

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine

PUBLISHED BY THE REFORMED FREE PUBLI SHING ASSOCIATION, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

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Entered as Second Class mail matter at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Vol. XVII, No. 19.

JULY 1, 1941

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$2.50

Meditatie

Vergaderd In Jerusalem

Alzoo zegt de Heere der heirscharen: Ziet, Ik zal Mijn volk verlossen uit het land des opgangs, en uit het land des nedergangs der zon. En Ik zal hen herwaarts brengen, dat zij in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen zullen; en zij zullen Mij tot een volk zijn, en Ik zal hun tot een God zijn, in waarheid en in gerechtigheid. Zach. 8:7, 8.

Wie zijn deze?

En waar is het, dat ze zullen wonen?

Wie behooren tot dit volk, welks God de Heere is, en die daar wonen in het midden van Jeruzalem, vergaderd uit alle oorden?

Ze wonen blijkbaar in Jeruzalem, van welks roem de profeet in naam des Heeren gewaagd had in het verband, en dat geheeten zal worden eene stad der waarheid, de berg des Heeren der heirscharen, een berg der heiligheid. God, de Heere woont in haar mid- den. En daar woont nu ook, volgens de woorden van bovenstaanden tekst, het volk, dat God verlost en vergaderd heeft.

Wie zijn dan deze?

Zijn het de Joden, verstrooid onder alle volken, maar verlost en wederom vergaderd door de machtige hand des Heeren, om voortaan altoos in het aardsche Jeruzalem te wonen als het gansch bijzondere volk des Heeren?

Zoo willen zij het, die hangen aan uitwendige vormen en aardsche dingen, die niet verstaan dat het wezen van Jeruzalem met den aardschen vorm eener stad van hout en steen niets te maken heeft en dat het wezen van Gods volk niet onafscheidelijk verbonden is met den vorm van Israel's nationaal bestaan; die niet verstaan, dat Gods werk voortgang heeft en zich strekt naar de voleinding van het eeuwig, hemelsch

Jeruzalem, dat uit den hemel van God afdaalt op de nieuwe aarde; die niet verstaan, dat we hier nimmer een blijvende stad hebben, maar de toekomstende zoeken, en dat ook de oudvaderen, de belofte door het geloof omhelzend, het hemelsch vaderland zochten, en beleden, dat ze gasten en vreemdelingen op aarde waren. Zij staan er op, dat Gods Woord ons hier niets anders te zeggen heeft, dan dat de oude Joden weer uit alle landen vergaderd zullen worden, om in die aardsche stad in het aardsche Kanaän te wonen.

Het is toch zoo duidelijk, zoo meenen ze, dat dit de bedoeling van den tekst is!

Let slechts op het onmiddelijk verband, zoo zullen ze u zeggen. Daar wordt ons immers gezegd, dat er nog oude mannen en oude vrouwen zullen zitten op de straten van Jeruzalem; en dat een ieder zijn stok in Zijne hand zal hebben vanwege de veelheid zijner dagen; en dat de straten dier stad vervuld zullen worden met knechtjes en meisjes, spelende op hare straten! En hoe zou dit dan kunnen slaan op een hemelsche stad, waar immers geen ouden van dagen en gebogenen onder dan last der jaren zullen worden gevonden!

Ach, neen, als ge niet verder ziet dan dit onmidde- lijk verband, en ge weigert dan om te verstaan, dat de profetie in den ouden dag zich aansloot bij de bestaans- vormen van dien dag, dan zal u wel geen andere keuze zijn overgelaten. Op stokken leunende oude mannen en vrouwen, en spelende knechtjes en maagdjies zullen op Jeruzalem's gouden straat zeker niet worden gevonden. Maar dan is de belofte toch wel zeer beperkt en arm. Dan heeft de gemeente van den nieuwen dag aan deze profetie part noch deel, en kan zij de Schrift hier wel gesloten laten. En dan is ook het vooruitzicht voor de Joden, dat hun hier geboden wordt, niet zoo heerlijk en grootsch, dat het hun hart mag doen opspringen van blijde verwachting: een gewone aardsche stad, vervuld met stokoude, strompelende mannen en vrouwen en spelende kinderen!

Maar moeten we dan onze oogen sluiten voor het feit, dat, ofschoon deze profetie zich aansluit bij de toenmalige bestaansvorm van Jeruzalem en volk Gods,

ze zich toch uitstrekt ver boven dien vorm, zoodat ze de verwachting wekt van veel rijkere vervulling dan ooit mogelijk zou zijn in de aardse stad, waarin vroeger de Heere woonde tusschen de cherubims? Of zeg het dan zelf of de tekst ons geen veel rijkere vooruitzichten biedt, wanneer hij ons zegt, dat God al Zijn volk, uit het land des opgangs en des nedergangs der zon, een schare, die niemand tellen kan, als het zand aan den oever der zee, als de menigte der sterren in het firmament, wederbrengen zal, om hen te doen wonen *midden in Jeruzalem*. Ziet ge dan niet, dat als millioenen bij millioenen, niet maar rondom of aan den buitenkant, maar werkelijk midden in Jeruzalem wonen zullen, ge u wel een heel andere stad moet denken, dan het aardse Sion, ge onwillekeurig reeds denkt aan de stad, welker afmetingen in elke richting twaalf duizend stadiën waren?

Of, indien ge nog zoudt meenen, dat de mogelijkheid zich denken laat, dat al deze milloenen van Israëlieten nog wel midden in een aardse Jeruzalem zouden kunnen wonen, let dan ook nog op het einde van dit hoofdstuk, en ziet, hoe vele andere volken ook optrekken met de Joden naar datzelfde Jeruzalem, waarvan hier sprake is. Want de volken en de inwoners van vele steden en machtige heidenden zullen komen om den Heere der heirscharen te Jeruzalem te zoeken. Ze zullen de een den ander opwekken en zeggen: "Laat ons vlijtig heengaan om te smeeke het aangezicht des Heeren, en om den Heere der heirscharen te zoeken; ik zal ook henengaan". Zelfs zal de verhouding van Jood en Heiden, onder degenen, die optrekken naar dit Jeruzalem, zijn van één tot tien, want "tien mannen uit allerlei tongen der heidenen" zullen grijpen de slip van een Joodschen man, en zeggen: "wij zullen met ulieden gaan; want wij hebben gehoord, dat God met ulieden is". En als ge dit alles hebt gezien, beken het dan, dat deze milloenen van Joden, vertiendubbeld met heidenen uit alle oorden, zeker nimmer in een aardse Jeruzalem zouden kunnen wonen, en dat de profetie zich uitstrekt tot de dag, wanneer het Nieuwe Jeruzalem nederdalen zal van den hemel in de nieuwe schepping!

Wie zijn deze? En waar worden ze vergaderd?

O, zeker, het zijn ook Joden! Want ofschoon Israel als natie straks zal hebben uitgediend, gesproken uit het standpunt van het moment der profetie, toch zal er ook uit Israel altijd zijn een overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade. En God, de Heere der heirscharen, zal hen vergaderen uit alle oorden en volken om te wonen in Jeruzalem. Niet alle Joden, en niet als Joden, maar als het eeuwig volk Gods worden ze vergaderd.

Doch het zijn niet enkel Joden.

Uit alle volken der heidenen trekken ze op, gehoord hebbende, dat God te Jeruzalem woont en met Zijn volk is, om ook het aangezicht des Heeren te zoeken, en met het overblijfsel naar de verkiezing der genade te Jeru-

zalem te wonen.

Gods volk uit alle volkeren der wereld!

De schare, die niemand tellen kan!

Die zijn deze!

Verlost!

Om midden in Jeruzalem te wonen!

Dat immers is de verlossing, dat God Zijn volk vergadert uit deze tegenwoordige wereld, om in het midden van Jeruzalem te wonen!

In Jeruzalem, de stad Gods, de stad der waarheid, de berg van den Heere der heirscharen, een berg der heiligheid!

Zeker, dat Jeruzalem had in de oude bedeeeling den vorm van een aardse stad. En daar woonde God op den berg Sion, achter het voorhangsel, tusschen de cherubim. Maar die aardse vorm was slechts een schaduw, kon voorbijgaan, zonder dat het wezen van Jeruzalem werd aangetast. En die vorm ging voorbij. En het wezen bleef. Want dat wezen bestaat hierin, dat Jeruzalem is de gemeenschap der burgeren in Christus met den levenden God. En die gemeenschap bleef, werd uitgebreid, werd verrijkt, toen Christus het fundament dier gemeenschap legde in de rechtvaardigheid Gods, door Zijn dood en opstanding; toen Hij opvoer tot in de hoogste hemelen om te zitten aan de rechterhand Gods; toen Hij, als de verhoogde Heere, Zijnen Geest uitstortte op alle vleesch, en door dien Geest in Zijne gemeente kwam wonen.

Jeruzalem, de berg Sion, tempel en Hoogepriester,—het is nu alles vervuld. En Jeruzalem, dat thans boven is, is vrij, en is onzer aller moeder!

En toch is Jeruzalem nog niet voltooid. Straks daalt het in al zijne heerlijkheid en schoonheid uit den hemel op aarde neer, de volmaakte gemeenschap der verlost heiligen, verheerlijkt naar lichaam en ziel, om eeuwig op de nieuwe aarde gevestigd te worden, tot lof en prijs van Hem, Die Jeruzalem zich ter woning verkoren heeft.

Daar worden ze vergaderd, deze milloenen uit alle volken!

Verlost worden ze uit het land des opgangs en des nedergangs der zon; verlost uit de tegenwoordige wereld met haar zonde en schuld, haar ellende en dood, haar vervreemd zijn van den levenden God. Verlost door den Heere der heirscharen. Want immers "alzo zegt de Heere der heirscharen: Ziet, *Ik* zal Mijn volk verlossen. . . . en *Ik* zal hen herwaarts brengen, dat zij in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen zullen". God alleen verlost. Er is niemand met Hem. Hij verlost van schuld en ongerechtigheid, als Hij Zijn eigen Zoon in het vleesch zendt, om den last des toorns Gods tegen de zonde ten einde toe te dragen, en volkomene gerechtigheid en eeuwig leven te verwerven door Zijne volmaakte gehoorzaamheid. Hij verlost, wanneer Hij door Zijn Geest en Woord de verworvene verlossing

toepast aan degenen, Die Hij aan Christus gegeven heeft voor de grondlegging der wereld. Hij verlost, wanneer Hij hen roept, uit de wereld, uit alle volken en landen, zooals Hij alleen roepen kan, krachtdadiglijk, met een almachtig, een onwederstandelijk roepen, en hen naar Jeruzalem voert, om midden in Sion te wonen. In het midden van Jeruzalem!

Daar woont immers God!

En daarin bestaat immers de grootheid en heerlijkheid der verlossing, dat de verlostten bij God mogen en kunnen wonen!

Let er wel op: ze *wonen* daar in het midden van Jeruzalem, waar God woont! En wonen bij God is nog geheel iets anders dan te zijn waar God is. God is overal. Ver boven al, wat scheepsel heet verheven, is Hij toch ook in heel de schepping en raakt Hij de schepping op elk punt. Nooit kunnen we Hem ontvlieden. In de hoogte der hemelen en de diepten der zeeën en de donkerten der hel,—overal is God. En toch kan Hij “ver” van den mensch zijn. Hij kan hem Zijne gemeenschap onthouden, waarin het leven is. Hij kan hem Zijn toorn doen gevoelen, Zijn gramschap, waarin de dood is. Hij kan hem met verschrikking vervullen door Zijne tegenwoordigheid. Maar Hij kan ons ook bij Hem doen wonen. Dan doet Hij ons Zijne vriendschap smaken. Dan maakt Hij ons Zijn verbond bekend. Dan raakt Hij ons in Zijne goedertierenheid, die beter is dan het leven. Dan doet Hij ons in Zijne heilgeheimen ingaan. Dan kennen we Hem met die kennis, die het eeuwige leven is. Dan zien we Hem aangezicht tot aangezicht. Dan spreken we met Hem, als een vriend met zijn vriend!

Dan smaken we, dat de Heere goed is!

Wonen midden in Jeruzalem, waar God woont!

Daar zijn ze Hem tot een volk; daar is Hij hun tot een God! Want immers, zoo heet het in den tekst: “En Ik zal hen herwaarts brengen, dat zij in het midden van Jeruzalem wonen zullen; en zij zullen Mij tot een volk zijn, en Ik zal hun tot een God zijn”. . . .

Hem tot een volk!

Let wel: niet slechts Zijn volk, maar Hem tot een volk!

Een volk, dat door Hem geformeerd werd, maar dat nu ook geheel en alleen in Hem het doel van zijn bestaan heeft, zoekt en vindt. Een volk, dat in geheel zijn leven zich richt op Hem, Zijn deugdenbeeld weerkaatst, Zijn wonderen vertelt, Zijn lof verkondigt.

Een volk, dat eeuwiglijk zegt: de Heere is God en Hij is goed! En dat wel als volk!

Niet maar als een menigte individuen, zonder eenheid en zonder verband en zonder harmonie. Want God is één, en Zijn werk is één, en Zijn volk is één. Als een machtig koor, waarin de stem van ieder harmonieert met alle andere stemmen, zoo zal straks midden in Jeruzalem de menigte, die door God vergaderd werd van den opgang der zon en van haren nedergang,

ieder op zijne wijze en op zijne eigene plaats, maar als eene eenheid, des Heeren lof verkondigen, het lied zingend van Mozes en het Lam!

Hem tot een volk!

En Hij zal eeuwiglijk hun tot een God zijn.

Niet maar hun God, maar hun tot een God!

Alles, wat God GOD doet zijn, dat zal Hij hun zijn! Hun Souverein en eeuwige Heer, om hun Zijn wil bekend te maken, opdat ze dien zouden betrachten. Maar ook hun Zegenader, Die hen eeuwiglijk verrijkt met het eeuwige leven, en hun den rijkdom Zijner goddelijke liefelikheden doet aanschouwen en smaken!

Vergaderd uit de vreemdelingschap der wereld, uit zonde en schuld, uit de diepte der duisternis en des doods! Om te wonen in het midden van Jeruzalem!

Wonderlijke verlossing!

Wonen bij Hem!

Bij Hem, Die de Heilige is en de Waarachtige, te rein van oogen, dan dat Hij de zonde zou kunnen aanschouwen! Wij Hem tot een volk; Hij ons tot een God! Verkeeren in Zijne tente in de gemeenschap van eeuwige vriendschap!

Hoe zullen deze dingen geschieden?

En het antwoord is: in waarheid en gerechtigheid!

Zij zullen Mij tot een volk zijn en Ik zal hun tot een God zijn. . . . in waarheid en in gerechtigheid!

Alleen in de levenssfeer van waarheid en van gerechtigheid kunnen wij bij Hem wonen, en kunnen we in die betrekking staan tot Hem, waarin wij Zijn volk, Hem tot een volk zijn, en Hij ons tot een God is. Want immers, dit is de verkondiging, die wij van Hem gehoord hebben, dat God een licht is, en gansch geen duisternis in Hem is. Hij is goed! Hij is het inbegrip van alle eeuwige en oneindige deugden en volmaakheden. Hij is de Waarheid en er is geen leugen in Hem; daarom kan de leugenspreker bij Hem niet verkeeren. Hij is de volmaakte Gerechtigheid, en daarom kan hij, die de ongerechtigheid liefheeft en doet, in het midden van Jeruzalem niet wonen. Hij is de Heilige, Die eeuwiglijk Zichzelven toegewijd is en Zichzelven begeert en zoekt; daarom kan de onreine van hart en hand bij Hem niet verkeeren. Hij haat alle werkers der ongerechtigheid. Hij werpt alle goddeloozen verre van Zich!

Indien wij zeggen, dat wij gemeenschap met Hem hebben, en wij in de duisternis wandelen, zoo liegen wij, en doen de waarheid niet!

Daarom: in waarheid en in gerechtigheid!

Dat is Zijn eigen Goddelijke levenssfeer!

En in die levenssfeer zullen ook wij moeten ingaan, om bij Hem, in het midden van Jeruzalem te wonen!

En ook die levenssfeer, en ons ingaan in die levenssfeer van waarheid en gerechtigheid—’t is al van Hem!

In Christus Jezus, onzen Heere!

Wonder van genade!

H. H.

Editorials

Our Lecture Tour

III.

As we wrote in our last article, we left Manhattan on Thursday, April 24.

The distance from Manhattan to Bellflower by auto is about 1200 miles. And as we left about seven thirty in the morning, and planned to be in Bellflower by Friday evening, we had no time to spare.

Once more our way led through the beautiful Galatin Canyon to West Yellowstone, thence westward for a short stretch over the Continental Divide, and after that our main direction was south, so that it became warmer as we made progress. At West Yellowstone, which we reached a little after nine in the morning, we still saw plenty of snow and it was freezing. But at Idaho Falls, where we arrived at noon, it was warm enough to sit on the grass at the river-side to eat our lunch, or part of it, for our good hostess had provided plentifully for us. From there we continued through Idaho, following the general direction of a wide valley and speeding ahead under the edge of a storm that was hanging in the mountain range to our left while the sun was shining overhead. We followed the road that led us through the pretty, rather thrilling Ogden Canyon, where the road is dynamited out of the mountain-side and meanders along rather steep precipices down into Ogden. From the last named city it is not far to Salt Lake City, famed for its Mormon tabernacle, and temple. As, however, we had been through the Mormon buildings before, we did not tarry now, but travelled on to Provo, where we stopped for the night.

The next morning we arose at the first glimmer of dawn. Of the twelve hundred miles between Manhattan and Bellflower we still had seven hundred to go, and we decided to finish the trip that day, the Lord willing. For us who live in the East, with its many cities and towns; its curving roads and heavy traffic, it seems an almost impossible task to drive seven hundred miles in one day. However, when one travels through Utah, Arizona, Nevada and thus into California, his conception of distance decidedly changes. The road is good, paved the whole distance. There is very little traffic, so that it is a pleasure when one may toot his horn occasionally at a passing car. From Provo to Las Vegas, which, I believe, is a distance of over four hundred miles, one does not pass through any large cities. Except for an occasional mountain range that must be crossed, the road is usually straight

for miles ahead, and in the desert the atmosphere is so clear that often one can see the road as far as twenty miles stretching before him. Under such conditions it is no more of a hazard to drive at the rate of sixty five or seventy miles per hour than it is to drive forty five or fifty miles per hour in our eastern States. Although it was rather late in the season to expect flowers in the desert, due to the plentiful rains they had had all through those parts, the desert was literally covered with millions of them, yellow, orange, pink and red, so much so that even the mountain slopes in the distance were colored. The Joshua-tree showed swelling buds at the end of its wierdly crooked branches, the Yucca was blooming and "the wilderness blossomed as the rose". Yes, even the desert has its own beauty!

Early in the afternoon we reached Barstow, and from thence we travelled on through the San Bernardino mountain-pass into the city of that name. Plenty of rain had fallen in California, and by a veritable downpour the state of sunshine welcomed us all that afternoon. Had we been earlier we probably would have stopped at the always hospitable home of the Rev. G. Vos in Redlands, for it is but a few miles out of the way from San Bernardino to Bellflower. However, the day had far advanced and we were eager to meet our children. So, on we went. And the sun had gone down before we finally reached the parsonage of the pastor of Bellflower's Protestant Reformed Church.

It goes without saying that we enjoyed our stay in California.

This was not due to the fact that we went sight-seeing, although there is, of course, plenty occasion for that in those parts. But for this we did not have much time, and, besides, the tail-end of the rainy season was rather long and very wet this season. One day we travelled to San Diego but it poured all day, so that one could hardly leave the car. And one warm, sunny day we took our dinner to the beach, the Rev. Vos also being with us, and we made use of the opportunity to take a swim in the Pacific. For the rest we were kept rather busy by travelling between Bellflower and Redlands, preaching four times and delivering five lectures.

But we enjoyed our stay in California most of all because of the fellowship we may have with the people there. Of course, it is a keen pleasure for us when we may spend a week at the home of our children, the Rev. and Mrs. L. Doezeema, whom because of the great distance we can see only occasionally. But pleasant it is also to meet our old California friends, as well as to spend a day in the parsonage of Redlands. The Redlands people had prepared a sort of informal reception for us after one of the lectures, in the basement of their church, the ladies serving refreshments, so that we had the opportunity to shake hands with all of

them. Redlands, you know, who first sent the long distance call to us to come over and help them, and where I might labor for three weeks back in 1932 when they were organized, always pulls my heart-strings, especially when once again I may meet them and preach the Word to them.

And the more we get into contact with our people in Bellflower, the more we love them. And several enjoyable evenings of fellowship we spent with them, when after lectures or services they would congregate at the home of their pastor. Bellflower is small but active. A very beautiful parsonage they built for their pastor, and they are talking about building a church. That they built a home for their minister first, is due to the fact that they have the opportunity to rent and meet in an Adventist Church that is rather well suited to their needs. Nevertheless, they long to have and should have their own church-edifice, where they can also have their weekday meetings. And if they should appeal to our churches for a little financial lift for this purpose, as I believe they plan to do, I hope that our churches, and especially my own congregation may liberally remember them. They are small and pay a heavy budget. To help them with a few hundred dollars means little for us; but it will be a great help to them. Of course, this is true with respect to other smaller churches that may knock at our door just as well. But I am speaking now of Bellflower.

I believe that the Lord is blessing our California churches and that they are being established in the truth.

The lectures were well attended, both in Redlands and in Bellflower. The last Sunday evening we preached in the latter place the auditorium was packed to the doors, which means that there were many outsiders, for Redlands had their own services, of course. During the week the people of Redlands and of Bellflower both would travel back and forth to attend the lectures (the distance between the two places is about sixty five miles), but that was not the case on that Sunday evening.

And now I must come back to the remark I made in connection with my lectures in Manhattan.

In three places I visited on my lecture tour I had been asked by the school boards of the local Christian Schools to deliver a lecture on Christian Instruction under their auspices, which invitation I readily accepted. This was in Sioux Center, Manhattan and Bellflower. The idea was, of course, to deliver these lectures in the local Christian Reformed Churches. However, when I came to Sioux Center I was told that the consistories of the Christian Reformed Churches there had refused the school board the use of their church-buildings. The result was that there I lectured in our own church on some other subject. In Manhattan I found the same situation. Only there our people

decided that I should deliver the Christian School lecture in their own church. The consistory of the Christian Reformed Church, however, arranged for a congregational meeting for the purpose of calling a pastor on the same evening they knew I was to deliver that Christian School speech. And, although they had plenty of time to change their date, and were asked to do so, they refused. And in Bellflower we had the same experience once more. There, too, we spoke on a different subject in our own church.

It reveals what spirit of cooperation with respect to the Christian School is found with the Christian Reformed brethren.

On the whole it made the impression on me that they are afraid to hear the truth and that they would rather not be disturbed in their slumbers of self-complacency.

For the rest, we gladly leave it to themselves to explain their action and attitude in this case.

Well, the time came that we must return home.

On Monday, May 5, we delivered our last lecture in Bellflower, and the following Sunday we had to be home.

We, therefore, left early Tuesday morning and "stepped on it". The Rev. Petter and his wife had very kindly invited us to stay overnight with them once more if we could at all arrange to be in Oskaloosa a night. And so we managed to make the trip to Oskaloosa in three days, and arrived in Grand Rapids the following evening, Friday, May 9.

The Lord had blessed us greatly and prospered us on our way.

A joy it was for us to visit all our churches.

And we pray that the work was not in vain.

God's blessing be upon our churches!

H. H.

De Sleutelmacht Der Prediking

We schreven aan het slot van ons laatste artikel over de Sleutelmacht der Kerk, dat deze alleen daardoor werkelijk *macht* is en zijn kan, dat Christus Zelf door Zijne Kerk op aarde de sleutelmacht uitvoert. Hij alleen heeft de macht om het Koninkrijk der hemelen te sluiten of te ontsluiten, om de zonden te vergeven of te houden. En als ook de Kerk op aarde die macht van Hem ontvangt, dan wil dit niet zeggen, dat Hij daarmede de sleutelmacht uit de handen heeft gegeven, maar dat Hij Zelf door Zijne Kerk op aarde die macht toepast en uitvoert. Dit nu is ook vooral van beteekenis tot recht verstand van de prediking des Woord, niet alleen van den inhoud der predi-

king, maar ook van haar gezag en macht. Op het eerste vestigt vooral de Heidelbergsche Catechismus de aandacht, als hij op de vraag: "Hoe wordt het hemelrijk door de prediking des heiligen Evangelies ontsloten en toegesloten?" het volgende antwoord geeft: "Alzoo, als volgens het bevel van Christus aan de geloovigen, allen en eenen iegelijk, verkondigd en openlijk betuigd wordt, dat hun, zoo dikwijls als zij de beloften des Evangelies met een waar geloof aannemen, waarachtiglijk al hunne zonden van God, om der verdiensten van Christus willen, vergeven zijn; daarentegen allen ongeloovigen, en die zich niet van harte bekeeren, verkondigd en betuigd wordt, dat de toorn Gods en de eeuwige verdoemenis op hen ligt, zoolang als zij zich niet bekeeren; naar welk getuigenis des Evangelies God zal oordeelen, beide in dit en in het toekomstige leven".

In dit antwoord wordt nadruk gelegd op de noodzakelijkheid van scherpe onderscheiding in de prediking, zal deze werkelijk sleutelmacht zijn en het koninkrijk der hemelen ontsluiten en toesluiten. Dit kan nooit, zoolang ge van de prediking van het Evangelie een algemeen, welgemeend aanbod van Gods wege maakt aan alle hoorders. Zulk een prediking trekt geen lijnen, onderscheidt niet, maakt geen scheiding, en kan daarom dan ook nimmer het koninkrijk der hemelen ontsluiten of toesluiten. Het Woord is dan een aanbod, en een aanbod heeft geen macht of gezag. Als een rechter een vonnis velt, dan is dat heel iets anders dan een aanbod. Als hij iemand veroordeelt tot gevangenisstraf of vrijspreekt, dan zet hij niet slechts de deuren der gevangenis open om den veroordeelde of vrijgesprokene aan te bieden al of niet de gevangenis in te gaan; maar dan spreekt hij een woord met macht. Zoo is het ook met de prediking. Ze oordeelt. Ze spreekt met macht. Maar wie van deze prediking een "aanbod" maakt, dat wordt voorgesteld als in Goddelijke gunst komende tot alle menschen, zet de poorten van het koninkrijk wijd open, en laat het nu voorts aan de hoorders over of ze al of niet dat koninkrijk zullen binnen gaan. Het is waar, zij, die aldus prediken, verbinden aan dat algemeen aanbod een voorwaarde. Maar het is een voorwaarde, waaraan de mensch moet voldoen, en waaraan hij ook kan voldoen. De mensch moet komen, de mensch moet zijne zonden belijden, de mensch moet gelooven in Christus. Wat God betreft, Hij is allen menschen genadig. Hij wil gaarne allen redden. Hij zet de deuren van Zijn koninkrijk wijd open, en Hij roept nu alle menschen om in dat koninkrijk in te gaan. En de hoorders verlaten onder zulk eene prediking dan ook metterdaad de kerk in den waan, dat ze te eeniger tijd zich nog wel kunnen bekeeren, en dat ze vandaag of morgen of in de toekomst zelf wel kunnen beslissen om in het koninkrijk der hemelen in te gaan, zoolang hun maar niet het ongeluk overkomt, dat ze eerder

sterven! Dan, als ze sterven, is het te laat. Dat ze zich dus bekeeren, eer het te laat is. Zoolang als de dood niet komt, is het daartoe nog niet te laat. Dan *kunnen* ze nog gelooven, dan *kunnen* ze zich nog bekeeren en de toevlucht tot Christus nemen. Alleen de dood maakt hen eigenlijk onmachtig om dit te doen.

Maar ook voor de geloovigen gaat er van zulk eene prediking geen kracht uit. Evenmin als de ongeloovigen en onbekeerliken daarin niet Gods machtwoord hooren, hen buiten het koninkrijk der hemelen sluitend, evenmin komt daardoor tot de geloovigen Gods Woord hen in dat koninkrijk zalig sprekend. Ook zij hooren een aanbod, dat zij wel hebben aangenomen, dat ze misschien ook op het oogenblik der prediking wel aannemen, doch een aanbod is en blijft het, en van eene vergeving der zonden op het hooren van een Goddelijk machtwoord is geen sprake. De ongeloovigen krijgen den indruk, dat ze weliswaar nog buiten het koninkrijk der hemelen staan, maar dat ze te eeniger tijd toch door de wijd open poort kunnen ingaan; de geloovigen hebben het besef, dat ze door eigen keuze, door het aannemen van het algemeen aanbod zijn ingegaan, maar dat het daarom dan ook te eeniger tijd mogelijk is, dat ze door diezelfde wijd open poort weer uitgaan. Sleutelmacht zit er dus in zulk eene prediking in het geheel niet.

Zal de prediking dus aan het doel beantwoorden, dan zal ze zeker onderscheidend moeten zijn. Wel is de prediking zelf algemeen, maar haar inhoud is en blijft altijd particulier. Een algemeen aanbod van zaligheid kan in Gods naam niet worden verkondigd. Een aanbod kan de prediking in het geheel niet zijn. Ze moet in den grond der zaak altijd zijn eene aankondiging van zaligheid, van de vergeving der zonden aan allen en een iegelijk, die gelooft, zoowel als van Gods toorn en het verderf aan een iegelijk, die in zijn ongelooft blijft en zich niet bekeert. Dit wil natuurlijk niet zeggen, dat de prediking niet meer behoeft te zijn en dat ze niets anders te zeggen heeft. Ze heeft den vollen raad Gods te verkondigen. Maar voor zoover de prediking sleutelmacht is, zal ze altijd den grondtoon moeten laten hooren, waardoor de geloovigen binnen—de ongeloovigen buiten het koninkrijk der hemelen gesloten worden op Goddelijk gezag. Alleen de rechtvaardigen zijn in het koninkrijk der hemelen. Deze rechtvaardigheid is alleen in Christus Jezus. Alleen door het geloof zijn we in Christus Jezus en deelen we in de gerechtigheid van Zijn dood en opstanding. Hun alleen kan daarom worden verkondigd op Goddelijk gezag, dat ze in dat koninkrijk zijn. Zoo alleen is de prediking sleutelmacht naar haar inhoud.

Maar ook hiermede is alles niet gezegd. De vraag komt immers op: waarom is het juist de *prediking* des Woords, die deze macht heeft? Heeft niet de Schrift zelve altijd gezag, daar ze immers Gods Woord is? Waarom dan nadruk gelegd op de prediking? Zal de

lezing der Schrift niet dezelfde sleutelmacht hebben als de prediking? Of zal het niet moeten worden toegestemd, dat ieder geloovige Gods Woord wel aan een iegelijk verkondigen kan en daarmede de sleutelmacht uitoefenen? Berust eigenlijk heel dat nadruk leggen op de noodzakelijkheid der prediking, en dat verbinden van de sleutelmacht aan de prediking alleen niet op misverstand? Dat de prediking onmisbaar was ten tijde van de apostelen, en zolang en wanneer het Evangelie moet worden uitgedragen in de heidenlanden, dat kan worden toegegeven, ofschoon ook dan velen in onze dagen de beteekenis en de noodzakelijkheid van eene ambtelijke roeping ook voor zulk eene prediking niet meer verstaan. Maar in onze Christelijke wereld, waar ieder zichzelve een bijbel kan aanschaffen, en ook ieder van het Evangelie kan getuigen, gaat het toch niet aan, om op de noodzakelijkheid der prediking nadruk te leggen, en de sleutelmacht aan die prediking des Woords te verbinden. De Schrift is altijd en overal genademiddel, en heeft altijd en overal en in den mond van wien ook sleutelmacht. Daarom behoeft de prediking nog niet afgeschaft te worden. Het is wel goed om mannen af te zonderen, die wat meer bekwaamheid hebben dan anderen, en die al hun tijd kunnen besteden aan de bestudeering der Schrift, om Gods Woord te prediken. Maar dat er van die prediking nu een bijzondere macht uitgaat, en dat ze een geheel eenige beteekenis heeft, daarvan heeft men geen weet meer, en dat wil er bij velen niet meer in. Het gevolg is dan ook, dat ieder op eigen houtje predikt, mannen, vrouwen en kinderen, en dat de prediking niet slechts naar haar inhoud is verwaterd, maar ook haar gezag en macht reeds lang heeft verloren.

Nu zal het volgende wel duidelijk moeten zijn uit de Heilige Schrift: 1. Dat oorspronkelijk en in eerster instantie de Heiland de sleutelmacht niet opdroeg aan ieder discipel, maar aan de apostelen. Zij alleen ontvingen allereerst de macht om te bepalen, wat en wie wel en wat en wie niet een plaats had in het koninkrijk der hemelen, om dat koninkrijk te ontsluiten en te sluiten, de zonden te vergeven en te houden. Zij werden hiertoe onmiddellijk door Christus geroepen en in het ambt gesteld, en ook onmiddellijk door Zijnen Geest onfeilbaar geleid, zoodat door hun woord ook werkelijk gebonden werd en ontbonden alleen wat in den hemel gebonden en ontbonden werd. Doch dit is niet al. Ook het woord van de apostelen had macht alleen, omdat Christus Zelf door hen sprak, door Zijnen Geest het woord der apostelen op de consciëntien der hoorders bond, zoodat ze door het woord der apostelen Gods eigen machtwoord hoorden en zich binnen of buiten het koninkrijk der hemelen wisten. Het Woord der apostelen openbaarde en verborg, was een woord ten leven of ten doode, alleen doordat Christus Zelf door en in dat Woord met Zijnen Geest werkte.

Juist daardoor werd het door hen gepredikte Woord sleutelmacht. 2. Dat die sleutelmacht en die opdracht om te prediken niet werd overgedragen van de apostelen op enkele personen of op de geloovigen in het algemeen, maar op de Kerk, aan wier spitse de apostelen stonden. Aan die Kerk, niet aan enkele individuen, heeft Christus Zijnen Geest geschonken, opdat Hij bij haar zou blijven in der eeuwigheid. Die Kerk, aldus door dien Geest geleid, niet de op zichzelf staande personen, heeft de belofte, dat zij in alle waarheid zal worden geleid. Aan die Kerk heeft Hij ook Zijn Woord, vervat in de Schrift ter bewaring gegeven, niet aan enkele geloovigen los van de Kerk. En die Kerk, niet de individueele geloovigen, heeft de opdracht en roeping om het Woord te bedienen en het Evangelie te verkondigen. Die Kerk heeft de sleutelmacht. En door de prediking dier Kerk wil Christus nog altijd op gansch bijzondere wijze Zijn eigen Woord spreken. En alleen daardoor, dat Christus in en door de prediking Zijn eigen Woord spreekt, wordt die prediking werkelijk sleutelmacht. 3. Dat de Heiland aan Zijne gemeente gegeven heeft, niet alleen apostelen en profeten, maar ook herders en leeraars, en dat het door deze ambten is, dat de Kerk hare roeping om het Woord te prediken vervult, en dat Christus Zijn eigen Woord tot de hoorders spreekt. Daarom is het ook thans nog waar, dat niemand gelooft dan die Hem hoort, dat niemand Hem hoort zonder een prediker, en dat er geen prediker is, tenzij dat hij gezonden is. Hiermee is natuurlijk niet gezegd, dat de geloovigen geen roeping hebben om te getuigen, noch ook dat dit getuigenis geen beteekenis heeft. Maar wel bedoelen we hiermee het onderscheid te handhaven tusschen dit getuigenis en de ambtelijke bediening des Woords, en te handhaven, dat de sleutelmacht bepaaldelijk verbonden is aan de prediking des Evangelies door de Kerk.

En nu kunnen we wel eigenwijs zijn en veronachtzamen deze instelling van Christus; nu kunnen we onze eigen beschouwing wel willen handhaven en zeggen, dat het evengoed zonder die prediking kan, of dat ieder wel op eigen initiatief kan prediken, doch Christus doet Zijn eigen werk in Zijn eigen weg, en de kwade gevolgen van onze eigenzinnigheid blijven niet uit. De waarheid wordt hoe langer zoo meer vervalscht, de prediking verliest haar macht en gezag, de kerk verachttert in de genade, wordt hoe langer zoo meer een prooi der wereld, en haar licht verdonkert op den kandelaar. Maar de Kerk, die gehoorzaam is aan haar opdracht en wandelt naar Christus' Woord, het Woord bedient naar Zijnen wil, zal ervaren, dat Christus in haar woont en werkt, en dat de prediking een macht is, die de ongeloovigen en onbekeerlijken buitensluit en verhardt, maar de geloovigen hoe langer zoo meer bevestigt in het geloof.

The Triple Knowledge

EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

I.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM AS A SYMBOL.

Our Heidelberg Catechism is part of our Reformed heritage. It belongs to the Reformed Symbols or Confessions. The other parts, that with the Heidelberger constitute the Three Forms Of Unity, are the Netherland or Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht. Our age is not characterized by a clear knowledge of and love of distinct doctrine. Creeds do not meet with much favor in the church of today. Some churches still have creeds but without being acquainted with their contents; others have so abbreviated their confessions that they contain no distinctive doctrine at all; many have adopted the deceiving slogan: "no creed but Christ". Our churches still value their Reformed heritage as contained in the Forms of Unity. An attempt is made to acquaint our people with their contents. Often our young people are instructed in the doctrine as expressed by the Netherland Confession and the Canons. And it is still the established custom in our churches to preach once a Sunday from the Heidelberg Catechism in such a way that no Lord's Day is omitted. Before we enter upon the exposition of our Heidelberg Catechism, as we shall try to do in the following chapters, it may not be superfluous to say a few words about creeds or symbols in general, and about our Heidelberg Catechism as a symbol in particular.

A symbol may be defined as a declaration by a church or group of churches of what such a church or group of churches believes to be the truth of the Word of God or the true doctrine concerning salvation. Symbols are also called confessions or creeds. By the name symbol is expressed that the church or group of churches that framed a particular statement of doctrine consider this their ensign. Just as a nation has its flag which serves as a symbol of its nationality in distinction from other nations, so a church has its authoritative declaration of doctrine as a symbol or ensign, representing the catholic faith of the church over against the world, or the particular faith of a certain church in distinction from other churches. The word *creed* is derived from the Latin word *credere* meaning "to believe". By this term, therefore, is expressed that a church or group of churches regards its statement of the truth as an object of faith. A symbol is not a mere compendium of doctrine or system of dogmatics, but it is the setting forth of those truths, which a whole church or denomination of churches embraces as the object of its belief. It is living truth.

And by the term *confession* the idea is set forth that a group of believers or churches openly profess their faith in unison with one another and with their Lord Jesus Christ. There are many different kinds and forms of creeds. Some are very brief and comprehensive setting forth the mere essentials of the catholic Christian faith, as the "Apostles' Creed" and the Nicene Creed. Others are more elaborate and specific and offer a more or less detailed exposition of the truth as professed by a certain church, as the Westminster Confession. To the latter belong also the Netherland Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Still other confessions limit themselves to the exposition and defense of certain particular points of the doctrine. To these belong the Canons of Dordrecht, setting forth the faith of the Reformed Churches concerning the "Five Points of Calvinism".

True creeds or symbols are not the result of abstract theological contemplation. They are rather to be conceived as spiritual children of the faith of the church. The believers individually, and also the Church of Christ collectively, are set in the midst of the world to be witnesses of the truth of God. The Church may not be silent, especially not as it stands in antithetical relation to the world of darkness. Its calling is to bear testimony in opposition to the lie. It partly meets this obligation through its confessions or symbols. But it also lives by faith in Christ. And faith has in it the urge to speak. The believing Church loves the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures. It loves to contemplate that truth, strives more and more fully to understand it and to appropriate it by faith, and has the desire to witness of that truth before all the world. Thus creeds are born from the faith of the Church in contact with the Holy Scriptures. Schaff says: "Faith, like all strong conviction, has a desire to utter itself before others—'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh'; 'I believe, therefore I confess' (*Credo, ergo confiteor*)". Although, therefore, theology certainly may and does aid the Church in formulating its creeds, they are never the product of abstract theological thinking but the spontaneous expression of the faith of the church. They are born, not made. A live church will certainly have its creed, just as a living believer must needs bear testimony of the truth.

And thus we already touched upon the question of the value of symbols or creeds. They are valuable because they serve as a means whereby the whole church may express her faith over against all the world, or by which a group of churches may declare what they believe to be the truth of the Word of God in distinction from other churches. As has been stated, it is the calling of the Church in the midst of the world to let her light shine and bear witness of the truth, to maintain that truth in opposition to every form

of the lie. She does this through her confessions as her medium. In the second place, they serve as a bond of union and a basis upon which a certain group of churches may unite. Just as a flag is not merely an ensign representing the distinctive nationality of a certain people in the midst of other nations, but also serves as a symbol around which a particular nation rallies; so a particular group of churches rallies around a certain confession as the symbol of its unity. In the third place, confessions or creeds are means to preserve the truth as it is delivered to us from the past in the line of generations. It is true that the whole truth is contained in the Holy Scriptures. But the Scriptures are the revelation of God in Christ as it was given in the process of a history of many centuries and culminated in Christ. They offer no ready made system of doctrine. It is the need, and also the calling of the Church to elicit from these Scriptures the truth in doctrinal form. This is difficult labor, which often finds an incentive in the opposition of false teachers. However, this work need not and may not be started anew by the Church of every age. God establishes His covenant and Church in the line of continued generations, in order that one generation may enter into the fruit of the labor of another. Thus the truth is preserved from age to age under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And creeds serve as means to transmit the truth and preserve it from one generation to the next. In close connection with the immediately preceding, finally, must be mentioned that symbols or confessions are excellent means of instructing the youth of the Church. If a creed is to remain the expression of the faith of a church or group of churches, it stands to reason that the individual members of such a church or churches must be acquainted with its contents. The Church must instruct its members, particularly its children and youth, in its doctrine. For this purpose its creeds may be found to be excellent aids, if not textbooks. For many reasons, therefore, it is expedient that the Church preserve and maintain her symbols.

Confessions have no authority other than derivative, that is, their authority can never replace or be put on a par with that of the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God is and must remain the sole authority in the life of the individual believer and of the Church of Jesus Christ. This does not mean, of course, that they have no authority whatsoever. For, they are a reflection of the truth of the Word of God in the believing consciousness of the Church, and authoritatively expressed by the Church, unto which our Lord Jesus Christ has given the power of the keys and the promise of the guidance of the Holy Spirit into all the truth. And those that submit themselves to the government of the Church that is based upon a certain creed, are certainly under the authority of that

creed and bound by it. But it does mean that a creed can never be the final court of appeal. Confessions and traditions must always be based on the Scriptures. And with the Scriptures they must constantly be compared and in their light their truth must be judged. The contents of the Scriptures can never be subject to the criticism of the believer or of the Church, but the doctrinal declarations of the confessions must really constantly be subject to such criticism. Scripture cannot be altered or developed, confessions may and should. The Bible is infallible, the creed of the Church is not. Hence, the confessions must constantly be gauged by the Scriptures. A church that fails to do this lapses into confessionalism and dead intellectualism.

This does not mean that the individual believer has the right or power to altar the confession of the church of which he is a member, nor does he have the right to propagate views that are in conflict with the creed of his church. One that takes his confession seriously will not even easily reach the conclusion that the doctrine as set forth in the symbols of his church is erroneous. He will remember that the symbols are the product of long and earnest labor and struggle on the part of the Church, and that she was guided, too, by the Holy Spirit. But if after serious consideration and prayerful study a believer cannot escape the conviction that with respect to a certain doctrine the creed of his church is in conflict with the Bible, he will reveal his objections to the church, and try to persuade her to rectify the error. He will do this in the proper way, which in the Reformed Churches is the way of consistory, classis and synod. If he fails to convince the church, and if the doctrinal point of difference is sufficiently serious and fundamental, the way is always open to him to join himself to purer manifestation of the body of Christ on earth. However this may be, the confession can never have other authority than such as it derives from the Scripture, and appeal from the creed to the Bible must always remain possible.

If this is born in mind one will find little difficulty in answering the various objections that have been and still are often raised against creeds as such. Some of the main objections are the following: 1. The church needs no creed; the Bible is sufficient for the faith and instruction of the believers. 2. Creeds impede the development of the truth and stand in the way of unprejudiced exegesis of Holy Writ. 3. Confessions force and bind the conscience of the believer, subjecting him to doctrines of men rather than to the Word of God only. 4. They are the cause of much false religious zeal, engender strifes and contentions, breathe the spirit of sectarianism and cause hopeless division in the Church of Christ. 5. The result is often doctrinal indifferentism and skepticism.

This explains why the age of Confessionalism in the church of the seventeenth century was followed by that of Rationalism and apostasy in the eighteenth. Our general reply to these objections may be that improper emphasis on the importance of symbols may be the occasion of the abuses mentioned, but all these objections fall away as long as the Church remembers that the confessions can never take the place of, nor be placed on a par with Holy Writ, and that their contents must always be gauged by the teaching of the Bible. The truth of the sufficiency of Holy Scripture cannot be used as an argument to defend the denial or ignoring of the labor of the Church in the past as it is expressed in the confessions. If symbols, moreover, are kept in their proper place, that is, in subjection to Scripture, they will surely not impede the development of the truth or obstruct free exegesis, for then the principle will be maintained that in no case may the doctrine of the Church dominate the interpretation of the Bible. Again, as long as the Church maintains the truth that the authority of creeds is only derivative, individual believers will always find the way open to appeal to Scripture if they have objections against the confessions and their conscience is not bound. Nor can it be said that the symbols of the Church are the cause of division and contention; on the contrary, it is heresy and false doctrine that must be blamed for these evils. And the movement to establish church-union by obliterating distinctive creeds can only impoverish the Church doctrinally and induce doctrinal indifferentism, thus making the Church a prey to the false philosophy of the world.

The many symbols that have been framed and adopted by the different churches in the course of their history may be divided into four classes (see Schaaf: *Creeds of Christendom*, I, 9-11). The first class contains the Oecumenical symbols of the early church, chiefly relating to the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and of the natures and Person of Christ. The second division embraces the symbols of the Greek Church, differing from the Western Church on the wellknown question of "filioque" or the double procession of the Holy Spirit, and on the doctrine of the papacy. In the third category belong the symbols of the Roman Church from the Council of Trent, which was convoked to counteract the movement of the Reformation and closed in 1563, to the Council of the Vatican, which finally established the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, in 1870. And, finally, there is the fourth class in which are comprised all the different creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches, mostly dating from the period of the Reformation. The two main divisions of these are those that are of Lutheran and those that are of the Calvinistic persuasion, chiefly differing with respect to the doctrines of God's decrees and of the nature and efficacy of the Sacraments.

To the last named belong the Three Forms of Unity of the Reformed Churches, comprising the Heidelberg Catechism, the Netherland or Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht. A comparison of these three parts of our Reformed heritage will show that each is quite distinct from the other. The Netherland Confession contains thirty seven articles, setting forth in the main the chief doctrines of the Reformed Churches and following the objective dogmatic order. The Heidelberg Catechism is much more practical in character, and follows the subjective-experiential order of the doctrines of sin, redemption, gratitude. And the Canons of Dordrecht, having their occasion in the Arminian controversy of the last part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, are destined to defend the doctrine of divine predestination, together with the related doctrines of particular atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

As to the Heidelberg Catechism, its name is derived from the fact that it is cast into the form of questions and answers, originally designed for the instruction of the youth, and from the fact that it was composed in the city of Heidelberg, situated in the Palatine, of which at that time Frederick III was elector. It was originally the Lutheran Reformation that about the year 1546 gained foothold in the Palatine. In the year 1556, however, Frederick III succeeded Otto Heinrich, and was elector until 1576. And under his reign a complete reformation was accomplished. As he himself had become thoroughly Reformed in his convictions, he desired to introduce the Calvinistic faith into his dominions, where hitherto the Augsburg Confession had been the sole norm of faith. He, therefore, commissioned Zacharias Ursinus, who at that time occupied a theological chair at Heidelberg, and Caspar Olevianus, who had formerly been incumbent of the chair then occupied by Ursinus but was then minister of the church of Heidelberg, to compose a book of instruction developing the Reformed line of doctrine. Both men had enjoyed the personal acquaintance of Calvin and the reformers of Switzerland, and were well fitted for the task. Schaaf writes: "The peculiar gifts of both, the didactic clearness and precision of the one, and the pathetic warmth and unction of the other, were blended in beautiful harmony, and produced a joint work which is far superior to the separate productions of either." *Creeds of Christendom*, I, 535. The Catechism was completed and accepted by the Synod of Heidelberg in 1563. Frederick III had added a short preface, in which he informed the clergy and schoolteachers of his domain that the book was composed at his injunction in order that it might be used for the instruction of the youth in churches and schools. From the outset, therefore, the Heidelberg served the double purpose of catechetical textbook and

symbol of the Church. It soon found its way into the Netherlands, where it was highly esteemed, adopted by several particular synods, and finally ratified and officially included in the Forms of Unity of the Reformed Churches by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-19.

As we all know, the Heidelberg Catechism is divided into three parts, the first treating the doctrine of sin and misery, the second of the doctrine of redemption and deliverance from sin, following the general line of the so-called Apostles' Creed, while the third part, under the general heading of gratitude treats of the subjects of the law and prayer. This division reveals the practical, spiritual character and viewpoint of the Heidelberg: it considers the contents of Christian doctrine from the experiential standpoint of the believing Christian. For the same reason this little textbook of instruction in the truth is direct and personal in form throughout. It addresses the conscious believer. It is further divided into fifty two Lord's Days, a division that was not found in the original editions, but was soon introduced with a view to its being used as a basis for instruction on the Sabbath. In the first edition there appeared only one hundred and twenty eight questions and answers. The eightieth question which refers to the popish mass as an accursed idolatry was inserted in the second and third editions, according to Schaff "by the express command of the elector, perhaps by his own hand, as a Protestant counterblast to the Romish anathemas of the council of Trent, which closed its sessions Dec. 4, 1563." (*Creeds of Christendom*, I, p. 536). Hence, the Catechism now contains one hundred and twenty nine questions and answers, in which is set forth in brief the whole content of the Christian faith from a Reformed viewpoint. Introducing its instruction with a question concerning the only comfort in life and death and by stating that knowledge of sin and misery, of deliverance and of gratitude are the indispensable elements of this all-embracing comfort, it speaks of the law as the source of the knowledge of sin and misery, of the greatness of this sin and misery, of man's original state, his wilful disobedience and total depravity, of the wrath of God and the punishment of sin, and of the impossibility of man's ever saving himself or being saved by another creature. This in the first part. The second part follows in the main the exposition of the "Apostles' Creed" and treats of the character of saving faith, of the Trinity, creation and providence, the names and natures, the offices and states of the Mediator, His death and descension into hell, His resurrection ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God, and His return to judge the quick and the dead. It continues to treat of the Holy Spirit and His work, of the holy catholic church and the communion of saints, of the final resurrection and eternal life. Lord's Day 23

stops to consider the fruit of believing all this and speaks of justification by faith only. It further discusses the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, and closes this second part with a few questions and answers concerning the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The third part is introduced by a few questions concerning the true conversion of man, which is followed by a discussion of the law of God as a guide for the Christian's walk and a treatment of each commandment separately. This discussion is concluded with the well-known question: "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly" and the beautiful reply that even the very holiest in this life has only a small beginning of the new obedience, but so that he has sincere desire to live according to all the commandments of God. It closes with a discussion of the subject of prayer in general and of the contents of the Lord's Prayer in particular.

Thus the Heidelberg Catechism is a veritable treasure of that triple knowledge of which it speaks in its second question and answer, and which is indispensable for the possession of the true comfort in life and death. It is the most widely known and generally used of all Reformed symbols. It is rich in content, beautifully simple in form, highly spiritual in tone and character. And although, perhaps, were it composed in our own time, some of its chapters, notably those on the sacraments, would be considerably abridged, while others would be enlarged, both from the viewpoint of its being a symbol of the Reformed Churches and of its being intended as a catechism the Heidelberg Catechism is one of the most beautiful and masterful compositions of all times. And our Reformed fathers gave evidence of their sound practical judgment when they ordained that one of the sermons on each Sabbath should be based on one of the Lord's Days of this precious little book.

H. H.

NORTHWEST IOWA FIELD-DAY

The annual Field-Day of our Churches will be held July 4th in Vander Werff's grove, 1 mile east and 1 mile south of Hull.

PROGRAM

Ball game at 10:00 — Miscellaneous program at 1:00

SPEAKERS

Rev. Bernard Kok and Rev. Andrew Cammenga

Games at 3:00

A well supplied canteen will be on the grounds. All proceeds for the Standard Bearer. Everybody welcome.

Wacht Op Den Heere

(Psalm 37, tweede deel)

De vorige maal hebben we stil gestaan bij het beeld van den rechtvaardige, zooals ons dat geschetst werd in den 37sten Psalm. Laat ons nu ook eens letten op de beschrijving van den goddelooze.

We hebben gezien, dat de Heere Zijn volk aanraadt om zichzelf toch niet te wreken, doch het al over te geven in Zijn hand. Men moet niet boos worden op den onrechtvaardige, want zulk kwaadworden is geheel en al misplaatst. Eerst al, omdat God alléén de wrake toekomt; en, tweedens, omdat zulks zondig is.

Het is echter geen wonder, dat Gods volk zoo nu en dan toch kwaad wordt, zich nijdig maakt over den goddelooze. Geen wonder, want het is dan toch erg, zooals zij huishouden in deze wereld.

Nu zullen we eerst letten op de beschrijving van de goddeloozen; dan zullen we zien, dat het schijnt alsof zij succes hebben; om dan eindelijk op te merken, dat hun einde vreeselijk is, doch het einde der rechtvaardigen zegenrijk. Let maar gerust op den vrome en zie naar den oprechte, want het einde van dien man zal vrede zijn.

De goddelooze is een mensch die voorspoedig is. Vers 7. Het gaat sulk een mensch wel. Psalm 73 gaat daar dieper op in. Om het in één woord te zeggen: "Want daar zijn geen banden tot hunnen dood toe, en hunne kracht is frisch. Zij zijn niet in moeite als andere menschen, en worden met andere menschen niet geplaagd. Daarom omringt ze de hoovaardij als een keten, het geweld bedekt ze als een gewaad."

Nu moet ge wel verstaan, dat al zulke uitspraken niet bedoelen om het voor te stellen, alsof er geen arme menschen zijn onder de goddeloozen. We weten wel beter. Doch het beteekent, zooals we het lezen in ééne clause van het bovenaangehaalde gedeelte van Psalm 73: "daar zijn geen banden". In dien zin zijn alle goddeloozen voorspoedig. Er is geen almachtige kracht Gods in hen die hen gedurig tegenhoudt, waarschuwt, geeselt, bestraft, doet grieven. Leest maar het getuigenis van Asaf aangaande deze zaak: "dewijl ik den ganschen dag geplaagd ben, en mijne bestraffing is er alle morgens."

Of leest het in dezen psalm. Let er dan op, dat in het onmiddelijke verband van de beschrijving der goddeloozen als voorspoedigen, er aan toegevoegd wordt: "een man die listige aanslagen uitvoert". Ziet ge, dat is de bedoeling van voorspoedigen in dit verband. Zoo gemakkelijk is het leven van een rechtvaardige niet. Uit de overgebleven bewegingen der zonde in zijn hart komen ook booze plannen op. Doch hier is het verschil: hij voert ze niet uit. Ten minste,

hij kan ze nooit *zoo maar uitvoeren*. Zoo spoedig die verkeerde gedachten en plannen naar voren komen, zoo spoedig komt de "plaging" en "bestraffing". Het is God die in het binnenste van U Zijn werk der genade doet. Het is ongekende zegen om zoo geplaagd te worden.

Doch de goddelooze is voorspoedig. Er zijn immers wat hij wil doet hij. Er is slechts één band die hem bindt en die band is de voorzienigheid Gods. Doch verre van hem door dien band te verbeteren, is het in toom houden door Gods voorzienigheid, dat hem doet: "knensen met de tanden", vers 12. De zonde werd niet gestuit, doch de zondaar werd weerhouden om zijn plannen te bestendigen. We begonnen met te zeggen, dat de goddelooze een mensch is die voorspoedig is. Dat lazen we in vers 7. Ter verklaring staat er bij, dat die voorspoed hierin bestaat, dat hij zijn listige aanslagen op den rechtvaardige uitvoert. Hij wordt niet "geplaagd" met Gods bemoeiingen. Hij kan heel gezellig van de gedachte voortschrijden tot het woord, om dan straks het woord in den daad te doen vrucht dragen. Doch als nu de Heere om wijze redenen niet wil hebben, dat een zeker plan van dien goddelooze gelukt, dan belet Hij hem van buiten af om de begeerte zijns harten te volvoeren. Doch dan knerst hij zijn tanden over den rechtvaardige. Bewijs, dat er zeker geen stuiting der zonde is in zijn diepe hart door de algemeene werkingen des Heiligen Geestes. Leest slechts vers 12. Daar gaat het weer over de listige aanslagen.

Doch God lacht over hem. Ja, dat behoort ook bij de beschrijving van de goddeloozen. God lacht om hen. Vreeselijk is het; we moeten er niet inkomen, want het is te ontzettend om dit naar waarde te schatten. Gedenkt slechts aan dat ééne regeltje in zekeren psalm: "Ja, zelfs is mij het haar te berg' gerezen—als ik op Uw gericht heb gestaard. . . ." God zal lachen en spotten in hun vreeze.

't Wordt al erger. In vers 14 staat er van dit soort menschen, dat zij alles in het werk stellen om den rechtvaardige neder te vellen en te slachten. En wat hun werk te gruwelijker maakt is dit: de rechtvaardige gaf in 't geheel geen aanleiding. Hij is de onschuld zelve. Centraal in Jezus, doch naar de mate der gave der genade is dit ook waar van al Gods volk. Zóó spreekt God ervan. Telkens wordt er nadruk op gelegd in Gods Woord, dat al dit slachten geschiedt uit booze aandrift ten overstaan van onschuldige kinderen Gods. Luistert slechts naar één duidelijk getuigenis: "Gij hebt veroordeeld, gij hebt gedood den rechtvaardige, en hij wederstaat U niet!" Ook staat het met zoovele woorden in al de teksten zelf, die van dit slachten spreken. Want zij doen het aan de *rechtvaardigen*. Dat is hun naam en zoo zijn ze.

Een verdere beschrijving geeft het 16de vers: de

overvloed veler goddeloozen. Ja, er zijn natuurlijk uitzonderingen op den regel, doch over het algemeen moet ge de weelde en den overvloed niet bij de rechtvaardigen zoeken. Die is bij de goddeloozen. En hoe veel te zuiverder de kerk van Christus tot openbaring treedt, zooveel te armer wordt zij. In 't zelfde vers staat het: "het weinige dat de rechtvaardige heeft". En dat weinige staat in deze bedeeeling altijd tegenover den overvloed der goddeloozen. Het is immers de werel die in de taal van de milloenen en biljoenen spreekt, niet de kerk van Christus. (Even een praktische vraag: Wat denkt ge van 't jonge mensch die een kwartje van 't povere werk-kapitaal der kerk naar de wereld brengt om het salaris van Charlie Chaplin te betalen? Een kwartje van Jezus' armoede naar den overvloed der vervloekten? *Mirabile visu!*)

Vers 21 zegt, dat de goddelooze ontleent en niet weder geeft. Dat is doortrapt gemeen. Er is zelfs een spreekwoord: Als ge iemand geld leent, verkrijgt ge U een vijand. Bestudeer het leven der wereld en ge zult het ook zoo bevinden. Men heeft geleend, geld geschonken, crediet op crediet gestapeld, en—men zal U ontloopen. Spraakt ge dan, zoo werd men ontstoken, verhit van woede, zeer boos op U. Het gaat zelfs zoo met goddelooze naties. Zijt ge het vergeten hoe Frankrijk en Engeland van Uncle Sam spraken toen Coolidge droogweg vroeg: "They hired the money, did they not?" Our name was then "Uncle Shylock!"

't Komt altemaal van 't verdorven hart. Men is ter school gegaan bij den duivel; voorts betaalt men haat voor liefde, kwaad voor goed.

Er staat ook nog van de goddeloozen, dat zij loeren op den rechtvaardige en dat zij hem zoeken te dooden. Vers 32. Om kort te gaan, ge moet daarover de Evangelien eens opslaan. En dan kunt ge zien, dat men alzo gedaan heeft met den allerbeste Rechtvaardige, Jezus Christus, den Heere. Men nam Hem waar, men legde Hem lagen, men zocht naar valsche getuigen. En zoo doet men ook met Zijn discipelen. De goddeloozen die U omringen, mijn broeder, kunt ge nooit vertrouwen. Hij is er op uit om U lagen te leggen. Hij heeft het er op gemunt om U te dooden. En nu weten we wel, dat het zeer zelden tot den daad zelve komt, doch het beginsel is er en dat beginsel is de haat. Men haat U om Gods wil, Psalm 44:22.

Aan het einde van dezen schoonen psalm wordt het beeld van den goddelooze als een boom geschilderd. Vers. 35 en 36.

De goddelooze is daar iemand die geweld drijft. Het Hebreeuwsche woord dat hier gebruikt wordt om den goddelooze te schetsen is treffend. In den overgankelijken vorm van het werkwoord, beteekent het om iemand vrees, angst aan te jagen; iemand te doen beven van vrees en ontzetting. Dat is het werk van rechtvaardige vergeleken bij een groenen inlandschen den goddelooze. Hij wordt in zijn invloed op den

boom die zijn takken wijd en zijd uitbreidt, zoodat er een groote schaduw gevormd wordt. En zoo staat het er metterdaad bij in deze wereld. De goddelooze doet het hart van Gods volk gedurig beven. In allerlei vorm vindt ge de tyrannie van dien inlandschen boom uitgebreid over het arme volk van God. Zij worden door het snoeven en dreigen en geweld blazen van de goddeloozen bang te moede en vluchten schreiend tot God. Denkt slechts aan de periode der Romeinsche keizers in de eerste eeuwen der N. T. kerk-historie. Of ook aan de bange periode der Hollandsche martelaren. Als kind heb ik de verwrongen aangezichten der martelaren op de plaatjes gezien, en gesidderd in 't hart. Ja, waarlijk, de goddelooze is een geweld-drijvende.

Ook schijnt het alsof zij succes hebben.

Ze voeren hun plannen uit tegen den rechtvaardige; de rechtvaardige wordt neergeveld, geslacht; ze veroveren de wereld mitsgaders hare volheid, ze spreken booselijk van onderdrukking, hun mond tast zelfs den hemel aan; den roof houden ze in de klauwen vast gelijk een roofdier; en hij spreidt zich daadwerkelijk uit als een groenen inlandschen boom: hij schijnt dan toch succes te hebben.

Doch meer dan schijn is het niet.

Luistert slechts naar de stem Gods: Als gras zullen zij haast worden afgesneden, als groene grasscheutjes zullen zij afvallen. De boosdoeners worden uitgeroeid; hij zal er niet meer zijn, zelfs zijn plaats zal er niet wezen. De Heere lacht over hem, want Hij weet dat zijn dag komt. Het zwaard dat hij gescherpt heeft om den rechtvaardige te slachten, zal in zijn eigen hart gaan. Hij zal als de rook verdwijnen. Het is waar, dat hij zich uitbreidde in zijn goddeloosheid als een groene inlandsche boom, doch luistert naar den poët: "Ik zocht hem, maar hij werd niet gevonden".

Al zijn grootheid en geweld, al zijn benauwende invloed in de wereld zal voor eeuwig ophouden. Als de Heere blinkende verschijnt in den dag van den Heere Jezus Christus, dan zal Hij zijn beeld verachten.

Daarom, ontsteekt U niet over den goddelooze. Ook niet, wanneer al zijn heerlijkheid en macht en kracht U doen sidderen. Weet, dat de Heere van voorlang het vonnis velde, dat de Heere alle dagen over hem toorn, dat hij zal uitgeroeid worden.

In plaats van U te onsteken over hem, of nijdig te zijn over die onrecht doen, moet ge op den Heere betrouwen. Al Uw heil is van Hem. Hij bewaart U als Zijn schat en ge zijt dubbel veilig.

Daarom moet ge Uw tijd besteden om het goede te doen en U te voeden met getrouwigheid. Zulke arbeid is zaligheid in zichzelf. Werkelijk, ge behoeft niet te wachten op de openbaring van het "vast gebouw"; het "eeuwig zingen van Gods goedertierenheid" begint heir en nu.

Wandelende onder de nare schaduw van "den groenen inlandschen boom" moogt ge U voeden met getrouwigheid. Dat te doen spelt zaligheid in 't binnenste hart.

Ook zijt ge nimmer alleen in die wandeling hier beneden. Neen, want:

"Let toch, en zie op vromen en oprechten;

Want, wat men denk' van d'uitkomst hunner paan
God kroont met vree het einde Zijner knechten
Maar durft men stout des Heeren wet versmaan,
Dan zal Gods wraak den berg van hoogmoed slechten,

En 't boos geslacht, ten grond toe, doen vergaan".

It moet vaak denken aan een tweetal teksten in dit verband. Eerst luisteren we naaar Petrus; hij spreekt van Judas: "en voorovergevallen zijnde is midden opgebarsten, en alle zijn ingewanden zijn uitgestort."

En dan naar Paulus: "doch wij zien Jezus, met eere en heerlijkheid gekroond!"

Wacht dan, ja, wacht! Verlaat U op den Heer!

G. V.

The Humble Penitent

(Psalm 38)

After reading Psalm 38 and noting that David calls this psalm: "to bring to remembrance", we are inclined to say: the sooner forgotten the better.

It seems to me that nice people would rather not have too much of this song. Its language is shocking to the so-called refined intellect. The choice of words is rather indelicate. Imagine: my wounds stink! Who wants to use this kind of language to describe self? Much more: who would want to sing it? Have you noted, dear reader, that you will never find a number in the host of hymn-books which comes anywhere near the theme of this psalm? And yet, the Holy Spirit is its composer; the man after God's own heart is the poet; and the God of you and my salvation wants you to sing of it in the church of Christ!

To bring to remembrance! Indeed! You are called upon to emulate David and find yourselves in this psalm.

I am persuaded to believe that David did not refer to bodily ills in this psalm when using terms like the following: no soundness in my flesh; my wounds stink; loathsome disease; my sore; etc. I am rather sure that David uses these terms to emphasize his spiritual condition, namely, his sin and spiritual corruption. At any rate, bodily troubles are always parables of the sore that is spiritual. What to me is sufficient proof

for this contention is the fact that throughout the psalm David confesses his sins and iniquities. And when such is the case, a spiritual man is not going to digress by bringing such superficial things into the picture as an ailing body. No, David is bothered by his sins. Of them he will sing a dirge. And he will bring them to God, pleading for His mercy.

Nice people, refined intellects, the noble and the elite shun such evaluation of self. You will understand that when I denominate such people as nice, refined, noble, etc., I have my tongue in my cheek. Such denomination is only their appraisal of self and has no foundation of truth. If God's people stink because of their wounds, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear? Never forget that when God smells of them He says: they are altogether become filthy (the Dutch translates: Stinking!).

Human nature is so abundantly corrupt that when they finally appear before the throne of God, He will judge that they are worthy to be cast into everlasting torments of hell. And: the punishment fits the crime, for God is righteous.

Therefore we will not be influenced by all the niceties of the worldly people when we consider this psalm. We are not going to soft-peddle the issue, just because we are by nature as blind as bats when it comes to appraising things and people and, yes, even God Himself.

There are three moments in this psalm.

First there is the description of a penitent man who bewails his sin; second, there is the reaction of those that stand round about; third, there is the cry for mercy to God. Happy the man, who shall bring it to remembrance!

David was aware of God's anger and wrath, even of His hot displeasure. God's hot displeasure! Strong words these. The word translated: displeasure, means poison. As such it is translated in Psalm 58:4. You find the original word used twice in that verse. So great is the discomfort which David feels that he likens it to the burning sensation of a poisoned body, which swells as it irritates and festers. We have read of the spasms and convulsions of such unhappy people that are really poisoned.

The awareness of God's anger is further described in figurative language. It is likened to an arrow which is driven in the flesh so that the barbs stick fast and all attempts to pull it out only aggravates the pain and misery. Moreover, it is likened to a hand pressing sore upon one, so that one feels crushed, spent, disintegrated. All harmony, rest and tranquility are absent: there is only the awareness of God's hot displeasure.

Ah, here is the cause: because of my sin!

And then follows a description of that sin, and what a description!

In the next verse two figures are employed: the one, a roaring tempest at sea; the second, a burden that crushes and crumples. My sins are so great that they seem to be like billows of a mighty ocean; they have gone over my head; I seem to be engulfed by them; all I see is sin, sin, sin!

And according to the other figure: they are so great a burden that they crush me, there is no wholesomeness left for me. I am crushed and spent. As a burden they have become too great for me. I cannot go.

Such as far as the quantity is concerned.

And as to their quality, they are loathsome to the extreme.

They are as stinking wounds; I am in contortions, out of shape. (Such is the literal translation of verse 6a) I am likened unto a body that is ravished by a loathsome disease, gnawing, suppurating, festering at my very vitals.

Because of all this, I groan, I pant, my strength faileth me and the light of mine eyes is extinguished!

All expressive of utmost misery and anguish.

There is a question that came to me when I read these lines, a question that became a torturing, insistent desire to know. I thought: why is it that so few of Adam's sons and daughters ever talk about themselves in this shocking way? The great majority of men and women turn away from such appraisal of self in disgust. Man is pretty good after all, they say. Oh, well, we all make mistakes, but then, who is perfect. But such language as David here uses hurts them, nauseates them, inflames them to resistance.

Here is the answer, beloved: people that speak as David does about self carry with them the light of God's own countenance. They are one with God; they have the life of God in heart and mind and they look through God's eyes at self. Then their clothes shall abhor them. Job 9:31.

Judging from the reaction of David's fellow men, it seems that David had come to this appraisal of his deepest self because of a grievous sin that had become public. The sin that was manifest to all had become the occasion to view deeper into the unholy fountain: his old man of sin.

And what reaction! It is two-fold. Two kinds of people surround him: the one kind are called: lovers, friends, kinsmen; the second kind: they that seek after my life, they that seek my hurt, mine enemies, they that hate me wrongfully, they that render evil for good, my adversaries.

The first kind of people are the children of God that surround David. They are his friends, his lovers. And we know that David said: I am a companion of those that fear Thee!

How did these children of God act? They stand aloof from my sore and they stand afar off.

Ah, what pity! That should not be. They are but few words, but, I ask you: who does not see the spectacle? No, they are not going to talk about it; they are not like the sons of Belial. They keep their distance though. You cannot expect us to be intimate with such an one. After all, there is a limit to all things. Imagine: David had the nerve to do this abominable thing! Yes, my dear, and I have it first hand: a close relative of Joab told me the whole story!

Ah, what pity! The poor people did not realize that the same festering sores were in their own heart. Aloof from sinners? Afar off from the poor people of God that fell into sin?

No, a thousand times no, devil! Come with me to the poor publican. He dared not to raise as much as his eyes to heaven, smote his breast and cried out: O God, be merciful to me, *the sinner!*

Beloved, let us go to David and tell him to make room for us so that we may kneel next to him and mingle our sighs with his cries. Ah yes, a song to bring to remembrance!

And if you insist in standing afar off, be sure and do so because you say: I am worse than they all; I would call myself *the sinner!*

And the other kind? It is hardly necessary that we would linger long with them. The poor deluded people imagine that they are pure without transgression; they know not that they are poor, naked, miserable and blind.

Look at the reality: while they stand afar off and jibe at sinful David, God smells them to be stinking in their abominations. Go to now, ye world, that stands and looks at the sinful church! Here is God's answer: they hate the church because she follows what good is. (Verse 20).

David? What is his answer? He found none. He answered not, neither the aloofness of the church, nor the jibes of the wicked. He was as a man that was dumb. He opened not his mouth.

Wonderful wisdom. For there were no possible reproofs. As far as we are concerned, we cannot even answer the reproof of a sinful man in our sinning. Moreover, it is usually worse than friend and foe can see or evaluate.

What then?

David went to God and told Him of all his sin. How childlike is his confession; how simple is his inward speech: sweet simplicity.

He says within himself: I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. A child would speak thus. Yes, indeed, unless you become like one of these little ones. . . . It seems to me we heard those silvery strains in the plains of Galilee.

And David suited action to his word.

Listen: forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not

far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

Hush, my soul! Be very still now. In heaven above the angels have heard and seen. They set themselves to sing they are very happy. Again they might see the wonderful work of God's salvation.

More than over ninety and nine that need no repentance. . . .

O God, be merciful to me!

G. V.

The Promise Fulfilled

Acts 2:39.

Pentecost is the great day of harvest.

The fruit of the suffering and death of the Saviour becomes apparent. O, sure, the Resurrection and the Ascension are the result of that same suffering and death, for it proved beyond any doubt, that the work of Christ was accepted by God. God called His suffering Servant out of the grave, that He might appear as the Lord of glory, who received a name which is above every name. The new line begins with the resurrection, becomes more glorious in His ascension and must find Him exalted in the sitting at the right hand, in the highest heavens, until He shall return to judge the quick and the dead.

However, on the day of Pentecost, the church receives of the fruit of the labors of her Redeemer. True it is, objectively the church possesses all things with the Lord in the resurrection and the ascension and also in the sitting at the right hand. But on the day of Pentecost the objective fruit is poured out in the Church. Christ received the Spirit and on the day of Pentecost that same Spirit is poured out on His body. He fills her with the benefits of her Head and the results are clearly shown. Do they not speak in different languages concerning the great works of God?

The power of Pentecost becomes manifest in the testimony of the Church. First of all, in that the enemies are openly rebuked. "Let the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ". God, thus spoke Peter, raised this same Jesus and what is heard and seen by you, is God's work, rather, is God's work for Christ's sake and the result of His labors.

Hence, on the same day this testimony of the church revealed the thoughts of many in Israel. Some said these men are drunk, others said, Men and brethren, what must we do? And Peter immediately answered them, that the way to the blessings of the king-

dom of God and of His Christ were to be gotten by and in the way of repentance. Whereupon the Apostle points to the promise that was unto them and their children and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Significant, that the Apostle does not define the promise. The question can be raised, What does he mean when he speaks of the promise in such a broad sense? Was that promise a wellknown fact, so that every one immediately understood what he meant? To you men and brethren is the promise, because ye are the Church of God? So may we ask. However, to my mind the Apostle does not refer or does not single out one promise at the expense of others. In saying that the promise is unto you, he refers to the one central promise of Scripture.

Many were the promises given to the fathers of the Old Dispensation, on many occasions. Moses, David and others received such promises. God, in many ways promised to be the faithful guide and protector of His people. The word itself is most beautiful. The word means glad tidings, concerning the contents of the promise. These promises of God were the objects of the faith of the believer. They were closely connected with the messages of the prophets. Centrally, there was only one promise, Christ the Messiah. And when Peter speaks of the promise he refers to Christ, according to the context. Hence, if he speaks of the promise, Peter refers to Christ and all His benefits. We must not forget there are no promises besides this one promise, Christ and His work of redemption. And on the day of Pentecost, the day of completion, all these benefits of Christ were poured out on the Church.

Hence, this word is also beautiful, because in this word 'promise' is embodied the riches of Christ. This is possible, because Christ is centrally the "Promise" of God. Secondly, we could read also, unto you is the Gospel. A glad tidings, if the gospel centrally presents Christ, Him crucified, raised and glorified. Thru Christ God reveals and executes His eternal plan of salvation. Therefore, when the gospel is preached, the Gospel must at all times speak of God's plan of redemption, of Christ and His suffering, of the benefits of the Cross for God's people. And we may well take note, that the Apostle speaks these things to the Church and more particularly, that these benefits are to be had by the Church in the way of repentance. The Promised One has fulfilled the promise(s). All you hear and see is the result of Christ's labors and is the revelation of the full counsel of God.

Pentecost is in a special sense the day to reveal the fulfillment of the Promise. The Spirit operates mightily. He takes it as the Spirit of Christ out of Christ and brings the fruit of Christ's labor to the Church. And in a special sense these benefits are

experienced by the Apostles and the one hundred and twenty. Every one of them is filled with the Spirit. Every one of them gives testimony concerning the wonderful works of God. Every one is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. Because, every one of them is partaker of the Promise of God and knows and believes that they have their part with the exalted Saviour.

And now the apostle turns to his audience in a familiar and well known way. Men and brethren, to you and to your children is the promise and to as many as are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Who does he speak to? Men and women of Israel and their children? Who are they? The answer is, he speaks to the Church. He reveals to us, the way of the Covenant. God hath established that covenant with the people of Israel. Besides, we must take note of the fact, that he speaks to people, who do not know what to do. They were pricked in their hearts. They were a people conscious of their sins. I take it, not merely of the fact that perhaps some of them hath been witnesses of the crucifixion, or perhaps belonging to the multitude that hath cried, crucify, crucify!!

To you is the promise whenever you humble yourselves before God and before His Christ. We find, standing before Peter and the whole church, the remnant according to election. And this remnant is made ready by the Spirit to confess their sins and to be sent to Christ for the forgiveness of the same.

And to your children. Is it necessary to point out that this promise does not simply refer to the natural seed? In the history of the Church this has been preached, even in the so-called Reformed Churches. Hence, the necessity of repentance is superfluous.

Notice, how Peter also here, points his audience to the Word of God. In speaking to these men of Israel he speaks to a people well acquainted with the Promise. Hence, well acquainted with the Word of God. This they must know, that the Scripture always speaks of conversion when it speaks of the promise. Or, we may say, the Scripture always speaks of the knowledge of sin and our sorrow over sin as one of the elements of sanctification. Yes, also the historical element appears in that Peter addresses the house of Israel, for unto Israel were given the covenants and the law. Nevertheless, in what follows, the apostle points to the sovereignty of God. In as many as it pleases the Lord to call, this Promise is given. If we take the whole text, we will read, as it pleased you to call in Israel, so it also is His good pleasure to call others, namely, out of the Gentiles. But the calling of God after all, is the means to receive this promise.

This proclamation is the basis for the salvation of the Old and the New Testament Church. It would

not be difficult to again have someone annihilate the idea of sovereign grace. It may be said, all are called, hence, to all comes the promise as an offer of salvation. This kind of preaching is well known in our day. In fact, it is just about the only preaching we hear, when listening to speeches of those who make it their business to win souls. That is also the preaching in the churches, who claim to be reformed. The external call of the preacher is, in this way, the internal call of God. Better, we should not bother much about the internal call. It was earned for all by the perfect sacrifice of Christ, hence, it should be offered to all. But this is contrary to the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost.

The day of Pentecost is first of all, the day of the Church and the day for the Church. Peter speaks not at random when he brings this glorious gospel, but he speaks to the men and brethren of Israel. Secondly, he speaks to men who are sorry for their sins and not knowing what to do ask for light. And light they received as is clear from the answer of the apostle.

Furthermore, the day of Pentecost, as day of harvest, is not a day wherein God has changed His method of bestowing grace upon the sinner. He it is, who is and always will remain the author of salvation.

Therefore, although it may not seem to take a prominent place in the text, the idea of God's work and saving grace stand clearly on the foreground. In as many as the Lord shall call, to them is the promise. To call never means to preach the gospel to, that they may accept or reject the same. To call, as to the word in the original, means to call out. To call out that the one's who are called, may be a separate people, dedicated unto the Lord. And this effectual calling will always reveal God's power. He called these men and brethren to whom Peter spoke. And the call was answered. For, when God calls, we most assuredly will come. True, the others also heard it preached, therefore, they mocked. They were confounded, but when they were over their first scare, they ridiculed the work of God, of Christ and the work of the Spirit. That, we could say, was the negative result upon the preaching of the apostle.

The positive result was, that when the call of God was sent, they were pricked in their hearts. It brought about a confession of sin, of their weakness, of their true knowledge of self. Therefore, they inquired concerning the way of salvation. It was to them the central question of their lives. What must we do? But it was at the same time, an admission of the knowledge of guilt, of misery, of utter despair.

Through it the Lord added them to the congregation of the saints that were brought to light in that beautiful day of Pentecost. For they also received the Spirit, according to the promise of God as preached by the apostle Peter.

W. V.

The Forty Years

At Numbers 14:34 the statement occurs, "And ye shall know my hostility (erroneously translated, "And ye shall know my breach of promise"). The pronoun *ye* has reference to the apostate Israelites, who in the carnal rage had wanted to know why the Lord had brought them to the border of Canaan that they, their wives and their children, should be a prey. The notice, "And ye shall know my hostility", must be taken to mean that the Lord would be continually against the apostates, would pursue them with His curse, until the carcasses of them all be wasted in the wilderness. But the Lord for the sake of His believing people did not abandon the nation. The view that He did so is in conflict with the facts communicated in the chapters 15-20 of the book of Numbers—chapters that refer to the interval of forty years. The legislation of Jehovah continued and the people were fed with manna from heaven. Some interpreters see in the further legislation in reference to the sacrifices a cropping out of an intimation that sacrifices were suspended during the period of the wilderness. However, Aaron's making atonement for the people, who, after the punishment of Korah and his company, accused him and Moses of having killed the people of the Lord, plainly indicates that the sacrifices were not suspended. The nation lived before the face of God only because its sins were in unbroken continuity being covered by the blood of these sacrifices.

Now with respect to the order of the local residence or movements of the Israelites for the next forty years or less, the sacred narrative at Numbers 15:1 reaches a point where there is a blank. Just what the order of these movements was cannot be determined to any degree of certainty.

In chapter 33 (of the book of Numbers) there are enumerated twenty stations between Sinai and Kadesh and twenty two including Sinai and Kadesh. The enumeration is formed by the names of the following stations: Sinai, Kibroth-hattaavah, Hazeroth, Rithmah, Rimmonparez, Libnah, Rissah, Kehelathah, Mount Shepher, Haradah, Makheloth, Tahath, Tarah, Mithcah, Hashmonah, Moseroth, Bene-jaakan, Horhagidgad, Jotbathah, Ebronah, Ezion-gaber, the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.

Of the eighteen stations between Sinai and Kadesh only two are recognized beyond debate, namely, Ezion-Gaber, which was at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, and Mount Hor. All the others have been only conjecturally identified. Now one view has it that Rithmah, the name of the station third after Sinai, was just another name for Kadesh and that therefore the stations mentioned after Rithmah occurred in wanderings that brought the host back again from Mount Seir

by the Red Sea to Kadesh for the second time. According to this view, the host departed from Sinai, pitched successively at Kibroth-hattaavah and Hazeroth, and thereupon arrived at Rithmah, that is, Kadesh for the first time. Removing from this station, it turned south again. Camping successively at all the stations mentioned after Rithmah (Kadesh) and before Ezion-gaber, it finally pitched at this last named place—the extreme southern point of this part of the journey. Removing from Ezion-gaber, the the host, according to the view under consideration, again turned north, on the same way that it had come and pitched at Rithmah (Kadesh) now for the second time.

The Israelites are thus held to have encamped at Kadesh twice during the period of their wanderings and as many times to have taken their journey from this station. To the first turning from Kadesh the notice at Deuteronomy 2:1 is referred, "And ye turned from Kadesh and took your journey in the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea and compassed Seir many days." To this same turning, it is said, the notice at Numbers 14:25 must be made to apply, "Tomorrow turn ye (from Kadesh) and get you into the wilderness by the Red Sea." To the second turning from Kadesh, the notice at Numbers 20:25 and the one at Numbers 33:37 are referred, "And the children of Israel journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. And they removed from Kadesh and pitched in Mount Hor on the edge of the land of Edom." Between the two encampments at Kadesh the period of the forty years or less is said to have lain. Such is the view. The objection to it is that, by taking Rithmah to be another name for Kadesh, it imputes to the Catalogue of chapter 33 an arbitrariness in the use of names that would make it worthless for that purpose for which it was evidently recorded in the book of Numbers. Thus the only acceptable view is that Rithmah was the name of a place other than Kadesh; that therefore there was only one encampment at Kadesh; and that thus the list of stations in chapter 33 is a catalogue, that gives the stations consecutively; that refers to localities by one and the same name, being the name elsewhere used in this book for the same place, and that gives the order of stations as accurately where we cannot verify them as it does in cases where we can. So then, the order of the movements of the host was not thus: Sinai, Kadesh, Ezion-Gaber, Kadesh, Hor, Mount Seir, Canaan; but the order was thus: Sinai, Ezion-Gaber, Kadesh, Hor, Mount Seir, Canaan.

As the journey could have easily been made in less than a year, it is natural to ask just where, at which station, the forty years were spent. The notice at Deuteronomy 1:46: "So ye abode in Kadesh many days," suggests the answer. This notice may be received as describing the whole period of forty years or less as a period spent at Kadesh. This long sojourn

at Kadesh was spent in a nomadic life (verse 33 of chapter 14, your children shall be shepherds). It involved, of course, a dispersion and moving about over a large area, which may have included the most or all the desert of Paran and extended southward to the Elanitic Gulf (Red Sea). The journey from Sinai to Kadesh had made the Israelites familiar with much of this region. During the forty years they continued to move hither and thither in it, in search of pasture for their flocks. But the tabernacle and headquarters of the nation may have continued to abide after the events of chapter 14, at Kadesh. Here those dispersed to pasture the herds would gather from various points; first when the invasion of Canaan was to have begun from Kadesh (chapter 13:26), again the new generation of forty years.

Of the departure of the new generation from Kadesh chapter 20:14sq. gives the account. Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom with the petition that he permit the Israelites to pass through his country. The king was unwilling. He refused "to give Israel passage through his border, wherefore Israel turned away from him." Then follows the notice, "And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto Mount Hor." To this passage we must take as parallel the one at 33:37, "And they removed from Kadesh and pitched in Mount Hor, on the edge of the land of Edom", and the passage at Deuteronomy 2:1, "Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed Mount Seir many days." The beginning of this movement was also the beginning of the execution of the command at Numbers 14:25 and given some thirty seven years previous, "Tomorrow turn ye and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea. This is a command to abandon the invasion of Canaan on the south, and turn in that direction that was afterwards successful. It was executed some thirty seven years later. *Tomorrow* presents no obstacle to this view. For the Hebrew *machar*, that is so rendered, has not the limited meaning that *tomorrow* has in English. It may also be translated *in time to come*.

The notice to the effect that "Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom", proves conclusively that during the thirty seven years the tabernacle and headquarters of the nation continued to abide at Kadesh.

Some interpreters, when they picture to themselves the Israelites of the thirty seven years, have the idea of a vast multitude "being led up and down the awful desolations" of a wilderness, amid terrific suffering to men, women, children and cattle, "with no assignable purpose, except to spend out the allotted years". In the light of the above observation, this idea appears to

be incorrect. The nation was not led up and down awful desolations but was allowed to disperse to various points of fertility in the wilderness to pasture its herds. And there were several such points as several of the names of the stations indicate. *Rithmah* is a name derived from *retem*, meaning a broombrush, so that it may be presumed that the encampment at the place designated by this name was determined by the existence of vegetation. Then there is the name *Rimmon-pares*, "the pomegranate branch" Mount *Shapher*, "the mount of beauty," *Rissah*, "dew", *Mithcah*, "sweetness", *Hashmonah*, "fatness, fruitfulness" *Bene-jaakan*, "the wells of the children of Jaakan", *Jotbathah*, "goodness". The district in which the wanderings took place must have been capable of supporting flocks and herds. For Deuteronomy 2:7 shows that Israel had greatly increased in substance and wealth during the thirty seven years.

It is held by some that the Lord, to mitigate their punishment, gave to their wanderings at least an apparent object, which determined their direction and extent. "When they found that they could not scale the mountain passes of the Amorites, their southward journey might well have for its object to find some passage through Edom to the East by the route they at last followed; and it may have been with this hope that they compassed Mount Seir for many days. Then, as at the end, they may have met with some refusal from the Edomites; and to have waited about their head-quarters at Kadesh, trying sometimes one passage and sometimes another, but shut out on both sides. . . ."

This is sheer conjecture. Were it true, then the nation during the period of the wanderings, lived in perpetual rebellion.

G. M. O.

GEDACHTENIS

Den 5den Mei, 1941, behaagde het den Heere om na een korte ongesteld tot zich te nemen onze vriend en broeder,

MR. JACOB BUITEN

in den ouderdom van ruim 77 jaar.

Onze gedurige omgang met hem en vooral dat wij nog enkele woorden koort voor zijn heengaan met hem konde spreken, merkte wij zoo duidelijk de vervulling van de belofte Gods zooals wij lezen in Zacharia 14:7, welk een schoone toekomst, voor hen die weten en gelooven dat ten tijde des s'Avonds het licht voor hen zal opgaan.

Trooste de Heere Die alleen trooste kan de Weduwe en Kinderen.

Namens de "Vriende Kring".

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Be Careful For Nothing

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Phil. 4:6, 7.

"Be careful for nothing." This statement from the apostle's pen is equivalent in meaning to the one just previously made, "Rejoice in the Lord alway", the only difference being that the one is negative and the other positive.

"Be careful in nothing," or, as we of this day say, "Do not worry." We understand the apostle, to be sure. What he means is not that we be sinfully careless, irresponsible, indifferent with respect to "all things", or matters that concern us and in which we should be vitally interested, but that on account of these things we be not filled with a kind of concern that springs from unbelief, a lack of trust in the Lord, a failure to spiritually apprehend that God's people are the objects of His endearment and that in His love He causes all things to work together for their good. In a word, what the apostle in the name of the Lord forbids is worry.

How inclined even God's people are to worry. And worry they do when they stand not in their faith, consider not that the mercy and goodness of God follows them all the days of their lives until they dwell in the house of the Lord forever and that therefore all things are for them in that God—the God and Father of Christ—is for them.

Worry always concerns God's works. The farmer has ploughed and sowed. But if he will also harvest, God must send rain and sunshine and give the increase. Mindful of this, the man worries, as his anxious looking at the cloudless skies in periods of drought betoken. The minister of the gospel brings His message from Sabbath to Sabbath, but he cannot work faith, make men to believe, cause the word to take root in the hearts of His hearers and to bear fruit in their lives. This, too, is God's work. Knowing this, the human preacher, when his labors in the flock seemingly bear no fruit, worries. Will that son or daughter, now indifferent, eventually turn to the Lord? The parents know not and they worry. The family man, with a number of dependents, has a good job. Will he be able to hold it? He is not certain and he worries. Also God's people, when they stand not in their faith, worry about many things. They have need of the admonition, "Rejoice in the Lord. Be careful for nothing". Do not worry.

But, some may say, this is easier said than done. How will a man, a christian man, free himself of his

worry, in what way? The apostle has the answer, "Let your requests be made known unto God, in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving."

The believers have requests, desires in respect to all things—all those things or matters, that especially concern them, such as the matter of their daily bread, of their children, of the school and church, of the Kingdom causes in general. And in respect to all these things they have definite desires, requests. And when there is no conscious faith, these requests have a way of multiplying until their number is almost legion. Let all these desires be made known unto the Lord, admonishes the apostle. Pour out your heart to Him. Tell them in *His* ears. For He careth for you, is attentive to your voice and knows how to give good gifts to His children.

Make known these requests of yours by prayer, that is, by seeking God with a true heart and acknowledging Him as the overflowing fountain of all good, and thus as the creative fountain of your heavenly existence in Christ Jesus;—by supplication, that is, by turning to Him, the living God—the God and Father of your Christ—as deeply conscious of your real need, which is grace;—with thanksgiving, that is, with hearts and mouths declaring His adorable praises.

And what will be the result of this hallowed action on the part of God's believing people? First, that many of these requests will stand out in their minds as springing from lack of trust and will therefore not be voiced. Second, that a great peace—the peace of God—will flood their souls. Such is the assurance of the apostle.

Mark you, he does not say that the Lord will respond by granting all the requests. Also with respect to the voiced desires of His people, God does all His good pleasure. God's believing people understand this also and therefore their final petition is that His will be done, except when the thing requested has been divinely promised. And there are such promised things. God has promised to give His people grace—in a word, the heavenly. And of this good they now possess the firstfruits. And they without ceasing pray for the full harvest, which the Lord will give them in His good time at the appearing of Christ.

Letting their requests be made known unto God, the believers have peace—the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

The peace of God. God is a God of peace. Their is perfect harmony between the three persons in His blessed being. For He is good, and being good, He is peace and is at peace with Himself and all things.

And as the God of peace He prepared peace for His people, who by nature hate *Him*, Who is good, and are at odds with *Him*, with His thinking and willing and all His blessed doing. But He loved them, though they loved Him not, loved them, did He, before the founda-

tion of the world in Christ Jesus, in whom He also chose them to everlasting life. And in His love He prepared for them peace through Christ. He gave His only begotten as a propitiation for all their sins thus reconciled them to Himself in the cross. And the peace He prepared for them, He also places in their actual possession, through His quickening them by Christ's Spirit and through His assuring them in their hearts that He justifies them through His clothing them with the righteousness of His Son and cleanses them from all their sins in His blood, that they thus are His beloved children, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. And this assurance is in them the fountain of a great calm, tranquility, peace,—the peace of God that passes all understanding.

And this peace keeps their minds and hearts in Christ. They are in Christ always, everlastingly, both legally and mystically, as He is the head of the body, His church. But believers are not always consciously in Him, in Him as to their mind and heart, thinking and willing and desiring. When they stand not in their faith, they are as to their mind and heart outside of Christ, in the world, having their affections set on the things on earth, and trusting not in the Lord but in the arm of flesh. Then they again worry, are careful for all *things*. But coming to themselves, they by His mercy, let their requests in all things be made known unto Him. Peace then floods their soul—the peace that keeps their minds and hearts in Christ. Then they consciously desire Christ and the fulness that dwelleth bodily in Him, have their affection set upon things above, minds and desires the things that are of the Spirit of God, seeking the heavenly and love Christ's appearing.

G. M. O.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 23, 1941, our dear parents,

MARTIN CASEMIER

and

ELLA CASEMIER—Haveman

celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their grateful children, extend to them our heartiest congratulations, and thank God for His mercies and blessings during these past years. We pray that the Lord may continue to bless them and spare them for each other and for us for many years to come.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Taylor

Albert John

John Albert

Kenneth J.

Marilyn E.

LaVerne M.

and 2 grandchildren.

Holland, Michigan.

Ezekiel

The prophecy of judgment. The divine mission of Ezekiel. The vision of the glory of Jehovah.

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as the prophet was by the captives by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of the king Jehoiachim's captivity, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar.

Vision of the four cherubims.

Vision of the wheels.

The glory of God.

Above the firmament there was over the heads of the beasts a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the throne was the appearance of a man above upon it, having the appearance of fire, and it had brightness upon it as the appearance of the rainbow. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

The divine commission of the prophet.

Ezekiel's commission.

The Lord addresses him as the son of man and commands him to stand on his feet, and to hear what the Lord will speak unto him. Then the spirit entered him and set him upon his feet, and the prophet heard what was spoken to him. The prophet is told that he is sent unto a rebellious nation who together with their fathers have transgressed against the Lord until this day. They are impudent children. To them the Lord sends the prophet. Whether they will hear or no, they will know that there has been a prophet among them.

The prophet's instruction.

The prophet is not to be afraid of them, neither of their words, though briars and thorns be with them. And he dwells among scorpions. The prophet shall speak the word of the Lord, whether they hear or not. He is not to be rebellious like that rebellious house. The prophet now sees a hand extended to him holding a roll of a book, written within and without lamentations and mourning and woe. This roll the prophet is bidden to eat. He did so and it was in his mouth as honey for sweetness.

God encourages the prophet.

The house of Israel will not hearken unto the prophet, for they are impudent and hard-hearted. For this reason the Lord has made the prophet's face strong against their faces. As an adamant harder than flint has the Lord made his forehead. The prophet again admonished to receive all the words of the Lord into his heart, and to get him unto them of the captivity, and to speak whether they will hear or no.

The first execution of the divine commission.

The installation and instructions.

The prophet picked up by the spirit and hears behind him a voice saying, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place." He also hears the voice of the wings of the creatures touching one another and the voice of the wheels. The prophet lifted up by the spirit and he went in bitterness, in the heat of his spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon him. The prophet came to them of the captivity at Telahib, that dwelt by the river Chebar. He remained among them seven days astonished.

God shows the prophet the rule of prophecy.

At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came unto him. The Lord made him a watchman over the house of Israel. Therefore he shall warn the wicked with "Thou shalt surely die." Should he fail to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the blood of the wicked when dying in his iniquity shall be required at his hand. Only by warning the wicked can the prophet save his soul.

The prophet is bidden to go forth into the plain, that the Lord would talk with him. The Lord declares that he will make him dumb so that he cannot reprove, for they are a rebellious people. But when the Lord speaks unto him and open his mouth, he, the prophet shall speak. "Thus saith the Lord." Those that hear, let them hear, those that forbear, let them forbear, for they are a rebellious people.

The three signs and their interpretations.

Sign 1. The prophet is bidden to portray upon a tile the city of Jerusalem, and to set his face against it, as lying on his side for 390 days in token of bearing the iniquity of Israel. Thereupon he shall turn him about and lie on his right side for 40 days. In this position the prophet, with uncovered arm, shall prophesy against the city. The Lord will lay hands upon the prophet so that he cannot turn him about till he has ended the days of his seige.

Sign 2. The Lord bids the prophet to prepare himself a porridge of various kinds of food enough to last him until the typical seige is ended. The Lord specifies the amount he shall eat each day. His water he shall drink by measure. His porridge he shall drink by measure. His porridge he shall bake and eat as barley cakes with human dung. Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the gentiles.

The prophet shrinks from eating human dung and complains to the Lord about it. The Lord allows him to substitute cow dung for human dung.

The interpretation of sign two.

The prophet's eating food by measure is prophetic of the eating food by measure of the inhabitants of Jerusalem during the seige. There will be great scarcity of bread.

Sign 3. The sign as such.

The prophet is bidden to take him a sharp knife, a barber's razor, to shave his head and his beard, and to divide his hair cuttings into three equal parts. For this he is to use the scales. A third part he shall burn in the city with fire, when the days of his seige are fulfilled.

A third part he shall smite with a knife. And a third part he shall scatter to the wind. And the Lord will draw out the sword after them.

A few hairs he shall bind in his skirts. Then he is to take of the cut hair again and cast them into the midst of the fire, for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

Interpretation of the third sign.

The sign has a bearing on Jerusalem. The holy city He shall set in the midst of the nations and the countries that are round about her, for she hath changed the statutes of the Lord more than the surrounding countries. For this reason the Lord is against her, and will execute judgment in the midst of her in the sight of the nations and will do unto her what He has never done before for her abominations: The fathers shall eat the sons and the sons the fathers in the midst of her. The Lord will diminish the city because she defiled His sanctuary.

A third part will die of the pestilence and with famine; a third part shall fall by the sword, and a third part the Lord shall scatter to the winds, and will draw out a sword after them. The Lord will make them a waste and a reproach, an instruction, an astonishment among the nations. The Lord will send upon the scattered third a famine to destroy them, and evil beasts, and pestilence and blood and sword.

The subsequent execution of divine commissions.

The visions.

Of the abominations in the temple.

In the sixth year in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, the prophet sat in his house and the elders of Judah sat before him. The prophet saw a likeness as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber, and He the Lord took him by a lock of his hair, and the spirit lifted him between the earth and the heaven, and brought him in the vision of God to Jerusalem; to the door of the inner gate, where was the seat of the image of Jealousy that provoketh to jealousy. And the glory of Israel was there.

The prophet is bidden to look northward and behold the image of jealousy in the entry of the north gate. The prophet bidden to take sharp notice of what wicked Jews do, the great abominations the house of Israel committeth there, for which reason the Lord turned away from His sanctuary.

The Lord shows the prophet even greater abominations. The Lord brings the prophet into the door of the court and bids him to dig in the wall and enter.

The prophet does so and sees a ghastly sight; creeping things, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall. He saw further seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, each with a censor in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. And with them stood Janiah the son of Shaphan. The Lord again bids the prophet to take particular notice of what took place and adds that the wicked Jews think the Lord does not see them in their hidden chambers.

For the third time the Lord bids him to turn and he shall see even greater abominations. This time the Lord brought him to the door which was to the north. The prophet sees a woman weeping for Tamuz.

Again the Lord bids him to turn and see greater abominations. The prophet is brought to the door of the temple between the porch and the altar, where were twenty five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, facing the east and worshipping the sun.

Again the Lord bids the prophet to take careful notice of what happened and adds that it is a light thing to the house of Judah, namely, these abominations. They have provoked the Lord to anger, wherefore He shall also deal in fury with them and not spare.

Of the judgment of the guilty.

The prophet is bidden to cause them who have charge over the city to assemble every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. Six men came from the higher gate, one among them clothed with linen and supplied with a writers inkhorn. And they all went in and stood by the brazen altar, and the glory of the Lord was gone up from the Cherub. And he called to the man clothed in linen that he should go through Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that cry and sigh because of the abominations. He does so. The others are bid to go through the city and smite whatever their eyes see: men, women and children, but to spare any man upon whom the mark is. They are further commanded to defile the house with the carcasses of the slain. The command is carried out.

While the slaying was in progress the prophet fell upon his face and cried and asked the Lord whether he would destroy all the residue of Israel. The Lord answers that the iniquity of the House of Israel is great and that the land is full of blood and the city full of perverseness, and that He therefore would not spare.

Of the coals of fire upon the city.

The prophet beheld the firmament above the head of the cherubims as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And the Lord bids the man clothed in linen to go between the wheels, under the Cherub, and fill

his hands with coals of fire and scatter them over the city.

The house of God again filled with the glory of the Lord. The sound of the cherubims wings filled the temple as the voice of the Almighty God. The man in linen again bidden to fill his hands with fire. The cherubims put fire in his hand, and he again goes out.

A description of the motions of the cherubims and the wheels in the temple. Their appearance described. The prophet saw them as under God, by the river Chebar.

Of the leaders of the people.

The prophet lifted up and brought to the east gate of the temple, where he saw twenty five men, and with them stood Jaazaniah the son of Azur, Petaliah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. The Lord tells the prophet that these are the wicked men that devise mischief and give wicked counsel in this city, who say, it, the destruction, is not near, let us build houses, this city is the flesh.

The prophet ordered to prophesy against them. The Lord knows the things that come unto the wicked mind of the house of Israel. They have multiplied their slain in the city. These slain will be the flesh, and the city is the chaldron. The Lord will bring them forth out of the midst of it, and will deliver them in the hands of strangers. They shall fall by the sword and the Lord will judge them, and they shall know that He is the Lord. For they have done after the manner of the surrounding heathen.

The death of Petaliah the son of Benaiah, occasions the complaint on the part of the prophet whether the Lord will make a full end of the remnant of Israel. The Lord replies that He will be a little sanctuary to the people. He will assemble the remnant out of the countries where they have been scattered. And they shall take away all the abominations thereof. The Lord will give them the land of Canaan, take away their stony heart and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in His statutes. They shall be His people and He will be their God. But as to the wicked, the Lord will recompense their way upon their own heads.

The Cherubims and the wheels again in motion and the glory of the Lord was over them, and went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountains on the east of the city.

The prophet brought by the Spirit in a vision into Chaldea to them of the captivity and spake unto them all the things the Lord had shown him.

The signs.

The sign of the departure of the king.

The prophet, whereas he dwells in the midst of a rebellious people, is ordered to prepare him instruments for removing from one place to another in their sight, in the evening as they that go forth into

captivity. He is to dig, further, through the wall in their sight. He shall bear upon his shoulders in the twilight. He shall cover his face that he see not the ground for he has been set for a sign unto the house of Israel. The prophet did as he was commanded.

The next morning the Lord explains the sign to the prophet. The burden concerned the prince of Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel. The prophet is their sign. As he has done (in a figure) they will do in reality. The people and the prince that is among them shall go into captivity. The Lord's net will be spread upon him and he shall be taken in a snare. The Lord will bring him to Babylon, and he shall die there. And all that are about him the Lord will scatter to every wind. But the Lord will leave a few men of them from the sword and the pestilence to declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come.

G. M. O.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet Wednesday, July 2, at 9:00 A. M., at the Fuller Ave. Church.

D. Jonker, S. C.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL FIELD-DAY

An All Day Outing for

WHO?—All Protestant Reformed people who love to propagate the Reformed Truth.

WHEN?—July 4th, from morning till nite.

WHERE?—Gun Lake, go south to Bradley then turn east and follow red arrows.

WHY?—To spend a day in Christian fellowship with our own people.

FEATURES

Speeches—by outstanding leaders in Reformed truth.

Also music, singing, and games for children.

Swimming, Boating—on a safe beach, in a clean lake.

Pony riding, etc.

— Young People's Weiner Roast at 8:00 —

Let's show that we have not lost our first love, by whole-heartedly supporting the cause for which the Standard Bearer stands.

(Coffee and buns can be bought on the grounds)

ALL OUR MINISTERS ATTENTION!

The Editorial Staff of The Standard Bearer will meet not in the month of August but on the 3rd of September next.

G. M. Ophoff.

IN MEMORIAM

Den 12den Juni, 1941, behaagde het den Heere tot zich te nemen, onze geliefde moeder, groetmoeder en overgroetmoeder, MRS TILLIE JONKER, geb. Blom in den ouderdom van 85 jaren.

Zij beleed en betoonde ook met haar wandel, dat zij hier een vreemdeling en een pelgrim was. De verzekering dat zij is ingegaan in het Vaderhuis is ons een rijke troost.

De Kinderen
Kleinkinderen
en Achterkleinkinderen.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

De Vrouwen Vereeniging der Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerk te Hull, Iowa, spreekt met dezen haar hartelijke sympathie uit aan Mr. en Mrs. E. Dykstra in het verlies van hun vader,

DS. H. A. Dykstra (assen Nederland)

Moge de Heere hen, en de verdere familie troosten met Zijnen Geest, en moge dankbaarheid hunne harten vervullen dat hij is ingegaan in de vreugde zijns Heeren wiens dienst hem een lust en blijdschap was.

Namens de Vereeniging,
Ds. A. Cammenga, Pres.
Mrs. G. Blankespoor, Secr.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its sympathy to our brother elder, Rev. D. Jonker, in the loss of his mother

MRS. C. JONKER

May the God of all grace comfort the brother and his family by the assurance that she has gone to her heavenly home.

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.

H. Hoeksema, Pres.
G. Stonehouse, Clerk.