

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

The Voice of Jehovah and Contending Rebels

"Now Korah . . . with Dathan and Abiram . . . took men and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel . . . men of renown, and they assembled themselves against Moses and against Aaron . . ." —Numbers 16:1-3

Vox Dei!

The voice of Jehovah, the God of Israel . . .

Such is indeed the Word of God in this well-known passage in the book of Numbers, wherein the sacred narrator records for us the mighty deeds of God, wherein He caused all things to work for the advantage of His church in the wilderness; as He brings His people into the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

For the Lord knows who are His own, and let everyone, that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity. He knows who are His own elect in the world, that is, who are His redeemed saints, but He also knows who are His own faithful office-bearers in His house . . .

Does not Jehovah God say of Moses that he was the most meek of all men, and that he is faithful in all His house? Shall he not behold the form of Jehovah? Should not a mortal fear to speak against My servant?! Has Jehovah God not called Moses unto this very task, having separated him and prepared him unto the same from the womb of Jochebed and from the loins of Amram? Is not this the beautiful child that was born unto these parents who trusted in God, that He would send deliverance in their serfdom and slavery in Egypt? Is this not the Moses who thought that the people would understand, that the Lord would deliver Israel by his hand? And, again, is this not the Moses, who must learn in the school of affliction

to wait for the time promised to the patriarchs of old, the time of the promised redemption?

Ah, space would fail us if we were to relate in detail the greatness wherewith Jehovah God magnified Moses and Aaron before the eyes of Pharaoh, king of Egypt . . .

Ten great and mighty plagues God brought upon Egypt through the man Moses. Great and mighty signs the Lord wrought through this faithful servant. He led the people like a flock in tender care through the Red Sea. When water fails Moses brings water from the Rock, striking it upon Jehovah's command. The manna, wonder bread of God, falls as a manifestation of Jehovah's faithfulness upon this faithful servant's word, with whom God talks mouth to mouth, even manifestly and not in dark speeches!

He is the mouth of God to the congregation.

The voice of Jehovah, the God of glory is this Moses, with the glory of God upon his face . . .

Moses, the faithful servant of God.

Moses, Vox Dei!

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Vox Populi!

The voice of the "people," who fear the Lord, enter into His courts with praise, and who bless His Holy Name, is this Aaron!

Forsooth, the people, who fear Jehovah, and know the joyful sound as this comes from the mouth of Moses, revere this Aaron, the appointed one of God to approach into the Holy place with the golden censor! They tremble in the beauty of holiness when their High-Priest, anointed with oil of consecration brings the sacrifice upon the great Day of Atonement, first for Himself and then for the people.

Their song is wafted heavenward to Him Who is enthroned upon the praises of Israel. Hear them sing on Java's strands: Tremble before Him with godly

fear. And angels bow in silent and audible adoration beholding the manifold wisdom of God's glory in worshipping saints; they watch and rejoice, whether this be the church in Paran's barren wastes, or in Europe's Gentile children in the "new world," called these Americas

For to this people of God's elective love, those upon whom God has mercy and shall have mercy, an avenue to God is given in hope through the crying voice of Aaron.

Ah, they know that Aaron has not taken this honor upon Himself. He is set aside by God. Amongst the people holy unto the Lord, a peculiar treasure to God in all the earth, there is none like Aaron in his place. He is the shadow and portrait of the Great High-Priest to come. He is appointed of Jehovah.

The Lord foreknew Him unto this task bringing him forth from the loins of Amram, Kohath, Levi. The Lord prepared him unto this task in the home of a mother in Israel, Jochebed by name, one of the cloud of witnesses that speaketh to us today, though she be dead. And the Lord separated Him publicly before all the people as the Lord, their God, Who had delivered them out of the house of bondage, in order that they might be brought unto Him through Aaron's ministry . . .

The Lord knows who are His own servants!

The people, who fear the Lord, acknowledge in holy fear and great joy.

The way into the holy place is not yet opened . . . but they have a voice in the temple, crying to Jehovah, who is throned above the Cherubim . . .

It is the voice of Aaron.

The voice that cries for better things to come . . .

The voice of God's chosen people!

Aaron, Vox Populi!

★ ★ ★ ★

Vox Populi, Vox Dei!

Such is ever the cry of those, who have no fear of God before their eyes, and who trample God's holy ordinances under foot, and kill His servants, the prophets in the house of God . . .

Such was the case with the people who would not contend the "Common faith" delivered by Jehovah through Moses to the saints; such it is with those who are spiritual brethren of those, who always again perish in the gainsaying of Korah!

These are the men, who never see the glory of God, the glory of grace, the glory of the Sanctuary, as this is not written simply upon tables of stone, but as this is written by the Ministry of reconciliation in the hearts of flesh. To be reconciled to God in spirit and

in truth they know not. They are enemies of God and of the Cross of Christ.

The fear of God is not before their eyes!

They fear not to contend with the Most High, Whose ways are in the Holy Place, who says My Counsel shall stand and I shall perform all My good pleasure. The voice of God is to their ears not the "joyful sound" since their hearing is not mingled with faith.

The Sanctuary does not make their hearts thrill with holy rapture.

A veil is upon their hearts that are filled with meanness and unbelief. The zeal of God's house has never set their hearts aflame with joy unspeakable and full of glory . . .

Vox populi, Vox Dei . . . is the slogan!

The "people" who always again murmur in the Church in the wilderness, against the Lord do so because they will not submit to the law of God. These are they who have not the Spirit and are none of His. They are their own Lord.

The voice of the people is the voice of God . . .

So many people cannot be wrong!

Vox Populi, Vox Dei!

★ ★ ★ ★

Now Korah . . . with Dathan and Abiram!

They rose up before Moses . . . they assembled themselves together

Ah, they did not do so in the name of the Lord, for they "took men". And it looked mighty convincing what they did. And they planned it with singular strategy of hell, of the Arch-Foe, Satan, that Old Serpent, the murderer of men from the beginning, the father of the lie. Tools these men were. They did not possess their souls in holy patience, but were possessed with unholy impatience, for Satan had plucked the Word of God from their hearts as it was sown by Moses, the Vox Dei!

Now, Korah with Dathan and Abiram rose up before Moses? Yes, it was a day of great searchings of heart in Israel. It was one of the great offenses that must come in Israel, that they who are approved may be manifest. Oh, the offenses must come, but woe that man through whom the offense cometh. It were better that a mill-stone be hung about his neck and that he were cast into the depth of the sea; it were better that he had not been born

Ah, Korah has become a by-word in Israel. This happened to him that we should not walk in the same sins. He dreamed dreams of wicked grandeur and sinful ambition, he talked of humiliation while he trampled it under foot. Hear him vaunt, while pretending to champion meekness, and that, too, against

the most meek of all God's servants: you take too much to yourself, Moses; and who is Aaron? We too are holy as is all the congregation.

Ah, that was a catch-word for "itching-ears"!

Here was a man, not simply from the "common people," who was interested in the *cause of the people*. He expressed exactly their feelings. He could preach the word so that they the "people" were edified, that is, strengthened in their wickedness and the perversity of their hearts.

Glad sound to itching ears!

For rebels who dare to show; proud contempt of God Most High

Korah, who perished in the gainsaying. Hidden rocks in your love-feasts are such, shepherds, that without fear feed themselves, clouds without water, carried about by wind, autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever!

Set for a sign in Israel

Now, Korah Vox Dei!

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Searchings of the heart!

Such was this evil day in Paran's wastes. Here were the searchings of the heart that make separation between the two seeds in Israel. Here is the searchings of the heart before the eye of the Lord, before Whom all things are naked and open.

Dathan and Abiram and Korah are consumed by the Lord. It is the sign and proof that Moses is Vox Dei and Aaron is the Vox Populi. That demands a return to the Word of the Lord by Moses or there shall be no dawn, but the blackness of darkness forever

But the evil men, the wicked cannot be subject to God.

Wailing their lying death-chant, stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the Vox Dei in Moses, they go into darkness And the earth swallowed them up, and the fire of the altar burned them to death!

All the evil of evil men then reveals itself. They rise up in revolt and would have the Lord of heaven cast down. But God is on His Throne, and out of Sion the perfection of holiness God shines forth. A fire devoureth before Him, and it is very tempestuous about Him

God spoke in Paran's waste, and did not keep silence.

I am God, even thy God.

Joyful meditations of the heart

Forever!

—Geo. C. Lubbers

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EDITORIALS

Earmarks

It certainly is an earmark of heretics that they play *hocus pocus* with the confession of the church.

They do not hesitate to distort the clear language of the confessions in order to make it appear as if these support their false doctrines.

Thus did the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 in order to find a basis in the confessions for their false doctrine that there is grace in the preaching of the gospel for the reprobate and that the natural man can do good before God.

And the same is true of De Wolf c.s. when they make it appear as if the confessions teach that the promise of God is for all on condition of faith, and that we must convert ourselves before we can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To prove this I was quoting from one of the answers to the examination to which De Wolf was subjected when he was still minister of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

I will now continue the same quotation. Said he:

"Now I know I am not trying to draw a necessary doctrine from this, but I maintain, Mr. Chairman, that no one else has any right to change this order (repentance, active faith, followed by translation into the kingdom of God, H.H.), unless he can show very plainly that that is the way it should be, and that our fathers are not right in having this order. That is the problem, Mr. Chairman. I am simply trying to present the problem. You can't just draw a line, and say it's that way on one side. First you are there. Now you are on the other side of the line, and that settles the matter. That is not so easy to do."

The reader must know that at a certain consistory meeting I drew a line on the blackboard to indicate the antithesis between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil, and to show that, not in darkness but only in the light, not in the kingdom of the devil but only in the kingdom of God, can we ever convert ourselves.

Heretics do not like definite lines of demarcation between the truth and the lie.

They draw their own lines, and they draw them at the wrong places.

That is what De Wolf does.

Although he states that he does not want "to draw a necessary doctrine from this," and although he presents the matter as if it were "a problem", yet he draws

his own lines, draws them in the wrong places, and tells us that "the fathers" (the Canons) draw them there!

The line he draws is between repentance and active faith, on the one hand, the rescuing out of the power of darkness and translation into the kingdom of darkness on the other. All with an appeal to "the fathers."

Before I continue to quote him and expose his *hocus pocus*, let me quote the passage of the confessions in question. It is found in Canons III, IV, 10.

There the fathers teach that calling and conversion "must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son."

In this De Wolf introduces the following order of time:

1. Active faith.
2. Then repentance.
3. Then the being rescued from the power of darkness.
4. Then the translation into the kingdom of God.

All this, mind you, to make the confession say that our act of conversion is before we enter into the kingdom of God.

And now I continue to quote him:

"Now the question here is: What does this translation consist in, and how does it take place? You have got to face this question. If it refers to regeneration alone, if entering into the kingdom refers to regeneration alone, then it must take place before God confers faith and repentance, because faith and repentance are the fruits of regeneration. But notice that this article says first that God confers faith and repentance, and that then He translates them. You have the opposite order there. The translation, I would say, may refer rather to the act of God which takes place after He has conferred faith and repentance, and which is realized in man's act of turning, so that it is conversion from the point of view of man's act, in that conversion as the fruit of the work of God that is referred to here. So that then you would have this idea, while the elect are in the power of darkness, God confers faith and repentance upon them, by which they come to the knowledge of their depravity and bondage in darkness, and by faith trust in Christ, turn from their sins—there you get that conversion and so are rescued out of that power of darkness, and are translated into the kingdom of his Son. And then conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom."

Hocus pocus!

But first, dear reader, did De Wolf, as he said afterward, refer only to repeated or continual conversion and entering into the kingdom when he preached his sermon, or did he really refer to the principal and initial entering in and conversion? According to the above, you say with me, only the latter is true.

Secondly, notice how De Wolf plays *hocus pocus*.

First he tells us that the order of time, according to the fathers, is: 1. faith; 2. repentance; 3. rescuing from the power of darkness; 4. translation into the kingdom. Now at the end, he says that "so", i.e. by conferring faith and repentance, they "are rescued out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his Son."

First he had told us that translation into the kingdom follows upon being rescued out of the power of darkness and follows upon conferring of faith and repentance. Now, all of a sudden, the conferring of faith and repentance are not followed by but are simultaneous with, in fact, are the same as being rescued out of the power of darkness!

Does De Wolf know what he is talking about? One might get the impression that he does not. But these answers were carefully prepared. All the questions he had in advance, in plenty of time. Hence, it is my conviction that he made a desperate attempt to make the confession teach that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God.

And notice how even in this attempt he utterly failed.

As long as he dared maintain that the confession teaches the order: faith, repentance, rescuing out of the power of darkness, translation into the kingdom, he could maintain his heresy. But as soon as he turned around and makes the confession say (as it does, indeed!) that the conferring of faith and repentance is the rescuing out of the power of darkness and translation into the kingdom, conversion and entering in are simultaneous and the PREREQUISITE falls away.

A child can understand this.

Hence, the Canons in III, IV:10 certainly do not teach the De Wolfian time order, but teach that God sovereignly confers faith and repentance upon His elect and by doing so rescues them from the power of darkness and translates them into the kingdom of His Son.

Our act of conversion, therefore takes place *in* the kingdom of God, and it is no PREREQUISITE to enter.

De Wolf still continues to play *hocus pocus* with the confession to maintain his heresy. Says he:

"Besides, Mr. Chairman, you have the problem here of entering, and entering is active. That does not mean being dragged in, pushed in, rolled in, or any-

thing else. It means entering, consciously entering in. There is an activity there that you cannot ignore, and if you are going to say that regeneration alone is the prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as it has been said here, you simply ignore all these things. I have no objection to saying that regeneration is prerequisite to entering the kingdom, but I deny, Mr. Chairman, that regeneration ever stands alone. God's work is complete, with regeneration always comes conversion, always. Its the very counterside of regeneration. It is the result of regeneration, and if you say that regeneration is prerequisite to entering into the kingdom of heaven, you must also say that conversion is prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven"

Hocus pocus!

O, indeed, entering is active. But *before* we perform the act of entering in (PREREQUISITE) we must, indeed, be "dragged in, pushed in, rolled in." I do not like this crude language. I suppose that when De Wolf uses such language many ignorant people like it, and receive the impression that they must do something, that we are no "stocks and blocks" and that our act of conversion is, indeed, a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of heaven. But the Bible does not use such language, although the language of Scripture is much stronger than this. No, the Bible does not say that we are "dragged in, pushed in, rolled in", but it does say that we must be rescued from the power of darkness, that we must be translated, we must be born from above, that we must be born of water and of the Spirit, before we can ever perform the act of entering in.

Our act of conversion is no PREREQUISITE.

To maintain this is a most fundamental heresy.

Notice, too, how De Wolf plays *hocus pocus* with the terms *regeneration* and *conversion*.

Says he: "if you are going to say that regeneration alone is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom"

No one ever said that, surely not in the sense in which De Wolf uses the term. For him the term denotes an act of man that is required of him before he can enter into the kingdom of God. I never used the term in that sense at all.

It is true that in my mimeographed sermon on Matt. 18:1-4 I used the term in respect to God, and, therefore, improperly or loosely. But anyone can understand that I used it thus. Strictly speaking, one cannot speak of anything that is required of God beforehand. I quote the passage: "It is impossible for the natural man to fulfill any prerequisites to enter into the kingdom of heaven. There is only one prerequisite. And that is not our act of conversion, but God's grace and the application of that grace by His

regenerating Spirit. And that is not our prerequisite but God's, and His alone."

When, therefore, De Wolf suggests that I taught simply that regeneration is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven, he does not speak the truth.

More about this next time, D.V.

—H.H.

—:—

The Court Case and I Cor. 6:1-8

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids was finally compelled to appeal to the secular court in order to obtain justice over against those that meant to rob them of their very name.

By doing this, they acted according to the Church Order, Art. 28:

"The consistory shall take care, that the churches, for the possession of their property, and the peace and order of their meetings, can claim the protection of the authorities; it should be well understood, however, that for the sake of peace and material possession they may never suffer the royal government of Christ over His church to be in the least infringed upon."

At first, they were of the opinion that I Cor. 6:1-8 was applicable to their case. There we read, in part:*

*) The attitude of the consistory at the time as well as the attitude of the schismatics may be gathered from the following letter:

Beloved Congregation: When the enclosed letter was written your consistory planned to occupy their usual rightful place on the pulpit of First Church. Notice was given to the disciplined office bearers of our intention in order to avoid confusion and discord in the divine worship next Sunday. We had hoped that some peaceful settlement might be made until proper disposition of the property is made. However, to our request we received the following reply:

"We cannot possibly recognize your schismatic action and your illegal suspension and deposition of office bearers and therefore cannot concede you the right to hold meetings in our midst. We therefore notify you that we will occupy the buildings until the proper disposition of the building is made." (w.s.) Cons. 1st Prot. Ref. Church.

Since it is very evident from the above reply that we are defiantly and illegally cast out of our own place of worship it would be necessary for us to resort to the law to occupy the building next Sunday. But rather than to do that, we would heed the word of the apostle Paul in I Cor. 6:1, 7b: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? . . . Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

Usual services will be held in the G. R. Christian High School Auditorium at their regular time of 9:30 A.M., 2:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. Please take your Psalters with you.

The Cons. First Prot. Ref. Church
G. Stadt, Clerk

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? . . . If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law against brother, and that before unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren."

But after further consideration of the case, also in the light of the above named passage, the Consistory became convinced that the above mentioned passage is not applicable to their case. For this they have the following reasons:

1. They certainly do no wrong or defraud when they claim their rightful property. And this they certainly do when they claim that the name *First Protestant Reformed Church*, the archives of said church, as well as the buildings belong to them and certainly not to a group of schismatics.

2. It is not a question of a matter of brother against brother, but of the First Protestant Reformed Church against a group of schismatics that intend to rob them of everything: their name, the archives, and the buildings. Remember:

a. The Consistory does not appeal to the secular court for any personal matter, for personal gain or filthy lucre but for the wellbeing of the congregation. They have been called by God to seek the good of the church even, according to the Church Order, in regard to their material possessions. In this case, they would be unfaithful to their office if they did not appeal to secular court.

b. The Consistory does not appeal to the secular court against brethren, but against those that still call themselves the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church but who are nothing but a group of rebels who have disregarded all law and order. They refused to submit to discipline, even in the way of protest, and, thereby have lost all right of appeal. Moreover, they refused to recognize the jurisdiction of Classis East, which they promised to recognize. Therefore, if they still were under the jurisdiction of the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church, they would be disciplined and, if they did not repent, they would be excommunicated. Hence, this is not a case of brother against brother, but of the Consistory against a group of schismatic rebels.

If a thief enters your house and claims it to be his

own, you surely do not properly provide for your own family but are worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8), if you leave him there. The same is true of a consistory in relation to their congregation.

3. This is not a matter for arbitration as the apostle enjoins in a case of brother against brother, for:

a. As has already been said, this is not a case of brother against brother. We are not even together in the First Protestant Reformed Church, nor could anyone ever be appointed as arbiter in the case.

b. Classis East has already given us the name of First Protestant Reformed Church. To arbitrate with the rebels that disregard the jurisdiction of the classis would be the same as denying the jurisdiction of the classis ourselves.

c. Even so, we gave them an opportunity to seek arbitration and settle the matter outside of court. Before we appealed to court, we sent them a letter, addressed to De Wolf and De Young whom they claim to be their minister and clerk of the consistory. In this letter we claimed the right to the name, the archives, and the church. They never even replied to the letter.

4. Not only according to Church Order, but also under the law of Michigan, we are obliged to take this step. For under the latter we are incorporated as the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. There cannot be and there are not two First Protestant Reformed Churches in Grand Rapids, and since they, the schismatic rebels, insist on using that name, in spite of the decision of the classis to the contrary, we have no other choice than to appeal to court.

5. Article 4 of the Articles of Association reads: "The members of said church or society shall worship and labor together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the United States of America as from time to time authorized and declared by the Classis of said Churches."

This article assigns all the property to those members that are united under the Confession and Church Order, that, therefore, recognize the legal Consistory according to the decision of Classis East. Hence, the schismatic rebels have no right to the property.

Art. 7 of the above Articles of Association reads as follows: "All matters and questions regarding the use, control and right to possession of the real property of said church, shall, at all times, be determined only by a majority vote of the members of the Congregation of said church."

By "the members of the congregation of said church" are meant the same as those mentioned in

article 4, quoted above, i.e. those members that recognize the Consistory declared to be the legal Consistory by Classis East. That is the only Consistory that can call a congregational meeting. Only under direction of that consistory can the congregation, by majority vote, decide upon the question regarding the property.

Under the leadership of the schismatic rebels many of the congregation have severed their connection with the legal Protestant Reformed Church before the question regarding the property was determined. They certainly no longer worship "according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the United States of America as from time to time authorized and declared by the Classis of said churches." They have no voice in the matter.

I conclude, therefore, that, in the present case we do not violate the injunction of Scripture in I Cor. 6:1-8.

Rather would I apply that other injunction of Scripture that is found in Rom. 13:3, 4: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is a minister of God to thee for good."

Even Paul appealed to Caesar.

I Cor. 6:1-8 is not to be generalized into an open injunction against all appeal to the secular court.

Calvin writing on this passage, is of the same opinion. Writes he:

"I acknowledge, then, that a Christian man is altogether prohibited from revenge, so that he must not exercise it, either by himself, or by means of the magistrate, nor even desire it. If, therefore, a Christian man wishes to prosecute his rights at law, so as not to offend God, he must, above all things take heed that he does not bring into court any desire of revenge, any corrupt affection of the mind or anger, or in fine any other poison. In this matter love will be the best regulation."

And then he continues to give four reasons why it is not evil in itself to bring anything before the secular court.

If, therefore no overtures for arbitration are presented to the legal Consistory, we shall be obliged to litigate if necessary even to the supreme court.

—H.H.

— : — : —

Doctrine and Life

These two are inseparably connected.

Depart from the truth, and you are bound to leave the straight path of God's precepts. Then you disregard all law and order, you no longer speak the truth in love, you soon care not how you lie or slander by word of mouth, by letter, or in print.

Of this I could quote many glaring examples on the part of those that still call themselves by the name of Protestant Reformed Church, but are neither Protestant Reformed nor a church, but simply a schismatic sect.

But this is not my purpose in this brief editorial.

My attention was called to a couple of announcements that appeared in the bulletin of the schismatic remnant of the Second Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The first concerned with the needs of the Hope Protestant Reformed School.

In the bulletin of Nov. 22, 1953, the following announcement occurred:

"The special collection this morning will be for the Hope School."

Notice especially two items in this announcement.

1. Instead of announcing the real name of the school: "Hope Protestant Reformed School" it merely mentions the Hope School.

2. But what is much worse is that, although it was well known that the need of that school is pressing, especially at the present time, not one word is added to recommend that collection to the congregation and to urge them to give liberally.

This is especially striking in view of the following announcement that occurred in the same bulletin and, in fact, in the same paragraph as that about the school in Hope:

"Next Sunday the special collection will be for the Reformed Guardian, a little paper which in our opinion is worthy of our whole-hearted support."

Striking, don't you think?

In the next bulletin of the same schismatic group another announcement occurred about the same Hope Protestant Reformed School as follows:

"The Hope School (sic!) will have a financial drive on this coming Wednesday evening. This drive will be for the building fund, a payment being due, and for the operating fund."

Again: "Hope School."

Again no word of recommendation. And this in spite of the fact that the board of Hope Protestant Reformed School sent in an announcement which evidently was arbitrarily mutilated and apocopated by

Blankespoor (who, I surmise, composes this bulletin). The complete announcement ran as follows:

"The Hope School Board must conduct a financial drive which will be done the evening of Dec. 2. \$1,000 or more must be paid on the money we loaned. Also we have expensive bus repairs, which has sadly depleted our school operating fund. We trust you will receive those who call on you Dec. 2 and help for this needy cause."

But Blankespoor and his group evidently do not consider Protestant Reformed education a worthy cause.

Compare this with the following announcement on the same bulletin:

"The Chr. High School Campaign is as yet considerably short of its goal. Many of our members have neglected to return their pledge cards. We urge every one to make work of this promptly. Surely, this cause is worthy of the support of everyone."

You see which way the wind blows, dear reader.

The worthy causes recommended by the schismatics are the so-called Reformed Guardian, which, evidently, thinks that it must "guard" the truth by means of all kinds of untruths; and the Christian High School, which is also supported by our Protestant Reformed people, but is nevertheless, not a specifically Protestant Reformed institution.

But the cause of Protestant Reformed education does not belong to those worthy causes.

I am not surprised.

One of the causes of the split in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids was the cause of Protestant Reformed Education. The majority of the congregation always was opposed to this cause. We finally succeeded to establish a school of our own in spite of the opposition. When parents asked for baptism blanks, the consistory even always asked them whether they would promise to send their children to our own Protestant Reformed School. But the opposition remained.

Why? How can any person that calls himself Protestant Reformed be opposed to specific Protestant Reformed Education?

The answer is: they never were Protestant Reformed.

I vividly remember how the Rev. B. Kok once delivered a speech before the Auxiliary, a ladies society that faithfully labored for the cause of Protestant Reformed Education when no school of our own as yet existed. In that speech Kok vehemently opposed the cause of a school of our own.

Why? The answer is the same: he never loved the Protestant Reformed truth.

When I consider the names of the men that, at the

last meeting of the schismatic remnant of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, were elected to presume the role as elders, I am convinced that the decision of the consistory to ask the parents that wish to present their children for baptism whether they will send their children to our own school will not be maintained.

Those elders never evinced any love for our Protestant Reformed Education.

Why not?

The answer is the same: they never were Protestant Reformed.

Life is inseparable from doctrine.

To one more striking item on the bulletin of the schismatic remnant of the Second Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, I must call your attention.

It, too, reveals that those who depart from the truth in doctrine also depart from that same truth in life.

In Reformed churches it has always been the established rule that the table of communion be accessible only to the members of the congregation that are sound in doctrine and upright in walk. If outsiders are to be admitted for certain reasons, they must make special application to the consistory.

And what a sound rule that is!

The preaching of the Word as a means of grace is inseparable from the administration of the sacraments.

Where the one is kept pure the other is too; where the one is corrupted the other is corrupted.

But realizing, evidently, that it is no longer a church but merely a crowd, and motivated, evidently, by the desire to make that crowd as large as possible, the schismatic group above mentioned, principally, adopted "open communion."

Just read the following announcement:

"The Consistory also invites all communicant members from Hope and Hudsonville who worship with us regularly and intend to join in the near future to the table of the Lord."

Do they know whether the invited communicants are sound in doctrine and upright in walk?

No, they don't.

Fact is that they are by no means.

All this is characteristic of schismatics. They are no longer under any rule or jurisdiction of a larger gathering. They can do as they please. There is no longer any law or order.

Doctrine and life!

True doctrine and a life in the fear of the Lord!

Corrupt doctrine and a corrupt life!
They are inseparable!

—H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

HEBREWS (the epistle of warning), by Dr. John Owen. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.00.

The exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews is too well known to require an introduction or even a commendation. On the whole, it is marvellous work, expounding the original text thoroughly and painstakingly. The original work which comprises eight big volumes may, perhaps, be regarded by some as being too elaborate because Dr. Owen adds many observations to his exposition of the text, yet even these "observations" are often valuable and rich in thought.

However, the work reviewed here and published by Kregel is a condensation of the original eight volumes by Dr. Owen in one volume of 238 pages. By publishing this volume, Kregel, undoubtedly, rendered the general reading public a valuable service. They, of course, are not interested in the original text nor do they have time to study such an elaborate exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews as is contained in the original eight volumes. The present volume is eminently fit to prepare, for instance, for a discussion on the epistle to the Hebrews in our societies.

The volume does not inform us who is the author of the condensation. On the whole, it is rather well executed, as a comparison with the original (which I made on certain passages) will show. Often even the very language of Dr. Owen is preserved.

Yet I must add a word or two of criticism. In the first place, I do not like the addition to the title: "the epistle of warning." This I consider a rather severe limitation upon the contents of the epistle. True, the Hebrews is also an epistle of warning, but it is much more than that. Secondly, I found that the condensation does not always do justice to the original and that, too, sometimes in important respects. One illustration of this I here offer. On the phrase "the immutability of His counsel" in 6:17, the condensed volume has:

"The *counsel* of God is the eternal purpose of his will: in this particular place it was His holy, wise purpose to give His Son to be the seed of Abraham for the salvation of the heirs of the promise."

But in the original we read:

"In particular, the counsel of God in this place, is the holy, wise purpose of His will, to give His Son Jesus Christ to be of the seed of Abraham, *for the salvation of all the elect* (I underscore, H.H.), or heirs of promise."

The omission of "the elect" in this particular place is not only very important, but must also be regarded as intentional. —H.H.

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EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, by Arthur W. Pink, Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Three volumes. Price per volume \$4.50, for the set \$11.95.

Pink is no stranger to many of our Protestant Reformed people, chiefly because of his emphasis on sovereign grace and unconditional election. In this respect, they will not be disappointed in him when they study his exposition of the Gospel according to John. An illustration of his proper emphasis on election and reprobation and, at the same time, of his honest dealing with the text, may be found in his interpretation of 10:26:

"'But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.' (10:26). Unspeakably solemn was this word. They were reprobates, and now that their characters were fully manifested, the Lord did not hesitate to tell them so. The force of this awful statement is definite and clear, though men in their unbelief have done their best to befog it. Almost all the commentators have expounded this verse as though its clauses had been reversed. They simply make Christ say here to these Jews that they were unbelievers. But the truth is that the Lord said far more than that. The commentators understand 'the sheep' to be nothing more than a synonym for born again and justified persons, whereas in fact it is equivalent to God's elect, as the sixteenth verse of this chapter clearly shows. The Lord did not say 'Because ye are not of my sheep, ye believe not,' but, 'Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.' . . . He Christ is not only charging these Jews with unbelief, but He also explains why faith had not been granted unto them—they were not 'of his sheep': they were not among the favored number of God's elect . . ."

Nevertheless, although Pink maintains and strongly emphasizes the truth of sovereign grace, total depravity, and unconditional election, this ought not to close our eyes to some of the bad features in his commentary. By no means does he always characterize himself as one that deals honestly and soberly with the text. Often he wildly allegorizes, i.e. arbitrarily

gives to the text a spiritual meaning which it does not even suggest. Of this I could quote numerous examples, but I will refrain from doing so. Partly, this is, perhaps, due to his premillennial views.

Hence, I recommend these volumes to the reader because they contain much excellent material; but at the same time, I want to warn the reader to study this commentary critically with a view to its allegorizing and falsely spiritualizing tendency. —H.H.

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DE TOEKOMST VAN CHRISTUS, (The Coming of Christ), by Dr. K. Dijk. Published by J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f. 7.50.

This is the third volume of a trilogy. The first volume I discussed some time ago. The second volume I never received, although I would still like to have it. I hereby call the attention of the publisher to this omission.

In this third volume, the author treats of the return of Christ and the related subjects: the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, everlasting punishment, eternal life, and the giving over of the kingdom on the part of Christ to the Father.

In a closing chapter, Dr. Dijk reminds us that it was not his purpose to offer a critical theological treatise on eschatological subjects, but simply to present to his readers whatever Scripture teaches concerning the doctrine of the last things. Judging of the work in this light, i.e. of volumes I and II, I am of the opinion that the author certainly realized his purpose. He certainly let Scripture speak without paying too much attention to all sorts of human philosophies about "the power and coming" of Christ. Besides, Dr. Dijk writes a very lucid style, so that, both as to form and content, I am glad to recommend this work to the general reading public in as far as they are able to read the Holland language.

Of course, this does not mean that I would not differ from Dr. Dijk in the interpretation of some of the Scripture passages quoted and discussed in the book. One of these passages is I Cor. 15:24-28. Another is that which mentions "the sign of the Son of man in the heavens." But all these things concern a matter of exegesis, into which we can hardly be expected to enter in detail in a review of this nature.

I heartily recommend this book to our readers.

—H.H.



FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Peter 1:18, 19

(Continued)

Repeatedly we have called attention in these series of the Apostle that the Church, the believers in Christ Jesus stand in a new Status Quo to Christ, and therefore to all things. Old things are passed away and all things have become new for us.

The "golden-chain" of elective love and grace are the beginning and end of our great and sure salvation. The elective love of God is the *cor ecclesia*, the heart-beat of the church. This elective love of God is the very heart-beat of our only and solid comfort in life and death! And such is the clear teaching of the Apostle here in this section of Scripture we are discussing.

For let it be clearly understood: we are not *under law*, but we are *under grace*!

All attempts at trying to mingle these two inevitably leads to a devaluation of grace. Grace is then no more grace. Our glorying in the Lord our Righteousness dies upon our lips. We have no *Soli Deo Gloria* left! We have no *incentive* to perfect sanctification in the fear of God, for then all hope of seeing God has died in our breast. Once more we have turned unto "dead works" instead of standing in Covenant fellowship with God, serving the living God in great and true joy of heart. Then we can chant the doleful chants of the ascetics, and we have the *de profundis* of the Jews at their walls of wailing, or have the pride of Pharisaic accomplishment, but then we do not have the real spiritual joy of heart that counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!

Wherefore let us lift up the feeble hands and strengthen the weak knees and stand in the grace into which we have been called!

For we are no longer "slaves" but we are "free-born sons" of Sarah, the Jerusalem above, the mother of all the elect-believers.

Such is the clear teaching of Holy Writ here in verses 18, 19 of I Peter 1. We wish to call attention to the following elements:

In the first place, we should notice that Peter teaches us that our redemption is an *accomplished fact*, once and for all. We have been redeemed with a great and precious price. That we have been redeemed means that we once were the slaves of sin under the righteous wrath of God; sin ruled in our hearts and

lives. The sense of guilt pursued us, and there was no satisfaction in our mind and heart except that we perpetrated evil. We could not liberate ourselves from the dominion of sin, because legally sin had a rightful claim upon us. We belonged to the realm where the power (authority) of darkness reigns. We could not deliver ourselves, we might not run away, and we could not will to run away from sin. Legal chains of darkness bound us. We were held in the chains of God's wrath! We were in the prison-house of sin's bondage in Egypt. And the prison-bars would not be opened. Powerless we were and unwilling.

But that is now past!

We have been redeemed. A great price was paid for us by our Redeemer-God, in the flesh. He came not to be ministered to, but to minister to our needs, to give His soul a *ransom* for many. We are not our own any more, but we belong to our Savior-God, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And the government is upon His shoulders. He will save us to the very end and finally set us with Himself in heaven's glories and perfections above, and that, too, forever!

It was a very *precious* price that was paid! This means, that the price is high on the scale of real values, that it is outside of anything "under the sun," as this world is apart from redemption. It is so great in value that it could never rise in the hearts of man. It simply cannot "be touched" by anything that any mortal can offer. It is nothing less than the perfect obedience of the Son of God in the flesh, learning obedience from what He suffers. It is perfect obedience under the wrath of God, in the inexpressible anguish and pains of hell!

And this he suffered that in our greatest assaults we should have a strong and abiding consolation in God. We must sing: unto Him that loveth us and loosed (washed) us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a Kingdom, and made us to be priests unto His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen! Rev. 1:5, 6.

There was nothing lacking in the redemption price. It was the full price, and it was of the right kind. It could touch our redemption. It was the *proper kind* of redemption coin. It was the blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the earth. It is the blood of whom angels and saints chant in glad strains of heavenly music, singing a *new* song saying: *Worthy* is the Lamb! He is the Lion out of Judah's tribe, the root of David. The Lamb of God is He. He is worthy to lift up our sins and bear them away on His mighty shoulders outside the camp of Israel, so that they are no more. And we sing: Thank, God! my sins are gone . . .

It is the blood of Him Who, was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep is dumb before its shearers, so he opened not His mouth! Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without "blemish" to cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God in spirit and in truth. He fulfilled the just demands of the law. The Mediator of a new Covenant is He, so that we might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Such is the glad tidings of the Gospel.

God has reconciled us unto Himself in Christ Jesus. We need not fear, for herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins. We have been redeemed! It is finished and nothing can ever be added.

And this redemption price is not an after-thought on the part of God. The redemption price is the great price wherewith the predestinated Church must be redeemed. God so loved the world. He never loved us in any other way. Sophists may dispute about what would have happened if Adam had not sinned, and they may write "learned dissertations" about the "moment" and many dabble in such inquiries as to the "ultimacy" of that which belongs to that which is past finding out, but the godly saints whose hope and faith is ever more into (eis) God, find "solid comfort" in the assurance of Holy Writ, that the Christ "was foreknown" as the Lamb to be slain from before the foundation of the world! For such is the clear teaching here of Scripture. They do not speculate about the contents of the glory of the Gospel, but they drink its message in faith, and put it in their mouth and eat it as the Bread of life!

Yes, the saints eat the *Full-counsel of God* as the Bread of Life!

What we eat is not simply the "whosoever will" Gospel, but the full-orbed Gospel, which is anchored in the foreknowledge of God the Father, who worketh all things according to the Counsel of His Will. No, we do then not try to put this "foreknowledge" on the back-ground, but it is the "heart-beat" of the Gospel! Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His *foreknown* Son a propitiation for our sins. And He blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, even as He elected us, from before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. Then we do not segregate Canons II, 5 as a mere aphorism (een brokstuk) from the strong consolation given in the elective love of God. We rightly divide the Word of truth, being workman that need not be ashamed!

For always Christ was in a *complete state* of being foreknown, (notice the perfect passive participle in

greek: pro-egnoosmenou) yet in these last times, of which prophets through the Spirit of Christ spoke, he has been manifested once and for all as the Lamb that pays the ransom price, our mighty and faithful Redeemer. This is manifestly set forth before the eyes of the entire world in the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There stands that Cross, towering o'er the wrecks of time. It towers over all the cultural developments of man. These all crumble into wreck and ruins. Their speech is in their mute evidence that all is corruptible here below; that we, the redeemed elect, look for the inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away. We look for that incorruptible ransom price of the blood of Christ. Such is the manifested love of God in Christ in these last times for us, whose hope and trust is more and more into this electing and redeeming God!

Peter says: *Knowing* all this! And this knowledge is the incentive to a godly walk of conversion. And there is no other incentive. For the law works wrath!

But someone may inquire: what if I do not know this grand truth of the gospel with such conscious faith. What must I do then? I answer: the Scriptures teach us that God gives this faith to all His saints, and that the assurance is wrought in our hearts in His own time.

Surely the doctrine of election, of the enmity which God has caused to be present between the "seed of the Serpent," and the "Seed of the woman" is justly terrible to the wicked. It is justly terrible as long as we do not seriously turn to God in spiritual sobriety, girding up the loins of our minds. It is terrible for the hypocrites, who Pharisaically try to make a vain show of piety before God. And as long as they walk in such sins it must be told them that they do not inherit the Kingdom of God. Thus the preaching of the Word is the Key of the kingdom of heaven. For we do not enter the way of thinking in godliness by speculating about it, and curiously inquiring into the secret things of God, but by observing in ourselves with holy joy the fruits of faith and election.

But if we do not yet *experience* a lively faith in Christ, an assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, and do persist earnestly in the use of the means which God hath appointed for working these graces in us, we ought not to account ourselves with the reprobate, but with ardent desires humbly and devoutly *wait for a season of richer grace*. For God finishes His own work. Be not terrified! And if you earnestly desire to live a more holy life, and cannot reach that measure of holiness after which you aspire, believe that God will not quench the smoking flax, but press forward with renewed vigor, knowing who has redeemed you!

—Geo. C. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR

Afraid of the Gospel

(8)

Conditional theology!

Christless sermons!

These go hand in hand. Hand in hand they must go. For conditional theology wants us to believe that there are works of men that precede the works of God and for which God waits, either before saving us or before He can and will give us the next installment of salvation. We must believe, so the particular phase of conditional theology which was smuggled into the Protestant Reformed churches declares, before the promise of God to save us will go into effect. God promises salvation to everyone who hears the gospel on the condition that they believe. They must, then, first believe, and then the promise is for them. Before that it is not for them. And so, this particular brand of conditional theology maintains, it is also for man after he has been brought by God into the kingdom by his act of believing. Then his receiving and enjoying of the blessings of that kingdom still depend upon his doing something before God will give the next installment. He must convert himself before God will send to him that blessing of the kingdom, namely, the joyful experience of being in it, the comfort, the peace of mind of being a citizen of it. Man's work is prerequisite to God's work! Let them not say that they do not mean that! Let them rather convert themselves and become like little children and confess that the word prerequisite does not fit in Reformed Theology when we are speaking of the good works to which God calls us.

But taking the stand and maintaining it as they do that God promises conditionally and that something is required of us *before* we enter into the kingdom either initially or daily in our consciousness, their sermons must become Christless. He Who is The Prerequisite demanded and supplied by God without any of our work must be relegated to the background and presently in the line of generations of this philosophy be lost as the complete Saviour that He is.

But I hear voices raised in protest! We do not say that man's work precedes the work of God. We say that there are conditions that man fulfills by God's grace. That surely is putting God's work first! We say that without the grace of God man can never fulfill these conditions. We do preach Christ. We

preach Christ crucified. And we also preach predestination unto adoption, as Paul speaks of it in Ephesians 1:5.

If you say that in all sincerity—and we believe that there are a few who might be able to say that—then you are a poor deluded, deceived soul who has not yet seen the inconsistency of such a philosophy. Shall we try it out once? Listen! God promises everyone of you that if by His grace you believe, you will be saved! That is not the way Rev. De Wolf said it. He left that “by His grace” out. And in doing so he left Christ out. It was in that respect already a Christless sermon. But look at the statement as it now stands. God is going to give you grace in order to believe. He is going to give that to you so that you can fulfill the condition which is necessary for your salvation. You say that He will have to give it to us before we can believe. You say that you believe that unless He does give that grace you cannot perform the act of faith. Fine! So far we agree. And we seem to have the same doctrine. For thus far we have not yet that miserable conditional theology. But look again! Christ must give me grace *before* I can perform the act of faith which is a prerequisite, a condition to salvation! But what nonsense we have then! Is it not so very, very plain that the moment God gives me that grace to believe He has already given me salvation? He has given me Christ, when He gave me grace to believe. And can I have Christ and not salvation? Can I receive grace outside of Christ?

But you say that the grace to believe and the act of believing are simultaneous. Chronologically, that is as far as the time element is concerned, that may very well be. Logically that is not so. But even then, even if the grace to believe and the act of believing occur at the same moment of time, then it is also true that our salvation occurs at that same moment of time and our act of believing is not first, is not the condition to our being saved. Our act of believing is part of that salvation. Our act of believing is Christ working in and through our hearts and minds. That is not Christless preaching, that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ in and through us as well as for us!

Let us look at that second statement also. Let us put it this way, Our act of conversion is a prerequisite (which we by God's grace fulfill) to entering the kingdom. Once again, even when you say that this refers to those already in the kingdom and refers to their consciousness and conscious enjoyment of the blessedness of being in the kingdom, the addition of that phrase “which we by God's grace fulfill” makes the whole thing meaningless. Had Rev. De Wolf said, or even corrected it after his attention was called to it repeatedly, instead of maintaining it in its literal

form: "Our act of conversion is a requirement which we by God's grace fulfill to enter the kingdom" he would at least have had Christ there in the word "grace". But he did not, and by his maintenance of the literal form he excludes Christ. And the result is Christless preaching. It would change the whole idea of his statement to add the suggested phrase. It would surely demand the withdrawal of the "pre", the "before" idea in his statement. But when you try to straighten it out without withdrawing that obnoxious, heretical prerequisite element and by adding "which we fulfill by God's grace", you make it ridiculous. You put a prerequisite to a prerequisite. You make God's grace prerequisite to our act of conversion. That is fine! And there we again agree. But do not make God's grace a prerequisite to a prerequisite that man must fulfill. You become confused by such theology. The minute you add "which we by God's grace fulfill" you put God's work ahead of that act of conversion and automatically take the "pre" from the prerequisite. God grant that the erring brethren would still receive courage to do that! Put God first not man!

We had more to say about this relegating of Christ, The *Word* of God become flesh to the background in the preaching of the *Word*, but it can wait till later.

Let us pause and plead with Rev. De Wolf even now after all the sad history that has transpired since he refused to retract his unbiblical statements. We would urge him in the love of God and in the love of the truth to use this department and tell us that he will no longer maintain those statements in their literal form.

It is not too late to do that! And all truly Protestant Reformed people would love him for it and thank God for it. There still is room for him in the Protestant Reformed Churches *without his statements*. And he would find out, too, that if he condemned those statements and would cast them from him, those who love the truth would not gloat over his having been humiliated into an acknowledgement of error, but that they would receive him as a brother to whom our gracious God has in His mercy given an exceeding great measure of spiritual strength. How could they gloat over his being humiliated. It is not humiliating to confess sin and error, it is a sign of spiritual strength. Confessing error is not weakness. Maintaining error is weakness.

Incidentally, he need not be concerned about the feelings and attitude of those who protested against these statements which he made. The idea never was, as some—who ought to know better—so naively put it, that he must make a "conciliatory apology" to these men. It was not their feelings that were hurt. It was

not that they or Classis East felt personally offended by those statements. The offense in them is that *they are an insult to God!* They relegate Him to the background! They put man before Him! That is why Classis East said that they must be condemned. Rev. De Wolf, take away those insults to God! If you love God—and we do not want to believe that you do not—then fight with us against such statements which deny that he is God!

You have erred. Nothing strange about that. We all do. John says that "if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar." Nothing strange for a man in an important office such as you occupied in what we call the "mother Church" of our denomination. Men in higher positions erred. David did! Peter had to be rebuked to his face by Paul because of a grievous error! But the strength of these men was not that they maintained themselves in their errors. Their spiritual strength was in this that they broke away from their errors. May God grant you that spiritual strength and courage!

We were told that you preached a Protestant Reformed sermon on "Predestination Unto Adoption" based on Ephesians 1:5. Give us all the benefit of that sermon. Use this department and on its pages hold that wonderful truth before our eyes, and show us that because of this wonderful truth, which does not relegate God and His Christ to the background, those statements of yours cannot stand, and that you are convinced now that they must be condemned as elevating man to a position where he may not and cannot stand.

Do that in His fear.

In His fear you will have no fear of what men may say and do. In His fear you will have joy and peace. In His fear you can, by God's grace, perform a great work, a blessed work. You can lead many erring sheep back to the fold of Christ and bring peace and joy to many confused minds.

The Word of God is uncompromisingly *distinct*. And the distinguishing marks of the true Church, also according to Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession, show an exceedingly distinct Church. In the fear of Him Who is Himself a distinct God, lead His people back from a movement that seeks to cut off the sharp corners of His antithesis. He is a light and in Him is no shadow of turning. And He says, "Be ye holy even as I am holy." THAT IS A VERY DISTINCT CHURCH! And your text of Ephesians 1:5 preaches a very distinct truth and a distinct Church.

Be not afraid to do things in His fear.

—J. A. Heys

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE, OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 3. And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings, to whom he will and at what time he pleaseth; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. Rom. 10: 14, 15. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Step by step our *Canons* are unfolding for us the truth concerning our salvation, and at the same time carefully leading up to the subject of divine predestination, which is the main subject of this first chapter. First of all, the principle was laid down that God is not obligated to save anyone, but that He might justly have left all men in their sin and condemnation. Secondly, it was pointed out that nevertheless it was God's purpose to save some, that He manifested His love in the sending of His only begotten Son into the world, "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The question, therefore, that is of immediate importance is: how do men come to believe in God's only begotten Son? And, as we pointed out at the end of our discussion of Article 2, this question is crucial, for it is only the believers who "shall not perish, but have everlasting life." The present article begins to furnish us with the answer to this crucial question. It answers the question: by what *means* are men brought to believe? If men are to believe in God's only begotten Son, there must be some point of contact between Him and them. They must know of Him in order to believe in Him. And this third article gives us to understand in general that the preaching of the gospel is the means whereby some are brought to believe.

We may distinguish several elements in this article. In the first place, it teaches us that the preachers (*praecones*, "criers," heralds) of the gospel are sent by God. In the second place, we are instructed that God sends them mercifully (Dutch: *goedertierenlijk*; Latin: *clementer*). In the third place, the article teaches us that even the time and the scope of this gospel-preaching is strictly a matter of God's good pleasure: He sends these preachers "to whom he will and at what time he pleaseth." And finally, we are ac-

quainted with the fact that through this ministry men are called to *repentance* and *faith* in *Christ crucified*. All this the fathers substantiate by quoting the well-known passage from Romans 10:14, 15.

From the very outset, therefore, it is emphasized in the *Canons* that the gospel of our salvation, and, therefore, our salvation, is entirely God's. The most joyful tidings of which Article 3 speaks are, of course, in brief the tidings spoken of in the previous article, namely, that God manifested His love by sending His only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on Him . . . might have everlasting life. And of this Son of God as the manifestation of God's love toward us there is no knowledge possible for mere man. He cannot be discovered by the power of human intellect and reason. He cannot be found out from God's revelation in the things that are made. In all the things that are made is, to be sure, the revelation of God's eternal power and godhead. But apart from the light of the gospel of Christ crucified, there is in that speech of God in nature only the testimony of His wrath. There is in it no speech of divine love. And therefore, if the love of God is to be known by men, He Himself must make it known. And He does so by sending preachers, heralds. We have here, therefore, the following truths: 1) The gospel, the good tidings, are strictly God's. The gospel is not of man whatsoever. Even when that gospel is preached, it is not man's gospel. Men are but heralds, messengers of the good tidings. And characteristic of a herald is exactly the fact that he functions as a servant of him who sends him, that his message is not his own, that the authority of his message is not his own authority, but that both the content of his message and the authority of the message are of the sender. 2) A preacher must be sent by God. This is quite commonly overlooked in our time, both in so-called evangelical circles where it seems that almost anyone can be recognized as a preacher who has a "hankering" to preach, and also in Reformed circles, where too often the calling and sending of a preacher is, I am afraid, viewed as purely the work of the congregation that extends a call, sends a preacher forth, and supports him. It must be remembered, therefore, that the calling and sending of a preacher is God's, and that only there do you have preaching of the gospel where it pleases God Himself to have someone called unto that task by His church. 3) In this same connection we may call attention to the fact, which receives more emphasis in a different context in the *Canons*, that in order to believe you must hear Christ! This is precisely the point in the quotation from Romans 10:14. The correct translation there, as has been frequently pointed out, is not, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" but, "How shall they be

lieve in him *whom* they have not heard?" Unless Christ Himself is heard through the preaching of the gospel, faith can never be the result.

This sending of the preachers of the gospel is in itself already a great mercy. And to this, too, the *Canons* draw our attention. There are some who understand this as meaning that this sending is a manifestation of God's favor toward the preachers. Others take it to mean a manifestation of God's mercy toward the hearers of the gospel. We may quite safely include both. And then we must understand this as meaning that even the *proclamation* of the gospel has its reason not in the rights of fallen man, but only in the pure goodness of God. Just as in Article 1 it was maintained that God might justly have left the entire race in sin and condemnation, so here it must be remembered that God might justly have withheld from the entire race the preaching of the gospel. That at this point the objects of this mercy of God are not further defined does not mean that the preaching of the gospel is grace to all who hear it. For we know that later on the *Canons* make very clear that God's grace is only for the elect. It may also be said that God has the gospel preached to some in His wrath. Here, however, the question as to the objects of God's favor is not in the picture.

The most striking element in this article, and at the same time the most telling blow against the Arminian view, is the truth that even the scope and time of this preaching of the gospel are strictly determined by God Himself. What an entirely different note this is than that which is sounded only too frequently by present day "evangelists." Today we hear much of the lie that Christ has made salvation possible for all men, and that now it is up to men to see that the gospel of Christ reaches as many men as possible, so that they all may have the opportunity to believe in Christ. We are pointed to the vast millions who have never heard about Christ. And we are vehemently urged to evangelize the world, to gain as many souls as possible for Christ, and even to hurry because time is running out on us. If so many millions go lost having never heard the gospel, it will really be our fault. Such is the spirit of our age. Now, to be sure, it is true that the church has the calling to preach the gospel to every nation, and that under the guidance of the Spirit this calling must be carried out. But it is definitely not true that it was ever the divine purpose that all men should be in contact with the gospel of Christ. Nor is it true that it is up to men to see that the gospel reaches as many men as possible. Even this is a matter of God's sovereign purpose: He has His gospel preached to whom He wills and when it pleases Him.

History teaches us, of course, that the vast majority of mankind never even come into contact with the gospel. All through the long ages of the old dispensation there were, comparatively speaking, only a few who heard the promise of the gospel proclaimed. For many centuries that gospel was limited for the most part to only one nation, the people of Israel. And in the new dispensation it is no different. The proclamation of the gospel follows a certain definite course. In general we may say that the path led ever westward, from Jerusalem to Asia Minor, from Asia Minor to Europe, from southern Europe to northern Europe, and from Europe to America. Many were the millions who never heard the gospel preached from the dawn of the new dispensation even until now. Just recently I heard it claimed on one of these radical evangelical radio programs that there are still today as many as two-thirds of the inhabitants of the earth who have never so much as heard of Christ. Why is this? Is the Lord God short-handed? Does He not have enough men to proclaim His gospel? Is it the fault of men, who are disobedient to the calling to preach the Word? Will the result be that some places in the house of many mansions will go unoccupied? No, the answer is very simple. It never was God's will that all men should hear the gospel. It was His purpose that the vast majority of mankind should never even come into contact with the Christ. The sending of the preacher is all of Him. How shall they preach, except they be sent? If it pleases the Lord God not to have the gospel proclaimed to any other nation than Israel for century after century, who shall countermand that order? If it pleases Him that the proclamation of the gospel shall not become universal until the day of Pentecost, who shall prevent the realization of His purpose? And what is true in general is true in every individual case. Every child of Adam who comes into contact with the gospel of Christ crucified does so exactly according to God's sovereign determination, even as far as the exact moment is concerned. But how foolish in the light of this fact—and there are numerous Scriptures to support it—is the Arminian contention of a general grace of salvation. How utterly insane in this light is the claim that Christ died for all and every human being, when it was never God's intention that they should know of the Christ! It must be, then, that it was God's eternal purpose to reject some, and that too, in such a way that they would never have the Arminian "chance" to be saved!

The purpose of this preaching, positively speaking, of course, is that some should be called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. This calling is not further defined. But even here we may note that the very form of the words at least implies that the preach-

ing is but the means, while the calling is out of God and takes place through the preaching. The Canons have more to say on this later.

One more remark is probably in order in this connection. It is this. To conclude from this article that our fathers believed in a mediate regeneration is unwarranted. The distinction between mediate and immediate regeneration is simply not under discussion here. While it is perfectly correct that faith as a conscious activity of the soul is wrought through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit, it is nevertheless true that the power or faculty of faith is implanted in the heart immediately, that is, apart from the preaching of the gospel.

—H. C. Hoeksema

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Before we begin our discussion of the early views of the sacrament of baptism as entertained by the Church in the first centuries of the New Dispensation, it will probably not be amiss to call attention to the Jewish washings, the baptism of John, and the institution of Baptism.

A few general observations

Discussing the historical development of the sacrament of Baptism, it will probably not be amiss as we remarked in the preceding paragraph, to call attention to the period of transition from the Old to the New Dispensation. In the first place, then, we would call attention to the washings and purifications which were already prevalent in Israel prior to the dawn of the New Testament. The Rev. H. Hoeksema calls attention to these Old Testament rituals in his book on the Heidelberg Catechism, entitled: "Baptized into Christ." These washings were instituted by Divine law; and in a sense, therefore, being thus ordained, they may be said to be foreshadowing the sacraments of Baptism. At least it may certainly be said that, when the sacrament of Baptism was instituted, the idea that washing with water symbolized a spiritual purification was not strange to Israel. However, these washings had no sacramental value for the simple reason that they were not instituted to be observed by the whole Church but merely regulated special cases—the same

may be said of the baptism of the proselytes. Proselytes were baptized as a sign, together with circumcision, of their incorporation into the Jewish nation. And also this indicated that baptism as such was by no means an unknown rite or ceremony.

In the second place, we would call attention to the baptism of John. The Roman Catholic Church denies that the Baptism as administered by the Baptist is of equal significance with that of the baptism of Jesus, and declares that everyone is accursed who is addicted to that conception. Others, too, refuse to ascribe this significance to his baptism. To support their contention they call attention to Acts 19:1-6, asserting that this passage clearly teaches us that there were those who, having been baptized by John, were rebaptized by the apostle, Paul. For a clear refutation of this interpretation of Acts 19:1-6 we again refer our readers to Rev. Hoeksema's book: *Baptized into Christ*, pages 99-101. If, in this passage of Acts 19, verse 5 does not belong to the speech of Paul, these men were indeed rebaptized by the apostle. However, if verse 5 must be understood as also belonging to the speech of Paul, then the apostle simply declares that these men were baptized by John in the name of the Lord Jesus after they had heard him declare that they should believe on Him which should come after him.

When identifying the baptism as administered by John with that of the Lord Jesus it must be conceded that the sacrament of baptism was not formally introduced until the ascension of Christ when the risen Lord commands His Church to go and teach all nation, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The sign of circumcision was still in effect at the time of John's ministry and was not replaced by the sign of baptism until later. Besides, the baptism of John was limited to the Israel of the Old Dispensation and apparently confined to adults. Nothing is mentioned of the baptism of infants during the labour of the forerunner of the Christ. And we may certainly conclude that the Baptist himself, although standing upon the threshold of the New Dispensation, nevertheless belonged to the Old Dispensation. However, one can hardly deny the significance of the baptism of John. In the first place, Scripture certainly teaches us that the baptism as administered by the Baptist was instituted and commanded by God. This appears from John 1:33 and Matt. 21:25, and we quote: "And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost . . . The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we

shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?" The thrust of the first passage quoted here speaks for itself. And, when we read the question in the second passage: "If we shall say, from heaven," the implication is, of course, that if the baptism of John is from heaven it has heavenly sanction, originating in heaven and therefore authorized by the living God Himself. Secondly, it was a baptism of repentance for (literally: into) the remission of sins. We read in Mark 1:3: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." And the same is predicted of the baptism of the New Testament, according to Acts 2:38 and I quote; "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." That John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance for (into) the remission of sins" signifies that it was a baptism characterized by repentance which bestowed upon or led the believer into the conscious forgiveness of sins. We repeat: this is also stated of the baptism of the New Dispensation. Thirdly, Jesus Himself was baptized with the baptism of John and therefore recognized this baptism of the Baptist. The water of John's baptism was, of course, symbolic of the blood of the Lamb of Calvary. That Jesus consented to the baptism of John does not mean, of course, that He Himself was a sinner. He, we know, knew no sin, was spotlessly holy and undefiled. But it did mean that He, too, could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven alone through the blood of the cross. For Jesus, although Himself sinless and perfect, was the Head of the elect, those given Him by the Father from before the foundation of the world. Hence, all the sins of the elect were upon him, not, we understand, in a spiritual sense of the word which would render the Christ sinful and corrupt, but in a judicial sense so that He was responsible for their payment before the tribunal of God. And these sins must be paid according to Divine justice and righteousness. Jesus was baptized by John at the beginning of His public ministry and thereby set His face toward Jerusalem and Calvary at the very outset of His ministry and assumed full responsibility for the cross. And this certainly implies that Jesus, permitting Himself to be baptized by John, set His seal of approval upon it. This lies in the very nature of the case. Fourthly, Jesus certainly did not distinguish between the baptism as administered by His disciples and as administered by the Baptist. This appears from John 3:22, 23, 4:1, 2, and we quote: "After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judaea; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Enon

near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized . . . When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (Though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples)." These verses speak of the baptism as administered by Jesus' disciples and by the disciples of John, and they do not draw any distinction between the two baptisms. In the fifth place, Jesus simply recognized the disciples who had been baptized by John and did not rebaptize them. This appears from 1:37 and Acts 18:25, and we again quote: "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus . . . This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." The first of these passages refers to two of John's disciples who had certainly been baptized by the Baptist, and had followed Christ. We do not read of their rebaptism. And the second passage refers to Apollos and informs us that he knew only the baptism of John. And neither is his rebaptism recorded in the Scriptures. Finally, Jesus does not institute a new baptism in Matt. 18:19, but simply expands the baptism of John, as it were, so that it henceforth will embrace all peoples. The baptism as administered by the Baptist had been limited only to the people of God of the Old Dispensation, and only to adults; it is now expanded to embrace all nations and peoples.

We conclude, therefore, that the sacrament of baptism was principally instituted by God when He commanded the Baptist to baptize with the baptism of repentance unto the forgiveness of sins, and that this institution of baptism was sealed for the entire Church of the New Dispensation by the specific command of Christ as expressed in Matt. 28:19, where we read: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Besides calling the attention of our readers to the Old Dispensational washings and purifications in Israel and the baptism as administered by John, the Baptist, we would also mention the Baptism Formula: "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This Baptismal Form, we understand, is based on Matt. 28:19. However, we do not regard Matt. 28:19 as a Baptism Formula. We do not believe that this verse gives us a formula for the administration of the sacrament of Baptism, that Jesus gave us these words with the intention that they should be used at the time when the sacrament of baptism was administered. We believe that these words express the heart and essence of baptism, that

baptism is really and actually a being baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and that, therefore, the sign, corresponding to what Baptism essentially is, should be characterized by the pronouncement of these words. However, the Lord willing, we will have opportunity to call attention to our Baptism Formula in subsequent articles.

—H. Veldman



DECENCY and ORDER

Ambulantes Levitae

The above caption is a Latin title by which a group of self-appointed itinerant preachers of the sixteenth century were called. The phrase means, "walking Levites." It rather appropriately fits this class of itinerant preachers because they refused to be ministerially connected with any particular church but travelled about from place to place as they saw fit. They claimed the authority in themselves to minister the word and the sacraments and even appealed to the examples of the Apostles and early evangelists although they ignored the fact that the apostles and their helpers occupied a special and temporary office in the New Testament church during the years of her infancy.

The Reformed Churches correctly maintained over-against these "ambulantes levitae" the sound and fundamental principle expressed in the sixth article of the church order and of which we wrote the last time. That principle is "that no one can be engaged in the work of the ministry without the lawful calling and without being connected to the local church." This follows because the authority of the ministerial office does not repose in any individual but in the church itself which Christ gathers and institutes in the world. This same principle forms the basis for the seventh article of our church order which reads as follows:

"No one shall be called to the Ministry of the Word, without his being stationed in a particular place, except he be sent to do church extension work."

We may notice, firstly, the formulation of this article for which there is, in our opinion, room for improvement. The dutch has: "Niemand zal tot den Dienst des Woords beroepen worden, zonder dat men

hem in eene bepaalde plaats stelle . . ." Especially the phrase, "without his being stationed in a particular place" leaves the impression that the article sanctions the bishopric or Methodistic form of church government according to which the individual clergymen are stationed in various places as it may seem fitting to the higher bishop. Certainly this was not the intention of the composers of the church order as is clear from Article 3 and 4 where we learn that the minister is not "stationed by men" but is "called to the office through and by the particular church." It would, therefore, have been better to state the thrust of this article thus: "No one shall be engaged in the Ministry of the Word without his being called by a particular congregation to be her pastor."

Thus understood the article refutes the error of vesting Classis or Synods with power to call or ordain men to the ministry. This was not always clear. In 1581 the Synod of Middelburg ruled that "no one not stationed in a particular place shall be allowed to engage in circuit preaching without the consent and authority of Classis or Synod." The intention of this ruling was to allow for certain forms of itinerant preaching but that whether this was necessary and proper was not to be decided by individuals, but left to the judgment of the Synod. No doubt some of this work was necessary in cases, for instance, where churches had been broken by persecution and the people of God scatter or as a means at that time of gathering and organizing believers who had seceded from the Roman Catholic church. Yet, this could not justify the Synod's assuming an authority to send out a preacher for this authority belongs only to the particular church.

Likewise did the churches in the province of Friesland in former years ordain men at their Synodical or Classical gatherings without their having received a call from a local church. This was wrong and in conflict with proper order. Later this was seen and these churches also then conformed themselves to the true Reformed principle governing this matter.

The important thing to take note of here, therefore, is that the individual, local church be regarded as the only body that has the right to authorize men to engage in the labors of the office of the ministry of the Word. No more than another body has the right to ordain elders and deacons can any other body ordain one in the office of the ministry. And so it also follows that only those who are called to a particular place and ordained by a particular church in a particular office have the right to perform the labors of that office. This right of the church belongs to her autonomy. The negative side of this right is then that only the particular church has the prerogative

to remove one who reveals himself unworthy from that office.

This important fact rests upon the truth that each congregation is in itself a manifestation of the body of Jesus Christ. It makes no difference whether she is large or small. A small church is as complete and as really the instituted body of Christ as one that numbers hundreds of families. To the church is given the ministry of the Word and Sacraments together with the key-power of christian discipline. Nowhere outside of the church are these things found and, therefore, to use them one must be lawfully placed in the office by that body.

Two things must be considered here yet. First of all this article does not imply nor express that a minister placed in a certain church may not minister the Word or Sacraments in another church of that denomination. The article itself does not touch upon this directly but merely states the principle that one who is not joined to a local church has not the right to preach. Otherwise stated we might say that one who is joined to a local church does have the right to preach and the bond of agreement or unity between the churches allows him to do so in any of the churches where he may be called whether for one service or for a longer time.

For this reason it may be added in the second place that although the Classis and Synod may not call or ordain men in the office, they do render advice to the churches as to who shall and who shall not be admitted (See Art. 4). This is because the ordination of a minister in any local church is a matter of denominational interest and concern. Likewise the removal of any minister from a particular church is done with the advice of other churches but the power to execute the removal remains with the local church itself.

In the seventh article there is also an exception clause. It reads: "except he be sent to do church extension work." This does not mean that missionaries are "ambulantes levitae" who have no connection whatever with a local church and are, therefore, under the jurisdiction of no consistory but are at liberty to go about as they please. Rather the clause means that those engaged in this work are not to be confined to one particular place. They too are to be called by a particular church (not the Synod) and by that church are ordained and sent out. The field or place where the missionary is to labor may be changed from time to time according to the discretion of the church.

This does not mean that two or more churches may not do this co-operatively. Nor does it contradict Art. 51 which states that the mission work of the churches is to be regulated by the general Synod in

a mission order. This means that all the churches unite to perform this work through the Synod by designating one or more particular church to carry out the function of calling and sending forth men to do church extension or mission work. This is perfectly proper and in accord with the principles of Ref. Church government as long as the missionary is sent out by and placed under the supervision of a particular church. If this is not done the one going out becomes a "walking levite" doing his work without proper authority . . . without the authority of the church and so also without the authority of Christ. Without that authority the word preached has lost its power and cannot be useful toward the extension of the church or Kingdom of God. Hence, the fundamental rule is that all ministry of the Word proceeds from the duly instituted church of Christ and whether one, therefore, labors in the ministry in a particular place or established church or whether he is sent into various fields to proclaim the gospel, he must labor and can labor only upon the authority of the church which sends him. The right to preach the gospel is vested in no individual.

It must be noticed yet that this article speaks of "church extension" work. Among us this is usually considered as referring to any form of home mission endeavor in distinction from foreign mission work or work among the heathen. Originally the article read "except he be sent to gather churches here and there" and referred to the gathering of the "refugees" whose churches had been destroyed through persecution and the gathering of believers in Romish lands. The original reading, therefore, was rather broad and sanctions the policy of sending men to gather believers from the erring and apostate church, as well as sending them into all the world to preach the Gospel. No matter what form of mission work may be practiced it must proceed from the church and otherwise it is not worthy of the name.

In conclusion it is worthy to note that Arts. 3-7 inclusive of our church order properly emphasize that the very authority which Rome vests in the person of the Pope is an authority which rightly resides in the church as the instituted body of Christ. The right to call, to ordain, to preach, to transfer to another pastorate is the right which Christ gives to His church and to her alone. When this right is removed the very foundations of order and decency are shaken and any structure built upon a tottering foundation will come to ruin though it may for a time appear mighty in the eyes of men.

G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US

Orders From Headquarters

In the November issue of *Concordia* the news item of Hull particularly struck our attention. Because the name of the undersigned was used in it, and because he with the people he served in Hull were put in the wrong light, we wish to comment on it now.

We quote the following from the item: "Most of our churches have gone and still are passing through a crisis, and there is much sad news in many of our churches as is well known to all of us and as has been published rather in detail in this paper, the *Standard Bearer*, or, *The Guardian*." And Hull also shared in this sad news. Here, too, we have had our ultimatums, —walkout, —action. By this time a sizeable part of our congregation has left us and meets separately on the Sabbath. And from all appearances and actions they are finished with us. They have chosen a consistory, have made a trio to call a minister, and the Rev. M. Schipper has labored here in Hull with the avowed purpose to widen the breach. They undoubtedly consider this church-destructive work as "building" the church. They call us the "schismatics," a term which so aptly applies to those who have left us and acted according to the instructions from "headquarters." However sad as this history may be we will not enter into any details at present. Besides, all was not sadness either. Furthermore, we are glad to know that our God in His providence does not only "uphold" all things but that His very conserving is at the same time "governing." And also for all these things we *all* must give account to Him Who judges righteously both the outward deed and the very motive of the heart." So far the article.

There is much in this paragraph on which we could comment which would make it as ridiculous as it really is. But the part on which I wish to reflect, as I said, has to do with the undersigned and the people whom he served for six weeks recently in the Hull area. Rev. Schipper, so it is said, "has labored here in Hull with the avowed purpose to widen the breach." Suppose, for a moment, that this were true. Why then didn't the Rev. De Jong come to see me and warn me of this "sin"? Why didn't he come up to me when he spoke to me one day while I was standing in front of the Post Office and call my attention to this "diabolical thing" my "avowed purpose to widen the breach"? Wouldn't that have been the way of brotherly love? The opposition is always talking about brotherly love, you know. But no, he must simply publish before all this

"nefarious action" of mine without making one attempt to correct me. If the Rev. De Jong should say that I was talking to others at that time and he didn't want to interfere, he certainly knew where I was staying, and could have talked to me alone. Yes, he even could have asked me by phone to come to see him. But all he said to me in the six weeks I was in Hull was "Good Morning." And mind you all the while it was not a good morning for him.

But maybe the Rev. De Jong would argue that it wouldn't have done any good to talk to Rev. Schipper because he was only there in Hull to follow up "instructions from headquarters." By the latter term I suppose he means, well, —what does he mean? He doesn't tell us where headquarters is located, nor who the persons are who run it. He simply concluded that Rev. Schipper with the congregation for which he preached had no mind of their own. They were the simple dupes of some commanding officer or officers stationed in another place.

Now that is not a very nice conclusion to make concerning a man who has a mind of his own and knows how to use it. And even if he was so simple as to be the dupe of an imposing "headquarters", what about those people in Hull whom he served? According to Rev. De Jong they must be dupes too. But I found them to be people who were not so simple as the Reverend would have you think. They are the dupes of nobody. I have never met people whom I could respect more for having minds of their own and knowing how to use them. It is true they are people who were afraid to do the wrong thing, and that is why they didn't reveal their stand any sooner than they did. They knew for the last three years at least that someone was trying to dupe them. Someone who used dictatorial powers to make them cease speaking their mind, someone who tried desperately to mold their minds into hatred for the *Standard Bearer* and persons who defended "unconditional" theology in the Protestant Reformed Churches. Someone, who when he did not succeed in this method, used the method of discipline on those who dared to disagree with what they heard from the pulpit. Of this, I learned the people in Hull were fully aware. They even knew that if they came to Classis with their grievances they did not have a chance. This they patiently endured for as long as they could stand it. And when finally that Classis rode rough-shod over all decency and order and made itself guilty of schism, they took their stand. Orders from headquarters? Oh no! And Rev. De Jong after being with these people for more than three years certainly knows better.

It seems to me that the writer of the news item from Hull gives vent to two emotions of his when he

he is rid of these "trouble-makers", and, he is sorry wrote as he did. He shows plainly that he is glad that for himself because in the whole mess which he brought upon himself he lost a flourishing congregation. As far as the undersigned is concerned, he is glad he could go to Hull and learn first hand of conditions which he could not possibly have imagined could exist in Protestant Reformed Churches. Mere rumor could not have convinced him. The split in Hull was not only necessary but it was also good. And the congregation for which he preached will prove this to all in due time when all the facts are known.

Protestant Reformed Split Spreads

Rev. Peter Van Tuinen writes under the above heading in his department of *The Banner* of November 6th. We will not quote his entire article, but only give you the thread of thought running through it.

He tells us there are "unfortunate developments in our somewhat estranged but near relative and close neighbor, the Protestant Reformed Churches, during the past months." The "rift in First Church, . . . has spread throughout the denomination, and has torn the Church beyond any apparent hope of repair."

"The hopelessness of the split is apparent from the fact that it will be impossible to hold a General Synod which will be composed of delegates representing both sides of the issue." According to the Reverend, because our Synod is composed of two Classes, and because one Classis is opposed to the stand of the other, and deems the other schismatic, no Synod will be possible. And this means that there can be no opportunity to appeal either the doctrinal or church-political matters involved.

He concludes with the following paragraph. "It is obviously not incumbent on an outsider to pass judgment on the merits of two opposing positions. But it is evident that something has gone wrong. The "Protestant Reformed Churches" as a whole has not had opportunity to speak its mind on the dispute. Nor, according to the precedent set in Classis East, will it be able to. One sector of the Church has declared itself to be the Church, thus closing the door to proper synodical action, and virtually cancelling the right of appeal. This looks like an overthrowing of the Church Order's safeguard against the fallibility of minor assemblies (Church Order, Article XXXI)."

In commenting on this article, we recall a statement of one of our ministers made in a speech at the last special meeting of Classis East. He made the statement to the effect that "the Church never splits, and we didn't have a split either." I shall never forget that remark, and I don't think others who heard it will either. It is true that individuals, and even churches

may leave a denomination of churches, but the church never splits. And this is exactly what has happened in the Protestant Reformed Churches. There are those who have separated themselves from us, but the church is still intact. And we will go on without them who have chosen to differ with us until they repent.

Rev. Van Tuinen is correct that we had only two Classes and that the one is now separated from the other, and therefore there will be no Synod in which the Schismatics will be able to appeal. This is not because we have no regard for Article 31 of the Church Order, as Van Tuinen suggests, but this is simply due to the fact that our Churches of the past were so constituted. If we were composed of three or more Classes as the Christian Reformed Churches are, this situation would not obtain. And we are sure that we will never be so composed again if and when the matters which are now troubling us are settled. Either we will have to go back to our original set-up of one Classis (without Synod) or, we will have to have three or four Classes if we would have a Synod.

One more remark in closing. Rev. Van Tuinen does not tell us that the Schismatic element in our Churches lost the right of appeal and recognition when they became schismatic. This may not be forgotten. Had the Rev. De Wolf and his elders submitted to the decision of the consistory and then appealed, that would have been their prerogative. But this they would not do. They continued their schismatic way. Had Classis West gone the church-political way instead of schismatically jumping the gun, the grievances it had might have come to Synod for disposition. But Classis West separated itself from the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and thus the faithful Church must go on without them. Those in the Protestant Reformed Churches that are not schismatic can live under the order of Article 31 of the Church Order. No doubt about that.

—M. Schipper

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IN MEMORIAM

The Priscilla Society of the First Prot. Ref. Church, Grand Rapids, expresses its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. G. Geers, who was suddenly bereaved of her husband,

GERRITT GEERS

on Monday, November 23, 1953.

May the God of all grace and comfort, console her heart in the knowledge that all things work together for good to the glory of His name and our salvation.

Mrs. H. Veldman, Pres.

Mrs. R. C. Ezinga, Sec'y.

CONTRIBUTIONS

PERTINENT QUOTATIONS FROM THE "DOGMATICS" OF REV. H. HOEKSEMA

It has become a rather common habit of the Rev. B. Kok to quote the Rev. H. Hoeksema as if this theologian taught a Dogmatics the warp and woof of which is, that faith is a condition of salvation. Now I have noticed all the while that brother Kok did not ever quote from the "notes" dictated by Rev. H. Hoeksema, dictated by the latter in class also to the Rev. B. Kok, who then was yet "but a student". Intellectual honesty would seem to dictate that such be done. However, the quotations given by Rev. Kok are calculated to leave a very wrong impression of the teaching of Prof. Hoeksema. And these wrong impressions may not go unchallenged by the facts.

I believe that I may say that I have sat at the feet of Rev. Hoeksema twice as long as the Rev. B. Kok. He sat at his teacher's feet but three years. I have enjoyed that singular privilege for six years. Maybe that is why I have "soaked up" a little bit more of his teachings than did brother Kok. At any rate, the latter has not had the graciousness to quote from these rather important and pertinent "notes" of our former and esteemed Professor.

I shall quote from time to time from the Dogmatic Notes given by Prof. Hoeksema during the early and happy years of our Seminary. They were then dictated in the Dutch language to the entire student body, and these were put by the students into mimeographed form. Rev. Kok has these notes in his possession unless he has lost them. If he has he can obtain a copy of the same from the undersigned. Then he can check up on my translation and findings. Let his and my motto be: *Epi Pasan Aleetheia!*

This time I wish to quote and translate the "Introduction" to the Fourth Locus of Dogmatics, Soteriology. (The doctrine of applied salvation) I shall first quote this introduction, and then I shall make a few observations.

I quote the following:

"Soteriology treats of the work of God, through Christ whereby He realizes His Covenant of Grace in the hearts of His elect people, by causing them to partake in the benefits of His Covenant, merited by Christ. With this belongs most naturally the treatment of the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) and the separate benefits, which God causes to come out and through Christ to His people.

"The point of departure for us should be, in the treatment of Soteriology what the apostle so beautifully expresses in Ephesians 1:3, 4. (quoted in Greek)

"For verily in this passage, first of all, it is emphatically stated, that all the spiritual blessings which are spoken of in Soteriology, come to us solely out of Christ and in fellowship with Him. The fact of the matter is, that God has blessed Christ as the Head of His Church, which is His body, and that by means of this blessing Christ He has also enriched His peo-

ple with all spiritual blessings.

"God has blessed Christ. He has pronounced His word of blessing (eulogia) upon Him. He has exalted Him on the ground of His perfect obedience and deep humiliation. He has raised Him out of the dead, clothed and filled Him with glorious, new and eternal life; Him He has exalted at His own right hand in heaven, and He has given Him power over all creatures in heaven and on earth. (quoted are Phil. 2:11, 12 and Eph. 1:19, 20)

"But there is more. He has also wrought the same great power in Christ, whereby He has raised Christ from the dead. (een eeneergeeken en too Christoo) So that the living operation of the life-giving and exalting power now also works in Christ Jesus as the Head of His Church. This God performed when He gave His Holy Spirit to Christ as the exalted Head of His Church, by which Christ became the Life-Giving Spirit. By this Spirit Christ constantly receives from the Father that quickening and exalting Divine energy, whereby He imparts the blessings of salvation to His Church bought with a precious price. In the receiving of the spiritual benefits spoken of in Soteriology the operation along the entire line from Regeneration to Glorification never proceeds from man. Where such is the case one is a Remonstrant. The Savior Himself bestows as the Mediator and Head of His Church all the spiritual blessings to those, who were given Him of the Father. (Quoted Acts 2:33; Eph. 2:8-10)

"Objectively God has given all the spiritual blessings to His people in thus blessing our Savior, for Christ is the Head and the Church is His body according to Divine appointment. The blessings that are given to the Head are already of the body, even though it be true, that they are not yet fully imparted to the body. For faith does not receive the salvation in Christ in piece-meal fashion, in order in that way to finally apply to themselves the full Christ. On the contrary, it appropriates the full Christ and in the fellowship of this full Christ, it constantly increases in a richer possession of the spiritual blessings, until we shall have attained unto the perfect fellowship of God's Covenant.

"These spiritual blessings, which the Church possesses objectively in Christ are wrought in her through His Spirit. (Acts 2:33 See above) He pours out the Spirit in the Church, dwells in her through that same Spirit, and causes the life-giving power of the resurrection and exaltation to work in her. Thus He imparts the Divine Grace to all His own. Since this grace is not imparted in the entire fulness at once, but in the way of a process and steps, therefore we can speak of the Order of Salvation in Soteriology.

"Furthermore, Ephesians 1:3, 4 also point out the deepest origin of the blessings of salvation for Christ and in Him for the Church to be: God's eternal election. He has blessed us in Christ even as He has elected us from before the foundation of the world. All things find their purpose and end in God's eternal Decree. God has willed to reunite all things in heaven and on the earth in Christ. It never was His plan and purpose to glorify and perfect all things in the first Adam. All things must be exalted in His Son. The Covenant must be perfected in Him, and all creatures must be united and exalted in heavenly glory under His dominion. All things in God's Counsel are subservient to this great purpose. And all things in time must serve that purpose, sin and the godless, the Devil and hell, including all the powers of darkness. For to realize that purpose God has willed to prepare for His people the deep way of suffering. Indeed the so-called Covenant of works is raised up with the first Adam but according to God's Decree and Adam's guilt the latter falls away and does not remain standing in that Covenant. God, however, causes His Word to stand, realizes His Counsel and maintains His Covenant. Of this better Covenant Christ is the Head. As such He has come to fulfill all things through His suffering and perfect obedience and as the Head of the Covenant now also realizes the spiritual Covenant by shedding forth the blessings of salvation in the Church.

"Only thus do we arrive in Soteriology to a right conception of things, and are we protected from all kinds of errors, which also press themselves to the foreground in this matter of applied salvation."

We would like to make a few observations here at this point.

First of all, notice that Rev. Hoeksema is not philosophical in his "point of departure" but that he is very exegetical throughout.

Secondly, that he hews the line of the "golden chain" of the Canons of Dort, tracing all things back to the fountain and origin, the will of God's Decree. And that, too, according to the Supralapsarian scheme of Ephesians 1:3-14.

Thirdly, that Rev. Hoeksema allows man no part in saving himself, even in the matter of applied salvation. He carefully maps out the course to avoid all Remonstrant conceptions. All is God's efficacious power in Christ.

Finally, that in this framework, as here set forth by Rev. Hoeksema, there is no room left for faith as being a condition, or prerequisite. It will be perfectly clear that faith was, for Rev. Hoeksema in 1928, simply the God-wrought means in Christ, whereby the blessings are imparted unto us even as God elected us in Christ unto holiness and blamelessness. Professor Hoeksema stood foursquare in the way of Dort in this "Introduction" to Soteriology, and he, being a careful builder, does not fall into the sin of Remonstrantism, which defines faith as a condition or cause and requisite.

Thus taught the Rev. H. Hoeksema in 1926-30, when Rev. B. Kok was yet a student! —G. Lubbers

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REPORT OF WESTERN LADIES LEAGUE

With enthusiasm and knowledge that we are continuing in the faith, the women of the Western League of Prot. Ref. Churches met in the auditorium of the Doon Church on Nov. 18. Meeting opened by singing a few Psalter numbers and prayer by our Vice-Pres., Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema and Scripture I Tim. 4 read. After a short business meeting, our speaker for the afternoon, Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, addressed us on the theme, "Continuing in the Faith." He brought out the following points. 1. What does that mean? 2. Why should we do that? 3. How should we do that? He first explained the term faith in the subjective and objective sense. Also brought out how false teachers brought out various false doctrines. Then brought out how the Prot. Ref. Church since 1924 interprets faith over against the error of the Three Points, and over against the error of the conditional promise of today. The faith that our text speaks of is Christ crucified, as it centers in the Cross of Christ, wherein we have total depravity, unconditional salvation, limited atonement, irresistible grace, preservation of the saints. That faith wherein we know that salvation is of the Lord, that God is God,

that God's grace is sovereign or particular, that the promise is particular. To continue in that faith implies that we have that faith, wherein we have the living spiritual knowledge whereby we hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, and also a hearty confidence that our sins are forgiven, and that then we cling to Christ and find comfort, having that gospel concerning salvation. Continuing in that sphere in which there is harmony between you and that object of the Scriptures it becomes manifest in your confession as believers, in your actions, in your walk of life. Walking so that the sovereign grace of God is revealed and you crucify your own human nature, etc. Why this is necessary; for the truth's sake, the church must maintain truth without exception because man is sinful, and if he once departs, he keeps going farther and farther from the truth. How this is done; essentially we cannot continue in the faith, we have nothing to boast but it is a gift of God. God causes us to continue through different means: 1. Means of grace, 2. Means of the League, first purpose to meditate on Scripture, 3. Means of Societies, 4. Means of personal Scripture study, 5. Means of instructing children, etc. "In so doing thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee". God grant it!

After the speech, Edgerton gave a musical number, then an offering was taken for the *Standard Bearer*. Our question hour was also conducted by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, questions having been brought in by various Societies. Hull gave a musical number, meeting was closed by singing the doxology and prayer by Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema. Lunch was served by the Doon Society, and so a very pleasant afternoon was spent.

—Mrs. Geo. Hoekstra, Reporter

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East will meet on Wednesday morning, January 6, 1954, at 9 o'clock at Hudsonville, Michigan. Will the Consistories resorting in Classis East kindly take note.

Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk

ANNOUNCEMENT

Our churches are, no doubt, acquainted with the decision of Classis East, "To request our churches to take up free-will offerings for a special fund in the present emergency in our churches to pay the traveling expenses of our ministers and candidates who preach in our vacant churches." "Also individual gifts and donations for this present need will be deeply appreciated."

Please send all correspondence to: Peter J. Lubbers, Box 276, Hudsonville, Mich.

All monies to: Richard Bloem, 4630 Riverbend Drive S.W., Route 5, Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Classical Emergency Finance Committee