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MEDITATION

Niet Vele Meesters

Zijt niet vele meesters, mijne broeders! wetende, dat wij te meerder oordeel zullen ontvangen. Want wij struikelen allen in vele. . . .

Jak. 3:1, 2a.

Zijt niet vele meesters!

Want wat nuttigheid is het, mijne broeders, indien iemand zegt, dat hij het geloof heeft, en hij heeft de werken niet?

Kan dat geloof hem zalig maken?

Zoo is nog altijd het onderliggende verband.

Wel begint Gods Woord hier het hoofdonderwerp van den brief van Jakobus van eene bijzondere zijde te bezien, en op eene bepaalde phase van het leven Gods volk, als vrienden Gods in de wereld, toe te passen. Dit hoofdstuk wordt ingeleid met eene waarschuwing om te waken tegen de zonde van meester te willen zijn, en geeselt dan voorts het kwaad van eene booze tong, van het zondige spreken in het algemeen, en dit alles in vergelijking met en in tegenstelling van de wijsheid, die van boven is.

Doch dit alles staat in nauw verband met het hoofdonderwerp van den geheelen brief: door een levend geloof in Christus, een geloof, dat uit Hem, en in Hem, en door Hem, en tot Hem werkt, zijn we vrienden Gods geworden, en wandelen we als van Gods partij in de wereld.

In den brief van Jakobus valt de nadruk op ons deel in God verbond!

En dat deel bestaat immers daarin, dat we den Heere onzen God liefhebben met geheel ons hart, met geheel onze ziel, met geheel ons verstand, en met al onze krachten, dat we ons vertrouwen alleen op Hem stellen, Hem aan hangen, de wereld verlaten, onze oude

natuur dooden, en in een nieuw godzalig leven wandelen. Wie daarentegen een vriend der wereld wil zijn, die zal een vijand Gods gesteld worden.

Dit legt beslag op heel ons leven. Ook op ons verstand, op ons denken, op ons spreken. Door een levend geloof in Christus staan we, als vrienden Gods, in Zijn verbond ook met den dienst der tong. Door het levend geloof beheerscht, spreekt onze tong de wijsheid, die van boven is, die is "ten eerste zuiver, daarna vreedzaam, bescheiden, gezeggelijk, vol van barmhartigheid en goede vruchten, niet partijdig oordeelende, en ongeveinsd." 3:17.

Daartegenover nu staat een dood geloof, een geloof, dat iemand beweert te bezitten, maar dat zich niet openbaart in de werken. Zulk een "dood geloof" openbaart zich op het gebied der tong hierin, dat het nier spreekt in "zachtmoedige wijsheid", de wijsheid, die van boven komt, maar de wijsheid der wereld, welke is "aardsch, natuurlijk, duivelsch." Ze werkt gekijf en tweedracht, twisten en vechterijen, nijd en twistgierigheid. En het schijnt wel, dat dit kwaad sterk tot openbaring kwam onder de geloovigen, de "broeders" aan wie Jakobus schrijft. Noch ook is die sterke openbaring van dit gruwelijke kwaad beperkt tot de gemeente van dien tijd. Alle eeuwen door werd, en ook thans nog wordt door de booze tong, de tong, die door het vleesch beheerscht wordt, door de wijsheid, die aardsch, natuurlijk, duivelsch is, ontzettend veel kwaad gesticht onder de broeders. 't Is een vuur, dat nimmer geheel uitgebluscht is, en dat telkens weer opblaait, om dan, eer het weer onder de controle der genade gebracht kan worden, zijn verwoesting rondom zich verspreidt.

Zijt niet vele meesters, mijne broeders!

Niet als een woord, dat in het verleden eens gesproken werd door een zekeren Jakobus, en waarvoor destijds bijzondere redenen waren, maar als het Woord Gods, dat door den Koning Zijner Kerk tot haar, tot ons gericht wordt, moeten we het hooren.

Reeds eerder had Jakobus tegen dit kwaad gewaarschuwd.

“Een iegelijk mensch zij rasch om te hooren, traag om te spreken.” 1:19. En ook: “Indien iemand onder u dunkt, dat hij godsdienstig is, en hij zijn tong niet in toom houdt, maar zijn hart verleidt, deze godsdienst is ijdel.” 1:26.

En nu bestrijdt hij dit kwaad, niet met vleesche-lijke, maar met geestelijke wapenen. Hij vat de zaak niet van den buitenkant aan, om verbetering, refo-rmatie aan te brengen, maar van den binnenkant, om berouw en bekeering te werken.

Hij schrijft niet een wet op steenen tafelen, maar hij beroept zich op de wet der vrijheid.

Geloof is zonder de werken dood. Het baat niet. Het maakt niet zalig. Het levend geloof brengt vruch-ten voort, ook de vrucht van een geheiligde tong.

Het dood geloof is rasch om te spreken, traag om te hooren. (Het wil meester zijn.

(Het levend geloof hoort graag. Het wil discipel zijn!

Leerjongen van Christus!

Zijt niet vele meesters!

Niet vele onderwijzers!

Dit toch is de beteekenis van het woord, dat hier door “meesters” is vertaald.

Gemeente, laat toch in u de toestand niet heerschen, waarin velen waarin de meerderheid van u, waarin straks allen onderwijzer willen zijn!

Laat ons dit goed verstaan.

In den goeden zin des woords is het een kostelijk iets, wanneer eene gemeente vele *didaskaloi*, vele onder-wijzers heeft. Noch ook geldt dit uitsluitend van die bijzondere klasse van onderwijzers, die in den bij-zonderen zin des woords, hetzij in het ambt van leeraar of ouderling, hetzij daarbuiten, in de zondagschool, of de christelijke dagschool, tot de taak van het onderwijs zich geven en geroepen zijn. Zeker, ook die gemeente is te benijden, waarvan gezegd kan worden, dat ze in dien bijzonderen zin vele onderwijzers heeft, vele werk-krachten, die bekwaam en gewillig zijn om bezig te zijn in het onderwijs der gemeente, van jong en oud, in de leer en in den weg der godzaligheid. Maar in nog breederen zin mag gezegd worden, dat “vele meesters” in de gemeente zeer te begeeren zijn, ja, dat niet alleen velen, maar allen, als staande in het ambt aller geloovi-gen, geroepen zijn om elkander te onderwijzen, te ver-manen, te vertroosten, te dienen tot elkanders opbou-wing in het geloof, en alzoo tot opbouwning der ge-meente!

Och, dat al Gods volk profeten waren!

Zoo is het immers, in den grond der zaak, in de ge-meente van den nieuwen dag.

De Geest is uitgestort op alle vleesch!

Allen hebben de zalving van den Heilige, en ze heb-

ben niet van noode, dat iemand hen leere. Op de vraag: “Maar waarom wordt gij een Christen ge-naamd? antwoord de geloovige van den nieuwen dag: “Omdat ik door het geloof een lidmaat van Christus en alzoo Zijner zalving deelachtig ben, opdat ik Zijnen naam belijde, en mijzelf tot een levend dankoffer Hem offere, en met een vrije en goede consciëntie in dit leven tegen de zonde en den duivel strijde, en hier-namaals in eeuwigheid met Hem over alle schepselen regeere.”

Allen zijn profeten!

Och, dat allen nu ook daadwerkelijk profeten waren!

Dat zou immers beteekenen, dat allen vervuld waren met de waarachtige kennis Gods, die door Geest en Woord in hart en verstand gewerkt wordt, niet maar met theoretische kennis der waarheid, die opgeblazen maakt, maar met de geestelijke kennis des geloofs. En hoe meer van die kennis er in de gemeente gevonden wordt, hoe beter. Het zou beteekenen, dat allen van die kennis ook spraken, niet maar in koude, intellectu-ele discussie, niet om onze eigene geleerdheid te open-baren, of om gelijk te hebben, maar in de liefde van Christus, tot openbaring van de heerlijkheid Zijner genade, en om het goede voor Jeruzalem te zoeken, en het welzijn der broederen. Het zou inhouden, dat we de een den ander uitnemender zouden achten dan ons-zelfen, omdat we immers allen van Christus zijn, en dat we slechts als leerjongens van Hem elkander willen onderwijzen, vermanen, en vertroosten.

Och, dat allen profeten waren!

Niet zoo, dat ieder op zichzelf, *alleen* meester wil zijn, om alle anderen te beschouwen en te behandelen als *zijne* leerjongens; maar zoo, dat allen het alleen uit Christus willen ontvangen, en tezamen woekeren met hunne gaven tot opbouwning van het lichaam van Christus!

Dat is immers ook geen “meesterschap,” en zeker niet het meesterschap, waarop Gods Woord hier doelt.

Zoo verstaan, zijt dan maar vele *didaskaloi*, vele meesters, vele onderwijzers, mijne broeders!

Als leerjongens van Christus onderwijzers van elkander!

Als eene openbaring van het nieuwe verbond, de vervulling van de belofte: “Ik zal Mijne wetten in hun verstand geven, en in hunne harten zal Ik die inschrij-ven; en Ik zal hun tot een God zijn, en zij zullen Mij tot een volk zijn. En zij zullen niet leeren, een iegelijk zijnen naaste, en een iegelijk zijnen broeder: Ken den Heere; want zij zullen Mij allen kennen van den kleine onder hen tot den groote onder hen.”

Allen zittend op de schoolbanken, om zich door Christus te laten onderwijzen.

Allen vervuld met, en geleid door Zijnen Geest, ge-bonden aan Zijn Woord.

Allen juist daarom ook eerend en zoekend den dienst des Woord.

En dan allen elkander onderwijzend!
Heerlijke verhouding!

Zijt niet vele meesters!

Want het meester willen zijn is uit den duivel!

Een "meester" toch is iemand, die het weet, die het *alleen weet*, en die voor zijn klas staat, om het *alleen* te zeggen.

De klas, wel, die bestaat immers louter uit leerlingen. Hij, de onderwijzer, de meester, weet het alleen. Daar, in de klas, is de verhouding niet zoo, dat meester en leerlingen bezig zijn tot elkanders opbouw en onderwijzing. Er is slechts één meester, de rest zijn discipelen.

Laat het, mijne broeders, onder U alzo niet zijn, dat velen, dat ten slotte allen tegenover alle anderen in de gemeente die houding, de houding van zulk een "meester", die het alleen weet, en ook alleen wil weten, aannemen!

Zulk een meesterschap wortelt niet in de liefde van Christus, en is geen vrucht des geloofs, maar komt op uit hetzelfde beginsel des ongeloofs, dat zich uitsprak in het woord van hem, die altijd van zichzelf spreekt, en die juist daarom altijd de leugenaar is: "Gij zult als God zijn, kennende het goed en het kwaad." Zulk een meesterschap wordt beheerscht door den geest uit den afgrond, zit nooit op de schoolbanken van Christus, heeft een hoogen dunk van zichzelf, is opgeblazen. Hij, die dat meesterschap zoekt, zoekt zichzelf, plaatst zichzelf op den troon van zijn eigen kathedraal in de gemeente. Hij zegt van zichzelf: "IK weet het, en ik weet het alleen; IK heb kennis en wijsheid, IK heb een diep inzicht in de waarheid; MIJN woord alleen moet worden gehoord." Hij is nooit discipel, ook niet van Christus. Hij is louter meester. Op alle anderen ziet hij uit de hoogte neer: zij zijn de leerjongens! De anderen uitnemender achten dan zichzelf, is hem eenvoudig ondenkbaar.

Daarom spreekt deze meester dan ook veel.

Hij is altijd aan het woord.

Steeds is hij anderen aan het onderwijzen. En "meester" zijnde, onderwijst hij zichzelf nimmer. En als hij gesproken heeft, is het uit. Tegenspraak kan niet geduld worden. Deze meester "meestert" onder den dienst des Woords, toestemmend knikkend, als de prediking hem gelijk geeft, nadrukkelijk "neen" schuddend over alles wat zijn "onderwijs" tegensprekt. Hij "meestert", zoodra hij uit de kerk stapt, zich stellend in den dienst des Boozen, om het zaad des Woords zooveel mogelijk weg te rukken. Hij "meestert" in gezelschap en op de vereeniging, hij "meestert" altijd en overal.

Hij "meestert" zelfs nog in zijn openbaar gebed!
En het doel is altijd eigen IK.

Niet de verheerlijking van Christus, niet de opbouw en het geestelijke welzijn der broeders, maar eigen eer heeft deze meester op het oog!

Zijt niet vele meesters, mijne broeders!

Och, als ge één zulk een meester in uw midden hebt, hebt ge reeds een centrum en bron van twist en tweedracht!

Hebt ge twee, dan moogt ge voortdurend ellende verwachten.

Maar "vele meesters", eilieve, met hen is geen huis meer te houden!

Dan viert de duivel hoogtij!

Want hun wijsheid is niet uit het geloof. Hoe dooder het geloof, hoe meer zulke meesters!

Hun wijsheid is natuurlijk, aardsch, duivelsch, en vertoont de duivelsche trekken van onzuiverheid, twistgierigheid, onbescheidenheid, ongezeggenheid, wreedheid, geveindsheid. . . .

Neen, broeders, niet vele meesters!

Mijne broeders!

O, ja, het zijn toch de broeders, die aldus worden vermaand!

't Kan immers wel, dat ook de broeders elkanders zoo gaan bemeesteren! Er is dan wel geloof, maar er wordt niet uit geleefd. Er is dan wel leven, maar het wordt niet geopenbaard. We hebben immers slechts een klein beginsel dezer nieuwe gehoorzaamheid, en de bewegingen der zonde woelen altijd in onze leden.

Broeders, ja; maar met de dure roeping om zich te bekeeren!

Deze "meesters" moeten gaan leven, als in den dag des oordeels, en dan daarbij bedenken, dat wij allen in vele opzichten, op allerlei wijze, met woord en daad, struikelen, en dat het wel voor de hand ligt, dat het o zoo gemakkelijk is, om in woorden te struikelen!

Zoo levende, in het bewustzijn van eigen zwakheid en geneigdheid tot struikelen, en als in den dag der openbaring van het rechtvaardig oordeel Gods, zullen ze bedenken, dat hun meesterschap straks meerder, zwaarder oordeel hun zal brengen. Want wij moeten allen geopenbaard worden voor den rechterstoel van Christus, binnenst buiten gekeerd, gewaardschat en het licht van Gods heilige wet, opdat een iegelijk wegdrage hetgeen in het lichaam geschiedt, het zij goed hetzij kwaad. En, o, zeker, er is vergeving. Er is geen verdoemenis voor degenen, die in Christus Jezus zijn. . . .

Maar, mijne broeders, in den weg van uw duivelsche meesterschap hebt gij daaraan toch geen houvast!

Werkt dus uws zelfs zaligheid, en bekeert u!

Met vreeze en beving!

H. H.

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CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session, D. V., Wednesday, July 9,
at 9:00 in the morning at the Prot. Ref. Church at
Hudsonville, Michigan. D. Jonker, S. C.

EDITORIALS

Sarcasm, Sophistry, Evasion, Or What?

The reader will, no doubt, recall that some time ago I reflected on a remark made, in *Concordia*, by Mr. Geo. Ten Elshof, and my request that he either explain himself or apologize.

The brother delayed answering a long time. At the time of this writing it is about the end of May, and I just received the reply. I am sorry that I could not publish it in the issue of June 15, but this time of the year I have to work ahead for our Standard Bearer because of the busy week of synod, and my vacation following that week. The result is that my copy of June 15 is finished. Nor, considering that Mr. Ten Elshof waited more than three months with his answer, would it seem necessary for me to change my schedule of work to accomodate him.

But seeing that so long a time intervenes between my request to him and his reply, it may be expedient to remind the reader of what I wrote. Here it is:

At the close of an article in *Concordia* Nov. 28, 1946, defending Ladies Aid Sales, Mr. G. Ten Elshof dropped a remark that should not pass unchallenged. I quote: "Perhaps if the brother would make an exhaustive study of the reasons why our various church expenses are continually rising and who are doing this and why, and that at 'company expense', we shall have something more concrete to discuss."

This remark has nothing to do, of course, with the debate about the sales conducted by our Ladies Aid Societies. It is not my purpose to become a party in that debate. Nor is this necessary. The arguments raised against such sales in the debate will not prevent our ladies to continue, with a free conscience, to devote their time and efforts to the support of various causes such as the Standard Bearer, Christian Schools, our own School, and the like. Only, instead of being compared to the money changers in the temple, our ladies deserve a word of commendation and encouragement.

But the remark at the close of the article by Mr. Ten Elshof must not pass unnoticed. Perhaps, it will be challenged in *Concordia*, but up to the present I have not noticed any reflection on this remark.

In the brief paragraph we quoted above, the brother makes some very evil suggestions and insinuations, and, by implication, is flinging serious accusations against some parties in our churches, and against our churches in general as a denomination. Concerning these insinuations as such, I would say:

1. If there is any truth in them at all, the brother should have brought his objections and indictments to the proper ecclesiastical gathering rather than shout them from the housetops in *Concordia*.

2. If the brother, nevertheless, considered it more proper to publish his indictments to the world, he should have clearly stated them, rather than move about in the foul air of dark insinuations.

3. If they are not true, and the brother cannot substantiate them, he should openly retract them, and confess his wrong.

Let him, therefore, answer his own questions:

1. Are our church expenses continually rising at a rate disproportionate to the rise in the general cost of living, and of wages, and to the need of our churches?

2. Who are doing this except the proper parties?

3. Why are they doing this, if not for the well-being of our churches, and for the cause of God's kingdom?

4. Are they doing this "at company's expense," i.e., without proper authorization from the company itself? Is not the company itself doing this, quite according to the incorporation laws of this company to which also brother Ten Elshof subscribes, that is, the Church Order?

Indeed, we must have something more concrete to discuss!

Thus I wrote in the issue of our paper of Feb. 15.

Now, I hardly think that the reader can imagine my astonishment when I received the following reply:

Esteemed Editor:

The time has come to break the silence which shrouded the paragraph of mine which you reprinted in the Feb. 15th issue of *The Standard Bearer*. For the sake of your readers it is expedient to do so. I have delayed deliberately though not maliciously.

It should have been quite evident to our readers that you too are in full accord with the sentiments expressed in that paragraph. It is quite evident that you too were aware of the conditions which led to this remark of mine. And all I can say is that I am very grateful that you have seen fit to publicize this remark exactly in the manner which you have.

So cognizant were you of the need for calling this matter to the attention of our people that you even allowed yourself to become involved in a layman's debate on an unmentionable and punctuated subject even to the extent that you admitted publicly that you did it foolishly. Such humility we had not expected.

And now, we shall proceed to prove that such must have been your intention and that any other conclusion

would reflect unfavorably upon yourself and be very foul indeed.

In the first place, had your intention been any other than that which I have mentioned above, viz., to publicize this matter and shout it from more and other housetops, you undoubtedly would have directed a simple inquiry to me through the paper in which the paragraph appeared. No one would have felt under obligation to answer at all unless it were so directed. For example, should I write in the "Public Pulse" of "The Chicago Tribune", I would not expect the editor of "The New York Times" to call me to account.

Secondly, proof that you wanted to call this matter to the attention of the public, is the forcefulness of your statements. You have risked much by the very manner in which you have commented. On the face of it, the careless reader might be led to conclude that you were very provoked with the author of that paragraph. And so, the very manner of your remarks leave room for no other conclusion. You have wagered both my name and the possibility that the reader might conclude that it was a very uncharitable and vicious attack and one which might cast an unfavorable light upon yourself, for the sake of arousing interest and possible correction of an undesirable condition. It was a courageous thing to do and I did not mind for I am, if need be, expendable.

In the third place, it is evident that you have chosen this means for publicizing my paragraph by the fact that you have singled it out; and although since that time others have written matter from which equally "foul" conclusions could have been drawn—you were silent. For instance, by inference and simple deduction, our young people were accused of attending motion picture theaters and again, the clergy was accused of bowling, and there was not a word of protest. Why? Because you did not deem it of sufficient importance to publicize. And again in your writings concerning our brethren in the Netherlands, one of whom even states that your covenant-view is unscriptural, there is no sharp outcry. And, that you have singled out my paragraph and directed the attention of the readers to it so forcefully, causes me to rejoice. You have done our denomination a favor and I thank you for it.

And, the happy result or fruit of my tick on the fingers which you have enlarged to a stab of the heart, has been a healthy speculation and consideration of this matter by others and at least an earnest attempt to correct if at all possible such matters as they may have found. And although your method of arousing such interest was unusual and risky, it was none-the-less effective.

Respectfully,

George Ten Elshof.

I asked myself the question: what is this, sarcasm, sophistry, evasion, or all of them?

It certainly is evasion, since the brother does not at all give account of his statement in *Concordia*, or try to answer my questions; nor does he apologize.

That it is meant as a bit of sarcasm is quite possible. Those that are somewhat acquainted with the brother's writings in the past, cannot have failed to notice that his somewhat able pen is frequently spoiled by a sarcastic note, often very much misplaced and offensive.

The argument is certainly a striking bit of sophistry, like the well known syllogism: "This is your dog; this dog is a mother; this dog is your mother." I will not even make the attempt to show the folly of his arguments, which, I trust, is plain to every sound mind. Nor can I believe that the writer himself is of such a subverted mind that he takes his own arguments seriously.

Fact is, however, that he makes me a liar. He coldly tells our readers that I rebuked his statement, ascribed to him "some very evil suggestions and insinuations," accused him of "flinging serious accusations against some parties in our churches, and against our churches in general as a denomination," told him that he should not have shouted these remarks from the housetops but have taken them to the proper ecclesiastical assemblies; and all the while I agreed with him, was glad that he published them, and used the opportunity to give them still wider publication!

It is a long time ago that I read such a perversion of one's statements, and of one's motives.

But rather than enter into his arguments, let me assure the brother:

1. That I do not at all agree with the statement he made in *Concordia*, and that I detest the sentiment expressed in it.
2. That I do not believe that there is any truth in his insinuations whatsoever.
3. That I deny that our church expenses have been raised at a rate that is disproportionate to the general rise in wages and cost of living.
4. That I do not believe that our brother is groaning under a financial burden as far as the church-budget is concerned.
5. That the amounts necessary for the various causes in our churches are fixed by the proper bodies, and with the consent of "the company."
6. That it is high time that the brother offer a double apology, i.e., for having made his statement in *Concordia*, and for the evil motives he ascribes to me in the above reply.

H. H.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XXIII

1.

The Idea Of Justification. (cont.)

It should be plain, then, that, in this life, when the grace of justification is applied to the sinner, so that he hears the justifying verdict of God, and appropriates it unto himself, he finds within himself a double testimony, the one condemning, the other acquitting, the one accusing him that he has transgressed and still transgresses all the commandments of God, the other justifying him, and declaring him so perfectly righteous in the sight of God, as if he never had or committed any sin.

And yet, these two testimonies, both of which are of God, and are true, are not so related that they dualistically contradict and oppose each other, so that the believer finds himself in two states, that of righteousness and that of condemnation, but so, that faith has the victory, and the justifying verdict of God overcomes the accusing testimony of his natural conscience.

Never, as long as the believer is in the flesh, is the voice of his conscience that he has sinned and does sin daily silenced. For no matter how far advanced he may be in the way of grace, always he has but a small beginning of the new obedience, and the motions of sin that are in his members are very active. Always he is deeply conscious of his sin, and of his being worthy of condemnation and death, in himself. Besides, in the flesh, he is still connected with the whole human race, and the sin of the race, in Adam, is his sin. Of all this his conscience bears testimony. He is guilty in Adam, he is corrupt by nature, he daily increases his guilt by his actual sin. Indeed, the Catechism expresses it quite correctly when it teaches us to confess: "my conscience accuses me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil."

Yet, when the grace of justification is applied to that sinner, he is conscious of another testimony. It is the testimony of the Spirit of Christ, wrought in his consciousness by the Gospel, received by faith, assur-

ing him that he is perfectly righteous, "even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me."

But, as was said, these two witnesses, the one of our natural conscience, the other of our liberated conscience in the Spirit of Christ, are not of equal value and power.

The justified believer does not say: I am both righteous and unrighteous, acquitted and condemned, worthy of eternal death and an heir of everlasting life.

On the contrary, the verdict of justification, wrought by the Spirit of Christ, through the Gospel, in his heart, is completely victorious, overcomes, transcends, swallows up the accusing testimony of his natural conscience. Standing before the tribunal of the sole Judge of heaven and earth, by faith, he declares: "*Though* I have sinned, and do sin, *yet* I am perfectly righteous. Though I am accused on every side, from within and from without, and though I confess that all these accusations are true, yet, in spite of it all, I know that God declares me free from sin and guilt, and worthy of eternal life and glory."

The deep reason for this victory of faith is that it clings to God *Who justifies the ungodly*.

Justification is the *forgiveness* of sins!

It is the adoption unto sons of God.

The justified sinner is he "that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." Rom. 4:5.

By faith, he shouts triumphantly: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8:31-34.

He that receives the unspeakably blessed grace of justification does not say: "my conscience accuses me no more, I have no sin;" nor does he declare dualistically: "I am guilty *and* righteous before God;" but he has the victory by faith, and properly expresses his wonderfully blessed experience of God's justifying grace thus: "though my conscience accuses me, yet am I perfectly righteous before the judgment seat of God!"

He sings:

"Lord, if Thou shouldst mark transgressions,
In Thy presence who shall stand?
But with Thee there is forgiveness,
That Thy name may fear command."

Ps. 130.

And again:

"How blessed is he whose trespass
Hath freely been forgiven,
Whose sin is wholly covered
Before the sight of heaven.
Blessed he to whom Jehovah
Imputeth not his sin,
Who hath a guileless spirit,
Whose heart is true within."

Ps. 32.

The righteousness of justification is an imputed righteousness, a perfect righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, a wholly transcendent and victorious righteousness.

For God justifieth the ungodly!

2.

The Ground Of Justification.

"How art thou righteous before God?"

In this question, the Catechism inquires, not only into the idea and nature of the believer's righteousness, but also into its way and its ground. It answers this question by pointing to Christ as the sole ground of our righteousness in the words: "Notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me, the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ." And again, in answer to the next question: "Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?" it teaches us as follows: "Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, is my righteousness before God."

To seek an answer to the question: what is the ground of the believer's justification? is by no means superfluous. Spontaneously, faith institutes this inquiry. Saving faith is not a certain vague, mystical feeling. It is a certain knowledge of all that God has revealed in His Word. The urge to give account of itself, to be able to indicate its own reason and ground, is inherent in faith. Moreover, it is for its own well-being that it give a clear account of the ground on which it rests. Especially with regard to the grace of justification, this is important. The clearer the understanding of the believer in respect to the ground of his righteousness before God, the more he will regard all other ground as sinking sand, put all his confidence in Christ only, and enjoy the true peace that passeth all understanding. On the other hand, if he be confused in his mind concerning the sole ground of his justification, fail to rely on it alone, and try to make

his faith, his piety, his good works, his religiousness, or anything of self, a part of his righteousness before God, he will expose himself to the accusing voice of his own conscience, and the temptation of the devil, which are always on the alert for the attack to deprive him of the assurance of justification, and, as a result, of the joy of salvation.

Now, the inquiry concerning the ground of our justification proceeds from the correct assumption that God's verdict whereby He declares us free from all guilt, perfectly righteous, and worthy of eternal life, must have a basis in fact.

In deepest sense, it proceeds from the truth that God Himself is true, holy, righteous, and just. He cannot deny Himself. He is truth, and all His works are verity. If He renders the verdict that we are righteous, that sentence must be based on truth. He is the righteous One. For He is the implication of all infinite perfections. A light is He, and there is no darkness in Him at all. His will is ever in harmony with His own being. If, therefore, He declares us righteous, His verdict is itself based on His own righteousness. And He is just. Always He rewards the good with good, and the evil with evil. If He, then, declares us worthy of eternal life, this declaration must be in accord with His own justice.

It follows that God cannot simply pardon the sinner, that is, excuse him from paying the penalty for his sin. This is often done by human magistrates. And, perhaps, because of the imperfection of human justice there is room for such a manifestation of mercy and leniency. A man is accused of murder. There is no objective, direct proof that he committed the crime. There are no eyewitnesses. Yet, circumstantial evidence is so heavily against him that the jury returns a verdict of guilty, and the judge sentences him to end his life in the electric chair. As a last resort, an appeal is made to the governor, and he, reviewing the case, and hesitating to let a man pay the penalty of death for a crime which he may not have committed, changes his sentence into life-imprisonment. Later, perhaps, when it appears that no further evidence is discovered against the condemned man, he pardons him entirely. But this is not possible with God. There is no possibility of an error when He judges. Besides, such pardoning is no justification. And God justifies the ungodly.

Nor is it possible to make an appeal to the mercy of God, in distinction from, and in conflict with His righteousness, to explain the fact that God permits the sinner to go free. For God's mercy is never in conflict with His righteousness. All His virtues are one in Him. His mercy is ever just and righteous, and His righteousness is ever truly merciful. And again, even if, regardless of justice and righteousness, God would acquit the sinner, such acquittal would not be

the same as justification. We must have an answer to the question: on what ground does the verdict of Him Who cannot lie rest that the sinner is righteous and worthy of eternal life?

How can God reveal Himself as the One that justifies the ungodly?

That there is no ground for such a justifying verdict in man himself has already become sufficiently plain.

Besides, in the next Lord's Day, this is emphasized once more.

It is not to be found in anything man is or does, has done or will do. Even after his being regenerated, called, converted, sanctified, the ground of God's verdict whereby he is justified is never in the sinner. It is not because of his faith, or because of the good works he performs by faith, that God declares him righteous. Nor can these add anything at all to his righteousness before God. The sinner is justified before he is regenerated. It is on the ground of his justification that he receives all other blessings of grace. Hence, the ground of his righteousness is never in man.

It is outside of man, outside of the sinner himself.

The ground of the verdict of God justifying the ungodly is Christ alone. In Christ the righteousness of God is revealed, that is, the gift of righteousness of which God is the sole Author, which He conceived from before the foundation of the world, and which He alone realizes and bestows on the sinner in the moment of his justification by faith, is Jesus Christ Himself. In Christ, God reveals Himself as the Reconciler, as the One that is righteous and just even when He justifies the ungodly. For "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:21-26. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. 5:6-10. And again: "There is therefore

now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. . . . For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:1, 3. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation: To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." II Cor. 5:18, 19. It is in Christ that "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Eph. 1:7, 8. For he "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25.

The righteousness of Christ, therefore, a righteousness which is of God, prepared by Him for us, is the ground of our justification.

Let us consider, first of all, this righteousness as it is in Christ, and, secondly, the justice of God in imputing this righteousness of Christ to us.

Christ is the justified One *par excellence*. And His justification is the justification of all the elect, of all that believe on His name.

To understand this, let us consider that Christ is the Son of God, the only begotten God, that is in the bosom of the Father. On this confession rests the whole of the truth concerning our justification. If Christ is not very God, if He is not the God of our salvation Himself, the very foundation of this truth is removed. But He is God of God, co-eternal with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost. He came in the flesh. He, the Lord, Who is above the law, came under the law. He came in the *state* of men. He became a servant, and must function as a servant, He, the Son of God in human nature. Even that was an act of His own, freely performed. He was not of necessity born a son of Adam, He freely assumed our flesh and blood. What is more, coming under the law, He entered into the *state* of sinners. He was not a sinner. The guilt of Adam could not be imputed to Him, for He was, personally, the Son of God. The corruption of the human nature could not touch Him, for He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. He was holy and righteous. He knew no sin. But He entered into the *state* of sinners. He took the legal position before God of a sinner. He assumed the responsibility for sin. In that state it became His obligation to pay the penalty for sin. He must not merely suffer the punishment for sin, which is death: He must actively *pay* for sin. He must cancel the debt of sin, if, in the state in which He had voluntarily entered, He was to be justified. And to cancel that debt, He must satisfy the righteousness of God. This satisfaction could only

consist in an act of love. For man must love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. That is the demand of the law of God, and that demand is unalterable. Hence, when Christ, the Son of God, assumed the form of a servant, and entered into the state of man, he was obliged to keep that law of love. And when, as the Servant of God, He entered into the state of sinners, it was His calling to love the Lord his God, even in His wrath, even when, in the hour of judgment God poured all the vials of His wrath and indignation over His head. This is what Christ did. He did so all His life on earth. In the state of a servant, and that, too, in the state of sinners, He functioned before the face of God in perfect righteousness and holiness. He never faltered. Step by step, as the shadows of death and wrath deepened, He remained obedient. And finally, He entered into the deepest death and desolation, and became obedient even unto the death of the cross. All the righteousness of God against Sin He perfectly fulfilled. He satisfied for sin.

And God raised Him from the dead!

That resurrection from the dead of the Son of God in the flesh is God's sentence that His Servant is justified.

H. H.

CHURCH POLITY

Dr. Ridderbos and Article 31

If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it can be proved to conflict with the word of God or with the articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a general synod.

In my previous article I stated that there are two possible ways in which this article of the Church Order can be construed. Rightly considered there are three possible ways in which this article can be construed. In order to bring out the issues as clearly as possible and to make it easier for me to prove my former contentions, I must restate these possible constructions in a slightly different way.

Construction I:

If any one—let us say a consistory—complains that it has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly—this would have to be classis—

this consistory shall have the right to appeal to a major assembly—this would have to be synod—*providing it submits to the classical decision in the meantime, while protesting it—in the event it refuses, which it is in duty bound to do for conscience' sake, it shall be deposed and expelled from the fellowship of the churches*—and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote of synod shall be considered settled and binding and the complaining consistory shall be deposed by order of synod unless the synodical decision be proved to conflict with the word of God; that is to say, unless there be an aggrieved one—the same consistory or some other consistory, it makes little difference—persuaded that the synodical decision is in conflict with the word of God; this consistory shall have the right to appeal to synod in the attempt to prove to this assembly that its decision is unscriptural, providing it submit to the synodical decision while protesting it; in the event it refuses, it loses its right of appeal and shall be deposed by its classis by order of synod.

As a guarantee of the appellant's right of appeal, the above interpretation of the article is meaningless. For it allows the appellant this right only on the impossible condition—impossible in that God must be obeyed rather than men—that he submit to the decision while protesting it. Besides the interpretation certainly is hierarchical throughout. It binds the consistories to the major assemblies hand and foot. For it invests these assemblies with key-power over the consistories and does not even allow a consistory for conscience sake to withdraw from the federation of churches intact, that is, without being deposed by classis. For it rules that if such a consistory refuses to be bound by the decision of the major assembly that it protests, it shall be deposed by classis.

Construction II:

If, let us say, a consistory complains that it has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly—classis—it shall have the right to appeal to a major assembly—synod—but not without being suspended by classis should it refuse to submit to the classical decision that for conscience sake it must protest; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote of synod shall be considered settled and binding unless the synodical decision be proved to conflict with the word of God; that is, unless there be an aggrieved one—the same consistory or some other consistory—persuaded that the synodical decision conflicts with the word of God; that consistory shall have the right to appeal to synod in the attempt to prove the synodical decision unscriptural to this assembly but not without its being deposed by classis by order of

synod, should it for conscience' sake refuse to submit to the decision while protesting it. Should it succeed in convincing synod, the synodical decision shall cease to be binding but not otherwise. For classis and synod shall cease to be binding but not otherwise. For classis and synod must always be obeyed.

This interpretation, though it calls for the suspension and deposition of the aggrieved consistory, should it for conscience' sake refuse to submit to the decision that it protests, nevertheless allows it the right of appeal. In this it differs from the interpretation under I). But for the rest, it is just as hierarchical. Which of these two interpretations is that of the doctor? The interpretation under (II for certain and perhaps the interpretation under I). I say *perhaps*, because the doctor does not express himself in his "Kerkscheuring" with sufficient clarity to allow us to say anything but *perhaps*. The interpretation under I) is certainly impossible for all the reasons that I enumerated in my previous article. I need not repeat these reasons. As was stated, the interpretation under II) is just as hierarchical. The only difference is that it allows the appellant—consistory—the right of appeal yet not actually but only apparently. For a deposed consistory has lost all its rights, including the right to plead its own case on the floor of the major assemblies. Hence, it is really burdened by all the objections that encumber the interpretation under I).

Construction III:

If, let us say, a consistory complains that it has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly—classis—it shall have the right to appeal to a major assembly—synod—without being deposed by classis for refusing to submit to the classical decision that for conscience sake it must protest; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote of synod shall be considered settled and binding unless the synodical decision be proved to conflict with the word of God; that is to say, unless there be an aggrieved one—the same consistory or some other consistory—persuaded that the synodical decision conflicts with the word of God; that consistory shall have the right to break with the denomination for conscience sake without being deposed by classis.

Characteristic of this interpretation is that it is strictly non-hierarchical. For it rules that consistories shall not be deposed for rejecting decisions of major assemblies that for conscience' sake they must protest. Accordingly, in its final section, it guarantees to the aggrieved consistory the right to break off its connections with the denomination for conscience' sake without requiring that the consistory be deposed on

this account by classis. And thus it truly guarantees the appellant the right of protest.

Yet, naturally, the exponents of the view that classis rightfully deposes officebearers raise several objections to this interpretation. Let us consider these objections one by one.

1. It is said that the interpretation under III) does violence to the plain sense of the article (31). We deal here with an old objection. The Rev. G. Hoeksema, too, raises it in his brochure. He writes:

“Let us first consider article 31. As already stated in a previous chapter, the words, ‘unless it be proved to conflict’, etc., are explained, ‘unless someone consider it proved for himself that it conflicts.’ Against this explanation we have the following objections: It is contrary to the very words themselves. ‘Unless it be proved’ simply cannot mean, ‘unless someone consider it proved’. Then words no longer have any meaning. The words themselves, ‘unless it be proved’ have an objective background and objective implications. Two parties are implied, the one that seeks to prove something, and the party or court before whom proof must be brought and who must be convinced. Only then can it be said that something is proved. And that is what the article demands: ‘unless it be proved’.”

But it will have to be admitted that as far as the form of its words are concerned, the expression “unless it be proved” can just as well be taken to mean, “unless someone consider it proved for himself that the decision contradicts the Scriptures. That one shall not allow himself to be bound by the decision.”

2. As we have seen, Dr. Ridderbos, too, maintains that the interpretation under III) does violence to the obvious sense of the article. He calls attention to the fact that the article declares not only that the classical (synodical) decision shall be settled and binding, unless it be proved to *conflict with the word of God*, but also that it shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to *conflict with the articles of the Church Order*. Now it cannot be said of the Church Order, says the doctor, that we may never submit to something that, to our mind, militates against it. From this it is plain, he concludes, that article 31 speaks of something else, among other things of that which shall be valid in the church, and thus speaks not at all of the will of God according to which members of Christ's Church must reject classical and synodical decisions of which they are persuaded that they militate against the Scriptures. In other words, as a sentence element of article 31, the phrase “or with the articles of the Church Order” plainly tells us that the interpretation under III) is wrong and that the doctor's interpretation of the article—the one under II)

is right. It is difficult to grasp the point to the doctor's argument here. Certainly the article 31 rules that classical and synodical decisions shall not militate against the Church Order. The ruling was necessary. Classical and synodical decisions in conflict with the Church Order spell the destruction of the very basis on which the churches federate. With this basis destroyed, the federation cannot function. Thus, why the fact that the article rules as it does should prove the interpretation under III) wrong and that under II) right, is hard to see.

3. It is said that the interpretation under III) is hopeless subjectivism. So Rev. G. Hoeksema and also the doctor and all the others. But the charge is false. What the interpretation in question does is to free the churches from the overlordship of the classis (synod) but only to subject them solely to the authority of the Scriptures as administered by the local pastors and teachers. Hence, it is not true that, on the ground of the interpretation under III), the decisions of major assemblies do not bind those who do not agree with them; that, in other words, they are never binding (G. Hoeksema). Also according to our interpretation of the article 31, these decisions are binding on every member of the church, except on those who are persuaded that they contradict the scriptures, yet also on such, if they want to remain in the church.

4. It is said that the interpretation under III) legalizes rebellion against classis (synod). The fallacy of this reasoning lies in its proceeding from the erroneous view or theory that classis (synod) is a mandatory power to which the churches are subject. Whereas classis is not such a power, it is impossible to legalize against classis rebellion. This being true, Classis cannot rightfully depose a consistory for disobeying it; for consistories owe classis no obedience. And therefore the interpretation under III) is correct; it is the only permissible one.

5. It is said that the interpretation under III) “involves an unintentional but nevertheless terrible denial of the kingship of Christ.” The part of this sentence included in the quotation marks is from the pen of G. Hoeksema. He continues, “We are all agreed that the one great dominating principle of Reformed Church Polity is the kingship of Jesus Christ over His Church. But here again we must not be satisfied with a phrase. We must give it real content; we must make it mean something, yea, everything in practical church government. In a word, *we must let the will of Christ speak through the rules of the Church.*”

Of course, we are heartily agreed with the sentiment that Christ alone is king of His Church and that therefore we must let His will *as revealed in the Holy Scriptures*—this by all means should be added—speak through the rules of the church. This being true, the

following questions are pertinent. Does Christ require deposition of office bearers by classis (synod)? Is this His will as revealed in the Scriptures? Or does Holy Writ plainly enough teach that it is His will that classis refrain from that action? The exponents of the views we here oppose should be very clear on the points that these questions raise before they advance the heavy charge that the interpretation under III) involves a terrible denial of the kingship of Christ. Fact is that in the Scriptures (New Testament) the local congregations with their office bearers everywhere appear as subject to the word of Christ as mediated by the prophets and the apostles and as ministered to them only by the local pastors and teachers of their own choosing and not as ministered to them also by a classis and synod. This is stating the matter correctly. For, verily, to say that classis (synod) is a judicial power to which the local churches and their pastors are subject is to say that also classis was appointed by Christ officially to minister His word unto the churches. Only if this were true, can it be maintained that a consistory must be deposed by classis for rejecting classical and synodical decisions. But where in all the New Testament Scriptures does classis (synod) appear as such powers? Nowhere. Doesn't this mean anything? It does, certainly. To us it means that the system of church government we here oppose is an invention of man. Some, to prove the point, direct attention to the so-called synod in Jerusalem, but unjustly so, however, as here we see in operation the infallible authority of the apostles.

G. Hoeksema puts the question, "Must the church of Jesus Christ recognize the right of withdrawal, for any reason whatsoever, as a *legal right* guaranteed by ecclesiastical law?" And his answer, "If so, the church declares legitimate what it knows that Christ the King condemns. And this is from its very nature an impossible position. Such withdrawal, being contrary to the will of Christ the King, must result in disciplinary action on the part of the church. And not the member's desire to resign, but only ecclesiastical censure can finally result in a legal severance of the tie."

These lines from G. Hoeksema's pen are confusing. The question should be so stated as to bring out the real issue—should therefore be stated thus: Is it the will of Christ that the churches declare in their Church Order that common members, office bearers, or consistories shall have the right to leave the church for conscience' sake without their being deposed or censured on this account *by classis (synod)*? If such be the will of Christ, and we are convinced that it is, the churches are not guilty of declaring legitimate what Christ the king condemns. It should be realized that, rightly considered, the only and real issue that article 31 involves is whether *classis (synod)* can rightfully

depose office bearers. To answer this question in the negative is to interpret article 31 as we find it interpreted under III) in this writing; while answering the question in the affirmative means that we adopt the interpretation under I) and II).

It is a different question, of course, whether it is the will of Christ that the *consistory* allow members to leave the church for conscience' sake without its censuring them for so doing. This, we believe, is the will of Christ. For the Scriptures teach that the jurisdiction of the consistory extends only to the members; and one who leaves terminates thereby his membership. But G. Hoeksema is of the conviction that the consistory must refuse to recognize the withdrawal and apply censure, when the withdrawal or resignation is flat and absolute, to use his own language. What he means is plain from the following lines from his pen." (But) as long as the affiliations are sought with a church that we can recognize as a part of the great body of Christ, those who leave us are not withdrawing from the true church. And the Protestant principle of pluriformity forbids the exercise of discipline leading to excommunication. But flat and absolute resignation, especially to escape discipline, is a sin before God and His church, and renders one liable to discipline, even though Christian censure cannot, in such a case, run its usual somewhat leisurely course." That flat and absolute resignation to escape a *deserved* discipline is a great sin before God, no one, of course, denies.

And then G. Hoeksema puts this question, "If members must be allowed the right to depart to some other church of less pure formation, as long as it is an evangelical church, must not the same right be granted to a consistory?" His answer is that of all those whose views we here oppose. It is this, "A consistory elected by a Christian Reformed Church, has no other right than to serve as a *Christian Reformed consistory*. As soon as it refuses to serve as such, it makes itself unworthy of office, and liable to censure. . . . as members they have the same privileges as all other members. But they cannot leave a certain church or *denomination and take their office with them*." Our reply is this: The offices that Christ instituted in His church are rights and tasks that He fixed in the local church. It therefore must follow that when the local church leaves the denomination it takes with it its offices and office bearers as in office. Besides, who is there to depose the consistory, if all the key-power is concentrated in it?

6. It is said that the interpretation under III) renders the binding character of the decisions of the major assemblies wholly illutational. As was said, this would be true only if common members, office bearers and consistories would have to be allowed permanently to refuse to be bound by classical and synodical de-

cisions deemed unscriptural, though unable to prove them to be of such a character to the satisfaction of the churches on their major assemblies. It follows from the nature of matters that the churches are not obliged to allow a consistory to persist indefinitely in pronouncing a classical or synodical decision unscriptural and on this ground to refuse to be bound by it, after they even once and again have treated the consistory's protest on their major assemblies without being convinced of the error of their decision.

A final observation. As was just stated, the issue raised also by article 31 is whether classis (synod) rightfully deposes office bearers. Upon our answer to this question depends our interpretation of the article. It is our conviction that according to and in the light of the Scriptures (New Testament), the Confession, and the Church Order on a whole, the major assemblies do not have that right. And we are satisfied that we have made this plain in this series of articles. It is hard for us to understand, therefore, how the exponents of the views we here oppose can be just as insistent that, according to the Scriptures, our Credal Standards and the Church Order, the major assemblies do have the right to depose office bearers. And what especially mystifies us is their persistently denying that the system of Church Government that they manage to find in the Church Order is not the hierarchy pure and simple. What should set these devines to thinking is that they are so little agreed amongst themselves as to just why and how the major assemblies can rightfully depose office bearers. As we have seen, G. Hoeksema's solution is that the classis (synod) is a permanent consistory with full consistorial powers. The late Dr. H. Bouwman came with the solution that when there is need of a power to depose a rebellious consistory, all the consistories transfer their key-power to the classis (synod) and thereby bring it into being temporarily as a major consistory with power to depose office bearers, but that, when the crisis is past, this power reverts to the local consistories with the major consistory again a common classis. Dr. Ridderbos simply appeals to article 36 of the Church Order. He says that this article vests classis with mandatory power over the consistories and that this settles the matter. But it doesn't, of course. The doctor is obliged to make plain how in the light of the teachings of Scripture, the Confessions, and the Church Order on a whole, it can be right for this article (36) to invest the classis with that power. If he can't make this plain, he will have to conclude either that the fathers of Dordt handed down to the churches a heretical Church Order or that his interpretation of the article is wrong. Still others in their attempt to explain how classis (synod) can rightfully depose office bearers tell us that the classis receives its key-power from Christ directly and thus not from

the local consistories. This solution, too, sets classis before us as the monarchical bishop of the churches and verily implies the institution of the office of such a bishop by Christ through the apostles. And so it goes. Each comes with his own solution. And this to us is so much more proof that the views that we here oppose are not defensible.

G. M. O.

SION'S ZANGEN

De Driewerf Heilige

(Psalm 99)

Tot driemaal toe wordt ons hier toegezonden, dat de Heere God heilig is. En door velen is hij vergeleken bij het driemaal roepen van Heilig, Heilig, Heilig is de Heere in het gezicht van Jesaja, of het roepen der engelen en gezaligden in het gezicht op Patmos. Anderen merken op, dat we dezelfde zaak hebben in den zegen van Aaron. Ik denk, dat we hier zeker te doen hebben met een psalm die de trinitarische gedachte in zich heeft. Bovendien, die trinitarische gedachte ligt overal in de Heilige Schrift, want het is God die spreekt door het Woord, hetwelk door den Heiligen Geest geïnspireerd is.

Het begin is grootsch, geweldig, boezemt ontzag.

"De Heere regeert: dat de volken beven; Hij zit tusschen de cherubs: de aarde bewege zich!"

We zullen nooit moede of mat worden om gedurig nadruk te leggen op de waarheid zoo groot als gewis, dat God regeert. Dat behoort bij Zijn God-zijn. Een God die niet alles regeert is geen God.

Hoe diep en allesomvattend is die belijdenis. Niets bestaat er, of het ligt in 's Heeren hand en Hij beweegt het, doet het bestaan, bestuurt het en dringt alles tot Zijn eind-doel. Och, dat dit zoo is met het brute schepsel en het starre stof, kunnen we nog wel belijden met een hoogmoedig hart, doch dat Hij ons hart in Zijn hand heeft en dat hart, hetzij het goed is of kwaad, beweegt tot Zijn doel, zie, daar willen we van nature niet aan. Het vernedert ons zoo heel diep! Tenminste, de booze mensch denkt, dat zulks vernedering met zich brengt. Evenwel, goed beschouwd is het geen vernedering, doch een groote en heerlijke zaak. Laat mij een beeld gebruiken. Zeg, dat de grootste en heerlijkste mensch U bezocht en zeide: Ik wilde U gaarne de hand drukken! Ik ben mijlen ver gekomen om U te zien en even heel dicht bij U en met U verkeerden. Hier is mijn hand; laat ons samen wat praten! O, ge zoudt U verheugen over zoo iets. Ge zoudt het nooit vergeten en er op pochen tegen

iedereen. Ik heb het wel gemerkt somtijds, hoe we er hoog op gaan als we een zeker groot mensch gezien en gesproken hebben. Ik heb wel eens een vrouw hooren zeggen, toen het ging over een beroemde dominee: Hij heeft mij gedoopt! En dat werd gezegd met een gezicht, alsof ze zeggen wilde: wat denk je daar nu wel van?

En, och arme, dat zijn maar menschen wiens adem in hunne neusgaten is. En dan zijn we direkt over 't paard getild, als ze ons slechts toelachen willen en even dicht bij ons staan. Ik heb het eens gezien hoe een groot mensch een vergadering toesprak, en aan het einde gekomen van zijn rede, ging hij van het podium af en zette zich neer op de eerste plek die hij kon vinden, vlak naast een gewoon lid der gemeente. En gij hadt het aangezicht van dien man moeten zien! Hij blonk van vergenoegdheid, dat die groote in Israel naast hem kwam te zitten. Zoo langs zijn neus weg, keek hij in 't rond of men het wel zag! En ik schrijf dit niet om die arme, eenvoudige man in 't zonnetje te zetten want ik geloof dat ik zelf een beetje jaloersch was op hem, dat die geleerde niet naast mij kwam te zitten.

En dat is maar een menschelijk gedoe, doch het gaat hier over God. En Die is zoo wonder groot en majestieus. Nu dan, als die God ons leert, dat Hij niet ver is van een iegelijk van ons, dat Hij ons in 't harte grijpt en dat zoo al onze wegen in Zijn hand zijn: ik vraag U: wat vernedering zit daar in? In het geheel niet! Het is eigenlijk, goed beschouwd, een heerlijke en glorieuze verhooging. O, vlak bij God te zijn: het is de hemel zelf.

Waarom stoot de mensch der zonde zich dan aan deze waarheid?

Er is slechts één antwoord: het is omdat hij zelf God wil zijn! Riep een goddeloos mensch niet in arren moede: Ik ben de kapitein van mijn ziel; ik ben de meester van mijn ziel?! Arme, dwaze, blinde man! het is in 't geheel niet waar. God alleen regeert.

Er blijft niets anders over voor den mensch dan te beven. Dat zegt de psalm. De volken beven!

Er is een tweeërlei beven.

Er is het sidderen en het beven vanwege de haat die de slaaf koestert voor zijn meester. Dat is het sidderen voor God, waarin de duivel ons voorgaat. De wortel is haat. Men wil zoo ver mogelijk van God weg. Als Hij dan toch nadert met Zijn vingers die vol zijn van heilige wraak, dan beeft de mensch der zonde en de duivelen, met Satan aan hun hoofd beven en sidderen ook.

Maar de gemeente van Christus wordt door den Heiligen Geest ook toegeroepen om zijns zelfs zaligheid met vreeze en beven uit te werken. En de reden wordt ook aangegeven. Het is omdat God in ons werkt. Hij is vlak bij U, o gemeente! Werkt dan, doch werkt met vrees en beven.

Die vrees en dat beven zijn radikaal anders dan het sidderen der duivelen vanwege Zijn dichte nabijheid. De wortel is liefde. Het is het ontzag voor de ontzaglijke majesteit van God. En dan is 't goed.

Ik ben van overtuiging, dat de Heere hier de volken oproept om te beven in aanbidding, en niet om te beven vanwege Zijn groote wraak. En ik grond dit gevoelen op de reden die God aangeeft om voor Hem te beven. Die grond is deze: "Hij zit tusschen de cherubs!"

Dat ziet op het wonen Gods in het Heilige der Heiligen. Daar was de arke des verbonds. En op die arke was een verzoendeksel. En op dat deksel was het geplengde bloed. En er waren twee afbeeldingen van Engelen Gods die zich vooroverbogen over het deksel en met uitgebreide vleuglen dat verzoendeksel overschaduwden. Nu dan, de Heilige Geest getuigt hier, dat God daar tusschen die Engelen zat.

Daar zit een schoone gedachte in. Het wil zeggen, dat ark en deksel, bloed en engelen, dat het alles tezamen een schoone Goddelijke gedachte vertolkte. Die arke sprak van Gods verbond, dat bloed van de betere dingen des verbonds, de betere dingen van onbegrijpelijke zondaarsliefde, en de overschaduwung der engelen zag op de zegenende en bewarende handen Gods. We lezen, dat Jezus, met Zijn armen zegenende uitgestrekt over Zijne discipelen, omhoog gevaren is naar den hemel. Daar heeft men hetzelfde als hier. God is de groote Weldoener van Zijn volk. Hij woont tusschen de cherubs. Hij gedenkt aan Zijn verbond tot in eeuwigheid. Hij heeft gedacht aan Zijn liefelijke genade, Zijn trouw aan Israel nooit gekrenkt.

Als gij daarin komt, hoe kunt ge dan *niet* beven? Alles beeft in ons bij het zien en ervaren van zulk een majesteit, liefde, trouw en aanbiddelijke genade. Beeft dan met Uw popelend harte.

"De Heere is groot in Sion, en Hij is hoog boven alle volken."

Daar hebt ge een toevoeging die ons aan moet sporen om toch te beven van ontzag. Hij is dicht bij ons. Hij is niet te groot om in ons kleine arme hart te wonen. Ja, maar Hij is tegelijk de Groote! Zóó groot, dat ik er geen voorstelling van kan vormen. Eerst dacht ik dat God de aarde vervulde, en dat het overige van God er buiten uit stak. Maar er is mij geleerd en verklaard, dat het zóó ook niet is. Het is waar, dat de hemel der hemelen Hem niet kan bevatten, doch men leerde mij, dat de Transcendente God elk oogenblik alle dingen óók raakt. Overal loopen we tegen de ontzaglijk groote God aan. Langzamerhand ben ik gaan zien, dat de idee, dat Hij zich met het onzienlijk kleine bemoeit, juist Zijn grootheid in het licht stelt. O, onze God is zoo wonderlijk groot.

En Zijn grootste grootheid (als ik mij zoo mag uitdrukken) is in Sion. Daar zien we een grootheid van God die ons doet duizelen.

Is het niet onuitsprekelijk groot van Hem om Zelf

naar de hel te gaan om U er van te redden? Is het niet groot, om slagen en striemen op te vangen, om doorstoken te worden, door het volk, dat Hij aan 't zaligen is op dat zelfde oogenblik? Zal ik een voorbeeld aanhalen? Terwijl Petrus vloekt, bidt Jezus! Duizelt ge niet bij zulk een grootheid?

Die grootheid zien de Japanners en de Chineezzen niet. Daar moet ge voor in Sion wonen. Daar zingt men van die duizelingwekkende grootheid: Uw goedheid, Heer, is hemelhoog. Zijne goedertierenheid is *geweldig* over die Hem vreezen.

O, Heere, waarom mocht ik geboren en opgeschreven worden te Sion? We zijn niet beter dan de kaffers en Hottentotten. We aanbidden.

En waar de dingen dan alzoó zijn, zoo komt de vermaning: "Dat zij Uwen grooten en vreeselijken Naam loven die heilig is!"

Micha zal ons hier onderwijzen. Die ziener heeft ons gezegd, dat we in den Naam Gods Zijn Wezen zien. Wat in de diepten van het Goddelijke Wezen zingt en jubelt, wordt ons getoond in den Naam. O, die Naam van God. Hij is zoo lieflijk en zoo zoet voor 't hart en voor het verstand. Alles glinstert en schittert in dien Naam van God. Het komt van dien Naam, dat de hemelen glorie vertellen, bij dag en bij nacht. Het is de werking van dien Naam waardoor de boomen des velds de handen tezamen klappen.

Die Naam kwam zeer nabij.

Ik moet hier denken aan een lied, dat ik vele jaren geleden hoorde in 't oude vaderland. Mijn zusters zongen het zeer vaak. Er ruischt langs de wolken een lieflijke Naam, die hemel en aarde vereenigt te zaam.

Die Naam, die nabijgekomen Naam van God, is Jezus Christus, de Heere.

Die Naam is zóó ontzettend dicht bij ons gekomen, dat wij Hem noemen Immanuel. God met ons. Die Naam is zóó dicht bij ons, dat de kerk er eeuwen over gevochten heeft, om er zich een voorstelling van te vormen, en die voorstelling neer te leggen in een belijdenis. En ook zelfs in die belijdenis, gewrocht in het concilie van Chalcedon, bevredigt het hart niet. Zijn adekwate uitdrukking ontving het niet aldaar. Doch het is het beste wat we konden voortbrengen. De Heilige Schrift spreekt er van, doch kalm, lieflijk, on-dogmatisch, schoon. Ik zie een man op zijn knieën liggen; hij stamelt: Mijn Heere en mijn God! En hij had het ook op Jezus die in menschelijke gedaante voor hem stond. Die hem noodigde om Hem aan te raken. Wie raakt "mijn Heere en mijn God" aan? Siddert ge niet? Beeft ge niet in aanbidding, bij het zien en kennen van zulke mysteriën?

Want we kennen dien Naam. We mogen de adekwate uitdrukking van dien Naam niet kunnen vinden, het zij zoo. Het eindige kan het Oneindige niet bevatten. Maar ik verzeker U, dat een oude eenvoudig vrouwtje dat den Heere vreest Zijn Naam kent en

uitspreekt in bevende aanbidding. De Naam is nabij: dat is Jezus. En zóó nabij, dat Hij in U woont. Door Geest en Woord komt Hij in U.

En we beminnen dien Naam. We hebben Jezus lief, omdat Hij de uitdrukking is van Gods reine liefde. Die ons eerst beminde!

Dien Naam looft gij!

Dat mag zóó gezegd. Want God bereidt Zich lof uit den mond zelfs van zuigelingen en jonge kinderen. De Heere zorgt er voor, dat er van uit het midden der wereld een gezang van lof opklimt tot in den hemel toe. Dat doende zijn die lovers van God het zout der aarde. Het maakt de aarde smakelijk voor God. Als er geen lovende kinderen van God meer zijn, dan is het voor eeuwig uit met de wereld.

Wat is lof?

Lof is als ge de heerlijkheid van den Naam Gods uitspreekt. We hebben eerder gezegd, dat des Heeren Naam uitgestrekt is over alle werken Zijner handen. Welnu, als ge al die sprake van den Naam opvingt, zoo zijt ge aan het spreken, zingen, jubelen gegaan. Men looft, o Heer! Uw wonderen dag aan dag!

En ge kunt die sprake van den Naam nergens schooner zien geopenbaard dan in het Woord van God. De geheele Bijbel is eigenlijk een kommentaar op dien Naam. En dan vooral in het centrum van die Naamsopenbaring, en dat is Jezus Christus de Heere. Vooral als wij hem zien in Zijn Zelf-offerande. O ja, bij het kruis worden de lieflijkste liederen gezongen. Ik moet er steeds aan denken, dat in het centrum van den hemel, nadat het Beest en de oude slang voor eeuwig weg zijn, dan zal gezien worden het Lam staande als geslacht. Dus de Heere wil ons tot in eeuwigheid herinneren aan het schoonste en lieflijkste van dien Naam.

Daarom staat er dan ook van dien Naam dat hij heilig is.

Heilig komt van een woord dat snijden beteekent, snijding in den zin van afzondering. En dat is de negatieve beteekenis van den naam. De Naam is groot en vreeselijk juist omdat hij heilig is. God is afgezonderd van alle duisternis, vuilheid en boosheid. Zóó absoluut afgezonderd, dat het Woord zegt dat Hij "verre is van ongerechtigheid". Hij ziet immers "van ver" met gramschap aan, den ijdlén waan der trotsche zielen?

Maar heilig beteekent ook iets positiefs. De positieve beteekenis van heilig is toegewijd te zijn aan het goede, het heerlijke.

Daarom beminnen we den Naam. Den naam te zien en te bewonderen is de hemel, daarboven bij God!
G. V.

NOTICE! — As is customary, The Standard Bearer will not be published on the 15th of July.

IN HIS FEAR

Living In His Fear

A Precious Peace.

Tremendously destructive weapons of warfare are being developed and produced! Political intrigue is being practiced on every side! Treaties are ignored and broken! Nations are plotting against nations! Men lust and have not; they kill and are not satisfied! Trouble and unrest are to be seen on every side! And the Word of God prophecies that perilous times are soon coming for the saints of God! What a present it is in which we live, and what a future lies before us and our children!

Even in the realm of nature today we have abundant evidence of what lies before us. The miseries and afflictions endured today and which will be experienced increasingly in the future are not all man made. War and bloodshed, deceit and treachery may be ours because of the depraved heart of the natural man. But floods and pestilence, crop failures and drought are not to be ascribed to the work of man in every instance. Indeed much of the starvation and pestilence in war-torn Europe is exactly to be charged to the guilt of godless men and their lusts. However what we experience today in our own land is something quite different.

That we have had a strangely cold and wet Spring is known to all. Whether we live in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, California or Montana, we are by our own experiences or by the emphatic witness of radio and press, aware that our country and even sections of Europe are experiencing an extremely cold and wet Spring. Thousands of acres of corn have been destroyed by floods. Thousands more of corn, oats and rye will not materialize because the soil in which these crops were to be sown could not be worked due to its exceptionally wet condition. Snowstorms have been experienced in certain sections of our country one week before Summer is officially here according to the calendar. The driest Spring in one hundred and fifty years is the lot of another section of our country and hoards of insects invade fields of ripening grain devouring tons of food upon which man counted for his needs and his income.

These things speak to the listening child of God. The unbeliever goes his way cursing these works of God and God Himself. He goes on in his folly and apart from the Word of God seeks to find out what causes all these things and brings him so much misery, uncertainty and fear. He turns his telescopes upon the sun and counts the sun spots and is encouraged to note that the number is greatly increased over the

previous number last year. He pages through records kept by his predecessors of generations before to see whether such things occurred before. He feels comforted to find that certain sections suffered such floods of equal or greater proportion before. His fear abates when he learns that wet and dry spells come in cycles, and he is sure that things will return to normal in the near future. He can even explain (to his own satisfaction) what happens and causes an earthquake, and in worldly wisdom he erects his buildings accordingly in those sections where he is sure the most violent earthquakes will occur.

When it comes to the deeds of his fellowmen, he is not so easily freed of his fear and anxiety. He knows from experience that the sword and war only embitters his enemy and makes him vow all the more earnestly to seek vengeance at the first opportunity. He knows that today after all the talk of World Wars I and II about making the world safe for democracy, the world is not any safer from aggression and war than it ever was. The cheery optimism so freely expressed during World War II that there would be no third world war is never heard anymore today. Today men talk of preparedness, and they mean preparedness for war. To seek to stem the incoming tide of warfare and bloodshed, appeasement has again been tried and is continuing to be administered. But this is done just exactly because man has not rid himself of the fear of another war. He advocates one world for the very same reason. It is not that he really wants one world, but he is beginning to think that this will be the solution. It will not solve the problem because the clay and the iron will never mix as we well know and as the figure is used by God Himself to show His people that there is no peace apart from Christ and His Spirit and cross. We have reference to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar which God gave to him and in which he saw an image with a head of gold, breast of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with clay. The kingdom of the Antichrist cannot succeed and presently the clay and iron which for a time seemed to form one world will separate and that great battle of Armageddon shall be waged between the Antichristian world power and God and Magog. But for a time man derives a little respite from his fear by believing that he can make one world and save himself and his family from the ravages of war.

But what of the child of God? He has more to fear than the unbeliever, has he not? He suffers with the ungodly in flood and drought, in famine and pestilence. His sons die upon the battle field, his home is ruined with the shells and bombs that fall, and his family likewise is killed. But even in peace he cannot find work because he refuses to swear allegiance to man and man-made institutions above his God and because he refuses to follow the practice of doing to others what

they have done to you. And presently he will not be able to buy or to sell because he will not worship man and deny Christ and His cross. The world is lining up against the church today as never before. And that goes for the world in the church too. Various movements are under way today to unite denominations by *compromising* with the lie. It only goes to make a stronger false church which shall the better be able to fight against the true church. And in the last days, Christ tells us, they shall try if it were possible to deceive the very elect. From a fleshly viewpoint, dreadful is the future that lies before the church.

Floods and pestilence, droughts and famines are ahead. This present wet, cold Spring simply shows us what can happen and will happen on a greater scale in the future. The sun will be darkened, and we shall enjoy only part of its light and heat. Pestilence and famine will naturally follow as a result, for life and the growth of our food require a certain amount of sunlight, and disease germs abound where it is kept out or greatly diminished. For the child of God such a season as we have just experienced causes him to think of the coming judgments of God upon the world.

Then, too, when we read of so many train wrecks, airplane crashes, hotel fires, and other disasters which take thousands of lives every year and especially of late we begin to wonder how fast we are approaching those days of the seven trumpets when no longer are one fourth of the inhabitants of this earth killed by the sword, by hunger, death and beasts of the field (Rev. 6:8), but instead when one third shall perish of men and all living creatures (Rev. 8:7-1; 9:18).

What then shall the child of God do as he lives in these last times which on the basis of God's unalterable word shall only become worse? Shall he conceive and beget children? What anguish and pain of soul it may cause him to see them snatched from his side either to fight and lose their lives in those wars which even the unbeliever despairs of stemming or else by the Antichrist who will seek to torment them as punishment to the parent who will not take his mark upon his right hand or forehead! And what of the multitude of subtle temptations which seek to destroy or prevent the faith of our covenant youth? Is it safe for the church to beget children with a view to the dreadful future? What shall the child of God do who lives in these days of confusion which indicate more trouble ahead?

He will live in the fear of the Lord! And the precious peace that passeth all understanding will be his. Therefore it is a foregone conclusion that he will not fear to bring forth the covenant seed of the future even though it may mean grief of soul to him and great agony of body and soul for that seed which he will bring forth. He will have precious peace in the midst of trouble and strife.

That he fears the Lord means that he places all his

trust and confidence in God. He believes that God is the Lord and that His cause will ever triumph. He believes in Christ Jesus His Son as his Saviour who came into our flesh that He might redeem and Who comes again in judgment to vindicate His people and to usher in His blessed kingdom upon their earth. He puts his trust in Christ and eagerly looks for His return.

He who fears the Lord and lives in that fear is not like those of whom we wrote in the former installment of these thoughts concerning living in His fear. They are not as those who said that they believed that a certain daring man could walk on a wire cable across the deep chasm of the Niagara River pushing a wheelbarrow in front of him with a man in it, but who did not have faith enough to be the man in that wheelbarrow. Those who *live* in His fear safely and confidently put their trust in Christ. They do not simply *say* that they believe that he can carry them safely through all the storms of opposition and physical agonies of this life to the other shore of bliss and eternal life, but they lean heavily upon Him and by God's grace place their whole life in His hands.

Precious peace is theirs! Fear is gone, that is, the fear of the world, fear of the devil, fear of earthly fear. They live in the fear of the Lord and are free from fear and cares. They are confident that Jehovah is their light and their salvation and that therefore there is nothing nor anyone to fear. They know that He is the fortress of their life and that they need not flee from anything or anyone. Living in His fear is living in His sphere, that is living in the sphere of His covenant and grace. They live consciously in the experience of God's loving smile living in the enjoyment of the fact that the light of His countenance is upon them which is His loving smile or smile of love. He who lives by faith, or if you will, lives in His fear, is confident of all these even while he endures many things painful to the flesh and the future looks ominous. A precious peace it is to live in His fear.

Living in His fear, we are confident that all will be well and even now is well with us and our children. The Triune God never worries. He never fears what the devil and his host will do to His elect people and their seed. He is the All Mighty One. There is no power outside and besides His. Therefore *all* things, absolutely *all* things occur exactly according to His eternal counsel, and nothing and no one is able to prevent the execution of any one of His decrees. God cannot fear. Living in His fear, the fear of awe and reverence, the fear of trust and confidence, we live in His sphere, and the perfect peace of God we also enjoy. We, that is, our hearts and minds, are in the sphere of His love and grace. We cast all our cares upon Him. We take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there. That is living in His fear. Living in His fear, what a precious peace!

J. A. H.

Contribution

Dear Editor:

I would like to add my approval and support to your editorial on, "A CLOSED SHOP WITH A LOOP-HOLE", however, we are wasting time and energy trying to convert the Christian Labor Association to a Christian Labor Association. But to strengthen and fortify those of like faith, it is well that such things be published.

Consider the C. L. A. as it is established and lead by its leadership. In the first place, the constitution sets forth and plainly states in its conception that its AIM is to ORGANIZE WORKERS—that its PURPOSE is to ESTABLISH JUSTICE in the sphere of labor and industry—that it PROMOTES the MATERIAL INTEREST of workers through practical application of Christian principles in collective bargaining AND OTHER means of MUTUAL AID or PROTECTION.

Analyze the above conception and there you already have all the answers. The C. L. A. must out of necessity be the authority on Christian principles—must be the authority to judge—must be its own protectorate—must be its own mediator and savior, with the job as set forth to "ORGANIZE WORKERS". And how must they do it? Through the democracy process of membership assembly.

The Communists have the same purpose and life view. But to say the C. L. A. is a Communist organization would be very funny and would intimidate their wrath terribly, but that the C. L. A. has the same idealogy and is upon the selfsame road as to the Communist is most assuredly the unadulterated truth.

Read the March issue of the C. L. A. herald which contained the material for your editorial, and you will also find therein the Oral Statement made at a hearing before the Senate Committee of our government, wherein the C. L. A. propagates for DEMOCRACY rights of government as do all the others of like color, the C. I. O., the A. F. of L. and other pressure power drunken groups.

Now what is a DEMOCRACY? It is the right of government by the people. In other words the C. L. A. too wants a democracy wherein they have the liberties of government to establish justice in the economics of both, labor and industry, through the membership process of self-imposed authority. That is Communism rights. And that is what every labor union wants, every monopoly, every cartel, and even such organizations as the Tri State Onion Set Exchange wants also. The rights to control their ends of organized enterprise, or social realm, by democracy government where-

in the majority rules without the need of recognizing any higher being or law.

This democracy is pure Communism, for it destroys by its own existence and functions the authority of our republican government. For our citizenship is already bound together through a government responsibility that is a REPUBLIC, wherein we as a people, have voluntarily pledged ourselves, to mutual aid and protection with justice toward all, through the process of DEMOCRATIC government by a FREE people.

Let us look farther, yet closer to the things more dear to us. Why is it that when the C. L. A. leadership had the chance of its life to establish the evils in the worldly neutral unions, having its own secretary on a church committee with the instituted authority to draft Christian Conscience legislation on the matter, that then he could, by the Scriptures, prove that Neutral Union Membership is Compatible with Church Membership? And then appear before the Senate Committee Government of our land and uphold before them the SACRED RIGHTS and HOLY CONVICTIONS of the Christian religion, and say that, and many are they, who CANNOT JOIN many labor unions because of CONSCIENCE SAKE. Yes, Mr. Editor, it is the same man in leadership that when before Church authority can prove with the Scriptures compatibility to them, and when before government authority upholds that for conscience sake many cannot join them. You figure it out—I can't.

Such an unholy disregard for authority is a mockery. Think it over again. The C. L. A. had within its own hands the occasion to establish authority on the entire matter and hence be an authority thereby, representing the Christian Conscience with the BACKING of the Church institute itself in the field of economics and labor, then uses the Christian religion Scriptures to prove compatibility to the godless neutral unions; then, when the occasion arises to appear before government authority, uses the self same Christian religion and Christian conscience, to attempt his victory, by declaring that for CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE SAKE MANY CANNOT JOIN MANY OF THE LABOR UNIONS.

Whom does such a leadership represent? Does it represent the Christian Conscience? It cannot. Does it represent free men? How can it? It only represents the C. L. A. and uses any kind of argument to gain its end, "TO ORGANIZE WORKERS", for its own honor and glory.

Thus the C. L. A. is its own democracy, with its own authority of government, for its own selfwilled purpose and end.

There are no other answers or conclusions to such delusions; the C. L. A. is its own judge, its own police, its own savior and mediator of labor and industrial

injustices and recognizes no other authority but its own. This same hell-raising licentiousness rules the C. I. O., the A. F. of L., the monopoly, the cartel, and many exchanges of control, all working out through democracy organization the destruction of our republic for their own selfish and righteous advantages. No government of a land can stand when her people become a law by themselves and for themselves, without a supreme dictatorship ruling them with its firing squads.

The closed shop—restraint of trade—boycott of activity—strikes—absolute control of prices—and many other elements of forceful organization democracy laws whereby they rule supreme, by themselves, and for themselves, has turned a peace-loving people into a virtual hell of their own making, and woe unto these men who carry with them the mark of such allegiance, for of such is NOT the Kingdom of Heaven but the road to hell, wherein contempt, hatred, envy and selfishness leads to its eternal end. For what men do in their labors, they do unto the CHRIST.

Frank Rottier, Lansing Illinois.

The Synod Of 1947

The 1947 Synod of our Protestant Reformed Church is now a matter of history. Everyone who was present will agree that this was a significant gathering because of the weighty and far-reaching decisions that were made. For four and a half days Synod met and deliberated. The work moved along smoothly and rapidly. Harmony and unity prevailed. True Christian fellowship was enjoyed both during the sessions and during the periods of recess. And everyone appreciated the friendly hospitality shown, and the splendid meals served by our host church, the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

Synod opened on the evening of June 3 with the customary pre-synodical sermon delivered by the Rev. G. Vos. As you may know, it is customary that the president of the former synod preaches this pre-synodical sermon, so that it fell to Rev. G. Vos to conduct these services. The synodical delegates, the students of our theological school and a fairly good representation from our churches of South Holland and Oaklawn were edified by the sermon rendered by Rev. Vos, who in his own unique way spoke to us, taking his text from Habakkuk 1:12, 13 and 2:4b: "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and O mighty God, Thou

hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? But the just shall live by his faith." Rather than give a resumé of this sermon, I would refer you to the forthcoming Acts of Synod where you can find the sermon in its entirety.

The first regular session began on Wednesday morning with the usual devotionals. All the delegates were present with the exception of Mr. Nick Yonker of our Grand Haven church. This is the first meeting of our synod that Mr. Yonker was not able to attend, but this time his health did not permit him to come. The Rev. P. De Boer served as delegate instead of Rev. L. Vermeer, and the Rev. A. Petter came in the place of Rev. A. Cammenga. One of the first duties of the synod was to choose officers. Rev. J. De Jong was chosen as president, and Rev. C. Hanko as vice-president. The Rev. P. De Boer became synodical secretary and Rev. J. Heys his assistant. Much depends upon good leadership for a pleasant and successful gathering. The fact that the work moved along smoothly and rapidly can be credited to a great extent to the capable leadership of Rev. De Jong. Nor is the work of the secretary to be slighted. In many ways he has the most difficult task of all, for upon him rests the responsibility of keeping an accurate record of all the decisions as rapidly as they are made. An assistant in that work is by no means a non-essential cog in the machinery.

The work was divided under three main headings as follows: (1) Matters pertaining to the theological school; (2) Matters pertaining to missions, and (3) The matters of Psalter revision plus other unclassified matters.

One of the most important matters in regard to our theological school was the graduation of three students, who were also declared candidates for the ministry in our churches. The three students, Homer Hoeksema, Edward Knott and Gerald Vanden Berg, had finished their course of studies at the theological school and were presented to synod for their final examination. The biggest part of two days was devoted to this examination on the floor of the synod, conducted by the professors H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff. To some it might seem that this is a lot of time for a whole gathering to spend on an examination, yet it must not be forgotten that this examination is very essential and important, also for the welfare of our churches. On Thursday morning these students were given the opportunity to preach their sermons. Student Hoeksema spoke on the text in Isaiah 40:1, 2; student Knott preached on Isaiah 53:5; and student Vanden Berg preached on Isaiah 55:6, 7. All three

sermons gave proof that these young men were capable of expounding the Word of God to the edification of God's church. The afternoon session was devoted to an examination in Dogmatics. On Friday the examination was continued in other branches of study by both the professors, and Rev. Hanko was appointed by synod to bring the examination to a close by a brief examination in Practica. Thereupon synod decided unanimously to declare all three of these young men as candidates for the ministry in our churches. They were informed of this decision by the president, who addressed them briefly with a few well-chosen words, after which the whole assembly united in thanksgiving and prayer, and in the singing of the doxology. This is always an impressive moment at any synodical gathering, especially because we are made conscious of the fact, that it is God Who calls to the ministry and gives His appointed servants to His church. May God's blessing accompany these candidates, and may their future field of labor soon be pointed out to them by the Shepherd of the flock. May God also make them a blessing in our Protestant Reformed Churches.

We may add, that the commencement exercises for these graduates were held on Monday evening, June 9, in the church where synod met. Besides a few musical numbers by a ministerial trio, student Knott delivered an oration, and the Rev. Hoeksema, rector of the school, gave the commencement address. These addresses will, no doubt, appear in the Standard Bearer for your perusal.

Three more significant decisions were made in regard to our theological school.

First, synod decided to correct an oversight of the past. To date the two professors, Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff have faithfully labored in our school for a number of years, yet they have never been duly installed as professors with the regular form for ordination. The Theological School Committee has been charged with the mandate to carry out this ordination before the next school year commences. The Lord willing this ordination will take place in the early part of September.

Secondly, it was decided to give Rev. H. Hoeksema one year to consider the feasibility of laying down his work in the congregation to become "full-time" professor in our theological school. Synod proposes to provide him with a salary commensurate to his needs and also to furnish him with a home in the vicinity of the school. In case the Reverend should decide to follow up this proposal, he will be given a leave of absence for one year, beginning in the Fall of 1948, to give him an opportunity to prepare some of the books he has contemplated writing. The gathering was somewhat reluctant to pass this decision, realizing that strong ties have been established between the pastor and his congregation during the past twenty

seven years. Yet, with a view to the large amount of work performed by Rev. Hoeksema in the past, and the necessity of conserving his strength as much as possible, synod felt that this proposal is for the welfare of God's cause as represented by all of our churches. Also in this we see the guidance of God's hand, and commit Rev. Hoeksema in his deliberations on this matter unto the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, synod decided to introduce a post-graduate course in our theological school. Although the ministers in the vicinity of Grand Rapids will be given the opportunity to take this post-graduate course, it has the definite purpose of preparing someone for the professorship in our school. A certain sum has been set aside for the yearly support of the individual who accepts the appointment for this post-graduate work. In a later session it was decided to extend the appointment to candidate Homer Hoeksema, who was given three weeks to deliberate and decide on this appointment.

The matter of missions also took a prominent place in the deliberations of our synod. Both the matter of home missions and of Foreign missions were given due consideration.

In regard to the matter of home missions, a decision was made to call two missionaries to labor in the field together. In times past we have been privileged to have one missionary in the field, whose work the Lord prospered. But for the last few years our churches have called repeatedly, yet failed to obtain another man for this work. In the meantime, our home mission work has not been at a stand-still, but two ministers have repeatedly devoted their time to this work, often two of them laboring together in a certain field. Those who have taken part in this work all agree that this makes the work much easier, and proves far more desirable than to lay the entire responsibility upon one man. The synod of 1946 also already considered the proposal to place two men in the field instead of one. At that time the committee of pre-advice recommended this very strongly to the synod stating:

"1. This is a sound Scriptural principle (namely, to send out two men together) with respect to mission labor. Cf. Luke 10:1; Acts 10:23; Acts 13:2, etc.

"2. The testimony of our own men who have experienced this manner of labor expresses its desirability.

"3. This arrangement would promote greater efficiency, dispatch and thoroughness of our mission work.

"4. This arrangement would promote continuity and succession during vacations, attendance of meetings, investigation of new fields, acceptance of calls, etc.

"5. It would not increase the expenses so as to

make it prohibitive from a financial point of view." (See Acts of Synod, 1946, page 69).

For some reason the synod of 1946 did not adopt this advice of the committee of pre-advice, but proposed the possibility of asking some neighboring minister to periodically assist the missionary in his work. Since we have had no missionary in the field during the past year, this proposal had not been tried out. But in reviewing the whole matter, the last synod felt that this decision of 1946 would never prove practicable if an attempt were made to carry it out. Synod felt at the same time, that the prospects of getting two men to labor in the field in conjunction with one another are far brighter than of getting one man who must carry the responsibility and the burden of this work alone. Some time in the near future, the calling church, the First Church of Grand Rapids, will most likely be faced with the duty and privilege of calling two home missionaries. May our God, in His infinite grace, make our churches spiritually fit to send out servants unto this labor.

In this connection it can be said that the Rev. H. Hoeksema has been requested to translate his "De Geloovigen En Hun Zaad" in the English language. Since he hopes to assume this work of translation himself, the Lord willing, he will make whatever revisions he deems fit, in order to bring it to date. This brochure has received a wide reception in the Netherlands, and since it deals with such a timely subject as the covenant of God, it will surely prove to be a great asset to our mission endeavors in our own country.

The matter of foreign missions was also given some consideration. The Mission Committee proposed to attempt obtaining stations for broadcasting in the Netherlands and other Dutch-speaking communities. Some investigation has already been done in regard to this matter, and it seems likely that broadcasting time can be obtained at a very nominal sum. We may hear more of this in the future.

The Mission Committee has also been mandated to investigate some foreign mission fields, where we may be able to begin labors of our own through our own foreign missionary at some future date. In the meantime, the churches are advised to begin taking up collections for this foreign mission project. These collections can be forwarded to our synodical treasurer, who has charge of all the synodical funds. Such collections surely need no further recommendation among us.

Synod further decided to seek closer contact with the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands through its Committee for Correspondence. And since Prof. Dr. K. Schilder has informed us of his intentions of visiting America next fall, Synod decided to recommend to our churches to open our pulpits to Prof. Schilder. This was done especially under the consider-

ation that already some years ago Prof. Schilder was the only one to raise any defence of our denomination as a lone voice in the Netherlands, and since that time has expressed himself as being in agreement with our stand against the theory of common grace. Our churches will, no doubt, welcome the opportunity to give the professor a hearing in our midst. It need hardly be added, that Mr. K. Van Spronsen, who visited every session of our synod, and took special interest in all our deliberations because of his relation to the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands, was more than pleased with this friendly gesture toward professor Schilder by our Synod.

There is also contact between us and the Reformed (German) Church in the United States. Although they had no representative from their classis in our midst, there was a letter of greetings from their representative, who stated that it was impossible for him to attend our sessions. Synod appointed the Reverends J. Blankespoor and A. Petter to represent us at their next classical gathering.

The third important matter brought to the attention of this synod was the matter of Psalter reprint and Psalter revision. As you know, our churches were busy during the past few years preparing a revision of our present Psalter. There is one committee active in examining the various songs and tunes, and another busy with the liturgical forms in the back of the Psalter. Both of these committees presented their report, but their work is by no means finished. A work of this kind should be done carefully and thoroughly, if it is to have a real value for our churches. The general opinion seems to be that it will still take some years before we are ready to use the revised Psalter in our services.

But that does not mean that nothing will be done to relieve the present shortage of Psalters in our churches. An opportunity has offered itself to reprint the present Psalter in its present form, with only slight changes, in sufficient number to tide us over until the new Psalter is ready. There will be one addition introduced into this reprinted Psalter. The Rev. John Heys has prepared two chorales on the Lord's Prayer, which have been adopted by synod and will appear in this Psalter.

There are always certain matters that appear on the agenda of a synod, which defy all classification.

Among these "varia" may be mentioned, first of all, the matter of subsidies for our needy churches. Two of our churches informed synod that they felt they could now get along without further financial aid, expressing their appreciation for the aid received in the past. Other churches were granted aid as advised by their respective Classes.

Then there was the matter of our new Church Order. By this time most of you know that our

churches have finally published their own Church Order. It still contains the eighty-six articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht (unchanged), but the various decisions of our combined classes and synods have been added under the articles to which they pertain. You will also find other valuable material in this new Church Order, which should have a place in every Protestant Reformed home. The price is one dollar, and you can obtain your copy from the stated clerk, D. Jonker, 1239 Bemis St. S.E., Grand Rapids.

What is also of interest to many of us, is the fact that the synod has compiled a Year Book. This Year Book contains information about all our churches, our ministers, our theological school, the various committees of our synod, etc. There has been a great demand for a year book of this nature for some time. It will prove interesting, informative and important to all of us. This year the year book will appear as a supplement to the Acts of Synod, 1947, which will soon be offered for sale. Every family will want the 1947 Acts with the Year Book.

Finally, a decision was made to hold the next meeting of synod, the Lord willing, in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

You will agree that many and weighty decisions were made. May the Lord cause His blessing to rest upon that which meets His approval. And may we experience His blessing and grace upon our churches also in the future.

C. Hanko, Reporter.

PERISCOPE

(Continued from last issue)

v. S. Views U. s.

"Whoever comes from the Netherlands to America and lives here for a while, is struck with the superficiality that reveals itself in almost every aspect of American life. This is also true of the Church-society life; the organizations for young people, men and women. It is not customary, for example, that a member give an introduction to the material to be discussed but the group simply comes together, usually under the leadership of the local minister, and after reading the Scripture portion to be handled simply begins discussing without preparation or introduction.

"There is a Federation of Men's Societies which prepares outlines for the Bible study but these lack any essential methodology. A few general remarks are made and several questions added, but for the rest each is free to draw his own conclusions. All

opinions are welcome and I have not yet visited with any group in which the chairman drew definite conclusions at the close of the discussion.

A particular society which I visited at various times was busy discussing the Epistle to the Hebrews. They had been busy with this for some time and were following the outlines of the Federation which treat the material text for text. Since the society met only once every other week, it is evident that this manner of discussion results in being busy with one Bible book for several years. The result is a discussion of the text rather than of the Scripture. For all the trees they lose sight of the forest. I was also unable to discover that they found any relation between various groups of texts and still less a unified concept of the whole Epistle.

"The last time I was present the discussion concerned the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: 'the gallery of the faithful', or, as the apostle himself writes: 'the cloud of witnesses'. During the discussion the question was raised whether it speaks here of 'saving faith', since the life of Samson and Rahab the harlot and the Israelitish people themselves, who 'by faith passed through the Red Sea', seemed to indicate that something else than 'saving faith' was meant. The ensuing discussion brought out that it had always been taught that there were various sorts of faith. That besides saving faith there was also historical faith, temporal faith, and miraculous faith. Upon this the question was discussed what sort of faith all those mentioned in the eleventh chapter might have had. When, finally, someone made the observation that the Holland translation read 'door HET geloof' and that the definite article certainly referred to saving faith, he was answered that the English translation did not contain the definite article but simply stated 'by faith'. Finally it was decided to write and ask the Professor of Greek at Calvin College concerning the original text and that this would probably shed more light on the matter. And this all occurred under the leadership of a minister who had studied at Calvin College.

"This is a clear indication of how shallow the study of the Scriptures is in America, even among the ministers. They have no insight into the organic connection, the pervading line of a Bible book or the principle thought of argumentation that the Scriptures present. When, in reply to all this foolish reasoning, it was pointed out that the Apostle is busy in this chapter to bring to a climax all that he had written before and that the Holy Spirit struggles, as it were, to make it plain to the believing Jews what the meaning of the service of the shadows was, and how the saints in the Old Testament embraced this as seeing the things not seen and believed, and that the content of faith is: Jesus Christ, next to which

there is no other faith, and that the whole of this eleventh chapter loses all sense and meaning when one takes away this Scriptural concept of faith, no one understood what was said. This is a great pity, for thus one no longer has a Holy Scripture but the Bible remains a closed book. I blame this to the superficiality with which they handle all things that concern the spiritual life in America.

"There is no desire for serious investigation and study of the fundamentals. They do not read in America. Their main concern is for a 'society' which is purely a social gathering, and if this can be attained through the medium of the men's societies they are quite satisfied. They look at one with amazement when it is related that a Netherlands society member often presents an introduction of from twenty minutes to a half-hour upon the material to be treated and that in preparation, a study is made of sources and commentaries. This is all radically strange to America.

"I believe that this is all connected with the materialistic character which marks the American life and because of which the abstract things no longer have the place they should have. America lives out of the principle of pragmatism. 'Does it work', they ask. Is it practical and what does it accomplish? For that reason they understand the mechanical things; know exactly how an automobile is put together, for this knowledge he can use in his daily life. But that which belongs to the more remote spiritual principles has no interest for him; they are of no practical value. This also explains the low esteem of the intellectual and almost total lack of interest for all that which has no practical value. Science is only worthwhile as it can be made to serve the enrichment of his family, his herds and his land; and so he uses it. Art does not interest him at all. He does not know how to enjoy a fine poem and has no desire for, or a concept of history. The development and political trends of other countries are only of importance as they concern America or, to the extent that they concern him personally.

" 'Does it work?', and if it does not work, i.e. if it does not fit into the scheme of his materialistic thinking, it is of little import. This does not mean to say that he is bound to the dollar. This is no more true of him than it is that the Hollander is concerned about the gulden. He gives a great deal for Church and school. Large sums are given for the maintenance of the schools. But also in this case the principle holds: 'Does it work?', i.e. does it have practical value. Education is secondary. More concern is given to sports than to study. The means of education are the same as in the public schools. They use the same readers, the same history books and the same grammars. But the children are kept in their own environ-

ment and that is the main thing; for that he will pay.

"Naturally, this pragmatism also overshadows the Church and society life. To a Netherlander the question often arises how the American can continue to live in this spiritual poverty. What is there left if this pragmatism itself has no answer for the question: 'does it work?'. For even in the prosperous America appearances give evidence of the fact that there are problems which cannot be worked out through pragmatism. America today is much different than it was twenty years ago. And the morrow will present another entirely different picture. Hence, if the reformed youth shall stand in that future they must have a deeper spiritual understanding than they now possess. Here the organizations of the men's and ladies' societies can light the way if they will concern themselves with serious study rather than holding mere social gatherings.

"As being typical of the specific Holland character, it was once said: 'one Hollander—a theologian; two Hollanders—a church; three Hollanders—a church schism.' If I have found this to be true anywhere, it is certainly in America.

"At this moment I am sitting in the study of a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches. His home is situated among surrounding mountain peaks in a small and secluded spot in the Middle West. This little place is more than a thousand miles removed from the Pacific where I spent the winter. Today is Good Friday and all the world round about is white with snow. When I wrote my first piece for *De Reformatie*, during Christmas week, I was in the midst of blooming flowers and trees of ripening oranges. Now on Good Friday I am here where even the grass is dead and snow and ice are everywhere. Even so, the sun is shining with a brilliance unknown to us in Netherlands and the atmosphere is serene and rare. We are situated here more than 1600 meters above sea-level while all round about rise the massive mountain peaks, as a protective wall enclosing us in the valley.

"This is America; a land of the greatest contrasts and extremes.

"But what I began to say: here, in this little place, that is called 'Amsterdam' and so small that one would not even find it on the map, live Hollanders. It is a tiny settlement. The first Hollanders came here in the 80's of the last century. They are farmers and have only about three months of the year in which to work the land; for the rest it is winter here. But in these three months the land produces in abundance. Yet this small settlement has two churches, one is the Christian Reformed Church and the other is the Protestant Reformed Church. You can understand then, that when I first drove through this little village

and saw the two churches almost next to one another, the proverb which I wrote above unconsciously rose in my mind.

"One must certainly deplore this course of events. All came from the same fatherland, are inter-related by ties of blood, have been driven to unity by the nature and elements of the place in which they live and yet are divided and separated. Is it possible that this is all due merely to the 'three points' of common grace? Certainly not. The more I become acquainted with the Church questions in America the more I become convinced that there are many points of similarity between the struggle which we have in the Netherlands and that which the Rev. Hoeksema went through in America.

"The cause is much deeper than merely a question of a portion of dogmatics. In the Netherlands the schism finally came on the question of the Covenant, but it could just as well have begun on an entirely different issue. Essentially the schism was already present. Fundamentally it was a question of world and life view; more of an ethical than a dogmatic and church-political crisis. I believe that in America exactly the same is true.

"In so far as I have contacted the Christian Reformed Churches and discerned from their publications, I receive the impression that they are pervaded with a spirit of self-satisfaction, of self-complacency and self-sufficiency, which, in many respects, resembles what we in the Netherlands also experienced in the years immediately preceeding the war. I have pointed out before many instances in which, according to my opinion, these churches are thus deluded. Above all there is the tendency of conformity to the American life, which, in as far as it is yet religious, is characterized by a pious tint of humanism and an unscriptural desire for mass-conversion, while their own church life is marked by boundless superficiality. They present a pretentious appearance but are hollow within.

"The Rev. Hoeksema already discerned this danger many years ago and his reaction against it revealed itself in his opposition to the teaching of common grace. He saw that the antithesis between the Church and the world was disappearing in America. His agitation against the teaching of common grace must be understood on this background if one will understand anything at all of this struggle. That all happened more than twenty years ago now. And now when one makes acquaintance with this group of Churches he discovers here, the essence of character and form that is closest to that of the true Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. This reveals itself in both the preaching and liturgy. The Protestant Reformed Church have kept themselves free from the Americanistic influence of methodism, arminianism,

and a pretention of liturgy which does nothing more than camouflage an inner hollowness and emptiness.

"We know that we are not agreed with these Churches in every respect. They have still another covenant conception than we have; which, if I understand it correctly, is again to be understood only upon the background of Americanism and its church life. It is to be seen as a sincere and hearty resistance to the spirit of Americanism which pervades almost all the churches of America. The essence of the striving of the Protestant Reformed Churches is an ardent desire to maintain the rich heritage of the Reformed and Scriptural truth.

"I have also received the impression in as far as I have contacted these Churches, that this purpose also lives in the hearts of the members. They know what they believe and are able to speak about it. I do not find here the conformity and self-complacency and spiritual lethargy. One need not be surprised at this, for these people struggle against the stream and the winds are contrary to them. They are only small groups and must be resigned to bear a certain renunciation and scorn. It is not pleasant (*gemakkelijk*) to be Protestant Reformed. It is, however, not true that they have loosed themselves from the Christian Reformed Churches because they have a desire to be schismatic. Besides the fact that they consider the deposition of Rev. Hoeksema and others a great injustice, they are also convinced that the maintenance of the Reformed truth for themselves and their children demands this separation.

"Naturally there are also dangers threatening them, and I believe they also see these. They are slightly prone, it would seem, to tend to a certain onesidedness. Due to a fear for arminianism and disappearance of the antithesis, they have come to a certain onesidedness which may lead to consequences that that should not be admitted. But I believe they themselves also see these things.

"Nevertheless, it remains a deeply deplorable fact that the Rev. Hoeksema was cast out in 1924. He is as completely reformed as the best in America. By their action the Christian Reformed Churches sustained a grievous loss. They could not get along without this man. He saw the dangers which they did not see, and with which they now have to struggle in an ever increasing measure, while they no longer possess the stamina of resistance to stand against them.

(To be continued in the next issue).

W. H.

NOTICE! — As is customary, The Standard Bearer will not be published on the 15th of July.