

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Divine Examination

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24

It seems to me that it takes quite a bit of courage to go to a psychoanalyst to have your soul examined. First of all, because they ask you all manner of soul-searching questions. We naturally shrink from such an examination. One has to be very brazen and hard in order to be able to endure such thoroughgoing analysis. In the second place, we instinctively feel that these analysts are very apt to misjudge the mass of data which they might gather from us. Finally, the subject matter they go after is very corrupt. We like to hide this corruption. No one likes to have all the corruptness of his heart bared for the eye of anyone.

Still, many people go to be psychoanalyzed. They seem to have overcome all these objections. Perhaps they reason that they themselves after all are providing the data to be examined. In other words, they reason that they will tell just as much as they please. And that is true. No soul can really be thoroughly examined by mere man.

If that is true with regard to an examination conducted by man, how will man find the courage to go to the Living God to be psycho-analyzed?

We can assure you that no natural man ever dares to do this.

Emphasis is placed on the scriptural dogma that no natural man *will* come to God. That he is unwilling to be psycho-analyzed by God. He hates Him too much to be willing to come unto Him.

Equal emphasis is laid on the dogma that natural man is *unable* to come unto God. And that also is true. The dead cannot rise by their own volition.

— But we may freely add also this, that natural man does never *dare* to come unto Him to be thoroughly examined. They that are called darkness do not come to the Light for

fear that all their evil will be exposed. They hug all their rottenness in their bosom and hide and hide and hide. That is the life of the world. That's the reason they much rather go to the show than to the church of God. There in the church the Word of God shines upon them and reveals unto their intellect that they are corrupt sons and daughters of Adam. And they spontaneously shrink from such examining light. Moreover, even if they do go to church and have a momentary look into the law of liberty, they go away immediately and have forgotten what manner of man they are.

They dare not approach the Almighty God who is Omniscient and Omnipresent and terrible in all His virtues. For they are corrupt and love it.

* * * *

It will now be clear when we say that to go to the Living God with a prayer for a complete psycho-analysis is a tremendous prayer.

It is tremendous for He need not ask any soul-searching questions of you. He knows it all.

Tremendous, for He will surely see all your and my corruption.

Terrible, for He is the Holy and Righteous One.

Still, some men and women were found of all the ages that came unto the terrible God for a complete examination.

David was one of them. Listen to him: "Search me, o God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thought: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Permit me to say right here that David never would have had the courage either if it had not been for the Spirit of God that dwelled in him. No natural man will ever do this, unless God brings him to it by His Spirit.

That prayer is tremendous. Search me, means literally: Dig into my heart, o God!

From the ethical point of view the heart in man is the very core of his being. It fathers all his desires and affections; his will and longing and yearning; his thoughts and meditations; and all his imaginations. It is that mysterious centre in you from which spring all the issues of your life. Deeper than the heart you cannot go in man. Hence, as your heart is, so you are.

Therefore it is so tremendous a prayer when you ask the Lord to search and to know that heart. For that heart harbors all our innate wickedness. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? laments the prophet! And to invite God to examine that heart is a tremendous prayer. For note that David does not ask simply for the Lord to know it all and then depart from him. That is not necessary at all. For God knows all the hearts and the secrets within. No, he asks the Lord to know and search him with the implied request to acquaint him, that is, David, with God's appraisal of all the corruption He may find. And such knowledge will prove to be terrible indeed.

It takes tremendous courage to pray thus.

* * * *

Moreover, David says: Try me and know my thoughts. The heart is the workshop; the thoughts are the products that are produced there.

And the second member of this tremendous petition is a request that God throw all the issues of David's naturally corrupt heart in the crucible of His holy and all-knowing Eye in order to try them in the fire of His holiness. And to let him know the outcome.

This is terrible, for then we become acquainted with all our corruption, such as our miserliness, our worldly-mindedness, our pleasure-madness, our selfishness, our coldness and indifference to God and Godly things; our hatred and our malice; all the malignity of our heart and mind will be laid bare together with God's appraisal of them and it.

Yet, how needful to pray thus. For who in the whole wide world will be able to diagnose me and my heart and my thoughts except the God of all the heavens and of the earth. He knows all our hearts and the secrets within. And He alone can judge of them aright. For only He is the Holy One. Who can understand his errors? Hence, cleanse Thou me from secret faults!

Moreover it is a sanctifying prayer.

For the Psalmist says: If Thou, O Lord, would behold a way of wickedness in me: make me to see it. Arrest me on that way of wickedness. Note that David proceeds from the heart to the thoughts of the heart and from both to his way.

The way of man is the life of man from the heart.

And that way of man has direction in it and therefore leads to some goal, some end.

Now this is the scriptural teaching that the way of wickedness is directed towards sin and the devil so that properly its end is hell.

So David prays the Lord to behold his way from the heart and if the Lord diagnoses that he is walking on a way of sin to arrest him on that way come what may.

That is a very sanctifying prayer and hence may bring you no end of sorrow.

For the Lord might hear your prayer. Have you ever considered this?

Suppose you are a pleasure-mad Christian? Suppose that the besetting sin of your life is the love of pleasure. And suppose further that God arrests you on this way of pleasure on which your feet are traveling? If He does, you will suffer. For then you will have to deny yourself all the pleasure you love.

Suppose you are a miser, my brother. I mean a Christian miser, shameful term. I have in mind a regenerated and converted man whose besetting sin is miserliness. It is very difficult for him to give toward the church budget, the poor and needy and all causes that are manifestations of the coming Kingdom of God. And suppose you pray as David: Search me, o God and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me! Then you must expect that God will, through His Word and Spirit, reveal to you that you are a miser. And that will hurt.

Practically it means that through the Spirit of Christ and the wisdom of God's Word you will mortify the members of the body of your death. And again: that hurts.

* * * *

Still, after all is said and done it is also sweet to forego sin and the devil.

It is wonderful to say "no" to the devil and to the world, and to your own sinful heart. It is good to sanctify yourselves.

There is no pleasure in wickedness. Wicked ways are very sorrowful ways. There is a bitter after-taste to the fruits of hell and the devil. He, that is, the devil, promises you roses, but when you assent to him he brings you only thorns and briars.

Pray then your sanctifying prayers to your God: Lord, if Thou see me walking on ways that lead to hell: hold me, arrest me; arrest me, even though it will hurt my inborn pride of life; arrest me, lest I insult Thy holiness and righteousness and become a shameful cause of the slandering of Thy glorious Name.

And this prayer is also glorious.

It ends thus: And lead me in the way everlasting!

The way everlasting! The way from of old! What glorious reality!

It is the way on which the saints of all the ages have trod. It is the way that is lighted with the light of God's everlasting love. Listen to Solomon's characterization of it: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

It is the highway that leads to heaven. The angels of God accompany you on that way. The eye of God's love beams upon you when you travel there.

It is the way from of old, that is, the way which God thought out from all eternity. It is the realization of His everlasting covenant that man should be to the praise of His glory. He delighted in that way from everlasting.

Moreover, it is the Christ of God. That way is founded in the blood and tears, in the suffering and death of His beloved Son, so that the Covenant of God might stand, might be maintained, might be exalted. So that we hear that Son call Himself: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Finally, it is the everlasting way, for it leads to life eternal with God in the heavens.

It is true that walking on that way will bring men much suffering, nay, moreover bonds and imprisonment. Never fear: the end of the way is life eternal in perfection.

If you walk on that way everlasting you will shout in the teeth of devils and ungodly men. Even if I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me!

* * * *

Pray then this tremendous prayer.

Do not hesitate to pour out your hearts before His Omniscient and Omnipresent Eye. And say: Search me, o God, and know my heart. I do not know it myself, for by nature it is deceitful more than anything. I cannot know it. But know Thou it. And know it so that Thou let me know Thy appraisal of it. Let me also know all the sores and bruises and putrifying sores of the which Isaiah speaks. So that I may come for the cure and balm to my Christ of God. Know my thoughts and imaginations, o God. Throw them into the crucible of Thy holiness so that I may know them. Teach me to kill, to mortify all the members of my old man of sin. And arrest me if these issues have led me to walk on a way that leads to hell.

And set my feet on that wondrous way that leads to Thy heart. Cause me to walk in Christ, Who is the Way to the Father.

For I yearn to see Thy glorious Face! G.V.

Announcement

The Office Bearers Conference will be held October 4 at 8 o'clock at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Topic: "The Duties of the Deaconite in Regard to the Distribution of Alms."

At the congregational meeting of Creston Protestant Reformed Church, held September 19, a call was extended to the Rev. G. Vos of Hudsonville.

IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minn., extends its sincere sympathy to our former Secretary, Ray Brunsting, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. R. BRUNSTING

May our Triune God give him comfort and strength, for He alone knows of our true sorrows.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. Is. 66:13.

John Docter, President

Henry Miersma, Secretary

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EDITORIALS

Based On Untruths

We have a few more remarks about the article in *Gereformeerd Kerkblad* to which we referred in the last number of *The Standard Bearer*.

Meyering, quoted by Visee, writes that, at first, I was very favorably inclined to the movement of the liberated or to the "liberation."

This is not true, at least not in respect to their conception of the truth of the covenant. I never did agree with them and never will. To agree with them *in dogmaticis*, in doctrine, as do De Wolf, Kok, De Jong, e.a. would be to deny all the fundamental truths the Protestant Reformed Churches ever since 1924 maintained.

As soon as I heard about their views, even before I read the many brochures that were written *pro* and *con* on the controversy, I wrote Dr. Schilder a very strong condemnatory letter, which the Rev. Ophoff also read, in which I expressed my utter amazement at the fact that he could have so changed that, at the first meeting of the "liberation" in The Hague he could plead with the gathering for organic union with the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Afterwards, all I wrote in *The Standard Bearer* about the doctrinal stand of the liberated, as Meyering may well know, shows very clearly that I condemn their view as Heynsian and, therefore, as Arminian. They simply agree with the First Point of 1924.

Again, when Schilder was here, I defended seven propositions concerning the covenant which were directly opposed to his view and to that of the liberated. These, too, were published in our paper at the time.

Meyering may know all this.

When, therefore, he makes the general statement that, at first, I was favoring the movement of the liberated and the liberation, he writes an untruth.

What is true is that, at first, I was favorably inclined to the liberated from a church political viewpoint. But again, this does not concern all their views, not even their interpretation of article 31 of the Church Order, but only the principle that a classis or synod may not depose officebearers as was done, at the time, by the synodicals. This has always been my conviction, especially since 1924, and this I still maintain. Nor did I ever deny this in Superior Court of Grand Rapids.

There was no need to deny this for the simple reason that, not Classis Grand Rapids East, but the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids suspended a minister and deposed elders.

It was not article 36 but article 31 which was the chief bone of contention in court. That article, as most readers know by this time, reads as follows:

"If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it 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."

It was the wild rambling of the opposition about this article in court which caused the judge to wonder whether they stood for any law and order in the church or wanted every one to walk his own sweet way as his conscience dictated.

This was especially true of Kok, but also of some of the others.

I will quote a few instances from the Court Record.

First of all a quotation in which Kok tries to explain what is meant by a majority vote in the clause "and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding." In court rambled on as follows:

"Yes, your Honor, (he is addressing the Court here, who asked him a question) Article 31, when it says by a majority vote, we read in Article 30 that 'In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the major assemblies in common. No, wait a minute, the first sentence— (Reading) 'In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted—and that in an ecclesiastical manner,' and then in Article 31, 'a majority vote. 'It has always been our contention that in ecclesiastical assemblies it is not a question of a mere bare majority like you would have in a political gathering. It has always been our position that in ecclesiastical assemblies, when there are differences of opinion, we say we are not going to call this matter to a vote. We are going to discuss it. We are going to try to come to unanimous decision. It is dangerous in church questions to get decisions by a mere majority. Therefore, it has always been, let's make it very clear, and also in the cases in the question of heresy, it must not be a matter that is nip and truck. It should be a matter that is the overwhelming conviction of the whole assembly that that is heresy, and of the whole consistory. It shouldn't be a matter of gaining a vote one way or the other. If it is still so precarious, the question of heresy, the consistory should say then this matter is not clear to us, and we are not going to vote on this matter. That isn't an ecclesiastical manner.'"

This is Kok's interpretation of "by a majority vote" in Article 31.

Now, in the first place, in Classis East the matter was freely discussed for days on end, and secondly, when it was voted upon, it was not "nip and tuck" but carried by a large majority as every one knows.

But this is not the question. Fact is that it would have been perfectly legal and in harmony with the Church Order that the motion that the statements of De Wolf were heretical had been carried by a single vote.

According to the rambling of Kok in the above question it is not the majority but the minority that decides matters. For the majority submits to the minority. And this is certainly not the meaning of Article 31.

But do you wonder that the judge received the impression that, with the opposition, there was no law and order. Do you wonder that he smiled at this interpretation of "by a majority vote" in Art. 31? I am sure that he never heard of such an explanation of a majority vote at all.

But there is much more in the Court Record on this same matter.

Here is another quotation:

From cross examination by Mr. Tubbs:

"Heresy is a matter of ecclesiastical determination, is it not? You can answer that by yes or no."

"Heresy is a matter of ecclesiastical interpretation? No, all ecclesiastical interpretation—I don't know what you mean, Mr. Tubbs. I would like to have you be a little more specific. What one considers a heresy the other may consider a truth—but I—"

"Under the Formula of Subscription as found on page 62, you and the elders and the members of the church, promise to teach faithfully and to defend the aforesaid doctrine, which is the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19. You also agree further on (Reading): 'If any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis and synod, that the same may be there examined, being always ready cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis and synod, under penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from our office.'"

"I subscribe to that with all my heart."

"That subscription means that the decision as to whether your speech was heresy must be made by one or perhaps all of the three bodies mentioned; is that right?"

"No, sir."

"You mean that your consistory cannot determine whether your preaching is heretical?"

"Only my consistory can determine that."

"But in this paragraph it also mentions classis and synod, does it not?"

"It only mentions classis and synod, if at any time I disagree with the Heidelberg Catechism, that if I disagree with the Confession of Faith, with the Canons of Dordrecht, or with the Church Order, I promise I will never reveal that or speak of it, not even to my wife, or to my children, unless I first brought it to my consistory and classis and to the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. That is what it means, but I subscribe to the Forms of Unity with all my heart, but I don't subscribe to all classical decisions.

"Would you, if your consistory determines that your preaching was heretical, subscribe to that?"

"If my consistory would determine that?"

"Yes?"

"If I could conscientiously subscribe to it, yes, but if my conscience would say my consistory was wrong, I would have to tell my consistory: 'I am very sorry, I can't agree with you. We have come to the parting of the ways,' and the consistory has the right to give me a release, or if my heresy is—"

"And you would then be released from the Protestant Reformed Churches?"

"If my consistory would do that, that is, the overwhelming majority of my consistory. I don't think would even be determined by one vote."

"Church Order provides that in ecclesiastical bodies, the majority decision shall be binding, doesn't it?"

"Church Order also provides that all ecclesiastical matters shall be treated in an ecclesiastical manner, and a bare majority is not in an ecclesiastical manner.

"Heresy is not an ecclesiastical matter?"

"I say a bare majority is not in an ecclesiastical manner."

"Oh, that is just a matter for your conscience to determine?"

"It is my understanding of Article 31 of the Church Order, that if at all possible, decisions should be made by unanimous decision."

Here you have it again: Kok understands by majority unanimity. That is, in court he said that such is the meaning of Article 31 of the Church Order. According to him, if the majority of the consistory votes in favor of a motion, the motion is defeated.

You understand, do you not, why Kok made this absurd contention?

He did so, because he wanted to maintain that Classis East might not have declared by a large majority that the Statements of De Wolf were heretical, because the majority sentiment of the other ministers and members of the church (particularly Classis West!) did not agree with this declaration of Classis East. Hence, the decision had to be unanimous, which would mean that Blankespoor, Knot and Kok would have ruled the Classis.

Hence, according to Kok in court, majority means unanimity!

The trouble was that the judge could not understand it thus!

More next time.

H.H.

Saints are not so much afraid of suffering, as they are of sinning; in suffering, the offence is done to us; but in sinning, the offence is done to God.

—Thomas Goodwin

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 48

Chapter 2

The Realization of the Kingdom

All the shadows of the old dispensation are now become reality and truth. Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, the throne of David, as well as the temple, the altar, and the perfect sacrifice, the King-Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec, — all are now in heaven, and all things are subject unto our Lord, Who is the King of kings.

However, this is not the end.

First of all, the kingdom of God is also realized in the spiritual sense in the hearts of all the elect in the world by the Spirit of Christ and the Word of God. When Christ was exalted in the highest heavens at the right hand of God, He received the promise of the Spirit. And the Spirit He poured out into His church on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." This Spirit of the exalted Christ is a royal Spirit. It is the Spirit of the kingdom of God. And when in the new dispensation God's people are regenerated, they receive the resurrection life of Christ, their exalted Lord. And when they are efficaciously called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God, they enter into the kingdom of heaven and become a royal priesthood. They share by faith in the victory of Christ. And in the consciousness of that victory they fight the good fight of faith, not indeed in the hope that they can make a kingdom of God out of this present world; but living the kingdom life in every sphere of the present world, and representing the cause of the Son of God in the midst of the world that lieth in darkness, they fight a spiritual battle. They put on the whole armor of God, considering it grace that in the cause of Christ they may not only believe in Him, but also suffer with Him. For they know that as citizens of the kingdom of heaven they are still in Babylon. And in the Babylon of this world they do not expect an outward victory. They know that in the world they shall have tribulation. For as they hated their King, so they will hate them, if they are faithful. They know, moreover, that they must expect wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines, an increase in the might of the forces of darkness, and the final manifestation of the Man of Sin in the kingdom of Antichrist, in which there will be

no room for those that refuse to worship the beast and his image, and to receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or forehead. Then they will not be able either to buy or sell. In all this they fight and suffer with a good conscience, knowing that in the end they shall have the perfect victory.

For the kingdom of God is still coming. It will come from heaven once again, when the glorified Christ shall appear in all the splendor of His power, destroy forever all the powers of darkness, justify His cause and His people in the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, and establish His throne forever in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteous shall dwell and the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Then the kingdom of God shall have come. God shall be all in all. Our Lord Jesus Christ shall be the Servant-King forever. And we shall reign with Him in glory over all the works of God's hands. And in the final sense it is for this kingdom of heaven that we pray in the second petition: "Thy kingdom come."

Chapter 3

The Prayer for the Kingdom

If we have understood the foregoing exposition of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, we will also be in a position to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God intelligently.

This is, of course, also the purpose of the brief exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 48. According to the Catechism, the second petition of the Lord's Prayer implies, first of all, a prayer for the rule of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. It explains: "Thy kingdom come; that is, rule us so by thy word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee." Secondly, this Lord's Day explains that the second petition implies a prayer for the church and for the destruction of all the powers of darkness: "preserve and increase thy church; destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word." And finally, this Lord's Day explains that this petition implies a prayer for the coming of the Lord in glory: "till the full perfection of thy kingdom take place, wherein thou shalt be all in all."

Understanding this, we can pray intelligently, without being confused by the many false philosophies concerning the kingdom of God that corrupt the truth in our day.

According to the interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism, this second petition is, first of all, a request for something very specifically personal. We pray here for God's gracious rule in our hearts, through the Spirit of Christ and by His infallible Word. We understand, of course, that only the citizen of the kingdom of God, and none other, is in a position to send this request to the throne of grace. That citizen of the kingdom of heaven is reborn. He has a new life, the life of Christ, in his heart. That life is not from below, but from above. It is the life of the kingdom of

heaven. Christ redeemed him by His blood, but He also delivered him by His Spirit, and snatched him from the dominion of the devil, establishing His throne in his heart. Principally he submits himself willingly and obediently, in the love of God, to the rule of His Spirit and Word. For he is not under the law, but under grace. And therefore, sin has no more dominion over him. In his inmost heart the law of God has been inscribed, and he has delight in all the good commandments of his God.

However, the regenerated child of God deeply realizes that he lives the new life of the kingdom of heaven only in principle. He has indeed only a small beginning of the new obedience. He finds within himself in his old nature, in his old body and in his old soul, the ruts of sin. And that sin always lusts against the Spirit of God and against the new principle of life within him. The motions of sin are still in his members. There is ever so much within him that rebels against the dominion of God's gracious rule in his heart and life. He thoroughly understands, with application to himself the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 7: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Such indeed is the experience of every child of God. And therefore the Heidelberg Catechism explains this second petition of the Lord's Prayer that it means not only that God may rule us by His Word and Spirit, but that He may so rule over us and in us "that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee." For an increase of sanctification of life this second petition prays.

But there is more. Not only does the Christian have but a small beginning of the new obedience, while the old man of sin is always with him; but he also lives in the midst of a world that lies in darkness, and that by its vain philosophy, by its treasures and pleasures, by the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, would seduce him to subject himself once more to the slavery of sin. And in himself he is weak. In fact, he feels that in himself he is powerless to fight against those forces of darkness within and

without. He knows that he is saved by grace, and that it is only by grace that he can overcome the seducing and corrupting powers of the world about him. He is deeply conscious of the fact that only in as far as God rules over him by His grace and Spirit and through His Word, can he remain steadfast in the midst of the world of darkness and manifest himself as a citizen of the kingdom of God. And knowing all this, and understanding too that God surely gives His grace and Spirit to them that ask Him, he prays: "Our Father Who art in heaven, more and more rule over me by Thy Spirit and Word. Rule over my heart and mind. Rule over all my thoughts and desires, in order that I may not become conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of my mind. Thy kingdom come within me."

But this petition also implies a prayer for the church, and, negatively, for the destruction of the powers of darkness that exalt themselves against the Holy Word of God. In this petition we pray: "Preserve and increase thy church." For it is the church of Christ that represents the kingdom of God in the world, and through which the cause of the kingdom is preserved and extended. By that church the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed even unto the uttermost parts of the world. By the church the truth of the kingdom is preserved and taught. Within that church the children of the kingdom are born and nurtured. And through that church Christ calls and gathers His elect out of the entire world. And therefore the prayer for the kingdom of God includes a prayer for the church. In it we ask that the Spirit of Christ may so rule in the church that she may be preserved in the midst of the world. In it we pray that the church may be founded and established in the truth, that she may not be seduced by all kinds of false doctrines and by the false philosophy of men, but, on the contrary, that she may grow in the knowledge and grace of her Lord Jesus Christ. In this petition we ask that the preaching of the Word may be kept pure and unadulterated, in order that believers may stand even unto the end. This petition implies that the church may remain faithful in the midst of all forms of persecution and temptation, and that she may represent the cause of the Son of God in the midst of a world of darkness. We pray in this second petition that the covenant of God may be continued in the line of the generations of believers, and that she may instruct the children of the covenant faithfully in the truth of the Word of God. And by this petition we implore our Father Who is in heaven that through the preaching of the gospel even in heathen lands all the elect out of the whole world may be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. All this implies, antithetically, that we pray in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word."

Of course, all this presupposes a spiritual disposition of

the heart in him that sends this petition to the throne of grace, according to which the church, the true church, where the Word of God is maintained in all its fulness and purity, the sacraments are administered in harmony with the Word of God, and true Christian discipline is exercised, is above all things in the world dear to us. It means that we diligently seek the fellowship of that church, and that for no carnal reasons we will ever separate ourselves from its communion, so that we can truly sing with the church of the old dispensation: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Ps. 137:5, 6. Persevere and extend Thy church, O God of our salvation, and destroy all her enemies. Thy kingdom come.

And finally, this prayer means that we ask and long for the coming of the day of Christ, when all the elect shall have been gathered, when Christ shall appear in glory, the dead shall be raised in incorruption, the present world shall pass away, all the forces of darkness shall be destroyed forever, new heavens and a new earth shall be created, and the kingdom of heaven shall be established in everlasting perfection. "Thy kingdom come," means ultimately that we pray for the coming of Christ and for all that it implies. We know that He will come through wars and pestilences and famines and earthquakes. We know that the hastening of His day will mean that the measure of iniquity must be filled, that Anti-christ must be revealed, that we shall have to suffer for His name's sake. We know that praying for the coming of the Lord means that we must condemn the idealism of a sinful world, as if lasting peace can ever be established before His coming. All this is implied in the second petition, "Thy kingdom come."

We may well ask: are we prepared to pray this petition in all its implications?

No doubt, as we begin to understand the real implications of this second petition, we will confess that also in this respect we have but a small beginning of the new obedience. Often we are too earthly minded and too much engrossed in seeking the things that are below to send this petition to the throne of grace in spirit and truth. And therefore, well may we, even before we take this prayer on our lips, earnestly beseech the Lord to teach us to pray, and say: "Our Father Who art in heaven, give us grace to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

LORD'S DAY 49

Q. 124. Which is the third petition?

A. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" that is, grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring obey thy will, which is only good; that so every one may attend to, and perform the duties of his station and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.

Chapter One

The Will of God

The third petition is concerned with the will of God, and particularly with that will as it concerns us. The first petition concerned the name of God, and asked that that name might be hallowed, sanctified and glorified by us and in all the works of God's hands. It asked, therefore, for the highest realization of the purpose of God in all the works of creation, in heaven and on earth, which is the glorification of His name. The second petition is closely related to this, and prays for the coming of the kingdom of God. That kingdom is a spiritual rule of God. And the final coming of that kingdom implies that that rule of God shall be perfect, so that God will be all in all. Hence, in that second petition the believer prays that all the works of darkness may be destroyed, and that the perfect state of things in the new creation may be inaugurated. Again, the third petition is related to the first two: for, surely, it is only in the perfected kingdom of God that the glory of His name will be revealed in the highest sense of the word in Christ Jesus our Lord, and that His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. For this, therefore, the believer is taught to pray in the petition to which we must now call your attention.

God is a willing Being. He is not an impersonal power, like the wind, or a blind force, which we call "fate." On the contrary, He is an intelligent and volitional, personal Being. The will of God is the power of all-wise and intelligent determination in regard to every creature. It determines what that creature shall be in relation to Himself, as well as in relation to every other creature in the entire world. It also determines what that creature shall become, and decides upon the whole course of its development. And finally, it also determines what purpose that creature shall serve, and what it shall do. In the last sense of the word, the reference is more especially to the moral creature, that has a mind and will of its own, though other creatures are by no means excluded. And for that moral creature the will of God is expressed in the very heart of the law, "Thou shalt love me with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor for my sake."

As to the will of God, we must emphasize that it is entirely in harmony with His own Being. And therefore, God's will is sovereignly free: all He does He wills to do, and all He wills He sovereignly performs. There is the most perfect harmony between God's Being and His will. He never does anything involuntarily, still less by compulsion or contrary to His own will. With us this is quite different. Our actions may be distinguished into voluntary and involuntary actions. When I speak or sing or pray, I perform voluntary actions. But when I breathe, or when someone unexpectedly stabs a knife into my flesh, and I cry out, I perform actions that are quite involuntary. They are not determined by the choice of our will. Besides, we frequently do things which we would not like to do if the choice of them were left en-

tirely to the decision of our will, but which we decide to do nevertheless because necessity is upon us. Perhaps I do not feel like stepping out of bed in the morning, but rather would continue my slumbers for a while. But the alarm clock rings, and tells me that it is time to arise and to get ready to go to work. There is, therefore, a conflict between the desire and the final determination of my will. I may hate to go to war and to leave my country and my home, in order to fight on a foreign battle field; but I am drafted into the army by the government, and I really have no choice in the matter. I may dislike very much to lie on my sick-bed; and if it was up to my will, I would be up and doing. But God's will is different; and in His will I have to abide. Hence, there is often a conflict between our desires and the ultimate choice of our will. But this is not true of the will of God: in Him there are no involuntary actions or conflicts. His Being and His will and all His acts are always in perfect harmony with one another. God is a willing God in the absolute sense of the word. And His will is perfectly free: "He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." Psalm 115:3.

Because of the perfect harmony between the will and the Being of God, His will is always good. For God is good. His Being is the implication of all infinite perfections. For He is a light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. In God there is no evil. He is truth, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, love. And, because His will is always in harmony with His Being, and because there are never any conflicts in God at all, nor any involuntary actions, it follows that His will is always characterized by absolute perfection. Thus we read in Rom. 12:1, 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." God can never will anything sinfully. His will is good, all-wise, intelligent, just, and holy. It is eternally opposed to all evil. God abhors all iniquity. For He is a light. He dwells in the light. And He wills and has eternal delight in the light. This does not imply that sin and evil exist in the world without His will, as if they were powers in themselves, which He could not prevent, and over whose entrance into the world He had no control. For the will of God is also absolutely sovereign. And that God is absolutely sovereign, also with respect to sin and evil and all the powers of darkness Scripture teaches us very plainly. It declares in Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." And if because of this sinful man would answer against God, and say, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" there is ultimately only one answer; and that is expressed in Romans 9:20, ff.: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath

not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." But even when it is His sovereign will and counsel that evil shall exist, His will is always righteous and holy and good. For always He wills it unto the realization of the highest purpose, the glory of His own name. Even when in His eternal counsel He gives a place to sin and evil, it is always the object of His divine hatred, and never can it be said that God has delight in evil. The will of God is always good. H. H.

Schedule of Feature Articles for S. B. and Replacements for 1956

Date:	Feature Article & Author	Rubric & Author Replaced
Jan. 1	Should Art. 31 of the D.K.O. be Revised and/or Clarified C. Hanco	Voice of our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
Feb. 1	Common Or Individual Cup in Communion, H. Hanco	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
Mar. 1	The Concept Faith In The Old Testament, R. Veldman	Contending for the Faith H. Veldman
April 1	Should Elders Be Permanently In Office, G. Lanting	In His Fear J. A. Heys
May 1	The Sign Of The Son Of Man In Heaven, Matt. 24:30, J. McCollam	All Around Us M. Schipper
June 1	The Civic Responsibility Of The Christian, E. Emmanuel	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers
July 1	Lay Workers In Evangelism, R. Harbach	Day of Shadows G. M. Ophoff
Aug. 1	The Proper Use of the Term "Condition", C. Hanco	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
Sept.	The Difference Between The Pounds And The Talents In The Parables, R. Veldman	Contending For The Faith H. Veldman
Oct. 1	The Relation Between The Bible Instruction, G. Lanting	Voice of Our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
Nov. 1	Devil Possession, J. McCollam	All Around Us M. Schipper
Dec. 1	The Significance of Numbers in Scripture, E. Emmanuel	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers

The Committee for Feature Articles

H. C. Hoeksema
G. Vanden Berg

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

1.

It is our plan to write an exposition of the first four Chapters of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. In this issue we place our first installment. The reason for beginning this series of articles in this issue of the Standard Bearer is that we are now beginning with a new volume of our paper, Volume 32.

We will only write on the first four Chapters of this great letter of Paul, written evidently from the city of Ephesus, to the brethren and sisters in the city of Corinth. These four Chapters are really one section in which Paul deals with the very great evil of *schism and party-strife* that had taken a foot-hold in this church of the living God. Each one chose his own party. Some said that they were followers of Paul, others of Apollos, others again of Cephas (Peter) and finally there were also those who said they were of the party of Christ. The church of God in Corinth was a sorry spectacle torn and rent into various pieces by the influence of the "flesh" as it wars against the Spirit.

Now there is exceeding much and great instruction by Paul in these first Chapters whereby he does not only show in words, but in very deed how to seek and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Such instruction there was here for the brethren and sisters in the city of Corinth. But, thanks be to God, such instruction these Chapters also contain for us. Every Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. I Tim. 3:16, 17. The Scriptures are more than dogmatics which draws the lines of the truth. They always speak these lines of the truth of God in Jesus as this pertains to the actual and concrete situation at the time in the congregation. And thus they serve as the royal law of liberty before which we can stand, and should stand, so that we may behold our natural face in the mirror of the law.

Let us, in the study of these four Chapters from the pen of Paul to the church of God in Corinth, be swift to hear and heed, slow to speak and slow to wrath. Let none of us ever think that we are already perfect, but let us forget that which lies behind, look and press forward toward the mark of the upward calling in Christ Jesus, our Lord. For Paul is here not at all becoming involved in this brawl over personalities, of likes and dislikes for preachers, nor in the pretense of the Judaizers, who falsely claim Peter as their leader; he is not engaged in a battle of words (woorden-strijd) but he is placing the spiritual man in Christ under the nurture and admonitions of the Lord! By willingly placing our neck under this Word of Christ will we see the more excellent way

in the light of the Word which shines more and more unto the perfect day.

All that Paul writes about the Word of the Cross, being a power and wisdom of God unto salvation, is written against the background of this party-strife in the church. Let us not overlook this fact, lest we lose sight of the *practical*, the *reproving* thrust of Paul's letter. Paul thus leads the "spiritual man" to higher ground, to the lofty heights of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of the peace of Christ.

Bearing the foregoing observations in mind we will follow the argument and reasoning of the Apostle step by step.

* * * *

Let us then first of all take notice of the verses 1-3 of Chapter 1. We read the following in these verses: "*Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: grace unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Thus far the text.

Concerning these words from the Apostle's pen we would notice the following particulars:

1. That Paul here evidently places a healthy and truthful emphasis upon the fact that he is an *Apostle*, one who is sent forth by Jesus Christ himself, separated unto the Gospel. And this separation unto the Gospel was not at all the doing of Paul. He did not separate himself unto this work. He did not *choose* this task. Rather the necessity was placed upon him by Jesus Christ. In the original Greek we read: Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ. In that consciousness of his calling Paul writes and in this *calling* lies his strength.

2. Often Paul reminds his hearers of this great calling whereby he was separated unto the Gospel-ministry. How clearly and unforgettably his calling stands forth before his mind's eye. Repeatedly he related to his hearers, especially to those who opposed him in Jewry, of the calling that befell him at Damascus. In Acts 9:3-6 we read the following from Luke's pen concerning this calling of Paul: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who are thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do . . ." Here we see minutely how Paul was powerfully, efficaciously called into the service of Christ and into the ministry of the Gospel, to preach the Word of the Cross, which had been foolishness and an offence to him.

Yes, it had been none other, than "Jesus" who had appeared unto him. The one whom God had exalted exceedingly

high at His own right hand. It was Jesus, Jehovah saves. For He it is that had principally saved all His people from their sins, both from the Jews and the Gentiles. He had also saved Paul from His sins and here comes to prepare him, a "chosen vessel" to proclaim the Gospel of salvation; And this Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed Son of God in Zion, upon the hill of God's holiness. And unto this hill would all the nations flow. He is the one of whom Psalm 2 speaks, and upon the coming of this Christ, Messiah, the eyes of all Israel waited. He it is that would comfort his people. And He it is that separated Paul unto the Gospel. That glorious and important reality of Paul's calling is here placed by him on the foreground and it is the corner-stone of this letter, giving it authenticity.

3. And since this calling came to Paul from Christ himself, as the Lord of glory, it was also most emphatically a calling that came by "the will of God." The term *will* here evidently refers to the will of God's decree of which God speaks in Psalm 2, where he says, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are they that put their trust in him." It is this will of the decree of God that is the means by which Paul's calling of Christ is realized. In this will of the decree Paul is a chosen vessel. Acts 9:15. According to this word of Psalm 2, Paul kisses the Son upon the way, saying: What wouldst thou have me do Lord. And in this kissing of the Son, lest He be angry by a little against Paul and the entire congregation of Corinth, Paul writes. Such is the deep and solid background in the soul of the great Apostle when he takes up the pen in the city, where he had fought against the beasts in the name of God's Anointed. Through Paul Christ was claiming the heathen for His inheritance. Behold, then, the Apostle by the decree of God in His Son.

Such was the strength of Paul, who is empowered with great strength from God. He is an apostle indeed having seen Christ upon the way!

This Apostle writing in this consciousness of his calling, which befell to him, who was less than the least of all the saints, rightly called the church at Corinth: the *church of God!* She is in no sense the church of man. No man in Corinth can call her: *my church!* She has been bought and cleansed with the precious blood of the Son of God. And thus she is, indeed, the church of the living God. It is important to notice that Paul thus addresses the church in spite of the fact that there were factions in the church. A factitious spirit is not deeply conscious that the church is God's. It seeks the human interest of proud and contentious man. But this is cut off in one stroke by Paul in this "church of God at Corinth!"

Paul writes against the schismatic background in the

church of God in Corinth from the very beginning of his letter.

4. And it is, therefore, of importance to notice how this church is here addressed not in its present imperfect and schismatic manifestation revealing itself in party-strife, but rather as this *church of God* really is constituted of those who are "sanctified in Christ" and are "called saints" and are put in *one class* with all the saints in the world, called those "who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every place." Paul thus lifts this church out of its selfish seclusiveness and addresses her as a part of the great Holy Catholic Church in the world as she is being gathered out of every tongue, people and nation. And in this Church none is master, except our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. He is one Lord, and has one faith in the church, one love, one hope and one baptism. All in the church can and do claim him as their precious Savior. In this consciousness of believing an Holy Catholic Church the sanctified in Christ must live. As such a communion of saints they are *addressed*. Such is the concrete addressableness of the Gospel. Not a Gospel addressed to all upon condition of faith, but a Gospel message which is addressed to the "church of God" in Corinth, full of instruction, reproof, correction in righteousness, that the sanctified man of God may be made wholly ready unto every good work.

Such is Paul's method of addressing the Gospel to the church.

Such is Paul's "pedagogical approach!" He that readeth this epistle let him take note. A gospel which is proclaimed to all, yet is so addressed to all that it is directed to the "sanctified in Christ," the "called saints."

To such is also addressed the "grace and peace" which is from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Not grace is to all, if they believe, but grace is to "you" the "called saints" here in the mouth of Paul. Let men, who find fault with this presentation, know that they are not contending with a Protestant Reformed position, which is then "played up" to be more than being "Reformed," but that they are contending with the Holy Spirit, who thus caused Paul to write.

The Spirit has His own pedagogical approach.

When we should be foolish enough to concoct "another" pedagogical approach, which is not an *other*, then we do not do honor and justice to the church of God. And under the banner of seeking the "gathering of the Holy Catholic Church" we deny the very "church" we purport to gather. Then we seek to gather where Christ does not gather, and we seek to do this by "means" which are not the *Means of Grace* of Christ!

Only where this "approach" of Paul is maintained and emulated shall truly the schism be banished from God's church, and shall brethren dwell together in unity with all the saints in every place. Let us kiss the Son, lest He be angry with us for not honoring His *Means of Grace*.

(to be continued)

G.L.

CHOOSING A VOCATION

Happiness in this life is the chief goal of all men.

And happiness means peace and comfort, security, and freedom from all poverty and want. It means, then, the possession of material goods, a substantial bank account or adequate returns from investments, and a settled and guaranteed employment or occupation or profession, which in turn gives security with a view to material possession and the freedom from want.

Moreover, in order to attain to the happiness he desires, it is said that man has certain obligations and duties to fulfill in his social relationships, family, community, and to all men. One's own happiness is determined by and conditioned upon the happiness of all round about him. Hence, the happiness of others is essential to our happiness.

The question is, and always has been, how can we best attain to this highest of goals; complete happiness? And there are as many answers given to this question as there are philosophies in the world. And at one time or another we have met with these philosophies, whether they be philosophies in their own right or have their source behind a well-used and aromatic pipe.

There is, however, a generally accepted way in which happiness, to some degree at least, can be reached. And that is: to work. With few exceptions, no one attains to any degree of happiness, of peace, security and comfort without working. Fact is, there is no other way. One must work, have an occupation, be employed, or enter some profession in order to acquire material possession, financial security, etc. And to say that this is the accepted way is to glamorize an ugly fact. For, to the natural man, to work is a necessary evil from which he is always seeking to escape. A little knowledge of human nature and our present day will suffice to substantiate this fact. The determination to achieve a shorter working day, higher and guaranteed wages is but an attempt to escape from that which man hates, and which always hinders his reaching complete happiness, namely, work. He hates work. But, and he cannot escape it, work he must. There is simply no other way in which he can attain to even a measure of happiness. And, in a measure at least, he accepts the fact that he must work. Moreover, as long as our happiness and that of mankind in general can be reached only through work, man will, by his very desire for happiness, be driven and forced to labor under the sun.

With this in mind, every man and woman will, sooner or later in life stand before the reality that he must work. And this means that in one way or another one will have to choose a vocation, whether in the field of employment, a definite occupation, or in some profession. He is driven to this. For, to be a beggar is to be an outcast of society. To resort to a life of crime "does not pay." And to be a sluggard is, perhaps, the worst of all. Work is the only way out, therefore, be it that which we hate.

There is, however, a possibility to escape this evil of work

to some degree by choosing a vocation which best suits our abilities, temperaments, likings, and that best affords us a degree of happiness, security, peace of mind, and comfort. And, in order that society as a whole may thus develop and progress in its striving for the greatest degree of happiness possible, our young men and women are advised and guided in making the wisest choice from among the many and various vocations. Books are written, clinics are set up, and specialists are hired with a view to guiding our youth in making its choice for a life's calling. All possible efforts are being put forth in order to help the individual, as well as mankind in general in reaching out for an earthly heaven.

The purpose of this article is also to give advice and guidance to young men and women. The title of this article implies that we have something to say on the matter. However, let it be understood that we are not endeavoring to enter into the field of vocational guidance as it is related to any specific vocation. We will set forth some points that will be of help to those choosing a vocation, but these will only give the general direction in which our choice should be made. And, these points are those generally accepted by those who specialize in this field.

Nevertheless, we have something to say in the matter of choosing one's life work. For we have in mind, not youth in general, nor even part of the group known as youth, but very particularly the youth of the church. Our concern is the christian young man and young woman. What we have written above concerns man in general and by nature as he lies in the sphere of darkness and in the bondage of slavery. That man, as he is by nature is a slave. He is a slave to his own desires and lust. And, because he is a slave to his own desires and lust, he must work. He is in bondage and is forced to work. Though he may hate it ever so much, he must work nevertheless. And, by attempting an escape from the drudgery of work through choosing his own vocation, he finds that also this attempt is and always will be a degree of slavery. He can never escape work, hence, he always remains a slave. And to guide and advise in the sphere of this slavery in which he must always work is futile. Never, regardless of guidance or advice, can he be anything but a slave to sin and death.

Not so, however, for christian youth. For, first of all, the christian young man and woman is free. That is, he no longer seeks his happiness in the material and earthly things. To him the happiness of the world is no happiness at all, but death, both temporally and eternally. It is vanity, and to seek it is to sin against God.

And to sin against God is but to add to our bondage and slavery and to end in eternal unhappiness. But the freedom of the child of God is in his being able to serve and love his God, and that with heart, mind, soul and strength. That is to the christian youth both freedom and happiness. And to attain to that is the highest good, both in this life and in the life to come.

Then, too, the christian youth is not forced against his

will to work, and therefore, to choose a vocation. Fact is, he wants and desires to work, and of his own will chooses a vocation in life. He knows that God has given him gifts and talents, and with these, opportunities, with and in which he may work. And knowing too, that true and eternal happiness lies in using all the gifts, talents and opportunities to the glory of his God, and in His service, the christian young man or woman chooses that vocation for which God has equipped and qualified him. Moreover, knowing that only in the sphere or vocation for which he is fit he can serve God to his utmost, he uses every possible means to find that specific vocation. He wants it, desires and wills to work in that vocation and in no other. By the same power of God's grace that has set him free from bondage and slavery, he labors, even in the sweat of brow, freely and willingly, in the sure hope that it leads to a complete and heavenly rest, and eternal happiness.

Hence, material possession, financial security, freedom from want and poverty are not the things which first of all decide our choice of vocation. Though they are to be considered, it is only with a view to enabling one to further serve in the vocation chosen. Regardless of what kind of work, or vocation one finds himself equipped for, or what men in the world may think of him, or even how his fellow brethren in the church may classify him, he that finds a vocation in harmony with his qualifications given of God, and labors diligently and faithfully therein, his bread and sleep shall be sweet, and he shall be happy for he is at peace with his God. And that peace, which passeth all understanding, shall give him rest, heavenly rest even while he labors.

The choice of a vocation is therefore, important. Our young people may not haphazardly fall into any vocation that comes their way. In fact, it is possible that God has equipped us for something that we, by nature, do not like. In His infinite wisdom and ever governing providence our talents and gifts may qualify us for something which offhand, we would not consider. Though this is not often the case, the fact that God has equipped us, and given opportunities in which we may serve Him, means that we must intelligently inquire into these things and thus also ascertain His will concerning us. And only in this way can we have the assurance that we shall be able to live in our Godgiven freedom, and be happy. Lust, covetousness, and discontentment are no longer with us, and we learn to be content.

To be sure, and to our shame and discredit, there is room for improvement in these things among our present day youth. We find men who cannot find "it," the position or vocation suitable to and harmonious with their qualifications. Others are known to take the first job that comes along, or leaving one vocation enter into another because it pays more. And though time may rectify some of these things, it is unhealthy and even sinful for the people of God. Much of the fault, however, may be placed at the door of parents and our school. Little, or no guidance and advice is given. Then too, our youth, in many cases at least, see a

job as a necessary evil. Here, even the church may be guilty of failure to instruct the youth in its Godgiven freedom and calling. And our youth must bear the fruits of these mistakes and failures, and sins.

Youth, the springtime of strength and vigor, and even determination, but also of inexperience and therefore often of foolishness, is left with the idea in its mind that it must work or else. And only through its own mistakes can it find its place, God-given place, in the world.

In conclusion, then, parents and school should seek to give the necessary guidance in helping the young man or woman in choosing his or her specific calling and vocation. This does not mean that our youth must take a calling which the parents deem best. The youth must choose, and is free to choose. And having brought up the youth in the knowledge of his true freedom, a little wisdom added will go a long way.

And you, young men and women, Christian youth, seek to choose that vocation which harmonizes with YOU. It means that you will choose. It means that you will know yourself, physically, mentally and above all spiritually. It further means, that you will seek a knowledge of the vocational world, employments, occupations, professions. It means that you will, in harmony with your freedom, your spiritual life, your abilities and capabilities, put aside all and every vocation that will not allow you to exercise and enjoy your freedom to serve Him in love, with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

And we add, seek competent advice and guidance, for, as one authority on the subject stated it: not only is the variety of present day occupations bewildering, but the occupational changes themselves are sufficient to render intelligent decision impossible without help.

G. Lanting

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, October 5, 1955, in the Fourth Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. At this meeting Candidate Herman Hanko, who has accepted the call to the Hope Prot. Ref. Church, will be examined.

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

The classical committee has arranged the following schedule for the examination of Candidate Herman Hanko at the next session of Classis East, October 5, 1955:

Dogmatics, Loci 1 and 2, Rev. G. Vos.

Loci 3 and 4, Rev. C. Hanko.

Loci 5 and 6, Rev. M. Schipper.

Knowledge of Confessions, Rev. J. Mc Collam.

Knowledge of Scripture, Rev. R. Veldman.

Controversy, Rev. G. Lanting.

Practica, Rev. G. M. Ophoff.

Sermon Critics, Revs. Mc Collam and Lanting.

The Classical Committee,

Rev. C. Hanko, Sec.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

THE PAPACY (by Philip Schaff).

The episcopate, notwithstanding the unity of the office and its rights, admitted the different grades of country bishop, ordinary city bishop, metropolitan, and patriarch. Such a distinction had already established itself on the basis of free religious sentiment in the church; so that the incumbents of the apostolic sees, like Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, stood at the head of the hierarchy. But this gradation now assumed a political character, and became both modified and confirmed by attachment to the municipal division of the Roman empire.

Constantine the Great divided the whole empire into four *praefectures* (the Oriental, the Illyrian, the Italian, and the Gallic); the *praefectures* into *vicariates*, *dioceses*, or *proconsulates*, fourteen or fifteen in all; and each diocese again into several provinces. The *praefectures* were governed by *Praefecti Praetorio*, the dioceses by *Vicarii*, the provinces by *Rectors*, with various titles — commonly *Praesides*.

It was natural that, after the union of church and state, the ecclesiastical organization and the political should, so far as seemed proper, and hence of course with manifold exceptions, accommodate themselves to one another. In the East this principle of conformity was more palpably and rigidly carried out than in the West. The council of Nice in the fourth century proceeds upon it, and the second and fourth ecumenical councils confirm it. The political influence made itself most distinctly felt in the elevation of Constantinople to a patriarchal see. The Roman bishop Leo, however, protested against the reference of his own power to political considerations, and planted it exclusively upon the primacy of Peter; though evidently the Roman see owed its importance to the favorable cooperation of both these influences. The power of the patriarchs extended over one or more municipal dioceses; while the metropolitans presided over single provinces. The word *diocese* passed from the political into the ecclesiastical terminology, and denoted at first a patriarchal district, comprising several provinces (thus the expression occurs continually in the Greek acts of councils), but afterward came to be applied in the West to each episcopal district. The circuit of a metropolitan was called in the East an *eparchy*, in the West *provincia*. An ordinary bishopric was called in the East a *parish*, while in the Latin church the term (*parochia*) was usually applied to a mere pastoral charge.

The lowest rank in the episcopal hierarchy was occupied by the *country bishops*, the presiding officers of those rural

congregations, which were not supplied with presbyters from neighboring cities. In North Africa, with its multitude of small dioceses, these country bishops were very numerous, and stood on an equal footing with the others. But in the East they became more and more subordinate to the neighboring city bishops; until at last, partly on account of their own incompetence, chiefly for the sake of the rising hierarchy, they were wholly extinguished. Often they were utterly unfit for their office; at least Basil of Caesarea, who had fifty country bishops in his metropolitan district, reproached them with frequently receiving men totally unworthy into the clerical ranks. And moreover, they stood in the way of the aspirations of the city bishops; for the greater the number of bishops, the smaller the diocese and the power of each, though probably the better the collective influence of all upon the church. The council of Sardica, in 343, doubtless had both considerations in view, when, on motion of Hosius, the president, it decreed: "It is not permitted, that, in a village or small town, for which a single priest is sufficient, a bishop should be stationed, lest the episcopal dignity and authority suffer scandal; but the bishops of the *eparchy* (province) shall appoint bishops only for those places where bishops have already been, or where the town is so populous that it is considered worthy to be a bishopric." The place of these *chorepiscopi* was thenceforth supplied either by visitors, who in the name of the bishop visited the country congregations from time to time, and performed the necessary functions, or by resident presbyters, under the immediate supervision of the city bishop.

Among the city bishops towered the bishops of the capital cities of the various provinces. They were styled in the East *metropolitans*, in the West usually *archbishops*. They had the oversight of the other bishops of the province; ordained them, in connection with two or three assistants; summoned provincial synods, which, according to the fifth canon of the council of Nice and the direction of other councils, were to be held twice a year; and presided in such synods. They promoted union among the different churches by the reciprocal communication of synodal acts, and confirmed the organism of the hierarchy.

This metropolitan constitution, which had gradually arisen out of the necessities of the church, became legally established in the East in the fourth century, and passed thence to the Graeco-Russian church. The council of Nice, at that early day, ordered in the fourth canon, that every new bishop should be ordained by all, or at least by three, of the bishops of the *eparchy* (the municipal province), under the direction and with the sanction of the metropolitan. Still clearer is the ninth canon of the council of Antioch, in 431: "The bishops of each *eparchy* (province) should know, that upon the bishop of the metropolis (the municipal capital) also devolves a care for the whole *eparchy*, because in the metropolis all, who have business, gather together from all quarters. Hence it has been found good, that he should also have a precedence in honor, and that the other

bishops should do nothing without him — except that which pertains to the supervision and jurisdiction of their parishes (i.e. dioceses in the modern terminology), and the provinces belonging to them; as in fact they ordain presbyters and deacons, and decide all judicial matters. Otherwise they ought to do nothing without the bishop of the metropolis, and he nothing without the consent of the other bishops." This council, in the nineteenth canon, forbade a bishop being ordained without the presence of the metropolitan and the presence or concurrence of the majority of the bishops of the province.

In Africa a similar system had existed from the time of Cyprian, before the church and the state were united. Every province had a Primas; the oldest bishop being usually chosen to this office. The bishop of Carthage, however, was not only primate of Africa *proconsularis*, but at the same time, corresponding to the proconsul of Carthage, the ecclesiastical head of Numidia and Mauretania, and had power to summon a general council of Africa.

Still above the metropolitan stood the five Patriarchs (having discussed in the foregoing the organization of the hierarchy: country bishops, city bishops, and metropolitans, Philip Schaff now proceeds to discuss the rise of the patriarchs — H.V.), the oligarchical summit, so to speak, the five towers in the edifice of the Catholic hierarchy of the Graeco-Roman empire.

These patriarchs, in the official sense of the word as already fixed at the time of the fourth ecumenical council, were the bishops of the four great capitals of the empire, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople; to whom was added, by way of honorary distinction, the bishop of Jerusalem, as president of the oldest Christian congregation, though the proper continuity of that office had been broken by the destruction of the holy city. They had oversight of one or more dioceses; at least of two or more provinces or eparchies. They ordained the metropolitans; rendered the final decision in church controversies; conducted the ecumenical councils; published the decrees of the councils and the church laws of the emperors; and united in themselves the supreme legislative and executive power of the hierarchy. They bore the same relation to the metropolitans of single provinces, as the ecumenical councils to the provincial. They did not, however, form a college; each acted for himself. Yet in important matters they consulted with one another, and had the right also to keep resident legates at the imperial court at Constantinople (this is a far cry, is it not, from the Roman Catholic claim of today that the pope at Rome is the successor of the Apostle Peter: notice that each of these patriarchs acted for himself — H.V.).

In prerogative they were equal, but in the extent of their dioceses and in influence they differed, and had a system of rank among themselves. Before the founding of Constantinople, and down to the Nicene council, Rome maintained the first ecclesiastical and political importance. After the end of

the fourth century this order was modified by the insertion of Constantinople as the second capital, between Rome and Alexandria, and the addition of Jerusalem as the fifth and smallest patriarchate.

The patriarch of Jerusalem presided only over the three meagre provinces of Palestine; the patriarch of Antioch over the greater part of the political diocese of the Orient, which comprised fifteen provinces, Syria, Phenicia, Cilicia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, etc.; the patriarch of Alexandria over the whole diocese of Egypt with its nine rich provinces, Egyptus prima and secunda, the lower and upper Thebaid, lower and upper Libya, etc.; the patriarch of Constantinople over there dioceses, Pontus, Asia Minor, and Thrace, with eight and twenty provinces, and at the same time over the bishoprics among the barbarians; the patriarch of Rome gradually extended his influence over the entire West, two prefectures, the Italian and the Gallic, with all their dioceses and provinces.

The patriarchal system had reference primarily only to the imperial church, but indirectly affected also the barbarians, who received Christianity from the empire. Yet even within the empire, several metropolitans, especially the bishop of Cyprus in the Eastern church, and the bishops of Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna in the Western, during this period maintained their autocracy with reference to the patriarchs to whose dioceses they geologically belonged. In the fifth century the patriarchs of Antioch attempted to subject the island of Cyprus, where Paul first had preached the gospel, to their jurisdiction; but the ecumenical council of Ephesus, in 431, confirmed to the church of Cyprus its ancient right to ordain its own bishops. The North African bishops also, with all respect for the Roman see, long maintained Cyprian's spirit of independence, and in a council at Hippo Regius, in 393, protested against such titles as *princeps sacerdotum*, *summus sacerdos*, assumed by the patriarchs, and were willing only to allow the title of *prima sedis episcopus*.

When, in consequence of the Christological controversies, the Nestorians and Monophysites split off from the orthodox church, they established independent schismatic patriarchates, which continue to this day, showing that the patriarchal constitution answers most nearly to the oriental type of Christianity. The orthodox Greek church, as well as the schismatic sects of the East, has substantially remained true to the patriarchal system down to the present time; while the Latin church endeavored to establish the principle of monarchical centralization so early as Leo the Great, and in the course of the middle age produced the absolute papacy.

H. V.

"Therefore every one who in his preaching has kindly extolled the excellence of human nature, has received great applause from almost all ages."

Calvin's Inst., Book II, Chapter I

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article V. Who teach: That the incomplete and non-decisive election of particular persons to salvation occurred because of a foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, godliness, which either began or continued for some time; but that the complete and decisive election occurred because of foreseen perseverance unto the end in faith, conversion, holiness and godliness; and that this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, for the sake of which he who is chosen, is more worthy than he who is not chosen; and that therefore faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election unto glory, but are conditions, which, being required beforehand, were foreseen as being met by those who will be fully elected, and are causes without which the unchangeable election to glory does not occur.

This is repugnant to the entire Scripture, which constantly inculcates this and similar declarations: Election is not out of works, but of him that calleth. Rom. 9:11. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," Eph. 1:4. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you," John 15:16. "But if it be of grace, it is no more of works," Rom. 11:6. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son," I John 4:10.

Quite correctly did Rev .T. Bos in his "The Canons of Dordrecht Explained," observe in connection with this article (translation from the Dutch mine, H.C.H.): "The divine order is turned about by the Remonstrants. That order is that according to the Scriptures all is of God. According to the Remonstrants God waits in His doings upon that which man does. Logically reasoned through, they must come to this, that the glory of heaven shall one day consist in the glorification of man."

In this fifth article of the Rejection the fathers expose completely the diabolical scheme of the Arminians whereby they seek to overturn any idea of a "particular and definite election" while deceitfully clinging to the expression as such. For an analysis of this fifth article certainly brings to light the fact that the Arminian election is neither "particular and definite," nor, in any real sense, election.

This article treats the distinctions in election mentioned in Article I of the Rejection. And it deals specifically with the twofold distinction which the Remonstrants made in the

particular and definite brand of election. At the same time we must bear in mind their distinction between an election unto faith and an election unto salvation, the latter being, again, either decisive or non-decisive. In the first place, according to the Arminians, there is a particular and definite election which is "incomplete and non-decisive." This is an election: a) Unto salvation; and, b) occurring because of a foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, godliness. And in the second place, there is, according to the Arminians, a particular and definite election which is "complete and decisive." This election occurs because of foreseen perseverance unto the end. And this foreseen perseverance is "the gracious and evangelical worthiness" which distinguishes the chosen as more worthy than the unchosen. Hence, the Arminian rejects the idea that faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are fruits of the unchangeable election to glory, and substitutes the notion that they are conditions and causes of the unchangeable election to glory.

It is to be noted that the Synod does not present any argumentation against this view, but merely presents the view itself in order then to quote Scripture against it. There is not even any exegesis of the Scriptural passages offered; Scripture is simply quoted. Evidently the Synod felt that a factual presentation of the Arminian view would so evidently expose its faults that a simple literal quotation of Scripture would be quite sufficient to contradict this error and to condemn it in the eyes of all. And it must be admitted that in this the fathers were quite correct, and that their choice of Scripture for such literal contradiction of the Arminian error could not have been happier.

Nevertheless, it is not amiss in this connection to call attention to some of the salient points of this erroneous presentation, as well as to the connection between it and the preceding presentation in Article IV. We may note the following:

1) Whereas in Article IV the Arminian is presented as speaking of an election *unto* faith, conditioned by the right use of the light of nature, etc. here he speaks of faith itself as a condition of election. God foresees, sees ahead of time, who will believe, who will convert himself, be holy, and be godly; and these He chooses unto salvation.

2) However, this election unto salvation is not decisive and complete. It implies that those chosen unto salvation have salvation, but do not necessarily have it permanently. They have it, but do not have it. And hence, after all they have nothing. It is entirely possible that though they believe, convert, are holy and godly, they will nevertheless be among the damned in hell.

3) Notice the very limited and materialistic conception of salvation that is implied in this view. Salvation merely means going to heaven instead of to hell. It is overlooked or deliberately ignored that faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness are integral elements of salvation, and that he who possesses them actually possesses salvation itself.

4) There is also an election unto salvation that is decisive and complete. This is conditioned by foreseen perseverance unto the end. God foresees not only who will believe, but also who will keep on believing; not only who will convert, but who will persevere in conversion; not only who will for a time be holy and godly, but also who will be holy and godly to the very end. And these latter he chose completely and decisively unto salvation. They are the only ones ultimately who will be saved. Thus the way of salvation is literally strewn with conditions until the moment of our death. For, mark you, the condition of perseverance implies that one persists in faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness until he has breathed his last. If his dying sigh is one of unbelief, he still goes lost. And if God foresaw from eternity that that dying sigh would be one of unbelief, that man would not be included in the complete and decisive election unto salvation. He would be elect, but still non-elect; he would have salvation, but still not have it. The matter is in doubt all the way, and the decision is not God's but man's. Nor must we be confused by the adjective "absolute" as applied in Article II to this complete and decisive election. It does not mean that this election is unconditional, for the condition is perseverance. It merely means that this is the last of that series of elections, and that after this there are no more conditions. Hence, the least that can be said is that the Arminian realized the folly of imposing conditions on a corpse, even though he does not hesitate to impose them on those dead in trespasses and sins.

5) This foreseen perseverance unto the end is the "gracious and evangelical worthiness" of the elect. This expression refers again to the supposed grace that lies in the fact that the act of faith and its incomplete obedience is accepted as of as much value as complete obedience. And it is called "evangelical" by the Arminians, that is, "gospel worthiness," in distinction from law-worthiness, or work-worthiness. Cunning distinctions these are, which enable the Arminian still to speak of grace and of the gospel, though he actually denies both.

6) Furthermore, it is to be noted that the Arminian, according to the fathers, posits *conditions* rather than *fruits* of election, and that these conditions are both *prerequisites* (required before hand), and indispensable causes of election. In the view of the fathers, therefore, the concepts *condition*, *prerequisite*, and *cause* are identical, and stand over against the concept *fruits*.

Once more we cannot refrain from calling attention to the very obvious consequence of the Synod's teachings in this article, namely, that the condemnation of the error of conditional election requires the condemnation of the error of conditional salvation. No more than election, which is the divine thoughts of our salvation, is dependent upon what God foresees of human thoughts about salvation, no more is salvation, which is the realization of those divine thoughts, dependent upon those human thoughts and desires. In all of Scripture and in all of the Canons election and salvation are

so intimately connected, yea, identified, as the fountain and the stream, the cause and the effect, that if the one is unconditional, the other must needs be.

Finally, we call brief attention to the Scripture passages cited in this article. Rom. 9:11, in its connection, teaches literally that the divine purpose of election stands not of works, but of Him that calleth. This is therefore in literal contradiction of the Arminian idea of foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, godliness, and the perseverance in these as the basis of election. The Arminian says: election stands of works, not of Him that calleth. Acts 13:48 teaches plainly that faith is the fruit of election unto eternal life, not the condition. Eph. 1:4 teaches the same of holiness. John 15:16 emphasizes that the choice of election is not man's, but God's. Rom. 11:6 emphasizes the mutual exclusiveness of the principles of grace and works, in contradiction of the Arminian, who confuses grace and works. And I John 4:10 teaches that the love of the God of our Salvation is first, sovereign, independent, and free, while the Arminian, even though he puts these conditions in God's foresight, nevertheless makes man first in all the process of election and salvation. Plainly this Arminian view is repugnant to Scripture.

Article VI. Who teach: That not every election unto salvation is unchangeable, but that some of the elect, any decree of God notwithstanding, can yet perish and do indeed perish. By which gross error they make God to be changeable, and destroy the comfort which the godly obtain out of the firmness of their election, and contradict the Holy Scripture, which teaches, that the elect can not be led astray. Matt. 24:24; that Christ does not lose those whom the Father gave him. John 6:39; and that God hath also glorified those whom he foreordained, called and justified. Rom. 8:30.

This error that is here rejected is simply a consequence of the errors that have already been rejected, and the rejection of it is likewise a consequence of the rejection of the preceding errors. We can, therefore, be very brief in our treatment of this sixth rejection.

Principally the error rejected here is the error of changeable election, or the error of the denial of unchangeable election. We have already seen that the Arminians had many kinds of election. And of these many kinds of election there was only one election which was unchangeable. And the one unchangeable election was that which was conditioned by perseverance unto the end. Hence, there was no certainty, no decisiveness, and no completeness in the decree of election unto salvation until that condition of perseverance unto the end, that is, unto and including a man's dying breath, was foreseen as fulfilled. All other election is changeable. And the change is the only one conceivable: the change of election into reprobation. Hence, in the Arminian view, — and note the pointed criticism implied in the phrase already, — "any decree of God notwithstanding," some of the elect both can and do perish.

(Continued on page 19)

DECENCY and ORDER

The Election of Elders

B. Procedure

We have already pointed out that the congregation must be given an active part in the choosing of her office bearers. The consistory, too, has an important duty to perform in regard to the election. Only when these two are combined and cooperatively executed does this matter take place according to the institution of Christ. That the whole procedure must be under the control, guidance and supervision of the consistory is clearly stipulated in Article 22 of the Church Order: "The elders shall be chosen by the judgment of the consistory (body of elders) and the deacons . . ." This statement does not abrogate the rights and duties of the congregation in the matter which might be the case if it were interpreted to mean that the consistory and deacons do this exclusively. That, however, is not the case.

If it were so, Article 22 would violate a sound principle of Reformed Church government; would deny what Scripture teaches concerning the appointment of office-bearers in the church; and, would agree with the heretical Romish conception of the offices and its teaching concerning the minority of the believers. But fortunately this is not so. No individual, be he the pope, or consistory has the inherent authority to appoint men to the offices in Christ church. Men are called thereunto by God through the church itself and, therefore, this authority to appoint belongs strictly speaking to Christ alone and He is pleased, according to His revealed ordinance, to exercise it through the church. And when we speak here of the church, we do not refer exclusively to the offices, nor simply to the general office of believers, but to both. Through both Christ calls and appoints men to serve Him as elders and deacons of the church. To properly carry out the election of office-bearers there must be a mutual relation of cooperation between consistory and congregation. Each must perform their respective parts and the absence of either makes the election void by virtue of its having been done contrary to the institution of Christ. Where both are properly performed, those chosen are the true appointees of Christ, under whom the church is duty bound to submit itself.

If this sacred principle were borne in mind always, there would be less danger of the flesh projecting itself into these matters. Jealousies, envies, and evil strivings which are frequently evident would be reduced. Some men with excellent capabilities are modest and shun from the calling. Others, oft times with less capabilities, are openly bold and seek to impose themselves upon the church by using external influences to gain the desired position. This is not as it should be. It is certainly a true saying that, "If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," but that desire

must always be subjected to the will of Christ and those who have such a desire must, therefore, patiently await the call of Christ through the church. It is conceivable that the desire for the office is motivated by carnal and fleshly reasons and then the above saying is no longer true.

The twenty-second article of the church order does not delegate to the consistory more authority than it should exercise in this matter, nor does it nullify the rights of the congregation. It speaks of the duties of both in the correct relation to each other. It proceeds from the Scriptural principle that the consistory is the ruling body of the church, vested with authority by Christ, and, therefore, in the matter of elections is called to exercise sound judgment in selecting prospective candidates for the offices; to exercise proper control and give good guidance so that the elections may be conducted in decency and good order. For the welfare of the church this supervision is of paramount importance. And there is wisdom in such an arrangement. Generally speaking the office-bearers of the congregation know better than the individual members the needs of the church and the qualifications of those who are best able to serve those needs. There is less likelihood of one being placed on nomination simply because he is a blood relative. Although consistories are not above reproach and they, too, frequently err, there is less danger of unqualified men being nominated for the offices when these nominations are made by a smaller group of select men than if they were made by the broader gathering of the entire congregation. And, it eliminates the possibility of one who is under silent censure being placed on the nomination. It is properly the consistory's function which they must always exercise with much prayer, extreme carefulness, greatest diligence, seeking undividedly the welfare of the church and not that of the individual.

For this reason, what is known as Free Election, or in the Dutch, *Vrije Stemming*, is (with the exception of instances where a congregation is first organized and there is as yet no consistory) always to be condemned. According to this method the congregation is called together and, without a limited nomination of approved men, the members vote freely until the desired number of office bearers are chosen from out of the entire congregation. This method is wrong on especially two counts: (1) It invalidates the authority of the consistory to govern the election, and (2) it vests in the congregation more than its proper right. Its dangers are many. It is very possible that a member under silent censure is chosen to the office under this procedure. It is quite likely that the unqualified forward member who exerts personal influence will more readily be chosen than the modest, spiritually qualified member under this arrangement. It should, therefore, never be used.

The question may be asked as to what system then is to be regarded as proper? In answering this it may be pointed out that more than one procedure is possible. We do not have to abide here by a hard and fast method. Article 22 of the church order presents two possibilities and it is

quite conceivable that both of them could be modified in various ways without destroying their principle correctness so as to make still more possible procedures feasible. In general we may say that any method is correct and, therefore, usable that includes the proper supervision and labor of the consistory and extends to the congregation its rightful duties. We mention here the following:

(1) The consistory gives the congregation opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons. This is the equivalent of making a general nomination. To this the consistory reserves the right to add other names if desired. From this nomination the consistory then proceeds to choose the number of elders and deacons needed and presents their names to the congregation for approval. If there are no valid objections, the ordination of those chosen by the consistory can take place.

(2) The second method is quite similar to the first except that instead of choosing the exact number of office bearers needed, the consistory selects from a previously made nomination by the congregation, double the number needed and from these the congregation proceeds to elect one half. Also here approbation is required before installation can take place.

(3) The third method is that which is customarily followed in our churches and, I believe, also in other Reformed Churches both here and in the Netherlands. It consists in this. The original nomination, consisting of twice the number needed for each office, is made by the consistory. This nomination is presented to the congregation for approbation. If there are no objections the congregation is called to choose one half of those nominated and they in turn are then ordained in their respective offices.

There is much to be said in favor of this last mentioned method. Although all three methods are principally correct, the last-named has the decided advantage of being more systematic and orderly. It is a very workable arrangement. Further it places the whole matter under the control of the consistory and at the same time gives the congregation the right to exercise its proper part. If desired the provision of method No. 1, "that the congregation be given opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons," may also be incorporated into this method and then it is as complete as it could possibly be.

C. Regulations

Article 22 stipulates that the election of office bearers shall take place "according to the regulations for that purpose established by the consistory." Many consistories do not have such regulations but are simply governed in this matter by the customs of the past. This might involve them in some technical difficulties and, therefore, it is better to have a set of written rules which may be amended or revised from time to time as necessity dictates. In their, "Church Order Com-

mentary," Monsma and Van Dellen offer a suggested list of such rules. Most of these rules concern simple parliamentary procedure. We will not quote them here but offer the following suggestions to those consistories that may desire to formulate a set of written regulations:

(1) These rules should be as concise as possible. Involved and complicated rules lead to more confusion than no rules at all.

(2) They should include matters of procedure which are not directly stipulated in our church order or in the decisions of our churches pertinent to the various articles. For example the rules need not include the stipulation that "Nominations be announced on two successive Sundays" as that is already a decision of our churches under Art. 22.

(3) These rules should cover every foreseeable difficulty that may arise in the voting process. For example, what constitutes a majority vote; what to do in the event of a tie vote; how to treat proxy ballots; etc.

(4) These rules may also stipulate the procedure to be followed in making nominations in the consistory.

G.V.D.B.

(Continued from page 17)

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

Imagine! A decree of God, Who is really God, who is eternal, unchangeable, Whose counsel shall stand, and Who performs all His good pleasure,—such a decree is not of enough power to prevent the elect from perishing! Such is the caricature of God and His decrees which the Arminian invented when he manufactured the myth of a changeable election!

This error is rejected on two grounds: 1) It makes God changeable,—a charge which is so obvious that it needs no elucidation. 2) It destroys the comfort which the godly obtain out of the firmness of their election. Also this is plain. Since the only unchangeable election is that conditioned by perseverance unto the end, and since all other kinds of election are changeable, all the assurances of Scripture, such as those quoted in this very article, are absolutely valueless. The Arminian must take his Bible and insert after all such passages the words: "But this is changeable." None of the elect in this life are ever able to say: my election is firm, because God's decree is unchangeable.

The Scripture passages also need no elucidation; they speak for themselves. And it is clear without any exegesis that all these passages contradict the Arminian error of changeable election.

H.C.H.

It was a choice saying of Austin, "Every saint is God's temple, and he who carries his temple about him, may go to prayer when he pleaseth."

ALL AROUND US

Early Lost, Early Saved?

Such is the title of an article written by the Rev. Henry N. Erffmeyer appearing in *The Banner* of September 9, '55. This title he borrowed from a little book he read which was written by George W. Bethune and published in 1846. Rev. Erffmeyer remarks that the only difference between his title and that of the little book is that he places a question mark (?) behind it, while Bethune uses a colon (:) and intends that his little book offers "an argument for the salvation of infants."

Though Rev. Erffmeyer does not want the conclusions of the little book, namely, that all infants who die in infancy are saved, he nevertheless leaves the impression that he does believe that all infants of believers who die in their infancy are saved. If this is his conception, a conception held by others of his colleagues, we emphatically disagree. We have had members of the Christian Reformed Church, one of whom I remember distinctly as a Sunday School teacher, who came to us with the question concerning the salvation of infants, and informed us how she was in disagreement with her pastor who taught the Sunday School teachers that all children of believers who die in infancy are saved, on the ground of Canons I, 17. And who has not heard others of their ministers preach funeral sermons that definitely assured bereaved parents of the salvation of their children? Though we agree with Rev. Erffmeyer that there is no basis for believing that all children who die in infancy are saved, we wonder whether or not he believes that all children of believing parents who die in infancy are saved. His article seems to leave that impression. According to Erffmeyer the covenant is a way to salvation, and believing parents may be comforted in the death of their infants with the promises contained in the Word of God. But Rev. Erffmeyer does not say wherein this comfort consists. Is it that these believing parents may believe that their infants are saved? With this we could never agree.

We have not the space for placing his entire article, nor is this necessary. Here is the gist of his article. Rev. Erffmeyer claims that the question: Are all children who die in infancy saved? is more academic than practical. "A child dies. A minister is called to conduct the funeral or officiate at the committal service. Shall he offer comfort? I believe the matter of imparting consolation depends not first of all upon the answer to the question whether the child is saved or not, but whether the parents are believers or not. For really what comfort is there for an unbelieving parent to know that his or her child is saved? Salvation really means very little for such a person; if it did, his attitude would be greatly different. All that a minister can do in such a case is to present a clear witness of the gospel and leave the question of the salvation of the child alone. On the other hand,

a child of believing parents dies. Then the minister has every right to impart comfort on the basis of the promises contained in the Word of God."

Rev. Erffmeyer maintains that the Scriptures are silent respecting the salvation of children outside of the covenant of grace. Writes he: "It need hardly be stated that we find no direct or indirect answer in Scripture concerning the salvation of children outside the covenant of grace. Upon other doctrines which must be considered in respect to salvation Scripture speaks very plainly. We think of election, total depravity, and the necessity of regeneration. Every time an infant is baptized in one of our churches we are reminded: 'That we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, so that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except we are born again.'" When I read this paragraph the thought came to me: I wonder what Rev. Erffmeyer would say about the passage found in I Kings 14 where we read of the death of the son of Jeroboam and especially verse 13 "And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." Perhaps if Rev. Erffmeyer considered this passage he placed Jeroboam inside of the covenant of grace, or he does not consider the word of the Lord in verse 13 to have reference to the child's salvation but only to a decent burial. But in the light of the above paragraph I would like to know his explanation of this passage.

I pass over two parts of his article in which the Reverend calls attention to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran views on this question, as well as to the cautiousness of Reformed men to give an answer to this question. Rather I would quote his own observations on this question.

"Although I believe that the question cannot be settled definitely on the basis of Scripture, nevertheless we should not lose sight of several important teachings of the Word of God. Salvation is always of pure grace, sovereignly originated and sovereignly bestowed. The only way God directs his grace and works it sovereignly in the heart, according to Scripture, is the covenantal way. If there is the wide exception in the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, then there must be this *additional* way of unrestricted mercy.

"There is also the matter of the indispensability of the Word. In no place in Scripture are we led to believe that the Holy Spirit works salvation effectually in those areas where the gospel has not been preached, or is not about to be preached. Now, to say all infants dying in infancy are saved, regardless of where or when, surely goes counter to this established rule. Then the Hindu mother does a good work—we could almost say a priestly work—when she throws her infant into the Ganges River; for she really throws him into the arms of God and into life eternal! Would then that all heathen babies were sacrificed!

"Moreover, faith is necessary unto salvation. Even though infants cannot believe, yet the children of believers can be said to be in the line of faith as covenant children. In respect to others: they are not planted in the soil of the covenant where faith is present. The Word is not nigh them (Romans 10:8-15).

"To regard all infants dying in infancy as saved leads to an atomistic conception of salvation. The organic unity of the redeemed Church is disrupted; a great sector of the redeemed then would be individual infants who would bear no covenantal relationship with others.

"In view of these various considerations I believe we should continue to speak with hesitancy regarding the salvation of all infants until the day we shall know with certainty. And in the meantime it is for us to bring the gospel out to the ends of the earth in order that the covenant may be established with many and salvation may come to numerous households—all to the glory of our great covenant God!"

One Year After Billy Graham

In the September, 1955 issue of Reader's Digest appears an interesting article entitled: "Do Billy Graham's 'Crusades' Have Lasting Effect?" written by Stanley High. This writer traveled to England expressly to find an answer to this question.

He tells us that "a year had elapsed since the three months' Crusade at London's Harringay Arena in 1954 which, with associated meetings, resulted in 38,000 decisions for Christ. In scores of interviews with churchmen of many denominations, with church editors, laymen, converts, I sought the answer to these questions: What has happened to the Crusade's converts? What remains of the dedication and zeal which were stirred among so many preachers and churches? Was it all a passing show? These are the answers I got, supported by a mass of facts and firsthand testimony: A surprisingly large number of the Crusade's converts are carrying on; the dedication and zeal aroused at Harringay, far from waning after a year, are on the increase; Billy Graham, in the words of one of England's most widely known religious leaders, 'has aroused an appetite for religion which puts before us an opportunity such as we have not had in this century to claim the soul of the nation for God.'"

Mr. High's investigation and inquiry among the converts in every station of life resulted in conclusions quite contrary to the prediction of Billy Graham's critics. In the words of one of these critics "a tiny majority are genuinely converted . . . No great harm, no great good, mostly just another show." And, "A London newspaper columnist, after telephone inquiries to 20 Anglican vicars, estimated that 'of outsiders, that is, genuine converts' not more than ten percent were still in the church."

However, when Mr. High contacted the converts them-

selves and the ministers of the churches to which these converts have come, the results appeared much more impressive. Mr. High found that sales personnel interested only in finding at Harringay some conversation material for a sales trip, or communists who went to Harringay only out of curiosity, were completely swept off their feet, made decisions for Christ that lasted, and their lives now are filled with testimony for Christ.

According to Mr. High "The *British Weekly* poll revealed the remarkable fact that in the months after the 1954 Crusade the number of converts continued to increase. Many people, exposed to Billy Graham's message but undecided at the time, 'moved slowly and thoughtfully to the Christian faith over a period of months . . . ' 'Before Harringay', says Sir Frank Medlicott, prominent London lawyer and Member of Parliament, 'if you wanted to avoid embarrassment, you didn't talk about religion save, occasionally in an abstract way about an abstract God. Now, thanks to Billy Graham, the average layman, like me, can talk without embarrassment to other laymen about the personal reality of Jesus Christ. A more remarkable fact is that so many laymen are doing just that.'"

What shall we say about all this? People ask us occasionally: What do you think of Billy Graham? Are not the results of his campaigns greatly exaggerated?

We repeat what we have often said and still say to those who ask us these questions: It is not for us to judge Billy Graham's personal sincerity or integrity. Nor would we say that the Lord will not use a man like Billy Graham to reveal to some of His people, walking in sin and error, His Word. But we deny that he is God's evangelist. And his work cannot be called mission-work. Our reason for saying this is the fact that Billy does not represent the Church, but the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. In other words, his work does not go out from the church. And according to Scripture Christ sends out His ambassadors through the church, not an independent business association. When I read an article such as the one in Reader's Digest, I am more convinced than ever that Billy's work and its results are an effective agency for realizing and strengthening the apostate church. When the Federal Council of Churches can find in the Billy Graham movement an object of praise, I have enough.

M.S.

Eastern Ladies League

The Eastern Ladies League meeting will be held in our Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church on Thursday, Oct. 20, 1955, at 8 p. m. Rev. H. H. Hoeksema will be our speaker for the evening. Ladies make your plans to join us in an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. Gerrit Pipe, Vice-Secretary.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Anniversary Address*

Beloved in the Lord, we are assembled here in joyful mood to commemorate the fact that our brother, Rev. Herman Hoeksema, has completed forty years of service in the ministry of the Gospel. In the name of all our people, I heartily congratulate our brother, and our ardent desire is, that, the Lord willing, several more years may go by before the Lord takes him home. This is our prayer. And I feel certain that it is a permissible prayer, seeing that I subordinate it to the Lord's will. A permissible prayer, I say. This would not be the case if the physical condition of our brother were such as to compel us to conclude that he has only a few more days to live. My impression is, that, though he is sixty-nine years old, he is still a rather young person in the point of view of his physical and mental vitality. He can still do a lot of walking and swimming. And in the pulpit he is still surprisingly vigorous. His mental powers have not diminished noticeably. His sermons are still characterized by that excellency that has always made it a joy to listen to them. He still writes as clearly and logically and forcibly and as edifyingly as always. This is the more remarkable in view of his severe illness of recent years. For a while he was completely paralyzed. He could not read, he could not talk, he could not think. He could hardly utter a sound. He could not move a muscle. But the Lord had mercy upon him and upon us all. He gave him a most remarkable recovery. And therefore I repeat, the prayer that the Lord may prolong his life for several years is a permissible one. For it seems that this is the Lord's will. At least it does not appear that it is not the Lord's will. And these final years of our brother's life may turn out to be as productive as any of his previous years in the ministry of the Gospel.

The committee did not limit me by indicating what I should speak on in connection with this occasion. So I am free to choose. Let me delve a little in the past and make some appropriate remarks as I proceed.

I first came to know about Rev. Hoeksema when I became a student in Calvin. He, too, at that time was a student in Calvin. But he was five years ahead of me, so that we were in school together for about this length of time. During these years we had no contact with each other, except for one year during which he was my teacher in English literature. I also recall that, when I was in the seminary, he was asked by the students to lecture before them on the subject of common grace, which he did. At the time he was residing in Grand Rapids as pastor of his present charge then the Christian Reformed church of Eastern Ave.

It was while I was in the seminary that the Jansen controversy ran its course. Prof. Jansen gave instruction in the Old Testament branches. The trouble with his instruction was that it was characterized by rationalistic tendencies. Our brother, Rev. H. Hoeksema, was the only one who was capable of making this plain to the churches. Others had tried it but had failed. And by others, I mean the four professors in the seminary, the late professors Volberda, Heyns, and TenHoor, and Prof. Berkhof, and some ministers including Rev. H. J. Kuiper, the editor of the Christian Reformed Banner. As a result of our brother's exposures, Prof. Jansen was deposed from his office of professor of theology.

During all the time of this controversy, I made no personal contacts with Rev. Hoeksema. I was esteeming him at a distance. His good fight for the truth in the Jansen controversy had endeared him to my heart. His singular abilities as a theologian and controversialist—abilities that had been called into action especially by the Jansen controversy—won for him my admiration, respect, gratitude and trust. It caused him to stand out in my mind as the only able champion of the truth in the churches, as the only one of all the ministers including the professors, who really had right understanding of things. From that day on he was my man, although as yet he knew nothing about it, as I not once had set my foot on his doorstep.

By his exposures of the wrongness of Prof. Jansen's instruction—exposures that, as was said, had resulted in his deposition—our brother, Rev. Hoeksema, had rendered the churches an incalculable service. Yet, what happened. Let us see what happened. The friends and supporters of Jansen, of which there were several in the churches, were furious with Hoeksema, as could be expected. And it became revealed that they actually vowed to rid the churches of him. And they also succeeded with their three points—the famous "Three Points" of the synod of 1924. And what was so startling is, that, in achieving their aim, in realizing their purpose, they sought and secured the cooperation of those very persons—ministers and professors—who had stood shoulder to shoulder with Rev. Hoeksema during the Jansen controversy, and who all along had run his doorstep flat, so to say, urging him to keep up the good fight by all means.

This, I say is startling, amazing. For the "Three Points" are Arminian. The doctrine contained in them runs contrary to the truth of the Scriptures as formulated in our Reformed Confessions. The first "point" teaches a favorable attitude of God also toward the reprobated. As taken in connection with the ground upon which it was made to repose, it teaches, does this "point" that the preaching of the Gospel is grace also for the reprobated. The idea of the second and the third "Points" is, that through the operation of God's grace in him, the reprobated can and does perform works that have true ethical, spiritual value in the sight of God. This is a plain denial of the Scriptural doctrine of man's total depravity. Fact is, that in adopting the "Three Points" the Christian Reformed churches through their represent-

*Address delivered on the occasion of the commemoration of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's completion of 40 years in the Gospel Ministry.

atives as assembled in Synod officially subscribed and introduced into their churches the entire conditional theology of the Arminians. This is what their doing amounts to. And what is also so astounding is, that the articles of the "Confession" that were quoted in support of these "Points" teach the very opposite from what is taught in these "Points." They teach our doctrine, do these articles. What it comes down to is, that we were deposed from office for the very reason that in our teaching and preaching we were adhering strictly to the Scriptures and the Confession.

Rev. Hoeksema was expelled from the communion of Christian Reformed churches, because he refused to do what before God he might not do, namely subscribe, preach and defend the doctrine of the "Three Points." His consistory was similarly dealt with for its refusal to place their pastor before these points. The late Rev. Danhof and his consistory and the undersigned with his consistory were deposed by Classis West for the same reason. For conscience sake it was also impossible for Danhof and for me to subscribe, preach and defend the doctrine of "The Three Points." And it was impossible for our consistories to place us before these points.

But I must not get into this any deeper. Allow me but one remark. The Christian Reformed churches seem to be going places. They have a school with a large enrollment, staffed with a faculty that numbers as many as fifty members, I believe. And they are always at it, adding school-building to school-building because of the continual influx of new students coming from everywhere. They have missionaries in the foreign field, and a goodly number of so-called gospel chapels. The voice of their radio minister is carried over the air to almost every nook and corner of our land. For it is heard on I don't know how many radio stations. They have extended themselves as a denomination deep into Canada, where among the immigrants many churches have been organized bearing the name Christian Reformed. But in the sight of God their whole huge program must be devoid of real use and meaning. For in 1924 they corrupted and forsook the truth and replaced it by the carnal and false imaginings of Arminius, and thereby they became just another denomination of Arminian churches. Certainly, they still have the truth but only on the books: it is no longer being heard in their pulpits—the truth of God's sovereign grace and of His sovereign election and reprobation. And unless they repent of their abomination and return to the truth, they have no future. The day will dawn but not for them as a denomination. The Christian Reformed churches are not to be envied but to be pitied only.

The sole calling of the church is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ as constrained by love, in order that Christ through that proclamation may gather out of the world His people. When the church, a church, corrupts the Gospel of Christ, it tramples its calling and then like salt that has lost its savor it is good for nothing but to be cast on the dunghill to be trodden under foot by men. And then it may still be doing

big things, but it walks in a vain show. And the motive of all its doings can be none other than the desire to become big in the eyes of the world, to gain recognition, to acquire for itself name and fame with men.

But to return to our brother, the Rev. Hoeksema. How true it is that most of the years of his ministerial career have been years of storm and strife for him, a fight for the truth. But the Lord was with him and sustained him through all these years. Take our most recent fight for the truth in the bosom of our own churches. How wonderfully the Lord raised him up from a bed of illness that he might lead us also in this fight. God is God and none else. This was again the issue, as it was in 1924. It is always the issue essentially. How wonderfully the Lord has wrought through our brother through all the years of his ministry. I think now of his labors as a pastor of a large congregation, of his labors as professor in our school, of his labors as writer and lecturer. We have a copious Protestant Reformed literature, the bulk of which came from his pen. Indeed, we are grateful to God for what He gave us in the person of our brother.

Fifteen years ago we were commemorating the fact of his having completed 25 years in the ministry of the Gospel. He then joined in our prayer that it might please the Lord to allow him to labor still another twenty-five years in our midst. If the Lord answers that prayer, he will still be with us, laboring in our midst, for another ten years. May it indeed please the Lord to prolong his life for that many years and even for more than that many years.

A final word about ourselves as a denomination of Protestant Reformed churches. It is twenty-nine years ago, I believe, that as a denomination of Protestant Reformed churches we were brought into being. Our beginning was small. We numbered but three churches. Through the years other Protestant Reformed churches were organized, but not so many. Certainly our growth was not phenomenal. As a result of our most recent fight for the truth, we are again nearly as small as we were in the beginning. But if only we are spiritual and love the truth, our smallness will not disturb and trouble us at all, seeing that the cause of our smallness is that we abided in the truth by God's mercy. More must be said. If we are spiritual, we will even rejoice because of our smallness, seeing that it betokens that we have kept the faith and that therefore the favor of God is upon us.

And let us not imagine that we have no significance just because we are small. It is we, Protestant Reformed, that hold and confess the truth in its purest form, that is, as uncorrupted by Arminian leaven. And therefore our influence is bound to be felt particularly by all that calls itself Reformed.

As to our smallness, let us consider that the matter of our numerical growth is God's business only and not ours, that our calling is to abide in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Let our prayer constantly be for grace to walk worthy of this calling—the calling wherewith the saints are called.

For unless we abide in the truth, we, too shall have no future as churches.

And let us not boast in ourselves but walk humbly before His sight as always considering that apart from His redeeming grace, God's believing people are but vile, ill-deserving and condemnable men, that even as saints of God they still are continually polluting their way before Him by their sins, seeing that in this life they have but a small principle of the true obedience in them, and that therefore the reason that "the sons of Jacob," whoever these sons may be, however faithful in this life by His mercy, are not consumed, lies not in them certainly but in God only: He is Jehovah, He changes not, Mal. 3:6. This is but one of the sides of the truth that we hold. Let us hold it and hold it dear, believe it with all our heart and confess it before God continually without ceasing also with respect to ourselves by all means, lest in judging others, we ourselves be judged and condemned of God.

G.M.O.

Missionary Notes

Once more the undersigned is back in Loveland, Colorado, where he is laboring, and is ministering unto the spiritual needs of the Protestant Reformed Hope Church of Loveland, Colorado. Yesterday, Sunday, September 18, I might again teach Sunday School, and preach twice in their midst. And it was a real joy to preach the Word in their midst. And it was also received, as it truly is, the Word of God, by this congregation.

Since the last Sunday in May of this year, the undersigned has constantly been with this congregation personally, or in close contact with them. And it has been a great joy of heart for the undersigned to be with these brethren and sisters in the Lord.

The reason?

Because they are fundamentally Reformed in faith, and desire to be such also in their walk and life.

When I say that they are "Reformed" I mean that they are such who hold to the teachings of Calvin and Ursinus, as this is laid down in the Heidelberg Catechism. And the truth of the Gospel concerning our only comfort in life and death is very precious to these brethren and sisters. Fact is, that they are very conversant with the content of the Catechism, and that, especially the older members, can recite the Catechism verbatim in the German language. And, what is very heartening, is that they insist that their children also memorize the Heidelberg Catechism. This is done in the English language. And these children do not come to their Catechism Class unprepared to recite.

Let me tell you, dear reader, something about this Catechism Class.

There are about fifteen catechumens in this class, ages

6-13 years. They all learn the Heidelberg Catechism. And they are always present. And not only are the children present, but the parents and grandparents, and uncles and aunts too. The number present are about forty to fifty souls in catechism.

The same is true on Sunday morning when we conduct "Sunday School." Then too these same fifteen children are present, but the entire congregation is present also. The undersigned makes ample use of the blackboard back of the pulpit in our "church," which is a Lutheran church school-building. These brethren and sisters enjoy this "Sunday school" very much. We are studying the book of Genesis. And the children memorize one stanza from the Psalter each week. The entire congregation is learning to sing from the Presbyterian Psalter which is ours. They affirm that they find these songs "sehr Schriftmässig," very Scriptural. It is a joy of heart for me to hear the eldest elder, who is eighty years young, sing "The Lord's my Shepherd I'll not want" So young and old are learning to sing the Psalters and they soon find their beautiful, German melodies among the collection of Psalms in our Psalter.

So all in all the undersigned enjoys a rather busy life here in Loveland. He may meet with the entire congregation the equivalent of four times per week.

Often these brethren and sisters voice the sentiment that they wish that those who cast them forth from their own church-building here in Loveland might hear the sermons preached by the (5) ministers, ex-students of the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff. These five ministers are the Rev. Herman Mensch, Leola, South Dakota, Rev. C. Hanko of First Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., Rev. G. Lubbers, Grand Rapids, Mich., Rev. H. H. Kuiper, Redlands, California, and Candidate-elect Herman Hanko of Grand Rapids, Mich. What strikes them is that these men all are Reformed and they all alike hew to the line of Scripture and the Heidelberg Catechism. It is the same joyful sound in all of this preaching. Then too they have never met Rev. H. Hoeksema and Rev. G. M. Ophoff, yet they feel that they know these teachers from their hearing these ex-students preach. They have heard Rev. H. Hoeksema four different times from tape recordings taken in First Church. One brother remarked to me that the preaching of Rev. H. Hoeksema was clear and lucid, and that one certainly understood the text when this minister was finished with his sermon.

I believe that it will be a service to the congregation here in Loveland to hear more of our ministers and become acquainted with them.

Next time we shall try and tell something about the difficulties these brethren and sisters have been experiencing during the past year because they could not do ought else but cling to the faith of the fathers as they had learned to love it.

G.L.

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST HELD IN DOON, IOWA, SEPT. 14, 1955

Our late summer meeting of Classis West, which met in our Doon church, was a very enjoyable meeting. In the first place our classis is now constituted of eight churches instead of five churches, and this certainly adds to the meeting. It is true that one of our churches was not represented at the meeting. However, it is so much more enjoyable to gather with delegates from seven churches than from four churches. Secondly, a wonderful spirit of oneness was evident throughout the gathering. Thirdly, the elder delegates certainly took a very active part in the proceedings throughout the meeting. And, fourthly, we had many visitors throughout the day. Among these visitors were also Rev. H. Mensch and four or five of his people from South Dakota.

An important item of business at this meeting of Classis was the examination of Rev. R. Harbach. The brother gave a very good account of himself and we are happy to write that the classis declared him worthy of a place in our churches. He had accepted the call to our Lynden church and it is our prayer and desire that he may soon be able to go to Lynden and begin his labors there.

Another important item of business concerned the brethren in Pella, Iowa. This evoked considerable discussion. Brother Vander Molen of Pella was present at our meeting. The classis was convinced of the fact that, although the number of the faithful is very small in Pella, the return of these brethren from their schismatic way was certainly the way of the Lord. And the Classis decided to reconstitute the Protestant Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa, and to authorize the classical committee to act accordingly. May the Lord continue to bless the small but faithful group in Pella, Iowa.

Church visitors were appointed to visit our churches of Classis West. Revs. Kuiper and Heys were appointed to visit the churches of the far West, and Revs. Heys and H. Veldman appointed to visit the other churches.

The vacant church at Doon, Iowa, received the following classical appointments:

September 18—H. Kuiper	December 11—G. Vanden Berg
September 25—J. Heys	January 8—H. Veldman
October 2—H. Veldman	January 15—H. C. Hoeksema
October 16—G. Vanden Berg	January 29—E. Emmanuel
October 30—H. C. Hoeksema	February 12—H. Veldman
November 13—H. Veldman	February 26—J. Heys
November 20—J. Heys	March 4—R. Harbach
November 27—E. Emmanuel	March 11—H. Kuiper

In connection with the classical appointments the classis decided to advise the congregation of Doon to request the consistories of Oak Lawn, Randolph, and South Holland to permit their ministers to supply Doon also the following Sunday when they fill their classical appointments there.

After treating a matter in closed session, thanking the ladies of Doon for their wonderful services, and deciding to meet in Edgerton, Minnesota, next March, the classis adjourned and Rev. Vanden Berg closed the gathering with thanksgiving to God.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk.