

Meditations for Every Day of the Year

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Introduction

This book contains sections taken from the Sermons from the Rev. J. P. Paauwe. They were translated from the Dutch language. The Lord in His goodness has left us with these words from His servant. The Rev. Paauwe's preaching was about the Law and the Gospel which is how we find it in the Word of God. For the Law is our schoolmaster to teach us who we are, and the Gospel is the promise of salvation unto those who call upon the LORD when they are in need. And all of us, are in need!

I have translated this to the best of my ability with the Lord as my guide and Saviour. May the Lord in His immeasurable mercy bless the reading of this book.

P. M. Jol.

1st January.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!” (1 Cor. 16:23) (I).

This truly is a good wish! We really are unable to utter any good wishes, because of our ignorance of what true happiness is, or what it consists of. And if that is so (and this cannot be denied), what should we wish for? Then you would probably think that you should always remain silent! If we were only to believe what you tell us and be silent before God. For the Apostle writes: *“That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”* (Rom 3:19). And neither do you believe that, for you try to deny it. But you must remember, that one day you will not be able to deny it any longer, even if you wriggle like a snake to avoid it; namely then, when you come to stand before God; either on this side of the grave, which would be to your salvation, or in eternity, and that would be to your eternal damnation.

Paul knew that a person without grace, without the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is empty; that on him or in him there is nothing worthy to be saved, nor shall there ever be anything, but he will be cast out, and that forever.

The name *“Jesus”* means, *“Saviour”*. If you believe Him to be such, then you are saved from yourself, and you will count that as the greatest blessing: to be saved from yourself, here to begin with, and totally after death, because we ourselves are the cause of all the misery. Adam thought he could put the blame on Eve, and Eve accused the serpent; that was to no avail for them; and neither will it avail us in eternity. Sooner or later, we must appear before God *alone*: *“to give an account of our stewardship.”* (Luke 16:2). However, if there comes *One Who will intervene, Jesus Christ the Righteous One*, then all is well: but if we have no Mediator in our stead, it will be dreadful!

2nd January.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! (1 Cor. 16:23) (2).

“Christ” means *“Anointed”*, *“Ordained”*, and *“Surety”*. The Son of God, the second Person in the Divine Being is always perceived like that first. Faith always sees Him, as the One sent by God at the appointed time; otherwise there would be no comfort. Namely; everything must be right, otherwise man has no comfort. For God comforts a soul that has need of comfort in this life (but above all in death), and not before she has received faith, and through this true faith the soul takes her comfort in Christ, as the Appointed of God, as the only Foundation. Then this is where the soul finds her rest, where she can breathe freely; otherwise she would have neither comfort nor strength. Yes, this is what gives the soul her first strength, comfort, and happiness, namely; the sight that the Son of God is God’s Christ, fore-ordained of the Father and sent by the Father.

Oh, what happiness this sight brings with it! What profound peace and great admiration there is in the soul of those who through faith, come to understand the means to obtain salvation ordained by God Himself. Then if Christ is ordained by God as Surety and Mediator! Then I may feel completely safe when I possess Him, for: *“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* (Rom. 8: 31, 32). Now the soul, being secured and redeemed, has nothing more to do than to go in the way of which God says: *“This is the way, walk ye in it.”* (Isaiah 30:21).

3rd January.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” (1 Cor. 16:23) (111).

What does it mean that the Son of God bears the name *Lord*? It means that He is Lord over everything, and that He has been triumphant over everything. When through faith, the soul esteems Him to be Lord, then she places everything, yes even herself under His feet. Then the soul agrees with God, so also with this Word: *“Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet.”* (Hebr. 2: 8). She also obeys what is said to her in Psalm 45: *“For He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.”* Beloved, it is here that the soul pays the homage which the Lord deserves, and she acknowledges: *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”* (Phil. 2: 9, 10). Here she denies all other masters, saying: *“O LORD our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name.”* (Isaiah 26:13). She acknowledges Christ as King over herself. And acknowledges Christ as the King of His Church, and this profession made Luther say: *“Did we in our own strength confide. Our striving would be losing! Were not the right Man on our side. The man of God’s own choosing.”* She also acknowledges Christ as the King of her own soul the latter comes before the former. We cannot comprehend what it implies that Christ has a Church over which He is King, and: *“Yet, have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.”* (Psalm 2: 6). We cannot comprehend it, unless we have learned to proclaim Him as our King. We can have a view of the Church, and have some insight into it, but we have seen nothing for our salvation from the Church, nor have we seen anything of the *afflictions of Joseph* (Amos 6:6), unless we have come to the acknowledgment, that Christ is our King, and our Lord.

4th January.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!” (1Cor. 6:23.2).

When is it, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us? When Christ is in us, and we in Him; and when we have come to the knowledge of our dreadful state as a result of our sins, without trying to conceal ourselves or to cover up our iniquities: *“I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.”* (Psalm 32: 5). Sincere acknowledgment of sin, is to pour out your whole heart before God and to hold nothing back. Then we are alone with God. Then there is nothing or nobody in the whole world that has done us any harm.

That is when man discovers himself, and no longer imagines that he can make any amendments, but realizes that the base principles and motives of his heart is enmity toward God. Then he humbles himself, feels sorrowful after God, justifies God, and declares: *“In all that befalls me, Thou art righteous.”* Then man feels and confesses that he is unworthy to receive even bread and water or any sign of mercy. That is when Christ has come unto him, and the result is that he has taken refuge: *“to lay hold upon the hope set before him.”* (Hebr. 6: 18), he embraces the Gospel, and through true faith turns himself unto God. Then the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with him and will abide with him. For the *“good work”* which God has evidently commenced: *“He will perform in you until the day of Jesus Christ.”* (Phil.1: 6), that is the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear on the clouds of heaven as the Judge of heaven and earth.

It is grace when a person may come to God through the faith in Jesus Christ with a sincere heart and the conscience sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. It is grace when one is made into a different person, a new person in Christ.

5th January.

“He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” (John 1:10).

“He was in the world.” He, being the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, He, Who is true God and also true and righteous man; God and man in one Being. The important part for you and me is that we know Him. For by knowing Him, we also know the Father and the Holy Ghost!

How is He known? The answer is clearly given in Gal. 1:15-16. That is where the Apostle Paul says: *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”* When it is like that in our hearts, then we have come to the knowledge of Christ. Then we have seen Him in His whole Godhead.

When you know Christ, then you will also trust in Him. That is what is said in Psalm 9: 10: *“And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.”* That is the will of God, for He says: *“This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.”* (Matt. 17: 5). Then it is impossible to do otherwise, because wherever you look around yourself in the world, or in your own heart, in your life; everything you see in the world would only lead to despair. But if you do not desire any other way, because you are united with the way which God has sought out, for sinners to be saved, and then when it says: *“This is the way, walk ye in it,”* (Isa. 30: 21), your hearts answer will be: *“Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”* (Psalm 27:8). Without doubt, it has the appearance that Christianity has many followers, but there are only a few, who know what it means to be a Christian and who are able, to give an account of what they proclaim to believe.

6th January.

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” (John 1:1).

They were offended by His Word; they never thought about the miracles He performed. They were displeased with His conduct. They were disappointed in their expectation of the Messiah. They presumed that His influence was harmful; and above all for their religion. And it ended in: *“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”* What were the reasons, or the cause of their action? Can you name them?

The first reason was that it had not pleased God to give them a new heart. Do you understand this? Our heart which we have by nature, never does anything but close itself for Christ. Therefore the Lord Jesus has said: *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3). And since we can only accept Christ, if it pleases God to give us a heart for it, the Apostle Paul tells us: *“But when it pleased God, to reveal His Son in me.”* (Gal. 1: 15-16).

Secondly, they did not understand the spiritual meaning of God's Law. But when someone understands the spiritual meaning of God's Law, then he will say: *“There is no hope.”* These people had only some knowledge of the letter of the Law. When man has no further knowledge of the Law, then he will always return to the Law. This is enmity against God, and therefore the Apostle Paul writes: *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.”* (Rom. 8: 7). In the third place, these people had no light. They did not behold God or themselves. So, if man does not behold God nor himself, he can never do anything but reject Christ.

7th January.

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name” .(John 1:12).

The acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ implies that He was offered. It is stated in Amos 3: 3: *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* This union can only take place in Christ. God must have met us there, and we must have met God there also, for then it is right. I presume that you agree with me that when these things happen, the heart does not remain ignorant about these things. Jacob said: *“I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”* (Gen. 32: 30). The Apostle Paul always spoke like that. For he that believes, never speaks in a different way.

Through the Word, the Lord Jesus is offered. This offer is done wholeheartedly, but man doubts this offer of God. Nevertheless, it is a sincere offer, and if man believes God rather than himself, then he accepts this offer. But man chooses to believe in himself. He decides that it is much safer to trust his own wisdom, rather than God's wisdom. It is through faith that he comes to lose confidence in himself, and then he puts his trust in the Word of God, as the Word states: *“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else.”* (Isaiah 45: 22). Also: *“He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good; and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.”* (Prov. 16: 20). Nothing is required of us, we *must* come empty-handed. It is all for *naught*, totally for *nought*. We must not only come empty-handed, we are unable to bring anything. I have nothing; you have nothing. I have never done anything, and neither have you ever done anything towards your own salvation! And that is how you must embrace this offer. That is why it says in Psalm 68 in rhyme: *“Thou to Thy poor didst show Thy care, for all their needs providing.”*

8th January.

“And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.” (Psalm 9:10).

One must possess grace to be truly able to express the Name “LORD”, which appears in our text. Without grace, man is unable to utter this Name to God’s honour, and to the benefit of his immortal soul. The Apostle Paul teaches us this, when he says: *“And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”* (1 Cor. 12: 3). It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us to know His Name, and He also teaches us to utter His Name. The Holy Spirit does this after He has humbled us through the workings of the Law, before He reveals Christ unto us as the One sent of the Father and as the Way to the Father.

We have said: *“After we are made humble.”* Because the true and complete humbling is a work of God’s Spirit through the means of the Law. However, this is not without the knowledge of the Gospel. For God’s actual purpose is to reveal to us the meaning of the Law through the knowledge of the Gospel. When God’s Spirit reveals Himself unto us by means of the Word, then He teaches us to express the name *LORD*. And He gives us to say: *“O, LORD our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of thy name.”* (Isaiah 26:13). From then on, this Name becomes more and more significant.

And it is again the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Who furthermore teaches us what it means when the Spirit says to the soul: *“I am the LORD thy God.”* In Exodus 6, we read that the Lord spoke to Moses and said: *“I am the LORD. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name of JEHOVAH was I not known unto them.”* This does not mean that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were totally ignorant of this Name. We find this clearly expressed in the beginning of the Bible. The more God is revealed to us by His great and glorious Name, the deeper we will sink into our lost and loathsome condition.

9th January.

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”. (John 1:13.1).

The Evangelist teaches us two things. He not only tells us what it is, but he also tells us what it is *not*. For we need to understand both! We need to know what it *is*, and we also need to know what it is *not*. When man does not know what it doesn't consist of, then not only doesn't he know what it is *not*, but it also proves that he doesn't know what it really *is*. When man becomes converted, he knows nothing, for it says: *“He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.”* (Hebr. 10: 9). The consideration of what we find in Ezekiel 37 is also beneficial. It is here that the prophet had to go around the valley of dry bones. And why did he have to do that? He needed to see what was in the valley! And that is how it must be in everyone's heart! This is the way God works in all those who are saved. For, it is as we find it in the form of the Holy Supper: *“We acknowledge thereby that we are in the midst of death. And why we read: “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man.”* When I point out that these three matters refer to the same thing, then I tell you something which is true. It is only repeated, so that it may be more deeply rooted. The deeper this sinks in, the better it is for us and others around us. It is to give us a deeper view of God and ourselves. And for our fellowmen, so that we may also be able to talk better about these things to other people: *“Not of blood.”* We know that in the time when Christ walked on the earth, what was meant by being a descendant of Abraham. They said: *“We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man.”* (John 8: 33). How could the descendants of Abraham, ever have thought that this would have had any value, in regard to their own salvation? In the eleventh verse it says: *“He came unto His own and His own received Him not.”* Because they had such great forefathers, they presumed that they walked in the same way. And we find this in everyone. The Lord Jesus once said: *“Because you built the tombs of the prophets” etc, “Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets”.* (Mat. 23: 29-31).

10th January.

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13.2).

“... nor of the will of man, but of God.” Hereby we may think about birth, and that in regard to what the Lord Jesus said: *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* (John 3: 6). This is something that man cannot understand, for whatever he is, he is but flesh. You must ask yourself what *“flesh”* is.

What condition are you in, regarding your birth? If you are interested in this question, then I advise you to do this in light to what we read in Rom. 5. And if these things really concern you, then you should read it carefully, and read the marginal notes also. And see then, if you can conclude out of your own heart and experience what *“flesh”* is. And if you are able to say it, then you will also know what *“spirit”* is.

“Nor of the will of man”. We must consider everything man intends to do. Sometimes he intends to convert himself, to read the Bible, to mingle with God’s people, to confess, and to weep over his sins. And now, we read: *“nor of the will of man”*. Has all this then no influence at all on his salvation? No! It has no influence at all on his salvation! If you are unable to wholeheartedly agree with this, then the time still has to come, when you will be able to confess: *“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”* (Psalm 40:6). When is man able to say this? Can you answer this question? I say: at that time, when God in Christ Jesus has come *to* him and *in* him. That is then the turning point in his life, this is conversion. Then he is changed, truly changed, and renewed after the image of God.

11th January.

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1: 13.3)

“But of God.” We are now speaking about the re-birth. What is the re-birth? And when does one become born again? Then, when man sees himself and his case, as totally lost; that is, his religion and his life. When man comes to see that, then at that same time he beholds Jesus Christ who is revealed unto him, and Whom he accepts out of the hand of the Father, he then perceives that he cannot go on without Him, for he observes that his own righteousness is but foolishness and as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), that his holiness is unclean, that his religion is idolatrous, and his imagined freedom, is bondage. When he understands that, then he realizes that he is unable to lead himself, not even for a moment. That is why he then gives himself into God’s hand, with the words of Psalm 25:4: *“Shew me Thy ways, O LORD, teach me Thy paths.”*

That is re-birth! This person has ceased to be what he was, namely self-righteous, and he became what he essentially *is* and *was* unable to be, a sinner! Now he observes that all he needs is in Jesus Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul writes: *“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”* (Gal. 2:20). Does the same Apostle not say: *“Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me”?* (Rom. 7:17). That is why the Apostle John wrote: *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.”* (1 John 3:9). This man is changed; his person is different his self is changed. Now he can say: *“I am no longer I.”* His thoughts are different now, he has another will, and other inclinations. He speaks different, and his deeds have changed. He has another purpose, and he has another life.

12th January.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14).

Man must ask himself whether he has observed God’s glory. God in His glorious virtues. Whosoever has received this privilege, is born again. You also know that people speak about regeneration. And in as far as people speak about conversion and regeneration today, many things are said about the re-birth. But we must experience the rebirth. When do we experience the rebirth? Then, when we behold God in His glory. When that takes place, we behold God’s glory with an open face. (2 Cor. 3:18).

We must ask ourselves whether we have seen God’s glory in Christ. Whether the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed unto us, and if we have come to know His Person and work, His states and offices, His natures and benefits, whether we need Christ, His preciousness and suitability, and His all-sufficiency.

Think about these matters. We have overlooked them. If we have moved in religious circles, we have heard people talking about the need of Christ. However, Christ was not necessary for them, because there was not a thing they did about it. For can there be a real need for Christ when there are no real strivings, when the heart remains closed for Christ? For then they are only an opinion which man has about these matters, and which he holds on to. And he feels strengthened, when he comes into contact with people who are of the same understanding.

But when the need for Christ is felt, then man opens his heart for Him and gives himself over unto Him, and then he has everything in Christ. For Jesus Christ must be known to such an extent, so that we have our *all in Him*.

13th January.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6).

We have this knowledge, when God has enlightened our hearts. The possession of this knowledge is crucial. However, before we can have this knowledge, God must have enlightened us. For it is so very important that we ask ourselves which knowledge we have received when God has enlightened our hearts. For this is a different kind of knowledge, which we possess by nature.

When you have been taught to discern these matters in a different manner, then you have always seen them, then you possess true spiritual, and eternal knowledge. Man stands there with his own knowledge, and who can deliver him from this? No one can do this! There is not a created being who has this power. And yet he still needs to be delivered, for all that man has ever thought or spoken of, is falsehood. And who shall convince him of this? But when God enlightens his heart, he becomes convinced. When God shines in the heart, then man understands that he has been wrong, that he has always deceived himself, and he would have continued to be deceived, in everything. We clearly see this in what the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Ephesus: *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.”* (Eph. 5:8).

Again, this is the knowledge which brings happiness. All other knowledge leaves man discontented, and the more knowledge he has, the unhappier he feels. But this knowledge makes him feel joyful; for in this knowledge, we have been able to let go of all that is ours. We must be taught to trust in free sovereign grace. We really need: to have our eyes closed, our hands folded, and our knees bent. We must really be like dead instruments. We must allow ourselves to be led and place ourselves in the hand of God. We must be controlled and do nothing of ourselves. God does everything, and that brings peace. This is the true delight which is accompanied with knowledge. We need this knowledge in which life is bound.

14th January.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” (John 17: 3).

The Lord Jesus says here, that to know God and Christ means life eternal. Our commentators say: “That these things are the means, by which we come to life.” This is true, for those who do not know God, will not attain eternal bliss. According to the word which we find in 2 Thess. 1: 8: *“Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* But I think we could also say something else about these things. The knowledge of God in Christ gives the right to eternal life, for as soon as we have the knowledge of God in Christ, the judgment has been taken away. The knowledge of God in Christ brings about the quickening of the soul. The moment man is acquainted with God, he arises from the death of sin, as we find in Eph. 5: 14: *“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”* To understand this *in this way*; man has faith, which is brought about through the divine enlightening. For through faith he is united to Christ, and he receives the Holy Spirit from Christ, which is the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. This Spirit comes to cherish him, quicken, and renew him, and makes him willing and able to live for God in Christ Jesus. The Apostles Paul expresses it in this way: *“For I through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.”* (Gal. 2:19). In the end, where the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus is found, there is also the commencement of eternal life. For in eternal glory we will be satisfied with God. Think of what the psalmist says in Psalm 73: 25: *“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.”* In heaven there is love for God. Think of the Bride in Song of Solomon 8:6: *“For love is strong as death.”* God is glorified in heaven. Think about the words of the Apostle: *“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to Whom be glory for ever, Amen.”* (Rom. 11:36)

15th January.

“And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.” (Luke 10: 23).

What is it; *to be “blessed”*? I thought when I was meditating on these matters, that when we talk about these things, we should be made attentive to what God’s Spirit teaches us in our hearts. So, what is it to be “blessed”? I do not know what your answer is to this question, but I will try to tell you what I believe it to be. When through the light, the knowledge of God reveals unto me what an atheist I am; and how much I desire that which brings me to eternal damnation; and what this condemnation consists of, and how I am always searching for something which does not include God, and then when this is revealed to me by the light of the knowledge of God initially and in continuance, I am deeply ashamed and have a heartfelt sorrow of myself. And at the same time, I am in awe of God and all that He has revealed to me of Himself. Then I feel that I am blessed. For there is then a drawing, and a longing in my soul to honour God, with a loathing and a denying of myself. Then there is a sincere sorrow in the heart that with all my sins I have caused God’s wrath; but there is also a hating and fleeing from sin. This fleeing from sin is a fleeing from self to the Lord Jesus Christ or to God in the Son of His eternal love.

However beloved, as long, as this divine enlightening is not present in the heart, man seeks himself, lives to himself; and that is death, spiritual death and nothing else! Man must be delivered, from this state of death. And we must seek this divine enlightening, now and by renewing.

Someone may think; “Do you put the matters in such a way, that there is really no other work to consider which comes before this deed?” Everything which comes before this deed, teaches us that it is impossible for us to come where we must be. Everything which comes before this saving and justifying knowledge, teaches the elect, that they are incapable of doing any good and are inclined to all evil.

16th January.

“And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.” (Luke 2:22).

It says: *“And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished.”* “Her” is mentioned here as singular, although in some authentic handbooks, it may be found in the plural form. Those books mention it as “of their” not “of her”. We are convinced that this is the correct version. We do not think about Mary and Joseph here, but about Mary and her Child. The mother was unclean. The Child that she had brought into the world had made her unclean. The Child was also unclean. His mother who was, as a descendent of Adam, an unclean woman. The Child was not unclean of Himself, for it is written: *“That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”* (Luke 1:35). Nevertheless, the Child was unclean by the imputation of Adam’s guilt, and through the guilt of the whole human race. He was unclean, for He had the guilt laid on Him of all those known by God from eternity, for the elect.

The words which we mentioned before, are a sermon to us about the love of God and about the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we are told, that: *“God so loved the world: that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16). We also hear this in the words of the Apostle Paul who says: *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* (Rom. 4:25). and what a great blessing this is! Do you also feel that this is such a great blessing? Where would we go if this was not so? Because of ourselves, we are guilty and unable to pay. And we would be eternally lost, for if God *really is*, then He is a Being who loves righteousness as it is also written in His Word: *“For the Lord loveth judgment.”* (Psalm 37:28 and Isaiah 61:8). And in Isaiah 1:27 we read: *“Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.”*

17th January.

“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord. A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.” (Luke 2: 24).

We know that the firstborn belonged to God. And that the firstborn of the cattle had to be offered. (Deut. 15:19). The firstborn of the people had to be redeemed (Ex. 13:2), to commemorate what had happened in Egypt. The Angel of the Covenant had spared the firstborn of Israel, while all the firstborn of Egypt were slain. The firstborn of Israel were not spared because they were worthier than the Egyptians. They were saved, by reason of the blood, of the Offer. When the Angel of the Covenant saw the blood, He passed by. (Ex. 12:23). That is why this feast of commemoration was called, *“the Passover”*, meaning *“to pass by”*. The parents could return home with their child again, once their firstborn had been redeemed.

This offer is not associated with the presentation in the temple but with the purification. The offer spoken of here is the offer of the poor. By this, we are to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ came from a poor family. The rich had to offer a lamb, a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering. (Lev. 12:6). Thus, the first was for a burnt offering and the latter for a sin offering. But we all know the charity of the Law, which was found in Israel. That is why the poor were permitted to offer a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons; one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. (Lev. 12: 8). Mary and Joseph did not have much, and yet they were very rich. *“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”* (Psalm 37: 16). When is a man poor? It is, when he suffers his soul to go hungry. Man is poor when his soul is without God! A man is poor when he cannot or will not go to God. If you belong to these people, then you are so poor and needy, no matter what you imagine yourself to be. You are unspeakably poor, poor and wretched.

18th January.

“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord.” (Luke 2: 24.2).

Here again *“in the Law of the Lord”* and when we look back a little *“the Law of Moses.”* It is through the grace of the Spirit that this teaches us, that in our religion we must keep ourselves wholly to the Word. Everything which is not in accordance with the Word, is dead! In the Word, it clearly says: *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”* (Isaiah 8: 20). Generally, the religion of most people is not according to the Word. We so often hear that people have a religion with a disregard for the Word. Perhaps you have wondered about that at times, it is good that we think about this. However, we can expect nothing else, for there is so little knowledge about the Word. And above all, there is a lack of the love for the Word. Man has no esteem for the Word. That is why we must not think that man desires his religion to be in accordance with God’s Word. His religion originated not out of God’s Word, but out of his own heart. That is why, when we think that we have received grace, we must ask ourselves if it has been revealed to us, that our own religion has come out of our own heart. And that instead of this religion which has come out of our own heart, we must receive a religion from God Himself. When God comes unto, and in our hearts, then true religion begins. All the rest is a delusion. With all the rest, we mislead ourselves. We need to eliminate the possibility that we would deceive ourselves. The importance of the matter is too great, and we must learn to say with the Psalmist: *“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.”* (Psalm 119: 59-60). This is absolutely necessary, as the Apostle James says: *“For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he will receive anything of the Lord.”* (James 1: 6, 7)

19th January.

“Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.” (Luke 2: 34.1).

Simeon saw that the Child which he held in his arms was none other than the Promised One to the fathers, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He also saw these two people, Joseph and Mary, and how this would affect them. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him (Luke 2:25), and by the light of the Holy Spirit, he understood what kind of reception was prepared for the Lord Jesus and for the parents, and especially for Mary, the mother of the Lord.

He saw, and Oh! How he wished that Mary and Joseph could also see this. He especially wished that Mary could see it. That is why he begins his prophesy with the word *“behold.”*

“Behold, this Child.” The Child of Mary was her child. For the Child, the Son of God, now in the arms of Simeon, was also true man. However, He remained what He was; for He was also true God. He was true God and true man in one Person.

“This Child is set for the fall.” The Son of God, Who, had taken on the human nature, had come in the place of man. God wanted man to return, for man is not in the right place until he returns unto God. The Child was the Man which God sought. He had, as stated, placed Himself in man’s stead and would carry the penalty which God had placed on the transgression of His Holy Law. He would also bring forth the obedience, which the Lord desired to be manifested. This Child would also be the foundation for the Congregation, and for the Church; for the foundation and the power. The foundation is His righteousness, and the power is the Holy Spirit. This would be preached unto the people. (1 Cor. 2: 2). Jesus Christ, and Him crucified would be presented and offered to them. But man would not tolerate His teachings. For men thought that they possessed it in themselves, even if not wholly, but then at least partly. And there was no room in the heart for Jesus. Man would cast Him out and reject the preaching, and would also cast out the preacher.

20th January.

“Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.” (Luke 2:34.2).

“Of many” After all it would still be: *“a great multitude, which no man could number.”* (Rev. 7: 9). Thousands of people were already added at the day of Pentecost from among the multitude which had unanimously cast out the Lord Jesus Christ, and had nailed Him to the cross.

They were circumcised, but their circumcision was unable to be their foundation. They had to learn to deny themselves and put Jesus Christ in the place of their *all*! Are these not the workings of faith? Everyone who possesses faith will give an affirmative answer to this question. Faith works with Christ alone. Faith is a noble mercy. It exalts God and humbles man. It causes man to be humbled. That is why it also brings peace, for when man tries to *be* something, or thinks that he *is* something, then he has no peace. Why is it that he has no peace when he thinks that he is something? And it is true, that he is nothing! For Isaiah says: *“that the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of a balance.”* (Isaiah 40:15)

That he is needy and that there are difficulties, that does not bother him. However, what does bothers him is, that when he thinks he possesses something, or assumes that he *has to have something*, then that is what bothers him. However, if he were to look upon the Lamb of God and so on God Himself, as a poor, miserable, and sinful lost creature, then he would feel rich, not in himself, but in God. From this we can see, that unbelief is the fall, and faith is the resurrection.

Just a few more remarks about the word *“set.”* It is written, *“This Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel.”* This means that it is, set by God. Is God then the reason? No! God is good, and all He does is good! When I say it in this manner, you must not accept it from me. No, you must not just repeat what man says. I say it, because it is true, and now me and you, we must ask ourselves if this is true for each one of us. We have the boldness to tell you that God is good, and that all He does is good. And it is an indisputable fact that God offers Himself.

21st January.

“Who has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18b)

The subject of this text is God. *“He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* (Verse 19). This means that it is God Himself Who offers and brings us, the offer of reconciliation. It is the Lord’s desire that we accept this offer of reconciliation. Everything will depend on the question, how we placed ourselves regarding this offer. If we accept this offer, then we have a reconciled God; for God offers Himself as a reconciled God in Christ Who has brought forth this reconciliation. If there is no acceptance, then the Lord remains an unreconciled God for man, which means a wrath God. The question whether we are able or not must be ignored. The question here is, how does God deal with us.

God is reconciled, because He has come to us in the Son of His eternal love, He had been separated from us by sin, through the fall. But He has come near to us in Christ, in Whom He has reconciled the world unto Himself. I don’t know if you believe this, or whether you understand this; or whether this has had an effect, on your heart and your life. But I can tell you this: that we have no knowledge of this unless it has been revealed to us. Do you know when it becomes clear to us that we don’t know this? It is in this: when it has not been revealed unto us, that God in Christ has come to the world, so also to us (for we also belong to this world), for without this revelation we will always try to turn God our way, and try to get Him on our side, and persuade Him to be merciful to us. But when it has been revealed to us that God in Christ has reconciled the world unto Himself, and has come unto us, then it is nothing else than the revelation *of His willingness to live in our hearts*. It is the work of faith through which this is embraced. For as long as you are unable to do this, then you prove thereby that you have no faith. There are so many people of whom it is evident that they do not possess faith. Yet, God brings everything with Him. Christ reveals Himself first, and then He gives faith. That is why the Apostle Paul says that faith, *“It is the gift of God.”* (Eph. 2: 8)

22nd January.

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the Word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:19).

There is a Word of reconciliation, a preaching of reconciliation, and a service of reconciliation, and that is how it must go. That is where we find Christ, Christ is in the Word. I don't know if you have the correct understanding of the service of reconciliation. First there was election, and after that, the reconciliation was brought about, and then God gave the service of the Word. What was God's intention in this? It was to offer Christ and to preach about Him. Christ is found in the preaching of the Word. To this purpose, God instituted the service of the Word as we can find it in the chapter of our text (verse 20). *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”* The Lord offers Himself to the world through the means of the Word. I don't know if you believe this, or if you have ever understood this. But what will it be for the world when they presently become aware of this, that God has offered Himself through the means of the preaching of reconciliation, and that the world has rejected Him? The rejection of the offer of reconciliation will be the reason for the condemnation of the world. Not only Adam's fall in the first place, *but the rejection of the offer of reconciliation will be the main reason for the condemnation of the world.* That is why the Apostle says; *that the world will be judged according to His Gospel. (Rom. 2:16).*

Strive to obtain light in the Word. We may think that when we read God's Word, that we understand it. No! We cannot understand the Scriptures until Christ is revealed unto us. Think about the question which Philip asked the eunuch: *“Understandest thou what thou readest?”* And he said: *“How can I, except some man should guide me?”* There is no one that understands the Word, unless the Holy Spirit preaches Christ unto him. When the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us in the Word, then we find the righteousness of the Person of Christ in the Word.

23rd January.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”. (2 Cor. 5: 20).

Man allows himself to be reconciled with God when he *embraces* the offer granted unto him in the Name of God. Whosoever embraces this offer, which is given to him in God’s Name, has received *a reconciled God in Christ*. Whosoever does not embrace this offer, has a wrath God, seeing that he rejects the reconciliation obtained by Christ.

We must always attempt to bring the things of the Kingdom of God back to their simple proportion. Then we have a better understanding what it is all about. For it is not so easy for man to understand quickly what it is all about. We are full of delusions, superstitions, false faith or a temporal faith, of which we need to be purified and cleansed. This cleansing takes place through the Word. To embrace the offer of reconciliation, means; *that we have faith in Christ*.

Just a few words about faith. Faith in Christ assumes that the reconciliation obtained by Christ has been offered through the means of the Gospel. Where this offering of Christ through the means of the preaching of the Gospel *is missing*, there is nothing but darkness. This is evident from the words often mentioned: *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge,”* -- do you hear that? - *“to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”?* (2 Cor. 4:6). Actually no one would have the liberty to embrace Him, if Christ was not offered through the means of the preaching of the Gospel, for the Word says: *“man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”* (John 3:27).

24th January.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8).

We believe that faith is *a gift of God*, and we confess that faith is *God’s creation*, as we find it explained in the Canons of Dort (*one* of the doctrinal standards, point 12). We must ask ourselves how we know that faith is a gift of God. We must investigate the origin of our faith. Faith has its origin in God and comes *into us*, when the Lord seals the promise that the Gospel is in our hearts. It is then that we understand the words of John 3:33: *“He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true “* So, when the Holy Spirit seals the Gospel in our hearts, then we hear God speaking to us through the Gospel, and that is how faith comes into being. That is how it starts, and how it should have come in us, confirming the words of Psalm 27: 8, 9: *“When thou saidst, seek ye my face”* (this is the sealing), and the answer is: *“Thy face, Lord, will I seek, hide not Thy face far from me, put not Thy servant away in anger.”*

Now a person who has the common workings of the Spirit, believes that he does all this, and that he has already done it all. He does not understand it. *Nobody understands these matters, unless he first comes to realize, that he has never understood them.* And *that* is a mark of the true saving faith.

Is true faith found within you? Do you know, that when you think you are at your best, you are at your worst? Did you ever discover that all your religious and spiritual treasures were worthless, and are worthless because Christ was and is not in them? That they were of no value, for the root of bitterness was found in your heart. To become aware of *this*, is to be convinced *of sin*. This is the beginning of the beginning, for the beginning does not start from our side, because with us there is no beginning; with us there is nothing. (1Cor. 1:28-29).

25th January.

“Moreover Whom He did predestinate.” (Rom. 8:30a).

The elect or the ordained were set apart by a decree before the foundation of the world. By the decree of a Triune God, they are called the elect of God. God the Father had set them apart from eternity. Why them and not others? No one shall ever know; this shall be concealed forever. God the Father chose them from eternity. God the Father put His hand on them and then gave them to the Son. God’s purpose in the salvation of sinners is the revelation of His divine virtues. *“I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake.”* (Ezek.36:22).

The Son took them out of the hand of the Father, after He was prepared with His human nature, and He committed Himself that through His suffering and dying He would die for the elect, whom He saw as the fallen in Adam, and He would pay the ransom and free them from perdition and release them from Satan and from condemnation.

The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Divine Being was present at this undertaking, He said: that all that was laid up by the Father and which would be acquired by the Son; He Himself would work in the hearts of the elect, and apply it unto the elect, granting them salvation.

Through this decree of the Triune God, they were separated from eternity to eternity, so that since the time when man was created, throughout all generations, there would be two kinds of people, a people chosen of God and a people rejected by God. The rejection is the reverse of election. If there was no rejection, then we would be unable to speak of election. The Apostle Paul asks this question in Rom. 9:14: *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?”* And the answer is: *“God forbid, for He saith to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’”*

26th January.

“Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” (Rom. 8:30b).

The calling is not only an *enlightening*, but also *the yielding of the heart unto God*. If through the grace of God, man does not know what this is, then he is puffed-up, for he thinks too highly of himself, because he does not know himself. And when he cries unto God and feels that he could wash the feet of those he esteems to be the children of God; and he spends the night or part thereof in prayer; or in reading the Scriptures; searching the truth, then man, living in such a way, cannot help but think that his heart is submitted unto God. He cannot help, but think that this is so. Nevertheless, his heart still needs to be brought into submission. He is still at enmity and maintains his opposition to God. His self-righteousness is yet concealed from him, for he has not been called yet. He has yet to become *“light in the Lord.”* The calling is the yielding of the heart unto God. That is why the calling is so necessary. It is essential that God calls man by his name, for then his heart is submitted to God. We read about this submission, in Psalm 27: *“Thy voice said unto me; do seek my face. I answered Thee, I will Lord show Thy grace, be merciful to me and do not hide Thy face, O Lord, my God, stay at my side.”*

And so, the calling and that what takes place on the day of God’s power (Psalm 110:3) is the same, that is why the Holy Scriptures also say: *“And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”* (Rev. 22:17). And only then when man is called, does he understand that the yielding over of his heart could only have taken place by the same God: *“Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which are not as though they were.”* (Rom. 4: 17). No sooner is someone called, or he understands that the power which was necessary to create the world and to raise the Lord Jesus from the dead, was the same power which was needed, to yield his heart over unto the Lord.

27th January.

“And whom He called, them He also justified.” (Rom. 8:30c).

Justification is a fruit or a consequence of true faith. By nature, man is represented in our first head, Adam. And so, the guilt which Adam made, is for our reckoning. We are also corrupt because God, as a righteous God, withheld His image from us. We are unable to do any good and inclined to all evil. The Lord Jesus Christ alone has righteousness.

When this righteousness, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is pointed out to us in the Scriptures, as: “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:6), and we have embraced this through true faith, then we are righteous before God in Jesus Christ. The imputation of the guilt of Adam signifies our condemnation. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ signifies our justification.

The justification is not such, that one *is made* righteous through it. The justification is a deed of God as Judge, through which a sinner is *declared* righteous. Again: *declared righteous* and accepted by God, after the Holy Spirit has made it so, that he has become a *believer* in Christ Jesus.

The justification is therefore a declaration or statement from God. Where do we seek for such a declaration? It is in God’s Holy Word. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Rom. 8:1). So no condemnation for those who *believe*, for through faith, *through true faith*, man is in Jesus Christ: *“For the righteousness of God is revealed therein* (in the Gospel) *from faith to faith; as it is written: “The just shall live by faith.”* (Rom. 1:17.)

28th January.

“And whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Rom. 8:30d).

In the margins of the Dutch Staten Bible, we read the explanation of the word glorified: in these words: *“namely here in beginning through sanctification and adoption as children, and hereafter, through the full possession of the glorification.”*

Sanctification means to be set apart. Because, does not the Apostle Peter say: *“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”* (Acts 2:40). When man has been set apart and he is separated from the great majority, then that, is the sanctification of the Spirit. What is it from which this man is separated? From himself, for he comes to deny himself. The Lord Jesus once said, *“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”* (Luke 14:26). And again, we ask what has he done? He has given his all, and as one that was poor, he let himself be made rich. Mary spoke of this in her song of praise: *“He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.”* (Luke 1:53)

Something had to be abandoned, and something else has been accepted. Until that moment, man had sought to have both of them; his own and what belonged to Christ, although he had no knowledge of that, what was his, or what was Christ's. But man can read the Truth and hear the preaching his whole life and still retain his own. And sooner or later this will come to light.

Would you like to hear the words of such a separated person? Then listen to the testimony of the Apostle Paul in Phil. 3: 7, 8: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, etc.”* His object was that he might win Christ. This man is separated from the visible and material things of this world. He is not attached to them anymore. He has been removed from them.

29th January.

“The just shall live by faith.” (Rom. 1:17b).

What is life? Life is, to have the approval of God. God’s approval is the fruit of the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is embraced through faith. What happens when this has taken place? Then the Godly approval immediately comes to rest on the person, who through faith has embraced the righteousness of God in Christ. The Fatherly delight of God in His Son is then wonderfully tasted by him who through faith has embraced the righteousness of Christ. We must take heed of this divine approval, for in our days there are quite a few people who claim to understand these things, but they are not any happier because of it. They have no happiness, nor solidity within themselves. They miss the calmness, the peace of conscience which is so wonderful, “this peace which passeth all understanding”, as it is stated in Phil. 4:7. The people who do not believe that God is satisfied with them, have not heard, nor do they hear what the Lord says to His Church: “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.” (Isa 54: 8, 9). This is a sign that they have seen these things only superficially, for they do not possess true faith. For if they possessed true faith, even in the slightest measure, then they would believe that they have God’s approval, for it is all *through faith*. We are not able to comprehend what faith is until we possess it. Many people think that the experiences of pleasant emotions, mean that they have God's approval. But God gives His elect to experience His approval, by granting them the forgiveness of their sins.

30th January.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1: 29).

The words *“taketh away”* are written here in present tense. It is a work that continues: *“for in many things we offend all.”* (James 3:2) and Christ continually takes away sin. Not by suffering for it time and again: *“For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.”* (Rom. 6:10). And Christ continually presents His sacrifice before the Father, requesting therewith reconciliation, pardon, and acceptance for those who are His own.

“Behold the Lamb of God” Not with the bodily eye. Many people have seen Christ with this eye when He was on earth, however, without the understanding, that He takes away the sins of the world. And we must come to see Christ in such a way that we perceive that *He taketh away the sins of the world.*

Have you ever seen Christ in such a way, that you understood that He taketh away the sins of the world, and *your sins as well*, (for you also belong to the world)? That is faith. When man has faith, then he perceives this. By this, you can examine yourself if you possess true faith. We may speak of seeing the Lamb of God, but usually, this is not the true *seeing*. The upright *“seeing”* is, that man is then unable to go without this. When man through true faith sees the Lamb of God, he embraces Him. Before Christ is revealed unto him, man sometimes sees a little of these things from afar, namely; the possibility on God’s side for him to be saved. That is for his support, but it is not the soul-saving seeing. Man must never end in that and must never think, that this is something that could add or take away from his salvation. Salvation is only through the faith of appropriation. *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:16)

31st January.

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21).

If a man were to call upon the Name of the Lord; then he must no longer try to work toward his own salvation. Before man calls upon the Name of the Lord, he has tried to help himself by leading a better life, by prayer, by sighing, weeping and lamenting. And as long, as we spend our time doing that, we do not call upon the Name of the Lord, not even with our sighing, lamenting, and crying day and night. If man were to call upon the Name of the Lord; then he must no longer have any expectations from the Law, neither of all his doings of the Law; no, he must be undone.

If a person were to call upon the Name of the Lord; then there must be a great earnestness in him. For then he realizes that his life depends on eternal destruction, or eternal deliverance. If a person were to call upon the Name of the Lord, then he must know the Lord. And the Lord will be known when He comes to reveal Himself.

In our decaying Christianity, the great majority of those who call themselves Christians, believe that man gradually comes to the knowledge of Christ. They also think that faith grows in a similar way so that it is not necessary that man remembers a time when he knew none of these things, nor knew of a time about his lost state in Adam. They say that it is not necessary to know all this, it is enough, if you agree with it. Not a word is spoken about the revelation of Christ nor about the necessity thereof. However, man is mistaken. For if Christ is not revealed within our heart, then we know as much about Him, as one who has never heard of Him before. Therefore, we say that the calling on the Name of the Lord assumes the revelation of Christ. Remember, it is not, that a text just comes our way. Neither is it the offering of an earnest, heart-felt prayer. It is something else. It can be summarized in these words: *the revelation of Christ*.

1st February.

“But when it pleased God .to reveal His Son in me.” (Galatians 1:15a, 16a).

When the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the heart, then man realizes, that he had always sought it in the Law. No one would ever have been able to convince him otherwise. There were times when he found himself in such a pleasant frame of mind, and at times he could cry so wholeheartedly. And it seemed as if he could have cried himself to death, because of his longing toward God. Who or what would have been able to convince him that this was all the work of the Law? And it is impossible to convince him! He will be convinced of it, when the Lord Jesus has been revealed into the heart, he will be completely convinced, and he also knows, that his best works were never anything else, but the work of the Law. And he also understands that the workings with the Gospel and the workings with Christ commence, through the indwelling and leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus is revealed into the heart, then man understands the difference between his work and God’s work. Before that he had never known the real difference. What would he do, or what would he have done, if he had been permitted to go on like that? Then he would have placed *his* religious works on the accountability of the Holy Spirit. You can hear this everywhere! His prayers, the reading of the Bible, his sincerity, and whatever else, he would have considered that to be the work of the Holy Spirit, he would have done that, for as long as he had been permitted to do this. He did not know the difference between the flesh and Spirit, and no one had ever been able to show this unto him. But when the Lord Jesus is revealed in his heart, then no one needs to tell him anymore, for now he does understand! He now perceives that he had been working from below to above. And at the same time, he sees how God has come down from above, so low, that He came down below him. Only then does man understand the difference between flesh and Spirit; the difference between his own work and God’s work.

2nd February.

But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

We must not think that when it is written: “*Be ye holy, for I am holy*”, that something is expected from man. Terror may strike at the heart of one who reads this, yes, he may feel, that all is lost for him forever. For in himself, he notices nothing but what is the opposite. He is full of lusts and desires. And then to be holy as God is holy! Oh, one may sometimes think, that it is also finished forever.

But that is not God’s intention. When God says: “*Be ye holy, for I am holy*.”, then is that really, a promise given to us that we will be sanctified by God. Who says: “*Be ye holy, for I am holy?*” The Apostle Peter says: for the Lord: “*Who has called you*” and now these words can also be applied: *and: “Faithful is He that calleth you, Who is also able to do it.”* When a contrite man has cast his eyes on Jesus (and only a contrite man will do that), and then through Jesus on God, then I say again: if someone trembles inwardly before God’s judgment, and cast his eyes to the Gospel, where God appears not as a Destroyer but as a Saviour, then he will regard God, as He is in Christ Jesus. What does such a person do then? As frequently as it is given to go to Him Who has called him, he will say “*Lord, that which Thou has promised, I have need of, but of myself I am unable to bring that about. What I need and what Thou hast promised, may I await that of Thee? Wilt Thou grant it to me? With this request I come unto Thee, for Thou hast promised it to all those who by grace have cast their eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Thy love.*” Then the heart is no longer terror-stricken. On the contrary, it rejoices that this is written, and we also read this in another verse: “*That they might know that I the Lord sanctify them.*” (Ezek. 20: 12). That is why there is always a great deal of shamefacedness in the Church of the Lord, for every believer, however, he will not leave God, but he will say: “*Do Thou as Thou hast said.*” (Sam.2:7:25).

3rd February.

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” (Ps. 19:7).

Man is unable to bring about his own conversion. He is unable to convert himself. There may continually be many changes in life, which do happen in one's life; however, a complete inward change known as conversion, is entirely out of man's reach. The Scripture says: *“For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the LORD God.”* (Jer. 2: 22).

Man is unable to bring about his own conversion. He tries to, at least it appears that he does, but he does not really do it. He has absolutely no knowledge what conversion really is. And he must give it up. And sooner or later, he will discover that from his side, it is impossible. We need to learn this; we must know how incapable we are. We must acknowledge and embrace this; otherwise man continues to expect it from himself. Nor must he be encouraged to continue in his efforts to convert himself. No! Man must be taught that this is impossible, for he must learn to make use of the power of Someone else. It says in God's Testimony: *“Or let him take hold of My strength.”* (Is. 27: 5). That is how far we must be brought. How will that take place? No one knows. Neither does anyone know *what* it is. But we must be brought to that point. That is why it is so necessary that man learns to let go of his fellowman, of himself, and of his neighbour. He must give up expecting anything of himself, and say with the Psalmist: *“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.”* (Ps. 121: 1, 2).

These are great and wonderful matters, to be able to expect it from the Lord, and to be willing to do this. When man has been brought *that* far, *that* he can and will wait, then he has reached that point. Then the work is done, for it says: *“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”* (Isa. 1: 19).

4th February.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5: 6).

A wrong explanation has been given to the words *“hunger and thirst.”* When man changes, and becomes serious, or as they say; he becomes occupied with the matters regarding eternity, and at times receiving some insight, or some feelings in his soul, then it is said that this is; the hungering and thirsting after righteousness. However, that is not it!

Perhaps one may think: how will I be able to tell the difference? “For to be honest, I think that, this is: *“a hungering and thirsting after righteousness”*. I do not understand that this can be contradicted. I do not feel satisfied with it really, and most of the time I cannot put my trust in it, for I do not know if it is from the Lord. Oh, if only I knew! If only I do not deceive myself in this. And alas, if this is not a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, how will I come to know, or is it impossible for me to receive this knowledge?”

Man will come to know this, when it is given him, to truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. For in *that very moment*, when it is given to him to hunger and thirst after righteousness, he perceives the difference from what he has now received, from what he had thought or had hoped beforehand to be *the hungering and thirsting*.

Actually, we should not go into these things too often; and especially not probe too much in these matters, for; we must become converted! There is no need for us to know something, *no*, we must know this; that we *must* become converted, and conversion is *the teaching of God*. For it says: *“Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.”* (John 6: 45). *“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”* (Isa. 54: 13). We need the Lord’s teaching, that is, of the Word and the Holy Spirit. And when it is given to us to receive this teaching, then all things are resolved and explained.

5th February.

“It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. (Isa. 66: 18).

To come is to believe. These two expressions are interwoven. For example, we read in John 6: 35: *“And Jesus said unto them, ‘I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.’”*

What is this coming? People often think that it is a; *trying to come*. These people are a bit restless, and they attempt to come to a Jesus Who has not been revealed unto them. This is what man then calls *“coming”*. That is how they are taught in the churches, and in the gatherings as well. The one explains it to the other, and they almost all accept it in that way, but in reality it is so different!

Coming to Christ assumes that one has a need, he needs everything. One who does not feel that he misses everything will not come. *“He has filled the hungry with good things.”* (Luke 1: 53). Man may say: “I miss the Lord, yet nevertheless, I still would not like to deny everything.” And this is exactly what holds you back from the Lord. If you presume that you possess something, and you still miss God, then you have nothing, and all that you perceive to possess is nothing but a mere delusion, which sooner or later will be revealed to every unconverted person. Acknowledgement, and the feeling of need is necessary. That is why the Lord Jesus has said: *“They that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.”* (Matt. 9: 12). *“To come”* assumes to have been called. *“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”* (Luke 19:5). If man has nothing left but that which makes him damnable before God, then he is called by Christ, which is meant in these words: *“And he calleth His own sheep by name.”* (John 10: 3). If man comes to Christ, then it is evident that he sees everything in Him. The Apostle writes to the Colossians: *“But Christ is all and in all.”* (Col. 3:11). If man were ever to come unto Christ; he must have seen this first.

6th February.

“And they shall come and see My glory.” (Isaiah 66:18b).

A person who has been called, and who has come, and has beheld the glory of God, has come to know his lost condition in Adam, and when that has happened: everything falls away; and then he has nothing, but, a feeling of guilt and sin. His work as well as his person lie under the curse. Man seeks to uphold himself in his strivings and is strengthened in this by the churches of our days, but it is all in vain. But God's work *is important*, otherwise the Apostle would not have said in Galatians 3: 4: *"If it be yet in vain!"*

But the work that man does without God, is without any value. That is what he must learn, or he will never know his state of death. When he has come to understand himself in his state of death, then he realizes that he has always gone about it the wrong way. And that he found himself in a state of enmity and aversion toward God, and kept himself in a state of mere delusion. In the second place: he that is called has come and has beheld the glory of God, and he has sought and found it *out of himself*. In his heart are the words of the Apostle Paul: *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* (1 Cor. 2: 2).

In the third place: such a man is renewed, understanding with his heart what the Apostle expressed in the words: *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor. 5: 17). We may experience many changes without being renewed. If we are changed but not renewed, we do nothing else but wander about, removing ourselves further away from God and testifying with our deeds: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14). Lastly, take notice of these things; for you are not warned about them anymore. The very opposite is taught. And you must take special notice of the work of the Spirit in your heart. When you have learned to do that, you will find it to be so. A person who has beheld God's glory, is brought to do God's will and he prays: *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"* (Acts 9: 6).

7th February.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.” (Psalm 110: 3a).

What does man see in the day of God's power? It is then that he beholds the King in His glory. He beholds Him as a Saviour, as Prophet, Priest, and King. And he now understands the man who sold everything for the treasure which he had found in the field. He has now found the Pearl of great value. And now he searches only for God and for nothing outside of Him. He now knows where it is and what it is. He loves and trusts the Lord regarding temporal things as well as to spiritual and eternal matters. Isn't that wonderful? And he received all this in just *one* moment! It wasn't there beforehand. There was only judgment and condemnation; everything had sunken away from under his feet, and then suddenly it was: *“Let there be light and there was light.”* (Gen. 1: 13). It is a day of light, and in this light, he beholds all things necessary. He sees the Lord, and he sees what is in himself, his fellowmen, the prince of darkness, discernment of what is true or false, so that he can no longer be deceived.

It is a day of wonder; he goes up and down, or he lies down and cries out: *“I never thought that this was possible.”* He also acknowledges that he has never asked for it before, because he now realizes the difference between what the calling and the seeking through faith is. I have observed that there are many people who have passed away, and who to all appearances have sought for it for many years but have not been able to obtain it. The matters were not immediately clear to me however, I came to understand them all in *one moment*. Man must learn to differentiate between seeking and seeking, tears and tears, faith and faith, prayers and prayers, and between conversion and conversion.

We have received an open Bible and we have been given an open heart, and an understanding about the basic concept of the matters, although many wavering steps must still be taken.

8th February.

“Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Matt. 7: 7).

We pray. I do it and you do it as well. You pray each morning and evening, before and after meals, and hopefully you have certain times which you have set aside to lay down before God, to pour out your heart unto Him. But we must compare our prayers with the prayer of the Church, and of the believer as we find it written in the Holy Scriptures. Do you do that? Have you ever done that? We must compare our prayer with *“Our Father.”* Christ has been so good as to teach his disciples this prayer, when they asked Him: *“Lord, teach us to pray.”* (Luke 11:1). You must admit that every prayer is not a true prayer. It isn't true, just because it has the name of *“prayer”*. The publican went up to pray in the temple, and the Pharisee also went up to pray, yet his prayer was not an upright prayer.

A true prayer is a fruit of faith. Do you understand that? Do you understand it when I say that: *“A true prayer is a fruit of faith?”* Prayer take notice; does not come first, it is faith which comes first. Yes, let this sink deep into your soul!

Because I think that you would have said: that prayer comes first and then faith, for after all we have prayed for faith and conversion. But you are wrong: and I have the truth on my side: that prayer is a fruit of faith. Do you understand that? A fruit of faith, which is really very clear, for it is stated that God will pour out upon His Church: *“the Spirit of grace and of supplication.”* (Zech. 12: 10) This Spirit is the Spirit of faith. When a person believes, then he has fruit, and the first fruit is prayer. Once again, when a person believes, then he is also able to answer the second question of the Catechism: *“How many things are necessary for you to know, that you in this comfort, may live and die happily?”* Answer: *“Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such a deliverance.”* The Apostles James and Paul speak in the same manner in James 1: 6, 7 and we also find it in Romans 14:23.

9th February.

“In Thy light shall we see light.” (Psalm 36: 9b).

Man *sees* in this light. In the heart and in the soul of this man there is true light, a window has been placed through which the light streams inside. And when he became aware of this, he could say with the one who was born blind: *“One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”* (John 9: 25). This is the experience of all of God's children.

And what is it that he can see? Ah, the matters are of such great importance, that we should never speak about them without hesitation. Not because they are not true, nor that they are uncertain, but because they are so glorious. He then sees God in His glory. In all probability he has read about God, and he has spoken about the Lord, often mentioning His Name, but he had still lacked the true knowledge. And it is now that he comes to realize this! He would never have seen it, had he not been enlightened.

When you come to consider this, then you understand that the truth will be spoken against. It is not the truth, when you speak about Truth and you are not contradicted. You will also understand that God's people must be the *filth* and the very *offscourings* as the Apostle Paul says in. (1 Cor. 13). These things are not valued, because the world does not know them. They do not know God, in His glory, in the Lord Jesus. God's glory is manifested in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And God dwells in an unapproachable light. No one must think that he could ever approach a Being who dwells in such a light. But God has revealed Himself, He has become flesh; and He became man. In His human nature, he manifests Himself so that His glory, the glory of His righteousness, of His holiness, of His grace, of His goodness, of His love, and of His mercifulness, is seen and beheld in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a discovery that man would never have had before this time.

10th February.

“For I say unto you: That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5: 20).

By the Kingdom of heaven, we must understand nothing else, than that it is the state of man in which he enjoys the favour of God and His glory. This state of man can be distinguished into two parts. We speak about the state of grace and the state of glory. The state of grace is the spiritual ruling of God in the heart by His Word and Spirit, so that this man has learned to pray with Paul of Tarsus: *“Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”* The state of glory is the enjoyment of the immediate communion with God (so not through faith) in Jesus Christ in heaven. The entering in to the Kingdom of heaven, is the receiving of salvation.

So it is out of the question - that the Lord Jesus Christ meant - that anyone who was not clothed with the cloak of righteousness and adorned with the Spirit of Jesus Christ was able to enter. For, take heed, where the righteousness of Jesus Christ is, there is His Spirit also.

We stand closer to the Pharisees than we may think or consider. We say that it is good to place ourselves under God's testimonies. But do we do that with the opening of our hearts? We believe that we must obey our parents. But do we bring our obedience in Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul says: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord.”*? (Eph. 6:1). We are all convinced that we are commanded to seek God's face. But do we unite this seeking with the bending of the knees of the heart? Our righteousness is also an outward righteousness. For we do not know God. So, it then speaks for itself that there is also no upright knowledge of what we are in ourselves. The knowledge of God and the knowledge of oneself are two distinct matters, but they are always found together. The Lord Jesus Christ is an unknown God. Who is there among us, who can explain how the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed unto him, and what this revelation has brought about in his heart and in his life?

11th February.

“Ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.”
(Jude 3)

We beseech you to be reconciled with God in Jesus Christ; and to accept the Holy Spirit out of the fullness of Jesus Christ; and through Him to be regenerated and renewed. We beseech you to be converted to God. When we speak like that, we do not forget that it is all the work of the Holy Spirit. But since we all are rational creatures, we may and must speak to you in this way.

When you possess the infinite privilege that God has brought you to Himself, then you know, that there is not the slightest reason for you to be haughty. For everything that you possess, you have received from Someone else: *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?”* (1 Cor. 4: 7).

We commit you to devote your whole heart to obtain a strong faith. It is the greatest blessing that can be rendered to your family, friends, parents, and to the people around you; so that when you possess true faith you also explain it. People need that. We are threatened by two great powers; the power of communism and the power of the Roman Catholic Church. You can only come through all this, if you have true faith, that is, when God has placed you with those of whom we read in Heb. 11: *“Through faith. etc”* Again I say, that is the greatest blessing which you can bestow on your fellowmen, if you are enabled by the Lord to confess and to shed light on true faith.

When you possess the unsurpassable privilege to have been brought in communion with God, then watch: *“that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”* (Eph. 4: 1). Cleave unto the Lord, and follow Him through good and through evil.

12th February.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” saith the Lord of Hosts. (Zech. 4: 6b).

It comes of its own accord. When I say this, then I mean that it is God Who does it. That is why it is so important that we learn to wait and see. For it to be right, there must have been a moment, wherein we were placed aside, and allowed God to do the work. It is not written in vain when it is stated: *“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of host.”*

Jacob was given to do this when he was with Laban. For twenty long years he had to wait and yearn for it, and it has not been in vain: *“Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”* (Hab. 2: 3) However, it was not given to Saul to wait. He grabbed what he could. And we know how fateful, how foolish, how miserable, yea, how wicked his end was.

The world does everything without God. If it is not with the mouth, then it is still with the heart which says: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14). Why is this? The world is too gratifying, it has too much knowledge and too much power. And as long, as man has knowledge, strength, and thinks well of himself and of his intentions, he is still at enmity with God.

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.” (Isaiah 66:2). God lays hold on us, and from our side there must be subjection. That is what it is! Everything else is conceit. *“He will regard the prayer of the destitute.”* (Ps. 102: 17). Therefore, tarry and wait for it.

John the Baptist was given to do that. John saw Jesus come unto him, and in his heart, he received a sign, of that whereof the Bride witnessed, when she called out: *“The voice of my Beloved! Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.”* (Song of Solomon 2: 8).

13th February.

“And ye are complete in Him.” (Col. 2:10).

When one has truly come to behold the Lamb of God, that is, when he has been united with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, then he dwells in complete safety, because beholding is believing. Do you also know and believe that? For the Apostle Paul does not say that to just a few, but unto the whole Church of Christ” *“And ye are complete in Him.”*

But, what about my sins? Perhaps one may think: “minister, it is as if you do not know what sin is!” Oh, let's not talk about that! The Scripture says: *“Ye are complete in Him.”* And we leave the Scripture as it is. *“For upon all the glory shall be a defence,”* (Isaiah 4:5) and, *“The Lord knoweth them that are His.”* (2 Tim. 2: 19). He also knows what He has wrought in Christ. He will not forsake the works of His own hands. *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* (Phil. 1:6).

But what about sin? You may confess them, but they are forgiven. When one prays: *“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,”* then he has addressed God as “Father”, even if he did not use this Name. He prays unto a reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus.

But surely, sin must be forgiven? I have told you: that they *are* forgiven, namely, to them that are in Christ Jesus: *“There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”* (Rom.8:1). And you may confess them, for the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and for the comfort the Holy Spirit, and to enjoy them by renewing.

14th February.

“In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.” (Prov. 14: 26).

The confidence is strong because (just to mention something), man has the assurance in himself that it is not for his own cause, but that it concerns the cause of God. Man is taught and led by the Lord; and he is constantly led deeper into the truth, so that he is continually dejected because of the mighty interventions of the Lord. But the Lord will raise him up and will comfort him, time and again, so that he calls out with the psalmist in Psalm 27: 8: *“When Thou saidst. Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”*

It is the Lord, Who warns us, for it does not remain with the first attempt to lead us astray. Time and again man returns, and who shall say what is devised at the gates of hell to come and break the spiritual neck of him, a poor child of God? For example, the Lord warns like He warned Ahijah, who then called out: *“Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam.”* (1 Kings 14:6)

Perhaps there are experiences from former years, and there may be memories of them. That is why the Apostle Paul wrote: *“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”* (2 Cor. 1: 10) There is a boldness of heart to draw near to God, and to make our troubles known unto Him, and to pray: *“Why go I mourning because of the oppression and of the enemy. O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles.”* (Ps. 43 2-3).

It may be that you wonder whether the word *“oppression”*, has a proper place in this Psalm. This expression is certainly suited here, for true faith often is nothing but a crying out of the depths of misery and out of the greatest difficulties.

15th February.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth forever” (Psalm 111:10).

There is no fear of God, before justification. The fear of God is a fruit of true saving faith, and this faith is a justifying faith. It is also the means whereby we are sanctified. But before we are sanctified, we are justified by faith. Where the justification takes place, there is also the fear of God. These two matters are inseparably bound together.

No one fears God by nature. How could that be possible? Man does not know the Lord. Would anyone be able to say what the true fear of God is, without receiving the gift of the uniting and justifying faith? No! How could he? By nature, man is not a friend of the Lord; he flees from Him. He attempts to avoid Him by saying: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14).

The first demand is, that we believe, and that we are united unto the Lord, and that we have communion with God in Christ Jesus. But what does the fear of the Lord consist of? Let's just mention a few things. The fear of the Lord presumes that we have a deep impression of God, that we have some knowledge of Him; a knowledge (that is to say) that makes us to leave all what is ours. Isaiah called out: *“Woe is me! For I am undone,”* (Is. 6: 5), and Job said: *“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”* (Job 42: 5, 6). And at the same time, as he feels his own insignificance, Jacob's word was: *“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth.”* (Gen. 32: 10)

The fear of God is to be concerned; concerned that we dishonour Him. We read in Proverbs 28: 14: *“Happy is the man that feareth alway.”* What does this person fear? His fear is to dishonour God and to live without Him, and to stray from the right path.

16th February.

“Follow peace with all men.” (Hebr. 12: 14a)

How pleasant it is, when we live in peace with our surroundings. For the opposite is very sad. But, if we still have peace with God under those circumstances, *have peace* (take notice of these two words) what is there then that could hinder us? I am unable to suggest anything. Sometimes the prince of darkness can bring man to the edge of the precipice, but no further, for, what the Holy Spirit has brought into the heart, there is no temptation or conflict which can take that away. For, the gift of the Holy Spirit comes from the Holy Spirit Himself, and He will conquer the prince of darkness. The circumstances can be very difficult (and for whom are they not difficult?) and they could well become even more difficult. But for those who have peace, through the grace of God are able to stand up against the worst of them. People can be against him. He may have hostility in his own surroundings. But basically, it is not really hostility. For it is only from the side of the people, from the side of the visible, but not from the side of the invisible. For, there has never been a child of God, who has said that he had peace with *everything*. The Apostle Paul has made it known in more than *one* text, but especially with these words: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”* (Rom. 8: 28).

When a child of God is offended, or slighted in any way, then he does feel this. And if he were permitted, then he would end in the one who had done him wrong. But he has not been allowed to do that. Because it is given to him to end in God, Who makes use of the ones who have acted unjustly, in one way or the other. *That is what it is, to have peace!*

And that is why there is always the inclination to forgive. Not upon this or that condition. That is hypocrisy! Peace is not nurtured by the confession, neither by the authenticity of the confession. No, peace just exists! A peace with God and with all men.

17th February.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.” (Hebr. 11:30).

We do not have to capture a city, but a much heavier burden rests on our shoulders. We must conquer our sins. All sins! And if the Lord were to come right now, then He should find us in conflict against all sin. The means, by which we can overcome sin is through faith. John wrote: *"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* (1 John 5:4).

But alas says a child of God, I suffer defeat so many times. Yet it is my intention to stay with the Lord, but I am not always successful. It is written: *"But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."* (Matt. 24: 13). Do not lose courage! Strive and keep on striving! Ultimately, you will see what the struggle of faith will yield. The triumphant Church has been victorious through the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 12:11). It is faith, which takes hold of this blood.

It did not have the appearance that they would conquer the city by going around it, but they did what was commanded of them. And we also need to do that. The printed Word, which we have in front of us now, does not have the appearance of being able to bring us to behold God Who is invisible to all people, or that through this revelation we would be brought so far as to deny ourselves, and to seek it in Him, So, be not held back by the appearance. It did not appear that Naaman by washing himself in the river Jordan, would be healed, and yet he was healed through these means. You can see this in the life of the eunuch. Yet it took place through the Word. However, when it was the eunuch himself that took hold of the Word, nothing happened. But while the eunuch was listening to what Philip had to say, then he took hold of the Word, and then the Holy Spirit came with the Word, and that is when it took place. We are bound to the means, and you must allow yourself to be bound.

18th February.

“This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.” (Isaiah 43:21).

Life is: to confess Christ and to let this confession follow the faith of the heart. The world needs this. And God requires it! Perhaps you see how poor the world is. How wicked and guilty, but also how poor she is, for she searches for it here, while everything calls out: “It is not here! After all, for the person who lives and dies without the Lord Jesus Christ, everything is a disappointment, and it will evidently turn out to be a disappointment. The greatest good is, that you can separate yourself from this world; the world of your family, of your relations, of your acquaintances. This, that you confess that there is deliverance in Jesus Christ, a deliverance for an eternity!

“Cast thy bread upon the waters.” If you do it in this way, then you have done it with love. Do it, and you shall be blessed: *“For thou shalt find it after many days”*, this is God’s Word and His promise. We also read this in Song of Solomon 4: 2, and 6: 6: *“There is not one barren among them.”* (The congregation here is compared to a flock of sheep). The Church of Christ is fruitful through the Word, and therefore she has received this command: *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:15, 16). Make a regular and earnest use of the Bible. Read and search the Bible Use the marginal notes in your research. These are exceptional comments. Consider what you read, praying continually. Do not wait until you have need of prayer. And don’t say: *“Oh, you say: pray continually: but man is unable to pray”*. That has not been said in a humble way, but in haughtiness. Through the grace of God, be simple and never theorize. Have no joy in these things, don’t argue about the Truth. If you are able, say a few about words about these matters. Be friendly to everyone; greeting all men. And I say again: if you are able, say a few words. If it is accepted, then God has used you; and if it is not accepted, your peace shall turn to you again. (Luke 10: 6)

19th February.

“For as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” (Acts 28: 22).

A person who preaches the Gospel, is a person who will be contradicted. The world will say: *“Concerning this sect”*, of course, for all the others are *church*, and it speaks for itself that all the others are *“church”*: and Christ’s Congregation is a sect. John the Baptist had to experience that as well. At first, many came to hear him. However, a short time later, hundreds resolved to leave, and what was there that he was left with in the end! And that is how it will go now as well. Where there is a constant audience, people are held together with other bonds. But where the Gospel is, there it must always be, that there are some who now and then, withdraw themselves, sometimes in whole groups. Where this does not take place, the Gospel is not present!

From this, we must learn that God is not glorified any less in those who withdraw from the Gospel, than in those who accept the Gospel, for this is all the same workings. Through the workings of the Gospel, in the hand of the Spirit, one is drawn and the other is cast off; even as the same sun makes the one hard and softens the other. That is why it has once been said, and rightly so. *“That God shall not be glorified in a lesser degree in those that go lost, then in those that shall be saved.”*

Now it all depends on one question, and the question is: *“Has the Gospel for us, personally; become a savour of life unto life?”* What a beautiful expression; *“a savour of life unto life!”* (2 Cor. 2: 16).

Do not rest before you have an answer to this question. And if you have a good answer to this question, then you know that strife and often heavy crosses are bound to the preaching and confessing of the Gospel. We read in Matt. 16: 24: *“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

20th February.

“And when He had spoken this, He saith unto Him: ‘Follow Me.’” (John 21:19).

Have you thought deeply, about the contents of these words: *"Follow Me"*? What would we be able to tell each other about these words? Very little, I fear!

Do you know what is often lacking by the remnant, according to the election of grace? This: *"I die daily."* (1 Cor. 15: 31). And: *"We which live, are always delivered unto death."* (2 Cor. 4: 11). This is then also the reason why we perceive so few mysteries. That is the cause why there is such a spiritual need in our lives. The Church of Christ is lacking so much these days! And this is the cause of it.

Follow the Lord. Try to find out what the Lord requires of you! For you cannot follow the Lord, before you know this. You must search and know what the Lord wants of you.

How do we live? We live after our own pleasure and lust. We select a profession. We start a business. We get married. We do this and that with our children, etc, etc. Just be honest, up until this time, you may have done everything without God? See, and that is not a following of the Lord.

There must be a design in our lives, so that we come to know what the Lord call has called us for. There is a profession a business. And it is already quite something, when we ask: May I accept this profession or this business? But there must be much more: *Is it Thy will* that I start this business, etc? That would be following the Lord. We are confronted with this life daily, that is, our life comes before us every day, with its prosperities or adversities; pleasant and unpleasant matters. And then we are called to consider how *we stand* in regarding those matters. If we neglect this, our life will overtake us, and we will lack the answers to these questions which life demands of us. How do we stand in regard to this life? For, that should be the work of a converted person! What a treasure he would then receive, a treasure of wisdom stemming forth out of a spiritual knowledge. And maybe he could then be a treasured service to his fellowmen!

21stFebruary.

"I shall teach thee." (Ps. 32:8a).

Who does God mean? He means you, me, and everyone. Everyone can profit from this privilege, as long as he can come to deny himself and wait, and look upon the Lord. For that is when he is ready to allow himself to receive help, and acknowledges that he is incapable of himself, and that he is the person who is the object of this promise. That is how we learn to live; live in regard to temporal, spiritual and eternal matters.

"I shall teach thee." That is why you should not take your refuge in your fellowmen. *"Put not your trust in princes."* (Psalm 146:3). We would like to call unto you: "Don't do that! Don't do that!" You don't need people. As long as *you* are willing to make use of God's power and willingness. For then you come to stand on your own feet. But if you forsake God, you will fall into the hands of men. David prayed: *"Let me not fall into the hand of man."* (2 Sam. 24: 14).

Our flesh and blood hear and see lions in the way. But these lions are not there; and even if they were, they would not have the strength to harm us. Follow God ... and you will be surer and safer, than if you had an army of millions to protect you. Do you believe that? *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."* (Ps. 91:1).

The Lord says in this word: you must not teach Me. for I have no need of thee, but you need Me. I do not depend on thee, but you do depend on Me. Neither must you teach yourself, for you are not the man or the person to do that. Your mind is darkened, and you always choose that which is harmful. You have no power to bring about that which you have chosen.

Happy is the man who realizes now and by renewal that he has not lived in the right way. For that would be true knowledge of what he is, *that is self-denial*. And I know for certain, that if you and I were to question each other regarding self-denial, we would be unable to say much. That is lost; we no longer know what self-denial is.

22nd February.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” (1 John 5:10a).

Through faith, man understands that the righteousness of God is offered to him personally. He sees that God gives him this righteousness, and now he receives it out of God's hand. He bears the testimony of this in his heart, and this testimony is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. When man has accepted this righteousness of God out of God's hand, then he knows that he has done this. I have heard it said many times: "A man can be in possession of this without knowing it." But this is only true to a certain extent, for man can never stretch out his hand to God's righteousness, when he does not have the evidence that this righteousness was offered to him.

Knowledge and trust without the assurance is not true faith. Our forefathers who were taught these matters by experience, said that the assurance which is in faith can never be separated from true faith. If someone would say that he has no assurance but that his faith is the true faith of God; then this cannot be considered as the true work of the Holy Spirit regarding the grace of true faith.

But,” someone may ask, “what about the temptations?” The people who possess faith are open to inward warfare; however, temptations are not part of their faith. The believer has to deal with temptations all his life, yet again I say: in true faith itself, there is assurance. And the Holy Scripture calls this: *“the full assurance of hope.”* (Heb. 6: 11)

During the Reformation, the Church of Christ, refused to commune with those that spoke against these things. If there was a minister that taught a doctrine that deviated from the pure truth, such a minister would then be excommunicated according to the discipline of the Christian Church. Such ministers were called: *“the hired barkers of the antichrist”*, by our fore-fathers And I agree whole-heartedly with this, and I hope that you also agree with our fore-fathers!

23rd February.

“Jesus answered them, and said: My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” (John 7:16).

Every minister must be able to say these two things:” *that he is sent*” and *“that his doctrine is not his own.”* And every hearer must be able to say: my doctrine is not my own. You must ask yourself, if you can say this with an upright heart, without your conscience accusing and indicting you, you must be able to say: my doctrine is not my own. That is how it must be in your heart! If you hesitate, then you must still be taught, by the One Who has said, that: *"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."* (Is. 54:13).

Man has opinions and insights, for he believes in himself. That is why all this has to be brought to nought, and instead of his own insights; he must believe in God: so that he can say in his heart: *“There shall no evil befall me, neither shall any plague come nigh.”* (Psalm 91:10).

You must never think that there is anything different that can be said; about a so called "weak faith" than about a "strong faith", for there is only one faith, and our Catechism calls this: *"true faith"*. Observe these writings and keep to the definitions which are given in these wonderful writings! Only these are true. Everything that differs from them is misleading. Just read Lord's Day 7 and place the question before you, whether that is the explanation of what you hold for your faith on the ground of what God has made known unto you. You must be able to say: "I had my opinions and thoughts, just like everyone else, but it pleased God to reveal Himself unto me, and then I saw that my opinions and thoughts were not true, that even my whole religion was not true." You must also be able to say: "I saw that I would have deceived myself and that, with that deceit in my heart, I would have had to appear before God!" Everyone who has been taught by the Lord through His Word and Spirit, is able to say that, without any difficulty, because it is an established truth for them.

24th February.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8).

The word *darkness* signifies man in his natural state. What is this state? Man, as he is born is a descendant of Adam, and is guilty. He is guilty through the imputed sin, and guilty through the sins that he commits himself throughout his life. He is corrupt as well, so corrupt, that he is incapable to fulfil his tasks and callings. His understanding is darkened, and his will is perverse. His affections are disorderly; his judgment has gone astray, and his conscience errs as well. The Church of Jesus Christ has always seen this. She confesses: *"If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?"* But she can also add, *"But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."* (Ps. 130: 3, 4).

"But now are ye light in the Lord." The light is the Gospel. The psalmist of Psalm 119 says: *"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* (Verse 105). Faith embraces the Gospel. When a believer embraces the Gospel, then the Gospel is in his heart, and he is a child of light. That is what the Apostle Paul means. Such a one is born of the light. This is not only mentioned in the Gospel, but it is also perceived by the one who has embraced the Gospel. Otherwise it could not be said: *"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."* (John 9:25).

"Walk as children of light." Without doubt, the pardoned sinner has faith in Christ. He not only believes but also confesses Him. A person is not a true Christian, by only just believing. For you know how these two matters are joined together, we read about them in Rom. 10:9: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* This confession comes from the mouth and especially, through his life in general. For it says: *"For the tree is known by his fruit."* (Matt. 12: 33).

25th February.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Is. 5:20).

This is the calling of the Congregation of Christ, also in this present time, so that through the grace of faith, she is brought to the conviction which stands in the sharpest contrast with the time in which she lives; in the sharpest contrast with the life of churches and politics of today. This must be taught to her through the grace of the Holy Spirit. And the initial light that is given unto her will lead her, and her light will increase in the ways into which she will be led, So that these words will be fulfilled: *"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* (Prov. 4: 18).

Is a man who possesses grace, a patriot? Does he have any patriotic love? Yes, he more than anyone! Because of this, and through the grace of the Holy Spirit, he can see what forces there are at work; which seem to pretend to seek the good of the nation, although they bring about the nations downfall. That is why, he stands distinctly against this through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and for the will of God. A man who possesses grace is through God's will sometimes also separated from the established churches. And his patriotism? He lives and falls with his nation when times are fearful; although his downfall will only be in regard to his body. He lives and dies with his nation. Patriotism is the fruit of a life with grace! He grieves and was not without sanctified tears, about what he saw and what he had to leave, and what he had to give up. He condemns his own opinions, and he will also condemn the opinions of those close to him. He will say: *"To the Law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."* (Isaiah 8: 20).

26th February.

“He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because He has borne it upon him.” (Lam. 3:28).

If the LORD has become your Portion, and when that is the reason why you have begun to put your hope in Him (Lam. 3: 24), then you will receive or you have already received a view of the instituted church. And that is how you will learn what an instituted church is.

First of all, we must be in the Church, that is: through true faith to be united with Christ. And then we learn what the instituted church is. We may, however, call this a second grace. For then we will come to know, how this church came into being: what was needed for that, and what the foundation of such a church is, and what it should still be now. For if they would have understood that in times past, then they would have acted in a different manner than they did in 1834 and in 1886, and in the whole of the 19th century, and in this century. Something completely different! Ledeboer, who established many congregations, had to admit.” “The beginning was carnal, and the continuance was carnal.” For he had done it without God. And what could be said about other churches? I don't mean this in regard, to their members, but about the doctrine.

They have tried to re-establish, that, what was once: the Dutch Protestant Church. Ignorance! Again: man has no knowledge of what is necessary for that. They don't even know what *has to* be re-established. They just go to work. Re-establishment can only take place when the Spirit has been poured out in abundance over a nation. Only then! Then it would be felt, not by just a few who think they feel it, but by all the people of God. Then great matters would take place. They would then become aware that God was with us. But now, man who possesses grace is sorrowful: *“for the solemn assembly”* (Zeph. 3: 18), because he feels that he is called, in the Name of God, to withdraw himself from everything and sit still, *“still unto God. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because He has borne it upon him.”*

27th February .

“Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. 3:20).

When a person has not come to know himself through the light of God's Spirit, then he does not know the perfect Law of God, so he has no knowledge of his sins: *"For by the Law is the knowledge of sin."* Only then when man comes to know himself, does he receive the knowledge of what his sins are. He thinks that his sins consist in; that he doesn't always speak the truth, or maybe he has sworn sometimes. But he does not know that there were other sins before these sins; and these sins would not be, if the other sin had not been there. Before these sins, there was that sin, that he had no knowledge of God, that he had never put his trust in Him, never asked after Him but always had said: *"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21: 14).

Man does not perceive that out of these sins, all the other sins flow forth. In other words, the sins against the second table of the Holy Law would not have been committed, had he not sinned against the first table of the Law. Man will never know this, unless God shows him the spirituality of the Law. When that takes place, then he understands the word of the Apostle in Romans 7: 7: *"I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not covet."*

What is God's purpose to work in man through the means of the Law? We should meditate on this question! Our answer to this question is, to bring to nought all that man thinks that he has, and what he can do for himself; to bring to nought his understanding which he thinks he has; to bring to nought his desire to do all the good that he thinks he can do; to bring to nought the strength that he thinks he has. It is said in one word, to bring to nought all his imaginations, and his own glorification. According to the insight which God has given me in this matter, this is God's purpose in working with a sinner through the Law.

28th February.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1Cor. 24).

Christ is the Person who through the Holy Spirit, is introduced into the heart of a condemned sinner, as the Power and Wisdom of God. That is how He comes to us to reveal Himself as the Wisdom, instead of our wisdom; and as the Power, instead of our power. Those who have learned something about this, or are in the process of learning this, and will understand along with others, these two texts: Ps. 84:5: *“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them”*; and in Ps. 36: 9: *“In Thy light shall we see light.”*

And because Christ is such a Person who is the Power and the Wisdom of God, it is therefore impossible that man would know Him, unless his own glory has been brought to nought. The Apostle Paul says it in these words: *“For I was alive without the Law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”* (Rom. 7: 9). For who will accept that praying is sin, that crying is sin, and that desiring is sin? Who will agree with that? (Now I do not speak here about a pardoned prayer, or a gracious prayer, or gracious desiring prayer). And only those who have seen themselves, will be of the same opinion for they have seen themselves by the light of the Holy Spirit which is the mirror of the Law. This must be accepted first. For if man does not accept this, then he will never come to an end with praying, crying, and desiring, and he will never find out that God has no pleasure in it. That is why the Law must be preached, and needs to be preached strictly (as the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us so clearly). This should not be understood in such a way, that we should use fearful words, but it should be done in such a way that the purpose of the Law is clearly revealed. It then applies; that the best that we think we have, is nothing! For the Apostle Paul says: *“Through the Law is the knowledge of sin.”* (Rom 3:20).

29th February.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” (John 5:25).

You must consider yourself as you are, and if you do this, you will behold yourself as separated from God and your fellowmen. When you realize this, then you will see, that in spite of everything, you have remained separated from God, and you experience that you are condemnable before God, and this condemnation embraces you. And as long, as you do not see your separation from God, you will be unable to see your damnable state before God. But if you experience that you are and always were separated from God, then it is not hard to condemn yourself and to glorify God, for then you embrace the truth through the workings of the Holy Spirit. You realize that you never knew salvation; neither did you ever seek it. The Gospel tells this man something; yes, it tells him everything. And because the Gospel tells him everything, he hears the voice of the Gospel as the Words of Christ: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you; the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”* That is how they come unto the Gospel, unto Jesus Christ, and unto God. And then they are nothing in themselves anymore, and they have nothing of themselves, nor do they ever wish to be anything anymore in themselves; but it is in Christ that they are something and have something. What are they in Christ? They are new creatures! What do they have in Christ? Righteousness, a Refuge, Spirit and Life, promises for this temporal life and for eternal life, yes, they have everything!

If you understand these things, then you understand the Kingdom of God. And if you do not understand these things, then you are still trying to have something and to be something out of yourself. And this is enmity against God, against me, and your fellowman. The Apostle Paul, who was taught of God, told us: *“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.”* (Rom. 5: 10).

1st March.

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17. Read Gen. 3:17) also.

The command, God's command, is altered by Eve and made more difficult than it was, and she made the threat less harsh. The poison was working. The influence of the prince of darkness is clearly visible. Although Eve seems to be on God's side, she is already further away than she knows. That is how a simple question (for more than that, was not done by the prince of darkness), is able to bring about great changes, when God allows it. The prince of darkness, so to say, went to sit at Eve's feet. He showed interest. He wished to be instructed, at least that is how it appeared. But this single question had disastrous results. If Eve had such great need to be kept by God, how much greater is our need then for us, so as to pray with the psalmist of Psalm 119: 4 and 5: *“O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.”*

What Eve did was not so innocent. It is written: *“He who believeth in Christ shall be saved.”* But it is also written: *“He that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:16). But we like to leave the latter part out. However, where there is a promise, there is also a warning. The warning must be there. If there was no warning, there would be no one who would have faith. Someone might think, “What? Would no one come to possess faith if there were no warnings? How often have we heard you say, that the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart are the means, by which we come to have faith?” Indeed, and it will soon be 22 years (in 1936) that we have preached this to you. And that is how it is! *“To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”* (Is. 8: 20). And in whose heart, is Christ revealed? That is another question. He is revealed in the heart of a person who can see himself guilty in every way, by transgressing the Holy Law in every way, and by them who fear God's judgment.

2nd March.

“And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3: 4, 5).

It has not escaped the devil that Eve has come under his influence, and now he goes a step further. His aim is to get the woman completely in his power. Listen to how he goes about it! He says: *“Ye shall not surely die.”* It is no longer a question! The prince of darkness no longer speaks as someone who would like to understand the matters. No, he now comes forward as a teacher who points out the right way, to man's happiness and salvation.

God and Satan, both speak about salvation. God had said: *“Be obedient, and you shall have life, and a right to eternal life hereafter”*. And Satan said: *“You shall be happy”*. This is the same. Satan also promises salvation. But what is the difference? Among other things and especially this: God's way is long and difficult; a way of which it is said: *“Strive to enter in.”* The way of the prince of darkness is short and easy. The stretching out of the hand is the only thing which is necessary. It is done by the stretching out of the hand to take the fruit. Do we not know this temptation?

The password in God's Kingdom is: *“Wait. Wait. Wait, ye man!”* But the tempter says: *“That would be too easy! Or, that would be too dangerous!”* No, we certainly must do something! That is the temptation. The latter has the appearance of being correct, and the first has the appearance of being wrong. However, by being too hasty, many have become the cause of their own destruction, and at times, of their neighbours also. How often has it not been bewailed, that they in their haste took a wrong turn which quickly seemed to bring them there, but they never reached their proper goal. Life teaches us this, for if it is not given to us, we cannot wait. Man is full of illusions. He cannot accept, that he has no hand in his own happiness.

3rd March. *"Ye shall not surely die."* (Gen. 3: 4b).

What did Satan say to Eve with these words? He said this: *"If you give up God, and if you do not believe in Him and not embrace His Word, you shall not die."* Do you hear that? And that is what is preached everywhere! They say: "For some people this matter is too great. You must not think that you will be lost, if you do not possess God through faith, and if you have not embraced this command of faith." It is here where you can hear what this preaching is, and, in fact, who the preacher is. There are after all, two kinds of preaching. There are two different kinds of preachers. Someone asked me this morning (and this is in view of what I now say): "Minister, you said that Christ did not know the difference between good and evil when He was on earth. How should I then consider His teaching? How could He teach, if He did not know the difference? Or was it God, Who spoke through Him?" My answer was: "That is correct! God spoke through Him, and because Christ experienced it like that, He looked up to God. For this reason, He has so often said: *"My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me."* (John 7:16). That is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, whereof Christ is a partaker, and of which Isaiah speaks in (Is. 61). The Apostle Paul also testified of Christ, that: *"He made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant."* (Phil. 2:7). That is why Christ's preaching is God's preaching. And this preaching is the preaching sealed of all those to whom Christ has said: *"Go ye into the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."* (Mark 16:15). That is why any other preaching is; the preaching of the prince of darkness. And now I ask you: have you experienced this in your conversion, that there are two kinds of preaching and two kinds of preachers; Satan and God? If you have experienced this, then this is a true distinguishing mark of the grace of God applied to you. Eve chose Satan's teachings and along with that, Satan himself. And what is faith? It is the casting away of Satan's teaching, and Satan himself, and the acceptance of Jesus Christ in His three offices as Prophet, Priest, and King.

4th March.

"She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Gen. 3: 6b).

"And she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." My history, your history, and the sad history of every person is drawn in these few words: *"And she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."* At first it was only the sight, but now the hand becomes involved as well. And when the hand starts to work, then we put our teeth into it, and the whole man sins. He lets God and the holy angels look on, and he follows the way of the devil which has now become his way, completely his own way. And now it is: *"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14). And that is how our fellowmen are also dragged along. If Adam had not taken of the fruit, there would have been no peace between Adam and Eve. But Adam had to do it, for the woman wanted it. Adam had no knowledge in what snare Eve was caught. But as she herself was entangled in the snare, she also persuaded her husband with whom she had lived in a loving relationship, and we read: *"...and he did eat."*

Eve did not believe when she was under the tree, that, that is where she left God through unbelief. That is the plain truth. She has given up on Him. And what for? She has experienced that; and I and you have also experienced this. And all because of sinful matters, of matters which are nothing but illusions. God wants us to be blessed, but man is only able to be blessed in God's way. God can be found, and in Him is salvation, and He is only found in His way. Men freely and deliberately steps out of this way, and he does not find God, but he finds death. Man has desired knowledge. He has desired to know good and evil. May the Lord give us an eye to see that! We all want to know it; however, we do not want to know that the *desire* for knowledge, is sin. We don't want to be dull people, we don't want to be a child, we don't want to be humble. No, we want to comprehend, fathom, and know the *"how"* of the matters. And we come into the darkness.

5th March.

"Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation."
(Rom. 5: 18a).

What is meant here is; Adam's fall, the fall of the first Adam, and about the offence, for Adam's sin was: rebellion against God. It was then that he began to say: *"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14). Adam's sin was: the trespassing against a Law which was perfect, a Law that required love to God and his fellowman. This was also an offence against his fellowman, for Adam dragged the whole human race into the bottomless abyss. Man makes himself guilty, by sinning. That is how Adam also made himself guilty before God his Creator, Judge, and King. (Is. 33:22). And the Apostle Paul says that this guilt has come over all mankind. The whole of mankind was in Adam's loins, by the establishment of the Covenant of works, and Adam represented all his posterity. That is how, all of mankind have become guilty before God, because of Adam's sin.

Man is guilty, and a debtor before God, even before he has thought anything, or has said or done anything, man is guilty. No exceptions can be found. Whether he is a grown up or a child, learned or simple, devout or wicked, he is a sinner. To show the weight of this guilt, the Apostle Paul follows on with these words with: *"to condemnation."* The Law is not done away with. It still exists, and it demands its rights; it searches for a man who has not fallen. That is her right, for God has made man upright: *"Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."* (Eccl. 7:29.) The Law now punishes everyone, because she does not find *one* perfect, uncorrupted person. And as you know, the Law curses man; you can find it in Galatians 3:10. That is the right of the Law, for the whole of mankind has sinned in Adam's loins. God had said: *"In the day that Thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Gen. 2: 17). Man has died this death. That is why he is *dead*. How? He is spiritually dead. He is carnal, and the Law is spiritual. Flesh is unable to do anything with the Spirit, which is the Law. Man is spiritually dead, he is dead in such a way, that he is unable and unwilling to desire the grace of God, which is found in Jesus Christ

6th March.

“Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” (Rom. 5: 18).

How? Through the imputation. The guilt that man has, is imputed unto him. It is strange. It is strange, because he personally had no hand in the sin wherewith he has come into this world. Adam our stock and covenant-head was the one who had committed them. That is why it has come on us by imputation. So is Christ's righteousness also a strange righteousness. Man has no hand in this either, and neither has he earned this righteousness himself. It is given to him, and it is imputed unto him, even as Adam's sin is imputed unto him.

"By the righteousness of one". This righteousness is Christ's righteousness, the second Person in the Godly Being, He Who became Man and did what Adam had not done, for He *obeyed*. He also took upon Him *"death"* which Adam had brought upon himself. By suffering and dying, Christ became Surety and Mediator, and He obtained the righteousness which was accountable before God. *"Justification"*, because this has the power to justify other human beings. As Adam's sin had the power to make other people debtors as well. Whereas, the righteousness of Christ possesses the power to bring grace to all people. *"Grace"* means, the mercifulness of the Father. The mercy of the Father is in the closest connection with the justification or the righteousness of Christ. Where this is, that is where the mercifulness of the Father manifests itself into the soul. And where this takes place, there the soul receives the knowledge that God is her Father in Christ Jesus. However, where the mercy of the Father does not manifest itself, because the righteousness or the justification in Christ has not been revealed, and where the soul will feel that she lies under God's wrath. However, as soon as Christ has put this righteousness in someone's hand, then the Spirit of God pours out Himself in that man, so that he receives the knowledge of the Spirit, that God *will be* his merciful Father.

7th March.

“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” (Rom. 10:3).

The imputed guilt, and the guilt we have put upon ourselves must be embraced. If man does not do that, what does that imply? Then he assumes that he did not fall. Then he makes God a liar, saying that it is not true that he has fallen so deeply. The people in the time of Joshua, spoke in the same manner when they said: *"We will serve the Lord."* (Josh. 24:21).

However, nothing can ever become of it, unless we embrace our guilt. Never forget this; for your heart and the world are full of false doctrines which tell us, that man can possess a lot before he has accepted his own guilt.” The righteousness is there as well; it is found in the Word and offered unto us. This righteousness must be embraced, just as we must embrace our guilt. What does man do if he fails to do this? Then he establishes his own righteousness as opposed to the righteousness of Christ, as it is stated in Rom.10:3: *“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* What does man do, when he does not embrace the righteousness of Christ unto the justification of his person, what does he do then? Then he establishes his own righteousness, contrary to the righteousness of Christ. You will understand that God will not be satisfied with this in eternity. This would mean the total collapse of the Christian religion. If the Christian church does not hold on to the requirements of the Law, the world will follow. Then there will no longer be any justice in the world. The Christian church has already taken the first step towards that. And if man still thinks that he has some good in himself, then he keeps Christ out of his heart saying: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14). That is why, you must examine yourself closely, so that you may come to stand before God empty-handed. The main point is, to stand before God with empty hands! *"For to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My Word."* (Is. 66: 2). We must become contrite and be made humble; and once this work has been done it will remain.

8th March.

"My beloved is mine, and I am His ". (Song of Solomon "2:16a).

The bride's glory is in Christ. She does not say: "The world is mine," nor does she say: "The pleasures of the world are mine." No, her glory is in God: *"My beloved is mine."* What does the bride express by this?

Firstly: *her title to Christ*. And secondly: *"her title to all that belongs to Christ."* And thirdly: *"her trust in Him that He will never leave her nor forsake her."* In Isaiah 25: 9, the Church says: *"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us."*

How did all this come to pass? What was it that made the bride able to make this statement? We must go to eternity for the answer to these questions. The Father had given Christ, His loving Son, to the bride: *"According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."* (Eph. 1:4). The Son had also devoted Himself to the bride. We find in Gal. 1:4: *"Who gave Himself for our sins."* In the fullness of time, Christ has given Himself unto death, yea the death of the cross (Phil. 2: 8), and by His suffering and dying on the cross, He has bought His bride as His possession.

And something else took place: Christ offered Himself unto her: *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."* (Is. 45:22.) Not only did He offer Himself to her, but He also gave Himself access to the bride, so that He was formed in her and united with her: *"My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."* (Gal. 4:19).

And lastly, this brings us to the second part following the words: *"My beloved is mine,"* where the bride continues with: *"And I am His."* When a man can say that Christ is his, he then makes it known that Christ is his Saviour and Redeemer from all his evil, and Who has made him a possessor of the greatest good. Then he can say that Christ's righteousness is his, and that the promises of Christ are his.

9th March.

“... *and I am His.*” (Song of Solomon 2: 16b).

Take special notice that the bride not only says: *"My beloved is Mine,"* but she follows on to say: “... *and I am His.*” In Jer. 17:9 it says: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"* There have always been people who boasted that Christ was *theirs*, and that they had grace, but not that they were in Christ. The one is as necessary as the other. It is true that we must first be able to say, that Christ is ours, and if we can say that on a firm foundation, so that it shall be an eternal truth, then is this a worthy word.

But is it then less necessary that man can say: *"I am Christ's?"* Not at all, for if we are not of Christ then we are of Satan; of the world, and of sin, and of ourselves. Yet it remains the comfort of the Church, that I am not my own but belong unto Christ with body and soul. (First question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism).

When the bride not only says: *"My beloved is mine,"* but also: *"and I am His,"* then is that her great joy. And she then makes known, that, what God through His Spirit has worked in her heart. *"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."* (1 Cor. 2: 12). For the confession of faith is really a repeating of what the Spirit has taught us to say. For woe unto us, if we were to speak before the Spirit, as it is written: *"To the Law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* (Is. 8: 20). However, true confession always follows the Spirit. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *"We having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and therefore speak."* (2 Cor. 4:13). And when the bride speaks like this, she makes her love known to Christ, her contact with Christ, her contentment in Christ, and her submission and obedience.

10th March.

"Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come. (Is. 45: 24a).

When does man believe with the heart and profess with the mouth that: *"In the LORD is righteousness and strength"*? Then, when he has been brought down from all his own work; when he has seen by the light of God, that he is completely damnable before God, and dead in sin and iniquity. When we have learned to embrace the fact that all our workings for the deliverance of our never-dying soul, are nothing but dead works, which lie on our conscience, and wherewith we try to serve the living God, and if we have not lost the life of his hand (Is. 57: 10), then we do not believe what our mouth professes. Then we have not been overcome, and we hold on to our own self-righteousness.

In the second place, it is said that when Christ Jesus is revealed into our soul, like Paul's experience has been, and about which he writes in Gal. 1: 15, 16: *"But when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me."* That only by this revelation in the soul, are the Person and the work of Christ as our Surety before God for our sins, made known unto us, or, (if you like), when it pleased God to give us the understanding, (that is to say an immediate spiritual understanding,) *"That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."* (2 Cor. 5: 19).

We will surely say this, when the whole heart has been completely won over unto God. What we read in Jer.31:12 we read: *"And they shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD."* And truly, that is how it is, not in any other way! When it pleases the Lord to apply Christ and all His benefits to the soul, then man will flee to God and His salvation. The psalmist says: *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple."* (Ps. 27:4). And in Psalm 119:4, we find: *"O let my heart be wholly Thy possession."*

11th March.

“Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.” (Matt. 26: 3).

When the Lord Jesus made it known unto His disciples, that after two days His people would nail Him to the cross, then the rulers of the people came together and decided, that the work of the Lord Jesus should be brought to an end. And they also decided that they would wait until the time of the feast was over, so that all the people had returned to their own homes. Everything was determined! The Lord says: *"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."* (Is. 46: 10).

Nevertheless, man continues to go his own way, he considers matters and makes decisions. After all, he has knowledge now, for he has eaten of the tree of which he would not eat. He is now able to judge for himself, he does not consider God, His Creator, Lawgiver and King. There was no fear for God among these people; neither did they ask for God. Their only goal was that their religion should continue. If this had succeeded, then they would be able to keep what they had. This was their thought behind everything. For man never seeks anything else than himself. He is not concerned about God. His only concerns are the material things in life. And yet, among these people, there were two people who were different. That is really a great wonder? The circle of the disciples had to give one over unto the devil. The Sanhedrin had to part with two people for Jesus. They were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Do you know these people? I understand that you know these people by name, but do *you know* them? In the depth of their souls, these people were separated from their surroundings. There was, between these people and others, not a gradual degree of difference but a fundamental difference, an utter difference. What had these people done? They had confessed their guilt. They had become the guilty ones in the situation pertaining to the miserable state in which the Jewish people lived. A person becomes guilty in relation to the country and the people, when they see that in general, the people refuse to call out: *“Where is God my Maker who giveth songs in the night?”* (Job 35:10).

12th March.

"But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. 26: 8).

"His disciples": this refers to His twelve disciples. These men were with the exception of Judas Iscariot, all disciples of Jesus. What is it to be, *a disciple of Jesus*? That is a person who says: "Lord, I don't know it, and I will never know it, for: *'I have not the understanding of a man nor have the knowledge of the holy. Surely, I am more brutish than any man.'*" (Prov. 30: 2, 3). But Lord, Thou knowest it all! And it is found in Thee, for: *"In Thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"*, for it has pleased Thee, that: *"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Col. 2: 3, 9). "Lord," so says a disciple; "I am glad that it is like this; that I do not know it. And I am also glad that Thou knowest it! I know that Thou can and will help, for in Thy great mercy, Thou wilt reveal it, I also know that Thou can and will help *me*. That is why I come unto Thee, because Thou art Whom Thou art, and I need Thee so much." *"Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths."* (Ps. 25: 4). Someone who is a disciple, and a pupil of the Lord Jesus, feels, thinks, and speaks like this. But at that moment, the twelve disciples were not *at that point*. A disciple of Jesus is never there unless he is brought there, because: *"Without Me you can do nothing."* (John 15: 5). The disciples should have been more careful. At least they should have kept back their judgment. Surely, the Lord Jesus was in their midst, he would have told them whether it was good or evil. God's people are not always careful. That is how it is written in Proverbs 28:14: *"Happy is the man who feareth always."* There was a great difference between Judas and Mary, Judas the bold man, the strong believer, the man who openly gave his opinion, and above all, came out for the "truth". And Mary, the weak Christian with whom much patience had to be practiced. But in reality it was the other way around! Judas was the restless, the troubled one, and Mary was the happy quiet one, who placed her trust in God.

13th March.

“When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, “Why trouble ye the woman? For she has wrought a good work upon Me.” (Matt. 26:10)

Mary had dedicated her ointment unto the Lord Jesus, and she did this with a good intent. The only thing which is important is, what is in the mind! Before all things the question should always be, what do we have in mind, God or ourselves? If we have the proper purpose, then our deed is right. They had even *"troubled her"*, they had saddened the one whom the Lord did not want to be grieved. Why? Yes, why? No one knew it. They had no foundation for their actions. And when we have no foundation for our actions, then we shall labour in the very fire. Hab. 2:13: *"Behold, is it not of the LORD of host that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?"* Is. 8: 20: *"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* And if something is not written about it in the Word, then these things have to take place through the driving power of the Holy Spirit. *"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."* (Rom. 14:23). Christ gives the finest explanation by what Mary did: *"For in that she has poured this ointment on My body she did it for My burial."*(Matt. 26: 12). Out of Christ's grave, the scent of life will rise up for all nations. That is why He says that Mary's deed was done, as a preparation for His burial.

We may learn from this, that what is not approved of here on earth, can be approved of in heaven. Let us not forget that. It is possible that we have the people against us, and that God is on our side. Sometimes we are inclined to think, that at least God's children should agree with us. For he who feels that his cause is right, when God's people do not approve of it? And I will go further than that, and say, that a good cause, is very often disapproved of by God's children. Therefore, when we are in God's way regarding a certain matter, then we must miss the fellowship of the saints for a shorter or longer duration.

14th March.

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests and said unto them, what will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” (Matt. 26: 14-16).

These people: the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people were Christ's enemies, save a few. Here we think about Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. What did those people do? What you and I have done and still do: we place church, religion, and ourselves, before salvation, and above Jesus. Only then, when it is Jesus alone, will we be saved. When it is nothing else than Jesus, for then man has died. And if we have not died, then it is not Jesus alone. *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted but loss for Christ."* (Phil. 3: 7). That must be in my heart and in your heart, otherwise we have built on the wrong foundation. Judas wanted money. Why was that? That was because he had not let go of that what was his, his soul was not loosened, he had not died and was not brought into Christ. When one has not been made loose of everything, there will always be something unto which he clings. If Judas had not had his heart set on money, there would have been something else he would have clung to. For it is one or the other; we cling to Christ or to something that is not of Christ. Judas loved money.

That the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders could have come to such things! That they would have something to do with someone who came with such an offer! It all looks so valuable, and it is all so little, for man has fallen. Do you know what it is to have fallen? *"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life."* (Job 2:4). That is how we stand at enmity against Jesus. *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be."* (Rom. 8: 7). *"And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."* Judas returned to Jesus as if nothing had happened. Judas could be silent, until he had to cry out. Woe to that man who is able to be silent under all circumstances!

15th March.

“And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” (Luke 22: 31, 32)

“Simon, Simon.” The repeating of his name served to remind Peter and the other disciples to feel that something of great importance would be said. *“Behold.”* This word also causes them to be more attentive. If only *we would* pay more attention! But because we are so full of ourselves, we take no notice of matters which are of the greatest importance for us! We pay no attention, until we are brought into a deep and desperate need, and in the greatest poverty, and when God in His incomprehensible love, shows us, and makes known unto us: *that He has come* to ask for us. It is then, and often for just a few moments: *“Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth!”* (1 Sam. 3: 10). *“Behold, Satan...”* Satan is a fallen angel, the head of all fallen angels. He is an opponent of Jesus Christ and of all those, who through a true faith, have been grafted into the Son of God. *“...hath desired to have you ...”* The Lord Jesus speaks here about His disciples, the ones who had remained faithful unto Him. Nearly all had left Him. The Lord Jesus had started out with thousands, but nearly all of them had been offended by Him. Now He was surrounded by only eleven people. These were the people whom Satan had in mind, and it was also his aim to draw them away, and never to return to their Master. Now there was a strong desire in Satan to bring those disciples to unbelief. We do not know how much goes on. We will never know, but the Lord Jesus had already said this earlier: *“And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matt. 16: 18). Satan will use all his strength to try to cast you down.

“. . . hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as the wheat.” Oh, what would become of them? Judas Iscariot had already fallen. Would Peter and the other disciples persevere? No, no man can persevere, no one can. Only One was able to, which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God! Who is *“The Author and the Finisher of our faith.”* (Hebr. 12: 2).

16th March.

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. 26: 30).

How has the Lord Jesus been able to sing in these moments? How was He able to do that? Did He not know what was forthcoming? Isaiah points Him out to us as *"a Man of sorrows"* (Is. 53: 3), and the Lord Jesus Himself had spoken more than once about His sufferings. He knew what was about to happen. Did He perhaps hope, that it would not be so bad? That is what we do. When we are warned about things of great importance, we say: "O, perhaps it may not be so bad." The Lord Jesus possessed a different Spirit, He saw the bitter cup. He saw Gethsemane. He saw Golgotha, and He saw the open grave. He knew everything, and yet He still sang? Yes, this is an extremely delicate question! Yes, Christ sang before going to the garden of Gethsemane. He knew what was coming. He had accepted it, seeing and knowing that it was God's will. And just because He knew that it was the will of God, He sang, for He loved this will of God. In the Law it says: *"And thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* (Deut. 6: 5). We see what Jesus did. And we must follow Him in this way. Whenever you are in difficulties, of whatever nature they may be; when there are many things that disappoint you, when you are seriously ill and have received news that you shall not rise from this sickbed, but that you must die from this illness, then you must submit yourself even unto death, out of love to God's will. You must have dominion over death by submitting yourself unto Him, for that is His will. That is the dying in the Lord! *"They went out into the mount of Olives."* To get there, one had to go over the brook Kedron. This brook is deep, and there was darkness all around. Going out of Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus met with depth and darkness, but that did not stop Him from going this way. There was no other way for Him. To go this way was the will of God and by doing this, two things would come to pass, the glorification of God and the obtainment of salvation for man. Salvation lies in the way from Jerusalem, through Gethsemane, Golgotha, and through the grave of Joseph of Arimathaea, unto the right hand of God the Father in Heaven. Does your salvation also lie in this way?

17th March.

"Then saith Jesus unto them; all ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matt. 26: 31).

We all know what the Lord Jesus was thinking about. Judas would come to betray Him, and Jesus would be led away by the servants of the high priest as if He was a criminal. This would be too much for the disciples. The question would arise if Jesus of Nazareth was really the true Messiah. And: *"All would be offended."* Not *one* would be exempt. Neither the passionate Peter, nor John, the loving John. *".... in this night."* The time had come. *"For it is written; I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."* The Lord reflects here on Zech. 13:7: *"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of host: smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hands upon the little ones."* The word "sword" here expresses the cruelty of the Jews, and all what Jesus would meet with during the last days of His sojourn upon earth. *"Awake"* means that God has summoned the sword, otherwise it would not happen. That is why Jesus said unto Pilate: *"Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."* (John 19:11). It was God's will that Jesus should suffer, He was: *"the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev. 13: 8).

"Awake against my Shepherd." This Shepherd is Jesus. *"I am the good Shepherd,"* He Himself had said this in. (John 10:11). He was God's Shepherd Who was sent by the Father, ordained, and prepared by Him.

"Against the Man that is My fellow." Jesus was the Son of God, but at the same time He was man, true righteous man. He was both God and man, and He was this in one Person. Happy is that man who can and may believe this. When Peter confessed this, then the Lord spoke these words: *"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 16: 17).

18th March.

"Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones." (Zech. 13: 7b).

"Smite the Shepherd" As if there was wrath. And there was wrath. Jesus carried the sin of the whole human race. He was a *sinner*, for the sins of all the elect were laid upon Him, which means they were accounted unto Him. The words *"smite the Shepherd"* was the word of the righteousness of God. Our Catechism says: *"God will have His justice satisfied."* (Question 12). *"And the sheep shall be scattered."* The sheep are the believers. Jesus is the Shepherd, and the believers are the sheep, for they follow the Shepherd. *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."* (John 10: 27, 28). When the Shepherd leaves, the flock falls by the way. And how often afterwards has this been fulfilled!

"And I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." The prince of darkness, the world, and those in power, and the pillars of the church and society scatter the flock. And naturally this is all done, for the sake of unity! That is why Elijah was called: *"He that troubleth Israel."* (1 King 18:17). They find Jesus Christ harmful for the church and for society. But the Lord Jesus gathers together. Only in Christ is the true unity, *"for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."* (Matt. 24:28). Unity is seen when we experience that which is found in Psalm 51: 9.

"The little ones", are the disciples, the highly favoured ones, the believers. Not that they are little, but God makes them to be little. How does the Lord do this? He does that by letting them know that they are but man, and by giving them to believe that God is their God. (Ezek. 34: 31). Where this is believed, truly believed, then this is where God is glorified and man is humbled. In other words, where faith works, there it is God alone, and then one becomes less than a drop of the bucket and as small dust on the balance. (Is. 40:15). And only God can bring this about. He does this by showing us His glory in Jesus Christ, His Son.

19th March.

“And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.” (Matt. 26: 37, 38.1).

What thoughts did the Lord Jesus have here? What did He see? What came to His mind? He saw more than I can tell you. He has seen what Judas was doing and what he would still do. That has been an inexpressible suffering in the soul of the Lord Jesus. Judas also had a soul to lose. Christ has felt His own suffering here, but He also thought about Judas who had followed Him, who had shown Him friendship and affection. And in general, He saw His disciples, how weak they were and what would still befall them. Christ has prayed for His disciples. He has not asked God to take them out of the world, but that He would keep them from the evil. (John 17:15). The Lord Jesus saw what Israel would do. He saw the capture and the interrogation. He saw Himself in the hands of the soldiers. He saw Himself in the hands of the people, and there was still much more!

He stood in man's stead, and now payment was to be made. God demanded, and Christ must fulfil this demand. He would stand here alone, as it is said by the prophet Isaiah: *"I have trodden the winepress alone."* (63: 3). Having no expectation of any man, He had to let go of everything. He had to go the way which God required that He should go. And in this He has felt God's judgment upon the whole world. When we see what this judgment upon the world has caused, and what this judgment must have been for the Lord Jesus! He also saw the curse of the Law. It was predominantly these things, that caused the dreadful trouble and anguish for Christ. He could not be silent about them. He went and turned Himself to His disciples, being in agony and He said: *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, tarry ye here, and watch with Me."*

20th March.

“And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me.” (Matt. 26: 37, 38) (11).

I don't know whether you have any experience of this: "*unto death?*" When one is in this state, then we are unfit to be in the company of people. Then it feels as if we have a plate of lead on our soul. That is what Christ has felt here. Yet why did He turn Himself unto the disciples? I must repeat, it was not that He expected anything from them. You must not forget that this must have been a great affliction for Him, when He felt that He could not expect anything from them. Just think about His words to Judas: "*Friend, wherefore art thou come?*" (Matt. 26: 50). It was a cause of great suffering for Him that He could not expect anything from Peter, John, or James.

In all these matters, the Lord Jesus was without sin. We always go out of our bounds, we turn to the right or to the left. He agreed entirely with God. But it has still grieved Him that he could not expect anything from His disciples. Then why did He tell them? He told them: "*So that presently they would be ashamed!*" For they would not watch or pray. That is why the Lord wanted these three disciples to feel embarrassed before God and each other. Christ's meaning was, to teach these three disciples more self-knowledge. Not only were they God's children, but they were also God's servants. And what is a preacher who has not thoroughly come to know himself? For then he preachers of "*do this*", but not of the Gospel. A preacher must be able to have compassion. As it is written about the Lord Jesus, how He was troubled "*by our infirmities.*" (Hebr. 4:15). In like manner, a preacher must have compassion. That is not possible unless he has learned to see himself as worthy of being totally rejected. If in an increasing manner, Christ has not become his only Comfort, Righteousness, Refuge and Preacher, then he is not a preacher.

21st March.

"He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." (Matt. 26: 42).

The Father came to withhold His influence, and the feelings of His love, His friendship and His leadership. This has been unbearable for the Lord Jesus. This was His trouble and anguish. Along with this, there was also the temptation of the prince of darkness, which left Him in great distress, by saying: "How Thou hast deceived Thyself! Thou hast thought that God was Thy Father.; art Thou still able to hold on to that? What proof is there that God is Thy Father? He has left Thee, and He does not help Thee. Thou callest Him, but He does not answer. And it is not only God who has left Thee, but all men have left Thee as well. Just look! See how they just lie there! They are Thy most loved disciples, and they are asleep! No, God is not Thy God. Thou hast deceived Thyself! I am Thy god. Thou art in my hands and presently Thou shalt be in my power forever." That is how the prince of darkness spoke to Jesus. And this has been His trouble and anguish. That is why He separated Himself from His disciples. In His desolation Christ took refuge in prayer. He has poured out His lamentation before the Father. The Apostle Paul says in Hebrew 5:7 that He: "*offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears.*" "*My Father*". God was Christ's Father, although it seemed that He was not. I have told you a little about this. It seemed as though, God did not take care of Him. Does a father not care for his child? It appeared as if the prince of darkness was right, that Jesus had deceived Himself. But, in spite of everything, *He believed* that God is His Father; and when Christ Jesus speaks like that unto God, He acknowledges His deep reverence, His subjection unto His Father, and His longing to do, what God wanted Him to do.

When Christ speaks about "*this cup*", then according to my insight, it is, that He did not mean His suffering and dying in general, but the great distress and anguish, and the darkness in His suffering and dying, which He still had to go through.

22nd March.

"Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death, but found none." (Matt. 26: 59, 60a).

"To put Him to death" These people had not come to this point immediately, but gradually it had come this far. First off all they (that is to say, many of them) had hoped that the gulf between them and the Teacher of Nazareth would be bridged. You can observe this by what Nicodemus said, namely: *"Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."* (John 3:2). Nicodemus did not say: "I know," no, he said: *"We know."* He speaks here on behalf of the others, on behalf of them that were his equal. But, as so often happens and always will happen: everything was disappointing. We all know that they expected their Messiah, but as it was, they expected a Messiah who would say unto them: "Ye are the people of God!" But the Lord Jesus had not said that unto them! Would you also be able to explain how you have tried to seek yourself, and how God has delivered you from that? If the searching for God did not follow the knowledge that you have always sought yourself, because this is pure deception and, not a true seeking after God. And if things do not go our way, it will come to light that we are murderers. (Rom. 8:7). That is why it says: *"To put Him to death but found none."* It was not successful. For it is not easy to say something against the Truth. I hope that you know which Truth this is. It is: *"The truth as it is in Jesus."* (Eph. 4:21). No man knows this truth, unless he is in Christ. Man has no knowledge of this Truth, until he is justified by God. Sooner or later you will experience that this is true!

"They sought false witness against Jesus." Where did these witnesses come from? They were people who had previously listened to the Lord Jesus. They were people, who had agreed with the Lord Jesus in the beginning, but later they had withdrawn themselves. It only had the appearance that the Lord Jesus had friends. This came to light when the Lord Jesus was made powerless; when it seemed that His case was lost.

23rd March.

“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2).

One Person, was the contents of the preaching of the Apostle Paul, not a doctrine or an Article of Faith. By saying this I do not say that whatever is meant when using the word "doctrine" or the words "Articles of Faith" that they are words without meaning. When a *"Person"* has become the focus of our knowledge and of our preaching, it is then that we understand the Articles of Faith. It is then that we understand the entire Holy Scriptures. When God in Christ is known, then we know Him in the Holy Scriptures and in all that is written in His wounds and in His resurrection. When your heart understands this, it is right; but if your heart does not understand this, then, through the grace of God, let the illusion be taken away from you, that you would be able to understand anything of the Bible to your own salvation. For then you live in an illusion.

“Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” As it is stated here, the cross of Christ, is often referred to as the whole of Christ's suffering and dying. For most people Christ's suffering and dying is without meaning. But, why does it have such a great significance for some people? Because, they have suffered and died in Christ, and in His resurrection as well. This is the pith of the matter! And he, who understands this, understands the Christian religion, and he, who does not understand this, has no understanding of the Christian religion. When this is true - and it is true - for Christ's Congregation sees a great deal in Christ's suffering and dying, and in the resurrection as well. For in Him, the Congregation is crucified, dead, buried, and has risen again. And then you must feel, that the contents of the preaching and of faith, can be nothing else than this. If it is any different, then we have gone astray from the Holy Scriptures and lack any foundation to speak about God, eternity, or salvation. I accept to defend this over against the whole world. For it will be either, one or the other, the Scriptures are the Word of God, or we must say: We don't know anything about eternal matters, and we will never know. A third option is not given.

24th March.

"And he said unto Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.
(Luke 23:42)

"Lord." When it starts like this, it is well, for: *"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."* (1 Cor. 12: 3). *"Lord remember me "* This man was so convinced of Christ's sufficiency, that he believed that if Christ only thought of him, he would be eternally saved. We have no need to call so loudly. Christ is quite different than Baal. (1 King 18). A sinner who is lost in himself, has a different stature than a priest of Baal. When we need Christ, then He Himself takes notice of us, even if we just utter a sigh. The woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years considered in her heart: *"If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole."* (Matt. 9:21). It truly does not consist in words but in truth within.

"Lord, remember me." That was all that this murderer thought and prayed. We would be inclined to take it for granted that one, who had that kind of life behind him, should make more work of prayer. Have you ever sent up a prayer? If you have ever prayed, then you will fully understand this man's prayer. A person who prays does not look upon his prayer, but upon Christ and upon God in the Son of His love, and upon his own great need. The greater our need, the better we will understand Who God is, and the more earnest our prayer will be. The murderer did not ask: "Lord, convert me." He did not ask: "Lord, give me faith." No, he asked: *"Lord, remember me."* He prayed like that because of his great need and on the view which he had of Christ's sufficiency. Oh, this truly was a man who understood, that God had laid help upon one that is Mighty (Psalm 89:19). Perhaps, at times, you thought that you saw that help was laid upon One that is Mighty. But I ask you, did *you* see that *God* has laid help upon One that is Mighty? The murderer prays: *"When Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."* He follows Christ, he follows Him into heaven. Behold! Such a Christ is the object of the true faith.

25th March.

"And Jesus said unto him: Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise". (Luke 23: 43).

Do you notice how true it is, what we sang yesterday: *"Oh God, Who hears our supplication"*? Christ had heard him. Christ had noticed that this was a voice out of the depths, as we find in Psalm 130: *"Out of the depth have I cried unto Thee, O LORD!"* Christ does not turn away from him now, for it says in Psalm 65:2: *"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."* Christ speaks unto him with these comforting words: *"Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."* In His soul, Christ hoped to be with the Father in a short while, for He upheld Himself by faith, as shown a little hereafter by the way He speaks unto God: *"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* (Psalm 22:1). Yes, Christ knew that He, Who justified Him was near, and now the murderer would also be with Christ. Today, within a few hours, you will be with Me in the eternal rest. Verily I say unto you, it will be so. From this incident, we have a clear proof that it is rather easy to enter into, heaven. For if we have to do nothing else, than to turn away from ourselves, and from all visible and material things, and then turn unto Christ with the question: *"Lord, remember me"*, then no one is able to say, that being saved is difficult. And whosoever says this, does not understand it! Nevertheless, that it is impossible for man to enter in, comes from the fact that no one wants to enter, in a different manner than the one that *he feels* he is entitled to, and as one who can bring something, as one who feels he is just a little better than a sinner. However, one who is a true, mourning sinner, can be saved just as easily as the elected murderer. It can never be said too clearly how free God is of someone's blood, and that all we now need, is to believe what God tells us. Now there is not much good, which God says about us. Throughout the whole Word of God, we cannot find that God speaks anything good of man. But the Lord does say: *"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help."* (Hosea 13:9). So, if you want to ask the Lord: *"What must I do to be saved."* Then you must also say about yourself, what God says about you, and flee to His blood for reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5: 19).

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26th March

“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman behold thy son!” (John 19:26).

This is the moment, in which the Lord Jesus and His mother looked, into each other's eyes. What this must have been for them, I obviously am unable to say, however, I can make the observation that people in general, but especially the believers, who are called so many times to endure untold afflictions. Nevertheless, the sufferings which you and I have to bear fall completely away, and are nothing compared to the afflictions which Mary's, the mother of the Lord, had to bear, especially at Mount of Golgotha. God does not spare the flesh and blood, that is why we must be taught to be hard on ourselves. Especially in the time which lies behind us, which was a time of plenty, we have been too soft on ourselves. To be hard is much better, for that is the lesson of life. We find in Lam. 3:27: *"It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth."* While the Lord Jesus looked at His mother, He spoke a few words unto her: *"Woman, behold thy son."* *"Woman,"* why not *"mother"*? Do not take this, as a lack of respect. That would be something, if the Lord Jesus had lacked respect for His mother. But that is not so! Reverence and respect for our mother is something which we should have in the first place. It is possible that the Lord Jesus avoided the word *"Mother"*, for in all probability this would have been too much for Mary, causing her to collapse in her deep distress. If this possibility is true, then the Lord Jesus had wanted to spare His mother from this.

The other possibility is that the Lord Jesus avoided the word *"Mother"*, because then all eyes would have been upon her. That would have been painful for Mary. When we are in deep sorrow, we would rather not meet anyone, or only a few people who are close to us, of whom we feel that they understand our suffering. But it seems to me, that the Lord Jesus used the word *"woman"*, because in a short time, He would be transformed into a different state. Flesh in that state, would no longer have a meaning.

27th March.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?, that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27: 46).

Had God forsaken the Lord Jesus? For He laments: *"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* Yes, somewhat. He was the Holy One: *"that Holy Thing which shall be born of Thee shall be called the Son of God."* (Luke 1:35) His *"meat was to do the will of His heavenly Father."* (John 4:34). And that is what it still was. The task which God had laid on His shoulders, He had fulfilled and was engaged in fulfilling. But He was also a sinner; although not by nature but by imputation. The sins of those who had been chosen to be redeemed from eternity, were imputed and laid upon Him. He was an eminent sinner, (a sinner who excels above all others). And for that reason, He was under God's wrath, under the curse of the Law, in the hands of men who were used by the prince of darkness to vex Him, torture Him, and kill Him in the end.

And what did God do while the Lord Jesus found Himself in these circumstances? He withdrew Himself, withholding His marks of favour. He gave Him over unto the people. He acted as if He did not know Christ, as if He had no knowledge of the trouble Christ was in. He made Him feel what it was to be cursed, and to be a child of wrath. Under these circumstances, Christ has called out: *"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* By this prayer, we can see that Christ was not given over to despair, for instance like Saul had been overcome and given into despair. *"My God, My God."* Christ knew that He was the Child of God, the Son of the Father. He had the conviction that He did the work of God, and that He was in God's way. He believed it to be true, that He with His work, and with his people for whom He had suffered and fought, would be accepted by God. And while He was in the deepest humiliation, He thought about the victory. Christ repeats these words: *"My God, My God."* Without a doubt, this repetition is of great significance. With this, Christ says that He expects His help from God. They had pointed other help unto Him. *"Save Thyself, and come down from the cross."* But Christ's only expectation is from God alone. The repetition shows us Christ's faith

28th March.

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.” (John 19: 28, 29)

While the Lord Jesus found Himself in the most pitiful circumstances, they brought vinegar to His mouth. He had to do without God, as far as feeling the Divine love. And lastly, He had to do without everything. And when He was in this state, they brought vinegar to His lips. How generously is mankind blessed by God! That mankind through their works, cause it to be an abundance here, and a great need somewhere else, is a different matter! But when Christ asks for something refreshing, then we give Him vinegar to drink. Do you know this person who does this? Who is he? Is that a Roman soldier who has already been a long time in the grave, and has turned to dust? *Or is it you?* We give Him vinegar!

When we receive a blessing, be it great or small, we say: “I am so grateful for that!” And if we are pious and religious, we give thanks. Yes, but to whom do we give thanks? We thank God, or at least, we think we do. It is all deceit! There is no one that has any thankfulness, either towards God or to his neighbour. And from this it comes to light, that man is revealed as being a sinner. Thankful is the person: *“who has been brought up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and whose feet are set upon the Rock of the righteousness of Christ”* (Psalm 40:2), and who believe in the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This man calls out with the Apostle Peter: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”* (1 Peter 1: 3, 4). Is that your doctrine? It is the doctrine of the Christian Church, a hated, reviled, and deeply despised doctrine! If this doctrine did not exist, then you would not exist either and neither would the world exist. This doctrine is the salt and the leaven of the earth.

29th March.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, it is finished!" (John 19:30a).

This word, *"It is finished"* is very remarkable, for actually what was there, that could be seen of a finished work? What there was to be seen is: the downfall, total failure, and dreadful self-deceit. But the Lord Jesus saw something different, for *He believed*. It is well known what the Father had said unto Christ, Who was regarded as the second Head in the covenant of grace, and which said: *"This do, and thou shalt live."* (Luke 10:28). Christ was aware in the Holy Spirit, that He was not only the Person to fulfil the demand of His Father, but also that He had fulfilled this demand. And now He looked upon God as His true and faithful Father. He looked upon the promise; in the fulfilling of it of which He now had a complete and assured right. That is the workings of faith. Faith does not observe visible and material things. Faith beholds a complete different world. Faith embraces and leans upon the promise of God, and the promise of the Gospel. God's children will forget this many times, and think that when they are in a good frame of mind, all is well, however when things are different, that they must let this hope go. If this is the case, then the cause should be found, and if sin is the reason, then this sin must be acknowledged! However, *we must* keep our eyes on the promise, which is revealed in the Gospel.

What was it, what was now finished? The suffering was now finished, and that what the prophets of the Old Testament had said about it. Christ had given His blood. One cannot give more! Therefore, Christ had given everything. This is the price, a price not paid by an ordinary man, but by Him, Who was true and righteous man and also eternal God. Everything was now fulfilled. And that is how everything will be fulfilled which is found in the Scriptures. You may say: *"I do not understand the Word, the world, and above all else; the scientific and civilized world, they reject this Book."* However, there will come a moment for the whole world, wherein this Book shall be opened and: *"Then every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."* (Rev. 1: 7)

30th March.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." (Luke 23: 46a).

"Cried with a loud voice" This was a moment of great significance! God was glorified, the Church and creation were saved, and in the feeling of the seriousness of this moment, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."*

The high priest in hypocritical indignation stood up in the room, rent his clothes, and called out: *"He has spoken blasphemy."* (Matt. 26: 65). But this had no influence on the Lord Jesus. He remained steadfast and proclaimed, even on the cross, that He was the Divine Son of God. Faith is such a wonderful matter. No one will understand it, before it is given unto him. There is not a man or devil who can say anything about faith. It will never perish either, that is why the Apostle John says: *"For His seed remaineth in him."* (1 John 3:9).

How well did the Lord Jesus stand in these moments! For what He beheld, and what He felt was nothing but ruin and failure. But faith does not look on visible and material matters. Christ looked unto God and His promises, and He rested upon those promises. That is why He had the boldness to turn unto the Father, with these words: *"Into Thy hands I commend My spirit"*, that is, *I entrust My soul unto Thee*.

Christ represented, His whole Church, like Adam had stood in the state of rectitude for the whole human race. When He commended His own soul unto His Father, at the same time He also gave the souls of all His believers into the hand of the Father.

When an ungodly man dies, one who is not in Christ, one who has not been justified by the Father, neither is sanctified in the Son, when his last breath goes from him, God will let him go. But when a child of God passes away, he commends and has commended in Christ the Father his spirit, and he entrusts his soul unto the Father.

31st March.

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” (Matt. 27: 51a).

Between the most holy place and the holy place was a veil. This veil gave entrance to the high priest only once a year, and only to the high priest. He entered in with the blood of the sacrifice, which was slaughtered outside the sanctuary behind the veil, to bring atonement before God for him and for all the people. The high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon his breast and upon his shoulders, so that when he went into, the most holy place, all the people were represented. And suddenly when the priest was working in the temple, this veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. I have no need to tell you that this rent of the veil is of great significance, and it also illustrates that more than one matter is shown unto us here. We will name only a few. We have already said that this veil gave entrance to only *one* person, and then only *once* a year on the Atonement Day. And now ... everyone could enter. Anyone could now take the liberty to go into the sanctuary, that is, the most holy place. These matters are shadows. Because this entrance into the sanctuary, which was now open for everyone, signifies nothing less than *the access unto God*. There is an access unto God. Do you know what that means? Well, it is not that you, at times, send up a prayer. I know that most people think that they seek God when they fold their hands and close their eyes and perhaps even bend their knees to say a few words. But it is something quite different. It would not be without importance, if we were to ask each other: “Do you know what it is to draw near unto God?” In Hebrews 10, something is said about this drawing near, this drawing near unto the most holy place, is the drawing near to God in heaven. Beginning with verse 19 we find: *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”*

1st April.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. And having a high Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebr. 10: 19-22).

“Let us draw near.” What is it to draw near unto God? When man draws near to God, then first of all this is a work of the soul, not of the body, for with the physical body we cannot draw near unto God. When a man draws near unto God, then his soul goes out of everything, and rises up unto God. You might say: *“A hidden mystery.”* Yes, it is a hidden mystery, for it is brought forth only by the workings and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And man does not end here, in his prayer, in himself, or in his own work, no, he ends in God. Meanwhile the soul rises up to heaven, until she is with God in heaven. When she gets there, she carries there with all her needs, cares, sorrows and troubles.

But how does the soul get there? Does she have a way? Yes, she has a Way, and this Way is: the blood of Christ. Now you must not think of the blood which fell at Golgotha with the scourging. You must not think of the physical blood, but about the Person and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Person and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Way for this soul. When I say that it is Christ, Who died, and Who was buried, and was raised from the dead, that, that is the Way for this soul, then I mean, that before she draws near to God in Christ Jesus, she has united herself with Christ, and that is how she became *one* with Him. This takes place through true faith worked by the Spirit of God, and that is how the soul comes unto God in Christ. Drawing near to God, is when we say: *“Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed, for a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.”* (Ps. 84: 9, 10) *“Let us draw near with a true heart.”* What kind of heart is that? It is a true heart which acknowledges before God what is written in Psalm 32:5: *“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD.”*

2nd April.

“And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.” (Matt. 27: 51b).

God was here! It had become quiet at the cross – not a word was heard anymore. It had been fulfilled. And now God speaks, and says to these people and to the whole world, also to me to and you. I do not stand on the side of the people. I am standing on the side of the Crucified One. *For this is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.*

There is a connection between spiritual and material matters. I cannot tell you what this connection is, but it does exist. The universe shakes when through the incomprehensible grace and love of God, one is made capable to utter just *one* word of this Truth. This is not the only place in which we find this, for we find it in different places of the Scriptures as well. Perhaps your heart knows about this.

The mysterious, and awe-inspiring happenings had not gone unnoticed by the people. They beheld it, but they took it to be, a natural occurrence. How can that be? Can you answer this question? Caiaphas had said: *“Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”* (John 11: 49, 50). And that is how they still saw it. By this I have told you what the cause is. Man’s whole being stands over against Christ. No, our interests are not in Christ; we have them in our own hands. That is the attitude of man. You must have observed this, first in yourself, and then everywhere else!

Have you not yet seen this within yourself, then may God grant you, that your illusion may be taken away from you, that there would still be a change, of being saved in the state in which you now are. Again, if you have not experienced this in your life, it is impossible for you to understand the world's happenings. And you will see that the whole of the religious and political situation in the world will unfold before you, when you have been brought into the state we have just mentioned. True faith is born out of the undoing of the man, whose situation I have unfolded before you. No, there is no true faith, if man has never been undone, when he has never been in great need.

3rd April.

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” (Matt. 27:52)

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebr. 9: 27). And these people had also died. They had passed away in the expectation and hope that one day they would awake again. They had this expectation and hope, because their souls had been awakened while they were in this life. When someone's soul has not been awakened, there is no hope for him. He does have a hope, but it is a deceitful hope, for this hope leans on nothing else than on his own imagination. When what I have briefly explained to you has taken place, then he is awakened. It says in Eph. 5: 14: *“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”* Do you hear this? There is a resurrection, and an awakening! This takes place at the rebirth, at the conversion, when man receives faith, when the uniting with Christ takes place. And we read in John 5: 28, 29: *“For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”* That is the awakening which is meant here. These people did not need to wait till the last day, like Enoch and Elijah were also awakened from the grave long before the last day. This shows how great the power of the resurrection, of the Lord Jesus Christ is. You know how the Apostle Paul prayed, that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection. And here you can see, the work and power of the resurrection. You might also know the power of this resurrection, for everyone who is drawn and converted by God, knows the power of the resurrection. The result of this is, that he says: *“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”* Do you hear that? *“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?”* (Ps. 27: 1). Through the power of this resurrection, the Lord unexpectedly opens your closed heart and mind. Before this took place, no one had ever thought, that it would happen to him.

4th April.

“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying: Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matt. 27: 54)

The centurion and the soldiers feared greatly by what had taken place, and most likely also by what had been done by the Jews, by the Sanhedrin, and Caiaphas, and last of all, what had been done by Pilate. *“Saying”* They did not keep this to themselves, and they say it to one another, and to others: *“Truly, this Man was the Son of God.”* For this Person, Whom they had handled so appallingly, and from Whom we have received such a deep impression. He was God's Son. They had heard that Jesus had said this about Himself, and they knew that this was the motive for His sentencing. And now they say it themselves: *“Truly this was the Son of God.”* There is no doubt about that.

It is remarkable. Judas had justified the Lord Jesus. He had said: *“I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.”* (Matt. 27: 4). Pilate had justified the Lord Jesus. He had confessed His innocence five times, saying: *“I find no fault in this Man,”* (Luke. 23: 4), and: *“Take ye Him, and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.”* (John 19: 6). Pilate's wife had sent a message that he should have nothing to do with this just Man (Matt. 27: 19), and now this Roman centurion and his soldiers say the same.

When we are on the side of the truth, then we are destined to be justified, generally in this life, and in any case at the second coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven. Then all the accusations will end. Only the truth will then be heard. Do you believe that? Are you convinced about this in the depth of your soul? Does this fill you with great happiness? This is the case if you are a child of God, and then these thoughts bring you happiness.

5th April.

“And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him.” (Matt. 27: 55).

These women stood over against everything which they saw and heard, over against everything which surrounded them. They had believed in Jesus. They were convinced as all those who have faith know, that Jesus was the Son of God the Messiah, and that He had been treated unjustly. These women knew that, and now they feared the dreadful consequence. They had the same view on these things, as the Apostle Peter seemed to have later on: *"Blood, and fire, and vapor and smoke."* (Acts 2: 19). The world is very scared of these things, but the world brings these things upon herself regardless, for she herself is the cause that they will come. Do you understand that by nature, you are the cause of the misery?

The earth had shaken, the rocks had split, the dead were raised, and in all these things, these women had seen the signs of the approaching calamities. These women were so frail, and besides being women, they also found that when they looked around, nobody approved of them. Oh yes, there were many who did not feel at ease about what had taken place, for example, Pilate. And yet they had all placed themselves on the side of the opposition, against Jesus.

However, the women were not that weak. They were weak on the one side but strong on the other side . What is the origin of this power? Do you know this? This is written in Psalm 27:1: It says there: *“The LORD is the strength of my life.”* They were strong, for they had a conviction. I have already told you, that they had the knowledge. Is it not fulfilling, that we have knowledge of spiritual and eternal matters? Is that not important? So that one who possesses this knowledge, can say: *"If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."* (Song of Solomon 8:7). Is it not fulfilling to possess something which possesses us? Is that not inexpressibly wonderful? Because will be our comfort, in the difficult moments of our life, yes, this will also be our comfort in death!

6th April.

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs." (John 19: 33).

God had become man, and as man has subjected Himself unto God. The Lord Jesus had said to His parents: *"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"* (Luke 2: 49). He remained this way throughout His whole life. Yes, from step to step, from moment to moment, He needed God, and He never did anything without acknowledging His Father. That is the life that we should have led in paradise, and which we are still obliged to live. We have wilfully and voluntarily transgressed, and we still do this every day. For it is written: *"For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Gen. 2: 17). And man also feels the meaning of those words, he feels this as often as he sins. The Lord Jesus was guilty, for He had placed Himself in this life to obtain freedom, salvation, and blessedness for man. And now He had endured death: *"And they saw that He was dead."*

In this death, there is life for you and me and for everyone. Whosoever has the holy competence to make use of this death is alive; otherwise, he is dead, dead through sin and iniquity. That is why a change must have taken place, before we change this temporal life with eternal life. Man must believe that with all his good and evil which he does, he is lost. He must discover what he is in himself, and the Lord Jesus must have been revealed unto him.

"They brake not His legs." For a moment, it seemed as if the authority of the Scriptures would be in danger. But the soldiers did not break the legs of the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 19:36 we read: *"For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of Him shall not be broken."* These words point to the paschal Lamb, for the paschal Lamb signified Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 5:7: *"Our Passover is sacrificed for us."* The soldiers looked at the outward appearance, but John saw further and deeper: The Scriptures cannot be broken, and God's counsel cannot be defeated.

7th April.

“And again another Scripture saith, they shall look on Him Whom they pierced.” (John 19:37).

“They”, who were they? They were the leaders of the people. These people had a doctrine and according to this doctrine, they thought that they were right, and that they would receive salvation in the end. But the Lord Jesus Who had now been among them for some time, had a totally different doctrine. And now they heard, that the members of the Sanhedrin, the leaders of the Jewish people in general, were wrong, for they would never obtain salvation according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. This was the reason why they hated Christ, and they had not rested, until they thought that they had made Him harmless.

These *“they”* were in the second place the people. The people may call: *“Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!”* (John 12: 13), but they can just as easily also call: *“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”* (John 19: 6). The people gladly follow the leaders, and it is a great exception if we find one person among them, who has placed his dependence and still depends on no one else, but on the Lord alone.

In the third place, Pilate, the governor, belonged to these *“they”*. Pilate was fully convinced that Jesus was innocent and that the Jews had delivered Him out of envy. Early in the morning he had been warned by his wife. But why did Pilate not openly declare and hold on to that word that Jesus could not be condemned? Do you have the answer to this question? If you have the answer, then this could prove that you have self-knowledge. Pilate was not willing to suffer for it. That is how it was with Pilate, for he did not understand the meaning of the two different religions. The soldier also belongs to those *“they”*. This man had been ordered to do the work, however, there is no excuse for what he has done. The Roman Catholic Church says that this soldier, who pierced Him with the spear, later on became converted. That is possible, but we do not know if this is so. *“And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced.”* (Zechariah 12: 10).

8th April.

“And again another Scripture saith, they shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” (John 19:37).

“Have pierced” We receive such a sight, when the Lord is ready to convert us. It is here that the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin and guilt, our own sins, but also our sin in Adam. Without this convincing work of the Holy Spirit, no one can ever be saved. The Lord Jesus said: *“They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick.”* (Matt. 9: 12 and Mark 2: 17).

And after the Holy Spirit through the means of the Law (the Law of the Ten Commandments) has convinced man that he is sinful and has transgressed the Law, it is then that the Holy Spirit gives us to behold our sins in the mirror of the Gospel, in the mirror of a crucified Christ. This conviction through the Gospel, which comes after the Law, brings man into a deeper humiliation, for: *“He looks upon Him Whom he has pierced.”* Then he realizes that he is the cause of the suffering and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. He now sees himself as he is, and is deeply humbled and loathes himself. He feels unworthy to be, either in heaven or upon earth. It is here, that man receives the conversion. The Blood which he has shed is now applied unto him, cleansing him from his sin and guilt. He has now united himself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the blood of Christ, he finds boldness to go to the Father, going to the Father with the request for a clear conscience. (1 Petr. 3:21).

However, this does not always follow at the sight of Christ. You will ask: “When is this not the case?” Well it is like this, by nature man lives in the world, and he thinks that it can go like it is now, and he wants it like that, he does not really want it in a different way. And when he is warned and placed before the Truth, then he strives against the Truth. For he has sought out many inventions, I am unable to name all of them. But he says, to name just a few: *“Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?”* (Exod. 5: 2). And: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14). He also has many excuses and apologies. *“Go thy way this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”* (Acts 24: 25).

9th April.

“And there came also Nicodemus.” (John 19: 39a).

In addition to John 19:39, we also read of Nicodemus in John 3 and in John 7. You know the places.

The Holy Spirit did not let Nicodemus go anymore. He guided him into the truth, as it is found in the Old Testament, for you know that the New Testament did not exist at that time. The result of this teaching by the Holy Spirit, and the searching which Nicodemus had done, had convinced him that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. And that salvation is in Him. Nicodemus became convinced, that all the prophets and Moses and many others under the Old Covenant had prophesied about the Messiah, and he had found this in Christ, and now he obtained the conviction which he needed. And the Pharisees, and the Scribes, and doctors of the law could now say what they wanted, but from that moment on, Nicodemus was able to confess the Truth as it is in Jesus, and he vouched for this with his life. He gave himself over; Nicodemus was no longer; now it was Jesus alone, and now it was with Nicodemus as it was with the disciples on the Mount of glorification: *"They saw no man, save Jesus only."* (Matt. 17: 8). And now he also saw, his calling. He saw that he was called to speak and to protest, to speak against the false teaching with word and deed. The teachings of the doctors of the law, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the high-priest were wrong. It was not unto salvation, it was a doctrine from man, maintained and supported by the people. No! The leaders did not follow the direction of the fathers. Nicodemus had seen this, and now he forsook it all. All what came from the Pharisees and the Scribes, he let it all go. And it had become Jesus alone.

Many have stood, where Nicodemus had been for some time now. They had some impression; their consciences had accused them, but they were unable to let go of anything, neither of God and His service, nor of the world and her services. They could not come to a decision, nor did it ever happen. And the reason is not always the same with everyone. Orpah was held back by the thoughts of an insecure future. And the rich young man was afraid that his position in the world would be ruined.

10th April.

“So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”
(Matt. 27: 66).

The people mentioned here are the high priests and the elders. These people and especially the elders of the people, were men to rely on, conservative in heart and soul. Perhaps, they overlooked that there is a difference between the form and the being. Man can live a long time with only the form, while long ago, he has lost the substance of the matter. It seems to me that these days, these things are no longer understood properly. Now, there are three words which are often used: civilization, freedom, and church. Civilization, but can it be denied, that the civilization of Western Europe is not a Christian civilization? Do they suppose that civilization can be protected, when there is no desire for Christ? Church, my observation is this; they are churches without Christ and without God. A church without Christ will have no other purpose than to become a rag to wipe one's feet on. Freedom, but I appeal unto all of you: “May God spare us, from this freedom which is sought!” For really *freedom without being bound to God, leads us irrevocably to destruction*. Anyone who has ever seen that he was without God, did he not shudder about the freedom which he had sought, and which he thought he had?

The high priest and the elders had gone to the governor, to Pilate. And you know the purpose of this. *Sir*," that is how they addressed the governor, "we remember," etc. "*Sir*," that sounds good, does it not? This shows respect. And yet they had not the slightest respect for Pilate! They hated him with an absolute hatred! And yet where it concerns the living Child, all the people are united together. When Christ must be destroyed, then there is, no divisions. Then there is only one voice: "*This is the heir, come let us kill Him!*" (Matt. 21: 38).

We remember that "*this deceiver*." How often had they stood shamefacedly before Him! How often had they failed to answer a simple question that He put before them! That is what man is, he is a hypocrite, an outright hypocrite!

11th April.

“And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted.” (Mark 16: 5).

A child of God goes through a difficult way, it is a way which passes through the valley of Baca. But there are also surprises in this way. For if there were no difficulties, there would be no wonders either. In the old rhyme of Psalm 97 we find, *"Gladness comes after many sorrows."*

“They saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted.” No soldiers, no seals, no stone in front of the grave, but an angel who was waiting in the grave for the women to come. This young man is one of those glorious spirits, who call out day and night: *"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."*(Isaiah 6: 3). Paul calls them: *“Ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”* (Heb. 1: 14). *“He was clothed in a long white garment.”* This garment tells us about the victory. This victory was obtained by Him, Who is the Head of the angels. He had crushed the head of Satan. He had obtained a complete victory over Satan. Sin and hell, grave and death, and the world, the Covenant of Works, they all lay at His feet. That is why John says: *"And this is the victory that over cometh the world, even our faith."* (1 John 5: 4). This faith, of which John speaks, is a union with Christ. The Apostle Paul says: *"In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."*(Rom. 8: 37). These women had been brought from step to step into the surety of faith, unto the real knowledge of the matter. A stone which had been rolled away, an empty grave, an angel in the grave, and yet not the true happiness. But, that had to come also. And now, these women have been filled with awe for many centuries already. Yes, the Church says in the 27th Psalm: *"To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."* And what will it be in eternity, where God will be seen, in all His glory, in the goodness and in the holiness of His virtues, righteousness and of all His ways and works!

12th April.

“But go your way; tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.” (Mark 16:7).

The command which the women received by means of an angel was clear. To say it in a few words: it was the announcement or the proclamation of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. What a privilege it is to receive this message! The resurrection is the actual Gospel. This means that we have no knowledge of the Gospel when we have no knowledge of the resurrection of Christ. We must have experienced the resurrection of Christ. It is not enough, that we have read about it. People, who live in a Christian society, take it for granted that they know that Christ has risen from the dead, and that they agree with the Twelve Articles of Faith, but this is all deceit. The resurrection must be experienced. Christ must have come unto us and not only unto us, but also into us. We must have come unto Him and into Him. Then the resurrection of Christ has been experienced. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor. 5: 17).

We must be taught and strengthened by the Lord to be able to proclaim these matters, like Timothy wrote to the Apostle Paul: *"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised, from the dead according to my Gospel."* (2 Tim. 2: 8).

The world writes many articles and speculations, has held many speeches and lectures, but what is amiss in all this? This; that the true knowledge, and the substance of Christian religion is missing. They vaguely speak about providence. And God's name is still mentioned, but they do not say Who the Lord Jesus is, neither here, nor anywhere else. Hearts without Christ, churches without Christ, governments, and people without Christ. This is the situation: and Christ is the only One who is able to improve this. However, man can do without Him, they do not talk about Him.

However, the women were on their way, to get a clearer and better understanding of the contents of the Christian religion.

13th April.

“But go your way; tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee.”
(Mark 16: 7).

There were eleven disciples, the twelfth was no more. How did that come to pass? He had been unable to bear the stings, which were in the teachings of the Lord Jesus. He had felt them, but he had been unable to acknowledge them, and then man becomes lost. A person will surely notice when he is rebuked by the Word through the pure preaching of the Word. For that is where he is reprimanded in regard to all that he has done throughout his whole life. And if he does not acknowledge this, then: *“There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”* (Hebr. 10: 26, 27). *“And Peter”*

Peter had denied the Lord, but he was no less sincere than the other ten disciples. His distress was great, as a result, of his denial. Moreover, the more grace of God a man may possess, the more his sins will oppress him, and the more he can see the dangers. And the Lord was now on the way to comfort Peter. No, the Lord did not think: “Let Peter go his own way now, so that he can feel what he has done.” No, the Lord knew Peter's distress, and we find in Psalm 103: 4: *“Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.”*

“That he goeth before you into Galilee, there you shall see Him, as He said unto you.” Everything had been foretold. It is all in God's Word, but who pays attention to that? What is your answer to this? I take no notice of it, neither do you, nobody does, converted or unconverted. No one is mindful of God's Word. The majority is so religious that they do not come to confess, and do not see what it is to be, mindful of God's Word. There is a remnant that will be saved, and to those it will be given to observe this: *“Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I have kept Thy Word.”* (Ps. 119: 67). Neither Pilate, Herod, nor Caiaphas, nor the Sanhedrin had anything to say. All these people had nothing to say regarding the great questions of life, but the women did, they were the only ones who had the answer to these important questions of life.

14th April.

“And they say unto her; “Woman, why weepest thou?” She saith unto them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” (John 20:13).

The angels who had been sent to the grave by God, had no message for the watchmen, but they *did* have a message for Mary Magdalene. That is the great distinction! It is such a great distinction when the Lord will have something to do with us, that He cares for us, and as a good Shepherd brings back the lost sheep, instead of allowing us to go our own way left all alone by Him. This amazing, this all decisive distinction was not Mary's doing. It is of God. God has appointed them, some to inherit eternal salvation, and others to inherit eternal damnation. (Rom. 9: 21-23). This is *truth*! Throughout the centuries, people have come up against this truth, and naturally, it cannot be otherwise. A decree of such a dreadful nature is impossible to be accepted by man who is nothing else but a man, in Adam and from Adam, for he is unable to unite himself with this. What is there that is necessary, to be able to agree with something which causes such an offence? Something must take place, if this divine decree be for our eternal comfort and strength, and are no longer a matter of offence. Man cannot agree with this, unless God has granted him to be brought into submission. “Oh,” says Mary Magdalene, “I have come to the grave, because I would have loved to care for Him Who was laid therein. But alas, the grave is open, and I don't see His body. I know not where they have laid Him.” Mary Magdalene could say a fair bit. It seemed that there was peace in her soul, and yet, she could not say what it was that she missed. She did not know. She mentioned what she thought was missing, but she did not say what she missed. Man cannot say what he misses. I have done it, and perhaps, you have also done it. But man cannot judge a matter of which he has no knowledge. In fact, man cannot say anything. Someone might think; “But then I would always have to remain silent.” You don't do that either. You cannot be silent, and neither can you speak. You are fallen, and because of your fall, you are corrupt and incapable to do any good.

15th April.

“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.” (Mark 16: 9).

The women had come too late, the grave was empty! And we would be inclined to ask, if there had been no one present, if no one had witnessed the rising of the Lord Jesus, then how do we know that He lives and is in heaven? You are quite right to ask this, for such questions should be asked. You should get accustomed to asking question like that. For there is an answer to this question. Everything would be hopeless, if there was no answer to this question, but there is an answer. The Apostle Paul says: *"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins."* (1 Cor. 15: 17). That is why I say: then everything would be hopeless. There is an answer, and the answer is: *"The Scriptures!"*

Is this answer sufficient? Just answer me; just tell me if this answer is sufficient. It all depends on *what your heart* says about this answer. This answer is certainly sufficient! *There is the Bible, and you either believe the Bible, and if you do not believe the Bible, you will be lost.* This is clearly stated. I know that we have thousands of reasons to contradict this, but that does not count. God has spoken, and you must believe, or you will be lost. And faith is this: that it is settled with the Words of the Bible. Any other faith is a delusion. Faith says: *"The Lord has spoken!"* So not just: *"The Bible says so,"* and then give room to vain thoughts: about whether it is true or not! No, not like that! *"The Lord has spoken it!"* That is the point. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, when this faith is found in you. Man cannot work this. Why not? He does not want it! He does not seek these things, they have no value for him. His inability is his unwillingness! The evidence is in faith itself, and this evidence is twofold. Faith is the substance of things as they are written in the Bible, and at the same time, we have the evidence that we are part of them.

16th April..

“Jesus saith unto her: Mary! She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her: touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father”. (John 20: 16, 17).

In just one moment, Mary Magdalene, who had wept so bitterly at the opened grave where in vain she had sought the body of her beloved Lord, has given herself over unto the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord had called her name, and that has been for her, as this always is when this takes place, a resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit. She then fell at Christ's feet, and in true faith she had cried out: *"Rabboni!"* And oh, how she had lain there and wept! Yes, they were different tears than the ones she had poured out, when she did not find His body. These tears, which she poured out at the feet of Jesus, were tears of true repentance. This was a weeping over herself as she cried out: *"Rabboni!"* We can compare this word with Job's words: *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42: 5, 6). Also with the words of the prophet Daniel: *"O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces."* (Dan. 9: 7).

But it was not the purpose of the Holy Spirit that she should remain laying there. Therefore, in the next text after the words: *"Rabboni"*, we find: *"Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father."* The Lord Jesus did not speak these words immediately, but only after Mary clearly had made it evident that she wished to continue embracing Christ's feet. For Mary needed the teaching of the Holy Spirit again. We now think about the words which we find in our Catechism, where the Church says, that of ourselves we are unable to stand for a moment. (Q.127). One moment Mary spoke through faith, and the next moment she was not speaking through faith (not out of faith, but the practicing of faith), and she needed Christ's teaching.

17th April.

“But go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God.” (John 20: 17b).

“Go to My brethren.” They were, as you all know, Jesus’ disciples. They had not done very well. They had spoken against Jesus: they had said that they would not leave Him. Peter had expressed this in a strong manner, and yet, they had still left Christ. Peter even told the enemies that he did not belong to the company of that hated Galilean, he had even confessed this with an oath. And now Christ still speaks about His *“brethren.”* That is something; who would have believed that! These brethren must have thought and feared many times, that it was finished for them now. And Christ does not speak one harsh word about them. He speaks about them, as if they had been faithful and loving all the time, from moment to moment. Oh, we do not have the slightest perception of the love and faithfulness of God. We are so deep in the Covenant of Works, that we cannot accept that there is grace and love for us, that is, even if we have tried to comply with it. For then the Lord also says: *“I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy Name’s sake, which you have profaned.”* (Ezek. 36: 22). The foundation is not in man, for if that were true, it would be cut off forever for the Church of God, but it has its foundation in the eternal pleasure and love of God in Christ Jesus. For the Lord says: *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.”* (Jer. 31: 3) That is why that seed remains, like God’s Word says: *“For His seed remaineth in him.”* (1 John 3: 9). And if the seed is there, no one can take it away. Not even the person himself, he cannot reach it. Grace lies that deep, so that it is completely out of reach. Even the power of hell cannot take it away; neither does the Lord take it away, as He has spoken: *“Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.”* (John 13: 1). Christ did not only shed His blood for reconciliation and justification, but He also fulfilled the Law for the sanctification of all those, who through true faith, do not refuse to receive Him.

18th April.

“And say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” (John 20: 17c)

That is. The Lord Jesus said: *I ascend unto My Father, Who is also yours, and to My God, Who is your God as well.* Christ and His people together, form one body. And Christ’s Father, is the Father of every member of the Church, and the God of the Lord Jesus Christ is also the God of all those who belong to Him in truth. And upon the foundation of this unity which exists between Christ and His Congregation, the Congregation of Christ has God as her God and the Father as her Father. And regarding our salvation, everything depends on the question whether we form a unity with Christ, and whether He dwells in us, and we in Him.

When you examine yourself regarding your state for eternity, you must always ask yourself: *“Can I be sure that Christ dwells in me, and that I am in Him?”* It is from this union with Christ, that life flows forth, and all the benefits and blessings follow. The blessings which Christ has obtained are also the fruits of saving faith. Through this saving faith Christ dwells in us, and we in Him; for faith is the grace by which we let Christ dwell in us, and are the means by which we are brought to God. The benefits consisting of justification, sanctification, and the adoption by God, peace with God, and many others are the blessed fruits of saving faith.

Because this faith was found in the disciples (although still in small measure), Christ could say on a just and sound foundation: *“To My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.”* And with this message, and these happy tidings, Christ sent Mary Magdalene to His disciples, who had made themselves worthy of something totally different than this. But why did the Lord not rebuke them? Because in this tidings: *“I ascend unto My Father; and your Father and to My God and your God,”* was the most intense rebuke for the disciples, for when Mary Magdalene brought this message, the disciples felt that they had sinned against God and against His Anointed.

19th April.

“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.”
(John 20:24).

You know that the Lord Jesus had still visited His disciples on the evening of His resurrection. They were in a room, and they had locked the door of this room. You can well imagine how they felt, for there was a guilt which lay on their conscience. They had sinned and done what was evil in God’s holy eyes. They were full of fear, and they thought that at any moment their enemies, the envoy of the servants of the high-priest, would draw near. Oh, in these moments, their hearts could not understand the words from the Apostle Paul: *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom. 8: 31). They had locked the door. And then unexpectedly when they had not the least expectation of something like this happening, they see Jesus before them. *He had come!*

It might be known to you, how He always comes through a closed door. And what happened then? Did He start by bringing their sins before them? No, He has spoken to them in a most friendly manner: *“Peace be unto you.”* Then indeed, the lock of the heart opens. Man can withstand a lot, *however*, he is unable to resist this. Oh, how they opened their hearts for the Lord Jesus! Christ had revealed Himself so humbly! He had shown them His hands and revealed His side.

But Thomas had not been with the disciples that night, and had not been able to enjoy this moment. Thomas must have kept himself in solitude that night. It had been too much for Thomas. He had not counted on such a deep disappointment. He would have preferred to die, but he was not allowed to die. The Lord kept him in his life. But oh, he had been unable to remain among people; he could not stand the sound of their voices. Therefore, he had been alone, isolated in the quiet solitude of nature. He had withdrawn himself. It had all been too much for Thomas! Truly, he had been unable to associate with people.

20th April.

“The other disciples therefore said unto him, we have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” (John 20: 25).

The disciples had a need for more than *one* concern. I will name just a few. See if you possess them in your own heart. In the first place, they had need of justifying the Lord before Thomas. For, they had not taken proper notice of the words of the Lord. Now they were pressed in their hearts to tell Thomas that it had all come to pass with the Lord, just as the Lord Himself had told them.

In the second place, the disciples had the desire to declare the Truth: *“the Truth as it is in Jesus.”* (Eph. 4: 21). When the Truth comes to enlighten our hearts, then there arises a desire in the heart of man to speak about the Truth. (2 Cor. 4: 13). *“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written; I believed and therefore have I spoken; we also believe; and therefore speak.”* The Truth possesses the love of the heart of every believer.

In the third place the disciples desired Thomas to be a partaker of their own happiness. They were so delighted, so unspeakably joyful! They thought: “O, if Thomas could also taste of this!” This love can be shared. When we are allowed to taste the love of God, be it for the first time, or after falling into sin, or after a quickening, or after a state of darkness, then we would like the whole world to taste God’s love. Moses said: *“Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!”* (Num. 11: 29).

21st April.

“But he said unto them: except I shall see in His hands the prints of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into His side, I will not believe.” (John 24: 25b).

Seeing is not enough for Thomas. He must touch the Lord’s body. That is why he goes on to say: *“and thrust my hands into His side.”* How many sins does Thomas commit here, and becomes guilty of? What Thomas is saying here, has nothing to do with faith. Thomas speaks here about a feeling, but not about faith. To believe something is quite different, then to feel it.

Thomas has no small opinion of himself. Just consider his words: *“Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put **my** finger into the print of the nails, and thrust **my** hand into his side, I will not believe.”* So first, he must see and feel, and then he would believe. Does believing then depend on Thomas? Can he believe, if he can see with his eyes and touch with his hands? Is faith not a gift of God? Must faith not be given? But if the body of the Lord Jesus was only a deceptive-body, what then? Or what if the scars were not there? Thomas had high thoughts of himself. Would it have made so much difference if Thomas believed? For what is a man! We would be inclined to build houses on a man such as Thomas. But is it not fortunate for us that these matters are written down? Now we only hear of God’s mercifulness and grace, and not of the holiness of God’s children. That is the Gospel, the Gospel of God’s grace. That is why is called unto us: *“But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord.”* (Jer. 3: 1). And in Isaiah 1:18: *“Come now and, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* That is how I stand over against your faith, says Thomas to the disciples. The foundation on which you believe, cannot suffice me. You seem to be able to do that, but it is not enough for me. See, that is how, through unbelief, man pierces, not only the heart of God, but also the heart of God’s people.

22nd April.

“And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut.” (John 20: 26a).

“And Jesus came.” The Lord Jesus comes. We do not go to Him. We never go to Him. The Lord comes to his Own, but when He comes to His own, it is always through a closed door. We are closed unto God and all that is His. Our understanding is closed. Oh, how many things will have to take place, before man will see and acknowledge, that he knows, nothing. Men always assume that they know it. And that is how he sits under the preaching of the Word. And how he takes up the Scriptures or the other means. How much has to take place, before man can see and acknowledge, that he has no understanding of God or of godly matters! I don't know whether you have ever seen this, or if you were ever privileged to experience this and to confess this before God and man. Then, when we can see and acknowledge this, are we open before the Lord. When it is explained to us in a word such as this: *“Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.”* (Prov. 30: 2, 3). It is only there that the matters are seen. Man can never see anything of God nor of His Kingdom in regard to the salvation of his immortal soul, and God's honour, or he must have entered into his own darkness. Has the Apostle Paul not said: *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”?* (2 Cor. 4: 6). How many things has the Apostle said, of which we do not understand anything, although we think we do? And as it is with our understanding, it is also the case with our will and desires. The whole of mankind hates Christ. Through the fall, man has come in his covenant breach in Adam, and into a state where he does nothing but keep Christ out of his heart and being. We find this explained in these words: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job. 21:14)

23rd April.

"... and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you!" (John 20: 26b).

"Peace be unto you!" Unexpectedly, suddenly, inaudible! The disciples saw Christ when He stood in their midst. That is how Christ comes into the soul. If He has ever come to you, then He has come in this way, suddenly! The Church says: *"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."* (Ps. 118: 23) .Unexpected! *"He leads the captive out to see, the joys of new-found liberty for bounteous is God's mercy."* (Psalm 68: 5 Genevan metric).

Silently! It is true, a storm, an earthquake, or a strong wind might more or less have gone before it, but the Lord is not in it. The Lord is in: *"a still small voice."* (1 King 19:12). The Lord comes without making a movement; He comes silently! And when He has come, He then stands in the midst, that is, in the heart. That is why the Apostle Paul has said: *"The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."* (Rom. 10: 8). Christ is seen in two places. In the first place, in the broken-hearted, abased, and humbled sinner. And secondly, on the right hand of the Majesty on High. (Hebr. 1: 3). This sight of Christ in heaven, and the sight of Christ in the heart are not the same. They must be discerned from each other, and yet cannot be separated from each other either. He, who has Christ in his heart, also finds Him at the right hand of the Father. Whosoever sees Him at the right hand of the Father, also finds Him in his heart. What a pleasant prayer it is, which then arises from the heart, like: *"Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's Son."* (Ps. 72:1). How privileged are they who are counted worthy to behold the King in His beauty! In this sight, the whole world fades away! *"Peace be unto you!"* Christ's peace is not like the peace of the world. The peace of the Lord is a deep peace, a wonderful peace. It is the *"peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 4: 7). The peace of the world does not come, until all the difficulties have been taken away, which take away our peace. However, the peace which is in Christ, is a different peace.

24th April.

"Then saith He to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." (John 20: 27).

As we can see, the Lord had heard what Thomas had said to the disciples. And yet He still came. The Lord does not cast out those who want to follow Him so quickly, and who through a true faith cling unto Him. But as far as they were concerned, they would bring the working of the Spirit to nought. However, the Lord keeps an eye on His people, for He has said: *"I will teach thee, I will guide thee with Mine eye."* (Ps. 32: 8). And that is how the life of a believer is preserved, even after the most appalling transgressions, man is not cast away from before God's countenance. All this is the fulfilling of the Word: *"A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth."* (Is. 42:3).

However, we must take notice of one thing, Thomas had a deep desire to believe. But Thomas could not believe that the Lord Jesus had risen from the grave. But oh, he had such a longing to believe, for Thomas was a man who was *sick of love*. (Song of Sol. 5: 8).

When man has truly been made fearful before the glory and Majesty of God because of his sins, and feels that he cannot exist before God but needs two things: first, the forgiveness of his sins, and secondly, the suppression of his sins, then the Lord will not cast such a one away. Even when the Lord has not come yet, it will not take long before He shall come. For: *"the Lord is come to seek and to save that: which was lost,"* (Luke 19:10).

"...and be not faithless, but believing." That is how the Lord convinces man, and that is also the way in which He works faith in man. It comes with one word: *"For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."* (Ps. 33: 9). *"God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."* (Rom. 4: 17).

25th April.

"And Thomas answered and said unto Him: My Lord and my God." (John 20: 28).

While Thomas saw, that He Who was crucified on the hill at Golgotha stands before him, he senses from the words of the Lord the almighty power of God, in the tender perception of the forgiveness of his sins. In the Lord Jesus he saw both: he saw the Lord and his God. He recognizes the Christ, as the Apostle Peter had said on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*(Acts 2: 36). Thomas acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and bows before Him.

Now that Thomas had been brought back again into true faith and everything is behind him, he perceives that he had not been paying proper attention to it before. But now he perceives, feels, sees and believes the Divinity of Christ. He sees the great mysteries of which the Apostle Paul has spoken: *"God was manifest in the flesh."* (1 Tim. 3: 16). And because he could now embrace these things through a true faith, he could add, *"my"* to it by saying: *"My Lord and my God."*

True faith sees, and true faith experiences that God has come unto us and into us, so that we (through faith) have possession of God in the Son of His eternal love. This appropriation of faith is, among others matters, the ability to surrender oneself to the Lord. Thomas surrenders himself. This is the contents of the words: *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."* (Ps. 110: 3). Thomas, through the grace of God, gave himself over into the full enjoyment of salvation. He laid there as spent at the feet of Christ, full of amazement and wonderment. He had not made himself worthy of this. He had never thought or had ever expected *this!* It is as it is written: *"This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."* (Ps. 118: 23). Thomas lost himself there, and in *one* moment, he was changed from being the poorest man, into the richest man.

26th April.

“And that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15: 4).

The Lord Jesus had risen early after the sabbath. On the Jewish sabbath, so on the Saturday, He had still been in the grave. Some think that this was Christ's rest already. However, this is not very important, and in no wise am I willing to dispute about this with a converted person. But I consider that Christ's abode in the grave was not yet His rest, but that He entered into His rest after He arose from the grave. That is how it also is with the converted person. He is cast to and fro, for a shorter or longer time by the Law, but God has come unto him and he is raised up, and it is through this resurrection that he has also entered into his rest. What is this rest? This is when man receives the forgiveness of sins by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ onto his conscience, which takes place through faith when he is in Christ, Who has fulfilled the Law completely, then he has a right to earthly goods, be they many or few, and it is also the fulfilling of the promise of the Covenant of grace and he also has a right to eternal life, and with that, he is at rest and has been renewed after the image of God. Wherein is his rest? Not in his faith, neither in what he has now received, but he rests in God. God is his rest, so that he sings with the psalmist of Psalm 62: 5 in metric: *“On God rests my deliverance, My honour shall my God enhance. He is my Mighty Rock my Saviour.”*

Christ had risen early. And as we read in the Gospels, the women were early on their way, however, Christ had still been ahead of them. Behold, herein lies a most precious secret: for Christ is always ahead of His people, when He has come with His almighty power and irresistible light, with His eternal goodness and grace, it is *then* that the sinner comes unto Him. Take special notice of this! Man coming unto Christ, before He came unto us, is always a delusion. People speak about taking a refuge of faith, this is misleading! Of course: there is a faith where we take refuge! However, taking this Refuge takes place through true faith, when Christ has come unto us and into us

27th April.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor. 15:17).

Christ has died and has become alive again. If He has died for our sins, then His rising from the dead must be our justification. But if the Lord Jesus Christ has not been raised up, would man then not still be in his sins? And does the Apostle Paul not make a lawful conclusion, and is the word of our text then not completely correct, when it says: *"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins?"* If the sins have not been taken away by Christ, who would then be able to take them away? If we are not renewed after God's image, then this word would apply: *"ye are yet in your sins!"*

And now we must ask ourselves, if the Apostle's train of thoughts are the thoughts of our hearts also. That is the best solution! You must place yourself before the question: “Does my heart agree with this text: *"And if Christ be not raised, my faith is in vain; and I am yet in my sins."* Therefore: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* (Acts 16: 31).

He that believes has everything in Christ, not just for eternity, but for the time as well! When a poor believer examines himself, he will find that deep in his heart, through the grace of the Spirit, he may have a foundation, and this foundation is nothing else but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! This poor believer will then see that his heart's trust is in the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, for He has come unto him. He knew nothing about it! It is like the Apostle Paul says: *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."* (2 Cor. 3: 5). He came unto us! *"Tell ye the daughters of Zion, behold thy King cometh unto thee "* (Matt. 21: 5). That is the Gospel! If man hears that, then his eye beholds and his ear perceives the Gospel! He did nothing himself. Yes, he had done something; he had resisted and kept his heart closed. And the Lord did everything. He came uninvited for: *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one."* (Rom. 3: 11, 12).

28th April.

“What does the resurrection of Christ profit us?” (Question 45 of the Heidelberg Catechism).

A good question! It is so often in this life, that the question arises: "What does it do for me? Does it help me to move forward?" Well, somewhere, this question has a meaning. This question comes to me and to you, and we are obliged to answer it. And I say; it is a good question. Because, the contents of our religion should be our treasure. We should not have anything, beside the contents of our Christian religion, nothing! No position, no capital, no wife, no children, no brother, no sister, nothing! *“What is your only comfort in life and death?”* The answer is sure and to the point: *“That I am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.”*(Q1).

It says in Matt. 24: 27: *“Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.”* We must become loose of everything! Yes, perhaps you may think. What is it, to be loose of everything? It is good that you ask, you can never ask too many questions. It encourages us to have conversations.

It is like this; there comes a time, a point of time in the life of the elect, that he is made loose of everything. That is the basis, the root, the foundation. And now everything comes to him; his wife, his children, home, property, and sociability, etc. and that will seize and hold him. And once again he needs grace to let go. But fundamentally, we must let go of everything. Do you fully understand that? That is how it must be. If it is not like that, then you are still a child of the devil. When you come to change this temporal life with the eternal one, you will be lost. That is the plain truth, and that is how the matters stand.

The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is a significant article, yes; we could say that with this article, the Church of Christ stands and falls. And that is also how it is with those in whom Christ has risen, who will understand the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say, they believe not only with a historical faith but also with a true-saving faith.

29th April.

“Firstly, by His resurrection He has overcome death that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which He had purchased for us by His death.” (Answer 45 - Heidelberg Catechism).

You must let this quietly sink into your mind, and ask yourself: “Is this true for me?” Because if all you can do is agree with it, it will not be beneficial to you. Historical faith is good, but it is not the true-saving faith.

The Lord Jesus has died and was buried. And when He lay in the grave, the world rejoiced or tried to rejoice. That is just pretence! For there is sadness in laughter, the world knows no happiness! There was joy in hell as well, but how can there be joy in hell? Yet they had triumphed too soon, for the Lord Jesus did not remain in the grave. Grave and death are the result of sin: *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23), and there is no sin in the Lord Jesus. He was without sin in Himself.

He had fulfilled the task, which was given unto Him. He had been obedient unto the Law and had borne the chastisement. And in that way, the Lord Jesus has conquered death through His resurrection. And now it says in our Catechism: *“That He might make us partakers of the righteousness which He had purchased for us by His death.”* Christ has purchased the righteousness which we need, through His suffering and dying. Christ's suffering and dying is the Righteousness, this is the Righteousness which is accountable before God. Take this Righteousness away, and you will no longer find anyone in the whole world, who will agree with God's Law. This Righteousness has risen out of the grave of Joseph of Arimathaea. And this righteousness is now in heaven: *“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (Jer. 23: 6). And through the means of the preaching of the Gospel it is also on earth. This Righteousness is presented and offered unto us by the means of the preaching of the Gospel. When the Holy Spirit comes along with this preaching, then a wonder takes place. We could well-nigh say, a threefold wonder, and it is this: for man then longs for the righteousness, and he beholds this righteousness and embraces it.

30th April.

“Secondly, we are also raised up by His power to a new life.” (Answer 45 - Heidelberg Catechism).

It is the new life which is here mentioned, and being raised up unto that life, and about the means by which we are raised up. What is this new life? This is the enlightenment of the understanding. When man possesses that light, he then beholds what he has never seen. Man may have a historical faith, yet he will not say: *“I have seen God.”* It does not enter his mind. But when new life is granted unto him, then he sees God, the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God: he sees Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then he also looks at himself; and he knows what he is in himself, the world, and the kingdom of the prince of darkness. That is the enlightenment in the understanding, and this light is the new life. This new life also reveals itself in his will and affections. Man, himself really has an aversion for the Lord Jesus; he does not want Him or accept Him. Christ is offered unto him, laid before his feet, and it is said unto him: *“Now you may appropriate Him with all that He has purchased.”* He doesn’t do it. What is the reason for this? And he does not want to.

However, the new life in the will means, that he has love unto Christ and embraces Him. When we have love, (just ask a mother what love is), love is when we open our heart for Christ. He also has a love for the Scriptures, for the Truth, the preaching, the sacraments, and for salvation. This is the new life in the will.

And a person who possesses this new life also has new strength, he has strength to fight against everything which is displeasing unto God and what would be to his own hurt, strength to confess the sins he committed and still commits. However, it is like this, Christ not only works this new life in us, but He *is* the new Life *within* us as well. It says: *“I live, ye shall live also.”* (John 14:19). He is the new Life, and He works it. How does He work life in us? The elect, are drawn as a dead man unto Christ through the drawing of the Father. And as soon as this dead sinner through the drawing of the Father, comes in contact with Christ, is also made alive in Christ.

1st May.

“Thirdly, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.”
(Answer 45 of the Heidelberg Catechism).

What has already taken place, when you are laid in the grave? Then your soul has already appeared before God, and was judged for eternity. Before you appear before God, the judgment has already been announced, either for: good or evil, joy or sorrow, salvation or condemnation. Your body is laid into the grave, but it shall not remain there. One day it will be raised up again. The resurrection from the grave is twofold: and will either be blessed or wretched. *“They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”* (John 5:29).

Whether your resurrection will be a resurrection of life depends on just one question: “Have you been united with Christ and justified and sanctified by God in Him?” What is your answer to this? It depends on this answer, whether your resurrection is blessed or wretched. These matters must be imprinted into your heart. Make sure that you know them, and tell them to your children. Rest not before you are assured: *and that is through experience.*

The Church has the assurance of a blessed resurrection, she has this assurance through the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, it is called “a pledge”, because Christ has risen as the Surety. He did not arise in the soul, but He arose in the body. He has risen as a Surety for His Congregation. And the result is, that the Church herself, and every member of the Church, shall one day arise from the grave. Christ is the first-fruit, the harvest must still follow. He is the Head, and He cannot be parted from the body. The Spirit, Which was in Him, is also found in the believers. Romans 8: 11 states: *“But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”*

We have now spoken to you in a few words about three points of the 17th Sunday of the Catechism. And I have heard people say sometimes: “Yes, but that is an old book. That was how people thought about it, back then.” I have then asked them: “Then you tell me, by what insight you can show me, that the Catechism is obsolete.” I still have not had an answer to that question.

2nd May.

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” (Col. 2:13).

Man has sinned in his own person and in the first man, he has transgressed the Law; he is guilty. He is incapable to do any good, for he no longer has the image of God and is cut off from the Fountain of life, from God. And where man is like this, the Holy Scriptures tells us that he is dead, dead in spiritual respect. While man is dead in spiritual respect, everything he does is wrong. He is incapable of doing any good and continually increases the debt which he already has, and which is accounted unto him. “

...the uncircumcision of your flesh.” The foreskin is a sign of the absence of circumcision. The circumcision was a sign and seal of the covenant. Baptism came in its stead later on. Where this covenant is missing, there is uncleanness; and where there is uncleanness, there is a rejection. That is how it was with the Colossians before their conversion, and that is how it is with every person, before he is converted unto the living God. The Colossians did not remain in this situation, for the Apostle Paul says: *“And you. hath He quickened together with Him.”* Now we must ask ourselves, what is it to be quickened? I have explained to you what the spiritual death is. When a person is continually in debt because of his sin, and increases this debt all the time, and when he has not been born again, then he is without God's image, (and as we have already said) he is dead. However, when this debt have been taken away, and the rebirth has taken place, then he is alive, spiritually alive. And it does not only say: *“And you...has He quickened”*, but also *“has He quickened together with Christ.”* Christ has been dead but He did not remain dead. And now Paul says, that all who believe are made alive with Christ. But how do we have to understand this? For when Christ arose from the grave, we were not there. And Christ represented His Congregation just as Adam represented mankind. That is why when Christ arose from the grave, His Congregation also arose from the grave. The resurrection of Christ was the justification of His Person by God. Where Christ represents His Congregation, there is His justification, the justification of the Congregation through God.

3rd May.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Rom. 6: 5).

It says here *“if”* However, we must not think that the Apostle Paul doubted. No, he believed! We can easily compare the word *“if”* with the word *“since”* or *“whereas.”* So *“whereas we”*. We must put the emphasis on the word *“we”*. Who are these people, who are mentioned as; *“we”*? I have no need to tell you, that the answer to this question is of the greatest importance. We find the answer at the beginning of the letter which is sent to, *“all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”*(Rom. 1: 7). By the *“beloved of God”* we understand that they are the believers, and are also those, who are called *“saints”*. Faith hears when God calls. Faith hears the voice of the Lord, which is nothing else than the Gospel. In no other way are they *“called to be saints”* than by true faith. True faith is the receiving of an offer. There must be an offer, and this offer is there. That is the offer of God's Son to me, to you, and to everyone who by God's providence, have come to hear the Word of God. There would be no faith if this offer did not exist, neither could anything be received; for if we take something on, which is not offered unto us, then it cannot be justified.

A person who possesses faith, will take his refuge to God in Jesus Christ also. Many people differentiate between a refuge-taking faith and a justifying faith. That is incorrect! True faith is not only a refuge-taking faith, but also a justifying faith. A true believer takes his refuge unto God in Christ, and at the same time trusts upon the promise of the Gospel: *“For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen.”* (2 Cor. 1:20). When a true believer has taken his refuge unto God in Christ, then in his soul he has a desire to be set free for eternity, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the blemish and the dominion of sin. He would not have a happier moment in his life here on earth, if it would be forever impossible for him to sin again.

4th May.

"That I may know Him." (Phil. 3:10-a).

There are two, or if you like, three distinct kinds of knowledge of Christ. Some know Him only through the Word. This is not a saving knowledge. Others know Him through the Word and through what is named as the common workings of the Holy Spirit. This is not a saving knowledge either. The elect, who through God's powerful calling out of darkness unto His wonderful light, come to know Him by the Word and by the peculiar workings of the Holy Spirit. All, who know Him in this manner, trust in Him with their whole heart. *"And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee."* (Ps. 9: 10).

Did the Apostle Paul not know Christ? Just listen to what he himself had to profess about that: *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."* (Gal. 1: 15, 16). And just because Paul knew Christ, that is why it was Paul's desire to be acquainted with Him. There is a feeling of love in the hearts of all of God's people, a love towards God. *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."* (Ps. 42: 1). *"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."* (Ps. 84: 2). And only then do believers deem to know Christ, when He is revealed in their heart more and more, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and as the Way to the Father. When they learn, to lose what they are in themselves, even their own life for His Name's sake, and when the Lord becomes more and more their only comfort in life and in death. And lastly, then, when they are strengthened more and more to follow Him through fruitful and unfruitful times.

And to *know* Christ like that, *was* Paul's desire. And as it pleased the Lord to fulfil Paul's desire, and the better Paul came to see and understand that his opponents did not have the doctrine of the truth, so he was strengthened and confirmed in the truth, and we have the expression of it in these words: *"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."* (1 Cor. 2: 2).

5th May.

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection. “ (Phil. 3: 10a).

The resurrection of Christ means His justification. See 1 Tim. 3: 16: Were we read: *“Justified in the Spirit.”* And in Rom. 1: 4 we find: *“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”* And because Christ suffered and died, He also arose as the Head of the covenant of grace, representing all those who were given unto Him in the covenant of peace. That is why, Christ's resurrection is not only *His* justification, but also of *all the elect*. The Apostle Paul says in Rom. 4: 25: *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”*

No one can appropriate these benefits, which Christ has obtained for His Church unto himself, unless they are given unto him, for it is written: *“A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”*(John 3: 27). If Christ had not risen from the dead, He would not have been able to give unto His Church, that, which He has now obtained for them. But now that He has risen, it takes place in this way: through the Holy Spirit He causes His elect to become destitute and loosened from everything, and to reveal Himself in the powerful calling, and by true faith unite them unto Himself. And in this union, He comes to grant and apply unto them the righteousness which He has obtained through His obedient suffering and dying, so that they may learn to say: *“The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”*(Jer. 23: 6).

This righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is given in and unto them; through the Son of God, and through them is appropriated by them through a true faith, which is their justification before God. The elect, are by nature the same as all other people, dead in sin and trespasses. That means that they are under the same curse of the Holy Law of God as other people, and are unable, and unwilling to be on God's side, and to live for Him. And if Christ had not risen from the dead, then He would have been unable to quicken any of His elect.

6th May.

“And the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” (Phil. 3:10b).

The fellowship of Christ's sufferings is not something which is different, then to being made conformable unto His death. There is a two-fold fellowship in the death of Christ. Firstly: we have the crucifying and dying of the old man, and secondly: the dying of the outward man. In Romans 6, we read about the dying of the old man and in Romans 8 about the dying of the outward man.

In the dying of the old man, we must understand nothing else than the workings of the new life. When the elected person has died in the first Adam and has risen again in the second Adam, that is when he begun a new life. For the workings of this life consists, in the dying of the old man.

You must pay attention to the fact, that the Apostle does not mention the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and the conformity unto His death, before he spoke about the knowledge of Christ and the power of His resurrection. If he had mentioned it before that, then he would have placed the sanctification before the justification. But he makes mention of this first, after he has spoken about knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection.

The dying of the old man means that in faith he has communion with Christ; and this means; that one has received a true saving conviction of his sins. Only those who died unto their sin, are drawn to Christ, and are placed in Him by the fellowship of the Triune God.

Man speaks about a dying, because the old man is so fervently bound up in us. Something in us must become undone before the dying of the old man will take place. Therefore, a supernatural power must take place. If this does not come to pass, regardless of what changes may take place, the old man will not die but goes on living, even if he takes on a different form at times.

7th May.

“And the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” (Phil. 3:10b).

The other fellowship to the dying of Christ is *the dying of the outward man*. When someone has the privilege to find himself in this fellowship of faith with Christ, then it cannot be anything else, then that he dies daily. And Christ, for Whom there was no room in the inn, the One Who was crucified between heaven and earth by us, is then his Righteousness, and his happiness, his comfort, his strength and his *All*. “He says no as often as the world comes to him, whether it is the pious or the wicked with all that is theirs, *“for he is determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* (1 Cor. 2: 2).

The world is unable accept this. She loves what is hers and defends it. The world sins and wants to sin. She is unable to do anything else but sin, for she is sin. And as far as the world is religious or pious, she creates her own righteousness, or, at least, she tries to do this. And again this has to be so, because she has no knowledge of *the* Righteousness. She was never enlightened with Divine light, and therefore has not seen her dreadful, sinful God-dishonouring and the soul-destructive nature of her own righteousness. How would she then be able to cast away her own self-righteousness as filthy rags? The righteousness which is accountable before God, the Righteousness of Christ, has never been revealed unto her, so how would she be able to stretch out her hands unto Christ, and open her heart for Christ and His righteousness? The word, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*(Matt. 6: 33), is cast away from the closed door of her heart, and she says: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14).

This causes a believer to become a suffering servant of the Lord, reviled and slandered, cast aside and scorned. Sometimes, he is unable to continue to stay in the place where he is living. Cain slew Abel. *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.”* (Hebr. 11: 24, 25).

8th May

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Phil. 3:11).

In her suffering and under her heavy cross, the Church takes no heed of that which the world keeps from her, but she looks unto that what Christ has obtained for her. That is why these words of Phil. 3:10 follow: *"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."*

By the resurrection of the dead, we must understand the destruction of that what is called *dead* and the full enjoyment of *life*." Because this will be when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come on the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead. Do you believe that? Do you believe that you will presently see Christ as the Judge of heaven and earth, coming upon the clouds of heaven? When that moment comes, then it will be fulfilled with what we find in John 5: 28, 29: *"Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."* Then it shall wholly be: *"death is swallowed up in victory"*, and the Lord Jesus Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to His Father and: *"God shall be all and in all."* (1 Cor. 15). Eternal joy will be on the heads of all those, who have learned to love His appearance here.

The Apostle says: *"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"*, now you must not think that the Apostle is unsure of these matters. He expresses himself like this, to give us an impression of the severity, of the difficulty of coming to the blessed resurrection. The Apostle Peter also says: *"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1 Peter 4: 18). The Apostle's hope was to come to the knowledge of the resurrection from the dead, and only through that. If you have understood this aright, then you will also comprehend why the Apostle spoke so strongly against the false teachers, who presumed that there was some good in man, which could have influenced the justification of the sinner before God.

9th May.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Rom. 10: 9).

The Gospel tells us that God has raised Christ from the dead, therefore, God is satisfied. Christ's righteousness is God's own righteousness. If there had been but one sin, which had not been reconciled, then God could not have raised the Son of His eternal love, for: *"the wages of sin is death."* (Rom.6: 23). One Person has brought about this righteousness, the man born of the virgin Mary, He has borne the punishment and shown obedience unto the Law; and with this Man, the eternal God had united Himself. That is why it says in Acts 20:28, that God has obtained His Church through His own blood. Now then, if we believe this with a faith of appropriation, then we shall be saved, so says the Apostle Paul. I repeat: with a faith of appropriation, for only such a faith is unto salvation. A faith in which there is no appropriation, is also in eternal damnation. The Apostle James says in his letter (James 2:19): *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* A faith without appropriation is not a true faith. People often say: "I hope that I have faith, but it still has to be applied to me." But, if it is not applied, then there is nothing at all! *The application is the soul of everything!*

How does faith stand, true saving faith, over against the resurrection of Christ? The Church says in the Twelve Articles of Faith that she believes in Jesus Christ, Who rose again on the third day from the dead. What does it mean, when the Church says this? Then she says that she believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He Who knew no sin was unable to be held by death. First, because He was without sin, no sin could be found in Him, and secondly, God had completely punished the sins of the elect in His flesh. And in the third place, Christ's Divine nature had united itself with His human nature. This is the faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

10th May.

“Jesus said unto her: I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” (John 11: 25).

In spiritual respect, the human generation is dead. It breathes it has understanding, will and feeling; but with all these abilities, there is an aversion to righteousness. The human generation is alienated from God, and this is its state of death. If anyone were to enter in the state of life, then he must wake up. That is why He says: *“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”* (Eph. 5: 14).

Martha had said: *“I know that he (Lazarus her brother) shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”* (John 11: 24). *“Jesus saith unto her, ‘I am the resurrection’.* That is, those who have Me, and know Me, and who possess the resurrection, *they have life.* And if there is anyone who has come into this state of life, then he will still be unable to keep himself in it, not even for *one* moment. That is why the Lord immediately says: *“I am the resurrection”,* and: *“Life.”* Which means, in Me is the continual existence of life. Now you may ask: how do we know these things?" How can we find out that the Lord Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life? You find the answer to this question in the following words: *“He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”*

“He that believeth in Me.” We see that here in our text, where we speak about a true saving faith. No one else is the object of this faith than Jesus Christ, the eternal living, all-sufficient, praiseworthy, blessed Son of God; although not excluding the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ is never known, unless we see the Father and the Holy Spirit at the same time. When the Triune God reveals Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then the result is, that we know Him as He is. Faith of which we speak is in fact nothing else but to say *“amen”* upon the revelation that God has given of Himself. When someone possesses this faith, then he can put a seal upon the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: *“I am the resurrection and the life.”* Christ is come unto Him and in him are the Risen one out of the grave of Joseph of Arimathaea, and he has been raised up in Christ, and he *“lives”* as it is written in Gal. 2: 20.

11th May.

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4:25).

The Lord Jesus was not delivered because of His sins. He had no sin. As God He was holy, and as man He was holy as well. He was also aware that He was without sin: *"Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"* (John 8: 46). The people knew this as well. Time and again, the governor had testified that He was innocent. And the centurion has done the same. Therefore, the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Cor. 5: 21: *"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* We had sin, and the Lord Jesus hath placed Himself in our stead, and He has become the sin offering for our sins. His resurrection from the grave was for our sake also, like the Apostle writes: *"... and was raised again for our justification."* *"Our."* Who does the Apostle have in mind here? He had himself, the Congregation in Rome and all the believers in mind. They are the believers, to whom it was given to: *"... believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead,"* (Eph. 1: 19, 20) and for the people who make use of all that Christ has obtained by His suffering and dying. It is like this: The Person, the work, and the benefits of the Lord Jesus are offered and laid before the people through the means of the preaching. Whosoever embraces this offer with his heart is blessed and will remain blessed. Ps. 72:17: *"And men shall be blessed in Him."*

"...for our justification." Justification is the first benefit of the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection from the grave. The righteousness which the Lord Jesus Christ - God and Man blessed into all eternity - obtained through His suffering and dying, is the righteousness which is accountable before God. There is no other, then this, our justification before a holy, righteous, and merciful God. God has punished sin in the crucifying of the Lord Jesus - not the sin of His Son, for I repeat, He had no sin, but for the sin of the world. By the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, God has now justified all those whose sins He punished in the suffering and dying of His Son.

12th May.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.” (Eph. 1: 19, 20).

What *do you think* about yourself? Is there hope in your heart? Are you interested in the answer to this question? Then let your examination in the first place, be about faith. Would you like to examine yourself, whether you have the right, the freedom and a hope for temporal, spiritual and eternal benefits, then you must ask yourself if you have this faith. You can always know this by two things. There are many more which we could mention, but I will only name two. Firstly: *Do you perceive the power of Christ's resurrection in your heart?* Because that is the power by which faith is worked. Do you perceive this power? For after all, “true faith is through the working and strength of God's power, which He has wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead!” Secondly, you must ask yourself: *“What is the object of my faith?”* Is it God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? When the triune God is not the object of your faith, then your faith is not the upright faith. The question whether your faith is true, depends on the question of what the object of your faith is, and only if the triune God is the Object, then your faith is upright, and all the rest is delusion! Therefore, you must examine and ask yourself whether the power of Christ's resurrection works in your heart. That is the power which works in us, if we truly believe. And then you must ask yourself whether God Himself is the Object of your faith. You must not go against this by remarking: "Yes, but there is also weak faith, and the Apostle John speaks about little children, young men, and fathers," (1 John 2: 12-14) for then, you deceive yourself! It is true, faith can be strong, and it can also be weak; it is true that there are little children, young men, and fathers. But faith is always the same. Even if it is weak, then it is still true faith, *if it is true faith*. Every faith, even the weakest, is a fruit of the workings of the power of Christ's resurrection, and it always has God as its Object, even if it is extremely weak.

13th May.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1: 3) 1.

From this you observe that the Apostle Peter, places the Lord Jesus Christ with His resurrection from the grave, entirely as the main point. Not only has the apostle Peter done this, but the patriarchs and the prophets have also done this. And after the apostle Peter and the other apostles had done this, others have done this also. It can be said that the work of the Congregation, is the work of God's Congregation, to place and see the Lord Jesus Christ as the centre point. When the Lord Jesus with His rising from the grave is placed in the centre like this, then we can draw various conclusions from this. I will only mention a few. We must have been deeply convinced in the heart, as well as having the knowledge and the possession of the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection. For a great deal has been gained already, when a person comes to perceive, that Christ is necessary for him, even if this is from afar. This is not so straightforward; for there is something else which is obvious. I have noticed this in myself and in others as well. It is obvious that man trusts himself. He does not see that, but it is true! Without earnestly giving an account of this, he believes that his heart follows the matters, which according to his judgment have meaning for him. According to his judgment man needs Christ; and in his heart, he is inclined to believe that he agrees with this. However, that it is something quite different. In our mind we may cling to an opinion, while the heart is still completely unfamiliar with it. You must have learned this, otherwise, you have certainly taken on a faith, which is nothing but an illusion, which you take to be the true faith. I say again, a lot has been gained already, when man starts to perceive that he needs Christ, and can see that things will not go the way he has gone, how he has tried to reach out; however, God must lead him in a different way, and if this does not take place, he shall never be saved. When he starts to perceive this, then he will come in greater need, and as a result will be, that his calling out to God, will become more earnest and more persistent.

14th May.

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1: 3b) 2.

The Apostle Peter ends in God, and so have all those, who have come to know the Truth. The Apostle speaks here about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and says that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has been the means of the re-birth.

See, here is something, which you must hear! What is it that you must hear? You must turn into yourself with questions such as these: Do I believe in the resurrection of Christ? Do I know that Christ is alive? *Do I know* that? *Do I know* that one day I shall see Him? Furthermore, you must ask questions such as these: Do I understand His resurrection, assuming, that He has risen? Do I understand what is meant by this? Is this matter explained in my heart? And you must also ask yourself: Do I understand the connection that is placed here between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the re-birth? You can also ask yourself what the re-birth is, and whether *you know* what the re-birth is. You could then ask yourself whether the connection between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the re-birth is reality for you, and if it is clear to you.

Perhaps you feel that when we do it like that, firstly, we must do what is reasonable, and what seems to make sense, and secondly; that it will then be impossible for us to remain without a blessing.

This is the mistake which makes; for he does not look, into the matters, and he knows the matters far too soon. And when we know the matters too soon it will mean, that we do not know them at all. Because for everything; there is a fullness of time, and in this fullness of time, we must have learned these things, *for then we will know them*.

We speak here about *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Christ has died and was buried. And where is He now? Now you must not answer with the Bible; neither the teaching you have from the Catechism, or with that which you have accepted, but the answer must come from your heart.

15th May.

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1: 3b).

The question is: *Where is He now?* And surely, your answer must come from the Bible, and you must have been made able to take the Bible to be the Word of God, because when the Holy Spirit has been given unto you, and you have been taught by Him, then there is no need to worry that you will say something which is against the Bible concerning these matters. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit has engraved in your heart, the Holy Spirit has made that known unto you! Whatever differences there may be found among the people, alas, also amongst the Christians, there are two matters to which all Christians agree, which is about *the justification and about sanctification*, or, the justification and the re-birth.

Christ did not remain in the grave. I say that, and the Bible says that as well. And you, do you also say that? Christ has not remained in the grave. And you, do you say that as well? *“I beheld Him”*, like the Apostle Paul said: *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, on the right hand of the Majesty on High.”* (Hebr. 2:9 and 1:3).

If the disciples had never seen the Lord Jesus again, they would never have believed! Are you aware of that! That is why the Lord Jesus made sure to show Himself to His disciples: *“by many infallible proofs.”* (Acts 1:3). With that knowledge they have gone into the world. The Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor. 4: 13: *“I believed, and therefore have I spoken.”* And we must have seen the Lord Jesus in this manner as well. How do you think, that they saw Him? What are *your* thought about that? The Lord Jesus comes suddenly, unexpectedly - as the Scriptures teach us - through the closed door of the room where the disciples were gathered together. And He says unto Thomas: *“Reach hither thy finger, and come near with thy hand, Thomas!”* Thomas falls on his knees, and what does he say? *“My Lord and my God!”* (John 20: 27, 28). Had he seen that in the wounds with his natural eyes? In the wounds of the hands and the wounds in the side? Had Thomas seen that in these wounds, that Christ was His Lord and God? In the wounds and with these eyes? If the disciples would have had nothing but the sight of their natural eyes, it would have been to no avail. But they saw Christ through faith, and that was to their salvation! That is how I must have seen Him, and you must see Him, and it is then that you know, that He lives.

16th May.

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3b)

When through faith you have seen Christ, then you know that He lives; that He lives in the world and shall appear on the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead. This view, brings forth a confession. Man knows nothing who has not received this view! He cannot say what God is, or what he is in himself! He deceives himself in everything; he has no knowledge of this, nor can he talk about it. There is something else as well. For what does the Apostle Peter do now? He brings the re-birth, his re-birth and the re-birth of those to whom he writes, in conjunction with the resurrection of Christ. For he says in our text: *"Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* And what do you say, when you hear this? You should say: if I had to say it myself, then I would be unable to confess this in a different way. That is what you must say! But if you are unable to say that, then there could still come a time in which you may learn this, for it is still not right with you, you still do not know it, you have not been taught by God yet. When you are able, to accept this, and you are able, to take a step back, then perhaps, it may still come to pass, but when you have not yet come to see your desperate need, nothing will ever come of it. There is nothing more dangerous than being pious, without being in Christ. The matters of themselves are not so dangerous, but man handles them in a wrong way. He works with the Gospel without having received the knowledge of the Gospel. He must work with the Law, and when someone works with the Law, and understands the Law, and subjects himself unto the Law, it is then that the Gospel will speak unto him. It must speak to him, because it is for people just like that, and these are glad tidings for those people. Now, there may be some people who work with the Gospel; but it will do them no good. They can say that they like it; and they say that it is sweet for them, that they are strengthened by it, but they perceive nothing of it. They know not what they say. Man can only comprehend the Gospel, if he understands the Law and embraces the demand and the curse of the Law. Then he understands the Gospel, and the Gospel will then speak unto them.

17th May.

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3b) 5.

You must be able to say, “Yes, my re-birth is closely connected with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The re-birth is also a resurrection from the dead. But what does man do when he is born again? As a damnable, guilty, creature, who is worthy to be cast out, he takes hold of God's Word, in which he can see and hear that it speaks to him personally. A person becomes a Christian when he sees and hears that it concerns him. He takes hold of the Word and brings it into his heart. And so, the Word is the seed, and the Word is life. And when the Word has been brought into the heart, life is brought into the heart, and it does not only take hold of the Word, but through the means: of the Word, Christ and God. For then Life has come into his heart, and he joined himself with the Life, Who is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For it was He Who has said: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”* (John 14:6). When he noticed that he was alive; then he knew that he had life. For life was in him, and he was in the Life. And what did he see regarding himself? He saw that he was: *“dead in trespasses and sins.”* (Eph. 2: 1), and that he was alive, in Jesus Christ, in God. That is what he became aware of! We must become aware of God in Christ drawing near unto us in our heart. That is the re-birth. And whoever has experienced this, immediately connects this experience unto the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not connect this to himself, neither with his workings or with his belief, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to a Triune-God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And now he can say with the Apostle Peter: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* It does not exist in many words, but it exists in this, that the heart has understood it. And when the heart comprehends it, then the Word will also come and say: *“Thou hast eternal life.”* Do you know why? Because you are born of God, God is the Truth, and now every word of truth must say, that you have truth within you.

18th May.

“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” (2 Cor. 5: 15b).

What is it to *live unto oneself*? It is by nature that man *lives unto himself*. And what does this mean? When someone *lives unto himself*, then he is ruled by his own understanding. And we find that almost everyone knows a lot, that is, at least, in their own opinion.

He, who *lives unto himself*, follows his own will; he does whatever pleases him. He says: *“We are lords, we will no more come unto Thee.”* (Jer. 2: 31). His aim is to get everything, which is pleasing unto him.

A man *living unto himself*, has an evil conscience. This is a conscience which is not sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Everyone, whose conscience is not sprinkled with the blood of Christ, has a bad conscience. Such a person *lives unto himself*. An evil conscience does warn a person when he sins, but it does not warn him of the matters regarding faith and conversion, he knows nothing about that. The conscience and the world call many things sin; but that *not receiving* Christ out of the hand of the Father is sin, and yet it is the second greatest sin; neither the world nor the conscience knows about that.

A man, who *lives unto himself*, is someone who lives under the dominion of sin, with whom the world has the overtone, the upper hand. This man has no knowledge of self-denial, and you all know the great judgment which is bound to that: *“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”* (Matt. 16: 24, 25).

A believer has *lived unto himself*, he knows this and has confessed this. He has *lived unto himself*, perhaps regardless of how religious he had been. It had always been all about himself and about his own honour, not about the Lord. However, now he no longer lives unto himself.

19th May.

“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” (2 Cor. 5: 15b).

“...but unto Him, which died for them, and rose again.” Unto Him, they shall live! What is this life? We have told you what it is - *“to live unto ourselves.”* Now we must also tell you what it is *“to live unto Christ”*. To live unto Christ is to think as God thinks, and to have the testimony of this in our heart. It is to will as God wills, to judge as God judges, to love what the Lord loves, and to hate what He hates. That is, among other things: *to live unto God or Christ*. This is the important point in the saving of sinners; this is God's purpose when He converts a person. We are inclined to think that it is all about salvation. No, it is about God: *“Who has made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”* (Prov. 16: 4). When the Lord works in man, then His first intention is to save his soul. But the Lord's further aim is: to have a person in a city or in a village or wherever, to proclaim that he stands on God's side. We can see this in the history of Daniel's friends. The golden image had been erected; everyone bowed before this image, but Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not do this. They stood on God's side, and the Lord used them to proclaim His praise. *“This people have I formed for Myself,”* (not for them but for Me) *“they shall shew forth My praise.”* (Isa. 43: 21).

Now, do *you know something* about this *living unto God*? Does your heart leap when you hear something about this? Or do you hear all this, with a totally unmoved heart? While reading it, did you think, that is how I would like to live, not unto myself but unto Christ. For then it would not matter what would happen to me, as long as God would receive His honour.” Is it like that in your soul?

There is no need to tell you, that this is not known among the people. We don't hear a word about this. Nearly all people *live unto themselves*. They do not say: what happens to me is not important, as long as God receives His honour.

20th May.

“And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them.” (Luke 24:50a).

Where did the disciples allow themselves to be led? They did not know. They did not need to know. Wherever there is reasoning and calculations, there is something amiss! Faith does not need to know, faith does not want to know where it is going. As soon as someone wants to know an answer beforehand, he shows that he distrusts it. Faith goes onward, not knowing where the end will be. But here we must add, faith knows with Whom it goes forward! And this is the point. The Psalmist of Psalm 23 says: *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”* *“And He led them out, as far as to Bethany.”* You all know that Gethsemane was not far from there. And the great sufferings which had taken place there! And this suffering had still increased. But that was all past now. The Lord had wanted to endure, for the joy that was set before Him. *It is finished*, and so it will be finished for the Church on earth also. It will be finished forever. What shall it be, to be delivered from the world, from a world which lies in wickedness, from a world which lies under the judgment of God, to be delivered from a heart, which in deceit exceeds all deceivers, and is ever so hypocritical, which tries to be so cunning, and which is inclined to cover up sins! O, what shall it be, to be delivered from a heart like that, and then to behold and rejoice! What would that be? Answer this question. It is what man has been taught here, that is, if he has really received grace in his heart. Perhaps you may think: *“Now I still don't know it.”* A converted person comes to know God in His glory here on earth. And when this takes place, then he bows down, even with the body if necessary, and with his heart as well, and lifting up his voice, he sings: *“Blest be the Lord, for He so glorious Alone does wondrous things. O God, in all the earth our chorus With Amen, Amen rings.”* (Ps. 72: 10 Anglo-Genevan Psaltry).

This is what heaven is! However, I did not say that it is known to me what heaven is. Yet, this I know, that it is the glorification of God to all eternity, which comes into existence when we behold God.

21st May.

“And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them.” (Luke 24: 50b).

Unexpectedly, the Lord Jesus lifted up His hands and was taken up from this earth. The disciples did not know, that this was going to happen.

“He blessed them.” With what? What is the blessing of the Lord Jesus? I am unable to tell you, because the blessings of the Lord Jesus are innumerable. It says in Psalm 71: 15: *“My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.”* Do you know them? Perhaps you cannot even mention one. Most likely you know nothing about righteousness. It is quite possible that you are not able to say anything about God's salvation. Only lost sinners in Adam, lost sinners are enabled to do that, people that have in every way completely defiled themselves and continue to do so the whole day, every moment, every hour. They find their heart in agreement with Psalm 71:15.

“And He lifted up His hands.” These hands had been pierced. If the Lord Jesus would have laid other hands on His disciples, then this would not have had any meaning. Pierced hands, hands in which you could see the stains of blood, the wounds which you and I, the pious people, the people who seek God, we, the people on the way to heaven have inflicted. All these blessings we owe to His wounds. Have a look at yourself! Dear people, humble yourselves! What has the Holy Spirit taught you about this in your heart, and what does He still teach you?

The disciples were blessed. And: *“whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”* (Luke 8:18). But just remember this, sooner or later *you will* find out. God will find you, if you have not truly cast the anchor of hope within the veil (Hebr. 6:19), where a compassionate, and merciful, praying High Priest is seated on the right hand of the Father. Hope founded on faith, founded on the righteousness of Christ, is also a blessing of the Lord Jesus. But don't forget, where there is no uniting, and no justifying faith, there is also no hope.

22nd May.

“And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” (Luke 24:51a).

Suddenly, the Lord Jesus makes Himself loose from His surroundings, and His disciples see Him go up into heaven. They gaze upon Him, though not for long, for: *"a cloud received Him out of their sight."* (Acts 1: 9.). Christ had departed from them. But there was a bond which was not broken, which would never be broken. Which bond? Well, that went like this. The Lord Jesus had made His appearance among the people and had preached the Gospel. By means of this preaching, He had presented and offered Himself, as you can read in John 1: 11 12: *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* Now, these people who had surrounded Him there on the Mount of Olives, had accepted Him. I do not know if *you know* what this acceptance is, but if you have received Him, then you do know. Were these people then different from all the other people who had rejected the Lord Jesus? Did they think that they were different? No, they did not think that! Did they place themselves on the same level as the other people? No, they placed themselves below these other people. How did that take place? Well, the Lord Jesus had come to them, and He Himself had taken care that they would accept Him. He had opened their hearts for Himself; and therefore, they had also opened their hearts for the Lord Jesus. That is how it happened. They knew that the Lord Jesus is the beginning, and that they of themselves, would never have given themselves over unto Him.

When the Lord Jesus has come to you and you have opened your heart for Him, then you know all this. *I am* unable to show you this. I can tell you, and you will also see this, if you proceed in the same manner.

And this bond will never be severed. The person whom the Lord has taken hold of, will be held by Him forever. And when if you profess to have grace, then you should leave everything to the Lord. And when you have become a sinner before God, then you are so filled with the wonder, namely: that it is the Lord who keeps you.

23rd May.

"He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:51b).

The Lord Jesus had fulfilled His mission. Salvation had been obtained, and God had received His honour. The Law had found her justice, faith was preserved, and God's virtues were restored. All was well, everything was perfect: *"For God was in Christ"*, which is the Gospel, *"reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (2 Cor. 5: 19). The Lord Jesus had now obtained a right unto heaven.

Sometimes, people speak about grace. And like we hear so often; "That it would be grace," or "That it is grace." However, you should not place too much value on these words when you hear them; for they are usually deceitful. It is certain that it is grace, but then something must be added unto this. For we sing: *"Let Thy right and mercy tarry with them who fear Thy Name."* Justice can never be separated from grace, and grace can never be separated from justice. Christ now had the right to enter into heaven, and in His ascension, He made use of this right. The Father had acknowledged it. Christ ascended into heaven, and the heavens took Him up: *"And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."*

The Lord was a public Person. You may not understand this expression. I will readily explain it to you. Adam represented the whole of mankind, and Christ represented the elect. When He arose from the grave, the elect also arose. When He ascended into heaven and took a place on the right hand of the Father, the elect did this as well. Therefore, those who are in Christ are in heaven, by the virtues of God's righteousness. And because they are in heaven in Christ Jesus, they will all enter into heaven. *He is the Firstborn, He is the Head*, and what has been given unto Him shall also be given to His Body. After having said all this, it comes down to the point that there must be a bond between Christ and us. Is this bond also between you and Christ?

24th May.

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up". (Acts 1: 9a).

The Lord Jesus has said many things. When He was only twelve years old, He began to speak; they found Him among the teachers of Israel. And He continued this until the last moment of His life. But His words have no value for people, whose heart has not been opened by the Holy Spirit. The world, although she is without knowledge and will never come any further than to speculate, casts His Word behind her. But the disciples were led to say: *"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6: 68). Besides the disciples, there were a few others who spoke in the same manner. And that is how it has been throughout the centuries. The Word through the power of the Holy Spirit has never been for the great multitudes, not for the majority, it is for just a few, although it is an eternal truth that *not one of those*, who through the providence of Heaven have come into contact, with the Gospel, will be locked out by God.

"When He had spoken these things." The disciples had questioned Him regarding the restoration of the Kingdom of God. They wanted to know whether this would take place soon. You know Christ's answer. And we say this with reverence: *"God does not like intruders."* And it is when man no longer knows it, that he will be taught by the words of Psalm 25: *"The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach in His way."* Oh, that blessed Kingdom of the Lord Jesus is built only on the rubble of what man is, in himself. Everyone should now examine himself, whether he was contrite and broken down when he started to believe in Christ, unto justification and sanctification, for: *"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* (Isa. 66: 2). Many have come to Jesus as a living soul, but those who truly come unto Him were dead when they came. *"The hour is coming, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* (John 5: 25). When we are brought to nought, then we understand a little about our misery, sin, and guilt which are so great, that there was a Jesus necessary to save us, and to bring us back to the Father, Which is in heaven.

25th May.

“To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3).

The Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven forty days after His resurrection. It could have happened earlier, for when the Lord Jesus Christ had said: *“It is finished”* and when He was raised from the grave by God, He could have ascended immediately into heaven. He did not do this, and there must have been reasons for that. I think that there are two that are apparent, which I will mention.

The resurrection is the crucial point, and the Lord Jesus knew that the resurrection would be spoken against. This began immediately. That is why, it has pleased the Lord to show Himself unto His disciples for forty days *“with many infallible proofs, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”*

Do you understand that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the crucial point? If you think that you do understand this, then explain what this resurrection has taught you and what it has given you, and how you stand regarding the resurrection. If you were to ask me then I would say: that God has become God through Jesus Christ; that faith and the Law are restored by the Son of God; and that in and with and through the resurrection, we have the forgiveness of our sins and a right to life; and that we are renewed after the image of God and have received a hope for eternal glory, as well as our perseverance to the end.

It is certain, that the disciples were taught of God. But how many stumbling blocks did they still have with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ! There was a lot which they did not understand correctly. That is the reason, why the Lord Jesus still stayed with them for forty days. It is an inexpressible goodness! It is, and do you know of what I am thinking now? Just listen! Most people take on a calling, without the evidence from God, that He will take care of it all. And it is an inexpressible goodness when the Lord does not bring this person in difficult positions, before the Lord has made him able and capable for these duties.

26th May.

"Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive." (Psalm 68: 18a) 1.

"Thou hast led captivity captive." With these words, King David the psalmist, casts the whole world into the dust, and preaches Jesus Christ unto the world. That is why David was a man, who through grace understood the reality. And the reality is that we lie in the midst of death, (words from the Form for the Lord's Supper) and it is through faith in Christ that we are saved from this predicament, forever.

When God created us, there was no prison. We were righteous and holy. We moved freely; freedom in all matters was our portion, with the exception, of taking the fruit from the tree of knowledge, of good and evil. We had access unto God, and saw creation as the work of the Lord. With the creation and with all that it gave us in God's goodness, we ended in Him, Who is the Origin, in God. We were at ease with our fellowman. We were filled with God; and nothing stood in our way. We enjoyed happiness and peace. This did not remain like this. For we were under the influence of the prince of darkness, we left this happy place, without being forced to do it. We gave all this up for something of still greater value, so we thought. We were obedient unto the devil, who had our destruction in mind then, which he still has in his mind. We transgressed the Law, the command of God, and left God, and then we were in captivity.

What is this captivity? The world (that is man) thinks that he is free, or rather, that he can be free. The captivity of which we speak here, is our being under the power of the prince of darkness. Is that a hard saying? I am unable to say it less bluntly, for it is the truth. The devil holds us captive, and it is right that he holds us captive. You can read it, if you have not experienced it yet, that he keeps us captive, and it is evident from words such as these: *"For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."* (John 14:30). That is the word of the Lord. The Apostle Paul speaks of: *"the god of this world."* (2 Cor. 4: 4). In Isaiah 49:24, the devil is called *"the lawful"*. Because he keeps us captive, no matter how we rattle and shake our chains.

27th May.

"Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive." (Psalm 68:18a) 2.

Sin holds us captive also. We sin against God, against ourselves, and against our fellowman. Really even a superficial reflection makes us deeply ashamed and embarrassed. But the consideration about this should not be superficial, for if that is the case, man will remain what he is in himself. He must become so convinced of his sins that he cannot remain in himself, so that he will go out of himself to Jesus Christ. For even if we strive against sin, it is all to no avail! When we think that we have conquered a sin, then they either come back, or many others will come in its place. It cannot be done! Sin keeps us captive! And the *world* certainly does not have good influence on us either. What is the world? The world consists of an enormous multitude of wicked people, of hypocrites, and mockers, and of people who neither ask after God nor His commandments. Although the world is like that, we acknowledge her, we honour her, we take notice of her, we seek her, and we follow her. Whatever she does, we do also. We fear her, hence the insincerity, the lying, and the deceitfulness. We love the world regardless of how evil she is. We ourselves are the world. And we? What are we? My own heart is deceitful above all things, and yet, we trust in ourselves, no matter how evil, and how treacherous, or how abominable we may be. *Death* holds us captive. It says: "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" (Hebr. 9: 27). *Hell* holds us captive. Man does not consider hell. They say that there is no hell. People even ask: "Whether there is a hell?" Why do people speak like that? We want the world. But the rich man opened his eyes in hell. (Luke 16: 23). *"Thou hast led captivity captive."* This tells us that Christ, God and Man in one Person, sent of the Father, fulfilled the will of the Father, and by His suffering and dying fulfilled the command of the Father. He has taken (the devil, sin, the world, our own self, death, and hell) captive. And when one has been taken captive, then he no longer has any power, for then he is bound. But if Christ has taken all these powers captive, then He has deprived them of what they had possessed!

28th May.

"And sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19b).

"Sat on the right hand of God." This text is not expressed in the same manner everywhere. For instance, in Romans 8:34 it says: *"Who is even at the right hand of God."* This gives us an understanding, of how durable the Lord's sitting in glory is. The powers of the world arise and are destroyed. We have had quite a few, and nothing is left of their former splendour. They are all destined for destruction. And all these powers prepare something to create chaos; for the world is destined to fully show what she is. And it's chaotic. That this is not yet fully manifested, is not because of the world, but only because of God's goodness. The world does nothing but find fault with the Lord; nothing is good about Him. The world does not know, nor does she want to know that she is indebted to the Lord for her existence. But Jeremiah knew. He says in Lamentations: *"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."* (Lam. 3: 22).

At times it is said, that the Lord *stands* at the right hand of God. The poor, but nevertheless, rich Stephen calls out when he stood before the Jewish counsel, his sly, hostile, and wicked opponents: *"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."* (Acts 7: 56). This tells us that the Lord is willing, willing to help anyone. Man, in his self-conceitedness thinks: maybe if I do this or leave that, or if there would come a change in my life, perhaps the Lord will help me then. These are all covenant works! They are ignorance! And enmity! Or man says or thinks that the Lord must be persuaded. But when we come to realize that we cannot persuade the Lord, then the Lord Jesus, must do it. Then is this the meaning of the words: "for Jesus sake", which is found in the mouths of the orthodox Christians. No, that is all wrong! The Lord is willing and able every moment, and He is fully prepared to help all those who are willing to allow themselves to be helped.

29th May.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1b).

“They were all with one accord in one place.” All, except Judas, for he was absent. And yet there was not one missing, for all the elect were there. That is how it has been throughout the centuries, and that is how it will be in the future. *“The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice.”* (Ps. 97: 1). That is why it will take place, as God has appointed it from eternity.

Then it is not just an election, but it will also become a reality. That does not mean that election would shut you out, because the preaching of the Gospel and the Word has come to you. For through the means of the Word, Christ with all His promises and gifts is offered unto you. And when there is room in your heart for Christ, then unlock your heart, and you will sing eternally of God's mercifulness. But you must never think, that when we are taught about an election, that you would later on, (presuming that you are not found among the number of the living), be able to plead on the fact that there was an election. It is not only that you are unable to do it, you will not do it. You shall not think about doing it. However, you shall then see this: In my life, I have given myself, from one moment to the next, to other things, and that is the reason why I am now lost!” Assuming, that you are now unconverted, why is it that you are unconverted? It is because you sought your life in something else. There was never a moment in your life wherein you needed God, and that is why you do not have Him. There was never a moment in your life, in which you desired God, and therefore you do not possess Him. The Lord Jesus Christ has said: *“And you will not come to Me, that ye might have life.”* (John 5: 40). Until it becomes reality for you that you did not want it, you shall remain without God. But as soon as you acknowledge this, and say: “I did not want to come; and I have never desired it,” then you will fully perceive what you did not want; namely, a glorious God, and it is then that the moment of your salvation has come, as you can read in the parable of the father who had two sons. He said to the one: *“Son, go work today in my vineyard.”* (Matt. 21: 28). The son said he would go, but he did not go. And the other said that he did not want to do it, however, he repented, and the father found him in the field.

30th May.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2: 2).

There is undoubtedly a reason, why the Spirit suddenly came with the sound as of a rushing, mighty wind. The rushing mighty wind served to cause the disciples to feel apprehensive. The way to the Lord for man is faith. When, and as long, as man does not practice faith, he will remain separated from God. And the way of the Lord unto us, is prepared with fear and humility. In the soul where God is working, anguish and fear of the judgment is felt. Fear of judgment and anguish of hell takes a prominent place with people in general and especially with the elect. It is counted as one of the greatest judgments over the children of this generation, that there is no fear for the judgment any more. This is owing to the fact, that sins are openly committed, and that there is an alarming boldness and forwardness among the people.

When there is fear in the hearts of the elect wherein God's Spirit is working, the wound (presuming there is a wound) remains open. In the time in which we now live, we now have a misbegotten Christianity, in which the living Jesus Christ is missing. Fundamentally that has no value. The Apostle Paul says, for: *"Christ is all, and in all."*(Col. 3: 11). If there is fear in the heart, then man will feel more and more that he has not received help, until he is healed. We have a disease, consisting in among other things, that we seek our salvation and the care of our interests for time as well as for eternity, without the Lord. The Lord says: *"For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* (Jer. 2: 13). We must be healed of this disease and then this work is laid in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit heals us from this, now, and by renewing. And in the first place, He shows us with this, that we with all that is ours, are without God. We can find this in these words: *"And when He is come, namely the Spirit, He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Me."* (John 16: 8, 9). And in the second place, by revealing unto us, that all what we have need of is in Christ.

31st May.

“And it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2: 2b).

The disciples were assembled in a simple room. The upper room was not the best part of the house. They would have been quite warm there, and they were in danger every moment, they were in danger that the enemy would discover them, because it attracts attention when there are a lot of people gathered together in a small room. But they did not keep to themselves. They were not allowed to do this, for God's Church is not allowed to keep to herself. You can find this in the Confession of Faith in the 37 Articles of Guido de Bres, and in article 28. That is why, the Church is called a flock. The disciples could not keep to themselves either, for Christ was their All, therefore they could not do without one another. For as the Lord increases, the believer decreases. The decreasing of the believer is the excellent foundation for unity. When this is *not* the foundation men can unite as much as they like, for this will then lead them more and more to a greater division. That is why, the uniting of the Church of Christ is the work of Christ Himself.

Although the place where the disciples were gathered together was so humble, yet the Spirit wanted to be there. Do you understand this? And yet, it is not the same as where the believers are gathered together, because we must be found in *God's way*. What seems to be the Lord's way, is not necessarily the Lord's way. The world is always speaking about order; everything must go in an orderly manner, as she calls it. However, the order lies in God, and not in us! Because it all had to go so orderly and beautifully, we have the Roman Catholic Church with all her pomp and splendour. However, the order and the beauty of the Christian Church is in her *being*. Therefore, a church-building may at times be a warehouse. The question is *whether the Lord wants to be there*. And with a view to this, the Lord who knew what times lay ahead, has said: *"Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matt. 18: 20). The Lord can grant us His blessing anywhere, but we must only expect the Lord's blessing in His own way. Therefore, it continually resounds in the heart of the believer: *"This is the way, walk ye in it."* (Is. 30: 21).

1st June.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” (Acts 2: 3).

There is no need for me to tell you, what is meant by this. The apostles would kindle the hearts of the people by their preaching. By *“fire”*, and we to think of light, warmth, power, cleansing, burning, and consuming. We cannot dwell on all these matters now, we only want to point out to you that the *Holy Spirit*, for that is, of Whom we must think here, with these cloven tongues as of fire; is a *Light*. He is the Spirit of the Father, and *“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”* (1 John 1: 5). He is also the Spirit of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has said during His sojourn on earth: *“I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”* (John 8: 12).

Where the Spirit is, there is light. But what sort of a light is that? That is a light which humbles man. Not every light humbles or gives man knowledge, (for light is also partly knowledge) humbles man. The Apostle Paul speaks about a knowledge which puffeth up. (1 Cor. 8: 1).

True light has a two-fold working in man. It humbles him, and it also exalts him; it humbles him in himself, and it exalts him in the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ, Who did not have the Spirit by measure (John 3: 34), was a humble man. He has said: *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”* (Matt. 11: 29, 30). His true followers were and are those, who pray as Abraham prayed: *“Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.”* (Gen. 18: 27). We hear Job call out: *“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”* (Job 42: 5, 6). And Isaiah says: *“Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”* (Is. 6:5).

2nd June.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” (Acts 2:3).

The Holy Spirit is a fire in the heart, a fire of love and a fire of power. But man, of himself kindles a fire that will go out. Ultimately, the world remains in pitch-black darkness. All the light that is found among the people, will presently be extinguished! Isaiah 50:11 says: *“Behold, all ye that kindle a fire that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.”*

"Do you believe this: a night of pitch black darkness! For no matter who you are, you and the whole world shall presently be in pitch-black darkness. You could ask: "How do you know that?" We read this in God's Word, it is also the experience of all those who believe. Because the light of the Holy Spirit is not kindle in the heart, before the light which we have kindled, has gone out: *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* (2 Cor. 4: 6). When this divine light is kindled, then the heart is enlightened. The Apostle Paul writes about this to the congregation of the Ephesians: *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."* (Eph. 5: 8)

When the Holy Spirit is received, He then remains in that person. And what does He work in this person? He teaches him, and when you possess the Holy Spirit or what is the same thing, when you possess faith, then you will know the way, in the time in which we now live. Mankind as a whole does not know the way. Neither does our nation know the way! Our nation has turned unto itself, and if it will not return unto God, there will no longer be a God for this nation! He, who possesses the Holy Spirit, knows the way in this dreadful confusion. The Gospel is like the star that showed the way to the wise man from the east. (Matt. 2: 2). Just follow, and this word will be fulfilled in you: *"I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea."* (Ps. 68: 22). You will never prosper, if you want it differently.

3rd June.

"The workings of the Holy Spirit "(1).

Pentecost, is the feast of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit! Is this true for me and you? When has this feast begun in your life? Or do you think with the word "feast" only about worldly matters? Then you are very poor!

There is not one person who has a reason, to take on the attitude as if he is celebrating a feast. Only the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has a reason! She always has a reason. Also in these times? Certainly! The more degenerate the world becomes, the greater the light will be that is called Christianity which says, that He is God. Do you understand that? Man, being dead in spiritual sense, does not understand anything about this. Although he talks about religion, yet he uses the opinion of a natural man. He knows no other standard. He does not know the Word, and the Word is the standard. *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."* (Ps. 119: 9). See, these are texts which we know, but do we understand the meaning of them? When the psalmist of Psalm 119 felt something of this, he stood still, and bowed his head, while his heart, was lifted up on high, he called out: *"I have seen an end to all perfection: but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."* (Ps. 119: 96)

Have there been matters in your life of which you could say: *"This is the work of the Holy Spirit"*? When did these things take place? Most people have a religion without knowledge. They are religious, certainly, but they have no knowledge of what the essential part of their religion is. What is the reason, that this is so? The Holy Spirit does not live in them. The Holy Spirit is the great Teacher of the Church of Christ. Whosoever does not have the indwelling of the Spirit in his heart, has no understanding about Christianity, not of the Lord, or of himself, or about the events of the world! Do you understand that? To see and acknowledge that, is the humbling of the heart. And then it is written: *"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."* (Is. 66: 2).

4th June.

“The workings of the Holy Spirit “(11).

A spirit is invisible. How can we then speak about the Holy Spirit? How can we have a sermon about Him? How can we learn something about Him? The Holy Spirit becomes known by His workings in the heart. If these workings are in the heart, then man will say: *“The Holy Spirit is working in me”*, even if he does not use these words. The words are not important, but the matters are.

All these things take place in such a wonderful way. The Holy Spirit, comes into man. And then it is evident that he is one of the elect, which is seen afterwards. When the Spirit has come, He works. And the Lord Jesus summarizes in John, 16: 8-11, what this work is: *“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me”*, so man is here considered to be an unbeliever, *“of righteousness because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more”*. It is here that the Gospel is preached, because this righteousness is nothing less than the righteousness, which the Lord Jesus has wrought through His suffering and dying on this earth in His human nature, and with which He is seated on the right hand of the Father, *“and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”* By saying this, he said as much as: *“Fear not; for the prince of the world, Satan, under whom the whole world has placed itself and still does, has nothing to say; he has been judged, so fear not!”* This is what the Lord Jesus has said in a few words, about the workings of the Holy Spirit.

And now we must learn to distinguish. For there are the extraordinary workings and the ordinary workings of the Spirit, the common and the effectual workings. Through the extraordinary gifts or workings of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles confirmed the doctrine which they brought with signs and wonders. Extraordinary gifts or workings of the Holy Spirit have nothing to do with salvation as such. Therefore, even if you were able, to perform a wonder, or heal one who is sick, or give life to one who has died, that would have no meaning for the salvation of your immortal soul. Distinguish these things properly; otherwise, you are in danger of deceiving yourself.

5th June.

"The workings of the Holy Spirit." (111).

The Apostle Paul speaks extremely serious about the common workings of the Holy Spirit in, Hebrews: 6. You may think, "but these people did not possess faith, did they?" In Acts 8: 13: it says: "*Simon* (that is the sorcerer,) *himself believed also*." What is the difference between a faith like Simon had, and the true saving faith? Do you know the difference? You must know this, should you not? If you deal in copper and gold, you must know them both, otherwise, you run the risk that someone will give you copper for gold. That would not be pleasing for you. You must be able to differentiate between them. So, you must be able to distinguish between true faith, and the faith there is through the common workings of the Holy Spirit. True faith is worked by the effectual workings of the Holy Spirit. We would like to name a few of these differences. Where these matters are truly found, there is concern, but take note, *a believing concern*. See if you understand that. It is like this: when the Holy Spirit, has entered into the heart of man, all sorts of things take place, certain workings take place. And sooner or later this man will come to stand before all these works. And he becomes aware of this inwardly, so that he says: "*That is the Holy Spirit*." This person then becomes believingly concerned, for he wants to know if this is the Holy Spirit. I say: *believingly concerned*, for even though he is concerned about it, yet he still is, be it ever so weak, a believer, he believes that it is the Holy Spirit which has worked everything in him. If you are a genuine believer, then you will understand this. Where it is just the common working of the Holy Spirit, there is no sense or feeling of guilt: only the knowledge of sin, but that is still something different. It depends on the sense of our guilt which is needed, because we need a Reconciler, a Redeemer: we need the Lord Jesus. That is why, we need to acknowledge, and be conscious about the guilt which we have. Where the common workings of the Spirit are, that is where the leading unto Christ is missing. Faith in Christ is such a wonderful matter. The religious world has no idea about this. She speaks about it, but does not understand the least of it. It is a wonderful matter, faith in Christ, because in this work, man is led by the hand of the Holy Ghost unto the Lord Jesus.

6th June.

"The workings of the Holy Spirit" (IV).

Where faith is not real, man has not become aware of what he is by nature. A spiritual man, a man for whom the matters have become right (one who knows himself), is the natural man of whom the Apostle Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 2: 14: *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

When a person gets absorbed in the preaching of today and someone were to say: "What a good sermon," then ask this person what the distinction is, of what the Apostle Paul says here about the natural man, then these people will direct you to the world. However, a person who possesses grace is the natural man! And he knows this, because he is the spiritual man. The spiritual man has Christ. If you have no knowledge of what the natural man is, then you are without the Lord. If you are in the Lord, then you can say what they both are, and you will be able to explain the difference.

There is no confidence, where the workings are common. They speak about hope. Sure, but on what is this hope founded? And is there confidence? You have probably sung about this confidence hundreds of times already in your life: *"Our God, the LORD, is strong to save. From mortal danger from the grave. And every cruel oppression."*

This is the confidence, but this is not found where the workings are common. It does not have it. And why not? Why can man not have it there as well? Because he has not seen in God's heart. There is no trust in God. There it is like this; Yes, I do hope that He will be gracious unto me: but deep in the soul, it is like this: But whether I will truly receive it, I don't know. That is the doubting, not the confidence but the doubting! And this doubt is there because man does not know God; man does not trust in Him, neither does man believe that in the heart of the Father there is anything friendly towards man, that the heart of the Father hides something good for man. And that is why all this coming to the Lord is a delusion. Just listen: *"For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*(Hebr. 11: 6)

7th June.

"The workings of the Holy Spirit". (V).

With the common workings of the Spirit there is no reverence. Worship starts here, and will continue in heaven. And after the Lord's ascension into heaven, it is said that the disciples: *"Worshipped Him."* (Luke 24: 52). What is worshipping? And when does man worship? I do not say: when does man pray? But: when does he worship? Then when God is everything, and man is nothing. *"For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah."* (Ps. 69: 35). *"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."* (Matt. 21: 16). *"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 18: 3).

When we are under pressure, that is when we are in difficulties, it is then, that it really comes to light, that it is only the common workings of the Spirit. For when man is under pressure, and in great difficulties, then he is unable to do very much, if he does not have the Holy Spirit. For what does he need? He needs help. However, he does not ask, what becomes of God's honour. For there is no one who asks: *"Where is God, my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."* (Job 35:10). There is something which I heard before the war, and which still rings in my ears, it was, when I came in contact, with someone who spoke the German language who said: "Wenn es nur besser wird." That is: "as long, as we do not have war, as long as..." and you can go on like that. And what if we must have war for the honour of God? Would you say then: "Lord, let it come! I would rather have war, than that Thine honour would suffer." If you are a person who has grace, then that is how it is in your soul. But this is not found in *one* unconverted person. They want to receive help. And when they come into contact with someone else, then they expect and hope that they shall receive help. And if that does not happen...? Yet the one who is converted, says to the one who finds himself in difficulties, "My friend, you can find it in the Bible: *"He delivereth the poor in his affliction."* (Job 36:15), and now you must remain in your miseries; you must not try to deliver yourself, and neither must you desire that someone else will deliver you; you must remain there. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. Through Him, the Father rules over all things. He has brought you in your miseries. Let Him take you out of it, and wait upon Him. For His faithfulness *will be shown*.

8th June.

The faith in the Holy Spirit

What is it to have faith in the Holy Spirit? It is to receive the Holy Scriptures as God's testimony, and to say with the psalmist of Psalm 19: "*The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.*" It is not that difficult to say: "*I believe that the Bible is the Word of God.*" We can say that because of our upbringing. But to draw near to the Lord, and to place His own Word before Him when we are in great need at times, and to say: "*Is this not Thy Word? Art Thou not bound unto me through this Word? and I trust in that*", that is something quite different! Only this is to know the Holy Spirit and to have faith in Him.

To know the Holy Spirit and to believe in Him means, that we have received Him. It speaks for itself that if we have not received Him, we have no knowledge of Him. You cannot see the Holy Spirit, just as you cannot see the wind. And regarding the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, this is the same as the knowledge of the wind. Although we cannot see the wind, yet we can feel it. When we feel the wind, we know it is blowing. We say; "There is wind. It is a strong wind; it is a storm." That is also like that with the Holy Spirit. No sooner has the Holy Spirit entered in our heart, or we say: "The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son!" This is to know the Holy Spirit and to have faith in Him.

In the third place, to know and to believe in the Holy Spirit, is to hold for truth that He is given to us, and that He will lead us, lead us in and through this life. By this, you can know whether you know something of the Holy Spirit. And blessed are you, if you can say from the depth of your soul and in the acknowledgment of the omniscience of God: "Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit." He, who possesses the Holy Spirit, knows the Divinity. The question here is not in what measure, for there are measures and degrees, but all those who believe, know Him. He is and has become aware of the enlightening of the Holy Spirit. In the life of a converted person, there comes a moment wherein he comes to understand the words: "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" (2 Cor. 4: 6).

9th June.

“What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit? First, that He is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; secondly, that He is also given me, to make me by a true faith, partaker of Christ and all His benefits, that He may comfort me and abide with me forever.” (Heidelberg Catechism Q. 53 -1).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of faith. It is *He* who works true faith, the faith of the elect, the faith: *“according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”* (Ephesians 1: 19, 20).

Now, when the Holy Spirit has worked this faith in man, so that there is a fellowship with Christ and a communion with God has come into being, and from that moment on, this person is no longer sought after. The world no longer associates with him. In Acts 24: 25, we find: *“And as he, namely Paul: “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, ‘Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”* Take notice of these words, *“Go thy way!”*

The world thinks that she is quite something, but that is not so. When she comes, into contact with the Truth, then she feels that she is unsure and she staggers and totters, and she does not want that. Why not? Because she plans to go on in her way, which is: *“Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”* (Job 21:14). You probably all know this through experience.

The religious person with his unsound confessions, acts like a determined enemy. He feels that, he must step aside, but he is unable, because he does not want to do that. He tries to uphold himself but when he perceives that he cannot do that, he takes his resort to mockery or outbursts of enmity! And in moments like that, civility has no influence. It is the nature of the ancestral instincts which take control at that moment. Then they would be, capable of murdering such a converted person.

Do you really know yourself? Has your self-knowledge become the death of your religion, of all your religion, of your whole religious composition which you have erected, and which everyone has raised up?

10th June.

Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer Q. 53 (see June 9.2).

A converted person is sometimes in one way or the other, put aside, and persecuted. But the Holy Spirit is his Comforter! That is what our Catechism says, and the Holy Scriptures testifies this as well. What is it to be comforted? Have you ever thought about this question? When the burdens have been lifted off us and the misery in which we were is no longer there, when a lot has changed and happiness has come in place of mourning, is that comfort? No, then we are not comforted. We are comforted when the grief is alleviated. It is the Holy Spirit Who does this. What is His work! He maintains life; He created it, and now He maintains it. *"My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."* (Ps. 121: 2). We are not even capable of keeping our life. Adam was called to do it, but he did not want it. The Holy Spirit works it, so that it remains. Isn't that great? Have you ever thought about that? Was it ever given to you to contemplate on that? The Holy Spirit prays. This has a precious meaning. The Apostle Paul says in Rom. 8:26: *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* If there was no prayer, there would be no life, for prayer is rightfully called the breath of the soul. And the Holy Spirit gives us this need. Would you be able to say something about this? Do you understand something about this matter? Do you have any experience of this? The Holy Spirit strengthens. Not one converted person would have remained standing if the Holy Spirit did not uphold him. And the Holy Spirit carries them, and then the soul is supported. One of God's children says: *"Thou hast strengthened me with strength in my soul."* (Ps. 138: 3). And: *"In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul."* (Ps. 94:19). Read the Holy Scriptures, for they are filled with it. *"In time of need He will not leave them destitute."* The Holy Spirit teaches. Have you ever been unable to go any further? And has the Holy Spirit then taught you with a mighty arm, by a hand of great strength? And He taught you in such a way: for He opened that which was closed, and said: *"This is the way, walk ye in it"*? Do you know this?

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11th June.

Heidelberg Catechism 53 (see June 9-3).

The Holy Spirit places the matters in a clearer light. When a person receives grace, then he understands all these matters in one moment. And then the Holy Spirit comes to enlighten these matters, now and by renewing. For so much is darkened through sin. Because you know just as well as I do: that as soon and as long, as we hold on to one sin, man will lack the confidence to press on in prayer or in conversation. Sometimes he holds on so tightly that it will take his confidence from him. By doing this, strength is kept from him. How many people, who had the name with their fellowman of being converted, have got lost in this situation! "*The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind, the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous.*" (Ps. 146: 8). Allow yourself to be led! God is mighty to save. Leave what is yours, so that you may be freed, before you go hence and be no more. For if you are not delivered of this self yet, you will be lost for eternity. "*Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD.*" (Ps. 119:1).

The converted person, will receive this enlightening time and again, so that he is able to defend himself, even if the whole world were to stand up against him. Then the world must be silent; their consciences would have spoken, and she (the world) would have felt her own powerlessness and experienced her own foolishness! If a converted person lived, from moment to moment out of the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then he would also have asked from moment to moment: "*Should such a man as I flee?*" (Neh. 6: 11) That is a word from Nehemiah. The strength which the Lord grants, is a victorious strength. "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*" (1 John 5:4). However, the most important thing of this all is that the Holy Spirit causes us to look upon Christ's victory. And this causes the soul to say: "*Shall I fear?* Christ is the Conqueror, and in Him, it shall be shown that I am a winner as well. The Apostle Paul says: "*In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*" (Rom. 8: 37). Finally, the Holy Spirit makes us to see the reward, which is indissolubly bound to our conduct in the fear of God. The reward, what is the reward? You shall say, I understand that it is heaven. But what is heaven? Let me tell you, although I know very little about it. Heaven is a place where there is no world, where God is everything, and where there is no sin.

12th June.

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:17).

The Lord Jesus had been their Comforter. Yes, they had indeed found comfort in Him. They had said with their whole heart: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6: 68). However, the Lord Jesus did not remain with them. That is why He says: *"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, (another besides Me) so that He may abide with you forever."*

“The Spirit of truth” What an expression! The world speaks about truth, but what is there that is the *truth* in this world? In a few words, this can be said about this world, that is about me and you; they are abomination, lying, and deceit!

Why is it, that the world cannot receive the Spirit? Because the world relies on her own understanding. And so long as man does that, he will not receive the Holy Spirit. It will take place, when it is over and done with, our own workings, it is then that it will happen, and not before. Then it will come! Because it is forever lost and done, with our own doings. When the Lord made salvation known unto Adam and Eve, He drove them out of Paradise, and at the entrance He placed an angel with a flaming sword which turned every way. With this, it was made clear to them that there was no longer a return unto paradise, no return to the Covenant of Works. He had now set the Covenant of Grace in the place of the Covenant of Works.

"Because it seeth Him not." When the Lord says this, He means thereby that man does not perceive Him. By perceiving Him, we are led to know the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit has entered in to someone in this way, it is then that he perceives the Holy Spirit and at that moment says: *"I have received the Holy Spirit."*

"Because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." Truly, the world is unable to say anything about the Holy Spirit. What does the world do with Pentecost? She cannot do anything with it. Neither does she do it. That is why the world has fallen back to her worldly pleasures as we can see on the day of Pentecost.

13th June.

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one” (1 John 5:7).

The Congregation of the Lord Jesus says in the 20th Sunday of the Catechism that the Holy Ghost is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. We are also baptized: "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28: 19). I once asked the minister in a catechism class: "Minister, I don't understand this: Three in One, and One in Three." But the minister was unable to tell me. And after that time, I have never understood anything. Neither have you ever understood anything. Just let your thoughts wander for a moment upon nature, about the flowers, about the stars, about your own life, about your origin, your future, and you will immediately say: "No, I have never understood anything, but through faith I do understand," that is, if you possess faith. There is nothing better than being able to close your eyes, fold your hands, and bend your knees (figuratively speaking, but literally also), and then when all is still within you, when your understanding and will are not working, that then you will be able to say: "through faith I understand, that God is a Triune God." Is that how it is with you? By this, you can know if you are a believer. You will not dare to speak like that if you do not have faith, because you know and feel the confusion in your soul. However, you can still maintain yourself and say, that you are a believer, of course you can; the foolish virgins have also done this. But you feel the confusion which is in your soul. You can go against this and say: "Nevertheless, I am a believer." However, the confusion remains in your soul, taking hold of you, and telling you that you do not know it. But this is the testimony of Christ's Church: "Through faith, I understand that God is a Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost." One believer has, more light in this than the other, that is for sure, but every believer sees God as a Triune Being, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And what does such a believer say about this? Not much, but what he does say about it is true. He says; "The Holy Ghost is united in me or with me; the Holy Ghost works in my spirit." He enlightens the understanding, and when the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, then all that was there before that time, has gone to ruin. For it was all foolishness!

14th June.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
(1 Cor. 2:14).

There are a lot of spiritual people in the world; but they have never come to see themselves as *the natural man*. That is the point; and proves, that there is an error. They impose something on themselves, but they have never become the natural man. And as a result, there has never been a beginning. Those people, have to hold on to their so-called knowledge. They must hold on to that. However, there is nothing to hold onto; for true knowledge holds us fast!

The believer says, "I experience the workings of the Spirit in my will. I did not want it at first; but you must not think, that I knew that I did not want it. I thought that I truly desired it intensely, and my opinion was: "If only God was willing as well, then it would soon take place." I have heard people, pious people say: "Lord, shall I embrace Thee now?" But of course, it did not happen at that time. And they would then presume, that it would still take place, because of the feelings which they had, had. Perhaps there are people among you also, who say: "I miss it, but it will come." That is what the devil tells them. There is not one promise made to you or to me outside of Christ. People, you must not forget this! That it is first, the Lord Jesus, and then His benefits! And these benefits are granted to us by means of the promises. Ah, again, when the Lord does not reveal Himself, then the Lord must suffer about this as well; because we think that He does not want to convert us. We would surely soon be converted if... well, I have already told you, but He is not willing, at least, He is not willing yet. And so, there is a dispute between God and man. And this dispute must be settled which only takes place if God reveals Himself.

You can well understand what shame there is, when man stands before God, what shame, embarrassment, and deep sorrows. For man can now see, that he, with his whole existence, and mostly with all his religion, his pious being, has gone against God, with his: *"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21: 14). *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."* (Acts 9: 4-5). Are you this Saul?

15th June.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”
(John 4: 24).

Worship is a working of the Holy Spirit. Do you know what worship is? Do you know what it is to worship God? Worship flows forth from the knowledge of God. It consists of two matters. If man worships God, then he acknowledges that he is less than the small dust of the balance and a drop of a bucket. (Isa. 40: 15). He then confesses that he was without faith and without Christian virtues, but that it was all granted unto him out of the fullness of Jesus Christ. That is the first part of the worship of God.

Are you able to tell me more about worship? A person worships God, when he acknowledges Him as the only One Who has power over his conscience. This is the second part of worship.

The natural man allows himself to be dominated by the circumstances, and by his fellowmen. The wife yields to the husband and the husband to the wife, the children to the parents and the parents to the children, the subordinate to the one who is placed above him, the subject to the government, etc. So, by nature, man does not acknowledge God as the only One Who has the rule over our conscience. When a person worships God, then he acknowledges God, and he acknowledges Him as King. Some histories in the Bible make this clear for you. And you all know the history which you find in Daniel 3. A commandment had been given that the people should worship the golden image which had been set up in the plain of Dura. Everyone obeyed the commandment of the king, for death was threatened if the commandment was not obeyed. Yet there were three young men: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who worshipped God. And what did they say? They spoke these words: *"Be it known unto thee, O king that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."* (Dan. 3: 18). This is the second part of the worshipping. Did you know that? *Do you understand these things?*

16th June.

“Jesus answered; Verily, verily, I say unto thee; except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” (John 3: 5)

“Water” means nothing else than the Spirit. When it is stated: "of water and of the Spirit," then it means: from the Spirit, Whose workings are like the workings of water. And even as water cleanses, so the Spirit cleanses man, and I hope that God has taught you how the Spirit cleanses. He sprinkles the conscience with the blood of Christ, so that it: *“purges your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”* (Hebr. 9: 14). The Spirit cleanses from the guilt of sin. And at the same time, it appropriates the power of Christ so that we die unto sin and live unto God, whereof the Apostle Paul testifies in Philippians 3:10-12: *"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."*

Just like water, the Spirit also causes us to be fruitful. He makes us to subject to the matters which are displeasing unto God, and arouses in us that which is pleasing unto God. He makes us able and willing to walk in the way of God's commandments (Ps. 119:32), and He causes us to endure: *“as seeing Him Who is Invisible.”* (Heb. 11: 27).

Even as water, the Spirit also refreshes us. When this happens, the believer says: *"Then was I in His eyes as one that found favour."* (Song of Sol. 8: 10). Or as the Apostle says: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Rom. 5: 1).

“The Kingdom of God” is the state wherein the Lord's people have communion with God, under Christ's direction. This Kingdom of God is set up here initially when the Lord Jesus Christ incorporates His elect into Himself, and commences to reign in their heart as King.

17th June.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” (John 3: 3b).

It is one or the other, we are in the Kingdom of God, or we are without the Kingdom of God. We are in the Kingdom of heaven, when we are born again. We will name a few characteristics of this re birth.

When we have been born again, we have been in the anguish and affliction of this birth. No child is born without anguish. The afflictions are not always the same for everyone, but when regeneration has taken place, then that person has come to know grief, to a greater or lesser degree. When God comes to regenerate a person, then He comes to convince him of his death state in Adam, about his sin and guilt, and the fact that he is without God and Christ. With such a person, everything becomes worse, and more impossible all the time. Everything slips away from him, and all the hopes he had, have left him. And this is God's way with His elect. Could this take place without anguish and grief?

Where the new birth is, there is life. What does the regenerated person confess? This: *"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."* (Gal. 2: 20). People speak a great deal about life, but nowadays who is there that understands, that life can only be in the communion and in the union with Christ? Just as Adam had no spiritual life in himself, neither do the elect have spiritual life without Christ. The Lord Jesus has said: *"I live, ye shall live also."* (John 14:19). This must be understood! Would you think, that when a man is changed and he has some desires to be converted, which are desires toward Christ, (as this is called), that this is life? However, these are all expressions of the state of death we are in, and if you disagree with this, then is this a sign that you yourself are: *"dead in trespasses and sins."* (Eph. 2:1). For man experiences all this unrest, if he does not acknowledge his fall in Adam, and he is still permitted to reject Christ, the Prince of Life. However, if he lies under the seal of the eternal election, then in spite, of everything, the end will be that he leaves and dies unto what is his. And that it is the dead voice, which is heard by the Son of God.

18th June.

“The Gospel which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.” (Col. 1: 6).

The Lord established the preaching and through the means of preaching He points out to the people, what He has done: *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (2 Cor. 5: 19). In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, God brings the offer of Christ and all what has been obtained by the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, when the Holy Spirit enjoins Himself to the preaching, either by the hearing or the reading, then great and wonderful things take place. When the Holy Spirit enjoins Himself with the Word, then man is dealt with by a holy, righteous, good-doing, merciful, and gracious God. The result of this is, that man is delivered from the deceit in which he has walked until that moment. He is delivered from his delusion, that he ever had anything or that he ever could do anything; he becomes what he had always been, a cursed being, and one who is rejected in himself, unable to do any good and inclined to all evil, and increasing his debt daily. Man, by himself, shall never come to the knowledge of this truth, but he will go against it as much as he can, for man does not love the truth. But God causes him to see and to love the truth, so that without being brought in the way of the truth, he would never want to be saved; and he is then shown what he is in himself. Man does not know himself, therefore he is so easily misled by himself, believing that a prayer, a frame of mind, a desire, a willingness, etc. are good in the eyes of God. Yes, and that, on that basis, maybe he will be accepted. But when it is revealed what he is in himself, he renounces the hidden things of his dishonesty. (2 Cor. 4: 2). And then he stands or lies naked before God, without a covering.

19th June.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him.” (Hebr. 11: 6a).

Faith is necessary: not that what is commonly taken to be faith, but a true faith, a faith worked by the Lord, the faith of the elect, the faith of the power of God! When you believe, then you must have experienced the power of God; not a change in your frame of mind, or some good feeling in your heart. No, *take heed*, that is not it! The Apostle Paul says: *"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."* (Rom. 1:16). When this power takes hold of us, then in our turn we take hold of it. And that is how the true working of faith comes into being, the faith of which Christ, and God in Christ, is the Object. You may want to say: "I cannot believe it, and how do I start; I do not even know what faith is, according to the way how you explain it." This is true: you don't know it. But does this cause you to cry out in alarm? It is too easy, isn't it, to say: "I don't know it, and I cannot do it, nor do I comprehend the matter." We should not even dare to come with that excuse, because that is without any meaning! And now, I ask you if *you* are crying out in alarm. And I can assure you that all the elect which are now are in heaven, have begun with cries of alarm, as it will also begin like that, with those for whom it is prepared. You say: "Oh, I have asked so long for it already. I cannot remember the time when I was not asking for it!" The fact that you say this, can be a sign of your zeal, but it is not proof of your knowledge; for God's willingness to help man comes before man is being made willing to allow himself to be helped by God. *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."* (Ps. 110: 3). Do you find these matters difficult, are you disappointed to have heard these things? Then I advise you not to go to another preaching, for a sermon or book in which the same matters are *not pointed* out in the same manner, are meant to deceive you. Don't give yourself over unto that!

20th June.

“I sought a man among them that should make up a hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.” (Ezek. 22: 30).

In times gone by, the Church had intercessors among God's children, people who could place matters regarding themselves, their families, or their nation before God. That is as good as gone, and that is our downfall! That is dreadful for us and for our children. How did that come about? It is like this, because we have gone our own way!

If you meet someone who is in politics, and you come to have a heart to heart conversation with him, you should ask him, what his objective is in politics. There will be no answer! And when you meet someone who is going to church, ask him: “Are you in God's way? Is it God's will that you go to that church, that we should all go there? Can you give an explanation about this, according to God's way?” Then there is no one who knows anything about that! There is no fear of God in the religions. They are perceived to be without the fear of God. For we have lost the fear of God!

If it would have been like this in the 16th century, there would never have been a church in our country. The so called "Church of the Fathers" of which people speak, that Church is long gone! The Church of the fathers would have never been, if they would have thought of it as we do now. Man can no longer go to God, so that no one knows anything anymore. If there is one here or there, who does know something, then I do not put the blame on him. You are unable to know anything, unless God has taught you. Your orthodox conversations do not interest me, to tell you the truth, and my orthodox conversations do not need to interest you either! We do not know it! Not one in our country knows it anymore! No one can come to God any more with his concerns. That is the situation in our nation; that is how you must perceive it. If you doubt that, then you should see whether *you* can say anything about politics or religion. Or perhaps, you belong to those few, who are truly taught by God.

21st June.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father; I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." (Luke 15: 18, 19).

The prodigal son had come to himself, and that is the beginning. The reality must be known. This takes place through the knowledge of the Law and the Gospel. Then there is a beginning, and then is God the Beginning. And then the work *shall be* completed.

When the prodigal son came to himself, he called out: *"How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"* (Verse 17). That is what it is! Man must come to the discovery that there is a Father in Christ. And man must have felt that he was perishing from hunger. All this takes place through the Law and the Gospel in the hand of the Holy Spirit. And upon this, the prodigal son has said: *"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him: father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."*

"Arise!" Arise out of what we are in ourselves, out of our self-righteousness, and our own wisdom and strength! Arise out of the world and sin. Return with a sincere, yes, with the earnest intention to confess! For it is written: *"But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy."* (Proverbs 28:13).

When the prodigal son had reached the house of his father, he let himself be dressed and adorned. Man must let himself be covered with Christ's righteousness and adorned with His holiness. Thereupon, a meal was served. And you know what it says in Revelation 3:20: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."* That is communion with Christ, and in Christ with the Triune God. And then they rejoiced. Faith without joy is never a true faith.

That is the way of returning. Examine yourself, if you have gone this way. Did you go this way? Examine yourself! Don't lean on yourself. If you think that you experience something, do not think that you have overcome everything, just examine it all continually.

22nd June.

“Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” (Phil. 3: 8).

If you are a Christian, then in the depth of your soul you are, in agreement with these words. These words are engraved in your heart, and if you had to say how things are with you, then you would say: "God the Holy Spirit has engraved these words in my heart." That is the confession of true saving faith, and this is a hidden work! Once more, if you are a Christian, a believer, then you say with the psalmist of Psalm: 73; *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!"*(Verse 25). Not a wife, a husband, children, sisters or brothers, no property or goods, no position or whatever else but: *"There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."*

Does that mean indifference? No, not in the least! You say, "I heartily love that what I have for my enjoyment here. But if we speak about the Object of faith, then that takes the first place in my heart!" To have a wife, a husband, children, parents, property, and goods are great privileges, and for life upon earth, they are rich blessings. But when it comes to compare these with spiritual matters, then all what we have mentioned, falls into the background. Then these things do not exist, so to speak, for the converted person. Only God exists then, and man says with the Apostle Paul: *"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."*(2 Cor. 6: 10). And this is a mystery. If you are a Christian, a believer, then you not only speak like that, but it is shown in your whole conduct and ways. Then your sincere desire is to live without sin! But oh, no one is without sin, not even the Christian here upon earth. On the contrary, one who has grace, sees his whole life as a life of sin, and all his shortcomings and faults are just as grieving for himself as for his fellowman.

23rd June.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."
(Luke 12:32).

The words "*little flock*" makes us to think about weakness, small, insignificant, and so on. For those people who belong to Christ have neither light nor power. They have no righteousness. They are the people who have left behind all that is advantageous and essentially soul saving, and glorifying unto God; for they are the people who are incapable of doing any good, and at the same time, inclined to all evil.

"A little flock" The Lord Jesus had not found many in His abode on earth. His preaching had achieved very little. At the beginning, it seemed as if it was going to be quite a lot. They came in great throngs, in great multitudes. They crowded around Him by the thousands. But oh, when they began to perceive a little of the meaning of His preaching, then with most of them the appeal of His preaching was gone. From that time on, many drew back (John 6: 66). At length, the Lord Jesus was almost left on His own. It had been like that before His abode on earth also. You know how it was in the days of Noah? In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, then there were not even ten; otherwise, these cities would have been saved. And David writes: "*I am desolate and afflicted.*" (Ps. 25: 16). For he had not found many either. Isaiah speaks about "*a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.*" (Is. 1: 8).

There have been times when multitudes were brought to the sheepfold, but how long did these times last? It says: "*The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while.*" (Is. 63: 18). People who truly believe, people who have let everything go, people who have lost their lives, people who have given themselves over for the name and the cause of Christ, have always been very scarce.

"Fear not." The persons, about whom we have spoken, do not have the slightest reason to fear. It is eternally secure for them in God. The Lord Jesus Christ has saved them forever. God's love is unchangeable. Through faith, they have taken hold of established, eternal, and deep matters. The Word on which they build is destined to remain forever. And yet, they fear. Therefore, the Lord takes care, that at the right time, there will always be a "*fear not*" for them.

24th June.

"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." (Rom. 8: 3a).

"For what the Law could not do." "The Law", is the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works has a demand, a promise, and a threat. The demand says: *"Do this, and Thou shalt live."* (Luke 10: 28). The promise is a promise of Life. It threatens death for the transgressors. Originally the Law, was able to justify man, to grant him life; because God had created man good and after His own image. What the Law was once able to do, she can no longer do. Yet she still points the way: *"Do this, and thou shalt live"*, but she is unable to justify anyone.

While she was *"weak through the flesh"*. The word *"flesh"*, here means corruption. Man is a corrupt creature. *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Ps. 51: 5). It says: *"And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."* (Gen. 5: 3).

"In that it was weak through the flesh," this is a result of corruption. The Law, although holy, stands utterly powerless against man, or as it is written here *"weak"*. The demand, which is righteous and good, brings man to sin again, because he is corrupt. Man attempts in his own way to do what he perceives is demanded of him, but despite all this, he removes himself more and more from God, and because he lacks love. He says: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways,"* (Job 21: 14). While he is busy fulfilling God's Law in *his own* way. The Apostle Paul writes: *"The strength of sin is the Law."* (1 Cor. 15: 56). Is this the last word? If this was the case, then it would appear to be very dismal for all of us. But just listen to this: *"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."*

25th June.

“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us.” (Rom. 8:3b and 4a).

"God", which is the first Person in the Divinity. *"His Son"* which is the second Person. The first Person in the Divinity imparts this Divinity from eternity to eternity to the second Person. Therefore, the first Person is called *"Father"* and the second Person *"Son."*

"God sending His own Son." We must here consider the incarnation of the second Person in the Divinity. For: *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”* (John 1: 14). *“In the likeness of sinful flesh”* The Son was true Man, but without sin.

"And for sin", that is to say; He was a Sacrifice for sin. And now I read to you what the Catechism says in Lord's Day 15: "Question: What dost thou understand by the words, ‘He suffered’? Answer: That He all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of the whole human race, in order that by His passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation and obtain for us the grace of God’s righteousness, and eternal life." (Question 37) *“Condemned sin in the flesh"*, which is in Christ.

"That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us". That is the righteousness of the Covenant of Works, namely that, what is due to the Covenant of Works. The Law, the first Covenant, has received what was due to her. The Law has its righteousness fulfilled by Christ, not through us, nor through an angel, neither through an animal, but through the Son of God. He has borne the chastisement in His human nature, which He took upon Himself through Mary. Throughout His whole life, He had been obedient. And that is how the Law has received from Him what was due unto her.

26th June.

“That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8: 4b) 1.

Is the Law now no longer valid, the Law as a Covenant of Works? Just listen for a moment. It says: *"That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us!" "In us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* And flesh means corruption. We are corrupt, every one of us, we all walk after the flesh, and every tree is known by its fruit.

What is it to walk after the flesh? To walk after the flesh is, to think only about yourself. Man has an interest in many things: his life, his health, his money and goods, his wife and children, his sociability, his position in the world, and for many other things. He neither can nor will do without these things. If he must do without them, then he becomes fretful and rebellious, then God does him an injustice. He becomes depressed, and this can go that far, that he takes his own life. The reason is not that he makes so little of life itself, but that he makes too much of life. If life had been different, he would not end his own life, but he does it, because it is so miserable.

If one walks after the flesh, then those things (I have mentioned a few already) are only of value to him, as far as they serve him. When they no longer serve him, then they are no longer of any value for him, and he does not even look at them anymore. So, he is nothing but an idolater! He has made a god of himself, and the entire honour he renders, is meant for himself. The love for his fellowman is nothing but a self-love. He hates death, and the day of judgment. He wishes that there was no judgment day, nor death. He loves life, and he places this as far as he can above God. That is the man, who walks after the flesh. Everyone who is like that, and acts like this, is a man who walks after the flesh.

27th June.

"That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4b.2).

We must be in possession of the Spirit, to *be able* to walk after the Spirit. For it is written: *"Make the tree good, and his fruit good."* (Matt. 12: 33). And we also know that the Lord has said: *"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help."* (Hos. 13: 9). To be able walk after the Spirit, we must be new creatures, spiritual people. A new creature is a person who is in Christ. A person is in Christ, when he is in possession of faith.

To walk after the Spirit is: for a person not to let *self* be the key figure, it must be God. To walk after the Spirit is to place God above ourselves. He, who does that, does what the Law demands of him, because the sum of the Law is: *"To love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and, to love thy neighbour as thyself."* (Mark 12: 30, 31). Therefore, if we place God above ourselves, then we love Him above everything, and everyone. And as it has been said, this is the demand of the Law. However now, man loves no one as much as himself.

He, who walks not after the flesh, does not love life more than he loves God. And here I point to the words which we find in the prayer at the beginning of the Form of Baptism: *"That they may, leave this life, (which is nothing but a continual death), being comforted by Thee."* *"Yet for your sakes."* A man, who walks after the Spirit, loves God more than he loves life. He does not hate death, nor the day of judgment. When man hates death, he places life above God's will. And that is the proof that he walks after the flesh and not after the Spirit. He, who does not have the Spirit, is someone, who is not a spiritual man; he is not in Christ and does not possess faith. There are many things that are pleasant for a person who believes, but he does not place them above God. For God has his heart. This is a man who is walking after the Spirit; and in this man the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled. The Law is finished for him, namely the Law considered as the Covenant of Works. He does not look at her demand, but he looks unto Jesus Christ as: *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* (John 1: 29).

28th June.

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”
(1 John 1: 7a).

God is Infinite, that is why His light is also infinite. His knowledge is infinite, and His uprightness and holiness are absolute. As God is in the light, we are unable to walk in the light in the same way. But if we do not neglect to submit ourselves unto Him, and our heart continues to hunger and thirst after the Lord and His righteousness, and desire to confess among men what we have seen with our eyes and what our hands have handled of the Word of Life (1 John 1: 1), when it distresses us when we turn aside, and we are not what we should be, and we confess our sins, then it is good. Then God does not turn away from us. He forgives us our sins.

"We have fellowship one with another." The Light comes from Above, so all enlightened souls are enlightened by the same Light. It is only one Light, as there is one God, one Father, one belief, one baptism, and one hope. The result of this is that we have fellowship with one another. This fellowship does not depend on flesh and blood. It is there! It is not made by us. It is there, because all of God's children, *I repeat*, are enlightened by the same Light. This fellowship is a fellowship of love. Now the word of the Apostle John also becomes clear: *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”* (1 John 3: 14). He did not see God; he cannot see God. Therefore, take note! - do you have grace? - have you become a partaker of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, then in that moment, when you were converted, you have said: *"Now I love God's people, because of the image of God which they have received from God."* So, for the Light by which they were enlightened. Because this is the image of God. We can also say: *“We with God and God with us.”* The enlightened soul, who does not cease to profess these matters which I have just mentioned; and which stretch out toward God, etc, has communion with God and God with her. God has come to her! God's children know of the drawing near of God in Christ to and in their souls.

29th June.

“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” (1 John 5: 6b and 7).

Surely this is the most important truth of our Christian religion. It is the first lesson which God gives man, as is evident from the Holy Baptism. When God comes to work true saving grace in man, He causes him to know that He is one in Being and three in Persons. I know that for a long time, something quite different has been taught. But this doctrine has also brought us in the miserable situation in which we now are. For a long time, it has been taught that the knowledge of a Triune God comes at the very end, and that there are but few of God's children who come to this knowledge. And this is then said, with a certain raising of the voice, "that most of God's precious people, who are destined to sing eternally of God's faithfulness, never come to learn these things fully, All I can say about this is *"people, this is a satanic teaching!*. It is proof that we have forsaken God. For if we had not forsaken God, we would not have found out that this doctrine; is not the teaching of God. A person who embraces this doctrine with his heart, is without grace. He is: *"the natural man who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."* (1 Cor. 2: 14). This doctrine has been brought into the churches for decades already. Our people have accepted this, because they did not resist it. They had no spiritual backbone, and by that they were drawn even further away from the reality. The results are now visible and will become even more visible in the future.

But the Baptism teaches us that God begins with this. Luther once said: *“They taught us that justification came at the end, but God has taught me that it is found at the beginning.”* The knowledge of the Triune God is also at the beginning. That is the first thing which God teaches man, when He works salvation in man, He comes to reveal Himself into man, that God is Triune, He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Through this revelation, man receives some knowledge of God. Then within his soul, he sees God as He is.

30th June.

"Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy Word." (Ps. 119: 17).

The psalmist of Psalm 119 calls himself "*a servant of the Lord.*" This name can be applied to all believers. By nature, man is ignorant and rebellious. But the grace of God causes him to submit himself and places the question in his heart: "*LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9: 6).

"Deal bountifully with Thy servant." The Lord's people have a need. They are an "*afflicted and poor people.*" (Zeph. 3: 12). "*They are the poor and needy.*" (Ps. 72: 12). The more grace they receive, they feel their need more all the time. They do not go with their need to their fellowman. They have come to know what they are in themselves, and at the same time, they have seen that the whole world is but a "*broken cistern*". (Jer. 2: 13). But in the Lord, they saw, searched, and found everything for the soul, but also for the body, for time but also for eternity.

What is it that God's people need? What things do they ask for, when they draw near to the Lord with the words of our text? In general, they ask for God's favour. For really, God's favour is everything. Moses once received a question: (The Lord asked him): "*Should My presence go with thee, to give thee rest?*" Moses' answer was: "*If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.*" (Ex 33: 14, 15). Where God's favour is missing, the fact is; that there nothing but curse and wrath.

God's people are in need to be led. They are a people who live alone. What David said, is felt by every child of God: "*I am desolate and afflicted.*" (Ps. 25: 16). God's people have a necessity to be strengthened. He, who is strong in God, is weak in himself. He continually needs to receive his strength from the Lord, and needs help for this work. A child of God almost always prays with his mind, but that is not to the glory of God; it does him no good. And if God's Spirit did not take hold of him at times, he would always be praying with his understanding. How many times does it happen that a child of God touches Christ with his heart? (Naturally I do not speak about the world.) Grace is necessary to understand that God must begin, but much more grace is needed to continually keep that in mind when drawing near unto the Lord.

1st July.

"Quicken me in Thy righteousness." (Psalm 119: 40b).

The believers have found death (they have died unto all that is theirs). Where did they find this? Everywhere out of Christ. And He who understands this with his heart, is a believer, and he has found life in Christ.

What is Life? Life is, to be a partaker of the righteousness of Christ. And if you are not a partaker of this, then you are a child of death. Life through faith in Christ is not only necessary, but it is also the first benefit of the Covenant of Grace. Life is to have the Spirit of God. When one does not possess the Spirit of God, he is bereft of the image of God. And what sort of life would he then have?

To have God's image restored means this: that the judgment has been taken away from that person. And when God's image has not been restored in a person, then this proves, that he is still under the judgment. Life is: to be in communion with God and say: *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee."* (Ps. 73: 25).

Do you know why it is that people live without God? They do not believe the Law. When man believes the Law, then he sees two things: first he sees, that he is under the judgment of the Law, and secondly, that he is cut down. For, if man does not believe the Law, then he has found, the life *of his hand*; and he is not grieved. (Is. 57:10). Do you know what it means, to have found the life of *your hand*? It means, that we say to God: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14).

Life is the pouring out of Divine love into the heart. A person has life and enjoys life when he can say: *"We love Him, because He first loved us."* (1 John 4: 19). Life is to have peace in the heart, and to have found pleasure in God. When man has found contentment in God, then he asks, and he seeks, and turns continually unto the Lord. *"Who is the Fountain of life, and in Whose light we see light."* (Ps. 36: 9). Life is to find an entrance to the throne of grace. And it is one of the most precious enjoyments, when we are brought through God unto God.

2nd July.

"But it is good for me to draw near to God" (Psalm 73:28a).

Asaph had taken on an extremely dangerous position. There have been many, very many people who have stood in this position, and have fallen prey to atheism, and denying that there is a God. People who possess grace, do not seek an answer for their problems; they see it in the Word, in God Himself. It had pleased the Lord to bring back His wandering child. And what does a converted person do when he is brought back? He is deeply ashamed and renews his choice. You find this clearly in this Psalm, beginning with the 21st verse.

"But it is good for me to draw near to God." Who or what is God? No one has ever found an answer to this question of himself, and there will never be anyone in the world, who will be able to say what God is. When God reveals Himself into the heart by His Word and Spirit, then he knows in a small measure Who and what God is. For when this revelation takes place in the heart, the soul has called out: *"That is God!"* and she was deeply humbled and ashamed. And the Scriptures tell us: *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (2 Cor. 3: 18), and Jacob has said: *"For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* (Gen. 32: 30).

Our Creator, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, had placed us in His immediate fellowship and nearness; but we have wilfully and freely left Him, and we do this every day, every hour, every moment. There is something in us which causes us to say: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21: 14). And if that is not put to death, then man wants to know anything about God. We must return to God! And if this does not happen, then eternal damnation is our lot. That is why Asaph also says in this Psalm: *"Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee."*, that is to say: whoso ever it is which chooses another woman; which means, to unite oneself with the world. We are unable to; returning unto God, is totally impossible. However, *God has now come unto us!*

3rd July.

"But it is good for me to draw near to God" (Ps.73:28a).

Truly, Asaph was permitted to say: *"It is good for me to draw near to God"*, for what is it, that we find when we are near to God? We find the deliverance of the greatest evil and the possession of the greatest good. Deliverance of the greatest evil, that is from the commitment of sin, from the guilt of sin and from the defilement through sin.

What is the greatest good? You must not think, that I am able to give you a complete answer to this question; but I say this about it: The greatest good is righteousness, peace, and joy, through the Holy Spirit. And when you possess these blessings, then you can let the world boast in her blessings. However, only you and all those which possess this blessing, can be called *blessed*. And everyone who does not possess this, is miserable; for he is on his way to the eternal misery if he is not brought out of that. Truly, the world would not run amok, and create so much commotion, if she had the slightest impression of death and eternity, but she does not have them. She is: *"without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."* (Eph. 2:12).

"But it is good for me", let the world then have what she gets, I do not envy her! *"It is good for me to draw near to God."* It is good to be near God. And where we are not near to God, there we are in a very bad way, this is where we find ourselves in the greatest dangers, for when God cuts our life off, we are eternally doomed.

And what about you? We have heard what Asaph said; but what do *you* say? Now you must seek to deal honestly with yourself; you must not try to reason around it. You must not say with Felix: *"Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."* (Acts 24: 25). And neither must you say what Agrippa said: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* (Acts 26:28). But search deep into *your heart*, for if it is *not* there, then you do not have it.

4th July.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8: 1a).

It is necessary, that through true faith we are united with Christ. We must be in Christ; and when we are in Him, then we have faith in Him. And when our faith is true, then we see Christ; for faith sees and hears Him. Faith is a foot that comes to Him; it is a hand that takes hold of Him; it is a mouth that eats Him; and it is a heart that receives Him.

To be without Christ means not to believe. And to not believe means: to cast away God's offer; for God offers Christ unto us. The Lord Himself says: "*But he that believeth not is condemned already.*" (John 3: 18).

When a person is in Christ Jesus through true faith, then God is on his side, and will remain there to all eternity. There will be strife and trouble, crosses and severe temptations, and resistance; however, faith, being the means, through which he is joined unto Christ, is upheld by the intercession of the Son of God and the indwelling and workings of the Holy Spirit.

That is why we must examine ourselves! Who was the first? You, or God? By doing this you will know whether your faith is true. For when our faith is the true faith, then Christ has come unto us, when we were in our blood; and there He has covered our nakedness, washed us, and covered us with ornaments. (Ezek. 16). The experience of this shows us, that we know grace, as free saving grace.

True faith makes us free. We must be taken out of everything which is ours, or we cannot be happy. He, who has never been taken out of everything that is his, has never loved. He knows not what Divine love is. When faith is true, man has been made free; he has come forward, so that he came to stand alone, alone with God. This is the deliverance of man. No man is delivered, before he has been alone with God. And when he stands alone, he is delivered of himself; and when he is delivered of himself, he is made free of his fellowman, of everything, and it is bound in God. But this does not say that he has freed himself from his fellowman. For it is at that moment, when he is made free of himself and his fellowman, he comes unto his fellowman. However, we do not come to our fellowman of ourselves.

5th July.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" (Psalm 119: 9a).

The men who wrote the marginal notes in the Dutch Staten Bible explained these words in the following manner: "That is, to direct his way, so that it is right and unadulterated." The right and pure path has been forsaken by us. All of us, who were in Adam's loins, were also represented in him before the Lord, and have come into the world upon the wrong path. And of ourselves, we are unable to return to the right path. We do not know the true and right way; it is completely hidden from us. *"The vulture's eye hath not seen."* (Job 28:7). Neither do we have the least desire for what is right and pure, for: *"Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs of thistles."* (Matt. 7:16). Neither can clear and fresh water come from a spring which is contaminated.

The true and right way is, the Son of God, Jesus Christ the LORD. John 14:16 says: *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."* Now, a person's path will commence to be pure, when he is in Christ and walks in Him.

David, the psalmist of Psalm 119, had a path which was pure and clean. He possessed the privileges, we have mentioned. He was truly a man, who was found in the Son of God, and to whom it was given to continually make use of Christ, to make use of the complete Christ. For, to walk in Christ is nothing else but to make use of Him as Prophet, Priest, and King. To walk in Christ is nothing else than to let God work in us by His Spirit. For when I allow God to work in me through His Spirit, then all what was mine has ceased; and when all that is mine has ceased, then I deny myself with the passing by of my understanding, will, and desire. Then I make use of that, which is pleasing unto God, and I abide in Jesus Christ. I mean: what the Lord Jesus has said and what He wants all His people to do, is: *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* (Luke 9: 23)

6th July.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse His way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." (Ps. 119: 9b).

The right way is pointed out unto us, in the Word. The Apostle Peter says: *"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arises in your hearts."* (2 Peter 1:19).

We have said that the way of the Lord Jesus, is the right way. And where do we find the Lord Jesus? It is with emphasis that I place this question before you. Where do the elect find the Lord Jesus Christ through the irresistible calling? They find this: *In the Word, in the Word of the promise!* You find this pointed out in the well-known words of Roman 10:6-9: *"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down from above, or Who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That is if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* So, when David asked the question: *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"*, then he himself finds the answer in his heart and in the Word: *"By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."*

I think that David has given this answer with a great deal of shame and sadness of heart. He had wandered out of the way. At the end of this Psalm, we hear him confess: *"I have gone astray like a lost sheep."* But the Lord had convinced him of the sin of his straying, and caused him to return. Grieving, he had left himself and all that was his, and prayed: *"Seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments."* (Ps. 119: 176).

The words: *"By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word"*, were words of the Holy Spirit. He repeated *that*, *what* the Holy Spirit had said, and by doing that, man speaks God's words, and man can never do this, without feeling ashamed with an upright sorrow in the heart. David did not discover something which he did not yet know. But that, what had already been made known unto him, he had come to understand even better.

7th July.

“And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.” (John 5: 40).

Everything depends on our coming unto Christ. Yet man does not come. The Lord Jesus is presented unto man. The Lord is offered unto man with all His gifts and treasures. It is made known by Divine providence that he may come, that he must come; and if he does not come, it will bring the eternal punishment of death. And yet man does not come! So, whosoever lives under the offer of God's grace and does not come, will go into eternal damnation with open eyes. That is the state of man. The blessing and curse are presented to him, but wilfully and freely, he chooses the curse and tramples on the blessings. Man is unable to go to Christ! And why is that, what is the reason that he is unable?

In the first place, it is in his understanding. The understanding of man is darkened, and it is impossible for him to see the Lord. He can see something and even a lot at times, but he does not see what he has to see. And what is that? It is the testimony of God in Christ: *"Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, then how should we live? Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"*(Ezek. 33: 10, 11).

In the second place, it is in the will. Man has no desire to do it. And all those who do not possess it, will discover this; if it is given to them to search deeply into their own heart, that they do not want it, and that they say: *"Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14)

Thirdly, it is also in the affections. There is a dreadful hatred in every man's heart, and this hatred has God as its object and also his fellowman. If man could, he would destroy everything. It is stated in Romans 3: 16, 17: *"Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known."* And it will remain like this, *until God makes him willing and able to go to Christ.*

8th July.

"Then said they unto Him: What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28).

If God does not give it, man cannot work. Man can only work through the power of God. *"Blessed is the man who strength is in Thee."* (Ps. 84: 5). For he can only see through God's light: *"In Thy light shall we see light"* (Psalm 36:9). And the only way he can come to God is, when the eternal power of God in Christ Jesus has taken hold of him. *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son."* (Col. 1: 13). Whatever man does out of God and without Him, is nothing than roaming around. That is why the prophet Jeremiah said: *"If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto Me; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight; then shalt thou not remove."* (Jer. 4: 1). One is amazed that people who read the Bible and the old writers, and who come to the preaching of the Gospel, do hear these things, and yet are unable to understand them. However, it is impossible to understand the Gospel, unless God teaches us. Yesterday, when I was on my way to a graveyard a few people passed me by, and I heard one say to the other: *"A person can have a lot of knowledge without possessing anything."* I thought to myself: that is not true. It can have the appearance that man knows something, without having any real knowledge of these things *in his heart.*" If he has not been drawn, and if he is not in Christ, he knows nothing! Therefore, the Apostle Paul has said: *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, (even if he tries hard to understand them), because they are spiritually discerned."* (1 Cor.2:14). That is why the Lord Jesus has said: *"I thank Thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."* (Matt. 11: 25, 26).

The Catechism teaches us that we need an answer to three questions: "First, *how great my sins and miseries are*; secondly, *how I may be delivered from all my miseries*; and thirdly, *how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance.*" That is why, before anything else, man must learn to acknowledge his total inability.

9th July.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” (John 6: 29).

So, God demands that we believe. We are so inclined to say: “God must do it, the Lord must give it to us.” But here it states that we must do it, for it says: “This is the work of God *that ye believe*.” This does not mean that we can come to this faith of ourselves. Oh no, man is completely powerless regarding the act of faith, wherein God’s honour and the salvation of his soul depend. Yet it is God’s commandment, for the Lord Jesus says: *“This is the work of God that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent.”*

So, when we say: “God must do it, the Lord must grant it, and faith is the gift of God,” then we free ourselves from this matter; and thereby reveal that we refuse to become debtors before God, because we are God’s enemies. This venom lays deeply hidden in the human heart.

When a man may truly believe that the grace of faith is a work of Heaven, then he has commenced to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ by the light and the power of the Holy Spirit. That we are incapable to believe does not stand in our way, but that what really stands in our way, is that we refuse to accept that true faith is a gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, even though we think that this matter is settled for us.

How precious is the gift of faith in Christ! I do not know how you have experienced this, but we are convinced that where the faith in Christ is missing, fundamentally there is nothing but sin and iniquity. Even if man were to spend his whole life reforming himself, reading, praying, and acknowledging his sins, it would not profit him, if through true faith he refuses to unconditionally give himself over unto God in Jesus Christ. For it shall be evident that all his reformations, his prayers, reading, and the confessing of his sins did not come forth out of faith, and therefore is not the fruit of that faith of which the Apostle Paul writes: *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

10th July.

“And when he came to himself” (Luke 15: 17a).

The prodigal son did come, but before he came, he came to himself. The elect come, but before they come, they come to and in themselves. It is so difficult, because man wants to be something, and do something. It is so very difficult to be nothing before God. Man is nothing and he has nothing; he is incapable to do any good and inclined to all evil. Although man comes to acknowledge this at times, yet there always remains some good in him. But it must come that far, that there is no good left in him. That is the beginning! To acknowledge this, means to let go of everything, to deny oneself, to tread down one's self-righteousness, and to confess whole-heartedly: *"Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."* (Prov. 30: 2, 3).

You must always strive, to go into your lost state in Adam. You may endeavour to reform things, but you must first acknowledge and humbly embrace, that: *"Thou hast destroyed thyself!" "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God."* (Hos. 13: 9 and Jer. 3: 13). That is where, *we must go: and be made humble*. Our mind is always filled with the thought: *“How can I be delivered from my misery?”* That is the sin of self-love, and of our aversion to accept that we have made ourselves worthy of all misery, yes of condemnation itself.

We must always stand fast in this: first, to acknowledge our sins, and to our being brought back to the reality; which is our fall in Adam; and then, the rest will follow as well. We should not make the least attempt to justify or to defend ourselves. We must simply bow our heads, justify God, and condemn ourselves, confess that we never had a right insight of ourselves, nor ever will, for we are undone! You do not need to do much for that. Neither must you say, “I still have to wait.” Who tells you, that you still have to wait? Upon which foundation do you base that? You must not just say things; you must acknowledge your sins! And this could start right now.

11th July.

“And they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.” (John 10: 16b).

To hear the voice of the Lord, also means: to justify God. To say with the heart that the judgments are justified (Psalm 119:137). To say with the heart, that: *"The Lord is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works."*(Ps. 145: 17). To express this with the heart means, to leave all things to the Lord. And oh, man is so far away from this, he is so opposed, from truly confessing with his heart, that there is no unrighteousness in God, as we find it expressed in Psalm 92: 15.

To hear the voice of the Lord is to confess that we are unworthy of it, and to have the stature of the centurion who said: *"LORD, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."* (Luke 7: 6, 7). It is to feel that: *"I cannot do without God, being unworthy of His grace."*

To hear the voice of the Lord is to behold the Lord Jesus Christ; to see Him as the One sent by the Father, as the Who obtained of salvation, as the Person in Whom the Father is delighted, and as the Person Who is before the face of the Father with His righteousness, Who makes intercession before the Father and presents His offer, and thereupon requires from the Father, everything what His own have need of for soul and body.

To hear the voice of the Lord is to go unto Christ with the assurance of the heart that it is not only to be expected by Christ, but also from Him. Many people come unto Christ (although in this case, it only appears to be so), for they don't expect it from Christ. And when man cannot expect it from Christ, he will not receive. The Lord Jesus never does anything to a man who does not expect it from Him, because He always says to those who expect it from Him: *"According to your faith be it unto you."*(Matt. 9: 29). The Apostle Paul says in Hebrews 11: 6: *“For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”* The coming to Christ takes place through the assurance of the heart, that He shall help us.

12th July.

"And there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." (John 10: 16b).

What is meant here, is the solidarity, and the unity of Christ's Congregation. There are not too many people who know what is meant by that. The Church of Christ only knows this. How will we find out that the Church of Christ is one? Because, there is unity in true faith. Through true faith we come into Christ, and that is our beginning. That is the principle True faith comes to us, when Christ has come into us. When this is granted, this is then the means, by which we have Christ dwell in our hearts. Faith on our side, is the bond between Christ and our soul. On God's side, the Person of the Holy Spirit is the bond between Christ and the believer. Christ is united with us through the Holy Spirit in a totally hidden way. To the question: "What believest thou concerning the Holy Catholic Church of Christ?" The answer is given in the 21st Lord's Day of the Catechism: *"That the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself, by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a Church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof."* It is the Holy Spirit Who regenerates the Church, which works faith in her, and unites her with Christ. As soon as man comes into communion with Christ, then that is where he finds the Church. That is why the Apostle John could say: *"And every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him."* (1 John 5:1). We also read about brotherly love in 1 John 3: 14: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* *This faith is a faith which "worketh through love."* (Gal. 5:6). And this love is an immediate condescending love of the Congregation of Christ; otherwise, we would not know that they are one. This is the unseen unity of the Church. In the visible church, we see nothing but division, but regarding the unity, we read in Song of Solomon 6: 9: *"My dove, My undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her."*

13th July.

“And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying: Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? Because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days.” (1 Kings 21: 28, 29)

We are inclined to say: What sort of a man has Ahab been, what a man! He allows poor Naboth to be murdered for a piece of ground!” I will not go into the history of it; you all know it, or you can read it in 1 Kings 21. And now Ahab humbles himself. And then there is God’s incomprehensible goodness! The prophet had to go there, to tell him that because of *outward humility*, the evil will not come in his days. There was nothing in it which represented saving grace; but because of his outward repentance, God takes the trouble to send the prophet to Ahab, to let him know that the evil will not come in his days.

We must all take notice of these things, and don't just go on! You destroy yourself and others, and your fellowmen. You destroy the people’s frame of mind in a terrible manner. You are directly guilty of that. Let something else be seen and heard from you. See how God takes notice of the least among us. We, the pious people (for we are ever so pious, are we not? We are so very pious and so religious, aren't we?) We, the pious people would have said: *"Oh, it is all the workings of the conscience,"* if we had seen Ahab's work. However, God says: *"You will be spared because you have humbled yourself."* Yet God knew, that there was not the least bit of love towards Him in it.

In former days, I have spoken about the outward fear of God; but we as a nation have lost that as well. We have only just a remnant of religion left, that’s all! We are no longer able to think, we are not sensible any more, nor are we unpretentious any more. Everything is corrupt in us, in our spirit and in our soul! Our soul, which was the nation’s soul, no longer exists because we have not remained what we once were. We have withdrawn ourselves from the influence of God's Spirit. And if only, even if it was just outwardly, we would return, that could be promising, yes, that would mean a great deal. You can also find that in the history of Ahab and about Nineveh; for they were also outward repentances.

14th July.

“And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, sayng: Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? Because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days”. (1 Kings 21: 28, 29).

But if your question is: "How do I have to understand this, how will I become a *true* repentant?" Then the answer is: you will be able to learn all this; at the feet of Jesus. Oh, if you could just place yourself there; and could just open your heart and stretch out your arms to a God Who has His arms stretched out to you, and Who says: "*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*" (Ezek. 33: 11). If you would just open your heart and stretch out your hands for these matters, then you would come to sit at the feet of Jesus, and you would learn something. Your spirit would be taught, so you would get a completely different insight of yourself, your fellowman, your nation, and everything else. Remember the poem by Groenewegen: "*He gives lessons, which makes the soul wiser.*" There at His feet, you will learn everything you need to know!

As long, as we desire this through the grace of God, for then our life will become so enlightened, so simple, and so clear. And this is the only thing which makes us strong, everything else makes us weak. Yes, just let me continue because these are matters of such great importance. What happens when we become weaker, what then? You may answer this question yourself, and it will not be difficult for you to answer this question. When spiritual life, (in the broad sense of the word), becomes less, then the earthly matters come closer, and over time, they become ever more important. The lesser the eternal matters become for us, then more and more, the *earthly and materialistic* things will take our attention. Besides seeing these things in my own life, I have also seen them in others. There has been a moment in my life, in which I saw that I had sought nothing but bread, that is to say; earthly things. This comes before every conversion. David, as well as the Apostle Paul had said: "*There is none that seeketh after God.*" (Ps. 14:2; 53:3; Rom. 3:11). This must be made true in our heart. It is not enough, that it is written in the Bible.

15th July.

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57: 20, 21).

As long as he is without Christ, man will have no peace. A person like that will be occupied with these things at times, but at other times he will just give up. This continues throughout his whole life, but he will have no rest. And the worst of all is this; it is because he does not want it any other way. Man is so rebellious, that he refuses to enter, into the rest of which the Apostle Paul says: *"For we which have believed do enter into rest."* (Hebr. 4: 3). In Hosea 13: 9 it says: *"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help."*

You can count on it, that, if you will ever be saved, you shall see that you had been mistaken in everything. Has that moment come in your life? If not, it still has to come. A man who is saved, sees that he has been wrong about everything. That is why the upright ones are willing to acknowledge: *"Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."* (Prov. 30: 2, 3). A person like that knows not how to pray. He has been taught to go a step further. He says: *"I know that there is One Who prays, of whom the Apostle has said: 'Wherefore He (namely Christ) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'"* (Hebr. 7: 25). Such a person understands what we find in Colossians: 2: 9 *"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* And he also knows that in Christ: *"are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* (Col. 2: 3).

This is where you have rest! One does not even need to know this himself. But this is the comfort of the Church that there is One, in Whom everything is decreed, which the Apostle Paul describes in these words: *"But Christ is all, and in all."* (Col. 3: 11).

How deeply man has fallen! He knows not the least about God or the way of salvation. For man, is as we find it in Ephesians 2: 12: *"Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."*

16th July.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1: 29b).

How has the Lord Jesus taken away sin? It speaks for itself that we should know that; we must have a historical knowledge about this, and an experiential knowledge as well. And what does the Church know about this? What is the content of her experiential knowledge?

He, Who has taken sin away, is the second Person in the Divine Being; therefore He is God. In the fullness of time, He has become man. And as God-man, He has taken away sin. He has obtained: both the forgiveness of sins and the right to eternal life. He has been obedient unto the Law. He has fulfilled the Law. And He has done more, He has also carried the punishment for sin. And He has not done this for Himself, but for us, for the world, for He stood in our stead. This is the Gospel! And I have expressed it in these words. And when you understand this Gospel, and you have a spiritual understanding of this, an understanding not acquired by speaking or reading about it, then you know what these words mean: *“Which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

“The sin of the world” Does this mean that the whole world shall be saved? No, that is not the meaning. It is like this: the salvation which has been obtained by the Lord Jesus is offered unto us, and whosoever receives this offer believes it, embraces it, and welcomes it into his heart. Those are they that are saved and are destined to be saved for eternity.

Faith is the embracing of this offer. And God grants faith to no other than to the elect. That is why it is called: *“the faith of the elect.”* This is the faith that *you must have*. Not every belief is true faith. That is why you find this question in the Catechism: *“What is true faith?”* True faith is the faith of the elect. It is the faith: *“according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”* (Eph. 1: 19, 20). So, it is important, that we have true faith.

17th July.

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
(Rom. 3: 24).

We are always thinking that *we must* make ourselves worthy. We always begin with sanctification; that is with the carnal sanctification, and then we desire to go from sanctification to justification. But this is not how it is! We must learn to understand, that we are acceptable to God *in Christ*.

Justification is something which is always understood the least and is disputed the most. It is the first necessity, and we could also say, *the one thing needful*, because the rest will follow. Through justification our person becomes acceptable unto God. In justification our person is accepted, and once this has taken place, it will remain. Our person is then always acceptable unto God, nothing can change that. We must perceive and believe that! We are not acceptable unto God by what we do or not do, even if it was worked by the Holy Spirit. All what we require is the cleansing, and the reconciliation through the blood of Jesus Christ. We are acceptable, through the power of *our imputed righteousness in Christ*, and acceptable unto God in Christ. And because our person is acceptable and pleasing to God in Christ, God will not forsake us, even though we have not made ourselves acceptable before Him. We are acceptable unto Him, but not in ourselves. We are acceptable unto Him in Christ, *in the worthiness of Christ*. In the justification, there is nothing of man that comes into consideration, for man is nothing else but sin, and he has nothing else but guilt. Read the 23rd Lord's Day of the Catechism. There you will find the answer to the question: *"How are you righteous before God?"* The Apostle Paul explains that it is God: *“that justifieth the ungodly by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* (Rom. 4:5 and Rom. 3:24). When a person, as an ungodly one, has come into the union with Christ by faith, then God will accept his person. And He forgives him all his sins, so that the forgiveness concerns everything man has done and has not done.

18th July.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18: 4).

Man can say that he has no understanding, that there is no desire unto God in him. And he can also profess in a most powerful manner; that he is a sinner, that he is ungodly and guilty; however, if at that same moment he does not take hold of Christ, to become a free man in Christ before God, by the gracious imputation of Christ’s righteousness, so as to be wrought, taught, and comforted by Him; then his profession is nothing but enmity against God, which comes forth out of mere pride.

To humble oneself, is to glorify God at the same time. We are unable to do without that. To humble oneself without at the same time giving glory to God is only pretence; it is self-exaltation instead of glorifying unto God. Without self-abasement there is no glory given to God. Because these two matters go together. For where we find the one, we will also find the other. Where humbleness is found, there is also the glorification of God.

Wherein does the humbling of oneself consist? This consists in the embracing of his lost state in Adam, and in the embracing of his guilt and incapability.

And wherein does the glorification of God exist? In the making use of Christ. When one makes use of Christ, then he proves thereby, that he considers God as He truly is, that is why we read in Hebrew 11:6: *“For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”*

The fact that man is corrupt, is known in hell as well. If it only consisted in this knowledge, then God would be exalted more in perdition than anywhere else. However, in hell it will not be found, that a corrupt man will go to Christ Jesus to be justified by God in Him, and to be sanctified in Him. This is that; which serves to the glorification of God. When man ends in himself, then he is without self-abasement, because he maintains himself. But, when he turns as one who is wicked unto Christ, then this is always glorifying to God. When such a man places his trust in the Lord, with respect to body and soul, then it shall not be said that he is reckless.

19th July.

"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 10: 4).

The Son of God in His incarnation, has put on the form of a sinner: Adam, in whom the whole human race has fallen; Noah who made himself drunk; David who committed murder and adultery; Peter, who denied the Lord; Paul, who persecuted God's congregation. In one word: He took on the form of a sinner, Christ became a sinner.

This brings about that all those who form a unity with Christ, are not sinners but are righteous. He is a righteous one, not in his own eyes, but in the eyes of a righteous God. This man is not righteous in himself; for in himself he remains a sinner and is a sinner. He is righteous in Christ, and in Christ he is righteous forever. Does this mean that all sinners are righteous in Christ? No! The Apostle Paul follows on to say: *"Every one that believeth."*

"Everyone" There is no distinction with God! It is hard for us to hear this. It seems that we would like to hear that there is no distinction with God. However, we do make distinctions. For us there is a difference between a man who is occupied with the eternal things, and the man who does not even think about it. This distinction does not exist before God. Even if we had the piety of thousands of Christians, and were without Christ, we would still be without merit before God.

"...every one that believeth." God demands, but also grants faith. He demands it, and thereby does no injustice. He has created us good and after His own image. We are unable to believe, and yet God demands it. He grants faith, namely to those whom it pleases Him to give it. When man believes, then he is accepted by God; and if he refuses to believe, then he is rejected by God. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *"every one that believeth."*

What is faith? The Scriptures contain the Law and Gospel. The Law demands, and when the Law fails to find what she demands, she condemns. *"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them."* (Gal. 3: 10). Then there is also the Gospel, and the Gospel reveals Jesus Christ.

20th July.

“For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” (Rom. 10: 4).

The Gospel reveals Jesus Christ and offers Jesus Christ unto us. But, what is faith? Faith is this: when man submits himself unto the Law, holds her to be true, acknowledges her, acknowledges her demand and her threat, and then comes and looks up to Jesus Christ, Who is revealed and offered unto us, in and through the Gospel, that is what faith is! This faith means that there is a unity, it is being united with Christ, and from this union the believer receives his justification first. His sins are not accounted unto him, and the right unto life and all that belongs to that life has been given unto him. But how does this man now know that he is righteous? How does he know that his sins are not accounted unto him? How does he know that he has been granted a right to eternal life? The Word and the Spirit say this unto him. The Word says: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* (Mark 16: 16). *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*(Rom. 8: 1).

The Holy Spirit reveals it unto him as well. What is it that the Holy Spirit says? Supposing then that you believe in Christ, what does the Holy Spirit tell you then? What has He said, and what does He still say? The Holy Spirit will then say to you: *“If Christ has paid for sin, and He has been obedient unto the Divine Law, and God has raised Him up out of the grave, and after He had done that, He has taken Him up into eternal glory; again, from this follows; that the Holy Spirit says: that you through faith are a partaker of Christ, and have borne the punishment in Christ Who has shown obedience unto the Law in Christ, so that therefore you are righteous in Him, and an heir to eternal life.”* This is what the Holy Spirit declares within you, if you believe. You hear the Holy Spirit say this unto you! And what do you do now? You repeat after the Holy Spirit. And what the Holy Spirit says, you repeat. And that is the confession of faith. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *"We also believe, and therefore we speak."* (2 Cor. 4: 13).

21st July.

“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (1 John 5: 6b).

The Spirit, the one Who has written the Bible bears witness that, the Bible is the Truth. This is a benefit which can never be appreciated enough, and in this fact we must stand firm. Perhaps you have not come to that yet, but for every converted person there comes a time, that God's Word is the only thing for him in this life, the Word; not as it comes to us according to our own opinion or our feelings, but the Word; as it is lies before you.

Just assume that you are in a certain position, and are called to handle a difficult matter. You need wisdom for that, however, this is only the beginning. And then when you come into difficulties, then the whole world around you, says to you: “What have you started? You must certainly understand that you will perish! You should have done this differently! You can see that it is going the wrong way! You are helpless!” And what is it that you have need of then? Then you need, God’s promise! Would it then be beneficial for you, if you still doubted? That is why this is a matter of such great importance, for we will have moments in our lives, when God must come unto us in our greatest need. And what does the heart of a believer then say? *“Lord, that is what Thou sayest in Thy Word, and Thou knowest that I am the object of this promise at this moment at this time. Lord, would Thou not hear me? Would Thou not keep Thy Word? Would Thou not do it for the righteousness of the Son of Thy love, Who has shed His blood, and has sent up His prayers for this?”*

See, that is how man wrestles with God. But in the beginning of this wrestling, he does not have sufficient confidence, however, in his wrestling, the confidence becomes stronger and the wrestler pleads: *“Lord! Thou shalt surely do that what is written in Thy Word, for I am the object of this promise. And where it is Thy promise, Thou wilt do it. I know this; and I am convinced that Thou shalt do it.”* That is the wrestling of faith, and likewise, the confidence comes forward in the word of David in Psalm 37: 25: *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”* There is nothing as sure as the fulfilling of His promise for a man whom God has chosen as the object of His promise!

22nd July.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2 Cor. 13: 5a.1).

There are many people who say: "I believe," but when their faith is examined they object. And yet that should be possible, for it says in the Bible: *"Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves."* Therefore, I ask you, have you experienced what it is to have faith? I will give you a few distinguishing marks of faith.

First of all, a man who believes has stood or lain before God as the Judge of heaven and earth. For true faith, is a way of going from justice to grace; or would you want me to express it in the language of the Scriptures? Faith is a going from Mount Sinai to the Hill of Zion. That is what faith is; all the rest is pretence.

A man who believes has come to the end of everything. He has worked, and worked! He has worked day and night to be saved. He has alienated himself from everything; even though he still did his daily work. He has separated himself from everything; for he was ruled by the question, how can I stand before God, and what must I do to be saved? So, a man who believes has come to the end of everything. And then he stood before God, as Adam and Eve had stood there, after God had taken away their fig leaves: naked. For God does not cover us, before He has taken our own coverings away, which are: *"the hidden things of dishonesty"*(2 Cor. 4: 2). *"He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."* (Hebr. 10: 9). This is the experience of a man who believes. And not just some of them! Don't be fooled by such nonsense! It is like that with all the elect, with all the people that are brought to faith.

A person who believes has felt the drawing of God to him, and in him. We are unable to come to God. And when God comes to save us, He comes to us in the depths wherein we lie through our fall and our sins. God descends into the depths and takes hold of us. He then reveals Himself in Christ Jesus. How defeated man is at this moment! For at that moment all his questions were resolved at once.

23rd July.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2 Cor. 13: 5a.2).

When a person believes, then he has accepted Christ and all that is bound to that. In the right sense of the word, this person has (you must understand me properly now) no family, no fatherland, no house or land, and no children. In the right sense of the word, this person has nothing else than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That is faith! You cannot do with less. You will perish, if you make do with less! You cannot be without God, or can you? No, if you were to say that, then I would ask you: "How do you know that? How do you know that you can be without God?" And you would be unable to maintain that.

A man who believes, embraces Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. He is unable to do without one of Christ's offices. He must be taught. And oh, he daily needs the intercession of the Lord Jesus, yes daily, for it sorrows him because of his sins. Yes, they both sin, the world and the Church (I mean the converted people). And what is the difference between those two? This; the Church of Christ is upright regarding sin, and the world is not. *“Among the righteous there is favour.”* (Proverbs 14: 9). The Church of Christ confesses before God, and if necessary also before the fellowmen, about her sins. That is the difference. A man who believes has a desire to follow. And he experiences moments as it were, in which he is not in the world. Fundamentally, he is never in the world but always in heaven. That is where he has his citizenship. He has been placed there by God in Christ Jesus. And he may believe this at times, and then there is nothing in the world that can hinder him. Then he has holy indifference regarding war or peace. Then he stands in holy indifference towards everything. We find this summed up in the words of Christ: *“What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.”*(John 21: 22).

And now, what do you say? Do you believe? You must not hold it for the truth, if this is not your faith. For I repeat, you will surely be deceived! There are different degrees, but the substance is always and everywhere, the same in being.

24th July.

“And He said unto them: Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15).

The preaching of the Gospel are the means. You must never think that God can do it in all sorts of ways. He has the means. He Himself has ordained the means. He who withdraws himself from the preaching of the Gospel, says unto Christ, the Establisher of the preaching, *“I have no need of Thee or of Thy ordinances. I will go my own way”*. However: *“Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?”* (Job 9: 4). It is unspeakable what dreadful calamity will come upon this man in this time, now, or when he gets older. But in any case, the dreadful calamity of destruction shall come over him.

I presume that you use the preaching, and search the Scriptures in your home; and I hope that you do this. And not only once a day! You must, as it were, live with the Bible, morning, afternoon, and evening! You must not only read the Bible at mealtimes, but also read it at every opportunity for yourself. And that is not enough either. You must also read and reread good books, for you need an interpreter, as you can find in Acts 8: 31: *“How can I, except some man should guide me?”* That is how you must live! If you do not live like that, you will never get there. Never! You will never receive salvation, but you will irrevocably come into damnation! I am not allowed to flatter you, so you must hear the Truth from this place.

But if you use the preaching and all the means mentioned, then there has to be a certain frame of mind and heart. Which sort of frame? A frame of mind with a desire to receive instruction through these means, and the use regarding the things which we have mentioned: *“the one thing needful.”* We must not just read out of custom. Perhaps you have taken the custom of reading the Bible from your father and mother, or maybe because your conscience presses you to do it. But that is not it! It must not be a dull routine, it must be a searching of the contents, and of the means to receive the answer to the question: *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16: 30).

25th July.

“Serving the Lord “(Rom. 12: 11b)

This is an important subject. We will name a few things in which the serving of the Lord certainly consists. He who serves the Lord, is united with Him, united through a true faith. Christ is in him, and he is in Jesus Christ. Without this bond, we cannot serve Him. If you ask how you must understand this, then I say: it is to be united with Christ, which is to cleave unto Him. As you find it in 1 Cor. 6:17: *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."*

To serve the Lord, is to be subjected unto Him. You can see what this means in the conversion of the Apostle Paul. God took hold of him and cast him down. The Lord Jesus Christ had appeared unto him. And out of his heart and mouth came these words: *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"*(Acts 9: 6).

To serve the Lord, is to love Him. And where there is no love, the Lord will find nothing which is pleasing unto Him. It says that: *"God loveth a cheerful giver."* (2 Cor. 9: 7). Man must be able to give himself unto the Lord in love and thankfulness. That is when it is good, and pleasing unto the Lord.

To serve the Lord is to be obedient unto Him, steadfast, without murmuring, and willing. Abraham receives a solemn order. God's will, is, that he should offer up his son, yes, his Messiah. And what do we find? We find that; Abraham rose up early in the morning to carry out God's command. The psalmist of Psalm 119 says: *"Thy commandments are my delights."* The young Samuel spoke on this wise: *"Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth."* (1 Sam. 3: 9). Aren't they amazing matters? The Lord Jesus taught His own to pray: *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matt. 6: 10). And how excellent was the example, He Himself, gave! In Matt 26:39; we read: *"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."*

To serve the Lord is to be at His disposal. He who believes is united with God, so, with everything that God does and wants. And at the same time, he is convinced that nothing can take place, or it is to the furtherance of his salvation.

26th July.

“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” (Rom. 5:10a).

To the embracing through faith of the deliverance, and the ransom which was obtained by Christ; belong the revelation of the work of Christ, His obedient suffering and dying, and is a proclamation how “God - the first Person - in Christ - the second Person in the Divine Being, has reconciled the world unto Himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them.* (2 Cor. 5: 19). This must be clearly understood by us. The revealing of these matters means the Gospel. When these things are not discerned, then we are always busy (that is if we are occupied with matters regarding eternity) to reconcile God, without understanding that God *is reconciled* in the Son of His eternal love.

Why do most people remain what they are in themselves? In the first place: they do not miss God; and what a man does not miss, he will not seek for it. In the second place: they do not understand God, when He says, in Christ: *“As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked! But that the wicked turn from his way and live.”* (Ezek. 33: 11). And in the third place: true faith consists in this, that man acknowledges that it has gone the way it had to go. Why does, the greatest majority reject Christ? They do not agree with the way things go. They do not agree with God’s way in which He saves sinners. Sometimes they say that they agree, but does not matter what the lips say, when the heart does not agree with it. If a person would agree for just *one moment*, with the way in which God forgives sin, then he would immediately go to Christ and through Christ unto God.

Often people will acknowledge that without Christ it will not work. But how do we realize that? With the mouth, and not with the heart! At times people say: *“If I were to agree with one true teaching of the truth, then it is with this teaching ”* Yes! But, if Christ is left out of it, then you still do not agree. You are not in agreement, if you do not embrace Christ at the same time!

27th July.

"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. 5:11).

The atonement is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in 1 John 2: 2: *"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* Jesus Christ is the propitiation. His suffering, His obedient suffering and death has reconciled God. God had to be reconciled. For: *"Without shedding of blood is no remission."* (Hebr. 9: 22). God's wrath had to be quenched. Christ has done that, so His resurrection out of the grave is life, eternal life!

For whom is eternal glory? Who can boast that it will be well with him for eternity? Only those who have reconciled themselves with God in Jesus Christ. Or shall I say it in a different way? All those who accept the promise which God has brought forth - upon the foundation of the reconciliation obtained by Jesus Christ - namely, the promise of the forgiveness of sin. It all depends on this receiving of the promise of forgiveness of sins.

Everything is tied up to the acceptance of promise and the forgiveness of sin. This is the beginning, and where God is the beginning, everything is there. The Apostle Paul speaks about justification in the first verse of Romans 5. This is the same as the forgiveness of sin, because justification consists in the forgiveness of sin and the right to eternal life. He begins with the forgiveness of sin, and after he has mentioned that, he names a list of blessings and benefits. So, the forgiveness of sin comes first. And if you have grace, you know that this is true, and that it has to go like that as well. And again, who are they that have received reconciliation? All those who have accepted the reconciliation through a true and God-glorifying faith. But if you have not accepted this reconciliation, then you are without grace. You have nothing but guilt; a guilt which reaches from earth unto heaven, and sins which cannot be numbered, of which you can pay nothing; not even a penny. Say *"amen"* to the offer which God gives in Christ, and you will possess a happiness which will not be taken away from you into all eternity.

28th July.

“Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like; he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock.” (Luke 6: 47-48).

Christ Jesus is our Foundation. For sooner or later - this is an indisputable truth – everything will sink away from under our feet. I do not say that you will experience this. For then it would not be written: in (Math 7:22, 25:11 and Luke 13:25). *“Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, open to us.”* However, if we have not had this experience, that everything sank away. Sooner or later everything will sink away. We have to be in Christ. He is the only One who stands fast. That is why He is the Foundation. Peter's confession was: *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* And the Lord's answer was: *“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matth. 16:18-18).

And you must be *one* with this Foundation. You must be *one* with Christ, as the stone is *one* with the foundation upon which it is laid. And when Christ has become the Foundation, then He is also the Way for us, the Way unto God. And this is indeed the faith, the salvation: to possess a God. This: that we may know that God, Who dwells and reigns in heaven, and Who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and Who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Who is gracious unto us, eternally gracious! Whosoever does not possess this knowledge, can never have rest in the depth of his soul. And he will be unable to say tonight nor tomorrow, when he is on his deathbed: *“My hope is in God.”* He could say this, but then he does not know what he is saying. He can say: *“I hope that it will be nice weather tomorrow.”* But it could be that the weather is not nice! But that is not how our hope should be, for if we say: *“My hope is in God,”* then there must be a foundation for our hope. Our hope cannot be different, there never was any other way, then in the offer of Christ, in which God rests.

29th July.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal. 6: 14 1).

These words reveal to us how it was in the heart of the Apostle. *“God forbid that I should glory.”* The doctrine of salvation through faith in a crucified Christ was declared in the heart of the Apostle Paul, and now his heart went out to these things, according to the words of the Scripture: *“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”* (2 Tim. 3: 14). The Apostle daily discovered his ignorance and lack of knowledge according to his own word, and the fruit which came from this was, that he wrote: *“And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”* (1 Cor. 8: 2). He felt more and more, that *he* could do nothing for Christ, unless the Word of Christ, by the power of the Spirit resounded in his soul: *“This is the way, walk ye in it.”*(Is. 30: 21).

“Be it far from my mouth.” It was known to Paul that there was nothing so hateful to the people, then the preaching of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This preaching is the great stumbling block on which most people stumble. Simeon pointed this out to Mary in the Name of the Lord, saying: *“Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”*(Luke 2: 34, 35).

When the Lord comes to reform His Church, then He would also give His people nothing but a purified knowledge of the doctrine of salvation. The result of this would be that the discipline of the Spirit would be revealed in the Church. And the more we reform without this, the more destitute the situation becomes. That is why the Lord says: *“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, sayeth the LORD of hosts.”* (Zech. 4: 6). If God were to arise over His Church (His Church consisting of the living members in the Son of His eternal love) to reform His Church, then there would be disgust in the hearts and sorrow for those who had ever attempted, to reform the Church without God.

30th July.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6: 14.2).

Although the Apostle knew that the plain, simple presentation of Christ was a stumbling block and a rock of offence in this world, yet *he* still went on, he could go on because without God's honour there was nothing for him, and was without purpose, and he had no need of any other purpose. A preacher, to whom God gives the honour to preach the beloved Gospel, is first made free by God from all other things which are not of God; otherwise, he is unable to preach the pure Gospel uprightly. The Apostle says: *"For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!"* (1 Cor. 9: 16).

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." By the", cross of Christ: we are to understand the just mentioned doctrine of salvation, of the faith in Christ. Salvation, and a right to salvation, presumes two things. First; the keeping of the Law and secondly: the suffering of the punishment, and the rising out of it. Where these two things are not present, there can be no salvation. The Son of God has fulfilled both, and that is why the Apostle Paul also says: *"He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* (Phil. 2: 8). From this we conclude: that the partaking of salvation presumes a union with the Lord Jesus Christ; for what Christ has done, must be accounted unto us. This can only take place if we are in Him. For Adam's guilt is also accounted unto us, because we are represented in him. However, Christ's righteousness will only be accounted unto us, if we are found in Him through a true faith. We are all in Adam through the first covenant, and by the power of faith, and granted unto us in the second covenant; we are in Christ, Who is also called the second Adam.

31st July.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal. 6: 14.3).

The Apostle Paul says: *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ."* To glory in the cross of Christ includes the following matters. First: that man has come to acknowledge his state of death in Adam, in other words, that the sentence of death has taken place in you; because before that time, no one would seek the second Adam and His righteousness. In the second place: the revelation of Christ as the Way unto God, as the Surety and Mediator of his Church, and as the Foundation of His entire Congregation. In the third place: the confidence of the heart on the promises of God, this is the promise of life in Christ. We could say all other promises flow forth from this one promise as Paul says: *"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."* (2 Cor. 1: 20). The Apostle had come to know Christ, and he also come to know what Christ was not; these two things always go together. The knowledge of life and death, light and darkness, blessing and curse are not the same, but the they are always together with the elect.

It was with shame that the Apostle thought back to the time in which he gloried in other things besides in the cross of Christ, so therefore, he writes in his letter to the congregation in Rome: *"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death,"* (Rom. 6: 21), like we can also read in Proverbs: *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Prov. 14: 12).

And now follows the second part: *"By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."* This second part follows on to the first. Where you find the first part of our text, you will find the second part also. The presence of the second part reveals that the first part is found.

1st August.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14).

"World" here means; the object and the characteristic of the old man. His honour, his standing, his possessions, and his name, etc. for that is the world. But this is not all. Furthermore; "world" is also everything which man contemplates, executes, and the attempts, this is to save himself without taking hold of God's strength.

And what does the Apostle say in regard, to the world? He says this: *"By Whom the world is crucified unto me."* The world had become loathsome and abominable to the Apostle; that is: the honour, appearance, name and position, etc. and all that he had thought and attempted to do, to save himself as well. I say: this had now become loathsome and abominable for the Apostle. How did that come about? The Holy Spirit had led him to the Law and unto the cross, and it was there that he came to know the world. This is the only place where man comes to know, what the world is. And it is *there* where he had seen, how loathsome and abominable his thoughts had been to obtain salvation. That is where he had come to understand the difference between the precious and the vile. He reflects on this teaching of the Spirit with these words: *"Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not covet."* (Rom. 7: 7). And as often as the Spirit led him to the Law and unto the cross, he abhorred and rejected himself. That is what his desire was, and he did this in admiration about God and full of shame about himself. In such moments, such golden moments, the Apostle felt, that what had caused the psalmist of Psalm 62 to say: *"Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation."* It is here, where God is understood the most, and then it becomes quiet within, by looking deeper into ourselves without turning away from God, and at the same time, feel more bound unto Him. And I would like to say this about that: *"Times of meditation are of a short duration."* And if there is something in these moments, which is able to bring man to self-denial, then I consider, this to be it.

2nd August.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman." (John 15: 1.1).

There is something which is strengthening in the grapevine. The wine, which is the fruit of the vine, is given to the sick. And that is how there is a strengthening power in Christ as well. Have you ever experienced something of Christ's strengthening power? I fear that regardless of how religious the world is (although the world is not religious), she knows nothing of the strength which there is in Christ. Yet, there is no one who understands anything of the power which is in Christ, regardless of how long they have been under the preaching or have been searching the Scriptures. The power, the excellent power which is in Christ, creates an excellent power in us. The Apostle Paul says: *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* (Phil. 4: 13). And David says: *"By my God have I leaped over a wall."* (Ps. 18: 29). We could prove this with many examples from the Word of God.

There is also a joyful strength in the grape vine; as there is in Christ. The world is unable to have a moment of true joy. The world can rejoice for only for a moment; however, this is not a deep lasting joy. Deep and lasting joy is found only in Christ, but the world does not seek this, because she knows neither Christ nor the joy which is in Him. The world seeks to escape from herself; but she will never accomplish this. True happiness is only found in Christ.

Paul stood as a bound man before Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and many other high-ranking persons. He saw the glittering of the world, because that is where the world was. There in front of him, he saw the riches, the culture, the education, in one word, he saw everything which the world seeks. But when Agrippa's heart was touched by the simple story of Paul's conversion, he did not seem to know which stand he should take, so that he cried out: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* And what was Paul's answer? *"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."* (Acts 26:28:29).

3rd August.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman." (John 15: 1.2).

Of the True Vine, and so also of the branches which are found in Him, is God the Husband man. Can you ever have a better Husbandman? For a husbandman, it is important that he has heart for his work. Well then, God is full of love for His Vine. I do not know whether you have ever looked, into the heart of God, or whether it has ever been granted to you to behold the heart of God. If so, then you have observed love and nothing else but love.

All is well when the husbandman has a heart for his work, but he must also have the capability. This can surely be said about God, for: *"He calleth those things which be not as though they were."* (Rom. 4: 17). We can see this in the Church in days gone by, when she was in captivity. She lamented and thought that she had a right to lament, because she was in Babylon in foreign captivity. I hope that the Lord will spare us from a foreign dominion. But if we would ever come under a foreign occupation, then we would experience, how great the change would be among our people. The Israelites experienced this even more than we would do; for this people had a unique legislation. They had the judgment of life and death; they had good and sure laws, which were completely contrary to the laws of Babylon. These people (at least, those among them, who now felt, what they would have to do without) lamented: *"My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God."* And what does the prophet say? *"Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding."* (Is. 40: 27, 28). It is as if he wants to say: "You, my people may not see deliverance, and it appears unto you that God will never fulfil His promises, but there is no searching of His understanding. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so high is also His understanding above all our comprehension, so that the Lord knows thousands of ways and means to deliver you, because: *"Before they call, I will answer," saith the Lord.* (Is. 65: 24). Our trouble is, that we have such base thoughts of God.

4th August.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.” (John 15: 2a.1).

The branch which is not in Christ, does not bear fruit, because it is dead through sin and trespasses. For the fruit is only there, where through true faith there is a union with Christ. Life is the fruit of the union with Christ. When someone has been united with Christ, then he has received life; and if he does not possess this, he is still dead. You understand that one who is without life in Christ, has a completely different existence than one who through true faith is united with Christ. This difference is greater, than the west is from the east. Although this difference is very great, nevertheless, those who have joined themselves unto the church, even though they are not truly united into Christ, are called branches, for it is says: *“Every branch.”* You also find it like that with the Apostle Paul. Although he knew that there were many thorns among the wheat, in his letters he still calls them, the church of God, the sanctified of Christ Jesus called to be saints. He made no difference in the headings of his letters to them, although he knew that they were not all saints.

The outward members of the church are called branches because they have the same profession. In times past, no one was ever admitted to the church without having made a proper confession of faith, either feigned or sincere. One also had to answer a few questions before he could take part in the sacraments. So, as we have said, all the members of the church have the same confession.

In the second place, they are called branches because they believe in the same God, and they both agree that they have need of the Holy Spirit, and they rely upon the Word.

In the third place, the outward members of the church are called branches, for by their profession, they proclaim to believe in Christ. What would one think of the church (I have the church of the Netherlands before 1816 in my mind), if one would be admitted to her congregation without this confession?

In the fourth place, they are called branches because they profess to have the work of the Spirit. The branches which are not in Christ, also speak of a change and of all the matters that take place in the branches that are alive.

5th August.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh a. way” (John 15: 2a.2).

There is no truth in the branches which are not in Christ, for they have not come to know themselves as entirely lost; and after all, Christ has only come to seek and to save, that which is lost. These people have never learned what was in the heart of the psalmist of Psalm 51 when he said: *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."* And where this essential part is missing, everything is missing.

The branches which are not engrafted into Christ, also miss the drawing of the Father; and this is the most essential part of true conversion. You must know that there is a drawing by the Father, which is different from being driven by the Law. When a person finds himself under the Law, then the slayer follows him closely upon his heels, so that through fear he seeks a refuge. This causes him to call unto Christ, and yet, this is not the drawing of the Father unto Christ, for He is not known unto this person. If such a person could be saved without Christ, he would never come to Christ. Someone once compared this to a sick person, who takes a bitter tasting medication. He swallows it, because he needs it, otherwise he would not take it. That is how it also goes with those, who want to be saved without Christ. They still call for Christ, because they know that Christ must help them. So, they do not go to Christ to God's honour, they only do it, to be saved.

If a man were to be drawn unto Christ, then God in Christ must be revealed to him first; and then the Covenant of Grace in Christ, the power of the Creator of heaven and earth, comes to draw the sinner unto Christ; with the revelation of the Covenant of Grace. Through this drawing, which happens with a sweet force, leads the soul gently unto Christ. And in this manner, man comes unto Christ and is united to Him through a true faith. All that was his is accounted unto Christ, and all that is Christ's is accounted unto him. His sins are laid upon Christ, and Christ's righteousness is granted unto him. Through this, man changes from the state; of being dead, to being made alive in Christ. All these things are missing in the branches which are not in Christ.

6th August.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away”. (John 15:2a).

How does God take away the branches? He does this in more ways than one. Firstly, He does this by bringing the branch into contact with the Truth, either by the preaching or by reading - when distinction is made, between God's saving work and a non-saving work in the soul. For when this is done, God takes away the branches. The unconverted do not favour the true revealing preaching of the Truth. He is always irritated by it; although it may seem as if he relishes it, but he really does not like it. He has no taste for it; he misses the tongue of the sheep. Because, this preaching has placed him outside of everything, it is impossible for him to remain under it. There are others who can remain under it for a long time; some even until their death. The faithful preaching is not a friend of *“the appearance of faith”* but only of the Truth. Where the true preaching is, that is where the door is opened for everyone who has true faith; but remains closed to all those who are not partakers of it.

This cannot take place in any other way. Although it is true that one sermon may be more comforting than another sermon, yet it is not allowed to include those who are without it. *“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him”*. But. *“Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him”* (Is. 3:10:11). We see this also in John 6. A great multitude followed Jesus. They could not get enough of His preaching, they even followed Him into the desert. We would be inclined to say; that it all went well. But for how long? It went, for as long as the Lord did not draw the sword, because when the word from Psalm 45 came: *“Gird Thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory, and Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of Truth and meekness and righteousness”* (Psalm 45:4 and 5), everything seemed to fall apart, which a short time ago had been built into something so glorious. Things had never been right with these people, for when Christ started to give them an explanation of the doctrine, by setting before them the necessity to be saved by Christ, and not by their own strength, many of His disciples left Him. They said, not to Christ but to one another. *“This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”* There was no comfort for them in this preaching. And God took those branches away

7th August.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.” (John 15: 2a.4).

God also takes the branches away, by allowing them to confess openly that they don't agree with a preaching like that. Usually this does not take place at once; they had often held back for a long time already , but at last they openly profess it. It is not that they then say: *“That what is said is not true”*, but they say that it can go in a different manner as well. That is then how they break away from the only way to true salvation. And God then takes away these branches, as well!

God also takes the branches away which do not bear fruit, by just leaving them. When a person is young, he can sometimes have impressions about death and eternity. However, when he gets older (and we notice this every day), these impressions start to fade. And when he has become forty, fifty or sixty years old, all these impressions have gone. He has let them all pass by, and now he no longer reacts to anything. He no longer takes an interest in anything, and that is not surprising, for despite everything which he has done and what has happened to him, he has neglected to accept the love for the Truth, which was for the benefit of his salvation (2Thes. 2:10). It is revealed that he did not have a branch in Christ. The Church says in Psalm 71: *“When I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not”* (verse 18). However, a branch which leaves God like that, has never had any serious thoughts or works. And that is why, now that he is old, everything is dead. We can see this daily all around us. God takes away the branches by leaving them like that.

8th August.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.” (John 15:2a. 5).

Furthermore, God takes away the branches by taking away a converted father, or mother, or a faithful minister. Such a person is then no longer under the influence of the Word or of the admonitions of this father, mother, or minister. This is a great judgment for man; we can see this in the history of king Joash. When Jehoiada the priest was still alive, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He did this for Jehoiada's sake, but when this God-fearing man was no longer alive, then it became entirely different for Joash than when he was under the influence of the faithful Jehoiada. That is why, it is such a, terrible tragedy for a nation, when the faithful preaching can no longer be found. When God withholds men from a nation who have lost their everything, through the knowledge of God (because a preacher without this knowledge is worthless), for they think only of themselves, and of how they will get through the world. If God does not give ministers, who have lost their all through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, then the people become more like atheist than Christians. When God no longer sends the true preaching, then the down-fall among the people gradually becomes greater. We can see this now in the time in which we live; if we take notice of how it was in our youth and what it is now. Yes, this is the judgment of God upon a nation, because we have left God and His Word, and we try to hide our guilt through all kinds of reformations. Everywhere we can see that churches are being built and societies are established, but the result is more schisms, more discord, and more deterioration. This is brought about by the hidden judgment of God. Oh, it is so terrible when a distinctive line is no longer drawn; when the difference is no longer shown between those that are Christians and those that are not. This is disastrous for a nation, when this is no longer mentioned in the preaching.

9th August.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away”. (John 15:2a 6).

God also takes the branches away by giving them over to despair. God will forbear for a long time with one who lives under the truth but does not convert himself, because He is long-suffering. But at times, God will also set some as an example of His fearful vengeance for despising the offer of His grace in Christ Jesus and the provocation of His long-suffering. God then gives such a person over unto despair. God does this by opening this person's conscience, so that in one moment he sees everything. He then sees that he has never had any desire for God, but that he has always lived as a hypocrite, and ill-disposed to God, and that he had sought himself. He sees that he has never called on God in truth. Neither is he able to pray now, for then he would have to condemn himself as a hypocrite unto the Lord. And he has never had a real desire to do that. And then it can happen that God, (as a warning to others) in his patient long-suffering cast the sinner aside, after the Lord had given many admonitions. If the Lord were to deal with every person according to his work, then He would give them over unto despair. For there is no one who can tell what is in the heart of man, no one is able to express that. The prophet says: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?”* (Jer. 17:9). Man must discover this, otherwise he will not understand that he really belongs in damnation.

If such a person could come that far to acknowledge all this, then his lamentation could reach unto heaven. If there was a prayer in this person's heart, then he would not try to take his own life. However, because there is nothing but bitterness in his heart toward God, he turns in bitterness toward God, and goes against every warning, and because he sees no other way out, in the end he takes his own life. Just think about Judas. How many times did Christ warn Judas. When Christ said to him: *“Friend, wherefore art thou come?”*, and: *“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss”*, because, Judas did not take this warning. Christ still gave him a chance to turn back. But he did not want it, and he remained an enemy over against the Lord, and when God opened his conscience, he ended his life.

10th August.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word." (Is. 66: 25 1).

A contrite spirit is a humbled man, one who is condemned in himself; one who is aware that he is the most wicked, the greatest of all sinners; for whom there will never be a greater wonder, than when it would be said unto him: *"Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* (Matt. 25: 34).

However, if we pay close attention to the words of our text, then even with all this we would not have explained to you yet, what it is to be of a poor and a contrite spirit. If it was left with this, then they still would not be those, whom the Lord has in mind. That is why we must add to this, that a man with a contrite spirit is one who sets his eye of faith upon God's free grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

He is one who has his eye upon the all-sufficiency, the willingness, the preciousness, and the suitability of the Son of God. While taking hold of God's strength, he takes refuge in the free and all-sufficient grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. It is him, who has put his trust completely upon the Person and the work of righteousness of the Son of God; for he embraces with his whole heart the free and unchangeable promises of God in Christ Jesus, such as, the forgiveness of sins, the sanctifying and the renewing of the heart through the power and the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, a poor and contrite spirit is one who testifies with the Church what we find in Psalm 39:7, *"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."* They are the people whom the Lord has in mind in the words of our text.

And the more it pleases God to make Himself known in Christ Jesus in the heart of this man, the poorer and the more contrite of spirit this man becomes in himself, over against the salvation of the precious, triune, and blessed Divinity. For the more precious, the Triune God becomes in our eyes, we will accordingly lose our own self-worth, and with all these and our self-love go over unto God.

11th August.

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word”. (Is. 66: 2b.2).

What does it mean, to tremble at the Word? By this we are to understand, firstly: the acceptance of the Word as God's Testimony, and not only upon the foundation of the clearness and evidences and the truthfulness of the Word itself, but also upon the foundation of this; that God's Spirit gives the testimony in our heart about the truth of the Holy Scriptures. This is what the Apostle John means, when he writes in one of his letters: *"It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."* (1 John 5: 6). This is also mentioned in the 37 Articles of Faith. That is where the Church says, that the elected believers believe the Word of God, not so much because the Church acknowledges them as such, but especially, because the Holy Spirit witnesses in the heart that they are from God. (5th Art.).

And secondly, our text word says: to love the Word of God, like the psalmist of Psalm 119 explains, when he says: *"O, how love I Thy Law! It is my meditation all the day."* (Verse 97). The Church of God understands this to be the whole of God's Word, the unpleasant (although there is nothing unpleasant in it) as well as the sweet, in other words, the Law as well as the Gospel, for the Church has received both as the Word of God through the knowledge which her soul has received.

To tremble at the Word means: to have the intention of heart with body and soul, for time and eternity, to live our lives through the grace of God according to God's Word, and to direct our lives in such a manner, so as, to let God's Word have the final say.

To tremble at God's Word also means: to place God's Word as judge over oneself. The true Church does not judge according to feelings, because she knows from her own sad experience how deceitful feelings can be, and act. Out of her own workings, she cannot come to decisions, as she has learned and still learns that only those workings are to God's honour, of which the Holy Spirit has been the Initiator.

12th August.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word." (Is. 66:2b.3).

God's promise is given to those, who are of a poor and a contrite spirit and who tremble at His Word: *"To this man will I look."* In general, this means that the Lord will render to these people His favour and His aid. But firstly and more particularly it means: that the Lord will look upon them with an eye of pleasure. He had already looked with pleasure from eternity upon His people. For the Lord says: *"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."* (Jer. 31: 3). And the Apostle says regarding the Church of God: *"According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."* (Eph. 1: 4). However, the Lord cannot look upon man with an eye of pleasure, until this person has wholeheartedly humbled himself before the Lord, and through true faith, has taken his refuge to the blood of sprinkling and the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

However, as long as man refuses to condemn and humble himself, and lay himself down as a lost sinner, and bow down before God through the means of true faith, and to esteem Christ Jesus to the highest by making use of Him and His offices, it is impossible for God to look down with pleasure upon him. For God's own Word says: *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."* (1 Peter 5: 6).

When man can still find any good in himself and is still able to find some comfort out of Christ, he not only exalts himself, but he rejects the grace in Christ which is offered to him and shows that he is an enemy of the Way of salvation, which the triune God has revealed.

But as soon as man is made humble, he agrees wholeheartedly that there is no good in him, but that he is worthy of eternal death and unworthy of eternal life. And as soon as man as a damnable and a rejected sinner, has laid hold upon *"the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil,"* (Hebr. 6: 19), and takes hold of God in Christ Jesus, then the eye of God has rested upon him with pleasure.

13th August.

"For we have heard Him for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world." (John 4: 42).

The Samaritans no longer believed it, because of what the woman told them. No! We must have heard it from God himself. That is what every living member of Christ's Church says: *"I have heard it from God."* And that is how these words are fulfilled: *"I will direct their work in truth."*(Is.61:8).

Most people try to work out later, whether they are converted. You can do that however, it must not be the only way. A Divine work must be seen in the things which have happened to us, there must be a Divine mark. A Divine seal must be seen upon it, like the Apostle says: *"the witness of the Holy Spirit."* (Rom. 8: 16; 1 Cor. 2: 12; Hebr. 10: 15). I don't know whether you have the conviction, that this is so with you. But even if the whole world would say it different, then you should still be able to hold on to what you have been taught. Just suppose that the whole city or village in which you live, had turned their back on the Christian religion; then you must be able to act different than the rest. However, you are only able to do that, when you have heard it from God; otherwise, it is not true. Man must stand completely on his own, and not be dependent on his fellowman. The more clearly the Lord has put him on his own, the more visible it will be for others that he has heard it from God: *"And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel."* (Is. 27: 1.2). It is an important part of the liberty of a Christian that his conviction does not in any way depend on the conviction of others. For the Apostle Paul says: *"By faith ye stand."* (Rom. 11: 20, 1 Cor. 16: 13, 2 Cor. 1: 24). And in another place, he says: *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."* (Gal. 5: 1).

In the last thirty years, I have heard and seen a lot, and among other things, I have seen that there are very few people who stand on their own. You should be in the same state as the Samaritans were at that time. You must be able to say: *"Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves."*

14th August.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." (1 Cor. 2: 12a).

"We", who are those people? Well, they are the people who cannot do without the Lord Jesus, and who have turned unto God as completely lost in themselves, and have received Christ, and through Him, have returned unto God. To say it in a few words, they are the believers.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world." The spirit of the world, is the spirit of all those who do not believe, and who are not united with the Lord Jesus, and who are not reconciled with God. This spirit is a spirit of confusion and of nothing but confusion, of uncertainty and of doubt, a spirit which seeks it in the world, who knows nothing but that which is of the world, regardless of how religious they may have been, at times.

"Not received." We have not received the spirit of this world. No, there was no need to receive that spirit. But everyone who does not believe in God through Christ, without fully giving himself over unto the Lord, is *led by and has the spirit of this world*.

"But the Spirit which is of God." And it speaks for itself, that the Spirit which is of God is the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul says, I have received this Spirit, and so have all those who believe as I do. It is the Spirit Which has been obtained and purchased through blood for all those, who have received Life through Jesus Christ: a Spirit Which is promised in John: 14: 16,17: *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth within you, and shall be in you."*

Because the Spirit is promised and obtained by Christ, believers receive Him. You can read this in the Word. Just think about Romans 8: 11: *"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."* And in Romans 5: 5, we find these words: *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

15th August.

'That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God'. (1 Cor. 2: 12b).

"That we might know the things". What are these things? Just tell us from your own heart. When you have received the Spirit which is of God, then you are able to do that. First it is Christ, and not only Him. For it is Christ, but not only Him, we receive other things as well.

Reconciliation with God and with life. There are very few people who are satisfied with life. Oh, there is so much complaining and murmuring! Whosoever is reconciled with God (and every believer is) is also reconciled with life. He is content with it. Not because life itself is so pleasant, but because he has received it from God. Everyone who believes, sees God's hand in everything.

The forgiveness of sins, the rebirth, the right and power to draw near to God and to call upon Him as a Father, a well-grounded hope for temporal, spiritual, and eternal goods. These and other things are, *"the things which are freely given to us of God."* And in order that we may know these things; know that they are granted unto us the Holy Spirit has *been given* unto us, and *we have* received the Holy Spirit. For if the Holy Spirit is not in man, then he has no knowledge of these things. Then he has no knowledge of Christ or of His benefits or about the blessings, neither about the suffering and dying and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, he will read about them, and he may hear people speak about them, but he does not understand them, he does not know what to do with them, he is confused. But when we have received the Spirit which is of God, then he understands them and makes use of them. And when we make use of these things, then it is to God's honour and to the salvation of our never-dying souls, yes, for our body as well.

"Freely given" It is not only necessary that we understand these things. It is necessary in the first place. However, we must also have them and possess them! And in order that we would possess them, the Holy Spirit has been given unto us and we have received the Spirit which is of God. For this Spirit is the Spirit of faith. That is to say: that it is the Lord which makes us believe. Without His presence, we will not believe.

16th August.

"And be ye thankful!" Col. 3: 15b).

It has been said in truth, that for the spiritual man praying is; what breathing is for the body. When someone stops breathing, he is dead. And when someone stops praying, in spiritual sense he is dead. Prayer arises from need and from the knowledge of God, Who is the Fountain of life and in Whose light, we see light. The Apostle writes in Galatians 4:6: *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father!"* The original verb which we find here, could be translated with the word "lowing" like the lowing of animals, the cows that low. That is the prayer - *the thankfulness*. A man who is not thankful, is not a real human being. Faith and thankfulness are inseparably bound together. The Romans and the Greeks knew no greater evil than un-thankfulness.

What is (to say it in a few words) faith? That is where, I came in contact with God, and now I have come to know, and have acknowledged that I could not exist before Him, that I would have been lost forever. And God has said to me: *"There is no need for you to be lost, for here is My Son."* And He has granted me to embrace the Son. Should I then not be thankful? Could it then be any other way, then for this heart to be thankful? That is how you can see, that thankfulness and true faith always go together. 1 Peter 1: 3, 4: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."*

Thankfulness, and striving against sin. All sins are forgiven from the past, the present, and the future. A converted person does commit sin, and he can do this in a dreadful manner. But he disapproves of it, he hates it! His greatest desire is, that he will forever be delivered from his sin. And one day that will take place, namely, with and after his death.

17th August.

"The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21b).

The Kingdom of God is established in the heart here, and this is the work of the Holy Spirit. When this takes place then there are some things, which take place in man. We will name a few of these. It is then that he breaks with life, with the world, with sin; he says to these things: *"Get thee hence."* (Is. 30: 22). In this he is generous and sincere and that must be so, for you have heard, that: *"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* (Matt. 6: 24). When through weakness this man falls into sin at times, then he is unable to remain there, for in his heart it says: *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."* (Ps. 42: 1). It is as Smijtegelt, that God-fearing minister of Middelburg said: *"You can do without arms and legs, but you cannot do without God!"* This is what this person feels, in whom the Kingdom of God through the Spirit has been raised up. This man is then deeply sorrowful, inexpressibly sorrowful! This is not just fear, although he comes to know fear as well. But above all, it is sorrow! The psalmist of Psalm 116 says: *"I found trouble and sorrow."* (Verse 3).

And why is this man so deeply sorrowful? Why is it that he has moments or times in his life, when he is unable to stop crying? It is because he misses God! That is the point, the cause, and the reason! Have you ever let a tear fall because you felt that you missed God? If you have never done that, then things don't look good for you. They look very bad indeed, for only those: *"that sow in tears shall reap in joy."* (Ps. 126: 5). Then man becomes and is convinced that he, being in the state wherein he now is, will be lost for eternity. He is convinced of the necessity of Christ! Has this become your case also, that without Christ, you will be lost forever? You will never get there, if that has not become your experience. You will never get there! That is why I have warned you so often against the religion that calls itself *"church!"*

18th August.

“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6: 33a).

The word "seek", means nothing else than what we find in Phil. 3:8,9: *"That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."* Therefore *seeking* includes: faith and making use of the means. The means are used, where there is faith.

What does faith do in relation to the righteousness of God? It beholds this righteousness! Where does faith behold this righteousness? The righteousness of God, which is mentioned here, is presented and offered through the preaching. Romans 1:17: *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith."* I have told you where faith beholds this righteousness of God. It sees this righteousness in the preaching. This is a strange matter, isn't it? To see God's righteousness in the preaching, or in the Gospel, or in the Word. Does your heart understand this? If it said: that the preaching speaks about the righteousness of God, then we would all understand it. But now I say, that *faith* beholds the righteousness of God in the preaching. That is something else! And this shows us, that faith is a great mystery. Because by nature, man with the best intentions in the world, cannot perceive God's righteousness in the preaching. That is what faith does. By this you can know whether you possess faith, because faith is a beholding of God's righteousness.

For example, if someone sees the righteousness, although not in the preaching, then he is mistaken. Faith agrees with this righteousness. What does that mean? Well this means that through faith man agrees with God, when *through His righteousness* He wants to save man, and only through this righteousness. And faith does even more still, in regard, to this matter. Through faith, we agree that *this righteousness* is given to us through faith. How? Through the preaching of the Gospel, this righteousness is offered to us and laid in our hands. Through faith man understands that God's righteousness is offered to him personally. That is a great mystery! There are many people who say that they believe, but they never saw that the Lord was offered unto them personally.

19th August.

“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6: 33b).

I do not have to tell you what is meant by "*these things*", they are food, clothing, a roof over your head, a position, and so on. It is said that these things shall be added when man first seeks the kingdom of God and His righteousness"

“Added unto you” We must think about a contract. In times gone by (it is no longer in use) you received a gift when you bought something. There was no need for it, but it was done out of friendliness. And so man received an added gift. That is the meaning of the words which are used here. All these things, you shall receive as an added gift.

It is very remarkable that food and clothing are spoken of in such a manner. It sounds as if this is a trifle, and that is what it is in God's eye. A trifle, just a small matter! However, this is the main thing for man! What a great difference there is in the assessment of these things between God and that of man! God and man stand here opposite to one another. Just look at our own lives. We are occupied with our daily bread. Generally, when "daily bread" is mentioned, then we talk about the visible and material things of this life. Oh, how we'd like to become what we are not yet. And, oh how we desire to remain what we have become, for woe to us, if we think that we may need to take a step back. That is how we are occupied with all these things, at the expense of our soul. However, in the end, we will say: "Did I go through so much trouble for that, for I have neglected *that* which should have been my greatest concern?" That is what man will say after his death. But then it cannot be changed anymore! In God's eye, these things are trifles. And if we have received grace, then ultimately; these things are trifles in our eyes also.

Now the Lord says: "*All these things shall be added unto you.*" What does the man who has received grace do now? What does he say? He will say exactly what the Apostle Paul has also said: "*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*" (2 Cor. 4: 18). And a person who has received grace will also speak like that.

20th August.

“And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee”. (2 Chron. 14: 11).

An army of about one million soldiers had drawn near to the border of Judea, over which Asa reigned. The people were in need and in danger. Asa and his house were threatened. Asa also had an army however, it is amply half the size of his opponent. Asa knows the Lord; he knows that the Lord is the almighty God Who reigns. The history of his people comes into his mind; He knows that in Moses' time, a way was made where there was no way; how the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the trumpet; how his great ancestor, king David, while still a shepherd boy, slew a giant with a sling. Asa had experienced God's goodness and power; he did not doubt. He remains standing and is not overpowered by what he sees before his eyes. He fully perceived the threatening situation before him, and he turns unto God, and he takes hold of Him, and he and his house, his army and his people, and his independent existence as a nation and religion, he places them all into God's hand. Then Asa no longer has it; the Lord has taken it all unto Himself. The word of the Apostle John clearly explains this: *"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* (1 John 5: 4).

"For we rest on Thee" We - who were they? Asa and all his people? No, that is not how you must look at this. It does not go that way. We want to know precisely how it will go, otherwise, we are not standing with our two feet on the ground. That is the misery of most people's religion, if they express something about it, then someone who has a certain clear view of the matter perceives: this is unreal, it's pretence! Just look at what it says in this chapter. *You do*, try to make time to read that, *don't you?* You can find it all in the Bible. For it says there: *“That Asa took away the alters of the strange gods, and he also took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images.”* (verse 3 and 5).

21st August.

“For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves; and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the Law and the commandment.” (2 Chron. 14: 3, 4).

How did all these things get there? The people had brought them there. And surely you do not believe that all these people had now died? Asa had taken all these things away, he had reformed. And the people, who had been fond of those things, were still alive. Do you believe that they have agreed with Asa? And beside this large group of people, who were by far the greatest majority, there were the people who doubted. Have you ever in your life dealt with a matter concerning God? Then you have clearly seen these wavering people. Perhaps it appeared that they stood on the side of king Asa, however in reality, they were far away from what he believed. And Asa has felt that! That never goes unnoticed for a person who through God's grace, may stand up for a matter regarding God. But just like us, neither did Asa know who they were which said, as he did: *"We rest on Thee."* He did not need to know that, for he could not do anything else, neither was he allowed to, nor did he want to do anything differently. Do you know what these pious people say? "If you do it, I will do it also." For these pious people have no God. And he, who has no God, can never stand alone. Surely, today they will call: "Hosanna!" and tomorrow: "Crucify Him!"

There is a lot of enmity and opposition in matters concerning the Church of God. For the church which is not of God, which is the church of the world, does not know the Church which is of God; but she is aware of her and despises her with a deadly hatred. If it were possible, she would have every member murdered. Throughout the centuries, she has always been at work, to persecute the Church of God unto death. And the more an individual person, exercises his influence, the stronger the attempts are to destroy the Church. All those who have striven for absolute authority have endeavoured to destroy religion and the Church. But in the long run, no one can have absolute power, as long as the Church remains alive. If you were to look back in history, then you would find it all there.

22nd August.

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from Him cometh my salvation." (Ps. 62: 1).

The joy in the troubled life of the Church is that, God is the only one who will care for her. And this is the attitude of every member of the Church; and *they are all alone*. You must now ask yourself, whether you know this. If you know of it, then you are a member of the Church, but if it is otherwise... well, *you will also know it!* However, I can explain to you why that is like that with you. Then you have just *chosen one* church out of many churches. Or it could be that you were born in it, but then you yourself have chosen one later, either the church in which you were born, or another one. They are the churches which are not of God, and every member of the true Church knows this. For, we die alone? Every member of the Church has died. *"For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God."* (Gal. 2:19). Every member of the Church has died, and we all die alone. Therefore everyone, who has true faith, stands alone. *He has not made himself loose from men, but men have turned their backs on him*. When he died, on that what was his; he had no enemies in the world, no, not one. And his prayer was, *"God be merciful to me a sinner!"* (Luke 18: 13). Neither did he have any enemies after that. *"Owe no man anything, but to love one another."* (Rom. 13: 8). For if the world would take everything from the Church, she would not utter a cry or a sigh, for the Church of Christ has nothing. People cannot take anything from her. But oh, flesh and blood do suffer sometimes. The Church of Christ, yes, every true believer must now learn what it is to stand alone. That is a painful matter, for self-denial or what is the same, dying is difficult work, and more so, for it takes place more than once. Paul says: *"I die daily."* (1 Cor. 15: 31). However, there is a comfort in this affliction, which cannot be found in the whole world. This comfort is, that it is God Alone who cares for His Church, and there is no need for man to do it himself, he may not do it himself, and he is unable to do it himself. For: *"Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from Him cometh my salvation. And now, LORD, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."* Search your heart, to see if *you know* about God's care. For all the rest is a delusion. This is the truth. And you will perish with the rest!

23rd August.

"For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 16:17b).

When God brings a man into the Covenant, He then reveals the Lord Jesus in that person. There is no need to ask me what this is, because when this happens, it comes with so much clearness and with such a great confidence that man immediately feels and says: *"That is God! That is the Lord Jesus Christ! I never knew Him nor had I ever sought Him."* There was some knowledge of Christ before that time, but this was only through the Word or the common workings of the Spirit. But the knowledge which we receive as the result of the revelation of Jesus Christ in our heart, is quite different. I could tell you a great deal about this. And it is important for us that we come to know, the being of it.

When one is brought into the Covenant, then he sees things quite differently from what he had expected them to be. He thought that he was willing, and that God had been unwilling, or at least not yet willing. But now he sees that he was unwilling to return unto God. He now perceives that the matters are quite different. Remember this if you can. You are never able to see the truth, until you behold God as a triune God in Christ.

The truth is strongly resisted everywhere, therefore, you must know what the truth is, otherwise, the enemies will cause you to doubt. That is their objective. There are but very few people who love the truth, and there are so many that hate it. But if you speak about the truth as it is in the opinion of the people, then you will not make so many enemies. But if you speak about the truth as it is in Jesus, and you speak about the common workings of the Spirit and the special workings of the Spirit, then you get everyone against you. That must be so, that is how it must be. And if you are not *the very off-scouring*, then you are rejected by God. Do you understand that? Only the *very off-scouring* of the earth, will enter into heaven.

When God brings man into the Covenant, then the Lord will show him the meaning of these words: *"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."* (Ezek. 33: 11).

24th August.

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” (Luke 18: 13).

He, who prays, believes. Take notice of the publican in the well-known parable. That man prayed, didn't he? His prayer was: *"God be merciful to me a sinner!"* Millions of people have done that, that is to say; they thought that they did. Perhaps you have thought that also. When you were sick, or when you were in need; perhaps you thought that you were going to die. Have you not done that? Have you never said: *"O, God help me!"* or, *"Lord be merciful to me a sinner?"* You have never done it, unless ... unless you believed. This publican prays: *"O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"* But, doesn't a sinner have to be condemned? Because a sinner has transgressed against the Law with his whole being? What meaning does the life of a sinner have? What does life mean for all these important people? (And all of us, great, and small, we are all so important!) And what about you, are you able to say, what the meaning of your life is? Just tell me! You can't do that say that -for you never stop to think. Have you ever thought to yourself, what is the sense of my life? What is the meaning of my life? What do I do in life? The life of a sinner is meaningless. And the sinner will be dealt with like that. He shall be dealt with as a man whose life was without any meaning.

How did it come about that this publican, who admits that he has done nothing but sin his whole life, prays for grace? Do you know that? Can you answer that question? The Gospel has come into his heart. The Gospel was in his heart, for God had revealed Himself in Christ Jesus to him, and he believed that Gospel. He believed it, and he held it for truth that God is righteous and merciful in Christ. Not only: that God is righteous and merciful. No, he believed that God is righteous and merciful in Christ, and without Christ an unapproachable, and a consuming fire. *And because he believed* (do you understand this?), *he prayed*. That is why I said: *"Praying assumes believing."* That is why we read about a: *"prayer of faith"* (John 5: 15, 16), and *"the prayer of the righteous"*. (Proverbs 15: 29). However, this doctrine is opposed in our country and in the whole world. What does that mean? Has the Truth not always been spoken against?

25th August.

"I have chosen the way of truth." (Ps. 119: 30a.1).

No one will deny the significance of this text. And neither will you deny this, when someone is able to feel this in his heart and confess this with his mouth, that he is a person whose joy is not counted by hours but will last eternally. For it is as the Lord Jesus once said, when He walked upon the earth: *"The truth shall make you free"* "Only the Truth does that! (John 8: 32). Made free from what? From all that is ours, from nothing else than from ourselves; and to be in the union with the God of glory. No one can describe the beauty of these things. This surpasses everything, and surely that is why the psalmist of Psalm 119 exclaimed: *"I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."* (Verse 96).

O, children, listen to me, and hear in my voice the voice of God. For when you may do that, then you will find, that as sure as the Scriptures are the Truth, happiness will be found in your way. But if not, then you are destined to be lost forever. And when I shall meet you at Christ's judgment seat, I shall testify against you and rejoice in your condemnation.

What is the Truth? Everything depends on this question. Most people do not feel it like that; there are only a few people who are occupied day and night with the question what the Truth is. What is the Truth? Pilate did not know it, and I must add that everything gave the impression that he was not interested in it either, for this poor man was just as I am, and you are, and what we all are by nature. How are we? And what was he? His thought was: *"If only I was rid of all of this, and as long as I don't have the problem!"* And we don't want any difficulties either, nor do we want any worries. We want a so-called smooth road, but do not see, because we have no eyes to see, that this way is full of holes, and we do not see that at the end of that road, there is a gaping hole, and if we remain upon this road of ease, we will fall into that bottomless pit.

What is the Truth? No one knows. Just take a piece of paper and a pencil and try to write down what the Truth is, and you will find that you will not succeed. Man assumes, hopes and assumes. But when he receives God's grace, then it will be given to him to see and say: I have always been wrong; I am a fool.

26th August.

"I have chosen the way of truth." (Ps. 119: 30a.2).

We have known the Truth in paradise. It does not matter, whether you understand this now, because by nature no one has ever known it, but it is a fact; that we have known the Truth. For the fact is: that God has created man good and after His own image, and this image consists of knowledge, love, righteousness, and freedom. Isn't it a great loss, that we have lost it by being disobedient, and transgressing, voluntarily and wilfully. We are all born without this image; and are now without knowledge, and ignorant. We know nothing about God or about the Truth. We know nothing about lying about the Truth either, for man does not know what the lie is, until he has come to understand what the Truth is. Only then, when he perceives the Truth, does he see and fathom the lie about the way of salvation. Truth and the lies about salvation do not belong together, however, the Truth and the lies and about the way of salvation are seen in *one indivisible* moment. When this takes place, we see Christ as the Truth, and ourselves in Adam as the lie. That is how mankind lives, without the knowledge of the truth, and pretending to know so many things. Oh, the things that man dares to say! The things we all dare to say! By nature, we are without any knowledge, and the more that man thinks he knows, the more miserable he is, for he does nothing else than deceive and tempt himself and his fellowman. Whether this has the appearance of religion, or the appearance of the power to be able to think; it is all without any value; man knows nothing, and the knowledge which he thinks he has, is cursed!

God is Truth. And now you could say: "That is, beside the theories which you have already told us about, also a theory." I repeat, God is Truth. You may ask, "How do we know that?" My answer to this question is, when God reveals Himself, then we know, that God is Truth, and then we also understand that we know this. True faith is never without knowledge. That this is attacked, spoken against, and assaulted, is another matter. What could a world which lies in sin, or what could a fallen angel, like the prince of darkness do, but speak against this Truth? The world has her pleasure in this, in her fierce enmity, it is her desire to go against it! She is always busy to undermine the truth, nothing else. That is how it is within the churches and also what it is out of the churches.

27th August.

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceive you.” (Matt. 24: 4).

Oh children, be warned! People will come upon you from all sides to mislead you. Parents, think about your responsibilities. Do not allow your children to go any longer than is necessary, into environments where the truth is spoken against. Oh, remember this! Children, your soul is so precious, and if you do not come to know the truth, but go along with the flow, even if this is a crowd of a hundred or a thousand people, then you will be eternally lost. And then there will come a time in which you will remember this moment, and then you will understand that you were warned, but that you did not listen. Perhaps then you will even curse your parents, because they had not warned you seriously enough, or had not warned you at all.

Just remember this, true faith looks through pretence. That is what faith is. God has a twofold purpose in the revelation of Himself. First, He wants to make you and me inexpressibly happy, for: *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*(John 3: 16). That is the reason why the Gospel is still preached, wherever it is still preached.

And I have not heard of a country or a place, outside of our country where the Gospel is. Even in a country like Scotland, where the Gospel had been preached so truthfully and for so long I don't know. But I do know, that there are still some people over there who remain at home to read. Of course, I do not know who they are. The second purpose of God's revelation is to enable people to testify. Why? Why was it that certain laws had to be proclaimed so that the friends of Daniel and Daniel himself would be brought into a fearful position, because of their faith? It was God's will, that in the world in which Daniel and his friends lived, there would be a testimony given about Him. *"Therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God"*, that is what we find in Isaiah 43:12. Even now, God desires us to testify of Him, that has been His will throughout the centuries.

28th August.

“For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” (1 John 1: 2).

When God manifests Himself, then He does this in Christ. For without Christ, God is a consuming fire; and in Jesus He is a friendly and caring Father. Do you know this revelation? Christ is the Truth; He is the Truth of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord Jesus once said to the leaders of His people: *“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me.”* (John 5: 39). They did not know that; they had the Scriptures, but they did not have Jesus. The multitude is innumerable who think that they have the Bible, and yet, they have never found Jesus in it.

When God reveals Himself in Christ, then the Word immediately falls open, and then we read and become aware of the Lord Jesus Christ and of God in Him. Without Jesus, you will never be able to understand one word of the Scriptures. All what you make of it is foolishness! The opened heart of the Father in Jesus causes our heart to open, and then the heart understands. It believes, and believingly it brings forth its confession. Regarding this aspect, read Matthew 16, a chapter of great importance. You all know what it says in Matt. 16: 13: *“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”* And the well-known answer is: where the Lord Jesus asks: *“But whom say ye that I am?”* Just read the answer in this chapter.

The point of the Christian religion is about the revelation of Christ. But not, as I have so often heard it said, this: *“that we receive an opening in the way of salvation.”* Do not believe any of that! That is not found in the Bible or in the Confession of Faith or any of the other writings of what was once the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. You will not find that anywhere! The revelation of Christ Jesus is something very different. Jesus says: *“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, (which is the same) may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”* (John 6: 40). That is the truth! If Christ has been revealed, God has come down, and man has seen the glory of God.

29th August.

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee." (Ps. 55: 22a.1).

Do you have a Bible with marginal notes? If so, then look up what it says about this text in the margins. I have always advised you to do this, because you can find such fine explanations in these notes. You will find that the interpretation of the word "burden" is not a definite word. The first view is this: *"Cast thy gifts upon the LORD."* In the margin it says, among other things: *"whatever it is that thou desirest that God should give thee."* All what a converted man would like to have, is in God. Our text says: seek it, seek it in the Lord; for it is in the Lord. Do not seek these things in themselves. Seek them in relation to God. Everything will then acquire a meaning, and everything will receive its right value. The Lord Jesus also spoke like that whilst He abode on earth. He said: *"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt. 6: 33).

We must seek God and we must miss God. It must be felt what it is to be without God. To be without God is to miss everything; that is to possess hell; and to be in hell. The Lord must be sought, and when we have found Him, everything which we possess is in Him. But we must have experienced this in our life, when we have found Him.

What is it to find God? Man finds the Lord, *when He has found us*. There is no one who knows where he can find God. We have our thoughts about God, and we speak about God. We have our imaginations about Him, but where is He? No one knows. We may say (and there are only a few who can), that is how it is written in the Bible, or that is how my parents have taught me, or that is what the minister says, but there is no one who knows where God is. And when we do know, then we have sought Him. Do you know it; do you know where He is? He is here; He is here in *the Word*! If we see Him here, and in the Word, then we are found by Him. And if we have been found by Him, then we have opened our hearts for Him. Then we have allowed the Lord to come into our heart. It says in Acts 16:14: *"Whose heart the LORD opened."* It is the allowing of Him into our heart. That is what it is, to find Him!

30th August.

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee." (Ps. 55: 22a.2).

In the second place, according to the marginal notes, the word "burden" means: *"Whatever it is that God gives to you, to cast it back upon Him again."* This is wonderful! For we are always at a loss, what to do. When the Lord gives us prosperity, a good position in society, or an increase of our capital goods, then we don't know what to do with them. We must cast them back upon God. We must leave it all in Him. Do you understand this? We must leave it all in Him. In fact, we should not take possession of them at all. We must not take possession of anything, but leave it with Him, leave it with God and then pray, pray! Even insist if you will. *"Have respect unto the Covenant."* (Ps. 74: 20). And *then, is that the prayer*, and you will understand the meaning of the words of Christ, *"Use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do."* (Matt. 6: 7). For God looks upon the heart.

Prayer, true prayer is spoken in peace. It comes forth from a heart which has found rest, and which believes in God. The word *"faith"* is such a wonderful word; the matter it indicates is such a wonderful matter. True prayer comes out of a heart that has found peace in God. (Ps. 62: 1).

Whether the Lord sends us adversity and difficulties; we read: *"Blest he whom Thou dost teach Thy ways, to give relief from troubled days."* (Ps. 94: 6 Genevan Psalms). Difficulties, worries, livelihood cares, grief over children, decline in business, what should we do with them? According to our text and the marginal notes, we must cast it all back upon God. We don't know what to do with them. If God, in His goodness, brings man into trouble, the first question of that man is; *"How do I get out of this?"* But he must be taught to accept the difficulties and to embrace them. He must love them. For a person, who does not love his difficulties, has no peace in God for: *"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"* (Is. 45: 7; Amos 3: 6). And isn't the word of Job: *"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"* We must love our difficulties. Someone might think: *"That is an art, which I have not learned."* But if we love God, then we also love the difficulties!

31st August.

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee." (Ps. 55: 22a.3).

In the third place, it says: in the marginal notes: "*Cast thy 'load' upon the LORD.*" For there is a load of guilt in the first place. Have you ever stood before God with a load of guilt? This is the only way to be freed of it; only *this* leads to deliverance. There must come a moment in our lives wherein we stand before God with a load of guilt, otherwise, we will neither understand Christ; nor will we understand God. If I may say it with reverence, we must (at least in a small measure) become familiar with God. When does man become a little familiar with God? When he understands what God is in Jesus Christ. When he understands that a little, then the whole question about existence is unveiled. He has as it were, no longer any questions.

A person who has, to a certain extent become familiar with God, understands two things through the light and the sight of the deliverance. In the first place, he understands the false doctrine, and secondly, he understands the true doctrine. That is what it is! This is what it is to have an insight in the matters. In the time of the Reformation, true insight was called faith. That is completely true. True faith has the correct insight. Then man no longer says; "*What is the Truth?*" People here, may think about it this way, and somewhere else that way, there are lots of different thoughts about this among the people. I will say it in a different manner. There are as many different opinions, as there are people. But when a person believes, then he no longer has his own thoughts or his own ideas, we could say, he has left his own imaginations and his own thoughts about spiritual matters. And that is how he has stood before God, without his own considerations, and without his own thoughts. And then God has grafted *His* thoughts into his heart. That is the knowledge; that is the faith, when God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has grafted His Own thoughts into our hearts. Man has then received knowledge. This knowledge is the same as faith. That is why they speak in Isaiah 53: 11, about: "*By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many.*" And the Lord Jesus had said in the days of His sojourn on earth: "*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.*" (John 17: 3).

1st September.

"He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Ps. 55: 22b).

What is a righteous man? No man is righteous in himself. Paul says in Romans 3:10: *"There is none righteous."* Christ alone is righteous. *"By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many."* (Is. 53: 11). And because He is righteous, we can become righteous. How can we obtain that? By embracing His righteousness, which is promised and revealed in the Gospel, and is also accounted and granted unto us in the Gospel. When man embraces this righteousness of Christ, then he is justified in God's eye as the result of this embracing. God makes this immediately known unto him; for when Christ's righteousness has been accounted unto him, then his sins are forgiven, and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is given unto him. The possession of the Holy Spirit is the mark of grace. I have often told you that man can have the gifts of the Spirit, but that we find only a few people who possess the Spirit Himself. Reprobate people, who will never receive salvation, also have had the gifts of the Spirit; but only the elect receive the Holy Spirit Himself. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor. 5: 17).

"... the righteous to be moved." There must be a danger for the righteous to stumble. If that danger did not exist, it would not have been mentioned. That is why it has been ruled out beforehand, that we should resolve this in the following way: the righteous can never be moved, for the righteous is a chosen one who believes, and none of the sanctified shall fall away. It is therefore out of the question that we ourselves should resolve this. He, who does this himself in his own way, can talk as much as he likes, but it is all without God, and he can only deceive others, and himself in the first place. Nothing is worked out by reasoning. It is only the Word and the embracing of the Word through faith, namely, by experience, experience of life, and appropriation.

2nd September.

“Love the brotherhood”. (1 Peter 2: 17b).

There must have been a moment in our life, wherein we were taken out of mankind, and where we were placed totally on our own. And when that moment has come, when we were placed alone at a point of time, in our life, then we have become still and trusted in God. Then we were free, free from all that was ours and free from all of mankind. And it was *just there* that we were bound to all mankind. The unity as we now find it, is no unity. In the time in which we now live, people strive for unity in politics as well as in religion. But all that is no unity, for mankind cannot be united, because mankind has fallen. And there is pretence everywhere. And where there *is* boastings about unity, we find nothing but illusion. Mankind in his fallen state cannot be united. Therefore, man needs to be drawn away from this so-called universalism. He must be made one with God. And when he has been made one with God, then, in the true sense of the word, he has been made one with mankind. Then he himself is mankind, for there are indeed only two kinds of people. This is love and, *“it is the only thing which unites”*, the love to God and the love to our fellowman.

However, when man is placed by himself, he must be supported. And this support prevents that his fellowman gets him in his power and draws him away; and it prevents him to listen to the advice of his fellowman, and it also prevents him from going the way which his fellowman wants him to go.

This casts light upon the nature of love. We immediately see from this, that there is no love where we give in to someone else, when we do what others wants us to do. No, the condition for love is to be completely our self. He who cannot be himself cannot love either; he can only deceive and mislead. To be able to love, places enormous demands, and yet these requirements are not so enormous. For the righteous would falter, if God did not continually draw him back unto Himself and place him by himself, and make him free from his fellowman, free from his enemies, but above all, from his friends. For man must fear his friends, more than his enemies.

3rd September.

“.... *we have waited for Him....*”. (Isaiah 25: 9b.1).

They had been interested in the coming of the Lord Jesus. Naturally, the people had spoken about the expected Messiah at times, for this expectancy lived among the Jewish people, they had been taught about it. When these people heard or read something about it, then they considered these things in their heart, just as Mary did. You know what is mentioned about Mary: "*But His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*" (Luke 2: 51).

Is it also like that with you? Oh, how hard you will find it, if the visible and material things are the most important matters for you, and if they keep on having the upper hand! Your comfort, your pleasure, your friendship, your marriage, your love, the pleasure of your children (even the sorrow of your children), etc., they shall all testify against you! Your whole life will then come before you, as it has already happened here for the converted people, and you shall not have one word with which to defend yourself! You will have to acknowledge: "It is true! It is true! I have forgotten God, while I thought about thousands and thousands of other things, my life has been like that." You may find proof of this, in the week which lies behind you.

They have *trusted* that the Messiah would come. Many people only need one word to have this confidence. That is a false faith. We need God to be able to trust; we need the knowledge of God. These people can trust upon the Word, because they esteemed God to be faithful. But to be able to do this, we must know God. They could trust the Word, because they knew that He is unchangeable, and because they believed that the Lord is good and wise; in one word: because they have known that He is God.

But, it took so long... Nevertheless, and despite all this, they remained patient. Their confidence, and their expectation, remained. They have believed that even if the Lord would tarry, He would still come. And... when that day came! There were some who have called out: "*Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us!*"

4th September.

“... *we have waited for Him...* (Is. 25:9b.2).

We must ask ourselves whether we can see our brothers and sisters in these people, who were expecting the Lord Jesus, as in Zacharias and Elisabeth, in Simeon and Anna, and in the disciples and others. You must place this question before you: *"Where would I have been, if I had lived at that time?"* Would I have been with the few who were waiting for Him, or would I have been with the great multitude, whose religion was sacrifices?"

We don't need to expect the Lord Jesus in the flesh anymore. He has come and has done His work. He has been on this earth, and to a certain extent He is still, the leaven in the world. How many changes have there been, by and through the preaching of just a few people, and of the Apostles who proclaimed the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It seems that it has become quite different now. People are now very active to wipe out everything in the world which reminds them of Christ, to wipe it out with stock and root. The guilty ones are not those, whom we think are guilty! You don't think that, do you? No, I am the guilty one; and you are the guilty one! And if you may experience that everything is overthrown, seek then to say: *"This is entirely my fault!"* And also say: *"We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly."* (Psalm 106:6).

How do you see all these things? We see it this way now: We have really shown the people how they had to do it. We have told them what to do, by casting Christ Jesus out of the church, the church which was once rightly called "The Reformed Church". I see it that way, and I believe it to be so! I would like to defend this over against the whole world. And we would like to stop that, wouldn't we? Sure, we would like to stop it but without God and by doing something about it here and something about it there, etc, etc. And when it will not succeed (and it shall never succeed), then someone else will have to bear the blame. And, as long as it is like that, you will not understand. Do you know the words of the writer of the Proverbs, that: *"With the lowly is wisdom."* (Prov. 11: 2b). Have you noticed how true this word is?

5th September.

“... *but with the lowly is wisdom.*” (Prov. 11: 2b).

The first part of this text says: "*When pride cometh, then cometh shame.*" The proud shows himself as being haughty. Providence, Who is righteous, brings the haughty to destruction, and then there is shame and reproach.

The main parts of wisdom are: a deep self-knowledge, a knowledge of God and of Christ, and a knowledge of the way of salvation. The lowly is someone who has been brought to reality. If you are not a lowly person, you live in an illusion. All you say, think, or do is but imagination. What is the reason for this? Because, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of wisdom, has not been given unto you! The possession, the indwelling, and the workings of the Holy Spirit breaks the illusions in the life of man, and then he is put in his right place. And this is so important. He, who has been put in his place, is always the most wicked person on earth, or as the Apostle Paul teaches us: "*The greatest of all sinners.*" Man, who has been brought to reality in this manner, detests the inclinations which he becomes aware of in himself, to get absorbed in the evils of his fellowman when his greatest desire is, to never speak a bad word about anyone else. This is a humbled person. To say it in plain words, he is a person who has enough of his own problems.

Humbleness, according to Christian Europe, is a virtue! But Europe as a whole is no longer Christian; Christianity has fallen away to a great extent, and it will continue to be trodden underfoot, there shall be no stopping until there will be an end of Christian civilization in Europe – but according to Christian Europe, humbleness is a virtue. However, no one knows or possesses this virtue of humbleness by nature, and yet God requires it. It says in Micah 6: 8: "*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?*" And in 1 Peter 5: 5b: we read: "*And be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*"

6th September.

“Sorrow is better than laughter.” (Eccl. 7: 3a.1).

Every sorrow? No, not every sorrow! There is a despairing sorrow, which is dreadful. You can find this sorrow in Judas. And he did not have it in a small degree. For he confessed his sin without anyone’s urging. He confessed before the whole world that he had sinned. He mentioned his sin and he made amends. And yet, it was a despairing sorrow, for the deliverance that could have saved him out of this terrible state, remained hidden from him. Oh, when man comes to see his sins, and there is no revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ, is there than anything, which would be of any value to him? Would he still be able to flee somewhere? Judas fled ... to his death ... a despairing sorrow!

There is a superficial sorrow, it is a sorrow which will pass. And what shall I say? A sorrow which passes without having the root of the true sorrow, without the upright humility in the heart, that is what I must say. It is a sorrow for a time, and then all that is left is enmity. I have known people, who would cry the moment when someone started a conversation about religion, yet whose stony heart was not taken away. This was a passing sorrow.

There is a worldly sorrow. Which we see when man is afflicted by visible and tangible things. For example, I have known a woman who had lost three of her children at sea in a shipwreck. She was consumed by sorrow, a worldly sorrow.

There is also a hypocritical sorrow. You can find this with Saul, the king. He was sorrowful; and you can read about this in 1 Sam. 15. But it was not an upright sorrow! How was it revealed that it was not real? Just hear what he says: *“Honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of My people.”* Whosoever is truly sorrowful, will not ask that. Whosoever is truly sorrowful has come to agree with God regarding the eternal misery and shame among mankind. He has come to agree with God in such a way, that God can never do him any wrong, which will become evident when we find ourselves at our post. If this person is smitten in his worldly possessions, in his relations, etc., then nothing has changed in the fundament of the matter, nothing, because he is reconciled with God.

7th September.

"Sorrow is better than laughter." (Eccl. 7: 3a.2).

When the Lord, the Holy Spirit, works in man then there is true sorrow. It is written: *"The Son of Man did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Matt. 9: 13). That is why there must be a work of the Holy Spirit through the Law. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 3: 20: *"For by the Law is the knowledge of sin."* But true abasement does not come from that. The Law works wrath. And a *"soft answer turneth away wrath."* (Prov. 15: 1). And when the Holy Spirit continues to work in man through the Gospel, then he will also receive a different view of his sin and guilt. Then he sees himself in all his detestableness, abominableness, and as one worthy to be rejected. And at the same time, he sees God's grace and His love in Christ Jesus. This man beholds God. And this view causes him to say: *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42: 5, 6). Or: *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"* (Is. 6: 5). And then: *"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."* (Ps. 51: 4). Man is then shamefaced as Ezra was: *"I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face unto Thee, my God."* (Ezra 9: 6). And like Daniel: *"O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces."* (Dan. 9: 7).

This man does not remain under the Law, but he comes forth out of himself and turns himself unto Christ, his only salvation. He sees the bottomless pit on both sides of Christ, but he sees Christ as the Rock where there is deliverance. He turns unto Him, and with Him, he unites himself, that is, he opens his heart for Him. In Him, he allows himself to be reconciled with God. He receives the Holy Spirit, and he acknowledges what he is, what he has thought, spoken, and what he has done. He receives the forgiveness of his sins, in the blood of Christ. And is converted to God. And when he has done this, he keeps on turning unto God. He remains sorrowful, as one who abhors himself, who cannot agree with himself, and who was and remains worthy to be lost forever, but who nevertheless holds a believing eye upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

8th September.

"Sorrow is better than laughter." (Eccl. 7: 3a.3).

Is it not better to have sorrow than laughter? Men walk playfully thither. They are not in control of themselves; they have slipped away from themselves, they don't even know that they exist! That is the condition of the natural man. The converted ones have found themselves, like the lost son in the parable. We read about the lost son in Luke 15: 17 *"that he came to himself."* He would not have been able to do that, if he had not found himself. And what does he do with himself? He does exactly the opposite to what he did in paradise. Because in paradise he had taken things into his own hands. But now he places himself into the hand of the Lord. He does what we find in Proverbs 23: 26: *"My son, give Me thine heart."* He has now come to know himself; and he has reached the bottom. He could not cling to anything anymore. And there, where he had now come, he is sought by Him, Who had said: *"That He had come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Man (me you, and everyone), begin to work out our own salvation, when we are still without the feeling for the need of the true conversion. That is our piousness. That is how religious mankind goes through life to the bottomless pit. Even when there was no beginning. You must take notice of this; for we are so inclined to talk here about blessing. And there is not a church where this is not done. It happens everywhere.

The man, about whom I have spoken a few words, has also said: *"Laughter is better than sorrow."* But everything has changed for him now. Through what means? Through the regeneration! Through regeneration, man becomes fundamentally changed. Now I place the question before you. Are you a converted person? Now you must not say: *"This is a significant question,"* we all know that. However, you must have an answer to this question. You must examine yourself, to see what your answer to this would be, and how you found out that you are a converted person. Words alone do not help. You must be able to prove it, by *the points of the matter* that you are converted. And if you are, then you will also say: *"Sorrow is better than laughter."*

9th September.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" (Galatians 3: 1a.1).

By our nature we are all bewitched, me, you, and everyone! Man believes that he understands the contents of the Scriptures. Is that not so? Every person believes, that when he has read the Bible, he knows something about it. However, what he sees does not at all exist in the way that he understands it. That is the bewitching. Again, he thinks that he understands the contents of the Scriptures when he has read them. Yesterday, someone said to me: "Couldn't you explain it to me, so that I would understand it?"

And I answered: "No, I can't do that. When you understand it, then you have been taught by Someone else than by me. For this is the work of the Holy Spirit." And that this work agrees with the Word is unquestionable. For the Apostle Paul says: *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1 Cor. 2: 14). And in the Old Testament we find: *"There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Prov. 14: 12).

Man believes that he is willing. He wants to know the truth; and his desire is to know God. He wishes to be converted, so to speak; he wants that which is good. This is the bewitchment that he says this, for he does not desire it! How would he be willing? He is not even willing to think it through. Where do we find someone, who has attempted to discern these matters, and has given an account of these things, so that he confronts himself with the question: *"Do I believe, or do I not believe? And, what is the essence of faith?"* Men does not even desire that! And to seek God in truth, or to convert oneself, or to choose the way of salvation, that is completely out of the question, for it says: *"And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."* (John 5: 40).

Man presumes that he has love. At times he believes that he loves God, although he is not completely at ease with that thought. His conscience, his judgment, and his natural feelings hold him back from saying: *"I love God."* But, surely, he loves his next of kin? His mother, his father, his brothers and sisters, etc. But that is not true either, he has no love! For the Apostle Paul says that we are: *"haters of God"* (Rom. 1: 30), and also *"hateful and hating one another."* (Titus 3: 3).

10th September.

“*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth.*” (Gal. 3: 1a.2).

What is it "*to obey the truth*?" That is: *to believe*. If you believe, then you are "*obedient unto the Truth*." But what is faith? I mean *true saving faith*. I will tell you. Just preach along with me if you can. And if it is granted unto you, do not listen with your understanding, but with your heart.

Faith means this: that God in Christ Jesus stands before us with the offer of Life and all that belongs to Life, He *stands* before us (that is a great word, yet I may use it and I must use it), *stands praying before us*.”. That I can say this, comes from what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor. 5: 20: "*As though God did beseech you* " This sight, is the beginning of saving faith. Where this is not seen, there has never been a beginning of saving faith.

I can understand that you contradict me. Maybe I would do the same, but that is not the point. Those who contradict in the strongest manner are often those that are taken captive first. And you realize yourself, that it makes no difference if someone disapproves. The question is, what is the *Truth*.

True faith assumes that man understands the matters, that he has received knowledge. What knowledge does he need? He must have a knowledge that causes him to say: "All my questions are answered!" That is the right knowledge. If you are unable to say: "*I know everything!*" then you know nothing yet. Of course; "*this everything*", is about the matters regarding salvation. We must have the knowledge in which *we* become undone, in which we become loose from ourselves and become bound to Someone else, to Christ. Man needs the knowledge to which the justification is inseparably bound to. "*By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.*" (Is. 53: 11). And *that* is the right knowledge.

What is it that man must know? He must know what he is himself. And when someone has seen himself, then he knows that he is a lost creature, and that everything which was his, is lost.

11th September.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth." (Gal. 3:1b.3).

In the second place, man must know what God is. He must not only know *that* there is a God, for the whole world knows that. There is not a nation without a religion. But we must know what God is, and we must be able to explain what He is. You must not reply what it says in the Bible, for that is not it. Because unconverted people read it first, and then they learn. But the converted learn first, and then they read it. You should remember this if you can. It may become useful later. Man must know what God is, and at the same time he must know what God is for *him*. Then he understands the offer. For that is the right knowledge, and this knowledge is faith; and it belongs to faith, it is faith.

Faith is also this: that man with his whole heart agrees with the way which God has ordained from eternity to save sinners. This way is revealed into the heart, and as a result of that revelation, the heart says: *"For such a High priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* (Hebr. 7: 26). And then the heart approves of that way. And why does the heart approve of that way of salvation? Why does it say: *"This is right, that is how it should be"* Because God is glorified in this way, and every question is answered in this manner. That is why Christ has said to His disciples: *"And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing."* (John 16: 23). When a person no longer asks, then it is given to him to worship God. Then it is given to him to say "Amen". To say "Amen" to God and to His revelation.

Faith is an embracing of Christ, an embracing of all what Christ has obtained for the forgiveness of our sins, the right to life, the embracing of the Holy Spirit, and the embracing of God's mercifulness.

You must ask yourself, whether you think that you have faith, and does your faith agree with this. And now you must not say: *"Yes, but these are your personal experiences, and with others, it takes place in a different manner."* No that is not true. I do not preach about my personal experiences. We preach Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. That must be my experience, and the experience which you must have as well, and which everyone has to have.

12th September.

“Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.” (Luke 6: 47, 48).

The foolish builder had already finished a large part of his house when the others have just started. When the wise builder is still digging, the other ones had already finished building. That is how hundreds of people go ahead of him, and at times when he sees this, he is inclined to say: *"Wait a little while. I am coming with you, too!"* But he cannot do that, and the others leave him to himself. The result is that he digs deeper still. Observe the difference between the builders. The first one has no foundation, and when the wind, the thunderstorms, and the waters rise, the houses fall to the ground. However, the other one had put most of the work into the foundation of his house, that is why it remains standing firmly, despite the wind and the floods which came down upon it.

And it will be of no avail to us if we join ourselves with the wise builders, if our work is not protected; for then we will eventually go with the world. Just read John 6, where many people turned away from Jesus. A large group of disciples had followed Jesus for a long time, but eventually, the preaching of true faith became too much for them. It says: *"Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said: This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"* (Verse 60). From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Yes, even those disciples who had hoped that they would remain with Him, had fallen away as well. It had become too much for them when they were tried. And that is how Jesus was left with His twelve disciples.

And then in the most tender manner the Lord asks those twelve disciples, which were still with Him: *"Will ye also go away?"* Eleven of them then started to dig deeper, and the result of that was, that with upright hearts they said unto the Lord Jesus: *"LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* God always works like that: He casts down, and then with a hidden hand He draws man unto Himself.

13th September.

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 13: 14a).

Christ, the beloved Christ must be put on. The person who does this, will be delivered from sin, and from the blemish and the guilt of sin. Whosoever does this is saved for eternity. His soul is saved, and his body is saved. He is blessed and will eternally sing of God's faithfulness. Christ Himself causes us *“to put Him on”*. God has placed the acquired salvation in His hand, and the application of it as well, for: *“Christ is all and in all.”* (Col. 3: 11). Do you know how Christ makes a man willing and able to come to Him? He causes him to believe. And out of His fulness He grants him the true saving faith. Through the means of this true faith, man goes out of himself and unites himself with Christ. When this takes place, man then sees the counsel of the triune God to save sinners. As soon as this takes place, then God in Jesus Christ comes to take away all his sins, saying: *“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins.”* (Is. 44: 22). This going out of oneself means nothing else than, the putting on of Jesus Christ: *“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* (Jer. 23: 6 and 33: 16). From the power of this unity, God sees this man as righteous, as He sees Jesus Christ, His Son, and Himself. The righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of the believer. And on this foundation, he receives God's blessing, as Jacob received the blessing of his father Isaac, when he approached his father in Esau's clothes. However, Christ does even more for man than that. When man has taken hold of God's strength and has united himself with Christ then the third Person in the Divine Being steps forward in His work and regenerates this man by the renewing of his heart. And because of that, this man now has a desire for true holiness. This not only results in that there is some likeness of God in him, but as he is shown what there is in God, he learns to die unto himself. This takes place, step by step. His greatest joy is, to offer himself and to ask continually: *“Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?”* God's honour, and God's will are his chief pleasures and his highest aim. He understands a little of what is meant in Matthew 16: 25: *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”*

14th September.

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (Phil. 3: 7).

In the congregation of Philippi, the discussion was about the teaching of justification. So it was not a matter of minor importance, because everything stands or falls with the doctrine of justification. Whosoever errs in this matter, goes astray in every article of faith. If we feel right concerning this matter, then we may still wander in certain matters, but regarding the foundation of justification, the heart is in the right place. In the chapter of our text, Paul is opposing the false doctrine. They taught that good works would be influential in the justification of the sinner. They mingled the Law and the Gospel. And to correct them the apostle explains this by telling them, how these things had taken place in his life, which his opponents claimed to have influenced the justification. He told them: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."* This is made clear, for by the words *"what things"*, he meant those things which were mentioned in the 5th and the 6th verse. It says there: *"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."*

He says: *"But what things were gain to me"*, that is; it appeared to me, *"those I counted loss for Christ."* With this the Apostle wanted to say; if I would have held on to *their* reasoning, I would never have come upon the right Foundation; for to hold onto them would have caused me to lose Christ. The Son of God is not found where there is self-exaltation, or known or revealed. But where He is known and observed, there is repentance and regret, shame and the abhorring of oneself, guilt and a feeling of being lost. Job said, *"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."* (40: 4). And in another place, he says; *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (42: 5, 6). The prophet Isaiah called out: *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."*

15th September.

"John said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." (John 1: 23).

If a person believes that he has come a long way, then he has never come any further, than that he is a distorter of the Lord's way. His sole purpose is to alter God's way! The greatest struggle for the Church of Christ here on earth *is*, the struggle against the false religion. If the Lord did not continually lead her into the Truth, she would be unable to remain standing, but she has the Lord's promise: *"Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matt. 16: 18). If you have some insight into these matters, you would see how much carnage there is on earth these days.

What was the task of John the Baptist? John came to bear witness: *"To make straight the way of the Lord!"* How has John done that? He has made this known, by telling the people what it really is, and to call them to come back to the origin. He spoke especially to the leaders and to the Jewish people, telling them that the way of the Lord was not with them, but instead, they had fallen in the way of the devil. He told them, that they were a lost and damnable people. And this is what it is, *to make straight the way of the Lord*. If man cannot come to acknowledge with his heart that he is damnable before God, and that the way of the Lord is not found in him, then it is impossible for him to come into the way of the Lord. What is the way of the Lord? It is this, that the Lord does everything. That is the way of the Lord; for the Lord does everything if we live and work by faith. For faith is the means to take hold of God. Have you been taught to take hold of God as a lost and damnable sinner in yourself? Have you done that? I assume that you have experienced this, the moment when God has worked regeneration in you according to His will and pleasure. The Apostle Paul says; that He has saved us: *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* (Titus 3: 5). And James writes: *"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."* (James. 1: 18).

16th September.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 27: 1.1).

How did David know this? Did he know this because he had heard it? Was this a certain religious feeling or sentiment which caused him to speak like that? Or did he speak like that because it was the language of his surroundings? No, he knew and understood this truth! Firstly, he knew it *through faith*, and secondly, through *experience*.

Through faith. When the Holy Spirit has formed faith in the heart of man, then he is able to see and acknowledge that God is the Origin of all things, of the creation and of the regeneration. In a man who possesses faith, the words of Rom. 11: 36 are alive: *"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to Whom be glory forever. Amen."* When through sheer pleasure, the Holy Spirit, endows one with faith, then this man sees that all things are subject unto God. *"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."* (John 17: 2). And again, when we may live through faith, then we see the Lord as the Author of our salvation. Man sees these three Persons distinctively. Then we understand that election unto salvation is from *the Father*, and the merits are from *the Son*, and the power and light from *the Holy Spirit*. Fundamentally, when a person possesses faith, he can regard God as working everything out for *his* good. And through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of Whom Paul was a partaker, and which he expressed in these well-known words from Romans 8:28: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."*

Through experience. There are advanced works of providence. Then the Lord makes us to fail in many ways, in order that we do not go in the wrong way. I will make this clear with a few examples. Joseph spoke to the butler, to whom foretold his promotion: *"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews."* If this would have taken place, Joseph would possibly have been released from jail, without doubt; but then he would not have attained his destiny.

17th September.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? (Ps. 27: 1.2).

Furthermore, I refer you to 1 Samuel 17. That is where David put on Saul's armour, however, he could not go like that. God prevents David from going that way. David takes his sling and five smooth stones from the brook. And in this way, which seems ludicrous to flesh and blood, he obtains a complete victory. And it is given him ... take note ... to say to Goliath: *"Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."* (1 Sam. 17: 45). *"And God's strength is made perfect in weakness"* (namely; in David's weakness.)

The Lord shows unto us that we are not worthy. I refer now to the story of the woman from Canaan. The Lord, and His people as well seem extremely harsh to this woman. However, the Lord had no other intention than to let her know and feel, what she was in herself. And when the word is heard; that the expression was about the feeling of her unworthiness, then the Lord shows His eternal love and His great work in this woman and says: *"O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt!"* (Matt. 15: 28).

The Lord unites us with His ways, so that we lose all our own expectations, and come to justify Him and say: *"Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him."* (Joel 2:14). Think about 2 Chron. 20: 12: where Jehoshaphat says: *"For we have no might against this company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee."*

And lastly, the Lord will grant it, and He makes it come. Read Luke 1: 13: *"But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."* Zacharias had given up praying for a son, a long time already. For he had become old, and his wife was barren. However, the desire had remained in his heart. And oh, when the Lord grants it, then the Lord gives him a heart which agrees with the Lord's will, so that he says: *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."*

18th September.

“Shew me Thy ways, O LORD.” (Psalm 25:4a).

We are speaking about the word by which the psalmist appeals unto the Almighty, with the word *“LORD”*. Those who are being led to Christ, will be brought to and in Christ so that a unity comes into being between the Lord and them. When this has taken place, then this person says this name *LORD*: *“O LORD our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy Name”*. When you know this, then you are a person who possesses faith. And if it is the opposite, then you are under the dominion of unbelief. But when we do not know the Lord and are without faith, what then? Should we not pray then? No, no one is permitted not to believe, neither are we permitted not to pray! You must be delivered from this difficulty. If this has not come to pass, then you are not a believer.

When we draw near to God and make use of a name to speak unto Him, then the name which we use must expresses our knowledge and the expectation which we have of the Lord. I say; expecting it from Him! And every request which is made follows with *“amen”*. Yet for most people who are in the habit of praying, this word *“amen”* has no other meaning, then an acknowledging that they have ceased praying. They say, *“amen”*, I am no longer praying!” But *“amen”* has a different meaning. When someone uses the word *“amen”* in the right way, he says: "It will surely take place. Unquestionably, God has heard what I have prayed for. I really believe this!" And for those for whom this word *“amen”* does not have this meaning, they have not prayed. They have only used a few words. Yes, those matters should sink deeply into you. For what would it avail you, if you allowed your religion to deceive you? This would be useless for you, for time as well as for eternity. Regarding the time, yes, for the time, you could comfort yourself with it, but the end of it would be a miserable deception of yourself. And surely, it cannot be your outspoken desire to walk in a mere delusion? Calling upon the Lord must take place in reverence. It says in Eccl. 5: 2: *"For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth."* The psalmist of Psalm 68 sings: *"Blessed be the LORD with reverence deep."* With reverence. There can be a familiar association between the Lord and you, but this familiarity must not harm, the reverence towards the Lord.

19th September.

"We love Him, because He first loved us". (1 John 4: 19).

When man is truly converted, then it has been given to him to read in God's heart. And what did he read there? This, that God loves him personally. It is so easy for us to say: *"God is love."* Does that impress you, when people speak like that? I have never had much respect for that. Is there anything which takes place in the world, which tells us that this is so? But when God has revealed Himself in His Son, *then* through the Son we have seen Him, in this Divine love. And at the same time, we understand that He loves us. Then we find a returning love; the converted then love God above everything else, so that he wishes to follow Him, wherever He goes.

We could tell each other many good things about this. For when a person is taught to love God above all, then among other things he has received the greatest gift which can ever be given to man, namely this, that he has become free, free from himself and from his fellowman. His being, has been saved for eternity! By nature, man is only a follower. But he is made free from this, when he receives faith. If a person loves God, then he also loves His name, His honour, His Word, His will, His good pleasure, His people, His preaching, and His sacraments. But, he loves God first!

Man can have his contentions about certain matters. There are disputations about political views, or for this or that church. However, they are only pretence! Because before man has come to love God, he has no interest in the well-being of his neighbour, or for his country. And what a church is, which some people, can become so hot headed about; will not be known, until they have come to know the Head of the Church, which is God in Christ Jesus. And if you, or whoever, is zealous for a church, and you have not come to know the Lord, the Head of the Church, then you are a fool! For you are zealous about a matter unknown to you. You must ask yourself if you know the Lord, and examine yourself, *when it was*, that the Lord revealed Himself unto you. And what went before that, and what followed afterwards? These are three important questions. If you truly have faith, then you can answer all these questions, and at times, your desire will be, to do that. Is that not so?

20th September.

"Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope."
(Psalm 119: 49).

It is here that we consider the offer of God's grace, through the Gospel. Through the Law is the knowledge of sin, and a feeling of terror and wrath in the conscience. The Gospel is a joyful message, and a tiding of new things. For in eternity, God has laid up a great blessing for His elect, for those who were for-ordained from eternity. The Son of God in His human nature, has by His obedient suffering and dying, obtained this blessing for His elect. And all this is offered unto man, through the Gospel. That is why we find these words in our text: *"Remember the word unto Thy servant."*

But how did David know that the offer of God's grace in Christ was not only given to others, but to him personally as well? David knew this through faith. Faith hears God speak to and in the soul. It says in Isaiah 55: 3: *"Incline your ear, and come unto Me, hear, and your soul shall live."*

What does man hear, when through; the means of faith, he hears the Lord speak to and in his soul? Essentially, he hears this: O sinner, you are in the wrong way, and you are hastening toward your eternal damnation. And if you remain upon this way, you will be eternally lost, but here is *My Son*. He has obtained all you have need of, and I am satisfied in Him. *For I was in Him reconciling the world unto Myself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* (2 Cor. 5: 19). See, a poor guilty and dam worthy sinner hears this in such a way, it is as if God speaks this unto him personally. Well then, this is the reason why David says: *"Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope."* (Ps. 119: 49).

David had hope! What was David's hope? His hope was eternal salvation. The Church possesses God, but not the salvation which is due hereafter yet. She possesses the Lord, and through faith Christ dwells in the heart of the elect sinner who was powerfully called by God. But the believer does not yet possess the salvation which is due hereafter. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *"For we are saved by hope."* (Rom. 8: 24). The foundation of hope, is the promise of the Gospel.

21st September.

"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1: 13b).

It is necessary for me and you that we have a hope, so that with David we can say: *"And now, LORD, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."* (Ps. 39: 7). We must place this hope over against the prince of darkness, for he will show things, and will make all sorts of promises. Think about the temptations of the Lord Jesus Christ in the desert, where the tempter took the Lord Jesus onto a very high mountain, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, saying: *"All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."* (Matt. 4: 8, 9). And this is repeated: and every member of Christ's Church will come to know this. But the Christian's hope must be placed over against this. We must set our hope against unbelief. The world, the educated, the well-mannered people, and people who are not educated or well-mannered, will often say; *"Oh, what do we really know about it?"* Well then, *we must* set our hope over against this, and wait patiently, and through a true faith embrace that which God has promised unto us in the Gospel, and which has been manifested through His grace in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We must set our hope over against our misery. In many aspects we have such bitter difficulties here, it is either that we are sick ourselves, or those dear unto us. Also, there can be difficulties in the adversities of our children or a decline in our business. Sometimes people are taken away from us. At other times, we learn to understand David's words when he complains: *"My soul is among lions; and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."* (Ps. 57: 4). Then the soul agrees with words such as these: *"I am as a sparrow alone upon the house top."* (Ps. 102: 7). Against our difficulties, we must set our hope upon God! Everyone knows the words of the Apostle Paul: *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* (1 Cor. 15: 19). However, our hope must be well-founded and be a good hope of grace, as the Apostle Paul says: *"A good hope in grace is a well-founded hope!"*

22nd September.

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." (Isa. 46: 10.1).

This is a way which the Lord Himself has planned, with which man is not satisfied. He rebels against his Creator. Oh if only he could! Is that not your case as well? Lack of self-knowledge! The Apostle writes: *"O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"* (Rom. 9: 20). Man would wish that he had nothing to do with all this. How often has his thoughts been: *"I wish that I was no longer here"*, or *"I wish that I had never been born."* And he is envious of a worm. Fruitless! For the Lord says: *"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."*

They are riddles for our understanding, nothing but riddles! And we must acknowledge this. We must not attempt to justify God's doings. There have been people who have tried to do this, but it was fruitless! Job's friends thought that they could do God a service, and what was the end? Job received instructions that *he* had to pray for his friends. So that is not the way. Neither is it the way, that when we try to free ourselves from it we say: *"Well, we do not know it, and we will never know it."* We must not try to cover the fact that we will never know it. We must frankly admit the fact, that we don't know it! When man comes to know himself, then he feels the hopelessness of the condition in which he finds himself, through sin which he is unable to deny, for the accusations of his conscience fly in his face; when he sees and feels that he is guilty, guilty before God and his fellowman, guilty before all man, no one excepted, even if he has not come into contact with many people, because there is a moral world order that has been defiled by him, and the whole world experiences the result of these violations. When man has come to understand that he is powerless and incapable of doing any good; and that there has never been any evil in the world, to which he could not have come. When he has seen how he has always stood opposed to his fellowman, and how often he has stood up against the Lord with heavy shields in his haughtiness; how he has often behaved so badly, that during his whole life this lies heavy upon him, *even* when his sins are forgiven.

23rd September.

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." (Isa. 46: 10.2).

.... when he sees how many times he has been so bitter towards his fellowman, and how often he has said: "*Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,*" (James 2: 16) and the many times he has talked about his fellowmen, judging them wrongfully and so on; - and then, when it is given to a person to humble himself before God, and to mourn about his sins, and when he has found trouble and sorrow, like the psalmist of Psalm 116 - when Christ Jesus came into his heart (Divine wonder of grace!), *he did not go to Christ*, no, he would never in all eternity have done that, *but the Lord Jesus came to him and in him*; when he opened the doors, which had always been closed for the entering in of the Lord Jesus; and he beheld all God's pleasures, His rights and holiness, and all the virtues which are in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and when he had gone out of himself like that and had united himself with the revealed salvation, then he is brought into the Godly Family and has received the kiss of the Father, the new robe and the shoes on his feet, and when he has eaten the fatted calf, and he becomes aware of the happiness which there is in heaven, about *one* sinner who has converted himself, also his heart, - then this person is now standing quite differently over against the ways which we mentioned before.

Where these ways are found in the Holy Scriptures, that is where the Holy Spirit has sealed the Word of the Lord into the heart, and now this man has also sealed that testimony, for: "*He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*" (John 3: 33). When Job had finished speaking, and the Lord spoke unto him, then this sufferer finishes with these well-known words: "*I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" (Job 42: 5, 6).

I have often told you in the preaching, that there are no mysteries for the person who believes, and that all his questions are answered. And I have also told you how this takes place. And if you understand these matters, then you have rest in the depth of your soul.

24th September.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12: 10.).1.

Read 2 Cor. 12: 1-11 first.

The Apostle tells us here, what he had learned, and had experienced. Faith, conversion, and all that is closely related to the Kingdom of God is *experience*. He who has no experience of these things, and who has not lived through them, has no knowledge of them. The Apostle is making a statement here, and he also explains how he has come to the point of making this statement. We find this at the beginning of the chapter. The Apostle was troubled by a sharp thorn in his flesh, and he speaks about this, as being buffeted by Satan. The question often arises, what the Apostle meant by this thorn. I think the answer to this question is quite simple, for he mentions this thorn, in the tenth verse, where he tells us what this thorn is: *“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.”* By this, we know what this thorn is, of which the Apostle speaks. He also says that it is a messenger of Satan, who buffeted him. And he prayed to be released from this messenger, from this thorn. *“For this I besought the LORD thrice.”* That is to say; repeatedly; but this thorn was not taken away. Had God not heard the prayer of the Apostle? God hears all the prayers of His children. But He had given the Apostle something better than what he had asked for, and the Apostle had discovered that. And that causes him to say, that he has pleasure in infirmities and in distresses. And he follows on to say: *“For when I am weak, then am I strong.”* But what does he mean when he says that? Yes, there is much to say about that, and even more to meditate on. We will try to explain it to you as clearly as possible.

25th September.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Cor. 12: 10.2).

When a person is persecuted and experiences all sorts of weaknesses, difficulties, oppositions, and adversities, so that many times he is very troubled, and at times so distressed that he no longer knows where to go, what is the consequence of that? It is this; that we feel how weak we are. That we have a feeling of not being able to cope with these things, a feeling that life is too intense, too tough for us. And when man experiences this in a lesser or greater degree, then he can turn three ways. He can try to pull through in the best way possible. It is possible that he will be successful. But if he does this, then he hardens himself; he makes himself hard; hard to withstand the harsh reality of this difficult life. The Apostle Paul did not go this way. To take this way is a little negative and not something positive. We can turn into another way, namely; to give up. Yes, then all sorts of things may happen. One may get such an inferiority complex, so that nothing works anymore. Then we are no longer fit for life. Or our nerves may get the better of us, so that we become a patient. Or make an end to one's life, although, this is an exceptional case, yet it does happen.

But there is also a third way, and this is the way of the Apostle. He did not only feel his weaknesses, but he also acknowledged and confessed his weaknesses. He confessed his inner shortcomings, his lack of strength, boldness, and courage, and so on. Yes, a great anxiety came over him ... and then he prayed. In fact, he did not pray, for in such circumstances, we do not really pray, for then the burden is too heavy. Perhaps we try to pray, but it does not work. There are no words. And the Apostle Paul describes this praying in Romans 8: 26 with the well-known words: *"We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* This is that *not being able to pray!*

26th September.

"O, taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." (Ps. 34: 8).

"O, taste that the LORD is good", what does that mean? The pious, the religious people all think that God is good. But, actually what *do* they say? God, or as our text says, "*LORD*" --- who is the Lord? Because before we say anything about the Lord, we must know Who He is. Or is it sufficient that we have read about Him in the Bible? That is not enough really. Then you must feel that your heart has no hold on things. And that is the point for me and you, that we have a firm foundation to stand on. Is there anything we can hold on to without the Christian faith? Let someone say where that would be! For then, we could do without God and Christ!

This firm hold is in God, but we must also know, that this is so. Our heart must know, that we have a firm hold, a support, and a refuge in God. That is why we must know who God is. We must know Him, before we can say anything about God. Most people do not think about this. We are far too superficial in religious circles as well as out of them. It is remarkable how superficial we are.

How do we come to know God? We come to know Him, when He has come to us and He has said: "*Behold Me, behold Me!*" (Is. 65: 1). That is the greatest wonder which can ever happen to us. Then the Lord reveals Himself. Everything else is but a groping in the dark and a delusion. It is remarkable but true, that if it were to happen to a child of ten or twelve years of age, then this child would know it much better than most ministers or professors in theology. Because, generally they do not know it. That child would then be able to talk about eternal matters, and that is what is necessary. But, if God does not reveal Himself in Christ Jesus, man knows just as much about God, as one who has never heard of God before.

There comes a moment in the life of every converted person when he says: "I would never have known it, if God had not said: "*Behold Me!*" Has that moment come into your life? Do not neglect to answer this question, for if it has not come, then you are still ignorant in heavens ways!

27th September.

Part of an address after a wedding ceremony

Something which we notice when we read the Holy Scriptures, as well as in the reading of the form of marriage which we have just read, is that in the Holy Scriptures, as well as in this form of marriage, everything is brought back to God. We could say, that is; wisdom about life: and to let all that has befallen us and will still befall us, and will befall man- kind as well, bring all off it back to God. And once again; we need *the knowledge of God* for this! For then man does not only come to know Him as the Creator, but also as the Keeper of all things. We must have (and I don't have to tell you this), peace with all things; for it is only then, that we really live. We must not be torn apart in ourselves about all sorts of difficulties and conflicts. In the depth of our soul, we must have peace and feel calm. This should not depend upon the circumstances in which we find ourselves. No, under all the circumstances in life, there must be a calmness and tranquillity in the soul! Only then does man live, when he is calm. And when is he calm? When he can see that everything is in the right place, and that everything which happens, is good in his own life as well as in the lives of others and in the lives of all nations. Only then do we stand; then we stand aright, and we can cope with life. Then we are not being lived, but we live. Then we are not trampled underfoot by the circumstances of life, but we face up to them. That is faith. That is why John says: "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*" (1John 5:4).

Why do people feel so miserable in the time in which we now live, why is there so much murmuring, so much complaining about matters which should not be? Because man is not capable to believe that everything is good and in the right place. And if this sounds unlikely, then this should not be a reason to reject it. It is better for you to leave it be, than to place hundreds of "*but's*" against it. For all those "*but's*" have no meaning!

But if you do not comprehend this (which is understandable), there may still come a time when you will learn to understand it. And as long, as you are on this side of the grave, it can still take place. But it must happen. If it does not happen, then you will come to stand before a God with Whom you have never agreed. And that means an eternal separation!

28th September.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10: 13).

It says: "whosoever". *"There is no respect of persons with God."* (Rom. 2: 11) For Him (to say it like this), there is no respect of converted persons or of those which have changed a little or of those who have changed a great deal. For God, there are only sinners and wicked people, whom He sees in their great need, and their sins which reach unto heaven, in their immeasurable misery. And it pleases Him to come to these people in Christ, beseeching them, in the Son and with the Son, to be reconciled unto Him. See, that is why it says: "whosoever", no matter who he is, or whatever he has done.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." There is an indissoluble bond between salvation and the calling upon the name of the Lord. Whosoever calls upon the Name of the Lord, will be saved. He who has received salvation has called upon the Name of the Lord. This is more clearly explained in some places in the Scriptures. Just take Stephen's history. There you read: *"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying: Lord Jesus receive my spirit!"* (Acts 7: 59). This is the calling upon God. For what did Stephen do when he acted like that? He turned his back on everything, so that it was God alone who existed for him, and so he turned himself unto God. That is what calling upon God is. When someone calls upon the name of the Lord, then nothing else exists for him besides God. He denies himself; and forsakes all the visible and material things; he only acknowledges God. That is why a converted person, immediately after receiving grace, understands these words of the Apostle Paul: *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (2 Cor. 4: 18). Peter's history enlightens this also. Peter sinks when he walked upon the sea, but he sinks, - for he no longer has a hold anywhere. But then he turns to Christ and utters the cry of faith: *"LORD, save me!"* (Matt. 14: 30). This is the *calling*, and this is the calling through faith. Now, two things must take place: *the calling itself*, and we must then consider what we possess through this calling. We have told you what this calling is. But then we must also know, *what it is that we have become the partakers of*.

29th September.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. 10: 13.2).

The religious people are inclined to think lightly about God’s judgment. Almost every religious person thinks, that this calling can take place without first being made a partaker of God. And the Holy Spirit must teach us, that this is not so; that they only speak that way because they do not understand it, for the Lord has not taught them as yet. That is why the Apostle Paul says: *“That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* (1 Cor. 2: 12).

Remember, it is either the one or the other; we possess nothing, or we have become partakers of everything. There is no third way. However, it can be that a sincere Christian does not have the right light in this, while inwardly it has become true for him. Then in His time God will clear that up for him, and then He will teach him in such a manner that he understands that this teaching is the description of his life, that this doctrine is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. According to God’s promise, God will deal with the matter in this way. *“God will lead him safely onward, Guide him in the chosen way.”* (Ps. 25: 6). We can briefly say that everything consists in this: that we lose all that is ours, and find it all in God, as the Apostle Paul has written: *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”* (Col. 3: 3).

Nothing and no one can help us besides God! We must be taught by Him. If that does not happen, we will never escape from our own self-deceit, for every man leans upon his own heart. However, if we are taught by the Lord, we will clearly see that we could never have escaped from our self-deceit, and that it was Him Who has delivered us from it, He shows us what we are in ourselves and leads us in the way of life which: *“is above the wise.”* (Prov. 15: 24)

True conversion takes place in a point of time. Never forget that! It is a coming unto the fullness and a going out of the emptiness. It is the holding up of the hand. If the hand is empty, then the Lord will fill it with spiritual, temporal, and eternal goods. *“He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away”* (Luke 1: 53).

30th September.

"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. 9: 16).

You say: *"I do not understand the matters."* It is not possible for man to have the right insight before he has learned to make use of Christ. For it says: *"In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said: I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."* (Luke 10: 21).

"I have no eyes to see." Christ has eye salve. (Rev. 3: 18). *"I have no hands to take hold of it."* Then do it without hands! *"I have no feet to go."* Then you should allow yourself to be drawn. Listen to what it says: *"I have laid help on One that is Mighty."* (Ps. 89: 19). But if you want to do it yourself, then you commit the sin of denying Christ. You must deny yourself and make use of Christ.

You should feel uncomfortable while you are unable to rest in God; for if you are able to rest without God, because if you rest on yourself without God, then it does not look good for you. Someone may ask: *"Is then all that happens before justifying faith not taken into consideration?"* Do you take that in consideration? Have you never seen this, that, that is not it? You say: *"Yet it is still something."* It is nothing more than the common workings of the Spirit through the Word, and if you rest on that, then you will perish eternally. You may also say: *"But I could speak a whole evening about my experiences."* That is sad for you that you would be able to speak a whole evening about it! It would be far better for you, if you could not even think about it. For that is not it; you will surely perish! It is in Christ! You must have been taught and be taught to say with Jacob: *"Judah, thou art he!"* (Gen. 49:8). When by spiritual light, that is; through true convictions of sin, we have received a view of how we form wrong ideas about the Person and work of Christ, then we come to see that all this, as a dreadful sin, and that we have used all this to hide from God, testifying with words and deeds saying: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21:14).

1st October.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Malachi 4: 2a.1).

In the foregoing verse, we read: *"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."* There are two kinds of people on earth. The first kind of people are called *"proud"* and the others are described as *"those that fear God"*. The unconverted, are called *"proud."* Why? Because they do not allow God to help them. For God has come unto them in Christ Jesus with the offer of life and all that belongs to life; however, they have said and still say: *"Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."* (Job 21: 14).

The others are called *"God-fearing people"*, because they have given way to the Lord. For after all, that is what it is to fear God, at least the beginning of it is, that we stand aside for God. If man does this in truth, then he allows himself to be helped by God, and he who allows himself to be helped will receive help, for the Lord says in His testimony: *"Be ye reconciled unto God!"*

"But unto you that fear My name." The Name of the Lord is the Lord Himself, that is as far as He has revealed Himself. The Lord has revealed Himself in nature. That is why the psalmist could say: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork."* (Ps. 19: 1). But God has given an even more glorious manifestation of Himself by giving His Son. And for the sake of this manifestation, the sovereign God has taken the fall of man into His counsel. Before the fall, before the preaching of the Gospel, the virtue of God's mercifulness was covered. When man sees God in the Son, then he sees Him in all His virtues. That is what the Apostle Paul teaches us in 2 Cor. 4: 6: *"For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

2nd October.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Malachi 4: 2a.2).

"...you that fear My name." Fear can be twofold. There is a slavish fear and a childlike fear. The slavish fear is found in all people, no one excluded. You can see the dreadful and destructive workings of this fear in Cain. He said: *"My punishment is greater than I can bear"* (Gen. 4: 13), it can also be seen in Saul, and in the deeply wretched Judas Iscariot. Where there is fear, there is a deep awareness of God's existence; however, man does not flee unto God. On the contrary man seeks to escape Him, as we can see in the examples we mentioned.

The childlike fear is found in all those, who are children of God. Through faith in Jesus Christ, man is a child of God. If that faith is the true faith, then we are God's children. The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* (Gal. 3: 26). And in John 1: 12 we find: *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* What does this fear of God consist amount to? It amounts to a knowledge of God and of His virtues. If one can truly say with Jacob: *"I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved,"* (Gen. 32: 30), then he fears the Lord.

Knowledge of oneself. When a person fears God, then he has had a deep insight into himself. He has seen himself in the light of God; and when he has seen himself as such, then he has seen that he was lost, lost in Adam.

Knowledge of the Son of God, of His mission, of His offices, of His states, of His natures, and of His benefits. Knowledge of the offer of the Son, through the Father. Knowledge of the Word, of the Law, and of the Gospel. Of the Law, so that we understand the testimony of the Apostle: *"Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not covet."* (Rom. 7: 7). Knowledge of the Gospel, so that we know in our hearts what it means to be sealed by the Word.

3rd October.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Malachi 4: 2a.3).

In the second place, the fear of the Lord consists in *reverence*. Where there is a childlike fear, God's honour lies heavy upon the soul. The heart esteems Him, and from comes among other things the right choice, which we find written in the well-known words of the letter to the Hebrews: *"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."* (Hebr. 11:26).

Esteem for the Almighty, so that some of the text of Proverbs 28:14 are understood: *"Happy is the man that feareth alway."* *Holy anxiety*, so that life, to a greater or lesser degree is a life of prayer, asking for God and His counsel, for His will and His way: *"Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths."* (Psalm 25:4).

A willingness of heart to follow the Lamb wherever it goes, to cleave unto the Lord and to follow Him through good times and through tribulation.

Pleasure in religious practices, in the searching of the Scriptures, and especially in the meditation of it, the pondering on the matters. Meditation is a great and excellent gift of the Lord. That is why the Psalmist says: *"My meditation of Him shall be sweet."* (Ps. 104: 34). Someone else has said: *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple."* (Ps. 27: 4).

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise." This certainly is a great promise, and this promise is given to all those who fear God. I say, this is a great promise, for when Jesus Christ is revealed into us, then we have the evidence, and a token and proof that God's saving work has begun in us. Gospel repentance, the exercise of faith, the beholding of God, and many, many other things begin with the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart.

4th October.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Malachi 4: 2a.4).

We want to meditate for a few moments on the descriptions, the beautiful metaphors in these words. Isn't it an expressive language? And what beautiful words they are; *"Sun"* and *"righteousness"*! And it says here: *"The Sun of righteousness."*

The Sun, which is here mentioned is the Lord Jesus Christ. How pleasant it is to stop and consider this for a moment. For we may certainly now say: that everything which the sun is for the earth and for the people, is what the Lord Jesus Christ is for His people. The sun is a light, a superior light. There where we find the Lord Jesus Christ, there is light, and where we do not find Him, there is no light. Are you able to agree with this? My meaning is, that you should answer this with your heart?

The Samaritan woman agreed with this. For she called out: *"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"* (John 4: 29). Saul of Tarsus agreed with this, for when the Lord Jesus Christ made Himself known unto him, he prayed unto Him, saying: *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"* (Acts 9: 6). And I dare say, that the entire Church of Christ agrees with this. Does the Apostle Paul not say: *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord?"* (Eph. 5: 8)

What is this light? It is knowledge. And knowledge is twofold. There is a knowledge of the letter, and there is a knowledge of the matter. When we have nothing but a knowledge of the letter, then it is not that we have a different Bible than God's people, but God's people have knowledge of the matters, because they see them. Those who only have the knowledge of the letter, just *read* about these matters. This difference is very great. We read in 1 Corinthians 2: 14, 15: *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."*

5th October.

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” (Malachi.4:2a.5).

The sun gives heat to the earth and to men. And the heart is also warmed when the Lord Jesus dwells in the heart. The Apostle John says: *“We love Him, because He first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19). Men were cold, they only thought about themselves, even when in their *own way* their thoughts were about salvation. However, when the Lord Jesus came, their thoughts were about God and not only about themselves. And then they bowed down and worshipping, they sang! *“Blest be the LORD, for He so glorious Alone does wondrous things. O God, in all the earth our chorus. With “Amen, Amen” rings.”* (Ps. 72:10). (Genevan)

Has he not paced his room up and down, saying: *“Who would have ever thought that! Who would have thought that! Thou God Who seest me (Gen. 16:13), full of mercy, Thou hast looked upon me, the most unworthy of all, the greatest of all sinners?”*

Warmth! Warmth for his fellowman as well. Ah, a converted person has a warm heart for his fellow creature. For he knows how deeply miserable every person is, and how guilty he stands before God, and what his future is when he is not converted. He also knows that when he is converted, what difficulties he will have in this life. Indeed, we must enter the Kingdom of God through many tribulations! (Acts 14:22). It grieves him, when someone else has troubles, this causes him to sorrow

A converted person does not only love his neighbour, but he loves the whole creation. In a certain sense he feels that he himself is connected with creation. This made a certain psalmist say: *“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handywork.”* (Ps.19:1). And it certainly made the Apostle write: *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”.* (Rom. 8:22). There is warmth in the heart of the converted for the birds and the other animals. It says in Proverbs 12:10: *“A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”*

6th October.

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” (John 15: 4).

We remain in Christ, when we continue to believe in Him; that is when we unite ourselves more and more with God’s plan of saving sinners through the means of the Son of His eternal love. *“When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”* (Psalm 27: 8).

The believer possesses love. Faith and love are not of the same significance, but love flows forth from faith. The Apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:6: *“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”* Where there is faith, man loves God above all and his neighbour as himself. (Matt. 27: 37). Man abides in Christ, when he continues to believe in Him. So that is, when we can wholeheartedly say with the Psalmist: *“I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.”* (Psalm 116: 1). ‘

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Christ is in the believer. In the 18th Sunday of our Catechism, we find *“but with respect to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.”* The Lord Jesus unites Himself with the believers. From that moment on, the believer is united with Him, and therefore, it is said that He is formed within the believer. (Gal. 4: 19 and 1 Cor. 4: 15). We should now understand these words: *“Abide in Me, and I in you,”* in such manner as: that the Lord says unto us: abide in Me, and through true faith hold steadfastly unto Me, and when you do that, then I shall remain in you; that is, I shall continually grant you more of the sap of life, in order that you may bear fruit, for: *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”* (John 15: 5a).

Where the Lord Jesus is, He will remain. But the condition by which he joins Himself unto us, should not be understood in such a manner, as if it is something that we are able to do through our own power or by our own light, without Christ working it in us. Because the Lord Jesus Himself has said: *“Without Me ye can do nothing.”* (John 15: 5b). The coming unto Christ and the remaining in Him, are all the workings of the Holy Spirit. And yet, the Lord does not speak without good reason, for He does not desire to treat us as sticks or as blocks, but His will is to deal with us as reasonable creatures.

7th October.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." (Gal. 5: 1a.1).

What does man do, when he stands fast in the liberty? He holds onto Christ, and to no one else. He only holds fast to Christ! That is why the Apostle Paul wrote: *"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"*. (1 Cor. 2: 2). He hears the Law, but he hides himself in Christ. He trusts in the mercifulness of the Father, Who is merciful in His Son. That is how he *stands*. It is like the Apostle Paul speaks about this in other places in the Bible: *"Stand fast in the faith."* (1 Cor. 16: 13; 2 Cor. 1: 24; Rom. 11: 20). Such a standing, is not only that man holds onto Christ, but that he glories in Him as well. (2 Cor. 10: 17). *"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* That is why the Church of the Lord, has said in answer to the question: *"What is your only comfort in life and death? Ans: 'That I belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.'"* (Heidelberg Cat. question 1).

As the matters are in the Scriptures, that is also how they are in the heart of the converted people. Now the Lord Jesus says that *those who hear the Word are blessed*. (Luke 11:28). So, turn unto Christ, to God's mercifulness, *casting the anchor of the soul within the veil*. (Hebr. 6: 19). The Lord says in the Scriptures; "Man, you are afflicted, and so deeply miserable. I have created you good, but you have fallen. And through your fall, you have become a guilty man. Through your sins, you have become completely corrupt. But you are still My creature, and you are not what you were before. There is a gulf between Me and you. And as you are, I must reject you from before My face. You are completely of no value, unable to do any good and inclined to all evil. Believe this and embrace God's testimony in your person, as well as in your whole walk of life. Humble yourselves and embrace the curse. *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."* (1 Peter 5: 6). Acknowledge your guilt and sins. Justify your Creator, Lawgiver, Judge, and King, and condemn yourself.

8thOctober.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.” (Gal. 5: 1a.2).

God goes on testify: My Son came in your stead. I gave Him, I gave Him over unto death, yea to the death of the cross. He has suffered what you should have eternally suffered. He suffered what I had pronounced upon you. He obtained righteousness, eternal righteousness. He did not acquire this righteousness for Himself; He acquired it for you! I offer Him unto you with all what He has acquired. I offer Him unto you with His righteousness and His Spirit. This is God's testimony regarding the Son of His eternal love. This testimony looks unto Jesus as *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* (John 1: 29), and it considers God as reconciled, reconciled in Jesus Christ. Come unto Him, embrace Him, and appropriate Him to yourself along with the forgiveness of sins, with God's grace, and the Spirit of God! Draw near through Him unto the Father. Lean upon Christ and embrace the promises of God which are in Christ Jesus, *yea and in Him amen.* (2 Cor. 1: 20). Hold fast to Jesus Christ, adhere to Him, cleave unto Him, and follow Him. Follow Him through good times and bad times and *"likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 6: 11).

Does the prince of darkness war within you, or is it your own flesh? Does the Law of the world accuse you? Cast then your eyes upon the wounds of the Lord, hold fast unto God's covenant, and lift up your head, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Be of good courage. He, who believes, does what he must do; he glorifies God, His grace, and His mercifulness. He is in God's way, for the Lord Jesus has said: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."* (John 14: 6). Also: *"For them that honour Me, I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."* (1 Sam. 2: 30).

Most people seek salvation in themselves. There are natural reasons for that. Among others, this one. They have never become sinners before God. They were never the accursed ones, they have never seen themselves by Divine light. And the Gospel remained hidden from them. They speak about the Gospel, but they do not understand. They do not believe God, they believe in themselves, and they trust in their own heart.

9th October.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3).

God has created us good. When we have abandoned this fact, then there is no longer a place for the Person and work, of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why the person who breaks away from the truth, *“that God has created us good and after His image”*, has lost everything. And as far as he is concerned there is no longer any faith in God. And because this is like that, God is just in His demand. In other words: he has the right, to demand true faith from us. And He will never back away from that demand. For if He were to do that, then He would, (so to say): back away from Himself. He would cease to be God. The person who feels this in his heart, who feels it working in him, can no longer be satisfied in this life without Christ. The reason that people think that they can be saved without possessing the Lord Jesus Christ, is because they don't acknowledge God's demand. And that is why the well-known words of the Apostle Paul, say that: *“The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ”* (Gal. 3:24), *so great, deep and wide*

Acknowledge the demand which is expressed in these words: *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”* Acknowledge this demand and say that they are justified. Say that nothing may or shall be taken away from them. Just say this, and keep saying it, even if it were to be for your condemnation. *Just keep on saying it!* Acknowledge that you are unable to fulfil this demand. Acknowledge your sins and iniquities, your sinful existence, acknowledge this, and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you do this, and do this through true faith, then you will be saved. If it is the reverse, then you will have to perish, whether you are young or old, small or great. And when you are no longer able to go this way; and everyone who tries to turn in this way will also experience this, then you may pray and beg for light and strength. *Just must do that and keep on doing that!* And even if the anxiety about the salvation of your soul is not very great, then you *should* do it. You will be unable not to do it. And *then* it could happen that the Lord would have mercy upon you. Not for your lamentation, but because this is the way by which and through which He leads His elect. For we must come to know both. First; we must come to know that *we are unable to save ourselves*, and secondly that *we do not want to be saved*. Those who have come to this knowledge, have come to know that they did not want it, nor that they were willing, these are the ones, who were and are taught by God. For *they were* willing in the day of God's power.

10th October.

“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life. (John 6: 40a.1).

Life, what is life? Do I know it? Do you know it? Are we able to explain what Life is? Life is, the forgiveness of sins, and to have a right to life. This is the renewing and the regeneration. And it takes place when we are placed in the fellowship with God through the union with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to have a refuge and an entrance unto God. It is to love God in Jesus Christ, for: *“We have loved Him, because He first loved us.”* (1 John 4: 19). To live is to have peace, peace through the blood of the cross, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Romans 5: 1). And it is this everlasting life which is here mentioned.

When these benefits have been granted unto you by the Lord in the Son, then you know what life is. And you understood this immediately. When you have not received these benefits, then it could be that you *think that you know what life is*, and then you deceive yourself. For a sight of the matters through the common working of the Holy Spirit, are nothing else than a vision of the matter, and a certain feeling, which you call life. But it has nothing in common with true life. I have told you, what life is. And when you have received grace in the Son of God's eternal love, then you know that this is so.

We have life in Christ. For in a spiritual sense, man is dead in himself. So, we can never have life in ourselves. The curse rests on everything, on ourselves and on our work. That is why man can never have life in himself, but he has it in Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ lives forever, that is why God's people have eternal life in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ has said: *“Because I live, ye shall live also.”* (John 14: 19). And the Apostle Paul wrote: *“Christ, Who is our life.”* (Col. 3: 4). And the Lord Jesus Christ has also said during the days when He was on earth: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”* (John. 14: 6).

11th October.

“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life.” (John 6: 40a.2).

“Everyone” Pay attention to this word *“everyone”*. The Lord makes no distinction. *We* make distinctions. In our churches, and in our gatherings, and among our acquaintances, we have converted and unconverted people. And the converted are subdivided, in the “concerned”, those who have not broken through yet, and the confirmed. But *God makes no distinction!* These things are not known by the LORD. God offers the Son of His eternal love to you, and the Lord Jesus Christ offers Himself unto you. And now all those who live, will acknowledge this offer, and those who are dead will leave the offer for what it is. So, it is not, as if the converted have an *advantage*, however, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, he embraces Christ and God in the Son of His eternal love.

A very old woman put a question to me once: “Would a person who has been under the workings for years have no more advantage, than a person who is still without the Lord?” What is the answer to that? I do not ask what my answer is or what your answer is to this question, but what is the answer? It is this: a converted person has no desire for priorities. He has lost everything of himself by the knowledge of God in Christ, and now there is only one Name for him. That is the Name of which we read in Acts 4: 12: *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* This is not just the reformed doctrine, and is not only the truth, but *it must be* the doctrine and the truth of our heart, and we must bow under it. If we cannot bow down, it is not right! For that is how it must be engraved in our heart.

“That everyone which seeth the Son.” To see the Son of God is: to understand Christ's all-sufficiency, the necessity, the suitability, and the willingness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When one beholds the Son in this way, then he has a true, spiritual, and eternal knowledge of the LORD.

12th October.

"And have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." (John 17: 8b).

God is the Author of salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ was His Father's Servant while He walked upon the earth (Is. 53: 11), and He has fulfilled God's counsel. We must take notice of this, for man is inclined to take the Lord Jesus Christ for a lesser Person than the Father. Man is inclined to think that it is easier to draw near unto the Lord Jesus Christ than unto the Father. But the Divinity is *one* in Being. Not only is He *one* in being, but also *one* in work and *one* in, willingness. And I would like to draw your attention to that in a strong manner.

Because we no longer understand the meaning, the position, the power, and workings of saving faith, we have come to make all sorts of distinctions. However, where true faith is comprehended in the right manner, that is where we understand, that through true faith we have the knowledge and the possession of the triune God.

That is why faith is necessary. For it is not the workings, neither is it the change or the feelings! It is faith; although, it must not be a dead faith, but a living faith. It is not faith of itself; it is the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith takes hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is why we say; it is nothing but faith. After all the Apostle Paul says: "*Christ is all, and in all.*" (Col. 3: 11). And now you must examine yourself through the means of the Word and ask yourself the question if that is true for you, namely; that faith is *all and in all*.

God offers Christ. To whom does He do that? To sinners and wicked people. You can find this confirmed in the Scriptures: "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.*" (Is. 45: 22). And: "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" Faith is the embracing of *this offer*. Where this offer is embraced, everything will be there, and is there! However, where this offer is rejected, there is nothing but guilt and condemnation. Faith, through the means, by which this offer is embraced, is the "*gift of God.*" (Eph. 2: 8).

13th October.

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (Matt. 7: 8).

It is possible that you pray, seek, and knock. But is your praying, the prayer which is meant in the Scriptures? I will ask you a question! You would not say that the pharisee of the parable in Luke 18: 9-14, was not a praying person. Was the prayer of the pharisee the right prayer? I really don't need to ask you this question. I only wanted to bring it to your attention; I know that you will say, that this was not the right praying! Well then, now I must ask *you a question*: Is *your praying* the right prayer? It says: *"... he that seeketh findeth."* The rich young man was seeking. (Luke 18: 21) You will say: "Yes, he was seeking, and yet, it was not the true seeking!" But, how do you seek? It says that we must knock. Do you also knock! Is it the right knocking? You must have the answer to this question, and everyone who possesses true faith, has the answer to this question!

If there were just the two of us, and I would ask you: *“Do you have that faith?”* And if things were right with you, then you would say: I will tell you. And then you would tell me: *“I am prepared to give you an affirmative answer to this question.”* However, if you are unable to do this, then this would be proof, that you are *not converted*.

When man is in the right way, then is this, because he possesses the Holy Spirit. We find in Is. 54: 13: *"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children."* This; *"shall be taught of the LORD"*, is nothing else than to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart. He informs us, for we would have never known it, if the Holy Spirit had not witnessed this unto us. (Hebr. 10: 15). When a person possesses the Holy Spirit, then he has learned to make distinction between praying and praying, seeking and seeking, knocking and knocking. This distinction was called in times gone by: the common and the special workings of the Holy Spirit. The world has the first, and the latter belong only to God's people. When a person believes, he has everything from God, so that he says with the Apostle Paul: *"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."* (2 Cor. 5: 5).

14th October.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebr. 4: 16.1).

This friendly exhortation rests upon the foregoing verses, so upon a good foundation. We must always let our thoughts go earnestly over the foundation; we need a firm and strong foundation! I do not have to tell you that the natural man, who is frivolous and deceitful, will readily pass over those matters, which are of the greatest importance.

All of us, who are gathered together here, have free access unto God, but *only* through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must go to God, but we have to do this through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has said: *"I am the way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."* (John 14: 6). And when we do this, when we believe that we cannot draw near to the throne of grace in a different manner than through the Lord Jesus Christ, then we must also ask ourselves, whether we also trust with our heart that God hears us, and not only hears us but that He also answers us. We must possess what we find in the words of Hebrews 11: 6: *"For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*

There is no need for me to tell you, that there is usually doubt in the person who prays. He draws near, so to speak, hoping for the best. He thinks or hopes, even if he does not say it, that his prayer will be answered. It could be that God answers, but it could also be that God does not answer. And he often ends with saying: *"Oh, it will be grace!"* But all these words have no virtue.

Why is it that the heart, of the one who prays doubts by nature? The Bible speaks about a different heart. Does it not say of the righteous that: *"His heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD"* (Ps. 112: 7). What is this fixed heart? Does one person then have a different heart than the other? No! When man truly believes this doctrine, then his heart is fixed.

15th October.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need.” (Hebr.4:16.2).

You notice that the drawing near unto God takes place by a heart which is fully assured, by a heart in which we find: the *full assurance and understanding* (Col. 2:2); *the full assurance of faith*. (Hebr. 10: 22); and, *the full assurance of hope* (Hebr. 6:11). What do we do, when we draw near to God in a different manner, so not with this assurance? Then we don't do justice to the Person of Jesus Christ. Then we place the Person of Jesus Christ and His offer aside while *we try* to move God, for instance by our earnestness, or our tears, or by displaying our needs, without taking notice of Him. Don't you feel, that this is so true?

When we draw near to God without the assurance of the heart, then we do not just put the Lord Jesus Christ aside, but the whole Godhead: Father Son and Holy Spirit. Then we declare God as nothingness, as vanity. For, if we were to hold God for Who He is, then we would not draw near unto Him with a heart which is uncertain.

That is why it should not be said, that the Roman Catholic Church possesses the christian religion! They let people go unto God and tell them, that they cannot be sure of God's grace. They teach the people to doubt. But the Apostle James teaches something different, namely, that he who doubts will receive nothing of the Lord. There is no doubt in faith. There is doubt, in *the person* who believes, but *faith itself* is completely without doubt. Through faith man stands immovably sure. That is why the psalmist says: "*They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.*" (Ps 125:1). Man is upheld in this faith by Him, Who is the Creator of true faith. Man can do nothing with his own faith, and neither would he be able to remain standing through faith, if God did not uphold his faith. You know the words which the Lord Jesus spoke to Peter: "*Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*" (Luke 22: 31, 32).

16th October.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need.” (Hebr. 4:16.3).

When I thought about these words, my attention came to the words of 1 Corinthians 2:2. It is where the Apostle Paul says: *"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."* The man who has written these words, has also written the words of our text. He knew where all the good things, which we have mentioned in our text are found. He had learned these things on the way to Damascus, when he was converted. That is *where* the Lord had appeared unto him, and where he had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and God in Christ!

From that moment on, he had *"cast out the anchor within the veil"*, where he had seen, -yes -, where he had seen that a sufficient Sacrifice was to be found, and that through the strength and the sufficiency of this Sacrifice, a prayer could not, nor ever would be rejected! And when man sees this, then he takes his refuge, to both these matters namely; to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and His intercession.

This never ceased to keep on going with the Apostle Paul. No, it never stops! There are people who always express themselves in the same manner. As they were ten years ago, that is how they still are today. That is not a good sign. Where there is true life, there it will always be different, although in being it never changes. We learn everything in the first moments of true conversion, and you must think about a small child here. What he does not have at birth, he will not get later, unless a new birth should take place. What a child has at birth, he will not lose. Well, that is how it is also with the spiritual birth. If God regenerates a man, He does a complete work. Think about 1 Peter 1: 3: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* And as the convictions of the Apostle Paul became deeper, he spoke these words, *"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

17th October.

“For where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. (Matthew 24:28.1).

We think that the marginal notes, in the Dutch Staten Bible, have the right explanation of this text. It says there, that where Christ's suffering and dying is preached in sincerity (truth), the believers will there be gathered together, as they will also be gathered unto Christ in the last judgment to be with Him always. Christ with His suffering and dying has always been the substance of the preaching of those who were called by God and were made able to preach the grace of God to the children of men. On behalf of all those, there has been *one* (perhaps the best) who has said this: *"I desire not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

But when is this preaching of Christ and His suffering and dying done in sincerity? Then, when the preacher continually makes it his calling, to present and offer Christ and the grace of God in Him unto the people. We must continually speak about believing in Christ and the conversion unto God. Because faith is the first grace and the most important one. When man truly believes in Christ, then he sets out to live the life which Adam had in the state of rightness. This consists in nothing else than to bow unto God, and to offer oneself up unto Him. And from this faith, is not only repentance unto God a necessary result, but also the pure fruit. For conversion unto God, can only take place if man believes in the Son of God's eternal love. But we are never able to speak about faith, unless we believe in the Son of God's eternal love. And every feigned faith should be questionable when conversion to God is not found at the same time.

Christ and His suffering and dying is preached rightly only then, where we do not refrain from clearly declaring that there is no life nor salvation to be expected without Christ: *"For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4: 12). And lastly, Christ with His suffering and dying is preached uprightly, when it is continually pointed out, that all those who have been taught through true faith to take a refuge unto God in Christ, that they will not be put to shame.

18th October.

"For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (Matt. 24: 28.2).

Now it says in the margin of the text, that "*the believers shall be gathered there.*" There are not many people who appreciate the preaching of Christ. People prefer more and more to be left to their own devices. The Lord Jesus had spent all His time to tell the people, that life can only be found in Him. The whole content of the sixth chapter of John's Gospel can be expressed in these words: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you.*" (John 6: 53). And what did the people say? The people which had followed Him into the desert and many other impassable places, and who had even wanted to proclaim Him to be their King, they said: "*This is a hard saying; who can hear it!*" (John 6: 60).

And yet, the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is beneficial. Firstly; when Jesus Christ is set before us and presented unto us. It is then that some people discover, that they are missing *the one thing needful*. The preaching of Christ, is the reason why the difference is seen between the common non-saving work, and the special saving work. For, through Christ's preaching, the false teaching comes to light; and God's people know this. For, often, and whenever Christ is preached uprightly and simply there are some people who may be encouraged; they hear and understand a little of what is being said. And through this, they lose everything which is their own; fearing that it will all come to nought. For what is there, that they can hold on to? And when those, who are being taught, become more attentive to what the Lord says than what the people say, or even what they themselves say; and when they are told that it is all in Christ, and that faith is the means, through which Christ is taken hold of, though required by God, yet it is worked by Him - see then they receive encouragement from God's side, and then something is revealed to them, which made the Church say: "*Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind*" (Joel 2:14). And ultimately then we find those, who through the preaching were made willing and able, to give themselves over unto Christ, with soul and body for time and eternity.

19th October.

“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” (Matt. 24:28.3).

There are some similarities between an eagle and a believer. You know that the eagle is an animal which has very good visual power, it can see from afar where it must go. Is the eagle therefore not an image of one who truly believes? Unquestionably, for the person who believes, knows deep and sure things. Something Divine has been revealed unto him; so that he is in possession of a surety. In general, people believe that having possession of certainty belongs to a high degree of grace. But if we think in this way about the surety, then it proves that we do not properly understand the matter. The surety belongs to every step, also to the lowest degree of grace. For, when God comes to man to grant him grace; then He sends His light. You know that the Church's prayer in Psalm 43: 3 is: *"O, send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill; and to Thy tabernacles."* She prays like that, because she has received the light and the truth. When the Lord sends His light and truth, then she sees the Divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And at that moment, there is a great certainty in the soul, which the Apostle Paul writes about in Hebr. 11: 1: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* The things which are not seen, and which the soul has now seen through faith, have a greater certainty for him, than the visible and tangible matters which are seen and felt by the natural man. The Apostle Peter says: *"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables."* (2 Peter 1: 16). And the psalmist of Psalm 119 sings: *"I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments."* Temptations may come, but these do not come from faith, for there is not the least doubt in faith; there is *certainty* in faith. Now the believer not only sees the matters regarding the Kingdom of God, but he also takes hold of them. Sometimes: people say, *"I can see it, but I cannot reach it!"* However, this is not a proper saying. For when it is seen, we will also reach it; we enter in, because we are unable to do anything else than enter in. For what profit would it be, if God in Christ revealed Himself unto man, and man could not come to make use of this revelation? God does not work like that!

20th October.

"For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (Matt. 24: 28.4).

The eagle is a royal bird. There is also a royal spirit in every believer. Through faith, in the dealings of the soul with God in Christ, she has left all that is hers; and she says with the Apostle: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."* (Phil 3: 7, 8). That is where the believer is. That is where he is, not only with his thoughts but with his heart as well. That is where you find the believer, for that is where his life is. If you challenge him about this, then you have the believer over against you. The Apostle says in Phil. 3: 10, 11 and 12: *"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,"* and then he humbly, continues, *"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."*

An eagle is a strong bird, and how strong can a believer be! Faith is indeed a Divine power. Why? Because it takes hold of the Almighty strength of God. *"Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me."* (Is. 27: 5). And the stronger faith is, the weaker man is in himself. When we try to help God with our works, then is that proof that we do not possess God. But when God comes to him and he leaves all that is his, it is then that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. This must be our comfort, joy, and strength; not that we do anything, but that God does it. And if something good has been put aside for us for eternity, then there will always come a moment, when we do nothing, and we allow ourselves to be saved. But if nothing has been laid aside for us for eternity, and we have religious inclinations, then we are full of works with the raising up of our hands unto God. However, nothing happens, nothing will come which truly causes us to be free and saved.

21st October.

“It is written in the prophets: And they shall be all taught of God.” (John 6: 45a).

If we were to ask, who is it that they are talking about, then there is only one possible answer. The answer to that is: it is about the elect. They are here speaking about the chosen ones. He who denies the election is more unwilling than ignorant; for the election is clearly taught on every page of the Holy Scriptures. We believe this truth, and we can say that it is an eternal election. God has known those that are His from eternity; He has ordained them to be saved from eternity. And those who shall not be saved were not ordained by God to be saved. Now I say this in just a few short words. And I do not know if this alarms you; neither do I know whether you disagree with it. But allow me to say this: that this *must* be explained in your soul, and in your heart. When and as long is not the case, you do not have to be alarmed, for the time being you do not have anything to do with this truth yet. For the time being, *all you have to deal with* at the moment *is the genuine well-meant* and serious offer of God in Jesus Christ, Who says: *“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.”* (Is. 45: 22). If you have obeyed this calling and have embraced this offer, then the truth of the election will come right as well; for it will all be clarified in your heart. Matters regarding the Kingdom of God will all be explained by the Word and the Spirit. Man has no hand in this. It is God alone who does this! And when God has explained all these things, then it all speaks for itself. It all depends from what angle man views these matters. When man sees it from God’s side, then it is simple, and then we can understand that the Lord Jesus has said: *“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.”* (Matt. 11: 25, 26). However, if we attempt to view them from our side, then it is a maze from which we will never find the way out. Take notice of words such as these: *“Show Thou unto me, Thy servant, all Thy ways and teach Thou me, so that by Thy Spirit guided, clearly I Thy paths may see.”* (Ps. 25: 2 Genevan). What we find in these words are the truth and they are found to be true.

22nd October.

"And besides Me there is no Saviour." (Is. 43: 11b).

The word "Saviour" means Deliverer. Man must be delivered. What is wrong then wrong? What is the situation, in which we find ourselves? We are all guilty, every one of us. The guilt which we have is, the imputed debt and the actual debt. To say it in a different manner: it is Adam's guilt, and the guilt we have brought about ourselves. And this guilt, the guilt which we have brought about ourselves, becomes greater every day. We are without God, that is, we have fallen away from God's fellowship.

And are we now able to help ourselves? No! We are unable ourselves, to return to the place where we first were. Assuming, that it was our desire to do this -- we really do not want to -- nor would we be able to do it. For we have irretrievably lost God's image, for the way unto God is unknown to us. The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans: *"The way of peace have they not known."* And, *"There is none that seeketh after God."* (Rom. 3: 17, 11).

The deliverance is in God. The person who believes and understands this, is happy! He really does not have to know *any more* than that: for if he believes this to be the truth, that there is deliverance with God, the deliverance of his person in soul and body, then he would immediately make use of God to the salvation of his immortal soul. What is the way for our salvation in God according to body and soul, in our person? We could answer this question by saying: our deliverance is in the Triune God. That is, to say, that the person who has been delivered, his soul has come to know God as a Triune God. To say it in a different manner: that the God of all the redeemed is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the redeemed themselves see Him as such and call upon Him. Our election is in the Father, our deliverance is in the Son, and the strength to take hold of the salvation obtained by the Son and destined by the Father, is in the Holy Spirit. He who understands this is taught of God. *"And all Thy children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of Thy children."* (Is. 54: 13).

23rd October.

"To you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts 13: 26b).

"Sent", so says the Apostle. God calls people to proclaim the Gospel. Not every person can do this. That is why the Lord forms people for this purpose. This usually takes place through much suffering, great adversity, and especially through a great deal of opposition. No one can become a good preacher without, tribulation, antagonism, and contradictions. The Apostle Paul says: *"We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."* (1 Cor. 4: 13). They must put you outside, persecute you as much as they can, contradict you, slander you, and whatever else! If that does not happen, then you are not a preacher of the Gospel. But the Lord strengthens them, for in themselves, they are nothing, and they bend over as a reed. However, they are strengthened, and equipped with gifts, one more than the other, but they are all given gifts. And then the Gospel will be preached, where God wants it to be preached. They are deeply dependent instruments in God's hand. If they will truly allow themselves to be used as instruments in God's hand, then they have an inexpressible, trouble free life. There are no difficulties for these people, neither are there any for God's children! They go over a paved way. But beware! This paved way is not in the visible matters. For this is the way which is sought by the world, and the world is pleased if it is an easy way. There way is in God and has nothing to do with visible matters! That is why the Apostle Paul writes: *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (2 Cor. 4: 18).

Oh, I don't know if you have any understanding what a child of God is. Most of you don't have any idea. In the Bible they are called *"men wondered at."* (Zech.3: 8). Maybe they have never been that to you. Yes, as long as they agree with you! But if they disagree with you, then your enmity flares up against them. You have never known this, unless God has made you to be such a person. And if this does not take place, then you will never know it, but then you will presently come to stand before Christ's judgment seat, as a persecutor of the Congregation.

24th October.

“Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.” (Is. 55:6.1).

To the calling upon the Name of the LORD, also belongs *the following of the LORD*. What is this: *to follow the Lord*? That is to cleave unto Him. The following of the Lord presumes our spiritual dying, a dying unto ourselves, and of our own understanding, also a dying unto our self-righteousness, so a dying unto all that is ours. And then: the cleaving unto the Lord. Which is expressed in the well-known words: *“As seeing Him who is Invisible.”* (Hebr.11:27). Presuming the following of the Lord and a dying unto ourselves; you may well understand that this is a very difficult work. Christ had His eye on this difficult matter when He said: *“Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”* (Luke 13: 24). A man who still lives by his own judgment, and who still has strength left and thinks that he must do something himself, is not capable of following Christ. Such a man rejects Christ; he withdraws himself from Him.

When all our own work is lost, and once again we come to *see*, that all what is ours is over and done with, it is *then* that the seeking (or calling) begins; for without this there is nothing but a dreadful hypocrisy.

In our text it says: *“That we must call upon the LORD while He is near”*. What is this? What is meant, *by the Lord being near*? This means nothing else, then, that the Lord is presented and offered to man through the Truth, the *written* Truth, but especially the *preached* Truth. God *can* work it through the written Word, but God certainly works it by the preached Word. The true preaching is there, where the Law and Gospel are preached. It is certain, that the Lord will also be there with His Spirit. You can probably understand the latter, or maybe you don't understand. Just let me tell you in a few words. Wherever the preaching of the Law and the Gospel is, that is where the Spirit must also be, for if the Spirit is not present, the distinction between Law and Gospel cannot be made. This especially applies to the preacher. For a preacher, who understands the difference between Law and Gospel is someone, who has nothing else in his mind.

25th October.

“Call ye upon Him while He is near.” (Is. 55: 6b.2).

We continually need the guidance of the Spirit. First, to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. And secondly, to be courageous, for the whole world will come up against it. This will come mainly from the professors and preachers of religion. In other words, the churches are the greatest opponents. They are the main enemies of the work that God wants to take place, *they all run to their own houses* (Hag. 1: 9), and we also know, that most people everywhere prefer leaders like that.

Time and again, man needs to be brought to accept all this, and unless he is led by the Spirit, he is unable to do this. The Spirit joins Himself to His own instrument, *namely the Word of God*, that is, *“to the truth as it is in Jesus”*. (Eph. 4: 21). That is what the Spirit does, and He will never cease to do that. That is why there is always a blessing, on the preaching of the Law and the Gospel, and at certain times in a greater measure than at other times. When the Law and the Gospel are not thoroughly distinguished in the preaching, then the Spirit cannot draw nigh with His light. But where these things are separated, that is where the Spirit will work with them. That is why it says in Mark 16:20: *“and the LORD working with them.”*

Because there have always been people who understood this, the Church has said: *“I was glad when they said unto me; let us go into the house of the LORD.”* (Ps. 122: 1). The preaching is the means, by which *the bonds of wickedness are loosened*. (Is. 58: 6).

Whenever the preaching is brought forth, it can be said that God is near. Therefore, it says: *“Call ye upon Him while He is near.”* Whenever the preaching goes forth, the Sun shines, and if you do not turn away from the light, you stand in the light, and you experience what is recorded in Mal. 4: 2: *“But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”*

26th October.

“Call ye upon Him while He is near.” (Is. 55: 6b.3).

Man can close his windows, no matter how gloriously the sun shines. That is why I said: If you do not turn away, then you stand in the light. When the preaching goes forth, the sun shines in the sky. The content of the preaching is nothing else than the Lord Jesus Christ with all His treasures and gifts. For what should I do, if I did not introduce Christ to you? The preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary for various reasons. First: man has a need for Christ to have a foundation for eternity. If man does not lean upon Christ, then he has no foundation. Ask someone who is earnestly concerned about eternal matters, such a person has no foundation anywhere. It is not even necessary to ask a child of God about this. Secondly: man needs Christ to draw near unto God, for God only accepts us when we are clothed with *the righteousness of Christ*. (Matt. 22: 11-14). The first Person in the Divinity takes notice if we have made use of His Son, for He has said: *"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."* (Matt. 3: 17). When the first Person sees that we have passed His Son by, or have neglected to make use of His Son, then He says: *"Them that honour Me, I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."* (1 Sam. 2: 30), or His explicit command and will is, that His Son shall be honoured. That is why Christ has said: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."* (John 14: 6). In the third place: man needs Christ to understand the truth. What do I know about the Bible, if I do not know Christ? Nothing for the salvation of my soul, neither anything towards God's honour! Christ is the contents of the Word. He is the contents of the Word, and the Word is in Him. Fourthly: if I do not know Christ, then I will not understand the spiritual expressions of mankind. It must be possible, and it is possible to understand the expressions of the great people throughout the centuries. (the expressions of the Reformers and the teachers of days gone by*). And *we will* understand them, when we *know* Christ.

*Note from the translator.

27th October.

“Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth” (James 1:18a).

“With the Word of Truth.” Although the Holy Spirit is the Maker, yet He makes use of the means. These means are here called: The Word of Truth. And by *“the Word of Truth”* you must understand that this *Truth*, is the preaching of the Gospel. That is also how you find it, in the explanation of the Bible. This is then the preaching or the explanation of the Gospel. However, this does not say that the Holy Spirit only uses the Gospel. No, for He also uses the Law.

To be the object of the seeking grace of God in Christ, *we must have wounds, bruises and putrifying sores.* (Is. 1-6). These are wrought by the Law. If the Law in the hand of the Spirit has not done his work, then man will keep going in the way of self-deceit. The whole world lives in self-deceit, the religious world as well as those who do not worry about religion. The Scriptures call it: *“healing the hurt of the people slightly, saying, Peace, peace when there is no peace”* (Jer.6:14). In another place it is described in this manner: *“Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceit”* (Is. 30:10).

Man lives in hope and self-deceit. However, when he has placed his hope on the offer and the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, then his self-deceit is only in his natural life. Self-deceit belongs to the natural man, self-deceit belongs to the world, to the foolish people. The Holy Spirit is the one who shows us our self-deceit. Well then, everyone who does not find this self-deceit in himself, has not been shown that he deceives himself. The Holy Spirit through the Law introduces man unto God as he is. Then this person sees, that he is unable to exist before God. And if this has not taken place with you, then your work which you think you have is nothing but deceit, and nothing else than placing a new cloth to an old garment and placing new wine into old bottles (Math. 9:16,17). And the Lord Jesus has told us what the result of that will be. The Holy Spirit works *faith in the heart* through the Gospel, after He has shown us through the Law what a delusion *our faith* is.

28th October.

“And enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psalm 143: 2).

David did two things. First, he confessed that it was just that he fell under God's judgment, and that God was righteous if He were to condemn him. Secondly, he renounced everything that was his, and leaned and rested only, in the righteousness which God revealed about the Son of His eternal love. It is important that man bows unto God, and that he feels: *"Thou art righteous"* and is able to say with his heart: *"Lord, Thou art just to condemn me for my own sins. For I am totally corrupt."* Our hearts are totally corrupt. You know the symbol of the apple: when it has a bad spot, we cut the bad spot off and eat the apple. But if the apple is completely rotten, we throw it out. That is how it is with the heart: it is completely corrupt; nothing good comes from it, nothing that is spiritually good. It has become so miserable through our fall and covenant breach. That is why it must come that far, that we ascribe righteousness unto God and confess with our heart: *"Lord, Thou art righteous, for in my deep fall in sin in Adam alone, am I worthy to be condemned by Thee."* When we end in our fall in Adam, and are confronted by the Divine Majesty, then we feel that only on the account of the acquired guilt in Adam, we are worthy to be cast away. This is a hidden truth which no one can solve for us. And only a person who has been made humble before God will come that far. He alone ascribes righteousness unto God, even if God would reject the whole human race which has fallen in Adam's loins. And so long as he does not come to that point - and he is unable to do this himself - it must all be granted unto him, because of himself, he is unable to work with Christ. You will never understand this mystery without the knowledge about the Son of God's eternal love. For even if we have heard about Him, and we acknowledge that we cannot be saved without Christ; yet the Person of Christ, and what God in Christ wants to be, for lost sinners, remains hidden for lost sinners, and will remain like that, until he (the sinner) ascribes righteousness unto God as his Creator.

29th October.

“Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.”
(Psalm 27: 11).

Those who are in Christ must guard the outgoings of their heart and have no other desires than to remain under the rules of the Spirit. It is a great privilege when we cannot do what we want to do when we are bound to the throne of grace and continually take notice of the work of the Spirit in the heart. If Christ dwells in the heart, then He also lives there; and if He lives in our heart, then He also reveals that He lives; not only to give us the feelings that He lives there, but above all, to work a dependency in the heart so as to be taught by Him. It is important that man not only knows that he has a foundation for eternity, but that, in the living practice, he comes to acknowledge God in all his ways, and that he depends on God in everything. This is really a part of the thankfulness, and is part of the crown, upon the work. The more we know about God, the more we shall come to detest ourselves.

There is no other way than to follow the Lamb, then through the fruitful as well as through the barren. If the remnant, which is still found in our days, would feel this, then there would be more unity. This unity would not only be manifested in that we would have the same feelings, but above all, that we would walk the same path. How strong we would stand together against all powers, when we would cleave unto the Lord and follow Him.

Decline anyone who may try to lead you away from God's way, even though you may come to stand before all sorts of problems and you do not understand everything. For: *“He commanded and it stood fast.”* (Ps. 33: 9). If you are on the right way, then there will come a time for you when God will let His light shine upon you from all sides. Then you will experience that all God's ways and actions are good and right. The difficulties and opponents will not cease as long as we are here on this earth. In connection to this, someone once said: *“I am able to suffer for Christ, but I am not able to go into disputation for Him.”*

30th October.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.” (Romans 6: 6a).

The old life in Adam is called: "*the old man*", because there is so much deceitfulness in the old man, and there is no possibility that we get to know him aright, for it says: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer. 17: 9). If the clear shining light of the true convictions of sin through the Holy Spirit does not come, then it will continue to be hidden. And all the work that man does, is merely done under the pressure of the Law, and are but a labour in the very fire. The Apostle called unto those people: "*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*" (Rom. 6: 21). The Church teaches to be sincerely ashamed about this, for with a deep shamefacedness before God and also at times before man, she declares: *I would have perished eternally, if it had not pleased God, by the convincing light of the Holy Spirit, to reveal unto me what these matters are fundamentally.*"

The old life in Adam is called "*the old man*", because it is so ugly. For that what is no longer young, has become aged, and has lost its beauty. For the ugliness and abhorrence which I am without the Son of God, can never be expressed in words. He who is able to see the old man, feels with the Church of old: shame and a loathing about oneself. All that is of himself, and all that comes from him, he abhors by the discerning light of the Spirit. When the spiritual eye sees the old man, then he is so detestable, that the person who sees him, will not allow him to live any longer. However, if he is already so ugly in the sight of man, what would he then be in the eye of a holy and glorious God! The fairest person is still always abhorrent in God's sight. The cloak of religion cannot adorn man. However, the cloak of the Church (the believer) is a different matter. Her cloak is the cloak of Christ's righteousness, and her adornment is His holiness.

He is also called "*old man*", because the moment will come, when he shall no longer be here. That, what is old is at the point of dying. Presently, the old man of every believer shall forever go down into the grave.

31st October.

Commemoration of the Reformation (1).

What did Luther preach? Sometimes the question arises: "*What is the principle of the reformation?*" And then we are told that it is: "*The preaching of justification out of or through faith.*" It is all so simple! Luther has preached what God had taught him! And what was that? That was, that salvation is found in Jesus Christ, and that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is saved and is destined to sing eternally about God's goodness.

We can say, that Luther preached the justification out of or through faith. However, Luther was not the only one who did this. Before Luther, others had done this and after Luther, others have also done it; for the preaching of justification out of or through faith is the preaching of the Church, the preaching of the Church of God, the preaching of the Congregation of Jesus Christ. Wherever this preaching is, that is where the Church is. And where this preaching is not found, there is no Church.

It is known to you that in the time of the Reformation, they said: "*That the Church stands or falls, of or through the preaching of justification:*" "And what does this preaching do? It offers and presents Jesus Christ, to poor, guilty, and lost people. When man in his lost state perceives that all that is his is lost; hears this preaching and believes, then he has his justification before God from this belief. The justification is a fruit of the faith in Jesus Christ. Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, and where this faith is sincere, there is also the justification. However, where there is no justification, there is no faith at all. The faith, which is found there, is a delusional, temporary, or deceptive faith. Faith is an empty hand, and God places Christ into every hand which is empty. And the result of this is that God justifies this man. He forgives him his sins and grants him a right to eternal life. This is justification: the forgiveness of sins, and a right to eternal life. And this justification always goes together with regeneration and renewing. Luther has exclaimed; that he felt as one who was born again. That is the re-birth, and this is followed and goes together with the justification. And the result of this is, that just like Luther, we feel that we are born again.

1st November.

Commemoration of the Reformation. (II).

Luther has felt how necessary the Bible is. Where did Luther find the Lord Jesus and the justification? He found them in the Bible, in the Holy Scriptures. In the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1: 17: "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'*" And God gave these words into his heart through the Holy Spirit, and for him these words became: "*a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*". (Ps. 119: 105). And as often as Luther came into difficulties (and I don't need to tell you that his life was a series of difficulties), the Scriptures, the Bible always had an answer, advice, and a comfort for him, the Bible had everything for Luther! From this he came to understand that the Bible is a necessity.

And we must have come to understand these two matters, to be children of the Reformation. To be reformed people, we must understand these two matters: first, that you are *justified in Christ -- in Christ*. And I have told you, how this is to be understood: it is through faith in Christ. We are justified in Christ through faith. And now you must ask yourself if the Spirit testifies in your heart that *you* are justified before God.

How does the Holy Spirit testify in the heart of man, that he is justified before God? Does He create, a certain feeling in the heart? I have often told you that feelings can be extremely deceitful, and if it was just this, then it would be so easy to deceive yourself. No, the Holy Spirit does not testify in this way! The Holy Spirit explains the Gospel to us, and He says: *All those who believe in Christ shall be saved!* So, the Holy Spirit makes use of the Word, and He clarifies this for us. He works in our heart. He says: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom. 8: 1). When the Holy Spirit says this, then He convinces the heart of the truth, He convinces the heart that this is the truth, so that such a heart becomes aware of what we find in the prophecies of Jeremiah: "*O LORD, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.*" (Jeremiah 20:7). There is not the least doubt in this faith.

2nd November.

Commemoration of the Reformation. (III).

How does the Holy Spirit's work go on? He testifies in the heart that *we are* the person to whom Christ is offered. And, to whom is Christ offered? Christ is offered to the wicked, to the ones which are lost, to those who know themselves as guilty, to all them which are sorrowful and repent, to those who hunger, and to the poor in spirit, Christ is presented unto them. You find this in the Bible, and the Holy Spirit testifies to man, that he is such a person. We are unable to believe, if the Holy Spirit does not bear witness with our spirit that we are, such a one. For you must realize, that to be able to believe you must know and feel, and become aware that you have a right, a Divine right, to accept Jesus Christ. And if you have not become aware of this, and you have not believed that you have a Divine right to accept Christ, then you have never believed. And if you then think that you have faith, you deceive yourself. Then your faith is not the true faith, it is a mistake, it is self-deceit! The Holy Spirit bears the witness in the heart of man that he has a right to Christ, a right through the power of the offer, and the power of the promise, therefore, from the power of God's pleasure. For, it is God's pleasure to offer Christ to those who are lost. The reason for this is not found in these people, because people are without any merits; they are guilty unto death. But it pleases God to offer Christ to people like that. Where the Holy Spirit bears witness that salvation is found in Christ and that *he is the person* to whom He is presented as He is, then *he will* come unto Christ, and *he will accept* Him. The Holy Spirit bears witness of God's approval, and of the acceptance by God. That is why, He witnesses in the heart, that the step he has taken to receive Christ, is a step which he has taken by the light and by the power of God. This is the knowledge which this blessed one has, of his acceptance by God, of his justification by God, and of his adoption as a child of God. I must have this assurance and you must also have this assurance, everyone must have it. It is something different when we experience adversity, and have all sorts of strife, and find ourselves in all sorts of trouble, and have all sorts of considerations, which make us say: *How is it possible that I have grace?* However, when such like questions arise in the greatest fear, then the surety which is in the heart will not cease; the surety is still in the heart.

3rd November.

"I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7: 7b).

Our desire for Christ, which precedes His coming unto us, is sin, for it is written: *"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."* (Rom. 14: 23b). We must really understand this, and we can only understand this, if it pleases God to make this known unto us. We would say: What could be better than to go forth unto the Lord, to have an interest in Him, and desire matters from Him - what could be better. Now, we must learn to understand and perceive that we basically have no other goal with this, then to maintain ourselves against the living God

Oh, and once again I must say: what has to take place before we will simply acknowledge, that, what the Scriptures says; is the truth? And the Truth says: *"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one."* (Rom. 3:10-12).

I would like to ask you a question! When does man learn, see, and realize, that there is *none that seeketh God, no, not one*? I don't know what your answer to this question is, but I will give you my answer. When by the light of God's Spirit, first he sees, what he has become through his fall and covenant breach in Adam, in whom God had created him good and after His own image. And secondly, when he understands that because of all this, even with all his religious works, he was not a seeker of God, for all his works came forth out of the root of bitterness, it is then that he sees the reality of the word: *"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."* (Psalm 14:3b and 53:4b). When through the irresistible workings of God's Spirit man sees this, it is then that the Lord reveals Himself.

And what does man see when the Lord reveals Himself? Two things. Firstly: he sees that the Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man in *one* Person, through His obedient suffering and dying, has obtained an everlasting righteousness and the Holy Spirit as well. Secondly: that the Lord Jesus Christ, ordained by God, was sent and made capable by God, so that the person who is in Christ's, finds God as a Seeker of that which was lost.

4th November.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”
(Prov. 3: 5).

Would you like to know which way you must turn for that? You must turn away from your own understanding, because this understanding harms us the most. Your understanding must be captivated under the Word. But that does not mean that we must just accept everything. We should have said this previously, however, I will say it now. We mention this especially to the young people, but the older ones should listen closely as well. When we say that you must not lean on your own understanding, we do not mean to say that you must just give yourselves over and simply believe what is written in the Bible. We detest such a thing with our whole heart. To turn away from one's own understanding and to place it under the Word is quite different, that is not that easy. Man does not turn away from his own understanding just like that. And the reason for this is, because he is too lazy to ask what the truth is. There are people, who have such easy-going natures; they just believe what the Word says. When they come into contact, with those who are more critical, at work or in the office, and who are unable to just accept what the Bible says; then they soon solve this by saying: I believe it, because it is written in the Bible. But that is not the turning away from one's own understanding. If you think that it is that easy, you have never understood it.

If you were to turn away from your own understanding; then you must receive a new understanding, enlightened with Divine light. And you receive this when God regenerates you. Through regeneration, we receive a new understanding, will, and feelings. How this takes place in regeneration, I am unable to tell you, but you will become aware of it when it is there. The re-birth works the same as the natural birth. No one can say how everything works. You know what is written about it in Ecclesiastes 11: 5: *"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."* Science tries to explain this, but no one can define it. They can describe it, but no one can make it clear, it is a mystery, a God-glorifying mystery!

5th November.

"He that believeth on Me." (John 7: 38a).

When we hear or read in the preaching that faith in Christ is nothing else than the embracing of God's offer of grace in the Son of His love, then we are inclined to think that faith is an easy matter. Faith is not an easy matter. There is no less power necessary for faith, than what was necessary for the creation of heaven and earth, and for the preparation of the human nature of the Son of God in the virgin Mary, and for the resurrection of Christ from the dead. However, when this power is given, faith is indeed an easy matter.

Faith in the Son of God is a saving grace. There is an unbreakable bond between salvation and faith. Where there is faith, there is also salvation. Where there is faith, we are free from guilt and from the taint and dominion of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ is there, where there is faith. These benefits are found in the Son of God's eternal love.

Faith is the first grace. Where there is no faith, there is only darkness, blindness, ignorance, sin, and unrighteousness, atheism, and a rejecting of God in the Son of His eternal love, in Whom He offers us life and all what belongs to life.

Faith brings a great change, inwardly and outwardly. Where faith is, there is the renewing of man. A Divine light has entered the understanding, so that we now see: God's glory, and His sufficiency. And the more this glory is observed by faith, the lesser we become in our own eyes. The desire is awakened to be like Him, to follow Him through the good as well as through the evil. There is a noble-mindedness, whereby we completely subject ourselves unto God, and we honour God. We love Him, not only because He does wonders, although about that as well, but above all that He is Who He is.

There is a new power in the will, so that we unite ourselves with the Lord. We can then wholeheartedly say: *"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."* (Luke 11: 2). Then we have no desire that the Lord would do anything differently than what He does.

6th November.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."
(Matt. 13: 45, 46).

Faith has found this pearl of great price. And where did faith find it? In the promise of the Gospel. Faith hears the Gospel, as Christ once said: *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* (John 10: 27). Faith agrees with the Gospel. It says: *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* and follows on to what the Apostle Paul says: *"of whom I am the chief."* (1 Tim.1: 15). Faith embraces Christ in the Gospel with the Gospel. For this is the peculiarity of faith: it sees Christ in the promise. It appears to me that this is one of the most precious mysteries of the doctrine of salvation: *faith sees the promise in Christ.*

Who is the person, who has a right to the promises? He Who has done what God would, that which should be done. This Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God has been obedient unto the Law. He has borne the chastisement that was set upon the transgressions. The promise of life is accounted unto Him, for the Lord had said: *"That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."* (Rom. 10: 5).

When Christ is revealed unto us, then the Holy Spirit comes to show us that the promise of life and all things which belong unto this, are in Christ, like the Apostle says: *"For all the promises of God in Him, are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."* (2 Cor. 1: 20).

Faith now embraces this promise. It makes use of the right which Christ has to life; and with this right, faith draws near unto God and says with the psalmist of Psalm 84: 9: *"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed,"* or to use the words of Psalm 74,20: *"Have respect unto the Covenant."* So, faith finds rest in Christ and then looks unto the Father. And this is the drawing near to the Father through Jesus Christ.

7th November.

"Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3: 24).

There is only room for sincere sinners in Christ, that is in the person who knows that he has sinned against the first, and against the second table of God's holy Law. I would like to ask you a question: Would you be able to answer, if I asked you: *"What is the sin against the first table of God's holy Law?"* If you can answer this question with your heart, then you may consider, that you have become a sinner before God. Most people do not know what it is to have sin, what it is to be a sinner before God. And as long, as man does not understand with the heart, what it is to sin against the second but also against the first table of the Law of the Lord, then there is no desire for Christ. The Apostle Paul says in Gal. 3: 24: *"The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith,"* and in Rom. 10: 4 we find: *"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."*

A separation has taken place, where there is true faith, not only between the world, sin, and us, but also between the Law and us. When God the Holy Spirit revealed unto us that our works are not right and showed us, that all that is ours is under the curse of God's Holy Law, because we were under the curse of God's Law, then

we died unto the Law and were made alive in Christ. (Gal. 2: 19).

When this separation took place, there came a separation from sin and the world, and at the same time there was the union with God in Christ. The Apostle Paul says this about it: *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."* (Rom. 7: 4). And the psalmist of Psalm 84 has said: *"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."* To say no more, where true faith is, there is hope, hope in God, even then, when man deeply feels his sinfulness. Just listen to what the psalmist says: *"Iniquities prevail against me,"* but he follows on with these words: *"As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away."* (Ps. 65: 3).

8th November.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3: 18.1).

I beg you, not to esteem this matter lightly, for when presently you come to stand before God's judgment, you will not be judged so much for your sins in Adam, nor for the sins which you have committed in person, but first and foremost for failing to accept Christ, Who was offered unto you, just assume that you come to stand before God without having accepted Christ. The great judgment for man is really founded upon, *unbelief!*

Don't think, that you are excluded from the offering of the Gospel. Why would you think, that you are excluded from the offer of the Gospel? Because of your sins? But, Christ has not come *to call the righteous to repentance, but He came to call sinners.* (Matt. 9: 13). Or is it because you have sinned too long? Yet the Lord says in Jer. 3: 1: *"But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the LORD."* You shall never find any reason which would compel you, to conclude that the offering of Christ is not for you. No, it is even as the Scriptures itself testifies: *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."* (Is. 45: 22).

You may now have realized that this offer pertains to you as well as to others, then embrace the Lord Jesus Christ! Embrace Him completely and appropriate all that is offered with it: the forgiveness of sins, the renewing of life, and the right to eternal life. Never come to accept less, for he, who has accepted less has not yet accepted anything at all.

However, I can see that some of you may now think: *"I would be afraid of deceiving myself if I would do what was said that I should do."* You should not think that the fear of self-deceit gives you the right to neglect your duty. Because this is a matter which concerns the fulfilment of a Divine obligation. How long do you think you still have left to be called to fulfil this duty? You could still become a corpse today. And if God comes to cut off your life, when you have not fulfilled this calling, then it is lost, eternally lost!

9th November.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3: 18.2).

You will not deceive yourself, when you consider that the offer of grace in Christ is done, not to the converted, or the half converted, but it is offered to *godless people*; so only, when you embrace this offer as a godless person. But the crux of the matter is; that it is not when you say: *"I would be afraid to deceive myself, if I did what I am told to do."* Such remarks are nothing but inventions. However, the difficulty in us is this, we cannot humbly bow down to acknowledge that we have nothing. And as long, as man is unable to bow that low, he must remain separated from Christ. Not because Christ is not offered unto him, this offer is for him as well, but because he thinks he still possesses something, and he places it there, where Christ should be, namely, between God and his soul. This is the wretched, deadly error of most people among Christianity. And yet these people do feel, that all is not well with them. That speaks for itself, for they do nothing else but waver. They continually feel this doubt in their hearts; they have never been able to rid themselves of this slavish fear. This slavish fear will only be driven out by love. (1 John 4: 18). The building of their salvation is not yet steadfast. It has never stood steadfast, and now they are working to secure it themselves, and let all the warnings pass them by. And that is the problem: man cannot come as he is, as a sinner, as one who has nothing but guilt out of Christ, and as one who can never cast his eye upon anything else than what is condemnable.

However, when man can come that low, it is then that the Gospel is a glad tidings for him, then he understands the words of Isaiah: *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion: “Thy God reigneth!”* (Is. 52: 7). Then that heart comes, the heart is then opened, because it believes the good tidings of salvation, in the joyous message given to her by God.

10th November.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8: 16).

When someone is in possession of the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit comes to comfort such a person. The ones who are rejected allow themselves to be comforted by people. The elect, are comforted by God. And the Holy Spirit does this through their portion which they have in Christ, and by showing them the benefits they have in Christ.

When one has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ through a true faith, then he knows what has taken place between God and his soul. He knows of the dealings, which have taken place between Heaven and him. And there is also a strong need in him for the testimony from God's mouth, namely, through His Word and Spirit. Only God's people know about the need for strengthening. They unite themselves with the prayer of the psalmist: *"Say to my soul, I am thy salvation."* (Ps. 35: 3). Then the Holy Spirit comes (with one person in a stronger measure, than with the other) to testify with their spirit, and with the reborn conscience, that he is a child of God.

The Holy Spirit comes to point out to the believer the form of those, to whom the promises were made. We find several of these forms described in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matth.5). Now the Holy Spirit shows the believer, by naming these forms, that these promises are for them, and from this, the believer has the boldness at times to conclude, that God is gracious unto him.

At other times, the Holy Spirit grants him support His hidden secret support. A child of God usually comes into difficulties immediately after his conversion. Now the first work of the Holy Spirit is to support such a person. And how does the Holy Spirit support such a person? By enabling him to pour out his heart before God, through which he notices, what the psalmist says with the words: *"Because He hath inclined His ear unto me."* (Psalm 116: 2). And as a result, he receives the boldness to speak unto the Lord, and becomes more and more inclined to speak unto the Lord. Often this souls experience is, that it is, as if he cannot stop speaking. Jacob experienced this strongly when he wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant. *"And He said, let Me go, for the day breaketh."* But Jacob said: *"I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."* (Gen 32: 26).

11th November.

"Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." (Psalm 143: 10b).

Where these consolations of the Holy Spirit are, the head is lifted up on high, and every morning the soul is made willing to take up the cross. You know that Christ speaks about this: *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* (Luke 9: 23). Another word which the Lord Jesus has said, is also very fitting, namely: *"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls: For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."* (Matt. 11: 29, 30).

The pleasantness, the loveliness, the sweetness of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the heart, are unspeakably great. The experience of the psalmist of Psalm 73 causes him to say, and the whole Church repeats this after him: *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee."* (Ps. 73: 25).

When someone possesses the Holy Spirit, He will remain. He leads us till death and through death. The Lord Jesus has said: *"That He may abide with you forever."* (John 14: 16). And why would He depart? Did He come because we have asked for Him? After all, the Lord has said: *"I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not: I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My Name."* (Is. 65: 1). He has come out of His own accord, and by the virtue of His Own pleasure, and He will abide forever where He has come. No power can move Him or cause Him to be drawn away from the soul for: *"the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children."* (Ps. 103: 17).

The Holy Spirit not only remains with His presence, but also with His workings. If the Holy Spirit did not do that, the believers would be a most miserable people. Hear what the Apostle Paul says in Rom. 8: 26: *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

12th November.

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12: 2).

When this change takes place, then the heart opens for God and embraces Him. A bond has then come into being between the Lord and the soul, for the Lord has entered the heart, and the heart has gone over into God. All this, is the workings of that blessed Spirit, Which me and you cannot do without.

When this has taken place, then all the desires of the heart are fulfilled. In fact, then there is only one desire, like the psalmist expresses in the words: *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple."* (Ps. 27: 4). And because the full satisfaction of this desire is only found in the Lord, we continually seek it in Him. Would you like to hear the testimony of such a satisfied man? Then, think about the words of Paul: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."* (Phil. 3: 7, 8). And so long as man cannot speak like this, he is not blessed. He may force something on himself, but in the inmost part of his heart, he has no true joy, no true salvation, for salvation is only in God, in the cleaving and, to follow Him through good and through evil. This is the fulfilment of the words: *"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."* (Is. 33: 17). Such a satisfied man knows what salvation is, and what heaven is. Do you know that as well?

Salvation, and heaven, are nothing else than the beholding and praising of God. This heaven comes down into the heart, when man has learned *to thank and pray*. Or should I say, *to pray and thank*? What do you think? I continue to say, *to thank and to pray*, for thankfulness springs up into the heart, of a lost man. Thankfulness consists in, that man knows that God is Who He is, as the Apostle Paul says: *"For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."* (Hebr. 11: 6).

13th November.

"I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." (Psalm 32: 5).

The confession of sin, is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When did you confess *your* sins? I don't know what your hearts answers is to this question, but the Church does not confess her sins, *before* God in Christ - that is the mercifulness, the love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ - has been revealed into the soul, and the soul is blessed with these two blessings: grace, and the Holy Spirit. That is why it says: *"Fools make a mock at sin, but among the righteous there is favour."* (Prov. 14: 9). And what does Ephraim testify? *"Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh."* (Jer. 31: 19).

A timid soul often thinks: I must be heartier in the confession of the guilt of my sins, but I am unable to do that, even if I tried my best, I cannot cry more heartedly. Such a soul says: I doubt if there is anyone besides me, whose heart is as hard as mine. I should ascribe righteousness unto God my Maker. (Job 36: 3) and accuse myself. And such a person often thinks: If I could only get my heart to be right before God. That this word concerns me: ...*"thy heart is not right in the sight of God."* (Acts 8: 21).

Let me just tell you this: All these things must take place; your heart must be right before God, you must wholeheartedly bewail your guilt before God, and you must ascribe righteousness unto your Maker. But you must never think, that these things take place before God Himself has come. When the Lord is present, then all these things take place. It is a well-known saying among the people, that: *"The Lord brings all things with Him."* And it is true, the Lord brings everything with Him, but it is so seldom believed. The Lord is here, but that is not seen. And, when it may be seen that the Lord is here, then it is like the Apostle says in the words, which we have so often mentioned unto you: *"The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."* (Rom. 10: 8). And when this may be seen; then all these things are here, which the timid soul thinks, where they should be.

14th November.

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin." (2 Cor. 5: 21a).

The incarnate Son of God has not known sin. His nature was undefiled. *"Therefore also, that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."* (Luke 1: 35). In His thoughts, words, and deeds was holiness and nothing but holiness. He always had the Lord before His eyes. In His youth, He had said: *"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"* (Luke 2: 49). In His later life, He said: *"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."* (John 4: 34). In His suffering and dying, He said: *"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."* (Matt. 26: 39).

He is the One, Whom God "has made sin." "He", that is the first Person in the gracious Divinity. The first Person retains the rights of the Divinity. He is the offended party. And we are told about this Person that He has made the Son "to be sin". He has treated the Son as "a sinner". Dealt with Him as a sinner. The Father has placed the sins upon the Son. He has accounted them unto the Son; that is why He treated Him as a sinner. In Gethsemane, the Son crawled in the dust as a worm. (Ps. 22: 6). On Golgotha, the lamentation came out of His heart: *"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* (Matt. 27: 46). The reason for this was, that God treated the Son of His eternal love, as a sinner. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken the person of a sinner upon Himself, and the Father regarded Him as a sinner.

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin." "For us", that is for people, for those who have known sin, for the sinners, the wicked, and for those without strength. *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."* (Rom. 5: 6). This "for us" means in our stead, as the guarantor pays for the debtor, "in place of", as we find it in the 15th Sunday of the Catechism- namely: *"In order that by His passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life."* (Question 37).

15th November.

"... that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5: 21b.1).

"The righteousness of God" this is a righteousness or justification which is pleasing unto God. The righteousness of Christ was the righteousness of God Himself. A person had obtained it, *the Man*, not Mary. And the eternal God had united Himself with this Man. Luke has written about this in Acts 20:28, *that God has purchased His Church with His own blood*. He who possesses this righteousness, *has a righteousness which is pleasing unto God*: and God applying His justice, grants him the forgiveness of *his sins and a right to eternal life*.

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." *"We"*, are the sinners, the ungodly, *for God freely justifies the ungodly for nought*. (Rom. 3: 24).

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." *"In Him"* So, to be made the righteousness of God, we must be in Christ, that is, be united with Him. If we are united with Christ, then we are also righteous in Him. Christ has indeed suffered and has risen from the dead as Surety for those that are His own. And God is just; He does not demand payment for the guilt twice. And the result of that is, that all those who are in Christ Jesus are righteous before God.

Now, how *do we* become righteous before God in Christ? Through faith in Christ. That is why, the Apostle Paul says in Rom. 5: 1: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* We would like to say something about faith. Faith in Christ believes, that the offer of righteousness is pleasing unto God, made by God to the sinner. If this offer did not exist, no one would be saved. *"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."* (John 3: 27). The offer of the righteousness of Christ takes place through the offer of the Gospel. You can hear this in the last words of the previous verse: *"Be ye reconciled to God."*

16th November.

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 21:5.2).

Most of the time we think that something sinful stands in our way, but it is usually something which we perceive, as having value. If only man could, and would always let go of everything, then he would see that his sins never stand in the way. Again, we always think that we must reform; and that we should reform; but not until we have embraced Christ, through a true faith. Because all the reforming man does who is still without Christ, is absolutely without any value. That is why we say, that faith in Christ presume: a true conviction of sin. Furthermore, faith presumes the revelation of Jesus Christ to and in our heart.

There are two kinds of revelations of the Son of God. There is a revelation of the Son of God, through the Word only, and this revelation have all those who, have come in contact with the Scriptures. However, there is also a revelation of the Lord Jesus through the Word and the Spirit. This revelation is a quickening, soul-enlightening, and soul-abasing revelation. Through this revelation, man comes to see God. Jacob said: *"I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* (Gen. 32: 30). Those, to whom and in whom Christ has been revealed, behold God, they behold the glory of the Lord, that is, the glory of all God's virtues. The Apostle Paul has spoken so beautifully about this in the well-known words of 2 Cor. 4: 6: *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

Faith in the Son of God causes the soul, to approve *wholeheartedly* with the means which God has thought out to save sinners. And as long, as such a soul could agree, that this can only take place through Christ; for it had always been a constrained work, because his heart had not been in it. Man does not perceive this like that. However, when he really receives salvation, then it all becomes clear to him. For this is the agreement which is found in true faith.

17th November.

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Cor.5:21 b.3).

Faith is the following: In the first place: it is an embracing of the Son of God. This takes place in this manner. When a soul is truly convinced of sin, and Christ Jesus has been revealed unto her, then in a completely hidden way the almighty power of God is working in her. And through this power she arises, so that she is working in the going *out* of herself and in *an ascending* up unto God. And she arises up until she is with Christ and through Christ with God. This is the embracing of Christ.

In the second place: it is the appropriation of all the promises which God gives in the Son of His eternal love. *"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us."* (2 Cor. 1: 20). All these promises are appropriated unto herself, by the soul which is working through faith. In the third place: in faith there is the assurance for the soul of the forgiveness of all her sins through the redeeming merits, the merits of the Son of God, through His suffering on the cross. And lastly, in the fourth place: it is a leaning upon Christ and resting in the Word of God, so on God Himself. So, this and this alone is the faith in Christ. Everything which deviates in any way from this, is nothing but a delusive, temporary, or a false faith. And the fruit of true faith is, that we have God's righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, and justification is a fruit or consequence of true saving faith. The Apostle says in 2 Corinthians 5:20: *"Be ye reconciled to God."* He here opens the way for the sinner, and he comes to pray for him in the name of the Lord, that he would be reconciled to God. And now the question comes to you: Have you allowed yourself to be reconciled with God? The offer *has* come to you, for you have read it hundreds of times, and as often as you have done this, the Apostle Paul, yes, God Himself has pleaded with you that you must be reconciled to Him. This prayer has also come to you now, and we now *ask you*: What was your answer? Do you know that the Lord has more than a thousand ways to cut off the thread of your life? Suddenly and unexpectedly, your relatives could come to stand around your lifeless body!

18th November.

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. Though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Hebr. 5: 7, 8.1).

"With strong crying and tears" This tells us that Christ's sufferings were extremely severe. It says that *"His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood."* (Luke 22: 44). He had accepted everything, and now He came, so to speak, to stand before it. The *"hour"* had come. Until now, man had not had any power over Him, for *"His hour had not yet come "* (Matt. 26: 45). But that would now become different. And while He saw this *before* Him, He came into a dreadful agony, in terrible anxiety. I do not believe that this agony ever returned to Him again. Surely, He suffered on the cross, but this was a suffering in a different degree. It says, that He *"was heard in that He feared"*. So, Christ did fear. What was His fear? Did He fear death? Certainly not! What we call *"death"* is not death really. There is something else, which is really death. Christ feared the curse, the curse of the Law, the judgment of God, the wrath of Heaven, and the influence of the powers of the devils. These matters were the death which brought fear into Christ. And now the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says that He *"was heard in that He feared"*. So, Christ did not pray that He would not have to die! If He would have prayed for that, he would not have been heard. However, Christ prayed for strength, for victory, for achieving His purpose, and for the fulfilment of God's counsel. He has prayed for the glorification of God and the salvation of the elect. His prayer is accepted. God did not spare Him in dying, but what *did* God do? He has given Him strengthening faith. And when Christ was strengthened like that, what was it that He believed? Firstly, He believed that He was the Son. And secondly, that He was the Called One of God. And thirdly, that He would be victorious, that He would be victorious over all to which He was subjected. And, He also believed that He would achieve His aim, namely, *the salvation of the elect*.

19th November.

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." (Hebr. 5: 8.2).

Now that it had pleased Christ to take the humiliation upon Himself, we must also learn, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, to accept the humiliating ways which God wants us to go through. And to accept them, in such a way, that we have pleasure in them. Christ Himself has taught us this. He has said: *"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your soul."* (Matt. 11: 29). It must please us to go through all this. Although flesh and blood shrink away from it; nevertheless, it is best for us. For, God is never greater for His people, than when they have to go without many things, yes, when they miss everything. And the greater God is, the greater salvation is! Salvation is nothing else, then to know God, and to be made conformable unto Him, and to delight in Him. The second point to which I wish to draw your attention to, is this: *The Lord Jesus came to suffer*. He has said: *"The servant is not above his Master."* (Matt. 10: 24). When we have a part in Christ, then we must bear in mind that we will be *sanctified through suffering*. (1 Peter 5: 10). And we must accept this suffering out of God's hand. When a man is afflicted, his only question is: *"How do I get out of this?"* That is wrong, for if the question, *"how do I get out of it"* remains, then the afflictions will not profit him a great deal. In the book of Job, it is written that God will *deliver the poor in his affliction*. (Job 36: 15), and in Psalm 138: 3, we find: *"In the day when I cried, Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."* This must be experienced in the afflictions. And when this is experienced in the afflictions, it means that the sufferings are sanctified. That is why it says in Psalm 94: 12: *"Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy Law."* We know through experience how opposed we are to sufferings. Through God's Spirit we must learn, what Christ has learned in His suffering, which is: *obedience*. When God brings afflictions upon us, we must not think that these are despising judgments from God. We are so quick to draw conclusions like that. We must know that such thoughts are sinful. For although Christ suffered greatly, He did not forget God.

20th November.

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." (Hebr. 5: 8.3).

Christ did not believe that God wanted to condemn Him, that is why He has taken His refuge in God. And he who prays, and especially him who makes supplications, has an expectation that God will hear.

Christ has not expected it from His disciples. He had taken them with Him, He even had desired the company of His disciples, but He had expected nothing from them. He has taken His refuge in God. Oh, there is so much enmity in our heart when we speak with people about our difficulties. When we are in afflictions, we must flee to God and have our expectations from Him, believing that He is the only one who can help us. And that would not be enough yet. We must not only believe that He can help us, but also that He *will* and *shall* help us. Where this conviction is missing, we do not find these words in the heart: *"Our God, the Lord, is strong to save, from mortal danger, from the grave."* (Ps. 68: 8).

This must be our prayer! Man does not know what praying is, that is why he does not ask himself: *do I really pray?* Does the Apostle Paul not say: *"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin?"* True prayer begins with the dealings from God! So, it does not start from below, but from *above*. Remember this, because we are completely ignorant!

What has been the comfort, which Christ enjoyed here? What has strengthened Him? I have already told you what that has been! This: that He was strengthened in faith. And to be strengthened in faith means, that we are a child of God, that we are called by God and that we find ourselves in the right way, that we shall conquer the struggle in which we find ourselves, and that all this will be to the glory of God and to our salvation. That is what it is to be strengthened in faith. Many people think that to be strengthened in faith is this; that we send up an easy prayer, or that we cry about these things. But that is not it, for *there is no comfort* in that. It is found in what I have mentioned!

21st November.

“ . . . that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” (Gal. 1: 4b 1).

With these words, the Apostle tells us where the elect sinner is when God in Christ comes to draw him through His Spirit. *"That He might deliver us* (pay attention to this) *from this present evil world."* So, from the moment the elect sinner is drawn, he finds and sees *himself* in this present evil world. That is like a blow of a hammer for our self-righteousness. For what is it, that we want? We want to be *more* privileged than others. If for some time or some years, you have been occupied (as it is called) with the seeking of the salvation for your immortal soul, then you do not want to be put on the same line as the worldly people. Then you are of the opinion, that you are *not* like them, but that you are a little better. That is unbelief, damnable unbelief. And we must be cleansed from that. However, the Apostle Paul had come to think differently, which made him say: *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."* (1 Tim. 1: 15). This is hard for pious flesh, to be placed on the same line as the world, with this present wicked world. The pious world comes to stand up against that. To bring this to naught, man will resist the truth with all his power, and finally give in to the false doctrines.

When a person belongs to this present evil world, then he is not drawn and is guilty of rejecting God. And he makes himself guiltier every day, although the calling of the Lord is coming unto him: *"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."* (Is. 45: 22). And in this manner, he refuses through a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to turn unto God. In the drawing, we find two matters. Firstly, there is the enlightening of the soul through the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. And secondly, it is there that the soul is made willing and able to unite itself with Christ, and to appropriate unto himself the benefits, which God in Christ through true faith has put aside for the elect sinner.

22nd November.

“That He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” (Gal. 1: 4b.2).

Until the moment when man experiences this drawing, he is in this present evil world. And he must receive grace to be able to see this, to acknowledge it, and wholeheartedly weep about it. If this is not granted unto him, he will continue to walk in his own self-conceit, believing that he is better than someone else. And that is how he will fall short of reaching the powerful calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus had said that He has *not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (Matt. 9: 13). He who has been drawn, no longer belongs to this present evil world, he belongs unto the Lord Jesus. Through true faith he has been united unto the Son of God. It is through this faith, the faith of the Son of God, that he lives. (Gal. 2: 20). This faith manifests itself especially in that he dies daily unto himself.

So that He might draw us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father. “According to the will”. That is according to the pleasure of our God and Father. The Son of God has obtained the salvation by His actual and passive obedience. The Holy Spirit applies this salvation. How? By revealing Christ Jesus unto us, and by granting true faith, so that we appropriate the revealed Christ with all His gifts and treasures. This takes place when this same Spirit through the means of the Law has brought us to the knowledge of our lost state in Adam.

But the deepest foundation of our salvation is found in the first Person of the Divinity. He has known and given from eternity specific people to the Son, Who receive from eternity to eternity the Divinity, upon the condition that in the fullness of time, the Son would in a God glorifying way obtain the ransom for that purpose.

The drawing takes place according to a way appointed in eternity. It says in Acts 13: 48: *“And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”* Those who are ordained to eternal life, and who die after they have come to understanding, are all drawn, for there shall not an hoof be left behind.

23rd November.

“And unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.” (Ps. 68: 21b.1).

There is, as you probably all know, a three-fold death. In the first place, there is the *temporal death*, to which we all are subjected. The Lord is the only One who knows when this shall take place, that is if it does not please the Lord to make this known unto us, unless we die an untimely death. But as far as the latter is concerned, the Lord keeps all those who lie under the seal of the eternal election, these people know that nothing can come upon them against God’s will and eternal decree. That is why the psalmist testifies, with the whole of God’s Church in Psalm 31: *“But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand.”* (Verse 14, 15). The Lord also takes the sting out of death for His people, for it is written in Isa. 57: 2: *“He shall enter in to peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.”*

In the second place there is, the *spiritual death* which is a result of our fall and covenant breach in Adam, even as our temporal death is. This death consists of our being cursed in our persons, under the curse of all that we do and all that we fail to do. Yes, so long as we remain in this state of death, we and all that is ours is cursed. This death consists in that we are unable to bring forth any good, and that we are incapable to even think of anything which is to God’s honour, and what could be of any benefit for our immortal soul. Deliverance from this death is only found in the wounds that were inflicted in the hands, feet, and side, of the praise-worthy Lord Jesus Christ on the cursed cross. There would never have been a deliverance, if God had not given over this precious Christ, God and Man in one Person. One of the old preachers of the earlier Dutch Reformed Church used to say: *“Yes my soul thou might well tremble. If King Jesus was not here.”*

Man has brought himself into this death by his deep fall into sin; and now we have the Lord Jesus, with all His merits, which is the only deliverance from this spiritual death. And eternally blessed be His Name that He has wanted to do this.

24th November.

“And unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.” (Ps. 68: 20.2).

In the third place, there is an *eternal death*. This death consists in the eternal suffering of the punishment in hell. There is no deliverance possible from this death. We read about this in Luke 16, where we read: *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”* (Verse 23). Oh, this means so much: to see the triumphant Church from afar, and then no eternal possibility to get there. For that is what we perceive from the conversation between the rich man and Abraham. When his only request was that Lazarus might dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, for he suffered such tremendous afflictions, and then it was pointed out to him that there was such an impassable gulf separating the rich man and Lazarus. No one could go from the place where the rich man was, to the place where Abraham and Lazarus were. And neither could anyone go from the place of Abraham to the rich man. Oh, that this would be taken to heart, *seriously*. But the place where the rich man came, that is where the Lord saves those, whom He has made alive, spiritly. He spares them from condemnation. The words which Christ spoke are meant for them: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”* (John 5: 24) And as a result, of the firm foundation, which she has under her feet, the Church can safely say: *“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever.”*

The psalmist gave the honour to God. He believed and acknowledged, and found his rest in the fact, that it was all from God the Lord. He had a good hope that the Lord would make all things well for him, no matter what would happen. The Lord Himself had given him this good hope. That is why he could say in Psalm 119: *“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”* (Verse 49). There had been a moment in David’s life when he had heard God speak, not only in His Holy Law, but also in His Gospel. And when there comes a moment in someone’s life, wherein he hears God speak like that, then the same hope which was in David’s soul, also comes into his soul. And instead of the false and vain hope which he had always had, he now receives a firm hope built on the foundation of the Law and the Gospel.

25th November.

“Grace be to you and peace.” (Gal. 1: 3a.1).

“Grace.” What is grace? To have grace, means that there is *guilt*. We receive grace when we are guilty. When we have never seen ourselves guilty before God and have never learned to ascribe our actual guilt unto ourselves, then we are without grace.

Grace means, that man has come to know himself as a damnable sinner; that all that is his, whatever it may be, has come to see everything, as nothing but unrighteousness. Grace is; that man has seen himself in the light which the Lord allows to fall on everyone through the means of the Word. And when someone sees himself through this light, then he knows that *he is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*. (Rev. 3: 17). Grace means that man has gone aside for God with his heart, and has learned with his whole being, to ascribe righteousness unto the Lord.

Grace assumes the revelation of Jesus Christ, to have the knowledge of the Son of God, and the knowledge of Christ's two natures: God and Man in one Person, a knowledge of His two states: His humiliation and His exultation; for true faith ascends from the earth to heaven, where Jesus Christ is seated on the right hand of God the Father. Grace assumes the knowledge of the benefits of Christ and of His offices. In one word: grace assumes that one has understood with his heart what the Apostle Paul has expressed in these words: *“That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”* (2 Cor. 5: 19). Grace assumes that man has great pleasure and satisfaction, with the way God has thought out from eternity, in the revealed way in which man can be saved for eternity. A converted person has no desire for grace which would not be to the glory of God's virtues. That is why he seeks his salvation in Christ Jesus alone. For in Him all God's virtues are honoured, for: *“Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”* (Hebr. 7: 26). Grace consists in the forgiveness of all our sins, which are felt in the heart of every believer, be they small or great.

26th November.

“Grace be to you and peace.” (Galatians 1:3a.2).

“Peace”. In the state of righteousness man lived in peace and friendship with God. This has been totally lost through sin. God’s wrath is terrible toward sin, and man has become an enemy of his Creator, saying: *“Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”* (Job 21: 14). It seemed as if this breach could not be healed, for God cannot renounce His rights, and man does not desire anything else than to separate himself further away from the Lord. Nevertheless, the second Person in the Divinity, the Lord Jesus Christ has brought about an everlasting righteousness, and with that, God was reconciled, sin is forgiven, and the Law has received what was her due.

Jesus Christ is the peace of His Church. He has obtained the peace, and He is also the One who brings Peace. For, so long as man lives without Him, he has no peace, even if he is one of the elect. How could it be otherwise? For just like other people, the elect also are what Paul says about them: *by nature children of wrath*. The Law also condemns them, for it says: *“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”* (Gal. 3: 10). She always condemns the elect, while the elect is unable to find a proper excuse. However, when Christ is in him, and he is in Christ, then the elect has peace, because God is reconciled in Him, and satisfied with all those who have learned to take their refuge under the covering of Christ’s eternal righteousness.

What is this peace, and what does it mean? See if you can explain this from your own heart. This peace is a peace with God, resting upon the reconciliation of God through the blood of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This peace is a peace in the conscience, for that blood which washes away all sins, has been applied to the conscience. In that moment, when a broken-hearted and contrite sinner places his eye upon Christ, the blood of the Son of God which cleanses all sin comes upon his heart, as we find in Acts 15: 9, so that through faith the heart is cleansed, and from that moment this man, has a pure heart.

27th November.

“Grace be to you and peace.” (Gal. 1: 3a.3).

“Peace.” This peace is a peace with the angels in heaven, for these are also given over unto Christ, so that they would be protected in Him to all eternity. That is why they encamp around about all those who through a true faith are united with the Son of God. (Ps 34: 7)

This peace is a peace with the triumphant Church, for if we may just mention one thing: the triumphant Church rejoices because of the obtained righteousness by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord. For His satisfying suffering and dying, is the only rest and support for all those, who have learned here on earth, to fight against themselves and against sin.

This peace is a peace with the militant Church, for whatever disagreements there may be found in the militant Church, they are *one* in the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Head of the Congregation. Through that, they are all in agreement with the words of the Apostle Paul: *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* (1 Cor. 2: 2). That is why the God-fearing Calvin could say, that he regarded Luther as a great servant of Christ, even if Luther would have regarded him to be a devil.

This peace is a peace with the visible and material things, for all the visible and material matters have received God’s command, *not to hurt nor to destroy in all God’s holy mountain.* (Is. 11: 9). This peace is a peace with the circumstances in time, for when we enjoy this peace, we do not want things to change, not in our personal, or in our domestic life, and not in our church life, our social life, or our political life. Then all is well, because God reigns and shall show His almighty power and shall attain His purpose, to the honour of His thrice holy and glorious Name. But this does not mean: that he is satisfied with sin, for the converted soul has an aversion and enmity in his heart, against sin.

This peace is a deep peace; it is a lasting peace, for in his renewed state, the believer always possesses peace. According to his inward frame of mind, he seldom has peace, because of the sin which dwells in him, in which he still is inclined to all evil. However, regarding his spiritual state, he always has peace

28th November.

“If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1: 9).

There were some people in the congregation of Galatia, which through true faith had accepted Christ, they stood on the foundation which God had laid in Zion, but they had left and had turned aside from that foundation. They had come under the influence of the false preachers, who had acted boldly. They had told the Galatians that they *themselves*, had to do something towards their own salvation, that it was not enough to just believe in Christ. When is the teaching; that man can only be justified through true faith, not spoken against? When has this doctrine not been opposed? And yet, it is the only true and complete doctrine of salvation. The doctrine of the simple faith in Christ Jesus is the doctrine of the apostles and the prophets; it is the foundation which was laid by God, of which Jesus Christ is the Corner Stone. This is what caused the Apostle Paul to write to the Galatians: *“If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*

Some of these Galatian believers had listened to these false preachers too often. There remains the inclination in the heart of the believers to return to the Covenant of Works. And we will return, if we do not remain with the true teaching, which is in Christ. The Apostle was moved because the congregation had come into this situation, where they had wandered away from the true doctrine of faith. If we are not accurate in the doctrine, then it will all come to nothing, and this means the downfall of the nations, and the downfall of the church as well.

The pure doctrine of faith means: to take everything from Someone else; which is Christ. And if we leave this teaching, everything will go to ruin. Every believer knows this, the Apostle Paul knew this also, and that is why the Apostle was so sad. It was his intention that through the means, he wanted to uphold God's honour; by preaching the doctrine of the free promises of the Gospel, because the pure doctrine of faith was worth more to him than his own salvation. That does not mean that he wanted to force these people. *No*, he acted with discretion and he wished them grace and peace. He knew that if this would be fulfilled, then they would soon be back upon the right foundation.

29th November.

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Luke 11: 9.1).

What is asking? The person who prays, clings unto God. Not to an unknown God. Not to a God Who has only made known to us that He is holy and just, for such a God is of no use unto man; for we need a God in Christ. No one will pray, unless such a God has revealed Himself as a Friend, as a personal, Friend. When a person is not sure that God is his Friend, then he does not pray. Praying is a clinging unto God. You can find that in Genesis 32: 26 in the well-known history of Jacob: *“I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me.”* That is the praying in faith of which James speaks. (Jam.1:6). And there is no prayer, where prayer is not like that.

The soul, who clings unto God, presents himself unto Him. It says in the Song of Solomon: *“Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.”* (Song of Sol. 2: 14). She presents herself unto God in her nakedness, in her damnableness. She also presents herself unto Him in all her objectionableness. She embraces the promises of God, yes, I could say: God’s virtues – God’s virtues, and they are glorified in Christ. To be brief, she pours herself out: *“Ye, people, pour out your heart before him.”* (Psalm 62: 8). It says in Genesis 4: 26: *“Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.”* In Psalm 50: 15: *“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”* The Lord Jesus has said in the days of His sojourn upon the earth: *“My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”* In Romans 10, we find these words: *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”* (Verse 13). From these and such like prayers we can see what religion is. We could say that religion consists in two parts: prayer and the preaching. Is that correct? Prayer and preaching? The assumption of the whole religion is God, the triune God. There is no religion without Him. Naturally, I mean, no true religion. True religion begins there where God in Christ reveals Himself. And you must ask yourself, whether your heart agrees with this.

30th November.

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Luke 11: 9.2).

A person who prays, has the triune God before his eyes, in his soul, in the Holy Scriptures, and in heaven. Is that not so? He would not be praying, if he did not have God in mind. Of course, we can just fold the hands, close the eyes, and say something or ask something. But I do not need to tell you, that the latter is not always praying. Just think about the publican in the parable. Well known is it not? The publican prays: *“God, be merciful to me a sinner.”* (Luke 18: 13). Do you think that the publican would have prayed like this, (or to say it differently), do you believe that Christ would have pointed out the words from this man, as a prayer, if the publican had not seen and believed that God was gracious, and willing; to save him, *the publican*, personally?

That is how these things are. All this is praying. That is why it is a taking hold of God, but not a God Who condemns and is wrath, but as a God Who is satisfied in Christ Jesus. From this we can see that one who prays has the triune God before him.

You may think: “Tell me, how often does this take place the life of a converted person?” That is not the question at all. It happens as often as the converted person prays through faith. Do you understand this properly? You must not make a teaching of a person’s practices, not even from a person who has grace! You must take the doctrine from the Word, through the workings of the Holy Spirit. All the rest is heresy; and foolishness!

There are always three matters in religion: the knowledge of misery, the knowledge of delivery out of the misery, and the gratitude to God for the deliverance. Are these three matters not always found in true prayer? Is a person who prays anything else but miserable? To refer you again to the publican, was the publican anything else, besides being a wretched person? In Psalm 34: 6, we find: *“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him.”* Whosoever is not wretched, shall not call. And whosoever is wretched shall call when God reveals Himself in him. So, the misery, but also the deliverance out of misery; because praying means, that we have a true knowledge of the whole plan of God’s way for our salvation, to say it in a few words: *of God in Christ*.

1st December.

“But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.” (John 7: 39b.1).

When one does not allow his own feelings to speak, but allows the Scriptures to speak, then you will hear how close the connection is between faith and Christ and the possession of the Holy Spirit. Take notice of this, for nowadays, we have such peculiar teachings. According to some (if we were to believe these people), we can possess faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father, and the benefit of justification, without possessing the Spirit! But alas, we do not have to be so surprised, for the cause of this confusion lies deeper than we think. Nevertheless, it is a pitiful matter that the pure doctrine, of our reformed religion, has been so mutilated and so corrupted over the course of time.

Yet our text puts the closest connection between faith in Christ and the possession of the Spirit. For it says there: *"They that believe on Him, should receive."* And this is also experienced like that, for what is the working of faith in regard, to the Spirit? In the first place it is, that we accept the Scriptures. Maybe you think, I have done that my whole life already, for I have never doubted that the Bible is the Word of God. But, when you speak like that, then this proves that all is not right with you, that all is not well, for you have not understood the meaning of the question. It is something totally different than what you think. We can be persuaded that the Bible is the Word of God; but when faith says that the Bible is God's Word, God's testimony, then one does this on the foundation through the testimony of the Spirit in the heart. And we dare say, that this gives a greater foundation in regard to our relationship to the Bible, than the one we have just mentioned.

It says: *"It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."* (1 John 5: 6). Where does the Spirit bear this witness? The Spirit bears this witness in the heart that the Word of God is the Truth; so, faith is active through the Spirit in regard to the Word. Think about Psalm 19: 7: *"The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."* We will never have a foundation that the Scriptures are the Truth, if we don't have the testimony of the Spirit in our heart.

2nd December.

"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." (John 7: 39b.2).

In the second place: faith receives Christ and the Holy Spirit as well, Who is a pledge of the heavenly inheritance unto the believer, and the believer testifies with his spirit that he is a child of God. True faith draws the Holy Spirit out of the fullness of Christ. And by taking this action, man sees that he is not mistaken in this matter. He knows this by the feeling which he receives from this deed, through the testimony that he has this working in his heart.

In the third place: regarding the Spirit, his faith works in such a way that he gives himself over unto the Spirit. *"Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."* (Ps. 143: 10). This never shows more remarkably than when the Church* is in difficulties or placed before impossible matters. Where did the disagreement among the Israelites in the wilderness come from? When the children of Israel drew near unto the land of Canaan, the majority of the people said: that it was impossible that the land could be conquered. However, Joshua and Caleb were led by a different Spirit. (Num. 14: 24). They believed the Spirit's testimony; that God would bring His people into the land which He had promised. This is a welcome opportunity for me to repeat the aforementioned Word of Scripture: *"He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."* (John 3: 33).

What did Joshua and Caleb do in this grave situation? They came to verify the promise and to accept it, and to authenticate that the promise which God had made unto Abraham, was true. And leaning upon a promising God, the sons of Anak did not exist before Joshua and Caleb; it did not matter that they were still in Canaan. The Lord had said that He had given them the whole land for their possession, and all the inhabitants of the country fainted because of them. (Josh. 2: 24).

And I don't have to tell you, that the Lord receives His honour because of this. And where His honour is so willingly brought unto Him, man receives his salvation, as it is written in 1 Sam. 2: 30: *"Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."*

*The believer.

3rd December.

"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." (John 7: 39b.3).

Now we must examine ourselves, if we have faith and whether we have the Spirit. But if we have faith, then we also have the Spirit. That is why, in our examination we should ascertain ourselves to the first question, whether we have faith.

By asking this question, we must attempt to make an unbiased judgment. We must let go of all our own notions and insights and ask what the Scriptures say. If you ask me what the Scriptures say, then my answer is: where there is faith, Christ has come to us and in us. This is such a distinguishing mark, that if it were the only indication, it would be sufficient. But let us examine ourselves, whether we have this mark. It may appear that we are coming unto Christ, however, that is nothing but a deception. For we really do nothing else than flee from Christ, resisting and rejecting Him, so that we would always remain separated from Christ, unless the moment has come, that in our totally lost state we lie polluted in our own blood. It is then, that Christ will come unto us. *"And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."* (Ezek. 16: 6).

In the second place, we must examine ourselves whether we have learned to let go of ourselves and of all that is ours. Firstly, in our life regarding the keeping the Law and in anything which is not of Christ. And if our soul has then been taken up in Him, of Whom it is written that: *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."* (Deut. 33: 27). This is expressed in the New Testament as: *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it."* (Mark 8: 35).

In the third place, we must ask ourselves whether we then became a happy people. The true religion makes people happy, unlike false religion. The false religion makes people who are without God and who are so unhappy already, lose their stability even more. True religion makes people happy indeed, they are temperate and calm, which is the reason, that we allow ourselves to be led. For it gives certainty and security in the matters regarding the soul.

4th December.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.” (John 5: 39).

There are people who say: “Really, I don’t know whether I do it properly. I agree with all of it, but I continually reach the conclusion, that I miss faith.” We will put a question to you, who talks like that. You say, that you do not have faith. Have you never noticed that there is an emptiness in everything? That there is an emptiness in the reading of the Scriptures, an emptiness in the preaching, and in the meetings which you have with God's children? In a word, an unspeakable emptiness in everything? Then you should allow your ear to listen to your heart. If you are unable to do that right now, then try it tonight when you lay down upon your bed or when you are alone. For if you feel an emptiness in everything, then Christ is just what you need! Christ comes to people like that. Go out of your emptiness to the fullness of Christ! I know what you will say. You will say: *“I am unable to do that!”* I know that, and you do not have to be able. For if you were able to do that, it would not be right. Christ Himself will work it, when He is revealed unto you. You may think that He still has to come, but what you don’t see is that He has already come; and the reason that you don't see this, is because of your unbelief, which lies as a veil upon your face. The veil of unbelief which lies upon you must be taken away; and when that takes place, you see it directly near you, in your hand, in your mouth, and in your heart. You will have nothing else to do than to allow yourself to be saved, and that is faith.

Do you know what *you* must do? *You must* read God's Word *in earnest* and you must not go everywhere. For this teaching about the offer of Christ, is as good as gone in our country. And you must not neglect to read the writings of the old-fathers, who have served the Church of Christ in times past. And while you are reading, you must continually sigh unto God. Sigh unto God all your days, if you can. Who knows maybe a wonder may soon take place for you, so that in full astonishment, you shall cry out: *“I have deserved eternal death, and now God has given me eternal life!”* And Christ says to my soul: *“Here I am, I am thy salvation,”* (Is. 58: 9 and Ps. 35: 3), and now I know what Jacob meant when he said: *“I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”* (Gen. 32: 30).

5th December.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. 33: 27a).

"Thy refuge" Are you able to go without a refuge? No! And are you also convinced that you cannot do without God? Think about that for a moment! When has there been a time in your life, that at the thought that you missed God, you could have cried yourself to death? When was that? There must be a wound. You must know what it is to miss someone. People will often say to someone, *"Oh, I miss her or, I miss him so much!"* That is what you must have felt regarding God, but in a much stronger sense. You must have felt the pain in your heart because of the yearning for God. Moses knew this. He knew of the absolute necessity of God.

When I preached my last sermon on the second day of Pentecost in the Dutch Protestant Church in 1914, I said: *"People, you can miss everything, even the church, but you cannot do without God!"* They were my last words. And is that how it is in your heart: rather to be without a church, than to be without God? That is how it must be in your heart. You may think: *"That is not too bad, for I can go without a church. I am not so attached to that!"* Do you think that you can do without a church? I don't know how that is for you, but for me it was like this, I sought for a church without Christ. And I know, that you do that as well. You search for a church without Christ, as long, as it is a church! Whether Christ is in there or not, that does not matter.

However, if you feel the guilt about looking for a church like that, then you know what it is, to come from an illusion into the reality. Everyone who holds on to the illusion, knows nothing about this. But by becoming the guilty one who had searched for a church without Christ, a church in which we ourselves (our heart) had everything to say, *see*, when we become aware of that; then this means that we are in the Church of Christ, in the Church of which Christ is the Head. (Eph. 1: 22).

You must have God as your refuge, where your heart is able to speak. That is what God's children had in days of old; they were intercessors. Because of that, man can only be an intercessor when he has his refuge in God. It is not sufficient when you say: *"Fundamentally, it is so and so."* For conversion is not the end? No, true life must bear fruit for our fellowman, or else it is not true life.

6th December.

1 Samuel 17.

The armies of the Israelites and the Philistines are positioned against each other. The valley is the only distance which separates them. Someone from the camp of the Philistines comes forward and scorns Israel and the God of Israel. The Israelites are not courageous. They are full of fear. There is not one person who will accept the challenge of Goliath of Gath. David had remained at home. His three older brothers are in the army: Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah. And Jesse, David's father says to David his youngest son: go to the army and visit your brothers and take these loaves for them and for their captains with you. And when David arrives in the camp and he hears the language of Goliath, he then recognizes his calling.

That is how we find our calling! It is not sought. We come across it, just as the Word of God is generally found; and then it is: "*Thy Words were found, and I did eat them.*" (Jer. 15: 16). This does not just stay in the judgment or in the understanding, but it is: "*a piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" (Hebr. 4: 12).

Saul, who only knew about visible and material matters, is brought on the wrong path by the prince of darkness (for which god do we have, without Christ?) You all know the history. When David feels that he must go to battle, Saul persuades David that he should at least prepare to arm himself. David allows himself to be misled. Indeed, David who was on the right path, allows himself to be led away from it. And now David stands there helpless and powerless! However, David did not just clench his teeth and just think: Well, now that I have gone this far, I'd better keep going." No, the Holy Spirit works in David and brings him into his helplessness. So that he says unto Saul: "*I am unable to go.*" And this powerlessness was his deliverance. David returns through the conquering and persuading power of the Holy Spirit to turn to the right path again. He takes off that which Saul has put on him. And with a staff, a bag, a sling, and five smooth stones, he draws near and slays his opponent.

See what you can understand about this. You know that in many places the Holy Scriptures say: "*Through God we shall do valiantly.*" (Ps. 60: 12). Because to have fallen and to be placed back, that is the royal law of freedom. Only when it takes place like this, all is well.

7th December.

1 Samuel 30

David with his six hundred men had left Ziklag where he was encamped. And when David returns, Ziklag has been burned down. The women and children, cattle and goods, everything had been taken away! The despondency among David's men was great. And it comes that far, that they want to stone David. And David does nothing. He does not try to defend himself, neither does he speak to the people. He does nothing, only his soul waits upon God. He leaves the stones in the hands of the people, and he strengthens himself in an invisible way upon God.

See, that is what I wanted to point out to you. Do you have difficulties? Then you must allow them to be! They are all in God's hands, be they great or small. You must acknowledge that you have made yourself worthy of much greater troubles; yes, that it is only through grace that you are still here, and that you have not been cast away from before God for eternity! You must truly believe that you can learn from these difficulties, that: *"This is the way, walk ye in it."* (Is. 30: 21). If it is given to you to walk in this way, then you will neither hinder your neighbour nor deceive yourself. Then you will quietly go your way, with your soul bowed down, nevertheless, with a heart which is joyful in God. *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."* (Job 13: 15). And what happens then? Then while you sleep, the Lord brings it all in order. Believe in God! *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."* (Zech. 4: 6).

When God's grace has been revealed unto a person; and a merciful God in Christ has glorified Himself, then this person must learn to wait. This is *one* of the mysteries of life. Waiting, abiding, hoping, and believing. *"He that believeth shall not make haste."* (Is. 28: 16). He must not take hold of anything, he must *wait*. This waiting is painful work! It is something like, lying among the thorns. Sometimes it even looks as if it is a dangerous work, a neglecting of one's duty. But that is not so. In fact, it is the fulfilling of our duties. Waiting is a great and God-glorifying work. *"Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it."* (1 Thess. 5: 24). Waiting is strength!

8th December.

"Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths." (Ps. 25: 4.1).

Do *you* know God's way? Do *you* possess the boldness to explain, that God has revealed Himself to you and in you? What did you see, when God revealed Himself? Joseph said unto his brothers: *"I am Joseph."* Just consider this history and examine yourself. For then you will find some of the things which take place when the Lord reveals Himself, such as: *"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."* (Gen. 45: 4). Are you convinced within yourself that the things of which you speak, are God's way? You must have the surety about this. Have you come to know what you are in yourself? And what does man see, when he comes to see what he is in himself? What would your answer be to this question? I am willing to help you with it, although, I will only mention *one* thing, and you should be able to name more than that.

When man receives an insight into himself, then he will notice that he never really sought God, even though he was occupied with eternal matters day and night, for weeks and months, yes, maybe even years. But, as I have already mentioned, there is more that is seen. I will put another question to you, "Have you changed your ways? And how did that take place? For that is really the conversion, is it not? We change our way. We step from one way to the other. How did that go? How do we come from the one way onto the other? Did *you* make that change, or did something else taken place? If all is well, then you were *brought* from *one way unto the other*.

For it is so very important, that we learn our own powerlessness. If we do not learn our own powerlessness, nothing will take place, because then we help ourselves, and then we have no need for the Lord. For, the whole of this soul-saving work of God is this: *that it is God Who does it. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* (Phil. 2: 12, 13). Perhaps you think that you are willing. You say, although you do not utter the words: *"I really would like to, but I am unable."* No for this is, in conflict with the Scripture! *"Both, to will and to do!"* The Holy Spirit takes us, as a father takes his child, and brings us down from our way over to God's way. Did it take place like that?

9th December.

“Shew me Thy ways O LORD; teach me Thy ways” (Psalm 25:4.2).

The Lord always returns to His own work, that is how it has always been. It may appear as if the Lord has forgotten, but He will return in His own time. And when that is perceived, then this works a deep humiliation. For then we have become even greater sinners than we were when we first received grace, and then Christ has become greater as well. And so, everything has come to a completely different prospective. Do you know something about this as well?

There are people from whom you always hear the same. That is a sign of death. Just assume that we, the older ones, still spoke about the same things we spoke about forty, fifty, or sixty years ago! And that is how it is in spiritual respect as well. In the foundation and being it is the same, however, because of the working of the Holy Spirit we are continually brought to see different perspectives, that is why it is always different and new again. We know what the Lord Jesus said to the scribes when He taught them: *“That the Kingdom of Heaven: bringeth forth out of the treasure of the heart things new and old.”*

And what happens, when you are troubled? Do you receive help? Do you receive help, or do you help yourself? And who is it that helps you? You can read a lot about this in Pilgrims Progress. He also belonged to those poor and needy people. But who helps you? Some people are ready to help you. And you are inclined to help yourself, for you would prefer to be rid of your problems. The Prince of darkness also offers you his help. And the people, well, why would they not like to help you? They are often helped themselves by doing it. Because a person who does not know God, offers help to his neighbour, because he is sometimes strengthened by doing it, himself. You should ask yourself, what happens, when you are troubled, and feel your helplessness, and are unable to go in or out, as Solomon says. Whether there is *One who remembers you*, while *you* thought that *He* had forgotten you? Does He then come unexpectedly to help you, to comfort, to strengthen and to teach you?

10th December.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3: 16).

What a word! Isn't that a great word? In paradise everything was changed in *one* moment. When you believe John 3:16, then everything has also been changed in one moment, everything is restored; yes, for more is given than we had in paradise.

John 3: 16 is a word which does wonders, when the Holy Spirit has made use of it. It causes a spiritually dead man, to be alive. It makes those who know not where to hide, happy. It saves those in whom the question arises: Would it not be better, if I ended my life? It covers the naked; it adorns the unadorned. It purifies the unclean, and it provides for temporal, spiritual, and eternal things. It gives us everything, and again: it all takes place *in one moment!* When God speaks, through the means of this word: *"Let there be light,"* (Gen. 1: 3), and then there is light, and this must be believed. Whosoever does not believe it, lets it pass by, and he will turn to the visible and palpable things, supposing that he can expect his help from them. That is how the world is full of fountains of help, but sooner or later, it will appear that they are nothing but dry brooks. Oh, how great will the disappointment be then! It must be believed; we must have it in our heart. The Truth must be written in our heart. *"For with the heart man believeth,"* the Apostle Paul says, *"...and with the mouth confession is made."* (Rom. 10: 10).

Count it a great wonder that you are still here, for you can still go back now. Presently you will no longer be able to go back, *when death comes into your window.*" (Jer. 9: 21). Oh, there is no reconsideration in the grave! Believe the Word! For it is a Word spoken by God Himself, and the matters written are the matters of God, and with the matters of God, all ends well for you. Someone once spoke these fine words: *"I count them fortunate who have a good God, a good matter, and a good conscience."* That is rightly spoken. When you presently lie on your sickbed, then it could be that you no longer have an ear for these things, and what could you do then, being forsaken of God? Have you felt something of this? To be forsaken, and given over unto yourself! The Apostles have said: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* (Acts 16:31).

11th December.

"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law" (Gal. 4: 4,5a.1).

"The fullness of time", that is the time which God judged as the most appropriate time. We could ask: Why not earlier? Why was it then? The answer to this question must be: because it pleased God to do it then. The time which the Lord has determined before, must always be accepted by us as the right time, even if we cannot find a reason for it.

"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." The Father (for it is about Him that we speak here) has sent forth His Son, and by this we can see that the Son was there before He was sent forth by the Father, therefore we have the evidence and proof of the Godhead of Christ. We must take notice of these things, for everything for us depends on this, whether we have the right knowledge of the second Person in the Divine Trinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Son of God also became *man*. He was God, and He became man. He had His Divine nature out of the substance of the Father, and He was the living Image of the Father. His human nature came from the being of the virgin Mary, and so He was true and righteous man. And so, *true God and true man*; both *God and man in one Person*. When it became evident that the Apostle Peter had embraced this truth, the Lord Jesus spoke these words unto him; *"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 16: 17).

"...made under the Law" "Law" here means: *Covenant*. The Law as a covenant consists in three matters. Firstly, it is *a demand*. This demand is: *"Do this, and thou shalt live."* (Lev.18: 5 and Gal. 3: 12). Secondly, the Law has *a promise of life*. If Adam had remained standing, then he would have obtained a secure right in regard to the promise of the Covenant of Works, a right unto eternal life for himself and for the whole of mankind. Thirdly, the Law has a threat, *a threat of death*: which we find in the words of Galatians 3:10: *"Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them."*

12th December.

“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.” (Gal. 4: 4,5a.2).

When we read, that He Who is true God and at the same time has become, a true and righteous man under the Law, then this lets us know that the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied the demand of obedience, of, *"Do this, and thou shalt live"*, and that He also endured the punishment which was laid upon the transgression of the Law.

All men are *"under the Law"* as a Covenant of Works, for all mankind are incorporated in Adam. So, God has made the covenant with mankind, although at the time only with Adam, for Adam was the only one there at that time, because all mankind are included in the loins of Adam. Therefore, it must be said that God made the first covenant with all of mankind, with me and you, with everyone individually. If everyone had been able to come into Paradise as Adam has been there, with the establishing of the covenant, then the Covenant of Works would not have applied to us, any *more than* what it does *now*. This truth must come into our hearts in a strong comprehension. For if the first covenant is not known, then our eyes will remain closed for the second covenant, which is the Covenant of Grace! Therefore, the Apostle Paul says that the Law, which is, the Covenant of Works, *is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*, (Gal. 3: 24) which is, the Covenant of Grace, according to Romans 10: 4; *"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."* When man in some degree, through the workings of the Spirit, begins to take notice of these matters, then he begins to understand that with all his own works, he can never, get to heaven. How privileged would you be then, if you were to understand this, for then the dreadful doctrine which is generally proclaimed in and outside of our churches in our days, would not have such an influence upon you. *"To redeem them that were under the Law."* God wants to save some of those who are under the Law. Everyone is under the Law, but God does not want to save everyone. If God would have wanted that, then it would have happened.

13th December.

“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.” (Gal. 4: 4, 5a.3).

We find the truth about the election clearly expressed throughout the Word. I agree, it is a most dreadful truth. It is a comforting truth but at the same time a most dreadful truth, *but it is the truth!* Anyone who comes into contact, with the truth even if it just superficially, knows that this is so. God's explicit intention is to save only a small part of mankind and allows the greatest part of mankind to be lost. But my flesh and blood and yours as well, disagree with that. However, it is written: *“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”* (Is. 8: 20). In order that a portion of mankind would be saved, the Son of God, about Who it is said to be: true God and true and righteous man at the same time, He has placed Himself *“under the Law”*. He has shown obedience unto the Law, and at the same time He has carried the punishment which was threatened by God.

If you have attentively followed what we have mentioned, then you understand *how man is righteous before God*. This is the great question, and life and death depend upon the answer. This question: *“How am I righteous before God,”* has lived in the hearts, of all the elect who have come to understand what this question means. And is found in the question: *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2: 37). And in this question as well: *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16: 30). When a person is under the workings of the Holy Spirit, (which must become clear later), and he is under the seal of eternal election unto salvation, then *this question* will be found in his heart: *“How am I righteous before God?”*

A man is righteous before God *through faith in Christ*; he is not righteous in himself! In himself, he is guilty. That is what the Bible teaches us, and our conscience tells us as well. You must understand that for me and you, it all depends on just one thing: *“Do I believe in Christ Jesus?”* It is told to us in Gal. 3: 26: *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”*

14th December.

“And beside Me there is no Saviour.” (Is. 43: 11b)

What a blessing it is, that we are not asked to save our brother or sister. Because even if we were able to do this work, we would not be willing. Just think about that; and then consider this, that: *Christ was willing*, He has placed Himself in man's stead, because no one desired it or felt the need for it. Then He did what man was demanded to do, and He suffered what man should have suffered eternally. And that is how He has become the righteousness of mankind. The righteousness which Jesus Christ has obtained in this way, and by doing it like that, and through this suffering He has obtained the righteousness which has its existence before God, and with which every person is able to stand before God, only then when he has taken hold of them.

Christ's human nature became the sacrifice. But this nature was the same as yours and mine; so, a man became the sacrifice. A finite offer would not have been sufficient; therefore the Divine nature has united Himself with the human nature. So now the human offer was no longer a finite offer. Through this union of the Divine and the human nature it became an infinite Offer. And the sight of this infinite Offer brings hope to the downcast heart of man, *"And this hope maketh not ashamed,"* says the Apostle Paul in Romans 5: 5. So the obtaining of this deliverance lies in the Son, but the possibility to take hold of this deliverance lies in the third Person of the Godhead. To say it differently: with the Divine Spirit, which is the Administrator of salvation. In the deliverance, we must have had dealings: with the Triune God: with the Father, Who has chosen us; and with the Son, Who has obtained salvation; with the Holy Spirit, Who applies this salvation. But it must begin with the latter. There must be a bond between Christ and us. There is also a bond between Adam and us. The bond between Adam and us is by our nature. The bond between Christ and us is through grace. The bond between Christ and us from our side is faith, and on God's side the Holy Spirit. If it is true faith, then our first deed is to take hold of Christ. There is however a faith which does not do this, but that is a temporary, delusive, or presumptive faith. Because every faith which is true, takes hold of Christ.

15th December.

"And their Nobles shall be of themselves, and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach unto Me, for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the LORD. "(Jer.30:21.1).

And their Nobles shall be of themselves." The Lord Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal Life (1 John 5: 20). But He is also man, a true righteous man. He is both: God and man, and He is this in *one* Person. *"And their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them."* The Son of God has a dominion: a dominion which stretches over everything. What a comfort this is, when through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may truly appropriate this unto ourselves! Christ has dominion over death and the grave, over hell and damnation, over satan, and over the world. How secure and how safe are all those who have taken their refuge under the shadow of His wings. This is such a wonder, and it made the Apostle Paul exclaim: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."* (Rom. 8: 28). Christ rules in the hearts of His people through His word and Spirit. When it is given to man to believe this, and become aware of this, then he lies on the knees of his heart, and he prays: *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"* (Acts 9: 6).

".... shall be of themselves"... and *".... shall proceed from the midst of them"* they are the same thoughts. Christ is from man! It must be shown unto us, what this means. These words tell us that He understands man; and that He is the only One Who understands man. He understands man's life, his troubles and his sorrows. They are not foreign to Him. That is why we find in Isaiah 63: 9: *"In all their affliction, He was afflicted."* That is, in the afflictions of mankind, in the afflictions of His followers. Paul wrote: *"But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebr. 4: 15). *"And I will cause Him to draw near."* This *"I"* is the first Person in the Divinity. When God has been revealed unto you, then you know that in this One Godhead, there are three Persons. Have you ever seen, or did you ever call out; *"Through faith, I understand that the Triune God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?!"*

16th December.

“And their Nobles shall be of themselves, and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach unto Me, for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the LORD.” (Jer. 30: 21.2).

The first Person says: *"I will cause Him to draw near."* The matters regarding salvation all come from God. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, has not appointed Himself, nor is it a coincident that He is a Saviour. He is God's Servant! *"Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth."* (Is. 42: 1). And: *"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."* (Matt. 3:17).

The Father has separated the Son in the peaceful eternity. There was a negotiation between the Father and the Son, the third Person, the Holy Spirit has been present there as well. He was the quiet Listener.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb, *which was slain from the foundation of the world.* (Rev. 13: 8). From eternity it was God's intention to bring salvation unto men, *only in Jesus Christ.* That is why the fall was also taken up in God's counsel. If the fall had not been taken up in God's determined counsel, then God would not have been known, as He is known now. This signifies what we find in 2 Cor. 4: 6: *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"*.

The Father has promised the Son. Adam and Eve knew nothing about Christ. It was not possible for them to know Him; but the Father revealed Him and said: *"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Gen. 3: 15). If this word had not been spoken, then there would have been no hope forever, neither for me, nor for you. But God has said; *"I have laid help upon One that is mighty."* (Ps. 89: 19). In the fullness of time, God has sent Christ: *"made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:4:5).

17th December.

"And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1: 46).

Mary was a human being just as we are, "*shapen in iniquity; and in sin*" (Ps. 51: 5) But Mary had grace. The Lord had called Mary; He called her out of a world which lies in wickedness, and loathsomeness, and as far as the world has come in contact, with the Gospel, is worse than the devil. The Lord had convinced Mary. For as long as man has not been convinced of sin, he will have no room or need for grace. The Lord had made Himself known unto her, and then it was done for Mary. Another Mary had risen. The Mary which had been, had given herself over unto death, for she had seen that everything was damnable. This is what it is, to possess grace! And you may examine yourself, whether *your heart* understands these matters. And Mary was now destined to take a special place in this life. This privilege has not been put aside for everyone. It was Judas' task to deny Christ, and I don't know if you have come to realize what your task is in this life, or what you were born for, and what your calling is. We do not honour Mary as the Roman Catholic Church does; this is against the Scriptures, and ludicrous. And if Mary was on earth, she would speak against this foolishness as strongly as she could.

Mary had a difficult life; we might well say, that she had a hard life. She carried a secret within her. She could not reveal this secret, for, if she would have done this, the world would have mocked her, and Joseph would have thought that Mary was telling him a tale. Mary did not have the frankness, nor the opening to say anything. Now, it says in the Holy Scriptures: "*For upon all the glory shall be a defence.*" (Is. 4: 5). Now if there is something which is of God, then the Lord continually keeps His eye on it; and at the same time, He teaches us not to stand up for it ourselves, but to quietly go our way. And that is why it is written: "*In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*" It is a pity that the prophet had to follow with the words; "*and ye would not.*" (Is. 30: 15 and Luke 13: 34). But through the grace of God, Mary was *willing*. And now the Lord had revealed it unto Joseph, who was espoused to Mary, and He had also revealed it unto Elizabeth. And that is God's work, for: "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Host.*" (Zech. 4: 6). Everything goes along an even path!

18th December.

"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour." (Luke 1: 47.1).

Mary's life was difficult, but in the difficulties of a Christians life, there are moments, in which he lifts-up his head out of the misery. (Job 11: 16) And Mary had a moment like that, when she visited Elizabeth.

While I thought on this text, the question arose. Who is this blessed person? And what is *your* answer to this question? What do you think about this? Who do you think this blessed person is? This blessed person, is a person who has a refuge in and through this difficult life. No, a blessed person is not him who is prosperous, for his prosperity is usually cursed, since he uses it to go against God, against himself, and against his neighbour. But the blessed man in this difficult life is the one, who: *"has Jacob's God for his helper."* (Ps. 146: 3).

"And my spirit hath rejoiced". "My spirit". We exist in body and spirit. If we have grace, then the Holy Spirit has come into us, and if this has taken place, we will say: The Holy Spirit dwells in me, the Word and the Holy Spirit."

"And my spirit hath rejoiced." What was it that rejoiced Mary's spirit? She rejoiced in the only Object of happiness, because the thousands of objects of this world, will not bring us any happiness. Whether this is a legend or the truth, I do not know, but you may have heard that Alexander the Great, who had many victories, wept because there was nothing left for him to conquer. *People, if you were to stop for one moment, to seek what is in the world;* then you would feel *the deep* poverty of your undying soul! And then something else must immediately take place; for if nothing else came in its stead, you would be unable to live. Mary rejoiced *"in God."* Not in God in the absolute sense. God in the absolute sense is a devouring Fire and an everlasting Burning, among which no one can dwell. (Is. 33: 14). Mary rejoices in God her Saviour. She knows the Lord, and she knows that through Him she has received grace. And she also knows, that she will receive more grace from Him yet; for she knows that He will grant her all that she needs. This joy begins when Christ is revealed into the heart. Before that time, no one has ever had any true joy.

19th December.

“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour”. (Luke 1: 47.2).

Which God did Mary rejoice in? I have told you something about her joy. Before we answer this question, I must tell you that every converted person knows Mary's joy. It is probable that not every believer feels this joy in the same manner, in which Mary felt this, but they have all known it. Grace is never granted unto us without sorrow, but this sorrow is never without joy. Where there is true joy, there is also true sorrow. And where there is the sorrowing after God, there is also the sincere joy. Mary rejoiced in God her Saviour. Mary weeps; she weeps about herself, and she weeps about her happiness. It is here that: *"godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of,"* a true repentance unto God. (2 Cor. 7: 10). A great deal of sorrow can come before it, but not the sorrow which works a conversion like that.

Mary renews her choice. She had already chosen the Lord, but now she renews her choice. She wants to serve no one else but God, like Joshua once said: *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (Josh. 24: 15). It is here that Mary leaves everything. Mary has now become quite poor! Even if she would have possessed great riches, she would still have been very poor. For it would no longer be Mary who possessed these riches; but God would have possessed this wealth for her. Can you understand that? That God would have possessed her wealth. If there is something we possess ourselves, then we are still rejected. Mary has nothing left but God. She says, although she may have not used these same words at that moment: *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee."* (Ps. 73: 25). Mary fully unites herself with the Lord and His cause. Because Mary herself has no cause anymore. I have already mentioned it to you; Mary has nothing anymore. She has become poor but rich in God. She unites herself with the cause of God, with His people, and His way. She has laid her hand upon her mouth forever. She shall agree with God in everything, even if she must die a martyr's death, even if everything was taken from her. And everything would be taken from her. She has stood at the cross of her Son. Her only desire was, that she would be allowed to follow.

20th December.

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." (Luke 2:1).

It is written as if no proof was necessary. And there is no need for proof in these matters. For they are a proof unto themselves. When we have the Holy Spirit in us, like Luke the author of this Gospel; then we feel and experience these things; then they are a greater certainty for us than the things we see and feel. The Church has always testified that God's Word is a lamp unto her feet, and a light unto her path. (Ps. 119:105).

"...in those days", that is what we find in verse 5 of the first chapter in the days of Herod, King of Judaea. Herod was not a man after God's heart, as David was. He was of Idumean decent. We are not inclined to expect any good thing to come forth for the Church of Christ, in times and circumstances like that. And yet, that is *when* the Lord came. When things look so hopeless to us, and we can see no way out, then the Almighty sufficient Jehovah reveals Himself into our hearts, and tells us: *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*(Matth.11:28).

The word of the prophet was fulfilled: *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be a ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting"* (Micah 5:2). It had the appearance that this prophesy would not be fulfilled. Mary, who was with child of the Lord, was in Nazareth and not in Bethlelem. However, it was nothing but pretence. For: *"the Lord reigneth"* (Ps. 99:1). He says: *"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure"* (Is. 46:10). In the heart of Augustus, He puts the plan; that all the world should be taxed, and that is how the Lord brings Mary to the place where she had to be. Mary and Joseph did not understand that Augustus had been used like that. They were blind for these matters, they would understand them later. *"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter"* (John 13:7). And Isaiah's prophesy was: *"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not"* (Is. 42:16).

21st December.

“And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.” (Luke 2: 2. 3).

Hidden in this text we find a difficult matter of historical nature, but we will not become involved in this matter now. However, it is certain that this taxing, which we are speaking about, took place at the *right time*. These things become great when we consider, that it was all prophesied many centuries before. It says in Daniel 2: 44: *“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”* And Genesis 49:10: *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”* And in Isaiah 7:14: *“Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. And in Micah 5:2: “But thou, Betelehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be a ruler in Israel, whose going forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”*

God had given Caesar Augustus dominion over the land of the fathers. It is true, Caesar Augustus had appropriated this dominion unto himself. Nevertheless, God wanted it like that. Firstly, He had determined it to be so, and secondly because of the sin of His people. God had prophesied and warned His servants about these matters. So there had to be obedience, for it is written: *“Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”* (Matt. 22: 21). And yet, the people were still called to humble themselves before God because of their sins. However, even in those days, there would not have been many. The word of Jeremiah: *“Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?”* (Lam. 3: 39). And this is only obeyed when it is given unto man to humble himself before God. And without this endowment, there is never anything else but murmurings.

22nd December.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David).” (Luke 2: 4.1).

"And Joseph also went up." This was through faith, for it is said: "... *and being a just man.*" (Matt. 1: 19). Man is just when he is in Christ; so, when he has taken hold of the righteousness of Christ. And we do this through faith. Joseph *was a just man*. And Joseph also went up, just like all the other people, for: *“all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked.”* (Eccl. 9: 2). But someone might be inclined to say, you must not forget that Joseph and Mary had to be in Bethlehem. We find that this is not mentioned here. He had gone up because Caesar Augustus had commanded it. Joseph did not think about Micah's prophetic word from Micah 5: 1, and yet, it took place according to the Word. The Word is involved in this, but it comes later. Where the matters are right, the Word does not come beforehand, but it follows later. If Joseph and Mary had thought about the Word (which I doubt), then they have subjected themselves unto the Word. They went according to the order of Caesar Augustus. It says: *"Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing."* (Eccl. 8: 5). Mary was great with child, have you ever looked at a map to see how great the distance is between Nazareth and Bethlehem? (about 100 km, as the bird flies). God has allowed Mary to travel this long distance in her condition. We do not know if she had a donkey or not, but even if she did, this was a difficult journey for her, and ... the people had allowed it. Had she been abandoned? What do you think? Yes, she had been abandoned, and yet she was not forsaken. It is most probable that Joseph and Mary had received a shelter at the appointed time when they were on their way to Nazareth Bethlehem. It may be bold for me to say, but my thoughts are: that there was a *need*. If you have experienced this *need*, you will agree; otherwise, you will leave it for what it is. There can be no other way, there must be a need! *"They called upon the Lord, and He answered them."* (Ps. 99: 6). Is it not true, that one glimpse of God's favour not only alleviates all, but that it is also the reason that we accept everything with gladness?

23rd December.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David).” (Luke 2:4.2).

All these names have a meaning. “Galilee” and “Nazareth.” You know the words from Matthew 4: 15: *“Galilee of the Gentiles”*, and you also know what it says in John 1: 46: *“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”* In spiritual respect, all the Josephs and Marys are despised, for every child of God bears God’s Christ in them. Have you ever learned how despised God’s people are? If you do not know it yet, then maybe you will know it in ten years. But you will find out! Why are they so despised? They are not more contemptible than other people, are they? The people of God are despised because of their confession, and what they say about God. A child of God is a person, who is bowed down and is raised up again. He has no consideration for anything in this world. It is said that we must have respect for the belief of others. But he knows that every belief which has not been wrought by God will not stand, for its origin was not from God, it was not wrought by the Holy Ghost. He knows Christ and that is why he is despised. We must accept this reason. Christians can be so amazed that people keep their distance from them. They cannot understand this, for they are also human, and of like passions as other people are. But people withdraw themselves from you, because of what you say about God!

Judea comes from a word which means one who *praises God*. It says in Genesis 29:35: *“And she (Leah) conceived again, and bare a son and she said, now will I praise the LORD. Therefore she called his name Judah.”* The ones who are despised, are the ones who praise God. They do this in Christ, for if one beholds Christ and God in Him, then he seeks God’s honour. Bethlehem means *bread house*. Bread is what I need and what you need as well, otherwise we would perish from hunger. Now Bethlehem has been the bread house, because Christ was laid there and was born in Bethlehem. And now you must bring this wholly into yourself. Your heart and my heart must be a Bethlehem, a bread house. You know how Christ was laid in Bethlehem. He was laid in a stable, in a manger. This was empty and lowly. When was *your heart* empty?

24th December.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12).

Christmas is a feast of companionship, warmth, happiness, and light. And all these things must be comprehended in a spiritual way. For if we do not understand these matters in a spiritual manner, then our Christmas celebrations will be of little profit unto us. Everything must be understood in a spiritually manner.

Light, there must be light. Not around us, not in our living room, or in our understanding, no, it must be in our heart. The Lord Jesus said: *"I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* (John 8: 12). And the Apostle Paul wrote: *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."* (Eph. 5: 8). See, when a great Light, has entered into our soul, and we are able to say with the psalmist of Psalm 36: *"In Thy light shall we see light,"* then there is a feast, then there is a Christmas feast! Light! What is the light? We would be better off to ask: *"Who is this Light?"* This Light is God. *"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."* (1 John 1: 5). Now when God as Christ Jesus is revealed into the heart, then man may have light, light in God. And that is necessary, for we must not only know that God exists, but also what He is. We must not only know what He is for us. We must also know what He has been for Peter and Paul, and we must know what He is for us as well. And we will know when the Light has risen in our heart, for that is when Jesus Christ, and God in Him, has been revealed into our heart. Then we see God, and I don't know if you are able to say what it is to see God. I don't know if you know, what effect this has, when man beholds God. Then he is raised up. When it is given to you to see God, then you are raised up and you are brought unto God; from God's side this is called *drawing* and from our side it is called *faith*, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. When man is raised up and brought unto God in this way, then is this the work of the Holy Ghost. God has an election for His people, and the Lord Jesus Christ has righteousness, peace, and joy through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells and works in the heart of God's children. He raises them up. And He brings them unto Christ and Christ brings them into the communion with God. If this has been your experience, then *you* know what it is to celebrate Christmas!

25th December.

"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son." (Luke 2: 6,7a).

That which the patriarchal fathers and prophets among the people had seen and prophesied centuries before, had come into being. How true it is what the Spirit reveals in the hearts of the prophets and the children of God! Can you perceive all this? We see it so clearly in the history of Christmas. It is all about Christ and His Congregation, as it is written in Isaiah 45: 4: *"For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect."*

People are also, so occupied with the Church in our days. They express their fears about the Church, but the Church is in God's care, the Church is protected by God: *"Who calleth those things which be not as though they were."* (Rom. 4: 17). People say, all sorts of things about the church. However, for me and for you and for everyone, it is important that we have let go of all that is ours, and wholeheartedly embrace that which is God's. When we have done that, then we have peace with the Lord regarding the Church, and according to the word of the Apostle Paul: *"For we which have believed do enter into rest."* (Hebr. 4: 3).

Mary had conceived in an extraordinary manner, but she would deliver in an ordinary manner. And Luke follows on to say: *"And she brought forth her firstborn Son."* "She", which is Mary, that chosen vessel who had subjected herself unto the Word of the Lord and who said: *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy Word."* (Luke 1: 38). And upon this, the Word was fulfilled. Everything had come together according to the Word. *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."* (Matt. 24: 35). Oh, that we might also have subjected ourselves unto this! You belong to our audience, but how terrible would it be, if presently it will be evident that you will be found among those who will be lost, because you: *"received not the love of the truth, that ye might be saved,"* (2 Thess. 2: 10), so that to all eternity you shall cry out: *"Woe is me, that I did not believe, that I did not subject myself unto the Word!"* Go then and examine yourself, whether you rather live unto yourself, or live according to the Word? For if *you* live unto yourself, then for you, the Word will be dead; however, when the Word lives for you, then *you* are dead unto yourself, and you will hear the voice of the Son of God.

26th December.

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son." (Luke 2: 7a).

The result of our fall and covenant breach in Adam is, that everything is gone! We have lost God! We are separated from God Who has created us. We lie dead in our sins and trespasses. If God does not prevent it, our life is no life, but an eternal destruction of the soul. Reconciliation on our side is impossible, and we do not only stand guilty, but we are also unable to help ourselves, because we are incapable of any good and inclined to all evil.

Mary's Child brings salvation. In Him is *"righteousness and strength."* (Is. 45: 24). When we return unto Him, then we receive what we have lost in Adam. Yes, more than that, for: *"They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever."* (Ps. 125: 1). He, Mary's Child, has brought it all back for those who bow down before Him and need Him. No one is excluded by God. No one shall ever be cast out; who through the grace of the Holy Spirit opens his heart unto the Lord Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus Christ, actually stands and knocks at the door of our heart and will in no wise cast us out. And he is welcomed by God! He is blessed with temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings. He is comforted in life and death! *"And she brought forth her firstborn Son."* He was entirely Mary's Child. He took Mary's flesh and blood upon Him. The Child Which was laid in a manger in Bethlehem, was made in the likeness of man except for sin and grace. That is why the Psalmist of days gone by has already sung: *"Thou art fairer than the children of man; grace is poured into Thy lips."* (Ps. 45: 2). He had remained what He was. With the human nature with which He was prepared in Mary and was united with the substance which He had of the Father. And so, He was true, and righteous Man, but He was also true God, and eternal Life. (1 John 5: 20). Oh, what a sure, and deep salvation there is in Jesus Christ! Truly all those who with an upright faith come to this Man, will be saved. The Apostle Paul has been made able to speak about this in this way, for he wrote: *"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Cor. 5: 21).

27th December

“...and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.” (Luke 2: 7b).

That was all Mary had. She had to make do with that. Has there ever been a mother of a new born baby who has found herself in such circumstances? And yet, how rich was this woman! She had God for her portion! Do we know what it is, to have God for *our* portion? It means to have all our needs fulfilled! Mary was poor, and Jesus has shared this poverty. A manger was His cradle. This poverty is the riches of every man who believes in Jesus Christ to the salvation of his immortal soul. Through this poverty, the riches of the Church, the riches of the believer have come forth, like the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8: 9: *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."* Do you now know what these riches are? If the question was put to us, so that we would answer from the heart what these riches are, which came from the poverty of Christ, would we be able to give a proper answer which would be agreeable with the Scriptures? Would we be able to say, (even if we do not finish it): *"I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad"*? (Ps. 119: 96). Would we be able to name all the favours which God has bestowed upon us, and the love of the Father for the fulfilling of all our needs? Would we be able to exclaim: *"...yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!"*? (Song of Solomon 5:16).

How miserable Bethlehem looked unto Mary, and yet, she was unspeakably rich. She dwelled there under the grace of God. She had the feeling of God's love, in greater or lesser degree. Is that not rich? What else would be able, to make man so rich? What value do all earthly riches have in comparison to this? Mary possessed enough to be able to appear before the Lord, even if she would have had to die. For the angel Gabriel had not only said to her: *"Blessed art thou among women"*, but also *"thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee."* The most important matter for people is to enjoy God's favour, and in all circumstances to know that we are in God's way. This brings prosperity, joy, life, and value to life. It is *that* and *that alone* which brings us real happiness.

28th December.

“... *because there was no room for them in the inn.*” (Luke 2:7c).

Yes, that is what they had left open for Mary and Joseph, *a stable*. When Joseph and Mary arrived at the inn, there was no room for them. But surely, could the people not see the position Mary was in? Yes, the people saw that, and yet there was no room for them. Don't you know, that where it concerns a living Child, you will be unable to find any pity from the people? I have experienced some of that in my own life as well. People have pity for the greatest villains, those who deserve the gallows ten times over, but there is not the least pity for the living Child. No, the deepest hatred is found in the human heart. It is like the Holy Spirit says this through the words of Paul: "*Hateful, and hating one another.*" (Tit. 3: 3). There has never been any pity, where it concerns the living Child. The words from Psalm 22 shall not fall on earth: "*They cried unto Thee, and were delivered, they trusted in Thee and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn.*" (Psalm 22: 5,6,7). That is how Christ has lamented through the Spirit of prophecy. We do nothing else nowadays than revile Christ with our Christmas celebrations. What exaggerations there are everywhere! Just look and see what took place in Bethlehem. Instead of man thinking about that, he makes the days of Christmas into festive days, whether he spends them in a religious or in a worldly manner. Who is there that understands, that *his sins* can be seen in this manger? Who has ever seen his sins in Christ by going through the world? Who has seen his sins on the cross and in the grave? Christmas is only a feast for those, who have a truly broken and contrite heart, otherwise, we see nothing else than a Child, about which the world rejoices, although they do not know Him; yet He shall presently present Himself to them to be the Lion out of the tribe of Judah, Who has prevailed, and will be fearful in revenge, *unless*, while there is still time today, "*kiss the Son.*" (Ps.2:12).

29th December.

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.” (Luke 2: 8).

Would we have thought about shepherds? Not me, and I don't think you would have either. However, the Lord does, for God elects *that* which is *nothing*, He elects the base, the poor, the weak and despised, like the Apostle Paul says: *"The excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."* (2 Cor. 4: 7). Is it not a glorious wonder, that while there were so many distinguished, wise, and highly placed people for the service, such as the high priest, the scribes, and the pharisees, God passes them by, and He turns to a field just outside of Bethlehem to bring the glad tidings of salvation unto the simple shepherds? Behold, God's free grace! *The Lord chooses His inheritance* (Ps. 47: 4), and that is all there is to it! If He chooses you, then: *"He causeth you to approach, that you may dwell in His courts"* (Ps. 65: 4); and if He passes you by, you will never ask for God, for: *"None saith, where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?"* (Job 35: 10).

The high priest, the scribes, and the pharisees would not accept, the demand which Christ made, neither were they open to reason. Perhaps you say: *"But man is of himself not able or susceptible, for it does not come from himself, but from God. ..."* Yes, that is true! But you can see from this word which I have pointed out to you, that it is all taken up in God's counsel, and yet, man is still responsible. Otherwise he would be apt to say: *"It does not matter how I live or what I do."* For that matter, the whole reformation of the Church ... God was at work to reform the Church ... but it does not concern all the learned and distinguished people. And with the proclamation of salvation, God turned to the shepherds. And this is just like the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, that also began, before anyone realized that it had begun. The Jews mockingly said, that the Apostles were: *"Men full of new wine."* God restores His Church, we do not do it; we never do anything else but destroy. And the blessed work of the Reformation, lies in God's hand. What a great privilege and blessing this is!

30th December.

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2: 10b).

Do we know this joy? We do not know this joy by nature. Man strives, he seeks to climb up, attempts to possess many things; for he wants to be something, to have something, to become someone, and to do something. Does that give happiness? The answer to this question is the well-known answer of the preacher: *"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."* Do you believe that you are condemned in yourself, despite, and with all that is yours? Then humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Look unto the salvation which God has brought about in Christ. Through true faith take hold of that to which you are very welcome. Lean upon the mercifulness of heaven, and then you shall rejoice. What is this joy? It is to lose oneself in the virtues of God, and so in God Himself. Then all that is yours has ceased, and God has come to take the place of everything. The psalmist of Psalm 73 has put this into these words: *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."* And in this joy, the Apostle Paul said: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."* (Phil. 3: 7). The Apostle Peter also mentions this joy, where he testified: *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matt. 16: 16). This joy, goes together with the giving over of oneself. This is the contentment with the Lord. He who knows Him, who has come to know Him, now says: *"I will no longer seek, for I have found it!"* And he experiences that in his heart and in his life; he has found a Supporter! This experience has caused the Apostle Paul to say: *"By faith ye stand."* This joy does not end in man, nor does it end in the workings. It does not make one look more to men, because they hold this or that position No, it ends through Jesus Christ in the Triune God.

It causes the soul to say: *"Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved."* (Ps. 62:1). It is peace through Christ. And Christ has obtained this peace. The Son of God is the way unto the Father. And why *"great joy"*? Because it has been laid aside by God, and it has been obtained by Jesus Christ, and it is worked by the Holy Spirit. So not: because the feeling is so great!

31st December.

“LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” (Psalm 90: 1).

If man has not taken his refuge unto God, then he has allowed himself to be kept back, for God is a Refuge. We don't make Him a Refuge, He is a Refuge, He is this for you, He is this for all of us. And what can be the reason, if man has not made use of it? It is this: he has allowed himself to be held back by the things he loves, and he has held back by the love of himself, by the visible and palpable things, by his own righteousness and insights, and by many other things, and this is what the Lord calls: the withdrawing of oneself. *“If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.”* (Hebr. 10: 38). For God is a Refuge, and He is that because He has no pleasure in those who withdraw themselves. This must be made clear to us by the workings of the Holy Spirit, for without the workings of the Holy Spirit, we do not understand this. We have various workings and feelings in our body: like the folding of hands, calling, sighing, weeping, and lamenting. And we are so inclined to call all these things *“taking refuge to God.”* But this it is something else, this is hidden from us, we must be taught about these matters. That is why we need the indwelling and workings of the Holy Spirit. Without the indwelling and workings of the Holy Spirit, we will never perceive nor understand these things; and the result of that is, that we always cling to other things. And this is that cautious agreement with hell and the covenant with death. (Isaiah 28:15). When we see the door of heaven slightly ajar, let us enter in, for it must be the right time, in which the word counts: *“The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”* (John 11: 28). Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, let there be a deep conviction, that in the taking of this Refuge, *lies our salvation*. For without taking this refuge, there can be no expectation of salvation. And we must not think that the fault lies with God, for God is good. We must take notice of His Word, for it says in God's Word: *“As I live, saith the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”* (Ezek. 33: 11).

THE END.