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MEDITATION

Wacht U Bij Verzadiging

“Als gij dan zult gegeten hebben en verzadigd zijn, zoo zult gij den Heere uwen God loven over dat goede land, dat Hij u zal hebben gegeven. Wacht u dat gij den Heere uwen God niet vergeet, dat gij niet zoudt houden Zijne geboden en Zijne rechten en Zijne inzettingen, die Ik u heden gebied; enz.

Deut. 8:10-20.

Ja, er is gevaar in verzadiging!

Dat is zoo, anders zou God het niet zeggen, en er tegen waarschuwen.

En de ondervinding heeft het ons geleerd. Door schade en schande wordt men wijs. Ook in het koninkrijk Gods.

We dachten daaraan in de dagen die aan onzen nationalen dankdag vooraf gaan. Als ge dit leest is het al dankdag geweest. In dit oogenblik, echter, is het nog enkele dagen voor dankdag.

Mozes had Israel gebracht tot de grenzen van het beloofde land. Verder mocht hij het volk niet brengen. Maar hij zal nog eenmaal dat volk de wet des Heeren inprenten. Dat is de beteekenis van Deuteronomium. Het is de tweede lezing van de Wet des Heeren.

En toen was hij aan 't vertellen gegaan van de wondere werken Gods.

En van het vele goede dat hun wachtte daar in het beloofde land. Het zou een land zijn overvloeiende van melk en honig.

Luistert naar Mozes: “Want de Heere uw God brengt u in een goed land, een land van waterbeeken, fonteinen en diepten, die in dalen en in bergen uitspuiten; een land van tarwe en gerst, en wijnstokken en vijgeboomen en granaatappelen, een land van olie-rijke olijfboomen en van honig; een land waarin gij brood zonder schaarsheid eten zult, waarin u niets

ontbreken zal, een land welks steenen ijzer zijn, en uit welks bergen gij koper uithouwen zult. . . .

En dan komt de waarschuwing: als ge dan gegeten zult hebben. . . . wacht u dan dat gij uwen God niet vergeet. . . .

Wacht u bij verzadiging!

* * * *

Ja, Israel zou dan eten en verzadigd worden.

Dat is het mirakel geworden van de genade Gods over Israel.

Het had er dan vreeselijk bij gestaan met het volk van God. Zij zaten bij de tichelsteenen neer en werden zwart van dienstbaarheid. En de honger moet hen zeer geplaagd hebben.

Later kwam de verlossing, doch ze moesten, ook vanwege hun goddeloosheid, veertig jaren in een huilende wildernis rondwandelen.

En in die wildernis waren vurige slangen en schorpioenen.

In die wildernis waren groote verschrikkingen.

Soms gingen families onder in groote verbolgenheid. Sommigen zijn levend ter helle gevaren.

Maar de verlossing, de eindelijke verlossing is in 't verschiep.

En daar zal men eten en drinken en verzadigd worden van de kostelijke spijzen en dranken.

Het gaat naar den hemel heen. En in den hemel zal het volop zijn. De rivier Gods is vol waters.

En Israel heeft uitgevonden, dat deze profetie van Mozes vervuld zou worden. Zij zijn in het beloofde land gegaan en zij hebben gesmuld van al het heerlijke, dat God deed groeien en bloeien.

Ze werden verzadigd. Ze werden vol van al het goede hetwelk de Heere met milde hand hun geschonken had.

Maar Mozes was door Goddelijke aanspraak vermaand om dat volk te waarschuwen. Er was het gevaar om den Heere te vergeten, nadat men vervuld zou zijn met het goede van Zijn hand.

Wacht U, o Israel! dat gij den Heere Uwen God

niet vergeet als gij vol zult zijn van Zijn gaven en volmaakte giften.

O! het gevaar is niet denkbeeldig om God te vergeten.

* * * *

En het is geschied.

Het hart van Israel verhief zich tegen God en zij vergaten Hem.

En God vergeten hebbende, was er maar één overig aan wien zij konden denken, en die eene waren zij zelf. En zoo kwamen zij tot de dwaasheid om te midden van al den rijkdom van Palestina te zeggen: "Mijne kracht, en de sterkte mijner hand, heeft mij dit vermogen gegeven." (vers 17)

En dan gaat het al dieper en al dieper naar de verfoeiselen der zonde heen. Dan volgde men andere goden na; vers 19.

En het einde werd dan dat men verging. Dat staat ook in het 19de vers.

Dan vergaat het Israel als de heidenen die ook verdeldg werden door God.

En de eenige reden is, omdat men God vergat.

En zoo is het geschied, dat ontelbaar velen verloren zijn gegaan.

Men was vol en vergat God.

Wacht U bij verzadiging!

* * * *

Wat moeten we dan doen?

We moeten loven den Heere onzen God.

We moeten Zijn geboden, rechten en inzettingen bewaren die Hij ons geboden heeft.

Er is slechts één doel waarom er de eerste wereld is, waarom er geschiedenis is, waardoor deze eerste wereld naar de tweede en laatste wereld zich spoedt, en waarom die tweede wereld zal staan tot in alle eeuwigheid. En dat eene doel is het loven van God.

Het is nu eenmaal een feit, dat God op Zijn troon zit. En Hij blijft eeuwiglijk op dien troon zitten, zal hem nooit afstaan aan het schepsel. Halleluja! God wil centraal zijn in Zijn schepping, en Hij heeft er recht op. En Hij zal centraal zijn in Zijn schepping en herschepping. Beide nu en straks is God God. Daar zorgt Hij Zelf voor. Daar gaat niets af. Ook niet als Zijn volk Hem vergeet.

Wij moeten Hem loven als we vol en verzadigd zijn van het goede ons geschonken.

En dat beteekent eenvoudig dat ge het Hem aanzegt hoe goed en lieflijk, hoe groot en heerlijk, hoe wijs en recht Hij is. Dat wil Hij tot in alle eeuwigheid hooren van Zijn volk. Daartoe heeft Hij hen bereid.

God heeft brood en water, het vette van Zijn aardrijk met alle zegeningen, opdat men aan Hem denke, Hem love, Hem diene in nederigheid des harten, kortom, opdat men geheel en al in Hem eindige.

Wacht U bij verzadiging, dat ge den Heere Zijn lof en prijs geeft!

Wacht U, dat gij Uwen God niet vergeet!

Och arme! Dat doen we allemaal!

Zonder één uitzondering, vergeet de geheele menscheid God die hen gemaakt heeft, die hen voedt en onderhoudt, die hen leidt en weidt. Van Adam en Eva tot op den huidigen dag is er nooit één mensch geweest die God niet vergat te loven en te prijzen. Israel deed het niet, en wij in den Nieuw Testamentischen dag doen het niet.

Neen, we hebben juist het tegenovergestelde gedaan.

We verheffen ons, we dienen afgoden, en we vergaan. Psalm 90.

Alle schepselen roepen ons luidkeels toe: Wacht U, dat gij Uwen God niet vergeet! En ons antwoord is steeds: Ik heb Hem allang vergeten, en wil niet aan Hem denken. Denk ik toch aan Hem, dan zeg ik: Wijk van mij, o God, want aan de kennis Uwer wegen heb ik geen lust!

Dit brengt ons tot een moeilijkheid.

Hoe komt het dan, dat Mozes, Caleb en Jozua zulke goede mannen waren, die wel aan God dachten?

Hoe kan Luther staan als een leeuw in Worms? Vergat hij God?

Wat moeten we doen met die ontelbare schare die verbrand, gemarteld, en vermoord zijn juist omdat zij aan God dachten?

We zullen trachten om U dat te verklaren.

En dan moest eerst vaststaan hetgeen we hierboven afgeschreven hebben.

Het is een onomstootelijk feit, dat een ieder die ooit leefde, nu leeft, of nog leven zal, God vergeet, Hem weigert te dienen, en Zijn geboden, rechten en inzettingen achter zich werpt. Denkt U een oogenblik het totale getal der menscheid. Welnu, die zijn allen te zamen stinkende geworden; niemand van hen zoekt God! En dat sluit in Henoch, Noach, Abraham, Mozes, David, Paulus, ja allen.

Adam leefde in het Eden en vergat God.

Zijn kinderen wonen niet meer in een paradijs, maar er is toch nog zeer veel brood, water, kleding, huizen, ijzer, koper, enz. En we leven te midden van al die dingen.

En temidden van al die dingen VERGETEN WE GOD!

God zegt: Wacht U dat ge Mij niet vergeet, en wij zeggen: Ik vergeet U!

Vreeselijke toestand!

* * * *

En toen is er Een Mensch gekomen die net andersom deed.

En die Eene Mensch is Jezus Christus, onze Heere.

Adam stond in een rijk paradijs. En de Heere zeide te midden van al dien rijkdom: Adam ge moet Mij niet vergeten. Denk aan Mij en loof mij, en het zal wel zijn met U en Uw zaad!

Maar hij deed het niet, en stortte zichzelf en zijn na-

komelingen in dien toestand die we boven omschreven.

Israel stond in een rijk Palestina. Leest den tekst.

En God zeide tot Israel door Mozes woord: Wacht U! Vergeet mij niet! Looft Mij!

Ge weet de uitkomst. Zelfs Mozes kon het land niet ingaan vanwege zijn zonde. En als ge de geschiedenis van Israel leest, dan zult ge moe worden van het telkens wederkeerende monster der zonde. Ze zondigen, ze worden geslagen, ze schreeuwen, ze worden verlost, enz., enz., enz. Men wordt moede het te lezen.

En vandaag is het nog zoo. Ik kom daarop terug straks.

Maar eindelijk, in de volheid des tijds kwam er een mensch die anders deed.

Die Mensch is Jezus Christus die geboren werd in Bethlehem's stal.

Die Mensch stond niet te midden van een Paradijs. Die stond ook niet te midden van het vele dat er nog overgebleven is. Aan het begin van Zijn leven op aarde was er geen ruimte voor Hem in de herberg. Dat is een profetie die vreeselijk vervuld zou worden in Zijn leven, dat in den meest letterlijken zin een gestadige dood zou worden.

Neen, toen Jezus kwam en tot rijpheid des levens voortschreed, toen was er op den duur niets meer voor Hem. Staat er niet ergens van Hem dat vreeselijke woord *vernietigd*? Staat er niet ergens, dat Hij Zich *vernietigd* heeft? Dat Woord waar we niets mee kunnen doen in de dogmatiek?

Er is straks geen ruimte meer op de aarde: Hij hangt aan het kruis.

Straks is er geen ruimte meer in den hemel: Hij hangt aan het kruis, tusschen hemel en aarde.

Nog een weinig wachters, en er is geen ruimte meer voor Hem in de gemeenschap met den DrieEenigen God: Mijn God, Mijn God, waarom hebt Gij Mij verlaten?

Maar let er nu op: deze Man heeft niets meer over, en toch looft Hij God. Hij heeft God zeer vreeselijk geloofd, temidden van duivelen, bloed, tranen, angst, de vertwijfeling der hellesmart en Godsverlatingen.

Maar Hij heeft nooit nagelaten om te loven. Om God te loven.

Hij heeft God nooit vergeten.

* * * *

Nu gaan we terug naar den gevallen Adam, en vragen we nog eens: hoe komt het toch, dat Adam eenigzins aan God denkt?

En dan is het antwoord: omdat Jezus Christus in hem woont en werkt.

De geheele kerk in het Oude Testament denkt eenigzins aan God en vergeet hem niet, omdat Jezus in haar boezem ligt, en in den boezem der kerk liggende, zingt Jezus Christus vooruit van Zijn vreeselijk werk: 'k Denk aan U, o God, in 't klagen uit de landstreek der Jordaan!

Nu gaan we weer eens naar den tekst in Deuteronomium. Daar staat Mozes, maar met Jezus in 't harte.

Daar staat Israel, maar met den Zoon van God in hun midden, zooveel het vleesch aangaat, en ook vanwege den Geest des Heeren Heeren die in hen is.

En de aanwezigheid van Jezus in Mozes en Israel spelt heerlijke dingen.

Als God dan zegt tot Zijn volk: Wacht U dat gij Mij niet vergeet! Dan zegt Jezus in hen: Ik zal Hem nooit vergeten! Hem mijn Helper heeten!

En zoo loopt de lijn door de eeuwen heen.

Jezus is het die U daarstelt als Zijn volk. Dat noemen we de wedergeboorte. Daardoor neemt Hij Zijn intree in Uw hart. Jezus is het die U dan begint toe te spreken. Dat is Zijn Woord.

En dan zegt Hij: Wacht U, dat ge Mijn Vader niet vergeet. En Jezus is het die U zijn Heilige Geest geeft om gehoorzaam te zijn. Dat noemen we de bekeering en de heiligmaking.

Daarom wordt er tot ons gepredikt van Sabbat tot Sabbat. En daarom schrijven we meditatie. Opdat ge luisteren zoudt naar des Heeren Woord. En dat doet ge ook. Door Zijne wondere genade over U.

Wacht U bij verzadiging!

* * * *

En zoo moet ge niet te veel U vergapen aan den dankdag der wereld.

Wij hebben onzen dankdag en het is goed.

Maar wij hebben dien dankdag niet omdat men hem geproclameerd heeft van hoogerhand. Er is geen aardsche president die ons aan 't danken zet. Dat doet Jezus. En wij hebben den dankdag ook niet, om daar mee te zeggen, dat het met één dag dankens gedaan is per jaar. Want Jezus dankt God tot in alle eeuwigheid.

Ook hebben we den dankdag niet om den Heere te danken voor de dingen van deze aarde alleen, en ook niet voor die dingen in de eerste plaats. Er zijn meer belangrijke dingen dan brood en water.

Maar wij danken God in Jezus' Naam voor alles wat Hij ons schonk.

Israel's aanzijn en Israel's geschiedenis is typisch.

Het brood en het water en het goede land is ook typisch. Het water en het brood zijn de gerechtigheid Gods die Hij uitdacht voor U en voor mij.

Het goede land Palestina is een type van den hemel der zaligheden die wacht voor U en voor mij.

Ge zingt ervan: Daar zal ons 't goede van Uw woning verzaden reis op reis!

En dan dat "eeuwig deel" o groote Koning!

We smelten weg in aanbidding bij het gedenken van zoo groot goed.

Er blijft dan ook niets anders over dan dat ge gaat loven, prijzen en zingen van het Deugdenbeeld, van het Deugdenbeeld van den DrieEenigen God!

Jezus zal het U leeren in 't diepe hart!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Once More: A Tendency To Individualism

In my brief article under "Correspondence" in our last *Standard Bearer* I remarked that I was not sure whether I would reply to the criticism of the Reverend Cammenga in *Concordia*. I wrote that, in my opinion, it was probably not necessary, seeing that I stated my objections rather clearly. The main arguments I offered especially in regard to the new system of catechism lessons the Rev. Cammenga left rather severely alone. The only counter argument he offers is really a quotation from Calvin, which, however, is not to the point at all. In the first place, it is a very partial quotation, which certainly must be verified in the context before it can be of any value. And in the second place, the system of catechism teaching which Calvin proposes is so different from ours that it certainly cannot serve as a model for us. That system was so perfunctory that according to it a boy or girl of ten years old was supposed to have all the main heads of doctrine in his head, and thus would be able "to present himself (or herself) to the church to make profession of faith, would be questioned on each head and give answers to each." It stands to reason that in such a system there would be no room and no time for any thorough instruction in Biblical history. But with us this is quite different. In the normal way of development young people do not make confession of faith until they are about eighteen years of age, which means that we can utilize about ten or twelve years for thorough catechetical instruction. And that leaves plenty of room for instruction in Biblical history. Even the quotation from Calvin, therefore, which the Rev. Cammenga offers as an argument in favor of his new system of catechism teaching, is not to the point at all. And, therefore, I repeat that he does not enter into my arguments and objections to the new system.

However, on reading again the article of the Rev. Cammenga I noticed several elements in it that are well worthy of special attention. The Rev. Cammenga has a very fluent and ready pen. And that easily leaves an impression. But when one analyzes the contents of what he writes, it soon becomes evident that his arguments are neither weighty nor to the point and correct. That this is true with regard to the quotation from Calvin I have already shown. And I propose to weigh and analyze his other arguments in the rest of this article. And therefore, I am constrained to serve the Rev. Cammenga with a reply, hoping that in the meantime he will answer my questions, which I

proposed to him in the last *Standard Bearer*.

And then I want to call attention in the first place to the method with which the Rev. Cammenga tries to bolster up his arguments, and which is,—I will not say: unethical; but at least: —incorrect. Writes he: "So, too, we welcome the criticism of *The Standard Bearer's* editor, although in this case we must say that the criticism is rather tardy, and we also question the fact whether it is in place." And about this tardiness of my reply and the question whether it is in place he writes: "But we spoke of Rev. Hoeksema's being tardy with this criticism, and this is true. The books in question were sent to him by the undersigned for his personal criticism long before they saw print. Concerning the first book, 'Primer of Reformed Doctrine', we received such a nice letter. We kept it as a souvenir for years. We were really proud to have such a compliment from Rev. Hoeksema. His only criticism was: If you are working on a catechism book to teach simple doctrine you ought to make it more simple still. Now as to our last book, 'Easy Steps In Doctrine', Rev. Hoeksema not only saw the entire book months before it went into print, but he saw the undersigned work on the book when we were together on church work for a few weeks, he even offered suggestions and criticism, but never once breathed a word of what he now writes publicly. Only this past August we wrote Rev. Hoeksema again if he could offer criticism on our last book (a mimeographed copy was sent in February) since we thought we might have to print it due to the many requests, the answer was: I appreciate your effort, but personally I do not see the need of such a book, we ought to teach doctrine with Biblical history."

Now, my first remark is that if the Rev. Cammenga wants to produce personal letters, which in itself is not always unethical, he should be careful to quote them literally, and not simply characterize and reproduce their contents as he pleases. He writes: "Concerning the first book, 'Primer of Reformed Doctrine', we received such a nice letter we kept it as a souvenir for years. We were really proud to have such a compliment from Rev. Hoeksema. His only criticism was: If you are working on a catechism book to teach simple doctrine you ought to make it more simple still." Now, in the first place, the reader must notice very carefully that this argument is worthless with respect to the new system of catechism teaching, because the "Primer of Reformed Doctrine" did not replace the books on Biblical history. But the point I want to bring out at present is that I cannot permit the Rev. Cammenga to characterize the contents of my personal letters in the way he does. If he wants to reproduce my letters publicly, I insist that he quote them literally, instead of reproducing them in his own words. And, therefore, I am sorry that he didn't keep this letter as a souvenir until the present day. This is the reason why

I asked him in the last *Standard Bearer* to reproduce the letter which I wrote him concerning his last catechism book.

But still worse it is when the Rev. Cammenga makes use of personal conversations in his article, and that, too, in such a way that the public must receive the impression that I really dealt dishonestly with him. Writes he: "Now as to our last book, 'Easy Steps in Doctrine', Rev. Hoeksema not only saw the entire book months before it went into print (which is true, H.H.), but he saw the undersigned work on the book when we were together on church work for a few weeks, he even offered suggestions and criticism, but never once breathed a word of what he now writes publicly." Now, how incorrect, not to say unethical, this mode of argumentation is will be plain from the following. In the first place, I do not and cannot possibly recall that any such conversation took place between me and the Rev. Cammenga, or that I ever saw him work on the book. Secondly, that therefore, although I do not want to assert that the Rev. Cammenga is guilty of an untruth on his part, I, for my part, don't believe it, especially since I never believed that Biblical history should be entirely ignored. In the third place, even if such a conversation took place, it is evident that the Rev. Cammenga should reproduce literally what I said and in its proper connection, together with the criticism and suggestions I offered, which, of course, is entirely impossible. And therefore, I cannot permit the Rev. Cammenga to quote my conversations with him in public and to leave the impression with his readers that I am two-faced and double-tongued. The only proof, therefore, that is valid, and which the Rev. Cammenga can use in this connection, is the last letter I wrote him on the book, "Easy Steps in Doctrine", and I ask him to reproduce it and quote it literally.

All the more evident it is that I cannot permit the Rev. Cammenga to produce either my personal letters or my personal conversations with him in his own words, when we consider what he writes about my criticism of the Consistory of Fuller Avenue. Writes he: "As far as criticizing the Consistory of Fuller Ave. is concerned it is out of place unless the consistory was duly notified, and we trust it has been, but even this severe criticism is at this time unwise, the 'new system' could better have been given a test for the period of one year". Now, in the first place, I assure the Rev. Cammenga that my consistory was not duly notified, as he seems to trust that it has been. I believe that I can publicly criticize a public notice in the bulletin without notifying the consistory. In the second place, my criticism was not in the form of a protest, but in the form of general and constructive advice. In the third place, I do not believe that the proposed new system of catechism lessons ever appeared on the consistory as a body. In the fourth place, I did not

single out my own consistory, but used the announcement in the bulletin as an illustration of what was done in more than one of our churches. I quote: "As an illustration of what I mean I may point first of all to the new system of catechetical instruction that has been introduced in some of our congregations. Thus I read in the bulletin of my own congregation: 'For some classes the lesson material has been changed. We have planned to begin teaching doctrine at an earlier age.' It seems that our children will be taught the Biblical history only during the ages of six to nine years, while from the age of ten until the time that they make confession of faith they will be taught nothing but doctrine." And finally, I deny the Rev. Cammenga the right to characterize my writing as severe criticism of the consistory. By such language he may probably make an impression, or think that he makes an impression, upon my consistory; but it certainly is incorrect. I neither criticized the consistory at all, nor was my criticism of the new system severe, but proper and very upbuilding. And I challenge the Rev. Cammenga to point out from my article where my severe criticism, which was not in place, of the consistory comes in. But if he so misrepresents my writing, how can I possibly allow him to reproduce my own personal letters and conversations in his own words.

Now, let me return for a moment to the tendency of individualism, which, in my opinion, is illustrated by the introduction of this new system of catechism teaching.

The Rev. Cammenga contends that I must show, in order to prove my point, that the classis made teaching from the books composed by the classical committee compulsory for all the churches. Writes he: "We concede that a number of years ago our general classis appointed a committee to compose catechism books on Biblical history. But Rev. Hoeksema must prove that the appointment of this committee by said Classis implied that all our churches *must always* use these books before he can charge those guilty of the 'new system' as 'going their own way rather than working in unison with the churches, and ignoring and forgetting the decisions of the churches in general, reached in their major assemblies'." Now, this is not correct. We have no hierarchical system of church government, and this would be hierarchy indeed. Of course, in the abstract every consistory has the right to decide upon its own material for catechetical instruction. But this does not mean that a minister and his consistory is not guilty of individualism and of going his own way, when he ignores the *advice* of the major assemblies. And that is exactly what the Rev. Cammenga and the consistory of Hull did. Notice: 1) The classis, and therefore, also the consistory of Hull decided that there was great need of catechism books of our own for the children. 2) The classis, of which also Hull was a

member, appointed a committee of three to write such books, and that committee fulfilled its commission and printed a couple of thousand of catechism books. 3) But the Rev. Cammenga and his consistory ignores the decision of classis and goes its own way. And what else is this than individualism?

But the Rev. Cammenga argues that even ethically he has no obligation to heed the advice of the major assemblies on this score. And his argument is twofold. The first is: "There is always a possibility that another system, besides that adopted by a given committee, might eventually be necessary and prove more advantageous." To this we answer that of course we grant that there is always a possibility, but in order to prove that it is ethically correct not to heed the advice of the major assemblies, he must not talk about possibilities but about actual facts. I deny that the new system of catechetical instruction is more beneficial and advantageous than the old. On the contrary, I maintain that it is positively harmful; and the grounds for this opinion I have stated clearly in my former article, grounds, by the way, which the Rev. Cammenga has not contradicted at all. His second argument is: "That one community differs vastly from another. What may prove advantageous in the one may prove unwise and unusable in another." Also this I deny, on the basis that the same system of truth is taught to children and young people that are of the same average intelligence. This argument is purely individualistic. The Rev. Cammenga writes: "For example, the book by Rev. Hoeksema, 'Essentials of Reformed Doctrine', has never proved successful in this community because its composition is often too complexed and the written work beyond the scope of the catechumen." This I consider an insult to the average intelligence of the young people in the West. I deny that the "Essentials of Reformed Doctrine" is a book that is too complex for any average, intelligent catechumen of the ages sixteen to eighteen, or nineteen, that have enjoyed regular and thorough catechetical instruction from their childhood. And I challenge the Rev. Cammenga to prove it from quotations of the book. And, if the so-called blind questions are too difficult for the average catechumen, so that he cannot answer them by himself, let the minister work with these questions and prepare mimeographed copies of the answers. I assure you that I certainly will fruitfully instruct the average catechumen on the basis of the "Essentials of Reformed Doctrine."

To one more instance of individualism in Rev. Cammenga's article I want to call attention. The Reverend writes: "And that is exactly the difference in catechism. Now it is possible that Rev. Hoeksema can teach doctrine very powerfully in Biblical history, that, then, is his peculiar talent, but there is another man that can't do it, or does not believe that it is the best

system, well and good, maybe this particular man has a gift that Rev. Hoeksema may not have, and that is to make doctrine live for children." This whole argument is completely individualistic, and I deny it entirely. A minister must certainly be able to teach Biblical history to little children as well as to the older children, whether he likes it or no. And in the meantime he must also be able to inculcate the first principles of doctrine into the children, according to their capacity. If the Rev. Cammenga feels that he is not able to teach Biblical history in the proper way, and if he does not see the rich significance of such instruction, it points to weakness in his own education. Perhaps in former years we did not lay enough stress upon teaching Biblical history in our own theological school. Our instruction was chiefly dogmatical and exegetical. But the Rev. Cammenga could certainly have made up for this lack of training by giving himself to a serious study of Biblical history, and my own notes on New Testament history have since been completed. At any rate, it is incorrect to say that one is more inclined to teach doctrine and another to teach Biblical history, and that each one can do as he likes. That is individualism indeed.

In closing, it may not be superfluous to make the remark that in my article on "A Tendency to Individualism" I did not make the contrast or the antithesis between teaching Biblical history and teaching doctrine, but rather between teaching doctrine in the way of Biblical history and systematic instruction in doctrine. And when the Rev. Cammenga suggests that it would have been better to give his new system a test for at least one year, I answer him that our own system has been tested for years and years and that it has certainly proved successful. We do not need a new system at all. And therefore, I conclude by quoting once more from my own article, namely, that the children "during the ten years of proposed doctrinal instruction will find so much repetition of the same things that in the end they will get weary of that instruction. And in the second place, that by the new system we make little dead intellectualists and dogmatists rather than believers that live from the Bible as the living Word of God."

H. H.

NOTICE

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The Board of the R. F. P. A.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

LORD'S DAY 25

2.

Preaching As A Means Of Grace. (cont.)

But how is a preacher sent?

And how can one be sure that Christ has commissioned him to preach the gospel of peace?

With respect to the apostles this question can easily be answered. Their very name expresses that they were sent. And they received their calling and commission through Christ directly and in person. The chief distinguishing mark of an apostle was even that he was directly and immediately called by the Lord. This is strongly emphasized especially by the apostle Paul, as, for instance, in Gal. 1:1: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Surely, the apostles were sent. They received their commission to preach from Christ's own lips. They had the promise of the Spirit; Christ put His own Word in them; and He sent them whithersoever He would, the Spirit leading them and sometimes preventing them from going to one place and directing them to another. And therefore, with respect to the sending of the apostles there is no difficulty. They had their commission directly from the Lord.

But how about him that serves in the ministry of the divine Word today, whether he labor in the heathen world or in a local church? And the answer is that also the preacher today is sent by Christ. Of course, this sending of the preacher is no longer direct and immediate as with the apostles. It is well for anyone who desires to serve the Lord in the ministry to understand this. A mere abiding desire to become a preacher, even though this desire gradually develop into a conviction that one is called by the Lord, is not sufficient. It happens occasionally that a man with such an inward desire and conviction attempts in different ways to enter into the ministry and become a preacher, and, if he fails to find a place and receive a call in the regular way, still insists that he is called, merely on the ground of that inward desire and conviction. This is a mistake. And if a man act upon that mistake and try to arrange a place for himself as a preacher, as is

frequently done in such cases, he sins, and he surely will never be a preacher. For a preacher must be sent, and Christ sends no man directly, either by an immediate and special revelation or by creating in one's heart the conviction that he is called.

Nevertheless, the sending of a preacher is just as real and peremptory as it was with the apostles, though the way of sending is now different. We must remember, in the first place, that Christ gave to His Church in the world the commission to preach. He did so when He was about to be taken up into heaven in the well-known words: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." To be sure, directly He was addressing the apostles when He spoke these words. But, as has often been pointed out, and rightly so, this commission to preach the gospel cannot possibly be limited to the persons of the apostles, but was given to them as representatives of the New Testament Church in the world and must needs be extended to the Church, even unto the end of the world. This is evident from the fact that the apostle personally could not fulfill the task of preaching the gospel in all the world. Nor can the promise which the Lord adds to this injunction be limited to the lifetime of the apostles: "And lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world." Therefore, not the apostles only are commissioned here to preach the gospel; neither can it be said that this commission is given to believers individually, for the apostles surely are the representatives of the Church; but to the Church of the New Testament in the world the Lord addresses the command: "Preach the gospel." The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." To the Church the Lord entrusted His Word. That Church must keep the Word, receive it, interpret it, confess it. And that Church in the world must preach the gospel. She has the commission authoritatively to speak the Word of Christ. And the promise of the Spirit that will lead her into all the truth was fulfilled in her. It is well that also this be emphasized in our own day. Not the individual believer, apart from the Church of Christ in the world; not all kinds of groups of believers, societies, boards, sects, movements, are the pillars and ground of the truth and have the commission to preach the Word. And whatever in influence for good such groups extraneous from the Church may appear to have, we should never forget that their existence and labor and separation from the Church is disobedience, and the ultimate effect of their work can only be detrimental to the cause of the truth.

The Church only has the commission to preach.

Nor is it difficult to see that this commission to preach the Word of Christ must be fulfilled by the Church as institute, and therefore, through its ministry. Christ gave to His Church some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors

and teachers. Eph. 4:11. And he gave these "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12. It is therefore through the ministry that the Church carries out the commission she has received to preach the gospel. Not the person of the minister has the commission to preach, but the Church has. And she fulfills her task through the ministry. Hence, only they whom the Church separates unto this ministry can properly feel that they are sent by Christ. And therefore, it is this calling by the Church that is the all-important factor in the determination of one's being sent by Christ to preach the gospel. Only when a man is so called by the Church to stand in the position of the instituted ministry, and when in that position he strictly adheres in all he delivers to the Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures, can he rightfully claim that he is a preacher. For how shall they preach except they be sent?

This preaching, then, in that very specific sense of the word, is meant when we say that the Word is a means of grace.

That this is true is very plain from the question we have already quoted from Rom. 10:14: "And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?"

The preaching of the Word is indispensable to faith in Christ.

This does not mean that I wish to minimize the value of all the means of instruction in the truth which we possess today. Least of all would I underrate the great significance of Bible reading and Bible study in the home, by individual believers, or by societies. We certainly believe the perspicuity of Holy Scripture. And we believe that all believers have the unction of the Holy One. Yet all these means cannot and may never be separated from the work of Christ through the Church as an institute, especially through the ministry of the Word. Suppose there had been no ministry, no official preaching of the Word through all the ages of the new dispensation: where would be our Bibles, translated in every language? Where would be our confessions, in which the truth is preserved from generation to generation? Where would be your fathers and mothers to instruct you in the truth from childhood? They would not be at all. You can see for yourself what becomes of the man and woman, of the family that separate themselves from the Church, proudly ignoring the Word of God that it is impossible to hear without a preacher, and claiming that they can just as well hear Christ by reading their Bibles at home. It does not take long before they have weaned away from the truth, and are lost in the world.

Therefore, the official preaching by the Church is of central importance.

It is just as true today and for the Church of Christ

as it was for the time of the apostles that the preaching of the Word is the main means of grace.

3.

Regeneration Immediate.

Thus far we discussed the idea of means of grace, the meaning and the various connotations of the term grace in Scripture, and the significance of the preaching of the Word as a means of grace.

The question now is: is all grace, as it is applied to the elect and wrought in their hearts, mediate? That is, does the Holy Spirit always work through the means of the preaching of the Word and of the sacraments, or is the very first beginning of this marvellous work an immediate work of the Holy Spirit?

The Heidelberg Catechism does not decide this question. In question and answer sixty-five it simply inquires into the origin of saving faith: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." The question is, of course, in what sense must *faith* in this question and answer be understood. Does the Catechism here refer to the power of faith, or, as it is sometimes called, faculty of faith, as it is implanted in the hearts of the elect in the moment of regeneration and as it also may be present in the hearts of little children? Or does the Catechism have in mind the act of conscious faith?

The answer of Dr. Kuyper is that the Heidelberg Catechism refers to both the power of faith and active belief. He reasons as follows: "If we say that what is meant is only the conscious and active faith, then one gets stuck with the sacraments: for in that case the sacrament of holy baptism cannot possibly strengthen such a faith, considering that the Catechism defends infant baptism, for the evident reason that such an active and conscious faith cannot yet be present in a little child that is just born. And on the other hand, if we say that by faith is meant not the conscious, but the unconscious faith, not the faith that already actively revealed itself, but the implanted power of faith, then it cannot be applied to what is said of the preaching of the gospel. For it stand to reason that children that were just born neither hear nor understand the proclamation of the gospel." Hence, Dr. Kuyper draws the conclusion that the Heidelberg Catechism in question and answer sixty-five refers to both, the power or faculty of faith as well as to conscious belief in Christ. And he would paraphrase the question and answer somewhat as follows: "Whence does this faith proceed? From the Holy Spirit, Who implants in us the power of faith in regeneration and brings it to conscious

faith through the preaching of the gospel, Who confirms the implanted power of faith through the sacrament of baptism, and Who strengthens conscious faith by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." It seems to us, however, that although this invention is rather ingenious, the explanation is rather far-fetched. And it is more than questionable whether this distinction was before the minds of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Nevertheless, it is the question whether the Catechism must be explained as meaning that the whole of faith, the faculty and the power of faith as well as conscious belief in Christ, and, therefore, regeneration included, is wrought by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word; or whether the Catechism refers to conscious faith only. Briefly, therefore, we can put the question this way: is regeneration mediate or immediate?

About this question there has been and still is much difference of opinion in the Reformed Churches. On the one hand, there are those who insist that all grace as it is applied to the sinner by the Holy Spirit, including regeneration, is mediate: the Holy Spirit always works through the means of the preaching of the gospel. These present the soteriological order of the various steps in the application of salvation to the heart of the elect as beginning with the calling. The preaching of the Word, according to them, is necessarily first. On the other hand, there are those who strongly oppose this view and who insist that regeneration is first, and, immediate. This controversy is still very much alive in the churches of the Netherlands.

It seems to us, however, that this difference of opinion can be reduced to a minimum. All Reformed theologians certainly emphasize that the sinner by nature is completely dead in sin and misery, that he is so blind that he cannot see the things of the kingdom of God, that by nature he is so deaf that he cannot spiritually hear and understand the truth of the gospel, and that his heart is so filled with enmity against God and His Christ that he will never come and embrace the Christ of the Scriptures. Hence, they one and all oppose the doctrine of the Arminians, which present the work of regeneration as if it were a matter of moral persuasion, affected by the external preaching of the gospel. All emphasize that regeneration is wholly a work of the Holy Spirit; powerful and efficacious, it is wholly effected without the will of man. Hence, they all must admit that logically regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit that precedes all other work of grace: The opening of the eyes to see, of the ears to hear, and the implanting of the seed of the new life in the heart of the elect. Whether, therefore, we maintain that regeneration takes place through the preaching of the gospel or not, it is certain that all Reformed theologians, unless they want to swing over to the

Arminian camp, must admit that in a certain sense regeneration is always immediate, for it logically always precedes every other work of grace in the heart of the sinner.

This is plain from the description of the work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as we have it in the Canons III, IV, 11, ff.: "But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions."

In article 12 we read: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise affected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvellous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe.—Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received."

Nor do the Canons teach that regeneration, which is called a new creation and compared to the resurrection from the dead, which God works without our aid and which is not effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, is wrought in us through the means of the preaching of the Word. Indeed, this marvellous regeneration, when once it is effected and accomplished in the heart of the sinner, does not exclude, but requires the use of means. Yet this does not imply that regeneration is mediate and is accomplished through the preaching of the gospel. This is plain from article 17: "As the almighty operation of God, whereby he prolongs and supports this our natural life, does not ex-

clude, but requires the use of means, by which God of His infinite mercy and goodness hath chosen to exert His influence, so also the beforementioned supernatural operation of God, by which we are regenerated, in no wise excludes, or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration, and food of the soul. Wherefore as the apostles, and teachers who succeeded them, piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory, and the abasement of all pride, and in the meantime, however, neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel in the exercise of the Word, sacraments and discipline; so even to this day, be it far from either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the church by separating what he of his good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminently usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the mire directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory both of means, and of their saving fruit and efficacy is forever due. Amen."

H. H.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Names Of God

The Attributes Of God.

We have already called attention, in our two previous articles, to the great difference of opinion among Reformed theologians with respect to their treatment of the Names of God. The late Dr. Bavinck, we noted, comprehends everything, including the attributes of God, under the one concept, "Name of God", and speaks of: Proper Names, Essential Names, Personal Names. Calvin has no distinction. The late Dr. A. Kuyper distinguishes between names and attributes, but does not confine himself strictly to this distinction. He distinguishes between the essential names of God and His proper names. This vast difference of opinion is understandable. The concept, "Name", in Scripture, is of great importance. Indeed, God's Name is His Self-Revelation, is the living God revealed. It, therefore, need not surprise us that the attempt has been made to comprehend everything under the concept: Name of God. It is surely true that the essential as well as the proper names of God, and also His attributes, reveal the living God unto us. For reasons stated in our previous articles we prefer to distinguish between the Proper Names of God and His attributes.

In the light of the foregoing, it need not surprise us that, when confronted with the treatment of the attributes of the Lord by Reformed theologians, we are confronted by and encounter the same wide difference of opinion. To this we will presently call attention. Also this wide difference of opinion is understandable. Any attempt to classify the attributes of God, to arrange the virtues of the Most High, must ever be incomplete, defective. This is simply due to the fact that God is one, the God of infinite simplicity, Who cannot be divided or classified.

The term "Attributes" As Such.

The concept "Attributes of God", is called in the Holland: *Eigenschappen Gods*. Neither term, attribute or "eigenschap", is happily chosen. This is due, in the first place, to the fact that neither term is very expressive. The word "attribute" is defined as a property or quality ascribed to a person. As such it is used in connection with the attributes of God. The word "eigenschap" refers literally to something which belongs to or is peculiarly characteristic of a person. Both words are merely formal, do not say anything, do not declare, e.g., what kind of property or quality is attributed to God, or what is peculiarly characteristic of the living God.

Secondly, neither term is Scriptural. The Word of God does not speak of "attributes" or "eigenschappen".

Thirdly, Scripture uses words which are infinitely richer in thought than these terms which are most commonly used and to which we have become accustomed. The Word of God, e.g., speaks of His "wonders" in Ps. 105:2: "Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works." In the Holland we read: "Zingt Hem; spreekt aandachtelijk van al Zijne wonderen." The Holland version speaks literally of "wonderen" or wonders. The original Hebrew uses a word here which emphasizes the thought that something is separated, distinguished, and that it is in that sense wonderful, great, extraordinary, which stands alone and is worthy of all admiration. In Psalm 27:4 we read of His "praise" or "heerlijkheid": "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." In 1 Peter 2:9 we read of "praises" or "virtues", "deugden": "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." The virtues of the living God are the Divine perfections of the Lord whereby Scripture ascribes unto him the ability or power or energy to be what He is, the alone living God. And the word "praise" occurs in Is. 43:21: "This people have I

formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise." Quite obviously, therefore, the Scriptural expressions are richer in meaning than the words "attributes" or "eigenschappen"; these words tell us that God's "attributes, eigenschappen" are perfections; are wonderful, are glorious, are beautiful, are indeed worthy of all our adoration. Their manifestation is indeed the Divine purpose of all things.

And yet we continue to use the word "attribute". This is due to the fact that its place in Dogmatics, the systematic knowledge of the truth, has been established. It is very hard to break a tradition of long standing. It is as common to speak of the "attributes" of God as it is to speak of Christ's states of humiliation and exaltation. The very mention of the word "attributes" reminds us instantly of the perfections or wonders of virtues or praises or beauties, etc., of the living God. For this reason we retain the term "attributes", if only we bear in mind that this term refers to all the glorious perfections of the living God.

The Knowledge Of The Attributes Of God

To Be Determined By The Scriptures.

Attempts have been made in the past to reason from the known to the Unknown to attain unto knowledge of the Creator. The line or course of reasoning has proceeded from the creature to the Creator. Some have applied what is called the Rule or Law of Causality. According to this rule they have concluded from the creature to the Creator, from the law of cause and effect round about them to the Supreme Cause of all things (this reasoning reminds us of the Cosmological proof which is adduced in support of the existence of God), from the observation of the government in this world to the idea of a God Who rules over all. Others have applied what is known as the Rule or Negation. Doing so, we remove from our idea of God all the imperfections of the creature, and determine who and what is by contrasting Him with the creature. God, then, is what the creature is not. The Lord is, therefore, incomprehensible, eternal, infinite, independent, changeable, composed of various parts, comprehensible. The rule of negation leads us unto knowledge of God by contrasting Him with the creature. And finally another rule which has been applied to attain unto knowledge of the living God is known as the Rule of Eminence. Following this law, we ascribe unto the Lord the most eminent perfections which we discern in the creature. We, then, proceed from the assumption that what we find in man, the effect, must also apply to the Lord, the Cause. We assume, then, that the Lord created the creature, made man in His image, reflected Himself, therefore, in man. Hence it must follow that whatever perfections we find or discern in the creature must necessarily exist perfectly

and eternally in the living God. This is, therefore, known as the Rule or Eminence.

Proceeding along these same lines, namely, the attempt to attain unto the knowledge of God by reasoning from the known to the Unknown, others have attempted to attain such knowledge of the Lord either empirically or pragmatically. Empirical knowledge of God is knowledge of the Lord which is based upon our experience. We, e.g., experience in our lives the need of a God. We are dependent and needy creatures, who cannot help or support ourselves, and are strictly dependent upon another. This is a fact which can hardly be denied. We are dependent upon the sunshine and the rain and cannot control either. We stand helpless over against the devastating forces of "nature" round about us, such as the high winds and the lightning and are unable to control and shackle these powers. We cannot combat successfully the powers of disease and death, are helpless in the midst of these forces of corruption and destruction. The need and desperate plight of the creature is undeniably a universal phenomenon. From this universal law men have drawn the conclusion that the Lord must be the all- and Self-sufficient Creator. We feel the need of such a mighty and all-sufficient Creator; hence, such an all-sufficient Creator must therefore exist. Viewed logically, however, does not this argument destroy itself? If the creature be needy and dependent, why, then, can I not conclude that also the Lord of that creature must be needy and dependent?

Pragmatic knowledge of God is knowledge of the Lord which is based upon our observation of what He does, His works. Pragmatic knowledge of things or persons is knowledge based on our observation of what they do. Hence, we observe the Lord in all His works round about us and conclude therefrom the identity of the Lord. God acts as He is. His works are, therefore, a revelation of Himself. Consequently, we can attain unto the knowledge of the Lord by observing Him in all the works of His hands.

These methods of attaining unto knowledge of God err in that they do not proceed from the Word of God. They ignore the Self-Revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures. They certainly ascribe too much ability to man to rise to the knowledge of the Most High. What will invariably be the result if the knowledge of God depends upon the creature's ability or effort to attain unto or determine that knowledge? Man is of himself a hater of the Lord and of his neighbor. He loves himself and seeks exclusively the things which are below. Man is a liar, has turned his back upon the living God, and will most certainly corrupt and distort and falsify the knowledge of the Lord. He will change the glory of the uncorruptible God into the corruption and shame of the corruptible creature. He will make a god to suit himself, will make a god as he would

have him be. History abundantly verifies this. The heathens, once having rejected the living God (originally, as at the time of Cain, e.g., these "heathens" did not bow the knee before gods of wood and stone), made themselves gods after the dictates and desires of their own heart. And the modern church world of our day is full of this knowledge of a god which exists as man would have him be. Man, then, does not exist for the sake of and unto the glory of the living God; on the contrary, "God" exists for man and in behalf of the improvement and betterment of this present evil world. This "God", however, does not exist, except in the heart and mind of the natural man.

Moreover, apart from the fact that man cannot of himself attain unto the knowledge of the true God, it is also a fact that there is no complete knowledge of the Lord apart from the Holy Scriptures. There is apart from the Scriptures no knowledge of the Lord as the God of our salvation. Indeed, it is true that the works of God's hands reveal unto us God's power, wisdom, and eternal Godhead. It is also true that Christ and the eternal and heavenly kingdom of our God is revealed or portrayed symbolically in all the things round about us. However, these symbols round about us we understand only in the light of the Word of God. And apart from the Scriptures, the Lord is revealed unto us and before us as a God of wrath and righteous indignation. Death and vanity is the all-important language of the creature and the works of God's hands. Hence, I again ask: What would be the invariable result if the knowledge of the Lord depended upon our ability to attain unto that knowledge? To ask this question is to answer it. In the first place, we would never attain unto the knowledge of the Lord as the God of our salvation. God is revealed as that God of our salvation in Christ Jesus, and He has been revealed in the Scriptures. And it is only in the light of the Word that we understand the speech of the works of God's hands as a mighty symbolism of the heavenly and eternal kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. And, secondly, the natural man would surely corrupt the revelation of the Lord in harmony with the darkness and foolishness of his evil heart.

We may safely conclude, therefore, that we cannot and do not determine who and what God is. Knowledge of the Lord does not proceed from us unto God but from God unto us. We do not ascend unto the knowledge of the Lord, but the Lord has condescended to make Himself known unto us. The line does not run from us to God but from the living Lord to us. Knowledge of God is based upon Self-Revelation, the Lord's revelation of Himself.

Various Classifications Of The Attributes Of God.

Some have classified the attributes of God as essential or natural and ethical attributes of the Lord. The

essential or natural attributes of God are all those which pertain merely to His existence as an infinite and rational Spirit. They are, e.g., His Self-existence, simplicity, infinity, etc. The Lord's moral or ethical attributes are all those which pertain or belong to Him as a moral Being. Among the latter can be classified such virtues as His truth, goodness, mercy, holiness, righteousness, etc. The objection to this classification is that all the attributes of the Lord are necessarily natural or essential and ethical. The so-called essential virtues of God are necessarily ethical, spiritual, and His so-called moral attributes are necessarily essential or natural. God is holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth, mercy. God is His attributes and for this reason all His virtues are, of course, essential.

Another classification of God's attributes is that of absolute and relative. The former belong to the essence of God as considered in itself and the latter view the Divine attributes of the Lord as: self-existence, immensity, eternity, whereas the latter class would include: omnipresence, omniscience, etc. This division of the Divine perfections, however, seems to proceed on the assumption that we can have some knowledge of God as He is in Himself, entirely apart from the relation in which He stands to the creature. Yet, is such knowledge of the Lord possible? Are not all the perfections of the Lord relative, so that we have knowledge of the Lord only because of the relation in which He stands to the creature. Yet, is such knowledge of the Lord possible? Are not all the perfections of the Lord relative, so that we have knowledge of the Lord only because of the relation wherein He stands to us and has revealed Himself unto us?

A third classification of the Divine attributes is that of affirmative and negative. An affirmative attribute of God is one which expresses a positive perfection of the Divine essence. The Lord's omnipresence and omnipotence are, e.g., classified as affirmative attributes. The latter, on the other hand, express an attitude which denies all defect or limitation to God. Among the latter we may include virtues such as: immutability, infinitude, incomprehensibility, etc. We may lodge the same objection against this classification as against that of the Lord's absolute and relative attributes. Are not all the attributes of the Lord affirmative and positive? Is not the Lord all His virtues? And does this not imply that He is, affirmatively and positively, all His perfections and attributes?

A fourth division of God's attributes is that which has been submitted by Hodge (late professor of Systematic Theology in the Theological Seminary of Princeton, New Jersey). He first of all mentions those attributes which equally qualify all the rest. All the virtues of the Lord are characterized by Infinitude (that which has no bounds), Absoluteness (that which is determined, either in its being, or modes of being or action,

by nothing whatsoever without itself). This also includes Immutability. Hodge also speaks of the Lord's Natural Attributes. With this distinction he refers to the fact that God is an infinite Spirit, Self-existent, Eternal, Immense, Simple, Free of will, Intelligent, Powerful. A third classification of Hodge is that of the Lord's Moral Attributes. God, then, is a Spirit infinitely *righteous, good, true, faithful*, etc. And, finally the late professor of Princeton speaks of the consummate glory of all the Divine perfections, the beauty of God's *Holiness*. The undersigned is also of the opinion that the virtue of God's *holiness* occupies a unique place among the perfections of God. Which perfection of God is more prominently mentioned in Holy Writ?

The late Dr. Bavinck discusses the attributes of God under the concept: God's Essential Names: but distinguishes the latter as incommunicable and communicable attributes. And he has the following distinction: Incommunicable (Asceitas, Infinitas, Immutabilitas, Unitas-Independency, Infinity, Immutability, Unity; Communicable (God as Spirit, God as Light, God as the Holy One, God as Sovereign).

The late Dr. G. Vos distinguishes between Incommunicable and Communicable attributes of God and does not hesitate to call this distinction the best.

John Calvin, the great Reformer of Geneva, has no distinction.

The late Dr. A. Kuyper proceeds from the image of God as the Principle of Division, and distinguishes between the virtues of God "per anti-thesis and per syn-thesin".

Incommunicable And Communicable.

The classification, Incommunicable and Communicable, is practically the same as the division of the late Dr. A. Kuyper. His "virtues per anti-thesis" defines the attributes of God as in contrast with the image of God in man. These are: Eternity, Omnipresence, Simplicity, Unity, Infinity, Immutability, Immensity, and Sovereignty. And his "virtues per syn-thesin" view the attributes of God from the viewpoint of their agreement with the image. They are the Divine virtues of Intellect, Will, and Power.

We, too, follow the distinction: Incommunicable and Communicable Attributes. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that every classification must necessarily be imperfect and defective. Secondly, this division proceeds from the Scriptural idea of the image of God in man. It can surely not be denied that this idea of the image of God in man is Scriptural. The Word of God mentions it literally. Thirdly, this classification has been most commonly adopted in the systematic knowledge of the living God, Dogmatics.

The division, incommunicable and communicable attributes, should be clearly understood. We define

the incommunicable attributes of God as those attributes which can be ascribed to the Lord alone. And we define the communicable attributes of God as those virtues of the Lord whereof we have a creaturely reflection in the creature. However, this division can be fairly easily understood if we only distinguish properly. Fundamentally and strictly, all the virtues of the Lord are incommunicable. God, we know and confess, is His virtues. It lies, therefore, in the very nature of the case that all the perfections are incommunicable, cannot and are not imparted to the creature. To assert this would imply the identification of the living God with the creature. Just as the Lord cannot impart Himself to the creature, so also He cannot impart His perfections to that creature. God is and remains God. God is wise, good, righteous, etc., in an absolute and wholly unique sense of the word. When, therefore, we define the communicable attributes of God as those Divine perfections whereof we find a reflection in the creature, we must ever bear in mind that the creature merely *reflects* these virtues and that in a definitely *creaturely measure*. Bearing this in mind we repeat: God's incommunicable attributes are to be ascribed only to the Lord, whereas the communicable perfections are reflected in His people. God alone is independent, simple, one, infinite, immutable. The creature can also be wise, good, merciful, righteous, etc., but according to the measure of the creature. God is good, wise, righteous, merciful, etc., as God; we, through the grace of God can also be good, wise, merciful, but strictly as creatures.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

David's Message To The Men Of Jabesh

As was said, at the time of the expiration of the events narrated in chapter 1 and in I Samuel 31, David and his company were still dwelling in Keilah, a city in Philistia, given him of Achish to whom he had fled to escape Saul's wrath. Saul being now dead, David returned to his own people, to his tribesmen in Judah. In accordance with the directions of God, for which he had prayed, he settled with his company in Hebron, a place in the most mountainous district of Judah and abounding in venerable associations. No sooner was he returned than the men of Judah came and there they anointed him king over Judah. So did the Lord deal graciously with His servant. Could there be among the psalms one that voices his heart's response

to these tokens of the Lord's mercy? As was said, internal evidence points to the hundred and first psalm. Its sentences of praise and thanksgiving and the vows contained in it are such as could be expected to rise from the heart of David at this juncture. He stood on the threshold of his career of theocratic king. The psalm reads,

"I will sing of mercy and judgment:
Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.
I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.
O when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house
With a perfect heart.
I will set no wicked thing
Before my eyes:
I hate the work of them that turn aside;
It shall not cleave to me.
A froward heart shall depart from me:
I will not know a wicked person.
Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor,
Him will I cut off:
Him that hath a high look and a proud heart
will not I suffer.
Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the
land that they may dwell with me:
He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall
minister unto me.
He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within
my house;
He that speaketh falsehood shall not be estab-
lished before mine eyes.
Morning by morning will I destroy all the
wicked of the land;
To cut off all the workers of iniquity from
the city of the Lord."

If the expression "city of God" indicates *Jerusalem*—and doubtless it does—the psalm was written after the capture and dedication of that city. Yet the sentiments of which the psalm is the expression must have already begun reverberating in David's soul at the time of his accession to the throne in Hebron. There is no reason why Hebron may not have been called "the city of God" at the time.

The text in II Samuel 2 continues, "And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-Gilead are they that buried Saul." Whether David's informants were these same men of Judah or some others, the text does not make clear. David at once dispatched a message to the men of Jabesh to the following effect, "Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have showed this kindness unto your Lord, to Saul, and have buried him." They had shown this kindness unto Saul *as their lord*, implying that despite his rejection, Saul had continued to obtain to the nation the relation of king. This is plainly the view to which David had been holding all along. Twice the Lord delivered Saul into his hand. To David's men

it was the certain indication that Saul must be slain. But David was not of that conviction. "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless. . . . A curse be upon me should I stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." Such had been his reaction on both occasions. In his eyes Saul was still the Lord's anointed, Israel's king and lord. And so he was actually. It must not be supposed that David was in error. The rule was still Saul's.

Yet there can be no doubt as to whether the Lord had rejected Saul from being king over His people. Samuel had spoken plainly, "For thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." Accordingly, Samuel broke with Saul that very day. God's Spirit departed from him; and the word of the Lord came to him no more. Shortly thereafter David was anointed. But we should not fail to take notice of the following: Samuel did not make known to the people that the Lord had rejected Saul. Nor did he in the name of God forbid Saul authority over Israel by demanding that he immediately step down from his throne. Or, what would have amounted to the same thing, Samuel did not release the people of their oath of allegiance as Saul's subjects. The meaning of these acts of omission on God's part is clear. Though forsaken of the Spirit and in this respect rejected of God at once, Saul's appointment to the office of theocratic king remained binding on the nation the rest of his days, and the people on this account continued under the necessity of honoring and obeying him as their lord and king, as the anointed of the Lord. David, therefore, would have been cursed indeed should he have stretched forth his hand against Saul. Truly, then, despite his ungodliness and misrule, his self-will and rebellions in which he walked to the end of his days, and by which he was gathering for himself and his people treasures of wrath unto the day of wrath, Saul remained Israel's king nevertheless; and he had to be received and honored as such the rest of his days. And the righteous in Israel did so *for God's sake*. Humbling themselves under God's hand in the awareness that the nation deserved that kind of king on account of its abominations, they continued honoring Saul as their lord in their deep regard not of Saul as such but of Saul in his capacity of the Lord's anointed. Thus they honored him for God's sake as constrained by God's love of them as shed abroad in their hearts. How they continued to revere Saul to the end on that account! They spared his life, when they had opportunity to slay him. They lamented over him when he was fallen and slain. Taking down his decapitated corpse from the wall of their conquered city, they gave it a burial such as became their king. This was the work of the men of Jabesh. Well might David

say to these men, to the righteous among them, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed kindness unto *your lord*, to Saul, and have buried him."

It is plain how we are to understand Samuel's words to Saul, "Therefore the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." A distinction must be drawn between Saul's rejection as consisting in his being forsaken of the Spirit that had been qualifying him for the duties of his office, and the rejection of God according to which Saul was removed from office, hurled from the throne. The former took place almost on the day that the seer pronounced sentence over Saul. The latter became an accomplished fact through Saul's suicide in Israel's war with the Philistines. In the meantime the righteous in Israel had to honor Saul as king for the Lord's sake, and patiently endure his mal-administrations.

There was more to David's message to the men of Jabesh. Said he to them, "And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing." The original text here reads, "And I also will do you *this good*. . . ." The meaning of these words evidently is, "As the servant and follower of the Lord, I, too, will show thee kindness and truth." The Hebrew *Chesed*, which the translators rendered *kindness*, is rich in meaning. It is holy desire, ardour, zeal, kindness, love, mercy and pity all in one. The men of Jabesh and all Israel especially the northern tribes, had great need of the Lord's showing them mercy. For the days were exceptionally evil. The Philistines had set as their goal nothing short of the conquest of the entire land of Canaan. And their victory over Saul and his host had brought them astonishing success in that direction. By that military achievement they had extended their jurisdiction over the whole of the west-Jordan land with the exception of Judah. They could now join hands over the Jordan with their old allies, the Ammonites. (The narrative is against the conjecture that Judah, too, was tributary to the Philistines and that David was their vassal-king during his residence in Hebron. The lords of the Philistines had plainly shown that they distrusted David. And the men of Judah had anointed him king of their own accord).

As studied in connection with the nation's plight, David's message to the men of Jabesh takes on meaning. The Philistines must be ejected from God's country. May the Lord show His people this mercy. May He deliver them from the cruel dominion of the adversary and crown them with glory that the nations of the earth may again see that they are called by the name of the Lord. And may He sanctify these evidences of His favor toward them to their hearts so that they may know and believe that they are loved and forgiven of Him and that He is their God. And

may He show them truth, keep covenant trust with them according to His promise. And that the Lord will do without fail. He will save His people for His name's sake and for David's sake to whom He swore truth. And David, too, will do them this good instrumentally as the Lord's anointed and with God fighting for them. "Therefore now," so he continues in his message to them, "let your hands be strengthened and be ye valiant" 'in the confidence', he means to say, 'that the victory is ours in the Lord'." "For," so he concludes, "your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them," meaning to say that they need not remain kingless in that he is their king for the choosing.

In addressing himself to the task of establishing his throne over all Israel David took no recourse to violence in dealing with his brethren. For he made God his expectation as he had been doing all along. Accordingly, the means which he employed in gathering them under his wing was a benediction invoked over the men of Jabesh and over his brethren in the north country. He was blessed therefore; with the meek in Israel he inherited the kingdom.

(One has reasons to wonder whether the critics themselves know what they mean by statements such as the following, "There can be no doubt that David was moved by considerations of policy as well as by more disinterested motives in sending this message and offering this prayer for the men of Jabesh-Gilead. Indeed, in the close of his message he invites them to declare for him, and follow the example of the men of Judah, who have made him king." What are "considerations of policy" in contradistinction to "disinterested motives" but selfishness, sinful egotism, considerations that aim at the advancement of one's own cause by means fair or foul? Must David be held guilty of such carnality here? Could not his wanting them to declare for him stem from the love of God and His cause just as well as any other work? It could and it did. But this, of course, is not a denying that he was a sinful man.)

However, David's overture of peace to his brethren in the north countries was ill-received. It was ill-received by Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's routed and dispersed host that with Abner and Ishbosheth had fled over the Jordan to escape the sword of the Philistines. Taking Ishbosheth, he brought him over to Mahanaim; and made him king *for* Gilead, and *for* the Ashurites, and *for* Jezreel and *over* Benjamin, and *over* all Israel with the exception of Judah. This was Abner's reply to David's benediction.

We must not fail to take notice of the change of propositions, three times "for" (Hebrew, *el*) and three times "over" (*al*). Does the preposition "for" indicate those regions over which Abner had gradually to extend Ishbosheth's authority, being obliged to wrest

them from the Philistines by continual wars; and accordingly does the preposition over (*al*) indicate the regions (Ephraim and Benjamin) over which the Philistines had not been able to extend their authority? It is doubtful whether the change of prepositions has that significance. For it would mean that the Philistines pursued the fleeing Israelites across the Jordan and established their supremacy in the whole of the east-Jordan land. But this is too unlikely. It is in conflict with the notice that Abner carried Ishbosheth over to Mahanaim and that he there made him king. This city was situate in Gilead; it lay on the border between the tribe of Dan and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Ishbosheth was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel. Two years he reigned, says the text. As to David, the notice is to the effect that the time he was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. Now Ishbosheth's elevation to the throne and David's anointment over Judah happened at the same time (chap. 2:7, 8, 9); and Ishbosheth occupied the throne as long as David was king over Judah which, as we have seen, was seven years and a half. Yet at verse 10 the text states that Ishbosheth reigned but two years. The apparent discrepancy is obvious. But Abner could not make Ishbosheth king over all Israel until after he had cleared of Philistines the districts mentioned in verse 9. It may be supposed that the conquering process took five and a half years. This is the explanation of some. Its weakness is that the narrative makes no mention of wars with the Philistines carried on by Abner during these years. The sequel reveals that the Philistines were not gradually expelled by Abner. This was a task the accompaniment of which had to wait until the establishment of David's throne in all Israel. But the conclusion is unescapable that Abner did make the attempt. But his measure of success must have been too small to allow us to suppose that after three years and a half Ishbosheth was reigning *in fact* over all Israel, and that this is the reason the sacred narrative limits his reign to two years.

Others take the passage from "but the house of Judah. . . ." to the end of verse 11 as a parenthesis and thus render: and when he—Ishbosheth—had reigned two years (only the house of Judah followed David, and the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months), then went Abner. . . . and the servants of Ishbosheth out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. But this does violence to the syntax and therefore does not commend itself.

There is still a third solution. It may not have been until the fourth year of David's reign in Hebron that Abner brought Ishbosheth over to Mahanaim, and that he reigned simply as a vassal of the Philistines over all Israel.

G. M. Ophoff.

SION'S ZANGEN

Liefdevol, Schoon Zwaar Getergd

(Psalm 106; Tweede Deel)

Toen we de vorige maal stilstonden bij dezen psalm, hebben we geluisterd naar het liefelijke gezang van den dichter in zijn zingen van Gods goedertierenheid. Zij was immers van eeuwigheid, en zij zal zijn tot in alle eeuwigheden? Maar hij had ook gezongen van de mogendheden van God, van Zijn veelvoudigen lof.

En toen was hij aan 't bidden gegaan; hij was gaan vragen om het welbehagen des Heeren ten zijnent. Hij wilde het goede aanschouwen van Gods uitverkoren volk. En zijn motief was goed. Hij wilde het welbehagen over Gods uitverkorenen zien, opdat hij mocht roemen in zijn God.

Nu gaan we verder.

Er komt een droeve overgang. Wij moeten met den zanger gaan belijden de zonde, de verkeerdheid en de goddeloosheid.

Zonde is als men het doel mist. Dat is de letterlijke vertaling van het woord "zonde".

Ziet ge, we zijn geschapen met den aanleg om steeds op het DOEL aan te leggen. En dat DOEL is de verheerlijking van het Goddelijke Wezen. We waren zoo geschapen, dat wij steeds leefden tot Gods eer en tot prijs Zijner deugden. Niets werd er gedaan om den mensch of om zichzelf. God stond in het middenpunt van het geheele leven en streven van Adam.

En de zonde is juist andersom. Dan doen we dingen om vele motieven, doch het eene goede motief wordt niet gevonden in het hart van den gevallen mensch. Hij mist het groote doel van zijn schepping. Al zijn pogen, streven, worstelen is niet dan ijdelheid.

"Verkeerdelijk doen" ziet op het zelfde leven van den zonder, maar nu uit het oogpunt van het feit, dat hij rechte dingen verdraait, verknoeit, op zijn kop zet. En het verschrikkelijkste van het "verkeerdelijk doen" is wel, dat de natuurlijke mensch daar schik in heeft. Hij keert achterwaarts, hij keert God den rug toe, in het duister verdraait hij wat recht is, en—lacht, spot met God en godsdienst. De mensch is verkeerd, krom, afzichtelijk in zijn slangenwerk.

"Goddelooslijk handelen" ziet op de zonde des menschen vanuit het oogpunt van het ruwe, brutale, luid roepende, onbeschaamde van de zonde. Dit woord doet ons den zondaar zien in zijn opstand en rebellie tegenover God.

Welnu, de zanger voelt zich een met Israel in hun zondigen. En in naam van zijn volk zal Hij den Heere aanloopen en zal hij de nationale zonde van Israel belijden. Dezelfde klanken beluisteren wij bij alle Gods-

mannen, zooals Mozes, Daniel, David en Salamo.

Leest het nog eens weer: "Wij hebben gezondigd!"
Groote genade!

In de belijdenis der zonden ligt de profetie van haar vergeving.

Want het is God die den mensch tot belijdenis brengt. Uit zich zelf zal men nooit zonde belijden.

Wat er nu volgt in den geheelen psalm is grootendeels een opsomming van die nationale zonde van Israel, afgewisseld door het verhalen van Gods goedertierenheid tegenover Zijn volk.

"Onze vaders in Egypte hebben niet gelet op Uwe wonderen, zij zijn aan de menigte Uwer goedertierenheden niet gedachtig geweest; maar zij waren wederspanning aan de zee, bij de Schelfzee."

Ge kent de droeve geschiedenis bij de Schelfzee.

Israel was door God verlost uit het diensthuis met een sterke arm, en door Zijn almachtige kracht. Tot tien malen toe had de Heere de goddelooze Egyptenaren geslagen, en zoo hard geslagen, dat ten slotte geheel Egypte kermde en weende bij de sterfbedden van alle eerstgeborenen.

O! de Heere had wondere dingen gedaan. Hij had duidelijk getoond, dat Hij Israel liefhad en dat Hij hen wilde redden uit de hand van hunne haters. De dingen die God gedaan heeft in Egypte waren zoo groot, dat de geheele wereld er ten huidigen dage nog van getuigt. De Heere had immers tot den goddeloozen Farao gezegd, dat Hij al deze dingen deed, tezamen met zijn eigen verhooging, opdat "Zijn naam verkondigd worde over de gansche aarde."

Maar Israel was het vergeten!

Onuitsprekelijke schande voor Israel!

Ja, maar ook onuitsprekelijke schande voor ons, voor een ieder die dit leest, voor iederen zoon en voor iedere dochter van Adam. Want wij zijn geen steek beter. De Heere doet Zijn wonderen van dag tot dag. En wat is ons antwoord? Zonde, verkeerdelijk doen en goddelooslijk handelen.

Daar gaat Israel, ze zijn op weg naar de Schelfzee.

Ze zijn nog maar net uit het Egypteland of zij zijn des Heeren wonderen vergeten.

De Heilige Schrift heeft het ons geboekstaafd. Ge kunt het lezen in Exodus 14.

Ziet ge, Farao kreeg spijt van zijn verlof aan Israel om naar de woestijn te reizen. En die spijt vertolkte hij door zijn bevel om de wagens en de paarden gereed te maken, tezamen met de dapperste helden van Egypte, om dat volk na te jagen, te achterhalen, eenigzins te straffen met bloed, en dan het geheele leger van slaven en slavinnen terug te sleuren naar de ovens der tichelstenen.

Dat was Farao's doel.

Daar komen zij aan.

Israel ziet achterwaarts, en wordt bevreesd.

Achter hen zien ze de schittering der zwaarden en spiesen en schilden van de Egyptische helden.

Op zij van hen zien ze de bergen, zij kunnen niet uitwijken, noch ter rechter, noch ter linkerhand.

En voor hen, de baren van de Schelfzee.

En ze gaan aan 't schreeuwen. Zij wenden zich tot Mozes om met leelijke verwijten den man Gods te benauwen. Want het schijnt, dat Mozes van benauwdheid aan 't roepen is gegaan, aan 't roepen tot God. En dat mocht hier niet. God zegt: Wat roept ge tot Mij? Zegt den kinderen Israels dat zij voorttrekken!

Aan alle zijden waren de kinderen Israels omsingeld, en we zijn geneigd om te zeggen: het was geen wonder, dat zij benauwd waren, en tot Mozes zeiden: waren er geen graven in Egypte?

Maar let er toch op, dat de Heere Zich pas geopenbaard had in de tien plagen!

Ja, ik stem het toe: zij waren omringd door bergen, de goddeloozen, en de zee. Maar er was toch nog een uitweg? En die uitweg was naar boven, naar den hemel, naar God. Daar boven het blauwe zat de Almachtige God op Zijn troon, en Israel behoefde werkelijk niet bang te zijn.

Maar zij vergaten Hem.

En dat is vreeselijke zonde.

Zij waren niet gedachtig geweest aan Zijne goedertierenheden.

We hebben meer dan eens gewezen op die glorieuze deugd van goedertierenheid. Het is de deugd van God waarin Hij Zijn volk wil zegenen, goed doen, verheerlijken. Het is de hartstocht in God, de eeuwige zucht om hen te zegenen en ten slotte in het eeuwig licht te zetten als pronkbeelden van Zijn werk der verlossing.

Maar Israel vergat.

En wij keuren het goed, want wij vergeten het ook, keer op keer.

Als we zoo in onze gedachten teruggaan naar de Schelfzee, en het schreeuwen, het goddelooze schreeuwen van Israel hooren, dan slaat ons zelf nu nog de schrik om 't hart. En dan komt de gedachte: men zou verwachten dat God zou zeggen: Gaat dan ten verderve!

Maar neen! God is God en het behoort tot Zijn lieflijke Wezen om getrouw te zijn. Hij is Jehovah. Hij is wat Hij is en eeuwig zijn zal. Hij is de Zijnde, die nimmer verandert. Hij beminde Zijn volk van eeuwigheid. Welnu, dan zal Hij hen beminnen in den tijd wanneer zij vreeselijk Hem zondigen.

Maar Hij doet het om Zijns Naams wil.

De Naam is de openbaring van het wezen.

In den Naam Gods treedt God U tegemoet en vertelt Hij U wie en wat Hij is. De Naam is God zelf.

En om dien Naam van God zegt Hij tegen de

Schelfzee: wordt droog. En zij gehoorzaamt. Israel wordt verlost, want de Heere wil Zijn Naam openbaren. En Hij wil laten zien hoe sterk Hij is van vermogen. Zoodat ontelbare kleine kinderen, van geslacht tot geslacht mogen leeren van Zijn groote wonderen bij de Schelfzee.

“en Hij schold de Schelfzee, zoodat zij verdroogde, en Hij deed ze wandelen door de afgronden als door eene woestijn.”

Wondere taal!

Hij schold de Schelfzee!

Hoe kan men toch een dood ding schelden? Ja, wij doen het, maar wij zijn domme menschen. Als wij ons hoofd ergens aan stooten, dan gebeurt het, dat men nijdig naar het ding kijkt, indien niet in ergernis leelijke woorden gebruikende om ons ongenoegen te openbaren.

Maar God is God. Hij weet, dat de Schelfzee een dood ding is. Hij heeft het ding Zelf geschapen. Wie praat nu toch tegen een dood ding? En wie zal dan nog dwazer zijn om het doode ding te bestraffen? Past op! Het is God die het doet, en al zouden we het niet kunnen verklaren, dan moet de hand nog op de mond, want al wat God doet moet goed zijn. Dat behoort tot Zijn Goddelijke Wezen.

Er zijn er geweest die het verklaren willen door te zeggen, dat de Heere Zich hier bedient van poezie. Het was slechts een bloemrijke manier van uitdrukking.

Het wil er bij ons niet in. Ik geloof er niets van.

Later hooren we hetzelfde op het meer van Galilee. Jezus bestrafte de wind en de zee. Was dat ook poezie?

Neen, maar het gaat hier weer om de goedertierenheid des Heeren.

Daar staat Israel, vlak voor de Roode Zee. En Israel is doodsbenuwd. En God bemint dat volk met een Goddelijke liefde eeuwiglijk. En daarom begint God te schelden op dat ding, dat hun treden belemmert. En God schreeuwt als 't ware tegen die zee: Leelijk ding! Gij, Schelfzee! die met Uw baren mijn volk benauwt en belemmert om voort te schrijden naar Mijn typischen hemel! Gaat op zij! Droog op! Wordt als een woestijn, zoodat Mijn teederlijk beminde volk naar Mijn hart kan wandelen!

Zoo moet ge dat schelden verstaan. Het is de goedertierenheid Gods voor Zijn volk.

“En Hij verlost ze uit de hand des haters, en Hij bevrijdde ze van de hand des vijands.”

Dat zal waar zijn.

Egypte, met Farao aan haar hoofd, waren de haters en de vijanden van Gods volk. Voor honderde jaren hadden zij dat volk getergd, gemarteld, vermoord, en verdaan. Tot tweemaal toe staat er in den tekst van hunne “hand” die het arme volk gemarteld had. Maar

God had die hand genomen en weggerukt van den strot van Israel, en Hij had op Zijn beurt die vijanden benauwd met een doodelijke benauwing.

God is recht in al Zijn weg en werk.

Maar Hij doet haastiglijk recht voor Zijn teederlijk beminde volk, dat in benauwdheid schreeuwt tot Hem.

En dat hadden zij gedaan. Zij hadden tot God geroepen van eeuw tot eeuw.

En Zijn goedertierenheid was geopenbaard in de verlossingen bij de Schelfzee.

“en de wateren overdekten hunne wederpartijders, niet één van hen bleef er over.”

Dat moet ontzettend geweest zijn! Daar gaat de bloem van Egypte's strijdbare helden de Schelfzee in. In de verte zien we de achtertocht van Israel's leger. Ik hoor die Egyptenaren zeggen: Als zij het kunnen, kunnen wij het ook!

En daar gaat het domme volk. Zij loopen zomaar den val in. Aan beide zijden kunnen zij in de wateren zien, de wateren die als twee muren omhoog gaan.

En voor tijd en wijle gaat het goed. Dat is eigenlijk een domme uitdrukking. Dom, want ge moet eens naar boven zien, naar den hemel, naar het oog van God! Hij heeft het gezien en gehoord, dat Egypte Israel najaagde in het hart der zee. Kunt ge het U voorstellen hoe het God te moede was, toen Hij die goddelooze Egyptenaren daar zag jagen in de zee, in Zijn wonder? Ze betreden met goddelooze voeten het heilige pad, het wondere pad, het mirakeleuze pad naar den hemel!

En toen is de Heere weer aan 't werk gegaan. Ja, Mozes heeft zijn staf over de Schelfzee doen zweven. Maar God heeft gewerkt.

Leest de geschiedenis eens. God werkte met Zijn OOG!

Hij zag naar de Egyptenaren. En toen werd het bang. Hij zag op hen neer in Zijn eeuwigen toorn. En toen ging alles verkeerd. Hij “zag” op hen en zij werden verschrikt. Leest het maar.

En dan komen de resultaten van dit “zien” van God.

De Heere stiet de raderen van hunne wagens weg, zoodat zij zwaarlijk voortvaardden.

De Heere ging aan 't strijden tegen Egypte. En zoo duidelijk, dat de Egyptenaren het zelf bemerkten en zeiden.

En dan komt het natte graf voor die helden.

Er bleef er niet een over.

Neen, en er zal niet een goddelooze overblijven in den dag van Gods wrake. Zelfs hun naam wordt uitgeroeid.

En waarom?

Omdat God goedertieren is over Zijn volk.

Hallelujah!

G. Vos.

IN HIS FEAR

Training For Life's Calling

Training in the History Class. (continued)

In the closing paragraph of the last installment of this department we made the remark that in the history class the covenant child must also be taught to see historical events as God sees them. By this we mean that he must be trained to be able to judge events according to the judgment of God. These events must be analyzed for him according to the ethical, moral standards whereby God judges them. And in this way he will be trained to analyze future events according to this same standard.

In the world historical events are analyzed according to the standards of public sentiment, the “conscience of society” or convenience and fleshly satisfaction. The mind and heart of man draw up the standard by which we must analyze and judge men and their works. Even as today with complete and deliberate ignoring of the hand of the Infinite God the recent surprising election of President Truman is explained in many different ways, so are the ethical, moral issues in history presented and analyzed as though God never existed. The standard is man. The viewpoint is whether man has been advanced, whether he has attained a new degree of security (?) and freedom (?), to continue his sinful way apart from God. The French Revolution, for example, is presented not from the viewpoint of the Fifth Commandment which forbids ALL revolution and demands submission to ALL authorities until they demand sin, but from the viewpoint of what man has gained in a material sense. In the worldly history-class, God's child is not taught to see historical events with the same judgment that is God's. The covenant child must see it that way and that way only. How else can he be trained and lead in the contemplation of the infinite greatness of God? Must he be taught that this infinitely great God can be pushed aside when man so pleases and that He will then look down in favour upon such rebels? Remember Nimrod whose name means “rebel”. Consider what happened to his glorious kingdom of Babel. He was a mighty man in the eyes of the people so that they, and not God, gave him the name of “mighty hunter before the Lord”. He was a great humanist! By his conquest over the wild beasts which multiplied so rapidly after the flood that man's life was endangered, he made the plain of Shinar a safe place for man, established his kingdom of Babel and in direct opposition to the word of God, at which he rebelled, he sought to make this a permanent settlement for the

whole human race. The advantages for the flesh were innumerable. From every viewpoint—except that of the glory of God—this was to man's advantage because they all spoke the same language and were indeed one nation. But God gave His answer. He passed judgment upon that deed not according to the standards of man's advantage and safety but according to the standard of His holy law which demands that all things glorify His name. This historical fact of the confusion of tongues, of course, is also denied by the unbeliever, but there are similar incidents in world history where one will have to judge an event as to its ethical value lest he fail to train God's covenant children for their life's calling.

To fail to judge an event, an act of man or a practice of a nation according to God's judgment is to misinterpret the event. Still worse, it will leave a wrong if not dangerous impression in the mind of the child. It may and often does lead him to walk in an evil way under the impression that he may do this thing. To be concrete, shall we, just because we are American citizens—losing sight of our heavenly citizenship and life's calling as such citizens—shall we, though we as well as others are deeply thankful to God for our marvelous land and for the freedom *He*, not men, gives us to develop the truth and to instruct our children without fear of persecution, judge the American Revolution according to the standards of worldly historians or according to the Fifth Commandment? When our worship of God was not at all at stake but our taxation without representation was shall we point our children to the present freedom of religion which we now enjoy and try to excuse that revolution which the Unchangeable and infinite God continues to judge according to His holy law? What is the result? Is such a practice harmless? We may not like to admit it, but then we are teaching our children a very unscriptural slogan that the end justifies the means. The end is our present freedom of religion, a land of our own where we can rule ourselves and can allow each other the right to his convictions. The end is a democracy where formerly we were ruled by a cruel monarch. The means was a bloody revolution, throwing off the God-given yoke, and must we justify it before our children?

Before we may do that, we will have to prove from the Word of God that the King of England had no right from God to tax us. It is not a question of whether the taxation was just and necessary. God says through the apostle Peter, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." That last phrase shows clearly that only when it requires disobedience to God may we refuse to submit to the authorities. All things must be for the Lord's sake. A little later Peter states, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle,

but also to the froward." That applies to the servants of the king too. The king may be froward and as with Rehoboam exact taxes which are unnecessary, yet the subjects or servants must obey. What Christian school teacher would uphold those who revolted against Rehoboam? One may say, indeed, but Rehoboam was the son of Solomon and so also the son of David and in his kingship was therefore a type of Christ, so that to rebel against Rehoboam was to reject Christ. We agree. But read once Romans 13:1, 2. For America to revolt against the King of England was to revolt against God. Paul has this to say, nay, God has this to say there, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (But we are getting now into training in the civics class.)

Furthermore, it will have to be proven, by those who maintain that the American Revolution was fought for religious reasons, that Scripture permits the church or the nation to take up the sword to defend the truth. Jesus told Peter to put up his sword, for they that slay with the sword will perish with it. Paul tells the church to put on the whole Armour of God. Surely God's Word did not teach America to hire godless France to help preserve the true religion.

A word of caution! The teacher, of course, will have to be tactful and above all spiritual in presenting historical events from the viewpoint of God's judgment of them. We *are* Americans! And we must respect those now in authority over us. Although there are many events in our history and deeds of our leaders in the far past and recent past whose works must definitely be presented as sin before God, yet the child must never leave his history class with a feeling of or inclination toward disrespect. And he surely should learn to be appreciative of the Infinite God's works whereby He led Columbus to discover this land for the sake of the church and whereby He has given us leaders who—whether in faith or unbelief makes no difference here—permitted the church to develop the truth and to instruct the youth in the truth and who even today keep their hands out of the domain of the church. To show a child history as God sees it, to show it to him in the light of God's law will not make him a poor citizen. There is not a better citizen than that citizen who is and lives as a Christian. On the other hand, teach the child that the authorities do not need to be obeyed when YOU think that they are froward and foolish and you train a band of revolutionists. We say again, there is a crying need for a history book that can be used in Christian schools, one written by a Christian who views all events according to that written in God's

Word, a book that shows the child historically as God ethically sees them. No philosophy of man must be behind its analyzation of men's deeds, but, and we refer you again to the principles drawn up by the Rev. Gritters, we shall have to judge the nations according to the position they have taken toward the church and the truth she preaches. That history book will have to judge the nations according to the standard of righteousness revealed in God's law, the truth we preach.

It all adds up to this, that teaching history to God's royal priesthood is one of the most if not the most difficult tasks a Christian school teacher is called upon to perform. The teacher will indeed have to be well versed in the doctrines of Scripture. A course in Reformed doctrine will have to be an essential element in that training. And much preparation of the lesson prayerfully and carefully will be required especially while we must yet make use of the world's textbooks.

The difficulty will not frighten one who loves the truth. And that is essential in the very first place. If one loves the truth, one can teach history properly. If one loves the truth, one will want to teach it properly, and though the difficulty remains, the love for the truth will by God's grace keep one from misrepresenting the facts. If one does not love the truth, one should not even contemplate teaching anyone, for woe to those who love the lie and teach it in one form or another to others. In the Christian school we have those who love the truth, and it is and should be a source of encouragement to the teacher every morning he or she stands before the class to consider that the parents have entrusted their children to the teacher's care and instruction. In the Christian school likewise, the teacher who loves the truth and works hard to present the history of the world according to the standards whereby God judges them, may be encouraged by the knowledge that to such our Covenant God Whose children they train will say, Well done good and faithful servants. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.

Next time we hope to conclude this series on training in the history class and perhaps introduce the next section, namely, that of training in the Geography class.

(to be continued)

J. A. Heys.

The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but to be able to hold your tongue in one language is priceless. — *The Banner*.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Hope Of The Covenant Mother In The Old Dispensation *

The birth of a child is often hailed as "a blessed event". Sometimes this is meant in all seriousness, but often it carries a ring of irony in it. In a world of sinful men who are filled with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life," children are often considered a burden and even a nuisance. Some would even hesitate about bringing a new generation into the miseries of an earthly existence. The anticipation of motherhood and the stigma of a large family are frequently looked upon with dread. Yet the fact remains that from the very dawn of history believing women were thrilled with the joy that belongs peculiarly to a real mother. This is not simply because of the motherly instinct of the woman, nor because the child makes the family unit complete and brings happiness into the home. But the real reason why a believing mother rejoices in the birth of her child is because she thereby realizes her purpose in the covenant according to the will of God.

This is especially evident from the church of the old dispensation where it was a source of constant grief to many believing women that they were deprived from the joy of motherhood. They realized that only in the line of continued generations could the Christ, the hope of their salvation, be born. All their salvation was wrapped up in that promised seed. All God's promises centered in Him. They were blessed in bringing forth that seed. For their hope was fixed upon the word of the Lord that was spoken to Satan immediately after the fall, "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."

It is interesting to trace that hope of the believing mothers of the Old Testament through a few of its outstanding phases.

Notice, first of all, the case of Eve, the mother of all the living. When she brought forth her firstborn son into the world she exclaimed, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." No doubt, she was filled with the amazement of any mother who gives birth to a child. No one can help but marvel at the wonder that has taken place. Here you have a well formed individual with eyes and ears and nose and mouth, with hands that wave and feet that kick, with lungs that

* This talk was given at the meeting of the League of Ladies Societies held in the First Protestant Reformed Church.

breath in perfect rythm, a heart that beats and a stomach that demands its food at regular intervals. It bears the likeness of father or mother, or more likely of both. It has its own features, its own characteristics, its own nature, its own place in the family, in the church and in the midst of this world. It has a spiritual existence whereby it lives its life before the face of God and finally passes on into eternity. It is a man or a woman in miniature, that will take its own place and serve its own purpose in life.

But surely Eve saw more than that in her first child. She realized that hereby God's purpose was being realized, that man should "be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth." This child was the first of the family the Lord would give them. He was a concrete evidence of the race that was to be born.

Yet considering that through the fall Adam and Eve had a depraved nature, she also must realize that her children were conceived and born in sin. Despair might have drowned every joy at the thought of bringing forth a carnal seed that was prone to all evil. How evident that became in the later history of Cain, for he slew his righteous brother Abel and became a vagabond upon the earth. We can well imagine what a grief this son caused his parents, especially when they realized that he had received his sinful nature from them as a result of their fall. But Eve was able to look beyond these things, for to her was promised a seed that would crush the head of the serpent. That hope flooded her soul as she took her firstborn son into her arms. Did she imagine that this child might already be the promised Saviour? We can only surmise. Yet this is certain, that when she exclaimed, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," she gave expression to all the hope that lived in her heart.

Then there is the case of Sarah, whose daughters ye are when ye walk in her faith. (I Peter 3:6). As you know, God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees to bring him to the land of Canaan, that he might become the father of all believers. To him came the promise, "I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Yet, strange as it may seem, God had given to Abraham a wife who from a natural aspect saw the hopes of motherhood vanish as the years rolled by, for she was barren. She had grown old, so that she was like a dead corpse as far as the prospects of becoming a mother were concerned. To still give birth to a child had definitely become a human impossibility. It seems utterly hopeless that the promised seed could ever be born from her. Yet all the salvation of the world was wrapped up in that seed. If she would die childless, the Christ could not come and God's promise would fail. God would not be God, for He would prove unfaithful to His word.

That accounts for it that she conceived of the plot to employ her slave Hagar for the purpose of producing the desired seed. After conferring with Abraham on the matter, it was agreed that this might prove to be a way out of their difficulty, so that the impossible might still come to pass. We should note that Abraham and Sarah had no intention of allowing Hagar to lay any claim to her own child. She was to serve as a slave, a bondwoman, to her mistress, to supply her mistress with a child. Sarah would claim the child which was born to her from Abraham through the bondwoman, and she would present this child to God as a possible heir of the promise.

We know that the plot failed miserably. God had no need of Sarah's scheming to realize His promise. The incident brought untold grief in the house of Abraham. But the outcome was that God proved that He could do that which was impossible with man. He performs the wonder of His grace, bringing forth the living from the dead.

We need only mention in passing Rebekah, the wife of Isaac. She also was barren. It looked as if Isaac had made a mistake after all in taking Rebekah to wife, for she was unable to bring forth the seed out of which the Christ should be born. Would the hopes of Abraham and Sarah still perish? But the Lord heard her prayer, so that she anticipated the birth of twins. And yet, before the children were born the Lord made plain to her that the sword of election and reprobation would pass between her offspring, for the one, even the firstborn, would have no part whatever in God's covenant. Not in Esau, but in Jacob lay the hope of the coming of the Christ and the ingathering of God's church.

And finally, not to mention any more, we pause at the example of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Scripture informs us that she was the beloved wife of Elkanah, yet she also was barren. It is certainly significant that there were so many barren women in the line of the covenant in the old dispensation. It plainly reveals that the church is born, not of him who will-eth, nor of him who runneth, but of God Who showeth mercy.

We are all acquainted with Hannah's prayer for a child, the Lord's answer to her prayer, and the fact that she dedicated this child to the Lord in the tabernacle at Shiloh. Her request was certainly unique. Plainly she was not simply interested in being relieved of the stigma of her barrenness. Nor was she interested in brightening her home with a child. She was governed by entirely different considerations. She requests a child, but only with certain definite stipulations. First of all, it must be a male child. A daughter would not serve her purpose. Moreover, it must be a child which the Lord will receive as a Nazarite from birth, to be devoted to the tabernacle and to the Lord

all the days of his life. Which finally implies that it must be a true covenant seed. She has no need for a carnal seed, but this child must serve the very definite purpose of delivering Israel from all her troubles.

Hannah's prayer arises from the heart of a true mother in Israel. No wonder that her song of thanksgiving is prophetic of the Song of Mary. Years later the mother of Jesus takes up this song of Hannah as she realizes that she is the most blessed among women, the one in whom all the hopes of the covenant mothers of the old dispensation were fulfilled.

(to be continued)

C. Hanko.

PERISCOPE

Home Mission News

Lynden Washington, November 15. — Since we haven't written for quite some time we will go back a bit in order to give a connected and coherent report of the activities that have taken place. Some of what we write, therefore, may be old news to many of us but it will serve to bring all the events clearly before our minds.

You will recall that our last Synod decided that our two missionaries should work together in the field of Lynden, Washington. At the same time the Mission Committee, in conjunction with the calling Consistory of Fuller Ave., received the mandate to continue labor in Canada and devise ways and means to do so. After the Mission Committee and Consistory had discussed these things they felt it to be expedient that the missionaries begin the work in Lynden together. Further, that after the opening of the Lynden field undersigned was to take up residence in Canada, and with the assistance of the Holland speaking ministers from Classis East, continue the work in Canada; in the Province of Ontario. Though this arrangement of the work was somewhat of a compromise and apparently contrary to the decision of Synod, it was adopted as a solution to use our present means to the best advantage both in Lynden and Canada. It was also expressed that this set-up was of a temporary nature, for if the Canadian field proved to be worthwhile other arrangements might be made to provide for a Holland-speaking man in Canada.

Early in September, therefore, Rev. Knott and his family settled in Lynden. Undersigned met them there and the work in this vicinity was begun as reported by the Rev. Knott in a recent issue of *Concordia*. After spending approximately four weeks in Lynden undersigned returned East expecting to remove to

Canada and begin the work there.

In the meantime, however, events had transpired which again caused a revision in the plans. Some of the brethren had objected to the plan to separate our Missionaries on the grounds that it was contrary to the expressions of our Synods, both when the decision was reached to call two men and also of our last Synod which decided that they should work together in Lynden, Washington. Consequently, a protest was delivered to the calling Consistory and appealed to Classis East which treated it at its last held meeting in October. Classis East sustained this protest and expressed that the decision that both missionaries labor together in Lynden should be carried out.

Hence, the Mission Committee and Consistory were obliged to revise their plans. It was decided that undersigned and family should return to Washington to continue with Rev. Knott in Lynden. About a week later, having packed up enough belongings on a small two-wheel trailer, we again left Grand Rapids headed for the West Coast. We had a beautiful and uneventful though tiring trip across the country. It took us six rather full days to span the distance. We left home on a Friday morning and after spending an enjoyable week-end with the Rev. Blankespoor's in Doon, Iowa, continued on our way and reached Lynden the following Friday night. The Sunday we spent in Iowa gave us opportunity to preach the Word once in Hull and once in Doon. We also greatly enjoyed the farewell send-off the Blankespoor's had arranged for that Sunday evening. All the ministers and wives in that vicinity met together and encouraged us in word, song and prayer. We are indeed grateful to them for their kind expressions.

In order to accomplish the mandate to continue the work in Canada, it was decided to ask various ministers to spend a few weeks there from time to time. The Revs. J. De Jong and H. De Wolf were granted leaves by their respective Consistories to spend four weeks in Canada. By the time of this writing they have very likely fulfilled their labor. We have heard that they were rather well received in Canada and held several small services in various places in which interest had been previously found. The Mission Committee hopes and expects to be able to arrange to continue in this manner by sending two more men at an early date to follow up what has been begun. At this distance the news comes rather slowly and, undoubtedly, the Mission Committee will keep our people better informed regarding developments in Canada.

Returning to our field here in Lynden, there is not a great deal more to report. The Rev. Knott's amply provided for our initial needs and found us a splendid place to live. Though it is about five miles from Lynden in a farming area, its many fine features more than make up for the inconvenience of living "in the

country". By this time we are rather well established and carrying on the work, which according to indications noted earlier, will be rather slow. We have already distributed a great deal of literature and made various contacts. The reaction has been rather meager. There seems to be very little desire to investigate our position or study the differences. For the past three Sunday evenings we have been holding preaching services in a small church building near Lynden. This meeting place is rather centrally located between the three communities here and serves our purpose very well. Together with our radio program we are happy to be able to give a distinctively Reformed witness in this community. Though, as yet, the prospects are not great, we rest in the will of the Lord knowing that our labor is never in vain in the Lord.

Illustrative Anecdote. . . .

When we first arrived here in September we took opportunity to call on various ministers of this vicinity to inform them of our presence and purpose. One of these brethren, whose public services we had attended and whom we called upon publicly, accused us of being spies and using unethical methods. He also expressed that he felt that stern measures should be taken against those who would attend our meetings or otherwise encourage us.

Well now, on the night that we held our first meeting we noticed a car parked, with its lights out, in the shadows of a farm lane directly opposite the entrance to our meeting place. Unfortunately (?) just as some people were arriving to attend our meeting the farmer across the road desired to drive into his lane and it became necessary for the car parked there to come out into the light. The driver was recognized as the brother who had so spoken against us!

My dictionary gives the following definition of spy: "One who watches others secretly: often with bad implications".

* * * *

Church Union. . . .

Both the desire and execution of mergers and unions of various Protestant denominations continue, as is evident from the following AP dispatches from a recent issue of the *Grand Rapids Press*:

"The congregational Christian churches and the Evangelical and Reformed church have agreed on procedure for merging, probably in 1949, into a United Church of Christ with about 2,000,000 members.

About 50 members of executive committees of the two denominations met here in an all-day conference Wednesday. Dr. Louis W. Goebel of Chicago, president of the Evangelical and Reformed church, said the sessions resulted "in a complete meeting of minds and afford a truly realistic procedure for completing this

great union of Protestant churches".

"A proposal designed to pave the way to eventual merger of various Lutheran church groups was before the ninth biennial convention of the American Lutheran conference Thursday.

"The preliminary committee of the conference urged that the group petition the National Lutheran council to initiate an all-Lutheran conference. Such a conference would have a membership of 5,500,000 Lutherans.

"Attending the Detroit conference are delegates from the Augustana Lutheran church, Evangelical Lutheran church, American Lutheran church, Lutheran Free church and United Evangelical church.

"The proposal would open the way for this group to be joined by the United Lutheran church in America and the Lutheran church—Missouri synod."

W. Hofman.

P.S.— Our address is R. R. 2, Lynden, Washington.

BROTHERHOOD

Think gently of the erring;
Ye know not of the power
With which the dark temptation came,
In some unguarded hour;
Ye may not know how earnestly
They struggled, or how well,
Until the hour of weakness came
And sadly thus they fell.

Think gently of the erring;
Oh, do not thou forget,
However darkly stained by sin,
He is thy brother yet;
Heir of the self-same heritage,
Child of the self-same God,
He has but stumbled in the path
Thou hast in weakness trod.

Speak gently to the erring;
For is it not enough
That innocence and peace have gone,
Without the censure Rough?
It sure must be a weary lot,
That sin-stained heart to bear,
And those who share a happier fate
Their chidings well may spare.

Speak gently to the erring;
Thou yet mayest lead them back,
With holy words and tones of love,
From misery's thorny track;
Forget not thou hast often sinned,
And sinful must be;
Deal gently with the erring, then,
As God has dealt with thee.

—Julia A. Fletcher.