

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

Aliens and Enemies Reconciled

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." Col. 1:21, 22

And you!

The Apostle is writing to the Colossians regarding the glorification of Jesus Christ as the exalted Head of the church.

Therefore he reveals to the church that this Jesus is according to God's election the Head of the body, the church. He became their Head through God's election. And by the same token He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead so that in all things He might have the preeminence. For so it pleased God that in Him all the fulness should dwell. And in Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven.

Now that reconciliation shall be fully revealed in the day of Jesus Christ. At that time it shall be manifested that all things which lay torn apart in the whole Universe, are harmoniously united again in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But its firstfruits are now and here. Because the Apostle says in my text: And you! The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ reveals that they are reconciled now already. God hath reconciled them through the death in the body of Christ. And that for the purpose that Jesus might present the whole Church to God as a holy commonwealth, unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight. This refers to the time when the Church as the Bride of Christ shall be manifested without spot and without wrinkle to the praises of the Triune God.

And you!

You are fully, completely reconciled.

* * * *

And you!

Who are you, apart from this word of reconciliation?

Well, the text gives us the answer, which is twofold. It says that we were at one time alienated and also enemies in our mind by wicked works.

What do these terms mean?

To be alienated from God means that we cannot possibly dwell in His presence.

It means that there is a great obstacle between us and God, and that obstacle is our sin and guilt.

Wherever God dwells there is light, the light of His own Being. And this light is the sum total of all that is good and virtuous. That light includes His justice and His holiness, His righteousness and His truth.

But we, the Church, have outraged these virtues of God through our sin and guilt. God's wondrous virtues forbid us to dwell in His presence.

And so we are aliens.

Moreover, we are enemies in our mind by wicked works.

It is not so that we stand far away from God in tears and sorrow because we would so gladly dwell in His presence.

Oh no, but we are entirely satisfied to have it remain so. We hate God. When He comes to us with His revelation we shout in wicked anger: Depart from me, O God! For in Thy ways I have no pleasure.

We are enemies of God in our mind by wicked works.

Behold the description of all the elect as we are by nature.

And here is the Gospel of my text: Christ reconciled us from that state and condition, and He reconciled us completely. That's the Gospel that is eternal.

That is, He took the obstacle out of the way which forbid us to commune with God the Father; and He entered our hearts in order to take away our enmity and hatred against God, making us His friends through regeneration and conversion, through sanctification and glorification.

That's the Gospel.

And you!

* * * *

The next question to be answered by the text is: How did Jesus do that?

In order to find the answer to that question it is perhaps

best to ask: what is that obstacle which keeps us from God's presence? What is required in order to be reconciled to God?

And here is the answer: the guilt of sin must be removed.

You see, God cannot and will not deny Himself. Reconciliation can only take place through satisfaction of the outraged virtues of God. Reconciliation must be wrought along the paths of justice and righteousness.

And the righteousness and the justice of God demand that the sinner pay for his sins and guilt. He must atone, or another must atone for him.

And atonement is first of all paying the price. And the price is death, eternal death.

But even then we have not said enough.

The devils and the reprobates pay too, but they never atone.

And here is the second element of atonement: you must pay because you love God so much. You must love to pay. It must be your rejoicing to pay the price of eternal death. It must be your meat and your drink to do the will of God even though this will would demand that you die the eternal death.

And if you can do that, then you can be reconciled to God.

But we cannot, and we will not do that!

But there is the Christ of God who not only was willing to do that, but who actually has done that.

He, that is, the Son of God in the body of His flesh went to hell for His sheep, and paid the price out of the pure motive of the love of God.

That is exactly the way you must say it.

The Son of God!

But in the body of His flesh.

The Son of God could not do it as the eternal Son of the living God, for God's nature cannot die the death. Neither did the Divine nature sin. That would not answer to the rigorous demands of Divine Justice.

And so we read that He, that is God's Son, did it, but in the body of His flesh, the flesh of the children whom He came to redeem and save.

And so everything is Divinely correct.

And so He could die the death like no other. For no one could do this terrible deed out of such a pure motive of love. He loved God as the Son of God.

And therefore He merited much more than a mere return to the first Paradise. His wondrous act of Divine love in redemption and salvation merits that we now are in the bosom of the Father with Him.

The everlasting Covenant of grace is realized through His wondrous dying.

And you!

* * * *

And you!

Are you ready to begin your eternal song of thanksgiving?

You ask me: Whom must I thank?

Must I thank Jesus, that wonderful Jesus who died for me?

That is the way some say it. But it is not true.

You must thank the Triune God for so great salvation.

And why?

Because the dying of the Son of God is the gift of God's heart. All these things of salvation are of God, of God Triune. The death of Jesus on Golgotha is the gift of His heart to you and to me.

You see, *God* needed not to be reconciled. *We* had to be reconciled. And Jesus did just that. He removed the obstacle that barred the way to God, an obstacle which we placed there in Adam. But the second Adam took it out of the way. And so we may boldly go to the throne of grace. The door of heaven is opened. Opened by God Himself.

Now we have the right again to live in His presence.

And this justification is also the ground for the removal of our enmity. He seeks out all those for whom He died two thousand years ago, and finding them, He enters their heart and removes the enmity and hatred against God. He reconciles us to God.

And you!

* * * *

And you!

Promiscuous you?

Oh no! You are the foreknown, the foreordained from before the foundation of the world. You are the chosen, the elect ones from all eternity. Your names are written in the book of life, and their number cannot be increased, nor decreased, no, not even by one man or woman.

And that becomes evident in time.

Some people go to church, and some do not.

Some people sorrow with a godly sorrow to God, and some say: what of it?

Some people love God and some hate Him.

What of these differences?

You see, Christ is very busy day and night. He is making saints of sinners. He is very busy making you holy and unblameable and unprovable in God's sight.

The first two estates are spiritual and the third is a legal estate.

He made you unprovable through His death and resurrection. There is now no more charge against you. Paul asks this question and there is triumph in his voice: who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? And the answer is: no one! All the guilt of sin is removed.

And He is very busy in making the church holy.

Holiness is that virtue where we are removed, cut away from sin and corruption, and dedicated, consecrated to that which is good, and that is God.

He did that principally when He came into your heart and renewed that heart. From then on you loved God, even though this love must for a time dwell in the midst of the movements of sin that still war in your regenerated soul.

And through sanctification He also makes you unblame-

able. And that is an ethical concept. It means that when He is through with that labor you will have no stain or spot on your whole being. It follows a process which shall not be completely finished until the day of Jesus Christ when in body and soul you shall be entirely beautiful and kind and good. Sons and daughters of God.

I know, I know that there are very many spots that still plague you and me. And God knows that too. But we hate our spots.

And when we in sorrow go and tell the Lord how sorry we are for the spots which still are found on our soul and heart against our will, then He tells us in deepest night: As a father pitieth his children so I, the Lord, pity them that fear Me! My child, I forgive all thy transgressions and I will continue to heal your soul from all spiritual diseases!

Jesus told many poor sinners while He sojourned among us: Be of good cheer, My son; be of good cheer, My daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee!

How great is that good which God has laid away for His children!

G.V.

IN MEMORIAM

With our fellow-deacon, Sierd H. Schaafsma, we express our heartfelt sympathy in the decease of his father

APA SCHAAFSMA

on July 6, 1954, and his grandmother

MARTHA SCHAAFSMA

on June 13, 1954, in Groningen, Netherlands.

His comfort in the hour of sorrow is derived from the knowledge that "our Almighty God and Faithful Father turns whatever evils He sends upon us, in this valley of tears, to our advantage." (Heid. Cat. q. 26, Romans 10:28).

The Consistory of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church
G. Vanden Berg, Pres.
J. Flikkema, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 12, 1954 our parents

MR. and MRS. PETER IPEMA

celebrated their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our gracious covenant Father for the years they might spend together, and above all for the training, instruction, and example they have given us.

May their remaining time together be filled with the peace that passeth all understanding.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Poortenga

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Ipema

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wierenga

Mr. and Mrs. James Triezenberg

Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. Ipema

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoving

Grace Johanna

Patheresa Jane

and 18 Grandchildren.

Oak Lawn, Illinois.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

"Aliens and Enemies Reconciled".....457
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

A Protest and Its Reply.....460
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Triple Knowledge (Part III — Of Thankfulness).....462
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS —

The Prophecy of Isaiah.....465
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of Romans 1:14-17.....468
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

"Walking in Error" (10).....470
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments.....472
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht (Art. 11).....474
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

Leave of Absence.....476
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

"A Pathetic Picture".....478
Rev. M. Schipper

CONTRIBUTIONS —

"The Farmer's Strawstack".....479
George Ten Elshof

EDITORIALS

A Protest and its Reply

From Mr. John Meninga of Kalamazoo, Mich., we received a protest which he had filed with his consistory, the former consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, with the request to publish it together with the answer he received from that former consistory.

This we propose to do, at the same time offering our comment on the answer.

The protest is rather brief but, in comparison, the reply is very lengthy. We deem it preferable, therefore to publish the material in installments, and let each installment be followed immediately by our criticism.

Here, then, follows the first installment of the protest and its reply:

"Protest to the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Mich.

"The undersigned protests against the consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church of Kalamazoo, Mich.

"That our delegates to Classis East which was held on Oct. 8, 1953 were not instructed that they had to stay by the truth, namely, by the Word of God, by the Confession, by the Church Order, and by the Declaration of Principles which give us an interpretation of the Protestant Reformed truth and of the confession, in the matter of the doctrinal dispute in the case of the Rev. De Wolf."

The answer of the consistory to this part of the protest reads as follows:

"A. In reply to your assertion that our delegates to the Classis held at Fourth Church in Grand Rapids on October 8, 1953 "were not instructed that the delegates had to stay by the truth and the church order in the matter of the doctrinal dispute in the case of Rev. De Wolf," the consistory would call your attention to two things:

1. That our delegates were instructed to do the very thing which you mention, namely, to stay with the truth and the church order.

a. The Classical credentials which are given to the delegates read as follows: "The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church, has appointed the brethren and elder We hereby instruct and authorize them to take part in all the deliberations and transactions of classis regarding all matters legally coming before the meeting and transacted in agreement with the Word of God according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as in harmony with our church order."

b. That, however, in the very Church Order itself, provision is made, on the basis of settled conviction that the classis or synod has erred or is proceeding on a course contrary to the Word of God and the Church Order, for those same delegates to differ with the decisions of a classis or a

synod without denying the truth or the church order. Article 31 of the Church Order reads: If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, *unless* (underscoring by the consistory this "unless" in the article does not bind every one to a decision of classis "until" it be proved contrary to the Word of God and the Church Order, but allows disagreement and unconformity with a decision without violation of the truth or the Church Order) it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles of the church order, as long as they are not changed by a general synod."

2. That when the delegates of the consistory disagreed with the classis in seating schismatic and improper delegates they did not leave the truth and the Church Order, but were exercising the right given them by the Church Order as it was their conviction that the Classis was doing the wrong thing as stated in their motivated negative vote."

Comment:

1. Indeed, the mandate of the delegates from Kalamazoo, according to the classical credentials, was that they should "take part in all the deliberations and transactions of classis."

But I am amazed that the delegates from Kalamazoo, through their consistory, had the sad courage to refer to this part of their mandate, for this important part of their mandate they never heeded. At least, as often as I was present at the sessions of classis, neither Rev. Knott nor his elder took part in the deliberations and discussions on the floor of the classis. They hardly opened their mouth at all. The Rev. Knott was member of the committee that produced the well-known majority Report in the De Wolf case. But I never heard from him one word in defense of his own report. As far as taking part in the deliberations was concerned, the Rev. Knott and his elder might just as well have remained in Kalamazoo.

Hence, I say once more that I am amazed that those delegates, through their consistory, have the sad courage to quote this part of the classical credentials.

They were unfaithful to a very important part of their mandate. For deliberations and discussions on the floor of the classis always precede and form the basis of the final conclusions.

2. The consistory's answer to the protest of Mr. Meninga also refers to Art. 31 of the Church Order. This has become quite a habit of late. It seems that, according to the interpretation of this article given by some, also by the consistory of Kalamazoo (what *was* the consistory), would leave a rather large loophole for the introduction of anarchy in the Church of Christ.

Let me quote the article:

"If anyone complain that he has been wronged by a decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal

to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a General Synod."

Notice that in this article:

a. Mention is made of cases of appeal. Say that one has been wronged by a consistory. He then appeals to classis. The decision of classis is to be considered settled and binding. But suppose that the wronged one still considers himself wronged and cannot agree with the decision of classis. Then, he can still appeal, this time to synod. If the synod agrees with the decision of classis, the matter is definitely "settled and binding."

b. But, you say, there is an exception to this rule of a decision being "settled and binding, for Art. 31 itself states very definitely that the matter shall be considered settled and binding "unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order." That is true. The question now is: when, and before whom is this proof to be submitted? The only possible answer to this question is: at the time when the minor and major assemblies meet and before them. Just consider once more the concrete case of an appeal. One considers himself wronged by a consistory. What will he do? Will he simply say that he is convinced that the consistory is wrong? Of course not. He will write a protest based on Scripture, the Confessions and the Church Order. In other words, he will furnish sound proof that he is right and the consistory is wrong. If his proof is not accepted as valid by the consistory, he will appeal to classis. The classis will examine his protest and its proof. If the classis also finds that his protest is not based on sufficient grounds and, therefore, agrees with the consistory, and the "wronged one" is not satisfied, he may appeal to synod and present his proof there. And if also the synod does not agree with him, he is at the end, and can either submit or leave the church.

One more question. What must one that considers himself wronged by a minor assembly do in the meantime, while his case is pending. May he go his own way, refuse to submit to the consistory, follow his own head and make open propaganda for his case in the church? By no means. That would be anarchy indeed. In that case, he would become the proper object of discipline. While he presents his proof, in the meantime, he must walk orderly and abide by the decisions of the ecclesiastical assembly concerned.

This is the meaning of Art. 31 and the proper way of appeal.

You say, perhaps, that we violated this very way and principle in 1924 when we refused to abide by the decisions of Classis Grand Rapids East? This is not true. Our case had been finished by the synod of 1924. They never condemned me, still less advised discipline, nor demanded that I sign the "Three Points." They declared me Reformed. Hence, Classis Grand Rapids East could not possibly have

the authority to demand that I express agreement with the "Three Points."

c. So much about Art. 31. But what about the interpretation by the former consistory of Kalamazoo? It exactly violates this article. It is anarchical. This is evident already from the introductory sentence: "That, however, in the very Church Order itself, provision is made, on the basis of settled conviction that the classis or synod has erred or is proceeding on a course contrary to the Word of God and the Church Order, for those same delegates to differ with the decisions of a classis or a synod without denying the truth or the church order."

Note the clause: "on the basis of a settled conviction that the classis or synod has erred." This surely is anarchy. It is surely in violation of the Church Order. One may differ on the basis of a settled conviction? That is pure subjectivism, individualism, pelagianism. That surely is not Art. 31. It does not speak of a "settled conviction" but of proof from the Word of God and from the Church Order. And proof is something far more objective than a "settled conviction." It is not something vague but very concrete. It is something that can be put black on white. It is something that can be submitted to the judgment of others, that can be accepted or rejected. And this is what Art. 31 demands.

This is the same corruption on which Kok has been acting for years and which always wrought havoc in the churches. I refer, offhand, to the case dealing with the Rev. H. Danhof, to the case of Byron Center, and, last but not least, to the case of his and De Jong's dealing with the Liberated in the Old Country. It is this same corruption which he tried to defend in the Superior Court in Grand Rapids.

This corrupt interpretation of Art. 31 is also evident from the sentence in the above quoted part of the answer by the former consistory which is put in parentheses: "This 'unless' in the article does not bind every one to a decision of classis 'until' it be proved contrary to the Word of God and the Church Order, but allows disagreement and un-conformity with a decision without violation of the truth or the Church Order." Note the intentional implication of this sentence. Classis or, in fact, Synod has made a certain decision. No one has ever proved, or even attempted to prove that such a decision is contrary to the Word of God or the Church Order. But "until" this is done or not done, nothing is settled and binding. Every one may go his own sweet way. Perhaps, someone has a "settled conviction" that the decision is wrong, but has as yet no proof for such a conviction. Perhaps, later he will try to find and produce proof. In the meantime, he may not be bound by such a decision. In fact, he may violate it "without violation of the truth or the Church Order" according to the answer of the former consistory!

We have still more about this part of the answer by the consistory.

But this must wait till our next issue.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM
PART III—OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 41

Chapter 3

Chastity (cont.)

And hearing this Word, and knowing his own sinful nature, he humbles himself daily before God, with the prayer of the publican on his lips, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." He implores the God of his salvation daily for the forgiveness of all his transgressions, also of the sin against the seventh commandment. And he implores his God in Christ Jesus our Lord for His grace and Spirit, that he may truly hear the seventh of the ten words, even in its prohibitive form, and heed its ever timely warning: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Hearing this Word, he will fight, by the grace of God, to keep his garments clean. He will flee not only from the actual sin of adultery, but from all that may lead up to its corruption. He will avoid and condemn all unchaste actions, whether in wedlock or outside; all uncleanness in speech or gestures, in dress and appearance, in pictures and literature. The young man will look for his future companion in life not in the movie or theater, not in taverns or roadhouses or on the street, but in the midst of the church. And the young woman will not let herself be found by an adulterous Philistine or Edomite, but seek the companionship of fellow believers in Christ. For it is absolutely essential for a Christian marriage that the bond of faith and of fellowship in Christ unite them and sanctify their union. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Well may our Christian youth constantly have this exhortation of the Word of God in mind as they seek their companions for life, lest they experience the sad consequences of disregarding this admonition when it is forever too late.

Positively, the seventh commandment instructs us to live in all modesty, chastity, and virtue, motivated by the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, whether in wedlock or in single life. It reminds us, as we contemplate it in the light of the gospel, that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We shall not make the members of Christ members of a harlot, nor defile the temple of God by bestial corruptions. When the Christian young man and woman have pledged their vows, and entered into the sacred covenant of matrimony, it shall be their aim to make their married life a reflection of God's covenant, of the relation between Christ and His church. The husband shall love his wife as his own body, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel. The wife shall respect and be obedient to her husband in Christ. They shall bear each other's infirmities, and forgive each

other's sins. They shall purpose together to bring forth the church of Christ in future generations, and bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. And thus they shall look forward in hope to the realization of the promise, when with their children they shall rejoice in the marriage of the Lamb, and Christ shall present His bride to the Father without spot or wrinkle in everlasting heavenly beauty.

LORD'S DAY 42

Q. 110. What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A. God forbids not only those thefts, and robberies, which are punishable by the magistrate; but he comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devises, whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor: whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandise, false coins, usury, or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness, all abuse and waste of his gifts.

Q. 111. But what doth God require in this commandment?

A. That I promote the advantage of my neighbor in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others: further also that I faithfully labor, so that I may be able to relieve the needy.

Chapter 1

Christian Stewardship

The eighth commandment, like the two preceding ones, is very brief: "Thou shalt not steal." Positively, this means that we shall love the neighbor for God's sake, in Christ Jesus our Lord, in his earthly possessions.

Although very briefly, the Heidelberg Catechism treats this eighth commandment rather completely and thoroughly, both from its prohibitive, or negative, and from its positive aspect. From the negative aspect it mentions that the eighth commandment forbids all direct stealing of theft, not only, but also all indirect stealing by tricks, deceit, wicked devices of any kind, and that moreover it forbids the principle of all these violations of the eighth commandment, which is undoubtedly covetousness. And finally, it explains that the eighth commandment also forbids all abuse or waste of the earthly possessions which the Lord gives unto us. Positively, the instructor of our Heidelberg Catechism explains that the eighth commandment requires that wherever that is possible and permissible, we shall seek the advantage of our neighbor, that we shall deal with our neighbor in regard to his earthly possessions as we desire to be dealt with by others, and finally, that we shall faithfully labor and take care of the needy.

When we read these answers of the Heidelberg Catechism, we cannot help but think that the world has changed not principally, but in form tremendously since the sixteenth century, when the Catechism was written. This is especially true of the last century, and more particularly of the last

few decades. When we consider the language of this forty-second Lord's Day, it looks to us as if it were written behind the counter of some little grocery store. It speaks of unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandise, false coins, *et cetera*. That is the way in which people used to steal, when the world and society had not yet assumed the gigantic measures it has today. People do not plug weights any more to steal a penny, or even half a penny. We have become too big for this. The world has become gigantic in industry, business, and commerce; and this requires gigantic stealing, as it is committed on a large scale today. But although the world has developed, and has become big in every respect, essentially it has not changed. Morally and ethically things have not changed one whit. All the troubles and unrest in society, the oppression on the part of those that are rich and the revolutions and strikes of those that are the poor, plainly testifies that the world is still motivated by that sin which leads to the violation of the eighth commandment in every respect. For this there is no cure except the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The form of society may change; the system of society may change from slavery to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, or even to socialism and communism; but no form of society can change the greed and covetousness that is in the heart of sinful man. You cannot cure a cancer by putting on a plaster. You cannot very well cure a well by washing the pump handle. And so you cannot cure the evils of society by changing the form, or even by legislation, as long as the root of the evil is in the heart of man. There is no cure except the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of His Spirit. Nevertheless, it is the calling of the Christian in the midst of the present sinful world to love the neighbor as himself for God's sake, also in respect to his earthly possessions. And this means principally that the Christian, whether he is rich or poor, regards himself and lives in the midst of the world as a steward.

This is undoubtedly the most fundamental principle of the eighth commandment. To this positive subject of Christian stewardship we must first of all call your attention. This principle implies, in the first place, that God is the only and absolute proprietor of all things, and that we, as His stewards, receive all things from Him. Negatively, this means that we do not desire or crave anything in our possession of which we cannot say that we acquired it of God. In the second place, Christian stewardship implies that the believer in Christ Jesus manages all his earthly possessions in the name of God and as before His face. He regards himself as in God's employ, and as His servant. And in the third place, it implies that as stewards of God we expect our reward, both in this life and in the life to come, from God alone.

These three elements we must briefly discuss.

God is the absolute and only proprietor of all things. He is such because He is the Creator of the heavens and

of the earth and of all things that are therein. He called them forth out of nothing. Apart from God's creative act there was nothing. He was not limited in His act of creation by some kind of material that existed and upon which He wrought creatively. All things are the product of His omnipotent will alone. He called the things that are not as if they were. Hence, as the Creator, God is the only proprietor of all things. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Ps. 24:1, 2. And in Ps. 50:7, ff.: we read: "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." The gold and the silver are the Lord's. And there is no capitalist that can claim any as his possession. In Joel 3:4, 5 we read of Tyre and Sidon: "Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Will ye render me a recompense? And if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head; Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things." And in Haggai 2:8 we read: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts." As the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, Who called forth all things out of nothing, God is the only and absolute proprietor of all things.

Besides, as the Creator He is also the sustainer and the governor of all things. From moment to moment He causes the creation which He formed in the beginning to continue to exist by His almighty power and providence. It is He that "sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." Ps. 104:10, 13-15. "Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good." Ps. 104:20-23, 27, 28. as if man were still in the state of his original righteousness,

And what is true of the brute creation is no less true of man. He also was created by God, and the Most High is his absolute proprietor and governor. And as a being that was created after the image of God, the Lord gave him dominion over the beasts of the field, over the fowl of the air, and over the fish of the sea, — dominion over all the works of God's hands in the earthly creation. In the first paradise He put man to keep and to dress the garden of Eden. He was God's friend-servant; and as such he stood as God's steward in the midst of the world. From Him and in His name he received the earthly creation in his trust and possession, not to do with it as he pleased, but to have dominion over it and manage it according to the will of God and to His glory.

Thus it was originally. But thus it is no more.

Sin entered into the world. This is often forgotten in the discussion of the eighth commandment, and the relation between man and his material possessions is often presented and as if man were still a steward of God with respect to his earthly possessions.

But this is not the case. There is no common grace. Neither can we speak of a common mandate. If there were, it would indeed mean that man in general, apart from the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is still a steward of God with respect to all things earthly. It would mean not only that God is still the proprietor of all things and that He dispenses all earthly possessions according to His sovereign will, but it would imply that man still recognizes God as the Lord over all things. To be God's steward implies, in the first place, that man has the *right* to his earthly possessions, that in the state of sin and guilt he still has the *right* to have dominion over all things in this world, and that God still gives him that right. This right belongs to the common mandate. But this is not the case with the sinner, that stands damnable before God. He has no right to anything. To be sure, God is still the proprietor and the ruler over all things in the world. He still causes the human race to develop organically, so that in the organism of the human race men are not all alike. He still governs all the earthly possessions of men, so that every man receives from Him whatever he calls his private property, whether he is rich or poor, capitalist or laborer. It is God, and God alone, that sovereignly dispenses to every man his earthly possessions. Communism, or socialism, in whatever form it may appear, is based upon a fundamental mistake, the denial that the human race is an organism and that it develops organically. According to Marxian socialism, which is the same as communism, men are all alike. The earth belongs to no one, or rather belongs to all. All and all possessions, all the earthly resources and goods belong to all men in common, and they should possess them all alike. But the human race is not an aggregate of individuals. It develops organically, and there is an organic distinction between the different members of the human race. It is impossible to

change that because God has ordained it so. But even apart from that, in a sinful world God is still the Lord. And He still dispenses to everyone his earthly property. But this does not mean that man in general, apart from Christ, has the right to anything in the world. Nor is it so that God in His grace bestows that right upon the reprobate sinner. Although man certainly exists, and must exist, for God's own purpose in the midst of the world, as long as it stands, he is no longer God's steward. He has no right to live in God's house. He has no right to have dominion over all things. He has no right to life itself. Apart from Christ he is under the wrath of God, and therefore under the curse. If you wish to speak of a common mandate, this is true only as far as the *must*, the obligation, to be God's steward in the midst of the world, is concerned. He must serve God with all things, also with his earthly possessions. He must have dominion over all things in the name of God. He must acknowledge God as the proprietor of all things. He must recognize Him as the one from whom he receives all things. But if you wish to include in the common mandate also the right of the sinner to his earthly possessions, you are mistaken. Man has that right no more. He is deposed as God's steward. He is discharged from the house of God. He may not even enjoy the privilege of serving God as steward with his earthly possessions.

But there is no more.

Not only does man in general, the sinner, damnable before God, in his state of sin in the midst of the world have no right to live in God's house and be His steward; but neither does he have the power and the will to be steward of God in regard to his earthly possessions. To a mandate belongs the *may*, the *can*, the *will*, as well as the *must*. But with the exception of the *must*, man has lost all the elements of his original mandate. He has no right to be the servant of God and to live in His house. But neither does he have the power, the ability, and the will to be God's steward. He may not, and can not, and will not, and cannot will to serve the Lord his God with all his material possessions. For he is dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil, unless he is regenerated by the grace of God. He is a rebel in God's house. As far as he is concerned, he dethroned the Most High and stands in enmity against Him. His mind is darkened, and his will is perverted, so that he does not know God, will never recognize Him, cannot serve Him and will not serve Him and cannot will to serve Him, least of all with the earthly possessions which the Most High bestows upon him. He is principally a thief, a thief with respect to God, and hence also a thief in relation to his neighbor. And therefore we must never speak of a general stewardship, or even of a common mandate, of the sinner in respect to his earthly possessions.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

Eliakim's request; Rabshakeh's reaction. Isa. XXXVI:11-20.

There now occurred an interruption in the blasphemous ranting of Rabshakeh that was caused by a request of Eliakim and his companions that he speaks to them in the Aramaic, seeing that they understood that language, and to refrain from speaking the Jewish tongue in the ears of the people on the wall, lest they be discouraged (vs. 11).

On the wall. — Here Hezekiah's troops would be standing on guard. Here a large number of people would assemble to see the ambassadors of the Assyrians and to hear their message.

Hearing their request, Rabshakeh was sorely disappointed and provoked, as could be expected. He had hoped for a different reaction. It was plain that Eliakim and his companions were unmoved. But might it not be different with the people on the wall? They were particularly vulnerable, as he had just heard Eliakim intimate. So he resolved to turn his attention to them. Why shouldn't he, seeing that, as he explained, his master had not sent him to speak to their master — meaning Hezekiah — but to the men that sat upon the wall that they might eat their own dung with them (vs. 12), meaning that, if they hastened not to surrender but continued to resist, they would soon be driven to that extremity by hunger.

But the king of Assyria, as Rabshakeh had just admitted, had certainly meant his message for Hezekiah. But Rabshakeh was now decided to work on the people on the wall. Evidently his purpose was to strike a breach between them and their king.

So bracing himself and crying with a loud voice in the Jewish language, he exhorts the people on the wall that they hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. His word to them is, that they must not allow Hezekiah to deceive them; for he shall not be able to deliver them. Neither must they allow Hezekiah to make them trust in the Lord, saying, Surely the Lord will deliver us: this city shall not be given into the hand of Assyria. They must not hearken to Hezekiah. If they do, they will be choosing disaster for themselves. How unspeakably foolish that would be, seeing that abundant life is theirs for the mere choosing. For let them consider what the king of Assyria is saying to them. His mandate to them is, that they make an agreement with him by a present, and come out unto him and eat every one of his vine and every one of his figtree and drink every one of the waters of his own well; until the king come and take them away to a land like their own, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards (vss. 13-17).

This was the policy with the Assyrians and later with the Chaldeans. They transported the natives to another district of the empire and put others in their place, purposing thereby

to quiet the conquered peoples and to destroy in them the hope of regaining their land and freedom by revolution.

Lest Hezekiah tempt them by his insistence that the Lord will deliver them, Rabshakeh asks them to consider whether any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of the hand of his king? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of his hand, that Jehovah should deliver Judah out of his hand (vss. 18-20)?

The logic here seems to be flawless and must have so impressed the apostates on the wall.

No god of all the nations has been able to deliver his land out of the hand of Assyria's king. If all the other gods are that impotent, why not Israel's God just as well? Why should He be the lone exception? Isn't it sound reasoning to conclude that he can no more deliver "the city" than the other gods were able to deliver their lands out of the hand of his master, the king of Assyria? And this leads to the conclusion that his master is *the* God that doeth all his good pleasure, and that, as compared with him, all the other gods, including Jehovah, are vanity. Sennacherib is *the* god. If they serve him, they shall eat the good of *his* earth; but if they be unwilling, they shall be devoured by *his* sword. For *his* mouth has spoken it.

The apostates on the wall may say that this is good logic, a real scientific thought process. But it is not the truth. It is *the* lie. Jehovah, Israel's God, is the one exception. He is God and none else. All other gods are vanity.

The king of Assyria was dreaming the dream of the anti-christ, whose type and forerunner he was — the anti-christ, that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 11:4).

As to Eliakim and his companions, they kept silence and answered Rabshakeh not a word. Such had been the instructions of Hezekiah. And with reason. Their silence told Rabshakeh, better than words could, that they despised his proposal and that his blasphemies grieved and horrified them. But should they not have pointed out to him his great sin? Then they would have been casting pearls before the swine. For Rabshakeh knew that he was blaspheming the true God. His people had been living too close to Israel for him not to know that. Through all the ages of the past the Lord had demonstrated through all His marvelous works that He is *the* God. The Lord will rebuke Rabshakeh and his master.

Hezekiah laments; He implores Isaiah to pray for them and is comforted. Chapter XXXVI:22—XXXVII:7.

Eliakim and his companions came to Hezekiah with clothes rent and reported to him the words of Rabshakeh (vs. 22). When he had heard, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of God. Besides, he sent a delegation to Isaiah including Elia-

him, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests. They came to the prophet covered with sackcloth (27:1, 2).

And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, and of rebuke, and of derision: for the children are come to the birth — Hebrew; to the mouth of the matrix — but there is no strength to bring forth (vs. 3).

Day of distress. — they had reference to the hopelessness of the plight of the “city” from a human standpoint, and to their great anguish of soul that the contemplation of the plight caused them.

It was a day of distress indeed. The whole land of Judah was now overrun with Assyrians and the city was surrounded with them. If the Lord did not step in to save the “city” by a wonder of His grace, they were lost, doomed to perish, like a woman in travail that, for want of strength, cannot bear, bring forth the child of her womb, is doomed to death. Such was now their lamentation, their confession and their plea before God.

Of rebuke. — the great distress was the rebuke, i.e., it was a word of God to the effect that He was chastening them for their sins by the Assyrian, the rod of His anger (10:6).

Of derision. — The terrible blasphemies of Rabshakeh, the likes of which they had perhaps never before heard. As an expression of their grief and amazement they rent their garments.

The children are come to the birth. — To discover how this metaphor is to be applied is not easy. The figure as such is plain. It is that of a woman in travail, who, for want of strength, all of which has been spent in her labors, cannot bear the child of her womb, though it is brought to the mouth of the matrix. Doubtless the matter signified is, that Jerusalem, like the woman in the figure, must perish, unless the Lord Himself, by a wonder of His grace, saved the city. This is a good explanation. It is true to fact. Jerusalem’s plight was hopeless. The Lord must act or the city is lost.

But there may be more truth concealed in this figure. But for the present, we won’t explore it any further.

We have yet to take notice of Hezekiah’s petition to the prophet. It reads, “It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left (vs. 4).

It may be. — As coming from the king this was not a form of speech by which he voiced doubt as to whether the Lord was actually willing to send deliverance. But he was humble and contrite. The conviction that he and his people had by their sins forfeited the Lord’s help was strong in him. Hence his, *It may be*.

It grieved him that the Assyrian had reproached, scorned, derided the living God. Loving God, he couldn’t stand it that such befouling of God’s name, that alone is glorious, go unrebuked.

This did not mean that he cared little whether the Lord save *him* and the “city,” if only He rebuked the blasphemer.

That was not his attitude. It could not be. For if he was to see God in the land of the living, sing praises to His name forever — and that was the desire of his heart — he and the “city” had to be saved. But rebuking the blasphemer was to save the “city,” so that in praying for the former the king was at once praying for the latter.

Though the Lord already had promised to heal him and to save the city, he again asks, for he had need of being reassured, seeing that it was a day of distress and of rebuke. That blasphemer had since appeared upon the scene, and he had need of telling the Lord about him.

We must now attend to the Lord’s reply (vss. 6, 7).

The Lord had the prophet tell Hezekiah that he must not be afraid of the words that he had heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria blasphemed him; that by a report that the king would hear, the Lord would cause him to resolve to return to his own land (Hebrew — put a spirit in him), where he would fall by the sword (vss. 6, 7).

To understand what is recorded in the verses that follow it must be born in mind that while Rhabsakeh and the army under him was laying siege to Jerusalem, his master Sennacherib was warring against Lachish and later against Libnah a Canaanite city. What it meant is that at the time the king of Assyria had two armies in the field, one at Lachish and Libnah under his own direct command and another at Jerusalem under the command of Rabshakeh.

It must have been while Sennacherib was occupied with the siege of Libnah, that he received a report — it may have been a mere rumor — that Tirhakeh the king of Ethiopia was on the march to do battle with him (vs. 9a). This was the fulfilment of the first part of the promise of deliverance, “And I will cause him to hear a report (or rumor).” For the text states, “So Rabshakeh returned” (vs. 8a), that is, under orders of Sennacherib, it must have been, he lifted the siege of Jerusalem and returned to his master with his whole army to help him against the new oncoming foe. He had heard that his master had departed from Lachish and was now warring against Libnah. Here is where he also found him (vs. 8b).

Though the text of the Scriptures does not literally state that Rabshakeh returned with his army, yet this is plainly implied, it seems to me. First there was the promise to God’s distressed people that Sennacherib would hear a rumor (vs. 7a). Then we read, “So Rabshakeh returned (vs. 8a). Why did he return? The following verse (vs. 9) gives the answer. For he (Sennacherib) heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee.” This was the rumor that Sennacherib was to hear. The implication is certainly that it caused him to send word that Rabshakeh immediately lift the siege of Jerusalem and hasten to join his forces to those of his master for the impending war. Whether this war was actually fought is not known. The rumor may have been a false one. Yet it had served its purpose.

So was Jerusalem now delivered. But might not Sennacherib return with his whole army when the Ethiopian menace had been removed? Such must have been his intention. But he also must have reasoned that he would not have to return at all to fight against Jerusalem, if only he could still make Hezekiah see that, in view of the hopelessness of his plight, voluntary surrender of the "city" was the only sensible course for him to pursue. If Hezekiah could only be persuaded. Sennacherib decided to make another attempt.

So he assailed Hezekiah with another barrage of blasphemies. He sent messengers to tell him that he must not allow his God to deceive him by saying that Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hezekiah must have heard what the mighty kings of Assyria had done to all the lands by destroying them utterly; shall he be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them that his fathers in the throne destroyed, such as Gozan and Haran and Rezeeph and the children of Eden that were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arphad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Iva (vss. 10-13)?

Having received and read the letter, Hezekiah took it with him into the house of the Lord, where he spread it before His face (vs. 14).

It was a meaningful act expressive of the posture of his heart as this comes out in the prayer that he now utters (vss. 15-20).

The petitioner sets out with acknowledging that the Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwells between the cherubim, is the God, even He alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. And the evidence? He has made heaven and earth (vs. 16).

This is his confession. Made under the constraint of a living faith in Christ's God, it forms the foundation of the rest of his prayer.

Let the Lord incline His ear and hear; let Him open His eyes and see all the words of Sennacherib that he has sent to reproach the living God (vs. 17).

This is praise in the form of a request. It is thus a declaration of faith that the Lord does hear and see, He being the living God, and that He will surely rebuke all revilers of His name. And so the petitioner also wants it. Such is his request. For the love of God is in his heart.

True it is that the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the lands and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire. But this only proved that they were no gods, that they were the work of men's hands, wood and stone. That is the reason for their having been destroyed (vss. 18, 19).

But the Lord is not wood and stone. He is *the* God.

Let Him therefore save them from Sennacherib's hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that He is the Lord, He only (vs. 20).

So does Hezekiah, under the impulse of God's love in his heart, take God's side over against Sennacherib and all

the idols of the nations. The Lord therefore by the mouth of the prophet let him know immediately that He will save him and the city.

G.M.O.

CHURCH NEWS

2nd of GRAND RAPIDS — Reverend M. Schipper has accepted the call extended to him. He will be installed on the 2nd and will preach his inaugural sermon Sunday morning, September 5.

HOLLAND — Reverend J. McCollum has begun his labors with us following acceptance of our call. His examination will be held in the October session of Classis.

SOUTH HOLLAND — The Consistory selected the following Trio: Reverends G. Vos, C. Hanco and G. Vanden Berg.

HULL — The following Trio was selected by the Consistory: Reverends G. Vos, C. Hanco and G. Lubbers.

RANDOLPH — The Consistory, in behalf of the Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin, wants to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped her during the period when she was without a minister and undershepherd. For almost six months, Randolph was dependent upon ministers who faithfully fulfilled their Classical appointments, students, and candidates, who supplied her pulpit. In all this time — especially during the trying period of the controversy and the preparation for scheduled court hearings, Randolph, with only one or two interruptions, was supplied by those who came and ministered the Word and the Sacraments. For this, we are most grateful — that our need was supplied in spite of distance, inconvenience, and inclement weather, at times.

We also wish to thank our Moderator, the Rev. G. Vanden Berg and the Consistory of Oak Lawn Church; the Rev. Vanden Berg for his untiring labors among us and the Consistory of Oak Lawn which graciously made him available to us in our need.

Once again, as the Lord has been pleased to send us a pastor, it is our prayer that we may experience the faithful and fruitful ministry of the Word — even as in the days of our former pastors, and that the Lord be pleased to keep us — Pastor, Consistory, and Congregation, faithful to the high and holy calling whereunto He has called us.

The Consistory, Protestant Reformed Church
Randolph, Wisconsin.

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NOTICE

Classis West will meet, the Lord willing, Wednesday morning, 9 A. M., September 8, 1954, in Doon, Iowa. The consistories are kindly requested to consider this as an official notification.

Rev. H. Veldman
Stated Clerk of Classis West

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 1:14-17

No one can preach the Gospel of Christ except he be called of God; only when one is separated unto the Gospel of Christ can one stand in strength, can he be fearless in the knowledge that God is with him.

Such is Paul's constant boast. He never magnifies his own person, but he constantly magnifies his office. By virtue of this office he is called to serve God in his spirit in the preaching of the Gospel. And his being a debtor is especially to the Gentiles. He is a chosen vessel of God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. God wrought effectually through him unto the Gentiles. He labors in the consciousness of being a debtor to the Gentiles, whether they be Greeks or Barbarians, whether they be learned in the knowledge of the schools or whether they be unlearned men. Paul is called of God to preach to every class of men amongst the Gentiles. For the Son of God gathers His church out of the whole human race, elect unto everlasting life in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.

And what is more Paul is not ashamed as far as he is concerned at all of the Gospel of Christ.

Of this wonderful boast of Paul in the Gospel of Christ we will see more specifically in the Scripture passage which we have chosen for the next two issues of the Standard Bearer in this rubric — "From Holy Writ."

This passage we translate as follows: "*Unto the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unlearned a debtor I am. Thus according me the purpose is also unto you who are in Rome to preach. For I am as respects myself I am not ashamed upon the Gospel of Christ. For power of God it is into salvation for every one believing, the Jew first and also the Greek. For righteousness of God in the same in uncovered out of faith into faith, even as is written: the just shall live out of faith.*" Romans 1:14-16.

Paul tells the readers in this passages in a series of reasons why he, as an ambassador of Christ, is not ashamed of the tidings that he brings. He does this in a series of reasons, each introduced with the particle "for," "gar" in greek. This series goes as follows:

1. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ — for *power of God* unto salvation it is.
2. Power of God unto salvation it is for righteousness of God is revealed in the same out of faith into faith.
3. And since the Gospel is such power unto salvation, such an efficacious message, Paul is not ashamed of it, yea, he is exceeding willing to press himself into the service of Christ, even in Rome. He has nothing to lose but is always the victor. He will thus surely confer some spiritual blessing in the church to their confirmation in the faith, and mutually be comforted together with the believers in the one faith.

Let us attempt to see a bit more of this.

First of all, we believe, it is necessary to state clearly what the idea and content of the Gospel is. As to the idea of the Gospel we may learn from the term in the greek that it means: good message. The term is euaggelion. It is the good message of God to poor sinners in all their poverty and wretchedness, their blindness and hopelessness, their being dead by reason of their trespasses and sins, children of wrath even as the others. For such it is glad-tidings of the good things of God's Covenant, the new Testament in Christ's blood. Since the content of the Gospel-tidings is always again this covenant of grace, this new Testament in Christ's blood, written not upon the tables of stones, but upon the tables of the heart through the Spirit of Christ, it is called the Gospel of Christ. Its whole subject matter is Christ the Messiah, prophet, priest and king. He is Christ Jesus, the Crucified One. The subject matter of this Gospel is briefly summed up in the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Gospel revealed by God Himself in paradise, afterwards proclaimed by patriarchs and prophets, portrayed in the shadows and ceremonies of the law and finally fulfilled in God's Only Begotten Son in our flesh. Thus, in one grand sweep, Paul views the Gospel unto which he has been separated for many years in Romans 1:1, 2, where we read: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ a called Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which *He before promised* through the prophets of Him in Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who became out of the seed of David according to the flesh, but was set forth the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification out of the resurrection of the dead." Such is the Gospel has in mind when he speaks of the Gospel of Christ.

Now this Gospel, this glad-tidings in Christ is a power of God into salvation.

The question is: what does Paul here have in mind when he speaks of salvation?

We believe that the term "salvation" (soteria) refers really to the whole of the work of Christ for us on the Cross. Yea, to this work of Christ not only on the Cross, but also for us in His resurrection, ascension, and glorified state in heaven, as the Christ who is our prophet, priest and king in heaven. Salvation is then what Christ does for us and also *in us*, that is, in our hearts now, and what presently will be finished in the resurrection. Christ is our Savior. He will save his people from their sins. He is indeed our Soter. His salvation implies then:

1. That He delivers us from the deepest woe of our sin and death, our guilt and shame, our sin and corruption. He breaks the power of the devil in us as our adversary at law, and also breaks the works of the devil in us, sin's dominion. Both legally and ethically we are set free.

2. Positively, He is our Savior in that He makes us full of His grace, writing His law in our hearts! He makes us sincerely willing to live before and unto Him, and assures us that He will continue to perfect His work in us until in the ages to come we shall stand before Him without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Such is the salvation of which Paul here speaks.

In this Scripture passage Paul emphasizes that the Gospel is *power of God into salvation*.

Notice the following here:

1. Firstly that the Gospel is here viewed then not as to its content, but that the *content*, the message of the Gospel is *efficacious power*, as it confers, breaths and infuses the believers in such a way that it is unto salvation.

2. That the idea is not simply that the Gospel-message of all that is in Christ in us and for us, is simply leading us unto, *up to* salvation, but rather that it leads us *into* (eis) salvation. It leads the believer *more and more into all the mysteries and glories* of Christ. It is the picture of the oak tree that sends its roots down-ward and its mighty branches upward. And thus it causes us to be comforted in the only comfort in life and death in all the works of Christ for us and in us now, and in the hope of the future glories that abide.

3. That this Gospel message is such because it is simply *power* of God. The original does not read "*the power of God*. The apostle does not wish to single out this power here in distinction from other power, but rather wishes to *describe* this power as he *predicates* into the Gospel. The Gospel as means of grace is a power, it is *efficacious*. It is *Divinely* efficacious! There are other manifestations of the power and Divinity of God in the works of God's creation. That too is God's power. But it is not a power that is efficacious *into salvation*. That is only true of the Gospel; it alone is power into salvation. It is a most positive, healing, correcting, instructing, admonitive power because it is life-giving and life affording power. As a power it is in no wise dependant upon the preacher who brings it. It is solely a dynamic which finds its energy in the Dynamo—God in Christ! Thus our fathers spoke of the wonderful Mystery of faith that it is worked by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel!

Of such a Gospel Paul is not ashamed. The need of shame is never to be based and founded upon what the Gospel in its implicit nature, whereas it is most efficacious in enlightening the sin darkened mind and bending the will. True, we cannot trace out this work of God, we cannot fully comprehend this dynamic of the Gospel. But such it is according to the clear testimony of Scripture, and we believe it to be thus!

Now notice that the Gospel is not such a power in the hearts and lives of all who hear it proclaimed. It is such not for every Jew and Gentile to whom God in His good-pleasure sends the Gospel. The text says that the Gospel is such power in "every one that believes."

Notice the following matters in this connection:

1. That one cannot paraphrase the text in the following manner and retain the sense of the Spirit in this passage. One cannot thus paraphrase as follows: "the Gospel is a power of God into salvation for *every one, if they believe*." First of all, if Paul had meant to express it thus he could

have stated it thus. He did not. That should command our greatest alertness to try to see what the meaning of the Spirit is in this text. Then, too, it should be obvious that in thus paraphrasing the text we would exactly have a Gospel of which a preacher is ashamed, because it has a conditional power. It is power of God only—if we believe. To say that it is a power of God *in me*, if I believe, is another matter. Then it makes my believing an indication that God's power is in me. But I cannot say that the Gospel is *a power of God*, if we believe. We therefore cast this possibility aside as so much corruption of Scripture.

2. That the text says that the Gospel is a power of God in every one believing is very noteworthy.

a. In the first place, because it is the *entire truth* of the Gospel on this point. It does not simply state what the believer must *do*, nor what the believer *actually does*, but it includes both what the *object* of the power of God in the Gospel is (believing *one*) and what he *actually does by virtue* of being such a *believing one*.

b. Secondly it expresses that the believing one is exactly a believing one because of this power of God, the Gospel of Christ. Exactly because the Gospel is *power of God into salvation*, the believer is a believing one. Such one has the Spirit of Christ.

c. Thus too we see the folly, not to speak of the refined error, of the statement that the text does not say "elect," every one that is "elect." I grant the formal fact, but I deny the implications! One must then not come with the lame-duck reasoning that this has "nothing to do with election." One does not speak thus who has seen the genius of the Canons of Dort! Exactly the elective grace of God is the guarantee of the power of God into salvation of *every one* believing! For this grace makes believers; the preaching makes believers as power of God and also causes these believers to persevere in the faith. Kept in the power of God we are through faith by the power of God, the Gospel that is efficacious!

(to be continued)

G.L.



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 11th our dear parents,

MR. and MRS. OTTO VANDER WOUDE

hope to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary, D.V.

We are thankful to our God who has seen fit to give them to us and our prayer is that He may bless them in the way that lies ahead and that they may experience that there is no peace apart from God.

Their grateful Children:

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Redder
Mr. and Mrs. William Corson
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Byker
John Vander Woude
and 4 grandchildren.

936 Prince St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN HIS FEAR

Walking in Error

(10)

Twice, under oath in the Superior Court of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rev. Kok stated that he considered it to be immoral of the Rev. H. Hoeksema to change his church political views since the court case began.

In the Concordia of July 15, 1954 he dared to write that the Rev. H. Hoeksema would "rather sacrifice the truth than to give up his claim to the properties."

These brazen lies have forced us to expose more of his false testimony under oath in court. We do so reluctantly. Would to God it were not necessary. We have no desire to quarrel with him personally and find no joy in exposing his walk of error. But the honor and good name of the Rev. Hoeksema demands it and the honor and good name of the Protestant Reformed Churches which Rev. Kok still claims to represent demands it. Nor may we allow Protestant Reformed membership to be deceived by it.

Rev. Kok makes bold and evil statements without one iota of proof (or does he intend to give us, pretty soon, some more partial quotations, as he did in court, to make it look like what he wants it to look?).

We will give, as in the past, cold, hard facts that cannot be denied.

First of all, let it be borne in mind that all his talk about the autonomy of the local congregation and all his appeal to '24 were entirely out of place in this court trial.

It is not a question, and it was not a question in the court room, as to whether the consistory of autonomous First Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan can be penalized and have its property taken away from it because it did not abide by the decisions of a broader gathering. That was 1924. This time the consistory accepted the advice of the Classis. It is rather a question, first of all, as to whether a group in the autonomous consistory may refuse to submit to the discipline of that consistory and then set itself up as the consistory and claim its name. Remember — Oh, how Rev. Kok et al like to have you forget — June 1 when the autonomous, local consistory of First Church decided by majority vote that Rev. De Wolf and the elders who supported him should apologize or be suspended. They refused to submit to this ruling and set themselves up as the consistory instead, and claimed the name. Rev. Kok was wise enough not to try to defend a thing like that in court. He knew, and his tactics evidence that he knew, that no such case could stand. So he tried with all the rest, no doubt with their attorney's advice, to turn the attention away from this matter and rather to the autonomy of the local church. Is that also why these engineers of the Schism of '53, who had been waging the "Hate Hoeksema" campaign, hired for their

lawyer one who opposed the Rev. Hoeksema in 1924? Why did they have to hire for lawyer one who did so much harm to the Protestant Reformed constituency in 1924? Could they not find a lawyer that would suit the case better? Why did this one fit so well, if they love the Protestant Reformed churches? He did us much damage then. Are they seeking a repitition?

And Rev. Kok knows that the Rev. Hoeksema stated time and again, also under oath in court, that he has only a few years to live and that he is not interested in the "brick." But he is very much interested in the name, Protestant Reformed Churches; which name Rev. Kok dragged in the mire in the Netherlands. Let us readers, especially those out West, remember that the advice of the late Prof. Holwerda in that letter was exactly that the Liberated should join our churches if they were allowed, and then from within destroy our churches by spreading the Liberated literature of the Covenant and of Conditions and to "help disseminate the dogmatical wealth of Holland in the Protestant Reformed Churches." What dogmatical wealth? The Conditional Promise of De Wolf, the Prerequisite of our act of conversion to enter the kingdom etc. etc. And Rev. Kok stated on the floor of our Classis in May, that he does not remember ever writing Prof. Holwerda to set him straight on these things. And when, as Classis, we asked him to publish what he told his consistory and congregation about that letter, he refused to give the promise that he would. He refused to give the Rev. H. Hoeksema the permission to publish it. Was he afraid to have the people in the Netherlands read it?

Does he care about the name Protestant Reformed? He does only in as far as he feels that it is necessary in order for him to keep the property which he knows he IS going to lose. HE said repeatedly in court that no one could take their property away and that no one would. The Rev. Hoeksema never spoke that way. Who is after the property, Rev. Kok?

Besides, no one ever said that these men did not have the right to form their own denomination, since they could not agree with the decisions of Classis East. Had they done that and chosen their own name, we could have friendly relations with them. Now by assuming our name, *they* made the court case necessary to secure the name. That is what we are after. To that name we have a right. And only by a civil court can we obtain that. Now they have forced us into the position wherein we now find ourselves: opposing each other.

In the second place the whole property matter rests, not on the Rev. Hoeksema's interpretation of the Church Order, nor on the interpretation of anyone else, but on the fact that autonomous, local churches drew up articles of incorporation in which they specified that the properties belonged to those who remained loyal to the Protestant Reformed Churches. By this the civil courts will be governed.

But let Rev. Kok not sacrifice the truth for a claim to

the properties. Let him publicly declare—he may use our department for it—that he is going to defend his stand, *also after the court case is settled*; that he is not going to change his church political views to save the brick for some of his colleagues; and that if they try to behave differently from what he maintained in court under oath, he will register his negative vote after fighting tooth and nail against them.

Let us explain.

Rev. Kok testified under oath that the local church can retain the name of the denomination after disagreeing with the Classis and after either being put out or after leaving the association. It, the local autonomous church, cannot be penalized any further than to be put out of the association, if it disagrees with the decisions of the broader assembly. It may not be deprived of its property. What is more, as a local, autonomous church it was incorporated as a Protestant Reformed Church, and it cannot be penalized by the Classis by having this name taken away. As he said, his group in Holland may still call itself the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan. He maintains this even though his consistory refuses to abide by the decisions of Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Under oath he said things along this line.

Does he intend to practice it?

Then HE has changed his church political views SINCE LITIGATION BEGAN as he accused the Rev. Hoeksema.

We can prove that!

He simply states it of the Rev. Hoeksema.

We will prove it.

Undersigned's consistory has in its files a letter signed by this Rev. Kok in which we are addressed as the "Hope Protestant Reformed Church."

Why the quotation marks, Rev. Kok? Why do you say with these quotation marks that we simply call ourselves this but actually are not? Why do YOU take the name away from us. Let us assume that you men in what you called the reconstituted Classis East are the real Classis East. This you surely are not. And Judge Taylor told you that you are not, and you know this. People out West please take note! He had some very uncomplimentary things to say also about that which calls itself Classis West and is not Classis West. Rev. Gritters will never forget what he said. More of that later. And it is ALL in the court records. Better not appeal to the Supreme Court, for then it will all be published. It should be anyway.

But let us assume that this group is the real Classis East and our congregation wants nothing to do with it. (You do not have to assume that last part. That is a fact). But such is the situation then. Our congregation is not split. A few families asked to be dismissed from us. But there is no one else that claims to be the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. There is no other body that claims to be the consistory of the

Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Why, Rev. Kok, did you address us as though we have no right to that name?

Did you change your church political views since the court case began?

Let us for argument's sake assume that you could win the court case, when the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan has ruled two or three times EXCLUSIVE OF '24 — which, as we said, does not fit here — in our favour, in far stronger cases than yours. But should you win, could we call on you, Rev. Kok to get on the witness stand to maintain that we could still keep the name, Hope Protestant Reformed Church? Or would you change again by that time?

Would you tell those who would like to get our property that it is immoral? Would you uphold the autonomy of THIS local church?

And, Rev. Kok, what advice HAVE you already given to a group in another one of our churches where the consistory is intact, where no split occurred, certain members of which church make a *long* trip to you for advice and even for services on Sunday, which members in their folly are worried about who will play the organ for them when (????) they get the property? Did you tell them that in the autonomy of the local church, this consistory may retain the name and the property? Is that why these members do not take their names off the role? Why are they waiting to separate themselves from that congregation until there is a decision from the court? Have you advised them to wait?

Be honest, Rev. Kok, and tell the whole world that you stick to your church political views which you presented under oath in court. Tell all those who come to you for advice that the local autonomous churches may retain the name, Protestant Reformed, and that therefore when their articles of incorporation read that the properties belong to those who remain faithful to the Protestant Reformed Churches, these local autonomous churches shall retain their property, regardless of which Protestant Reformed Classis and which Protestant Reformed Synod it is to which they belong. For you claimed in court that you could also have that name; and you call yourselves such.

Do not sacrifice the truth for a claim to the property, Rev. Kok.

You suffered much for the Protestant Reformed cause when you were our missionary, Rev. Kok. And for that you have your reward. But what has made you change so radically from those days?

We understand that your intense hatred toward the Rev. Hoeksema moves you to accuse him of sacrificing the truth for a claim to the property. But will you tell us what moves you to go to court to claim the property for one who under oath swears to the SAME church political view of which you unjustly accuse the Rev. Hoeksema?

REV. KOK, YOU CONDEMNED REV. DE WOLF!

(Continued on page 480)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Continued)

These views in the early Church (continued).

We concluded our preceding article with the observation that the North African Church revealed rather clear tendencies toward what is called the Reformed view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Among the leaders of the North African Church are men as Origin, Clement, Tertullian, and Cyprian. Origin, it is claimed, is the only one among the Antenicene Fathers (the Fathers prior to the Council of Nicaea, 325) who decidedly opposes those who take the external sign in the Eucharist for the thing itself. He wrote, for example, and we quote: "As common meat does not defile; but rather unbelief and the impurity of the heart, so the meat which is consecrated by the word of God and by prayer, does not by itself sanctify those who partake of it. The bread of the Lord profits only those who receive it with an undefiled heart and a pure conscience." Of Origin it is said that he developed, in his conception of the Lord's Supper, in the merely symbolical line of Zwingli, and did not attach as much significance to the actual participation of the Lord's Supper as the other fathers.

Tertullian certainly distinguishes between the signs in the Lord's Supper and the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Replying to the wicked and slanderous attacks upon the truth by a certain Marcion, Tertullian writes concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as follows: "Indeed, up to the present time, He has not disdained the water which the Creator made wherewith He washes His people; nor the oil with which He anoints them; nor that union of honey and milk wherewithal He gives them the nourishment of the children; nor the bread by which He represents His own proper body, thus requiring in His very sacraments the "beggarly elements" of the Creator." Tertullian, in this quotation, speaks of the bread as *representing* Christ's own proper body. Elsewhere, also refuting the wicked Marcion, Tertullian continues to speak of the elements in the Lord's Supper in the same vein, and we quote: "When He so earnestly expressed His desire to eat the passover, He considered it *His own feast*; for it would have been unworthy of God to desire to partake of what was not His own. Then, having taken the bread and given it to His disciples, He made it His own body, by saying, "This is my body," that is, the figure of my body (notice that Tertullian here speaks of the bread as the *figure* of Christ's body — H.V.). A figure, however, there could not have been, unless there were first a veritable body (Marcion denied that Jesus had a real human body — H.V.). An

empty thing, or phantom is incapable of a figure. If, however, (as Marcion might say), He pretended the bread was His, because He lacked the truth of the bodily substance, it follows that He must have given bread to us. It would contribute very well to the support of Marcion's theory of a phantom body, that bread should have been crucified! But why call His body bread, and not rather (some other edible thing, say) a melon, which Marcion must have had in lieu of a heart! He did not understand how ancient was this figure of the body of Christ, who said Himself by Jeremiah: "I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter, and I knew not that they devised a device against me, saying, *Let us cast the tree upon His bread* (this is the translation in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament by the Seventy — H.V.), which means, of course, the cross upon His body. And thus casting light, as He always did, upon the ancient prophecies, He declared plainly enough what He meant by the *bread*, when He called the bread His own body. He likewise, when mentioning the cup and making the *new* testament to be sealed "in His blood," affirms the reality of His body. For no blood can belong to a body which is not a *body* of flesh. If any sort of body were presented to our view, which is not one of flesh, not being fleshly, it would not possess blood. Thus, from the evidence of the flesh, we get a proof of the body, and a proof of the flesh from the evidence of the blood. In order, however, that you may discover how anciently wine is used as a figure for blood, turn to Isaiah, who asks, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, Bosor with garments dyed in red, so glorious in His apparel, in the greatness of His might? Why are thy garments red, and thy raiment as his who comes from the treading of the full winepress?" The prophetic Spirit contemp'tates the Lord as if He were already on His way to His passion, clad in His fleshly nature; and as He was to suffer therein, He represents the bleeding condition of His flesh under the metaphor of garments dyed in red (a metaphor is an implied simile, as for example: he is an ox, meaning that he is like an ox — H.V.), as if reddened in the treading and crushing process of the winepress, from which the labourers descend reddened with the wine-juice, like men stained in blood. Much more clearly still does the book of Genesis foretell this, when (in the blessing of Judah, out of whose tribe Christ was to come according to the flesh) it even then delineated Christ in the person of that patriarch, saying, "He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes" — in His garments and clothes the prophecy pointed out his flesh, and His blood in the wine. Thus did He now consecrate His blood in wine, who then (by the patriarch) used the figure of wine to describe His blood." — end of quotation. We have already observed, in parenthesis, that Tertullian speaks of the bread as a figure of the body of Christ. We quoted the rest of this writing of Tertullian because of the interesting manner in which he refutes Marcion's terrible conception of Jesus' phantom body. That fact that he, in opposition to the heresy of Marcion, speaks of the

bread as a figure of the body of Christ certainly indicates an essential distinction between the consecrated elements in the Lord's Supper and the Lord Jesus Christ Whom we spiritually eat and drink. On the other hand, however, Tertullian must not be understood as merely teaching a symbolical presence of Christ, inasmuch as he, in other places, speaks of an eating of the body of Christ, and this indicates that Tertullian viewed the holy Supper as more than a merely symbolical observance.

Turning our attention to Cyprian, we note that we have already called attention to his exposition to the effect that water and wine must both be used in the celebration of the Eucharist. Interesting, I believe, is this short quotation of this learned Church Father: "Let us also arm the right hand with the sword of the Spirit, that it may bravely reject the deadly sacrifices; that, mindful of the Eucharist, the hand which has received the Lord's body may embrace the Lord Himself, hereafter to receive from the Lord the reward of the heavenly crowns." This passage certainly indicates that the Eucharist was at this time received by the hand of the communicant, and not placed in his mouth by the minister, as some have pretended was the original mode of the administration of this sacrament. When Cyprian writes, and we again quote him, "For because Christ bore us all, in that He also bore our sins, we see that in the water is understood the people, but in the wine is showed the blood of Christ, "the implication is very clear, that he did not identify the elements of the Eucharist with the Lord Jesus Christ. He declares that if water be offered alone, the people are dissociated from Christ, and, if wine be offered alone, Christ is dissociated from the people. Hence, if the mixture of the wine and water also symbolize the people, how, then, is it possible to conceive of this element of the holy Supper as identical with the Lord Jesus Christ. Cyprian, therefore, surely advocated the symbolical significance of the bread and wine. However, he did not advocate a merely symbolical presentation of the elements of the Eucharist, inasmuch as he, too, speaks of an eating and drinking of the body and the blood of Christ. To eat and drink the body and the blood of Christ surely emphasizes a real contact with the Lord Jesus Christ and not merely a feast of remembrance.

From another of the Ante-Nicene fathers we offer the following brief quotation: "After this let the sacrifice follow, the people standing and praying silently; and when the oblation has been made, let every rank by itself partake of the Lord's body and precious blood in order, and approach with reverence and holy fear, as to the body of their king. Let the women approach with their heads covered, as is becoming the order of women; but let the door be watched, lest any unbeliever, or one not yet initiated, come in." This passage certainly shows, in the first place, the profound reverence which characterized the early Church in its celebration of the Lord's Supper. And secondly, it is not difficult to under-

stand, in the light of this quotation, that seeds were sown during this early period, for the later development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, although it must be added that also here nothing is said of the *change* of the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we proceed with our next observation the following may be interesting in connection with the celebration of the holy Supper during the early period of the Church. Only baptized Christians could receive this sacrament of Communion, this was a universal principle from the very beginning. This, of course, also applies in our present day. Heretics, schismatics, and unreconciled penitents were also excluded, though, we are told, it was sometimes given to the lapsed when dying. Interesting, I am sure, is the observation that it was the general practice to give it to children. This, I say, is a most interesting observation. The undersigned has often wondered why children in our present day should partake of all the means of grace except the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They are baptized, attend Divine service, and therefore the preaching of the Word, partake of the various means of instruction (in the home, school, and church), but are barred from participating in the sacrament of the holy Supper. And I believe that we may say without fear of contradiction that the children were permitted to partake of the Passover in the Old Dispensation. The custom of placing it in the mouths of dead persons must have been deeply rooted, to judge from the number of church councils which discussed this practice, and found it necessary to prohibit it. Much emphasis was laid, following Lev. 7:20 and 1 Cor. 11:27, upon purity of body and soul as a preparation for Communion. Chrysostom, who is especially strong on this point, requires a particular preparation by penance, prayer, almsgiving, and spiritual exercises lasting for days. As to frequency of celebration, the most which can be said for this primitive age with any certainty is that it occurred at least every Sunday, and there is plenty of proof for this in the second century. Our Church Order specifies that it shall be observed not less than four times and not more than six times a year. One wonders whether the Lord's Supper should be celebrated more than four times a year as is the custom prevailing in our present day. Being observed at least every Sunday, the tendency was toward greater frequency. Daily celebrations became customary in the West by the beginning of the third century in Africa, as evidenced by Cyprian; in Rome at least in the time of Jerome (died near Bethlehem in 420 A.D.) or much earlier if certain documents are to be accepted as genuine. At Caesarea in Cappadocia the rule was four times a week, and the leaders of the Church were eager to celebrate it more frequently. The Lord willing, in our following article, we will call attention to the idea of the sacrifice which was prevalent in the early Church's presentation of the Eucharist.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 11. And as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, omniscient, and omnipotent, so the election made by him can neither be interrupted nor changed, recalled or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number diminished.

In the above translation the word "annulled," while it perhaps conveys the general idea of the original, can hardly be admitted as an accurate rendering of the Latin *abrupti*. The Dutch "*afgebroken*" (broken off) is more correct. For the rest the translation is correct.

Also in this article there is no fundamental advance in thought over Article 7. For the main thought of Article 11 is, that election is unchangeable, which thought was maintained in Article 7 when it taught that "election is the unchangeable purpose of God," and again in the same article when it declared that God decreed to give the elect to Christ, to be saved by Him, etc., "and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally, to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy." Hence, the present article is simply an elaboration of the same thought, and a very beautiful one too. In one brief and concise statement the fathers connect the immutability of the decree of election with the attributes of the decreeing God.

The question may arise here: why were not the Scriptures quoted to support the contention of this article? More than one reason may be given for this. Certainly it is not true that no Scriptures can be found which present the above thought. For the passages are numerous. We may mention the passage in Romans 8:29, 30, already cited in Article 7, which surely teaches the infallible realization of the purpose of election. Malachi 3:6 is also applicable here: "For I, Jehovah change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." Isaiah 49:15, 16 instructs us concerning the Lord's constant mindfulness of Zion, His elect, even when they complain of being forsaken and forgotten in the following language: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." The Lord Jesus Himself teaches us, according to John 10:27-30: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck

them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Plainly, according to these verses, Christ's sheep, the elect, are imperishable. To the unbelieving Jews Jesus declares in John 6:37-40: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." James 1:17 emphasizes the unchangeableness of the Father in bestowing His good gifts upon His people in the following language: "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." And, to quote no more, there is that most beautiful passage in Hebrews 6:16-19: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." It may be, then, that the available Scriptural proof was so abundant and so transparent that it was thought unnecessary to quote it. On the other hand, however, we may notice that the argument of this eleventh article is inescapably logical. Anyone who wants to maintain the least semblance of orthodoxy will have to grant the truths of God's wisdom, immutability, omniscience, and omnipotence. When these are granted, then the immutability of God's election inevitably follows. To maintain the former implies that you must maintain the latter; and to deny the latter constrains you to deny the former.

There is, to be sure, one underlying principle which forms the foundation of what this article teaches. That principle is that God is One and simple, which implies that there is no separation of His attributes: all God's attributes are one in Him. And God's works being the revelation of Himself, they are all characterized by His unspeakable virtues. When, therefore, God chooses some for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of His glorious grace, then is not only His mercy and grace revealed. But all God's attributes, as it were, go into action. His mercy and grace are characterized by unchangeability, wisdom, omnipotence, omniscience, as well as by all the divine virtues. Such is the principle of this article.

Now let us take note of the details.

God is most wise. This means that God always chooses the best means to attain the highest possible purpose. That highest possible purpose is God's own glorification. And to

that purpose God always adapts His whole counsel and all things, and adapts all things to one another with a view to the same purpose. And we must remember too that we are speaking of the wisdom of *God*. Not only does this imply, according to Scripture, that this wisdom has nothing to do with what the world calls philosophy, but is an ethical idea, so that for the creature too "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But God's wisdom is absolute. He is the only wise God. Rom. 16:27; I Tim. 1:17. He is wisdom. His wisdom is self-existent, eternal, infinite, and unchangeable. That God chooses the best possible means does not mean, therefore, that God's wisdom is limited whatsoever. When man has a certain purpose in mind, he is limited to the means at hand. He does not devise the means, but he chooses from a whole array of possible means. His wisdom is causal and determinative. Furthermore, God can never make a mistake. He needs never to retrace His steps and try another path. Never can it be said of God's way that there is a better way. Always with infinite perfection, He adapts all things both in eternity and time to themselves mutually and to the attainment of the highest purpose. It is this same wisdom that characterizes God's election.

In the second place, the article maintains that God is unchangeable. This virtue of God is revealed in the name Jehovah; God is the eternal I Am. The creature, that exists in time and space, can never say "I Am." The moment he attempts to say it he has already moved on, and is no more what he was. But God is the I Am, the Immutable One. He is all that He is in all the infinite and constant fulness of His Being, eternally. God does not grow older; He does not increase or decrease in being or in power, or in glory. He is from eternity to eternity the same in essence and in all His virtues. His mind and will, His thoughts and decrees are eternally the same. Never, therefore, does God change His mind. Known unto Him are all His works from the beginning of the world. As far as God's counsel is concerned, which is the reality of all things, all things are finished from eternity, and God has all His works eternally before Him.

The Third attribute of God mentioned in this article is God's omniscience, that virtue of God according to which He knows Himself and all things. Surely, this implies that nothing exists and nothing happens unbeknownst to Him. But it implies much more. For also here we must keep before us the distinction between the creature and the Creator. Not only is our knowledge limited in every way, so that we know only a small portion of that which may be known, and so that we cannot possibly see things in their relation to all other things, while God knows all things perfectly. But we are dependent in our knowledge upon the thing known. With us the thing must exist before we can know it. With God this is not the case. God knows all things because He has determined what shall be and what shall happen. His knowledge is independent and sovereign and determinative. Hence, in His dealings with the children of men nothing can surprise

God or disappoint Him, for the simple reason that His knowledge is before the event.

Finally, the article speaks of God's omnipotence. That God is almighty is patently Scriptural. But this power of God is never set forth in the Scriptures as a mere abstract omnipotence. God's claim to power is not a philosophical claim to be able to do all things. This would lead to such foolish speculations as those of the scholastics, who would philosophize about the question whether God was able to make two mountains without a valley between them, and such like. The Scriptures always present God's power concretely as it is revealed in the works of His hands. They present it as a living energy and ability to accomplish things. Here too we must remember that God's power is strictly unique and divine energy and power. It is distinct from any power in the creature. God always performs what is impossible for the creature to accomplish. He is the God that does wonders. And His power is characterized by absolute freedom and sovereignty. God's power is not restricted by any power outside of Himself. It is causal and creative. We may very briefly define it as that attribute of God according to which He does whatsoever He pleases. Hence, too, we cannot speak of any power alongside of God's power, even though it be not as great as His. God's is absolutely all power; and apart from Him there is no power whatsoever. He holds all creatures in His hand, so that apart from Him they have no existence, and cannot so much as move.

Now when we apply these attributes of God to His election, we come to the following conclusion. First of all, election can never be interrupted. It cannot be that we are now elect and then reprobate. No enemy can interrupt election, for all the movements of the enemy are known to God, determined by Him, devised by Him as means to an end, and are in His sovereign power and control. We ourselves cannot interrupt it by fulfillment or non-fulfillment of conditions. For not only is our faith and perseverance unchangeably out of God's election, but all our weaknesses and unfaithfulnesses and failures are known unto Him, in His power, and under His direction. Further, in His infinite wisdom God also uses even our weaknesses and shortcomings for the demonstration of His power and to the attainment of the purpose of election. In the second place, election is unchangeable. We cannot change it. And God does not and will not change it, no matter what may betide: God's mind is made up from eternity, and He never retraces His steps for any reason whatsoever. Nor, in the third place, is election ever recalled. God does never devise a new plan, a substitute plan, a better plan. And finally, election is never broken off and destroyed and put to nought, neither by us and our sins nor by the powers of darkness in their enmity against God and His counsel.

God's election is absolutely unchangeable. Because God is unchangeable, it cannot be changed. Because He is most wise, it need not be changed. Because He is omniscient, it

(Continued on page 480)

DECENCY and ORDER

Leave Of Absence

Article 14 (Con't)

We were last discussing matters that pertain to the granting of ministerial leaves of absence. In the preceding issue of the Standard Bearer we pointed out some of the reasons for which leaves are granted; we mentioned the correct procedure to be followed in obtaining a leave; and we stated that it was quite essential that the consistory and minister concerned have a definite understanding concerning certain things at the time the leave of absence is granted.

This time our attention is to be directed to the meaning of the last part of Article 14 which states: "He (the minister requesting a leave) shall nevertheless at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation."

The exact meaning of this part of the article is rather perplexing. It lends itself to a variety of possible interpretations. There are some, for example, who point to the very old Dutch Church Orders which speak of "congregations" (gemeenten) and on the basis of this plural aver that the article merely expresses that a minister on leave of absence is at any time eligible to receive a call from any of the churches. This is a very simple but evidently incorrect interpretation. Both Dr. Bouwman and Dr. Rutgers point out upon good authority that the word "gemeenten" in the older dutch is not a plural at all but is the form for the singular, possessive case. "Het woord gemeenten is hier in het enkelvoud bedoeld, wijl het was de tweede naamval van de zwakke verbuiging." This being so, the very basis of this interpretation is removed. Furthermore, it would be rather superfluous to say that ministers on leave of absence are eligible for a call. This is naturally the case and generally would be assumed to be so. It needs no special mention.

Others explain this to mean that a minister on leave of absence can be recalled at any time by the particular church that has granted him the leave. According to this view the tie between the minister and the congregation is not severed during this time. The minister is still under the jurisdiction of the consistory and is bound by his vows and promises to fulfill his office. Although for the time being the consistory excuses him from active labor in the congregation, she may at any time she deems it necessary call him back. He remains subject to call at all times.

There is something that may be said both in favor of and against this interpretation. Favorable is the view that the granting of a leave does not sever absolutely the tie between minister and congregation. The former remains subject to and under the jurisdiction of the latter. Even though salary and parsonage rights are forfeited for a time, the tie remains intact by virtue of which the status of minister of the Word is also retained. The minister on leave is not given free lance.

It appears, on the other hand, that this interpretation is designed to fit current practices and ignores the historic circumstances out of which the present article arose. Because of this there is a conflict here with the first part of the article. That part speaks of "compelling circumstances which make it necessary to discontinue the labors of the office for a time." Where these exist it is hardly conceivable that a consistory could or would call the minister back into active service. If a man obtains a temporary release from his church to pursue some other labor or to engage in advanced studies, the consistory might find it necessary to recall him to labor in the congregation before the time of his leave is expired. Hardly could this be the case, however, if one was on leave because of some serious illness or was separated from his flock through severe persecution. The article was originally written with a view to these latter cases where certain providential visitations made it compulsory to lay down the work of the ministry for a time.

It seems, therefore, that the composers of the church order had something else in mind. To understand the part of the article in question, we must not lose sight of the historic picture. We stated before that persecutions, which dispersed the flock or separated the minister, were the primary causes for which leaves were granted. These conditions validated, without any question, the temporary cessation of the ministerial labors but they did not break the bond that joined pastor and church. They did not put the former out of office. He remained minister of the Word so that when the persecutions subsided he could again resume his labor in the church from which he had been temporarily separated. Remaining subject at all times to the call of the church, the minister would thus be protected in his office in these abnormal times.

On the other hand these circumstances did not give the minister free lance. He might not use these occasions to release himself from a certain church and her authority. He might not begin to preach elsewhere and assume a new charge without first being properly released from the church to which he was bound by the lawful call. He remained subject at all times to that call. If then, for valid reasons, he could not perform the duties incumbent in that call, he could be temporarily released from all duty but the consistory, nevertheless, continued to have sole jurisdiction over him. This meant that at the termination of his leave (when it became possible to again function in office) or at any time during his leave (if it became possible to labor elsewhere) he desired to reenter the active ministry, he would do so by either being reinstated in the church that had given him temporary leave or he would obtain from that church a proper dismissal in accordance with Article 10. At no time would he be free from ecclesiastical authority and act independently. Would that be so, he would be without office and calling. Now, however, he is at all times subject to the call of the church.

It should be considered that in our day leaves are often

given for a stipulated time with the understanding that the minister will not return to labor again in that same church. The church then proceeds to call another minister to fill the vacancy. However, the same rule or principle applies with respect to the minister on such a leave. He retains his status as minister by virtue of the call of that church to which he remains subject. When the time of his leave is expired, that church makes a proper announcement concerning his eligibility and he in turn then waits for a call from another congregation. If this were not the case, he would be out of office during the time he was on leave and would then have to resubmit to examination before being declared eligible for a call in the churches.

* * * *

The free lance practices by the ministry, the Reformed Churches have always opposed. They maintained decency and good order in all things pertaining to the church of Christ. Especially insistent upon this were they when it came to the ministry of the Word. Recall that in the years following the Reformation of the sixteenth century these practices of abusing the office of the ministry were quite general. Without the authority of the church, from which the office can never be separated, men roamed here and there posing as official ambassadors of the gospel with the purpose of gaining converts from the Romish church or of gathering those that were dispersed through persecutions. Although their purpose was undoubtedly a worthy one, the methods and practices which they employed were without justification. Only sinister motives would impel men to ignore the institute of the church in the performance of these labors. Unconcerned about the church, many of these independent "loopers" (roamers) sought only the advancement of personal and selfish ambitions. These practices the Reformed Churches could not countenance and, therefore, ruled in the fifteenth article of the church order as follows:

"No one shall be permitted, neglecting the ministry of his church or being without a fixed charge, to preach indiscriminately without the consent and authority of Synod or Classis. Likewise, no one shall be permitted to preach or administer the sacraments in another church without the consent of the consistory of that church."

This article we purpose, D.V., to discuss fully the next time. Just now we wish to make a very interesting and important observation. Article 15 is based upon a fundamental Reformed principle which is interwoven through all the articles, from 3 to 14 inclusive, of our church order. That principle is that the office of the ministry of the Word is vested in the institute of the church or in the local congregation. Each church is an autonomous institute to which Christ gives authority to preach His Word and to administer the sacraments. To none other does He give this. This principle is militantly opposed to the hierarchical view of Rome which vests this authority in individual persons. These persons vary in rank with the supreme power vested in the person of the pope. Against this the Reformed position maintains that

no one, regardless of rank or person, is permitted to preach or administer the sacraments without the consent of the consistory of the church where this is to be done and no one is permitted to do so outside of the sphere of the instituted church without the authority of the churches.

Underlying this principle is the Scriptural teaching relative to the calling of the preacher which comes from Christ through His church. (Romans 10:14, 15) Without that call no one, though he be professor of theology, elder or deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the ministry of the Word. (Art. 3) That call, coming from a particular church, stations one in a particular place except in the case of mission or church extension work and then one is sent out from a particular congregation. (Art. 7) Those without a fixed charge, that is, without a call, may not perform these labors. (Art. 9). Likewise do the other articles stress the importance of this principle in regard to those actively engaged in the ministry. But further implications of this will have to be considered next time.

G.v.d.B.



JEHOVAH MY GOD, ON THY HELP I DEPEND

Jehovah, my God, on Thy help I depend;
From all that pursue me O save and defend;
Lest they like a lion should rend me at will,
While no one is near me their raging to still.

When wronged without cause I have kindness returned;
But if I my neighbor maltreated and spurned,
My soul let the enemy seize for his prey,
My life and my honor in dust let him lay.

O Lord, in Thy wrath stay the rage of my foes;
Awake, and Thy judgment ordained interpose.
Let peoples surround Thee and wait at Thy feet,
While o'er them for judgment Thou takest Thy seat.

All nations of men shall be judged by the Lord;
To me, O Jehovah, just judgment accord,
As faithful and righteous in life I have been,
And ever integrity cherished within.

Establish the righteous, let evil depart,
For God, who is just, tries the thoughts of the heart.
In God for defense I have placed all my trust;
The upright He saves and He judges the just.

The Lord with the wicked is wroth every day,
And if they repent not is ready to slay;
By manifold ruin for others prepared
They surely at last shall themselves be ensnared.

Because He is righteous His praise I will sing,
Thanksgiving and honor to Him I will bring,
Will sing to the Lord on whose grace I rely,
Extolling the Name of Jehovah Most High.

Psalms 7

ALL AROUND US

A Pathetic Picture.

What we have to say on this subject, strictly speaking, does not belong to this department. We are supposed to write on matters that have to do with that which is "All Around Us." I am departing from the rule this time due to the peculiar circumstance in which I find myself at the time another article must be sent in to fill my department. I am in the throes of moving, if you know what that means. My study at this moment is a dismal place. All my books and periodicals which I need to read to obtain material, are packed away in boxes and ready for shipping. All that is left and in its usual place is my desk and typewriter and a few pictures which still need to be taken down and stowed away somewhere.

Among the latter are some panoramic pictures of Young People's Conventions of the past, some single snap-shots of a few personal friends, a group picture of a conference held several years ago with the Germans at Hull, Iowa, and also a group picture of a Protestant Reformed Theological Conference which was held in Grand Rapids, November 6, 1947.

It is this last picture which I call a pathetic picture, and to which I refer in this article.

No doubt many of our readers have seen the picture and maybe also have one in their possession. It was taken at the time of the Schilder Conference, when the late professor from Kampen visited our Churches and even preached and spoke in some of them in the late summer and early fall of 1947. I counted forty-two likenesses on this panoramic picture. These included the late Dr. Schilder, and a young man who has since then entered into the ministry of another denomination. The picture also includes the likenesses of two laymen who since then have gone to their eternal reward. The remaining likenesses are of the twenty-three ministers (some of whom may have been students in our seminary at the time. I do not remember exactly) and fifteen laymen, some of whom were elders in our Churches, while others were just visitors. And these thirty-eight we may again brake down into two groups namely, of those who remained faithful to the Protestant Reformed Churches, and those who have gone from us by way of schism. Of the group that is with us, I count ten ministers and ten laymen; and in the other group that has now left us I count thirteen ministers and five laymen.

All pictures, if they have any significance at all, arouse sentiment and emotion in those who possess them. And I confess that though I am generally speaking not easily affected by faces or the likenesses of them, I nevertheless was deeply moved as I studied that picture above referred to once more in the light of the history that has been made since 1947 and that conference.

In the center of it and on the foreground are the like-

nesses of the Revs. G. M. Ophof and H. Hoeksema, and the late Dr. Schilder. Looking at the latter and right below him, printed in white letters, the date of the conference, the thought could not be suppressed: Was this not the day, when you, the late Dr. Schilder, assembled with us in conference, that all our sad history of the past years began? O, to be sure, there were no apparent evidences of schism and strife then, for all on the surface appeared to be one. Or, at least, it appeared that all were striving for the same thing. The purpose of the conference, as I remember, was to seek unity and correspondence on the basis of the truth. For us who perhaps at that time did not understand the points of difference too well, there seemed to be unanimity and agreement. And all around the picture I see the likenesses of those who attending the same instruction I received had always left the impression with me that they were in thorough agreement with that instruction. But as I look at the history now made, I am inclined to believe there was no solid agreement then, and some of those present at that conference then were sure at that time that there never would be agreement. But be that as it may, it has now become very plain that from that day, November 6, 1947, to the present two manifest groups began to form in our churches; the one pulling for a closer association with the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands and Canada, the other, always determined to maintain our Protestant Reformed distinctiveness.

All of us know the schedule of events as they took place after this conference. The late Dr. Schilder returned to the Netherlands where he evidently fought hard to persuade his churches to seek closer affiliation with ours. Though several of his colleagues were suspicious of us, he apparently influenced them to break down their opposition. Not only did he work on his own people, but after the Declaration of Principles came to the fore in our churches, he even tried by way of pamphlet to remove this obstacle which was intended to show our people and those outside seeking to come in, how impossible a final union of us with the Liberated was. Then you have that incident of the visitors from America traveling to the Netherlands in the guise of representatives of the Protestant Reformed Churches, men of whom we have every reason to believe now were bent on selling our churches to the Liberated. When these men returned, the actual formation of two parties in our churches began to take on reality. This movement was agitated no doubt by what we thought at the time was the untimely warning of the Rev. Ophof (we see now that it was exceedingly timely) who published a certain letter of the late Dr. Holwerda which had been sent to the Canadian Liberated.

Then followed the sad history in the two Canadian Churches, Hamilton and Chatham. We need not repeat what has been written in many pages of the Standard Bearer relating the history of our Canadian experience. But when this occurred we believed the eyes of our people would open to not only the kind of people we were dealing with but more particularly their doctrine. But it seems to us now that the

two groups which were forming in our churches became more solidified through this Canadian debacle.

Then came the meetings of Classis East and West that were to consider adopting the Declaration of Principles. This was in 1951 that Classis East by majority vote adopted the Declaration, while Classis West also by majority vote (the faithful were few) voiced objection to it. And it soon became apparent that the group objecting to the Declaration and favoring closer affinity with the Liberated in Classis East began to be more outspoken in their opposition to all that smacked of being Protestant Reformed. It was about this time that the Rev. Kok began to write vigorously in opposition to the Declaration while supporting conditional theology, all the while endeavoring to deceive our people, urging them to believe that the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophof in their writings taught conditional doctrine. It was also at this time that the Rev. De Wolf made the first of his heretical statements which clearly evinced not only his hatred for the Declaration but also his love for Liberated conditional doctrine.

Then came that wonderful Synod of 1951 that shall go down in the annals of the Protestant Reformed Churches as still strong enough to sustain the truths declared in the Declaration. That was the Synod where more than ever before it became evident that those who favored closer collaboration with the Liberated and their doctrine were determined to split our churches if necessary to gain their objectives. O, to be sure, they had not planned on a separation at that time. As we now see it, they planned, like the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands and Canada had planned it, to swallow up all our churches, excluding, of course, the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophof and maybe a handful of ministers and the people that might stick with them. And thanks be to God! they were foiled in their plan. The separation came before they could carry out their purpose.

And now I look at that picture again. I see the likenesses of these men and in my imagination others with them not on the picture. And I say again, What a pathetic picture. There they stand, right behind and all around the leaders God in His great mercy gave to us to lead us all the years of our denominational existence. There they stand as those who were in full agreement with the instruction they like us had received, while already then the thoughts of forsaking that instruction was taking form in their hearts. There they stand, scattered throughout the picture next to men who have remained faithful by the grace of God. So close they are to them that their likenesses cannot be blotted out without destroying theirs.

All sentiment, you say? Too much emotion? Perhaps. But let me assure you that as far as I am concerned the picture is spoiled. It shall not be placed on the walls of my study again, at least not until the day that you who have caused us so much heart-ache shall repent and return to us in sincere sorrow for the awful sin you have committed while you were still members in our churches.

More conferences? Yes, there will be more of them. More pathetic pictures? Yes, there can be no doubt that there will also be more of them. And until the day come when we shall be able to confer without sin and schism, we will continue to fight the good fight while we weep and pray.

M. Schipper.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Farmer's Strawstack

It was a beautiful fall day when Ds. Van Ooster came to call on a former parishoner, Mr. DeRoster by name. For DeRoster had not been seen in church for several Sundays and the dominee, as was his pastoral duty, decided to "look him up."

Receiving no response to repeated knockings on the door, he wandered to the barn and, even as he suspected, found the farmer there, busy with his chores.

The usual greetings having been exchanged, dominee began to inquire as to the reason for DeRoster's absence from divine services. The following conversation ensued:

"Ja dominee, it is true that I've not been in your church lately. And you know why? No? It's because of that straw stack that stands just outside the barn.

"Come, come, DeRoster, je steek mij de gek aan! How can a straw stack keep you away from our church?"

"Well, dominee, it's this way: If someone comes by me to visit and we sit by the stove and talk crops en so forth, I tink it awful funny if all of an sudden mine neighbor says, 'Vel Jake, how much straw did you get from dat back forty dis year?' I would look at dat guy and say, 'Man, who's intrested in straw?' The real farmer would ask, 'How many bushels of wheat did you harvest and how much did it run per acre?' And that I'd tell him right quick. And he'd maybe ask if I'd put that cement floor in the granary and wire mesh around the openings and I'd say, 'You bet, no rats or mice are going to steal my grain!'"

"DeRoster, what in the world are you talking about? I come to find out why you haven't been in church and you talk straw and wheat!" The dominee's puzzled.

"O.K., O.K., dominee. I'm sorry. Thought maybe somebody with so much schooling would catch on. I make mine-self plain. You see, dominee, I always believed that our works were a fruit of faith. I never figured that anything was a condition for our salvation. And, lately, I've been hearing from the kansel, that you have to do this and you have to do that. And I started to wonder. And that last Sunday I was by you in church, you had a sermon on the text, 'Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.' Ja sure, dominee, you said it was all of grace but you still tried to hold that we had to do something. And I says to mineself, 'DeRoster', I says, 'What you gonna do? You don't know nothin' but farmin and ain't had no eddication, and besides, you're a big sinner — what you gonna do? By you it's hopeless.' Oh ja, domi-

nee, you said too that it don't matter who you are — ditch digger or an college professor, it's all the same. And it wasn't 'til next day when I do mine chores that, after I get the grain for the chickens and straw for bedding down the cows that it come to me that DeRoster can't go to your church no more."

"Come, come, DeRoster, you talk in riddles. You know that Scripture repeatedly says, 'Do this and ye shall live' and 'If ye walk in My ways' etc., You can't just ignore that part."

"Excuse me, dominee, maybe I can't say it so nice, but I try to explain once. And this is how I see it: That straw pile is *my* works and that wheat in the rat-proof granary is *Christ's work in me*. Every day by me the Lord is threshing and every day that straw pile gets bigger. And I get kinda sick of it to hear you most always talking about the straw pile on Sunday instead of the wheat. You can see for yourself, domine, that that straw pile out there is fifteen feet high and twenty feet across and the bin in the granary is only four by six by three. It don't go by quantity. I don't protect the straw and even set it far enough from the granary so if it catch fire it don't matter too much. Some of my neighbors with new machines don't even haul it in no more but leave it out in the field and plow it under."

"Just a minute, DeRoster, I smell a rat. No! No! Put that pitch-fork down — it was just a figurative expression — you've been going to those meetings in that store building in town with those radicals who deny the responsibility of man and who make of men stocks and blocks. Bekeer U, bekeer U, DeRoster and don't read anymore of those awful publications written by a broken-minded editor. He's leading you astray!"

A look of genuine pity then came over the face of this simple farmer. Slowly the pity turned to anger and disgust. DeRoster spat. Deliberately with pitchfork in hand he walked over to the straw pile and taking therefrom a huge forkful before the dominee's eyes, he spread it into the gutter behind the cattle. And, turning once more, he concluded his sermon to the dominee with these words: "Those, dominee, are mijn goed works. Bekeer U, dominee! Goed Dag!"

George Ten Elshof

ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual Standard Bearer Society meeting will be held the last part of September. Rev. Vos will be our guest speaker. Nominees are as follows:

AL. BLEYENBERG
DAVID MEULENBERG
PETER REITSMA
DOEDE ENGELSMA
GEORGE VINK
NICK KUNZ.

Watch for time, place, and date in next issue.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 471)

The fraud of your whole adventure is so glaring. You must have blinded yourself by your intense hatred to the fact that in his filthy, unchristian, slanderous cross bill Rev. De Wolf presents exactly the view for which you condemn the Rev. Hoeksema.

Did you forget that under oath he swore in that cross bill that Rev. Hoeksema "by his acts and conduct and by his refusal to acknowledge the fully instituted authorities of said church and its decrees and pronouncements, caused a schism in said church" Rev. De Wolf spoke of *authorities*, and they could not, in '24 have been the consistory, for it was 100% with the Rev. Hoeksema. And the pronouncements and decrees were then of the Classis and Synod. Rev. De Wolf stands condemned by you in Concordia, for he says that the autonomous consistory of the Rev. Hoeksema should have submitted to the Classis and Synod in '24.

What confusion there is in the midst of those who schismatically left us! There is always confusion in a walk of error! They go to court with a cross bill that insists that the Rev. Hoeksema should have submitted to Classis and Synod. And then in court they fight against the idea that the consistory must in any way, even in the federation, bow before any decision of Classis or Synod.

But the height of the folly of your whole caricature of Reformed Church Polity became evident when you sold it to your own lawyer, Mr. Linsey, so that in the testimony of Rev. De Jonge you had to hasten across the whole court room to interrupt Mr. Linsey, who was only being faithful to your presentation. You led your own lawyer into the worst blunder of the whole court trial.

Perhaps we better inform our readers of that next time.

But, Rev. Kok, when you hurried to his side, did you not feel the inconsistency of your whole stand? And how come only YOU could defend this new church polity for Rev. De Wolf and your whole group?

J.A.H.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 475)

cannot be foiled. And because He is omnipotent, it cannot be thwarted and obstructed.

What a comfort for the elect child of God! By grace we may place the present evil moment, whether the moment of our own heinous sins and sinfulness or the moment of the hatred and opposition of the enemy, in the eternal light of that unchangeable election, and in the knowledge that the elect cannot be cast away nor their number diminished say: "All is well. Soli Deo Gloria!"

H.C.H.