king. Saving souls is the means to prepare a great multitude for the above named purposes. The whole structure of that sort of religion hinges upon man. And man himself builds in that way a place of shelter for this life and when this life is spent, he expects his reward to be the entrance in that beautiful isle of somewhere.

That after all, is the building of his house here below. This building of man's house is a sign of all his activities. The idea of a house is, that a house (as represented here) is a revelation of the works of his hands. All he does in this life is his building from a spiritual point of view. And we do well not to make any exceptions. His life in this world, his daily walk, his so-called religious life, is the one life's-action and at the same time the material he builds with—in thoughts, words and deeds.

Also, both foolish and wise want a home. From this point of view a house is a place wherein he dwells. Man seeks shelter, look for safety, if possible, to feel sure eternally. Furthermore, it is a place of enjoyment. Not only in the midst of the storm, but at all times, both in winter and summer, a house must serve that purpose. Hence, every one builds for himself such a dwelling, that he may find joy and happiness, for this life and for the life to come.

Particularly significant is the fact, that the foolish builder is quite ready to build immediately. He has no trouble whatsoever in finding a foundation, in fact, that does not seem to be a problem at all. He is not concerned about the soil, nor does he ask himself the question, whether or not he should build on a solid foundation. Therefore, the sand is sufficient to build on, to him the question of a storm is far from his thoughts. His building reveals his inward condition at the same time. First of all, he would not be superficial if the Word of God was his guide, if the love of God was in his heart, if the Word he heard was for and to him the Word of God—the guide for time and eternity. In one Word, if the foolish were not foolish he would have asked himself the question concerning the Rock. Consequently, he would have asked himself the question over and over again as life continued, is my house well-founded, am I working, thinking, willing, in harmony with the Word I heard—the Word of

God? Are my works the works of faith, done according to the Word and to the glory of God? Of course, his house would not have made the impression of a great, impressive building, as far as the world is concerned. In fact, the world would not have taken notice of it. For the simple reason, that he would have confessed, his work, his house, had only value and was a place of safety, because of the Rock.

Nevertheless, the storm will come. The text speaks of Rains, Torrents and Winds. And they are all types of the great day of the Lord. And remember, the foolish builder heard of these things in this life, because it was preached to him. The reality was well known. But he built without God and without his Christ. Thus he appears before God in judgment, depending upon what *he* hath done in this life, presenting his works as the basis for entering into the eternal-heavenly kingdom.

The Lord does not know him.

And great was the fall of his house. This worldling built a great house, a great name, works self-made and for man. But the storm broke over it and it did not stand.

The other category of mankind is represented by the Wise Builder.

What is a wise man? The answer is simple, a wise man is one who is inwardly illuminated through the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that the revelation of God in His Word is intelligible and to him the rule of life, for his will, desire and mind, in his word, thoughts and actions. The center of that revelation is Christ as the foundation for time and for eternity. And all the actions of the wise builder are characterized by this one fact, that in all things God is the great reality for him. Daily he makes his plans accordingly and he considers the Lord in all of his ways. And we may say, that he looks at God in the light of His Word. And that Word tells him, you are out of the dust and to the dust you must return. And knowing that this life is a continual death, he seeks his life in Christ and upon his perfect work he rests. Until he finds Christ he cannot feel secure and safe for the storm to come. And watching this builder, we find, that he knows self, his works and their value—no worth in them. But he also knows Christ in His perfect work as the one Rock and hope for this life and for the life to come.

And when we ask the question, what is characteristic of his house? the answer is, that this builder has but a little house and on the house is written, the true knowledge of sin and misery, the true knowledge of deliverance and—the life (in principle) of gratitude.

Yes, the storm also came over his house.

But, in harmony with his wisdom—the new life of the Spirit, he lived with a view to the reality of the storm to come.

And his house stood.

He builded on the Rock .
 The Word was his guide and Christ his foundation
 and thus he was safe.
 Through all eternity.

W. V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Lord in His loving kindness and tender mercy withdrew from this vale of tears, on August 1, our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

FREDERICK VAN DYKEN

Our comfort is in the assurance that his departure is but a translation from this life to a glorious one which is the inheritance of God's elect.

Mrs. Catharena D. Van Dyken
 Mr. and Mrs. F. O. Van Dyken
 Mr. and Mrs. O. Van Dyken
 Mr. and Mrs. R. Van Dyken
 Mr. and Mrs. R. De Mann
 Jack Van Dyken
 Ralph Donnie and Betty Lou.

South Gate, California.

MY JESUS AS THOU WILT

My Jesus as Thou wilt,
 Oh may my will be Thine,
 Into Thy hand of love,
 I would my all resign.
 Through sorrow and through joy,
 Conduct me as Thy own,
 And help me still to say,
 My Lord, — Thy will be done.

My Jesus as Thou wilt,
 Oh may my will be Thine,
 Let not my star of hope,
 Grew dim or disappear.
 Since Thou on earth hath wept,
 And sorrowed oft alone,
 If I must weep with Thee,
 My Lord, — Thy will be done.

At Mount Zion

The people of Israel were encamped at Kadesh. The period of the forty years had drawn to a close, so that the time for the host of the Lord to take possession of the promised land was at hand. Two routes lay open to them: the one direct through the land of the Edomites, the other long and circuitous, stretching around and eastward of Edom. Accordingly Moses sent the king of Edom a message, petitioning him to allow the people of Israel to pass through his land. The message was friendly and warm. The first part of it declared by implication that Israel and Edom were descendent from Isaac and that their original ancestors were twin brothers, touched on the bondage of Israel in Egypt and the doing of God that had consisted in His delivering them in answer to their cry and finally informed the king of Edom of their whereabouts in the wilderness, "Thus saith thy brother Israel, thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers; and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and behold we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border." The second part of the message was formed of the petition proper and advanced the reasons why the king should not be afraid to grant the request. They would not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither would they drink of the water of the wells: they would go by the king's way, and would not turn to the right or to the left until they had passed Edom's borders.

The message taken on a whole reposed upon the assumption that Edom was familiar with Israel's origin, career and destiny, with the relation he sustained to God and with the promises made unto the fathers. There were three arguments by which Moses tried to induce the king of Edom to grant the people of Israel passage through his dominion. The first was that the two nations were of the same blood. It might be expected that this connection would render Edom hospitable. The second argument was that their afflictions in Egypt had been so cruel that the report of them had spread far and wide. "Thou knowest, hast heard of all the travail that hath befallen us." The king must be pitying them and would, as moved by pity allow himself to be prevailed upon. The third argument was the weightiest of the three. It was the part of wisdom to befriend the children of Israel, for God was with them. The evidence of this was that God by His angel delivered them out of all their troubles in answer to their cry, and brought them to the edge of the promised land. Hence, he who was

against this people, refused to do well by them, exposed himself to the curse of Jehovah, the God of all the earth.

But the king of Edom was unmoved. Having heard out the messengers, his curt and harsh reply was, "Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword". The messengers for a while continued to remonstrate with the king, "We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it. I will only, without doing anything else, go through on my feet." It was of no use. The king was adamant, "Thou shalt not go through". He even sent a warlike armament against Israel that trod upon the heels of the returning messengers. "And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand." Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border. And "Israel turned away from him." There was reason. The Lord had forbidden them to engage in any acts of violence against Edom, "Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not as much as a foot breadth; . . . Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall buy water of them for money that ye may drink" (Deut. 2:3-5). Israel may not dispossess Edom, is forbidden to molest him in any way. Edom is not to be reckoned among the tribes of Canaan to be extirpated. Does the Lord's sparing Edom betoken that He assumes an attitude of favor toward them? This cannot be, as Esau and his kin are reprobated. The Lord explains His own action. Israel and Edom are brothers, Ye are to pass through the coasts of *your brethren*. . . . To these brethren the Lord had given Mount Seir for a possession. Therefore Israel shall not meddle with them, "Take ye good heed unto yourselves; meddle not with them; . . . because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession" (Deut. 2:5)—given Mount Seir to Esau not in love but in His wrath. For both against Esau and Esau in his generations the Lord had indignation forever. (Mal. 1:4).

We can, say some interpreters, easily understand the objection of the king of Edom. Many of the defiles through which the main road wound were not adapted for the march of a great multitude. The Israelites could scarcely have gone through Edom without injuring the fields and vineyards; and though the undertaking was given in good faith by Moses, he could not answer for the whole of that undisciplined host he was leading toward Canaan. The safety of Edom lay in denying to other peoples access to its strongholds. The difficulty of approaching them was their main security. Israel might go quickly through the land now; but its armies might soon return with hostile in-

tent. Water, too, was very precious in some parts of Edom. Enough was stored in rainy seasons to supply the wants of the inhabitants; beyond that there was none to spare, and for this necessity of life money was no equivalent. A multitude traveling with cattle would have made scarcity or famine,—might have left the region almost desolate.

There is truth in some of these statements. But we learn from the Old Testament Scriptures that the real reason of Edom's refusing to give Israel a passage through his country was that, being reprobated, he was filled with an abiding and deep-seated animosity toward Israel. As stated in a former article, the Old Testament asserts over and over that the Edomites were bitter enemies of Israel; and it is evident from illusions in exile and post exilic writings that during the closing days of Judah's national existence the old hostile spirit revived. In Psalm 137 the prophet recalls with indignation the malice of the Edomites, "Remember o Jehovah against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem: who said, rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." From the prophecy of Obadiah, we learn that in the day that strangers carried away captive Jacob's forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even Edom looked with joy on the day of his brother in the day that he became a stranger; that he rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; that he spoke proudly in the day of his distress; that he entered into the gates of God's people in the day of their calamity and laid hands on their substance in that day; that he stood in the crossway to cut off those of Jacob that did escape; that he delivered up those of Jacob that did remain in the day of distress; and that he sent an ambassador among the nations with the message, "Arise ye, let us rise up against her (Judah) in battle".

Of all Israel's adversaries, not one was so persistently and fiercely hostile as Edom. To account for that hostility, it is necessary to go back on the history of Jacob and Esau. Edom regarded himself as a people cheated out of his blessing, out of the fatness of the earth, by Jacob. But through His placing Canaan in the actual possession of the twelve sons of Jacob, the Lord showed Edom that Isaac had made no mistake in blessing Jacob, so that the deep reason of Edom's hatred of Jacob was that Jacob was the chosen of the Lord.

So did Israel take the long route, stretching east of Edom. But also in going by this longer way, Israel passed not directly through Edom's dominion but through his coasts, so that there is no discrepancy between the command of the Lord to Israel, "Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau" and the notice that Israel turned away from Esau to follow the longer way.

After the transpiring of the above-cited events, the children of Israel journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. It was during the time of this encampment that the Lord told Moses and Aaron that Aaron should now die. The Lord also let it be known that the reason Aaron should die was that he could not enter into the land which the Lord also let it be known that the reason Aaron should die was that he might not enter in the land which He had given to the children of Israel, on account of his rebellion against the Lord's word at the water of Meribah. The Lord thus publicly attributed Aaron's death to his sin, and thus established in the minds of the people a connection between the two in order that the people, in their willing ignorance, might not say that in dying, Aaron had simply gone the way of all flesh.

Aaron was led by Moses in company with Eleazar, Aaron's son, unto Mount Hor, the place where he was to die and be buried. He thus went to his grave in full knowledge of where he was going. He had not only to be buried but also to die outside the camp. His death, or rather his being hindered through death from entering the promised land, was a punishment inflicted on account of a particular sin. But if the rest of Canaan was but a shadow of the true rest that Christ entered with His people, how could Aaron's being prevented from entering into Canaan, be punishment? How could the thought that the earthy Canaan was lost to him have saddened his soul, if he knew that in death he was to be with the Lord? How could he count this loss truly a loss? These questions can be satisfactorily answered. It is to be considered that, as I wrote in a former article, the Old Testament Dispensation was the dispensation of shadows. The Israelitish people together with all their institutions was a shadow of the heavenly. All was shadow. There was even a shadow satisfaction and atonement, a shadow forgiveness of sin, a shadow righteousness and sanctification and also a penalty, a punishment, that typified death eternal. And this penalty was physical death, the being cut off through death from the land of Canaan, God's country and thus from God's very presence. It was this that rendered death a state so terrible to contemplate to Old Testament believers. The offender, through death, was cut off from God's people, from God's country and from His sanctuary. "He (the offender) shall be cut off from his people" and, "He shall be put to death" are two expressions occurring in the Law that belong together. The thought of death therefore filled even the believers with grave apprehensions. By death they were separated from the visible, earthy sanctuary in Canaan. And in that sanctuary dwelt God. It was the only place where the Old Testament believer could meet God. The only heaven, the only heavenly country, temple of God,

house of the Lord, directly revealed to him was that earthy Canaan, that worldly sanctuary. He knew of none other. To Aaron therefore the thought of his being banished from Canaan through death was, must have been, extremely painful. It was to his mind, punishment indeed. What is more, it was a kind of punishment that was inflicted only when a gross sin had been committed, a sin that could not be atoned by the typical sacrifices by blood. Thus, Aaron's finding himself under the necessity of suffering this penalty, brings out the greatness of the sin that he had committed. But Aaron was one of God's saints, so that, though banished from the earthy Canaan, he died in the confident hope that the Lord would not leave his soul in death but that he would awaken and see God in holy temple.

The office of the highpriest could not be left vacant for a moment. Before Aaron died therefore the holy garments, the sacerdotal ornaments, were put upon Eleazar his son. This had the further advantage of designating Aaron's successor while he was still living, and of securing also the perpetuity of the priesthood in the genealogical line of Aaron. Finally it prevented this office from falling into dis-esteem.

Everything here indicates that Aaron in his capacity of highpriest and the office which he served were but shadows—everything : his being stripped of his sacred garments, his being unable to continue in his office by reason of death, and his being disqualified from entering into Canaan by his great sin. These happenings, however sad, were thus prophetic of the appearing of our only high priest, Christ Jesus. His atonement was real. His obedience, being perfect, fully satisfied all the rigid and relentless demands of the law. Hence as priest he abideth everlastingly. Never will He in the performance of His service as the Priest Glorified be interrupted by death. Of the garments of salvation with which the Father clothed Him when He raised Him up and set Him together with all His people in heaven He will never be divested. Such is the high priest now over the house of God. Should we then not draw near in full assurance of faith?

Perceiving that Moses was returning from the mountain without Aaron, and beholding Eleazar clad with the priestly ornaments, the people understood that Aaron was dead. None had seen him die, had witnessed the ceremony that had been performed in the mountain, knew the location of his grave—none save Moses and Eleazar. It had thus been a small funeral indeed, strangely devoid of all show, and also strangely secret. The people, the true people of God, grieved. They would miss him. And the congregation "even the whole house of Israel, mourned for him thirty days, that is, gave for this length of time public expression to their sorrow.

What shall we say of the Man Aaron? That he was one of God's saints, we know from Scripture. But he was not the strong man spiritually that his brother Moses was. He had it not in him to alone fearlessly and stedfastly champion the cause of God among his people. He was a timid man, one rather easily frightened by the insolence of the carnal seed in the camp. They could scare him into yielding to their sinful demands. At Sinai they had cried to him, "Make us gods", and he had obliged them. That he had joined Miriam in her opposition to Moses, shows that he was easily misled. He was a man who could not be trusted to carry on alone. As unfortified by the presence of Moses, he would have been a failure.

Another event that took place during the encampment at Horeb was the attack of Arad the Canaanite. The narrative reads, "And when King Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. . . . And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah."

This battle took place in the south of Canaan in the same region where thirty-eight years previous Israel had suffered such a shameful defeat at the hands of these same Canaanites,—a defeat recorded in chap. 14. When the people at that time hear the evil report of the ten spies, they broke out into loud weeping and accused the Lord of having led them to the border of Canaan that they all might perish by the sword of the adversary. That was the old generation. On account of their unbelief their carcasses were to fall in the desert. But the people in their carnal grief and in opposition to the Word of God, went up to take possession of the promised land. But the Lord was not with them, so that many of their number fell by the sword of the Amelekites and the Canaanites of that part of Canaan. All this had taken place some thirty-eight years ago. The new generation after these years finds itself in the very region where the old generation had been defeated. The king of Arad, recalling this defeat and thinking that a fatal blow might again be inflicted upon the people of Israel, now fell suddenly upon them as they were breaking up from Kadesh, and when, in the confusion of the march, they were unprepared. Though he took some of them prisoners, there was no serious defeat of the Israelites. They avenged the unprovoked attack on them, and destroyed the cities of the adversary, and named the place Hormah, meaning *destruction*. When they left, the

defeated Canaanites re-occupied the sites of their ruined cities, for Joshua finds them in possession there. This expedition was the first victory for the new generation. It betokened their great successful conflict in Canaan.

G. M. O.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session Wednesday, October 1, at 9:00 a. m. at Fuller Ave.

D. Jonker, S. C.

IN MEMORIAM

Den 26sten Juli behaagde het den Heere om tot Zich te nemen onze geliefde vader, grootvader en over-grootvader,

MARTIN J. HOEKSTRA

in den ouderdom van 85 jaren.

Alhoewel dit verlies ons zeer smartelijk valt zij wij den Heere dankbaar voor het goed dat Hij ons in vader gaf gedurende deze vele jaren; en de verzekering dat hij is ingegaan in de vreugde zijns Heeren doet onze bedroefde harten zingen.

De Familie:

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Steensma
Rochester, N. Y.
Mr. and Mrs. A. Plantinga
Holland, Michigan.
Mr. and Mrs. A. Vogel
Mr. and Mrs. J. Sietstra
Mr. and Mrs. P. Hoekstra
Mr. and Mrs. D. Hoekstra
Mr. and Mrs. J. Boer
Mr. and Mrs. J. Hoekstra
Kleinkinderen en
achterkleinkinderen.

Sheldon, Iowa.

ALL THAT I NEED

O Lord, I know that Thou wilt give to me
All that I really need;
And yet with heart insatiate and athirst
For more of Thee I pant.