

# THE STANDARD

*Beauregard*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXII

NOVEMBER 15, 1955 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 4

## MEDITATION

### THANKSGIVING

"And the Lord smelled a sweet savour . . . ."

Gen. 8:21a

". . . an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

Eph. 5:2b

If, a few days hence, we wend our way to the house of God in order to celebrate Thanksgiving Day, we should be certain that God smells a sweetsmelling savour!

He did in the case of Jesus Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 5:2; and therefore He did also in the case of Noah when he offered burnt offerings. That is so, even though chronologically Noah came first with his sacrifice. And Jesus approximately 2300 years later. Jesus is ideally first. He is both the firstborn of every creature, and the firstborn from the dead. That is so, even though, with regard to the first, many millions of men were born before He appeared on earth, and even though, with regard to the second, others had been raised from the dead before He appeared in Joseph's garden.

Jesus is always first.

Such was the goodpleasure of the Lord God.

He should and He will have the preeminence.

And so things will have to stand with regard to your and my celebration of Thanksgiving Day.

Take heed that there be a sweetsmelling savour on that day.

So that God may rejoice. He is very particular.

\* \* \* \*

A sweetsmelling savour!

That is figurative language.

And the meaning is rather clear.

It means that God looks from heaven upon the worshiper and is pleased with his worship.

Yes, the things that confront us on the day of thanksgiving are the things that pertain to worship, praise, adoration, giving of thanks and giving glory to God.

And that is of the utmost importance.

Important, because the enumerated actions of worship, praise, adoration, etc., are the one and only purpose of all things, be they creation or recreation.

If anything is plain from the Word of God it is this: God willed and determined all things unto one purpose, and that purpose is that the whole of the Universe, grouped round about Jesus Christ, should stand before His blessed face in a new heaven and in a new earth, and everlastingly tell Him how inexpressibly wonderful and glorious He is.

And, incidentally, such action of worship of God, etc., is heaven for man.

Knowing this, you will also know that Thanksgiving Day is an anticipation of the day when we shall finally see God's eternal purpose fulfilled. And you will take heed that all your action on that day be a sweetsmelling savour unto the Lord.

\* \* \* \*

Our worship of God a sweetsmelling savour.

But if we so conceive of Thanksgiving Day we realize that every day ought to be Thanksgiving Day!

And so it is. For, as was said before: there is only that one glorious purpose of God: the Universe should stand everlastingly before Him, praising and singing and making heaven and earth musical forever.

Our entire life ought to be Thanksgiving Day.

Our whole life ought to be a sweetsmelling savour to God.

And in order to tell one another this wonderful truth, it is not amiss to have a special day in the year, the last Thursday in November.

Attend to a text which we find in the midst of the statutes and laws for Israel: "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." Lev. 6:13.

There always must be a sweetsmelling savour unto the Lord.

Indeed, the world cannot exist without this Thanksgiving Day, now using the name of our national institution as I explained it a while ago. I mean the *eternal* Thanksgiving Day. The fire of the adoration of the Godhead may never go out. It must send its sweetsmelling fragrance upward,

ever upward to God, so that He may haply rejoice on His throne.

We are to send the smoke of such incense in the early morning, at noon and when evening lengthens the shadows. We are to send the smoke of the fire and of the sacrifices upward in the watches of the night. Everywhere, always, under any and every circumstance are we to give thanks to our God. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I Thess. 5:18.

And so we will go to the house of God and adore Him whether we are rich or poor, whether we have a plentiful crop or famine, whether it is war or peace, whether we are healthy or sick, whether we live or die. In everything we will give thanks to God.

At all times, from our birth to our death, we will send a sweetsmelling savour heavenward to our God and Saviour.

You ought, you must write above your whole life: My Thanksgiving Day.

\* \* \* \*

Yes, but who is sufficient unto these things?

I wrote it above this meditation: ". . . and the Lord smelled a sweetsmelling savour . . ." I quoted there the instance of Noah who took of the clean beasts and offered burntofferings upon the altar.

So in that instance it is plain that he succeeded to worship God.

But in the next chapter I read the sad story of his drunkenness and shame.

But the fire must be a perpetual institution. Moreover, the Lord is not satisfied with half work. Our adoration of Him must be perfect, for He is perfect.

The question arises: How did Noah succeed in worshipping God at all? And why did he not succeed all the time?

Yes, I find it in me to sometimes worship Him. But it is very faulty at best. And I am persuaded that Noah in that one instance worshiped God only in principle, just as you and I.

But most of the time I do not worship Him.

And when I do worship Him, such wonderful work is disfigured by gross imperfection.

How could God smell a sweetsmelling savour even on the part of Noah?

How could Jehovah be satisfied with that *partial* worship of Noah?

We, preachers, often rail at the world for their atrocious Thanksgiving on the Day that is set apart yearly, and has become a day of eating and drinking. I have done it myself.

And it is true: it ought to be condemned.

They think at best of the things of this earth, and thank Him for all the money and possessions and peace, and a thousand other things, all positive and of this earth only.

And, at their worst manifestation, they make of the day a day of rioting and drunkenness.

But how about ourselves?

How do you feel about your adoration? On the Thanksgiving Day, and on all the other days of the years of your lives?

And then we admit: it was only a small principle of the new obedience.

Sometimes we pray God for forgiveness of our good works.

It always ought to be a *perfect* sweetsmelling savour.

\* \* \* \*

For God is God.

God cannot accept a faulty work. He condemns a faulty work as well as a completely wicked work. God is never satisfied with anything less than perfection. His own Divine Life of infinite perfections postulates that.

You may be assured of this: when God smiles at something or someone, such a thing or person is perfect.

And that brings me to the second text which I wrote above this meditation: ". . . an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

The priest there is Jesus.

You see, there was no man left anymore.

All of us, rather than answer to that one and only purpose of God, have turned every one to his own way. That last clause, my dear reader, is in one word horrible. That is you and I and every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.

And "turning to his own way" means that we are a race of evil-doers. Worshiping devils and the things of the earth. Setting up the things that are mere creature, and calling them God, prostrating ourselves before them and committing abominations.

That is true of the elect and of the reprobate. That is simply human, that's the human thing to do. And we do it wantonly, by nature.

No, when God saw if there were a man, a worshiper, He found none at all. "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 14:3; and 53:3.

Just live as you came forth from your mother and father, and you commit abomination.

And you never do worship.

But when there was no man left, God called Himself a Man, the man Christ Jesus. He is the only perfect Man there is. And He proved it.

He came, and suffered, and died. And rose again, and is now seated at the right hand of God.

And throughout His life and death He worshiped.

You see, God had ordained Him from everlasting to be the Worshiper who would come in the stead of God's elect people.

And there He stands in the fulness of time and there He stands unto everlasting, with hands upraised to the heavens (that is why His name is Juda, from 'yad, hand, raised in praise and adoration) adoring the Godhead in our stead. He

did so even in hell, standing under the burning rays of the wrath of God.

Yes, Jesus gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweetsmelling savour . . . .

He does that now and will do that everlastingly as the perfect Man. The purpose of God of which I spoke earlier is fulfilled in Him.

And He does that *through* all His people.

Through regeneration and conversion, through faith and sanctification.

And so you see Noah standing before God and worshipping.

And so you see the multitude that keeps the holy day.

And when we see our sin and guilt, we whisper Jesus' name, and offer unto God our offering of a broken heart.

Yes, sometimes we weep hot tears of repentance to God on our Thanksgiving Day. And He hears, for Jesus' sake.  
G.V.

### Announcement

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, will sponsor a lecture at their temporary meeting place (13th St. and Lincoln Ave.) On December 2, 1955, the Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the subject, "The Covenant Challenged and Defended." The public is invited.

Yours in Christ,  
The Holland Men's Society  
B. Windemuller, Secretary.

### IN MEMORIAM

The consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, hereby wishes to express its sincere sympathy to our fellow office bearer, elder M. Gaastra, and his family in the recent death of his father-in-law,

MR. J. R. VANDER WAL

May the God of all wisdom give the comforting knowledge that all His doings are for the good of His Own, to all the grieving relatives. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, sowing precious seed . . . shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bearing precious sheaves" sanctified by the Spirit.

In name of the Consistory,  
Rev. H. H. Kuiper, President  
Mr. T. Feenstra, acting clerk

If God would limit redemption so as to fit man's proud evaluation of self and the neighbor, heaven's grand chorus would dwindle to a solo and, for want of accompanists, even that would have to be a cappella. H.H.K.

### THE STANDARD BEARER

*Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August*

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. G. Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

RENEWALS: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

*Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

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## EDITORIALS

### Based On Untruths

Interesting also is point 14 of Lindsey's basis of appeal to the Supreme Court. It reads as follows:

"The trial court erred in not finding and decreeing that the fact that defendants were not permitted to appeal from the decision of Classis of October 6, 1953 was illegal and of no force and effect."

What is the truth concerning this matter?

The May classis, 1953 decided that De Wolf and the elders that supported him should apologize or be suspended and deposed from office. Thus they advised the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church.

At its June 1 meeting this advice was adopted by the consistory. De Wolf and his guilty elders were asked to apologize. They asked for time to consider the matter. This was done in the presence of the classical committee appointed for this matter.

At the meeting of June 22 it became clear that they refused to apologize in accordance with the advice of classis and the decision of the consistory of June 1.

Hence, according to the same advice of classis and the same decision of the consistory of June 1, they were already suspended and deposed. And this decision was carried by the consistory in conjunction with that of the Fourth Church on June 23, 1953.

In October 1953 the classis set its seal of approval on this action, refused to recognize the would-be delegates of the deposed consistory members and their suspended minister, and seated the delegates from the legal consistory.

Now, in court they claimed that they appealed to synod and that their appeal was rejected.

That is absurd, for the following reasons:

1. They had refused to submit to their suspension and deposition, but continued to act in their office. By their own action, therefore, they placed themselves outside of the communion of Protestant Reformed Churches. They could not be seated as delegates to classis, nor could they appeal to classis against their suspension and deposition, for the simple reason that they had not first submitted but took matters in their own hands.

2. Still, although they could not appeal to classis, they could have notified classis that they would appeal to synod. Classis surely has no power to reject an appeal to synod. Only synod itself can have that power. Even if classis would have refused to consider their appeal, they certainly could have notified the stated clerk of synod of their appeal. And synod would have decided whether or not their appeal was acceptable. This we did in 1924. But they never did. There was no appeal of theirs at the synod of 1954.

3. Before that synod ever met they organized already a

new classis. They thereby expressed themselves that they were outside of the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches. How, then, can they possibly maintain that they appealed their case to synod?

Fact is that they never did appeal. Fact is, too, that they could not appeal because of their organization of a separate classis.

The truth of this matter is exactly as I stated it in my pamphlet "True or False" which, in part, was also read by the defendants in court. There I stated:

"False. But the case is not yet finished and will not be finished until the general synod has acted on the appeal the deposed officebearers are going to make."

This I claim to be false and, at the same time state the truth of the matter as follows:

"True. They have no appeal. And I do not think that they seriously intend to appeal. What they, to my mind intend to do, is to organize a new church formation. That they have no appeal is plain from the following:

"a. Article 53 of the Church Order demands that all officebearers sign the Formula of Subscription.

"b. That Formula of Subscription states that in case of discipline all officebearers shall have the right to appeal but 'until a decision is made upon such an appeal, we will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed.'

"c. They did not submit and acquiesce. Hence, they cannot appeal. The matter is definitely settled."

Nevertheless, in court the defendants maintained emphatically that they did appeal to synod and that the classis rejected their appeal.

But this is not true as is abundantly evident from the court records.

That Classis East did not attempt to deny their right of appeal to synod, but simply refused to treat their protest to classis is evident from a letter they received from the stated clerk of classis which reads as follows:

"Dear Erring Brethren:

"This is to inform you that the protests filed by you with the Stated Clerk of Classis East, October 6, 1953, have been duly received for information in the January 6, 1954 session of Classis East.

"We further wish to inform you that said protests are now out of order since you have been declared to be schismatic and have severed your ties with Classis East and thus with the Denomination of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

"Therefore said protests are not treated by Classis East.

"Praying that the Lord may give you grace to see and to confess the sin of your way, I remain

Your brother in the Lord,

George C. Lubbers, Stated Clerk."

It is very evident from the above letter that the classis did not even attempt to deny them the right of appeal to synod, but simply refused to treat certain protests of the schismatics.

The same is, evidently, true in regard to certain alleged appeals to synod of Kok c. s.

Let me quote from the printed court record.

"I quote from pp. 384ff.:

"THE COURT: While we are on that, I would have the Rev. De Wolf clear my mind. That is, it seems to be your position that the action of classis at this October meeting in regard to Kok and two other—was there?

"A. Yes, Knott and Blankenspoor.

"THE COURT: Yes, took away from them their right to appeal to synod. I don't see how by any action that you can take away a man's right to appeal. If you appeal from their decision or you appeal from their action, how can you take away from them the right to appeal?

A. May I explain that?

"THE COURT: That is just what I would like to know.

"A. All right. You see these men appeal this thing. They did appeal it, and it was decided in a later meeting.

"THE COURT: Who did they appeal to?

"A. They appealed to this same classis of October 6. They appealed the decision that was made by the classis in May and June in respect to the heretical statements. They appealed that decision to the classis of October 6, the continued meeting of October 6.

"THE COURT: How could they do that? How could you appeal from that? I can't understand how you figure you can appeal from the action of a body right back to the same body. You can move to reconsider their former action. I can see how you can do that.

"A. Your Honor, you ask them to reconsider, and if they do not agree, if they do not change, if they feel that they can't change their decision, then you can send their decision on to the majority body, the synod. You do that all in one appeal, so you see it goes back to classis again with the request if they cannot agree with you on that, you ask them at this time that then they will send it on the synod. Then it is supposed to appear before the synod, and the synod is supposed to judge the case.

"Q. You say they lost their appeal?

"A. They lost the appeal because when they refused to submit and bind their conscience by a ruling made by this classis, they were declared to be outside of the association, and therefore they had no voice, and the classis would not accept the appeal and send it on to synod.

"THE COURT: Classis has to accept their appeal and forward it to them?

"A. That is correct.

"THE COURT: You can't go to the other body with their appeal?

"A. No, sir, it goes through the classis to the synod.

"THE COURT: Is there anything that says they tried to do that?

"A. I am not sure, your Honor, whether they made the attempt. I believe they did, but I know that the appeal they made against the ruling of the classis of May and June, that

that appeal was ruled out on the basis that they were no more in the association of churches."

Did you ever hear of such nonsense? Did you ever hear of a classis having the power or even assuming the power to prevent anyone to appeal to synod? Did you ever hear of the nonsense that an appeal to synod must first be accepted by classis and that only through classis it can go to synod?

I never did.

The rule for appeal is, according to a note in the Church Order by Article 31, as follows:

"Appeal from a decision by any ecclesiastical assembly must be made before the first following meeting of the major ecclesiastical assembly appealed to and notice sent of this appeal to the clerk of the minor assembly. The interested parties must be informed of every decision made."

This is clear, is it not?

De Wolf, c. s. simply would have to inform the classis that met in January that they would appeal to the synod of 1954, enclosing a copy of their appeal.

Classis could never prevent them.

Fact is, however, that they never did appeal.

Their claim in court is simply an untruth.

H. H.

## AS TO BOOKS

*The Heidelberg Catechism*, (An Exposition) Vol. IX, *Love thy Neighbor for God's Sake*, by Rev. H. Hoeksema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. \$2.50.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the 9th volume of the series on the Heidelberg to you.

I am also authorized to tell you that the 10th and final volume is at present in the hands of the printers, and that it will come off the press shortly.

And with that 10th and final volume the Herculean task to which the Rev. Hoeksema set himself shall have been completed.

I said "Herculean," and the term is correct. Attend to this: no one during the one hundred years existence of the Reformed churches on our shores has ever attempted to write a series such as this.

Yes, it is the only commentary on our beloved Heidelberg in the English language.

The present volume is a neat piece of work from the point of view of the printer's art. It is clothed in an attractive jacket, has firm and strong binding, a clear letter, strong paper, and is of comparatively light weight, which makes for easy handling while reading.

As to its contents, it treats of the second table of the law, from the fifth commandment to the tenth, from the 39th to the 44th Lord's day.

I have, of course, read this volume also, just as I have read (and that many times) the earlier volumes in this

(Continued on page 91)

# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 50.

Chapter One

Our Daily Bread

To ask for today is sufficient. And if, as the dusk of evening settles upon our earthly life of the day, we have neither bread in the house, nor the means wherewithal to buy bread, even for another day, but the Lord did provide us in the day that has come to a close, He heard our prayers and fulfilled His Word: "Give us this day our proper portion of bread."

We must not overlook that this petition, as well as the other two petitions in this last section of the Lord's Prayer, stand in the plural. It does not say, "Give *me* this day *my* daily bread," but, "Give *us* bread." This presupposes love of the brethren. Without this love of the brethren we cannot possibly pray this fourth petition. It implies that when we have sufficient bread for the day, and perhaps more, and we know that our brother has need, we shall impart to him some of the daily bread which our heavenly Father has given us. Nor shall we have respect of persons. For that is not rooted in the love of Christ and in faith. The apostle James writes: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, and goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" James 2:1-6. And as to imparting of our abundance to the poor and giving them a portion of our daily bread, the same author writes: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" James 2:14-16. And the apostle John expresses the same thought in I John 3:16-18: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his

life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Actual love of the brethren, therefore, is presupposed in this fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer. As long as we have not done all in our power to fulfill the needs of those that are in want, we cannot possibly send this petition to the throne of grace.

Chapter Two

Healing on the Prayer of Faith

It may not be amiss in this connection to ask the question whether there is any basis in Scripture for the pretention of those that are called faith-healers, or for the belief that the prayer of faith will give instant and sure recovery to those that are sick. The fourth petition, so we said, is concerned with all our physical necessities in this present world and in this present life. Now surely, those physical needs are different at different times and in different conditions. Sometimes we are in a state of physical health, in which we are active, perform our daily work, and return home hungry. We need bread. At other times, however, the Lord puts us down on our sick-bed, so that we have no appetite whatsoever, and bread is nauseating to us. Now, the question arises whether this fourth petition, this prayer for all our physical needs, also implies that when we are in a state of sickness, we may pray the Lord that He sends us recovery, and whether in this fourth petition we have the promise of the Lord that if we pray in faith, He will surely heal us.

There always have been, and there still are, those who make this claim. There are preachers that make this healing by faith an essential part of their gospel. And although they do not make this claim on the basis of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, they nevertheless appeal to Scripture in general. It is an outstanding fact in Jesus' public ministry that He not only preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, but that He also healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave healing to the deaf and sight to the blind, that He cast out devils, and even raised the dead. As we read in Matthew 8:16, 17: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness." And when the Lord sent out the twelve, He gave them the commission: "Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. 10: 7, 8. Moreover, when the Lord sent His apostles into the world after His resurrection and ascension into heaven, He evidently gave them the same power; and from the book of Acts we learn that they actually employed that power to heal the sick, and even to raise the dead. H.H.



## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Haggai

Past Calamities Accounted for; New Blessings Assured, Chap. II:10-19:

10. *In the four and twentieth (day) of the ninth (month), in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

11. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Ask now the priests for instruction, saying,*

12. *Behold, one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.*

13. *Then said Haggai, If (one that is) unclean through a (dead) person touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priest answered and said, It shall be unclean.*

14. *Then answered Haggai and said, So this people, and so this nation before me, saith the Lord, and so every work of their hands, and that which they offer there; it is unclean.*

15. *And now, I pray, turn your hearts from this day and upward. From before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord:*

16. *When those (days) were, (it was so that) one had been going to a heap of twenty (measures), and there were (but) ten; one has been going to the winepress for to draw fifty (pails) out of the press, (but) there were (but) twenty*

17. *I have smitten you with blight and with mildew and with hail in all the work of your hands, yet ye (turned) not to me, saith the Lord.*

18. *Turn now your hearts from this day upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth (month), (even) from the day that the temple of the Lord was founded, turn your heart.*

19. *Is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree and the pomegranate tree, and the olive tree hath not brought forth; (but) from this day I will bless.*

10. In the fourth and twentieth day of the ninth month—just three months after the commencement of the building of the temple. The ninth month is called Chisleu (Zech. vii, 1) and answers to the latter part of November and first part of December. *Came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet:* The third divine communication so far given and to be followed by one more. The occasion of the prophecy, since nothing is said concerning it, must be inferred from the content of this Word.

11. *Ask the priests concerning the law*—literally *law* without the article—*ask law*—and therefore *meaning instruction*. The priests are requested not merely to cite the law but to draw inferences from it. In this activity the Lord in this instance guides them, so that their deductions are His infallible Word. This is so, seeing that the Lord commands

Haggai to ask the priests and seeing that he uses their instruction as a foundation for his message proper. To teach and interpret the law was the duty of the priests (Deut. xvii, 8-II; xxxiii, 10; Mal. ii, 7).

12. Holy flesh—the flesh of an animal brought to the altar for sacrificial purposes and slain. *Skirt of his garment*—A corner of the outer garment could be turned in or out to form a convenient place for carrying articles of various kinds. *And with his skirt touch bread . . . shall it be holy?*—The particular Mosaic law here involved is stated at Lev. vi, 27, 28. It stipulates that the flesh of an animal sacrifice renders holy anything there at the sanctuary with which it may come in contact. The things mentioned are any garment upon which the blood of the sacrifice may have been sprinkled and the earthen vessel or brazen pot in which the flesh was sodden.

The question that Haggai in connection with this precept propounds to the priests is this: Does the flesh of an animal sacrifice as carried in the skirt of a garment also render holy any article of food that the wearer of the garment may touch with its skirt?

The people of Israel offering sacrifices are like the man carrying the holy flesh. The food—bread, wine, pottage—represent the soil of the ground as cultivated by the people and all the fruit thereof. So the idea of the question is whether the holiness of the animal sacrifice is transmitted not alone to a man's garment but to his fields and the fruit thereof as well. The priests' answer is, "no."

13. The second question put to the priests implicates several laws the unifying idea of which is, that to come in contact with a human corpse is to be defiled by it (see Num. v, 2; xi, 6, 7, 10; Lev. xxi, II; Num. vi, 6). To the question whether anyone defiled through a corpse renders any food unholy, if he touch it, the reply of the priests is, "It shall be unclean."

14. The prophet applies the priestly instruction to the case of the people. *So this people, and so this nation.*—Here the reference is to spiritual and not to ceremonial, outward defilement. As one who has come in contact with a dead person is ceremonially unclean, so the people of Israel are spiritually unclean through their transgressions. Their particular great sin at this time is, that with their surplus wealth they built costly houses for themselves, while neglecting to build the Lord's temple. *Before me*—in the estimation of the Lord, in His sight. *So every work of their hands and all that which they offer there*—Being themselves unclean, all the works of their hands were of necessity unclean, and all that they touched, their sacrifices there in the place of worship, their fields and all the fruit thereof. This being so, the curse of the law was in their fields. It was on their basket and store and the fruit of their land and their kine and the flocks of their sheep (see chap. I, 6-12). It could not well be otherwise, seeing that all was unclean through their transgressions. And they must not complain because their sacrifices by blood did not beget for them the blessings of the law upon their

fields. For the holiness of such sacrifices was not transmitted to food. Thus the priests had instructed. Besides, their sacrificing as their work was unclean through their sins. It was an abomination in the sight of God. God could, therefore, not bless them on the ground of their sacrificing.

Not that a pure and undefiled animal sacrifice, had there been one partaking of such a character, would have merited with God. This cannot be so. For the animal sacrifices were but shadows, the body of which was Christ. But herein exactly lay their significance for the true believers. They served the true Israel as an instrument with which, through their act of sacrificing, they expressed their faith in God as the God of their salvation through Christ in His Spirit. As standing with their sacrifices in this faith, they received of God for Christ's sake, by whom all the requirements of the law were to be fulfilled, the blessings of the law also in their fields as tokens of God's favor upon them. But when His people were carnal and unbelieving, the Lord caused them to experience the curses of the law to lead them to repentance that He might be feared. For as well as do we, they lived solely by the mercies of Christ.

15. The prophet now will show this post-exilic Israel that the cause of all their troubles, past and present, is their neglectfulness of the temple of the Lord. *And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward*—not "backward" as the R. V. has it. The meaning is: Taking this day as your point of procedure, look forward, consider the days that lie ahead. The reason that they are exhorted to direct their gaze into the future is given in verse 19, "*From this day I will bless.*" Soon they shall again be in the possession of the signs of His favor toward them—rain in season and abundant crops. But before breaking the joyful news he once more points to past calamities in order to bring out clearly the contrast between their past calamities and the prosperity that the near future has in store for them now that they have repented and are zealous in building God's house.

And so our prophet continues (in verse 15), "*From before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord*—Before they began to build the Lord's temple. *When those days were*—Through all that time. It was a time of sixteen years duration. It had ended but recently. It was only three months ago that building operations had been resumed. The foundation of the temple had been laid (Ezra iii, 4), but during all those succeeding years the work was at a standstill. Nothing was further done. And for this there was no excuse valid before God. The real trouble was that there was little heart for the work.

16. How had they fared through all those years of sinful apathy regarding God's house? This is described in the rest of verse 16 and in verse 17. The description is similar to that contained in Chap. i, 6, 9-11; disappointment and disaster on every hand. *Heap of twenty*—That is, a heap of sheaves that appeared as if it contained twenty measures, when threshed was found to contain but ten, only half of what was estimated. *Winevat*—The receptacle in which the

juice flowed, after the grapes were pressed out. *Press*—Here the vessel that was used to draw up the wine from the lower vat. Some regard the word as an explanatory gloss. *Fifty . . . but twenty*—A quantity of grapes estimated to yield fifty measures, gave, when pressed out, but ten.

17. This verse presents the cause of the shortage of crops. *And I smote you*—The Lord did so by smiting their fields with blasting, mildew and hail. *All the labor of your hands*—Everything they had raised in the soil of the ground with great toil. *Yet ye turned not to me*—Refusing to see the hand of God in their calamities, they did not seek after God but persisted in their willing ignorance of His claim upon them.

It is worthy of note that in i, 10, 11 the cause of their calamities is said to be drought. Here they are blasting, mildew and hail. It shows that there were several different causes that brought about barrenness and shortage of crops.

18. *Turn your heart, I pray, from this day upward*—The same exhortation is contained in verse 1. That it is here repeated shows that our prophet now returns to what he there had started to say but had not completed, namely that from "this day" on the Lord will reward their obedience. Here, too, therefore the adverb "upward" points to the future and not to the past (as some have it).

In the next clause of this verse (18) "this day" is said to be the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, which in turn is called *the day that the temple of the Lord was founded*. So this last clause reads in the original text, and not, "The day that the *foundation* of the temple of the Lord *was laid*." This is a misinterpretation. It cannot be the idea of the original text. For the foundation of the temple was laid some sixteen years before, shortly after the arrival of the remnant in Jerusalem (see Ezra iii). The clause therefore must be taken to mean, "The day that a commencement was made of the erection of the superstructure of the temple." It is the same day that a "stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord" (15b). It is the same work described in two different ways.

I, 14, 15 state that "they came and did the work on the house of the Lord in the four and twentieth day of the *sixth* month," which would be three months earlier. But the two passages are not contradictory. It must have taken all of three months to do the preliminary work such as hauling the building material.

*Turn your heart*—Repeated at the end of this verse for emphasis. The phrase to be supplied is, "from this day upward." Turning their heart from this day, which is evil, let them now by all means look upward to God, their ever present helper, and put their confidence in His promise of relief that Haggai is now about to publish unto them. That this is the underlying idea of the exhortation is clear from the succeeding verse.

19. To enliven their awareness of the terribleness of their plight, to bring it close to their feelings, the prophet, now that he is about to proclaim to them God's promise of relief,



reminds them that the distresses before described, are still with them, in other words, that "this day" is evil still. He first asks them whether the seed is yet in the barn. "Seed," as is clear from the context, is to be taken not in the sense of corn for planting, but of corn already raised and ready for harvesting. This is plain from the succeeding affirmative statement, "as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree hath not brought forth." It shows how God's people must be imagined to have answered the prophet's question. They said, "No, Lord, the seed is not yet in the barn. There has been little or no harvesting. The fig tree and the olive tree, etc., have not yet brought forth. This day, the time, is still evil. Thou knowest Lord, Lord shew us mercy." And now the Lord through the prophet as His organ instantaneously replies, *"From this day I will bless."*

Now that they have repented and returned to Him and are zealous as builders of His house, His blessing will again be in their fields and upon all the work of their hands. As visible signs of His favor toward them His penitent people, whom He foreknew in Christ, harvests will again be plentiful and the olive tree and the fig tree will again bring forth abundantly. In a word, He will now cause them to experience the *blessings* of the law, and this in agreement with His Word spoken centuries earlier through Moses His organ, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day that . . . all these blessings shall come upon thee . . . Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shalt thou be in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of the ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shalt thou be in thy basket and in thy store" (etc., Deut. xxviii. 1-5).

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God . . . that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store . . ." (etc., Deut. xxiii. 15-17).

When this post-exilic Israel as God's believing people connect their past calamities with their indifference and the promised relief with their zeal as builders of God's house, they will not doubt that their past calamities was a visitation of God in condemnation of their indifference and that their relief is His gracious gift to them in recognition of their zeal, his work in them.

That the prophet, better said, the Lord Himself, was so insistent that His temple be built can be explained. The Word had not yet become flesh. Christ had not yet suffered and died, as the resurrected Christ, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The saints had not yet come unto the city of the living God, the *heavenly* Jerusalem. For *this* Jerusalem was not yet (Heb. xii. 22). What it meant is that the earthly Canaan was still the heaven of the church, the earthly Jerusalem the

capital of God's kingdom and the earthly temple his house. Here in this earthly temple alone of all places the glories of the triune Jehovah were revealed in the face of Christ as reflected by the typical things of the law—the sacrifices and the officiating priest. Here alone God's altars burned and the priests blessed. Here alone the saints stood before God's face. Here alone they saw Him and could hear themselves blest of Him. Here the saints shouted with joy. The temple was the bound that drew together the faithful far and near, such of them as were scattered among the nations as well as those that dwelt in the community itself. And so the temple was as yet indispensable. It had therefore to be built.

Observation on the blessings and cursings of the law. When the people of Israel as a nation served God, they were blessed of the law and then earthly prosperity and physical well-being was their portion. When Israel forsook God, they were cursed of the law, and then the nation was overwhelmed and made to experience all manner of physical calamities. So the blessings and cursings of the law worked themselves out in that day in the existence of the people of Israel. For it was the dispensation of shadows. Both the earthly prosperity and the physical, earthly calamities were typical. The former foreshadowed the true blessedness of the church in glory, and the latter the nameless sufferings and misery of the damned in hell. This earthly prosperity was a token of God's favor toward the elect. It was a blessing only for them. For the reprobated in Israel it was a curse and also meant as a curse.

This earthly calamity was a revelation of God's anger, of the anger of His love with regard to the elect and of the anger of His hatred with regard to the reprobated. For the Israel according to reprobation it was punishment; for the elect it was not punishment but chastisement and here the purpose was to lead to repentance and to drive into the arms of Christ. And therefore, though they suffered all these typical workings of the curses of the law, when in times of national apostasy and decay God would lay His strokes upon the nation, the law, God, did not curse them, their persons. For they were hidden in Christ by virtue of their being chosen in Him before the foundations of the world.

G. M. O.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It is with thanksgiving that we are able to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our folks on the 24th day of November,

MR. and MRS. J. P. MIEDEMA

Ps. 36:10, "O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart."

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Mohr, Allendale  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Miedema, Muskegon  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Sytsma, Grand Rapids  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miedema, Grand Rapids  
Mr. Kenneth Miedema, Grand Rapids  
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Gritter, Standale  
Mr. Harold Miedema, Grand Rapids  
13 grandchildren, 1 great granddaughter

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

#### 4.

We ended our last article with a promise that we would trace out the masterful skill with which Paul goes to battle with the sword of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, when he would combat the evil of schism and party strife in the church of the living God.

The attentive reader will, no doubt, be looking forward to this tracing out of Paul's great apology and polemic against this cancerous evil in Christ's body.

This we now proceed to do.

At first glance at the verses 13-17 I thought that I could call attention to all that Paul says here in these verses. However, upon closer observation, and riper reflection I notice that my space will be taken up if I only write on verse 13a, where we read, "*Is Christ divided?*"

This question is asked by Paul against the background of the terrific sin of party-strife over the "personalities" of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and even Christ. This difference over and striving about the persons of Paul, Apollos, is rooted in animosities, in not minding and willing and judging the same thing. And that sorry spectacle is seen amongst them who are very really saints in Christ, they are *Christians*, that is, members of Christ, living members by faith, and thus *partakers of His anointing!*

Only to such does this question of Paul have any relevancy!

Only to such can and must this question have pedagogical, corrective, reproving value only in these can this question be such a heart-searching one, that we go out and weep bitterly with Peter if we have been engaged in a conduct which is not *fitting to Christians*. Here the Davids sing, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Ps. 51:2, 3.

Paul's question, therefore, presupposes that the congregation at Corinth has the anointing of the Holy one and knows all things that pertain to godliness in this world.

It is an appeal to the new man in them; to the fact that this church has the mind of Christ (den *zin* van Christus). Just as a little child in its right mind, ere it can read, must learn to properly associate such objects as the mother and the baby, the kitten and the ball, the little girl and the doll etc., in its reading book, and thereby proves that it can put natural things with natural, thus also Paul presupposes in this question that the Corinthians, at bottom, can see the things which belong with Christ and those that differ. The simple, the babes see!

Much of what I hope to write to the address of those

who worked schism and mutiny in our midst also presupposes that they are not "natural man," who have only an eye for the psychological, but that they are, at bottom, "spiritual man," yet, who are in their walk and conduct in God's church *fleshly*. (sarkikois)

Paul asks of every one who works schism and cries: I am of Paul, I of Apollos: *Is Christ divided?*

In order that it may become crystal clear what a divided Christ would be let me call your sanctified attention to the following:

1. It should be noticed that in the Greek language the verb "Divided" is not the same as "rend" (schizoo) but it means to be *divided into parts*. The idea is that then Christ would be *distributed* to the church so that not the whole church would possess the whole Christ, but each could claim a part. Then the unifying power and work of Christ in the church would be gone.

2. It should also be noted that the tense employed in the Greek is the perfect passive tense. Christ would then undergo such a division. Those who work schism would then affect Christ so as to divide Him. And then Christ would be in this divided state up to the present moment. Whether in the decree of God or while laboring on earth, or now in heaven, he would be in a completed state of division. O, horrible thought! Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever in such a *completed state of division up to the present moment!*

Such is the question of Paul.

We do well to analyse its implications just a bit more.

The question is not whether Christ makes a division amongst men; whether there is not a fundamental "schism" between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Such, indeed, there is. Such is the "schism" of which the Gospel of John repeatedly speaks.

In John 7:43 we read according to literal translation of the Greek text: "Wherefore there became a *schism* amongst the people *because of Him*." This was the schism of the evaluation of faith and unbelief. Some said that Christ was to be born out of Bethlehem and others said that even though he was from Galilee, yet, he is truly *the* prophet which was to come. Here is the "schism" between those who receive him and those who don't. Such is the sword which Christ brings upon earth, being set for a fall and rising again of many in Israel, Luke 2:34. Likewise John 9:16, 10:19 speak of the "schism" amongst the people *because of Jesus*.

In the above passages there is the schism between those who are of Christ, given to Him of the Father and those who are not of Christ, as this historically becomes manifest in faith and unbelief.

But that is a far cry from sinful "schism" in the church of God.

This latter is just as ridiculous and sinful as it would be to divide Christ! If the latter is permissible and possible then the party-strife has the *sanction* of the Most High. But,

if not, woe be to him who offends the little ones of Christ, walking after the flesh.

What would a divided Christ be? How must we conceive of such a divided Christ so that its horribleness may keep us sober or bring us to our senses?

To form a conception of a divided Christ we must bear the following in mind in regard to *Christ*.

1. The name Christ means *anointed*. He is the Anointed of God. He is such as the Son of God in our human nature. He is the one who is forordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be Prophet, Priest and King. That he is Christ, therefore, includes two elements, namely, that He is *anointed* and that He is *qualified* unto certain tasks and duties assigned to Him by God.

2. Further, it should be noticed that this Christ is anointed unto a *threefold* office. As the Heidelberg Catechism puts it in Question and Answer 31:

a. He is ordained and anointed "to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret Council and will of God."

b. "and to be our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us."

c. "and also to be our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in the enjoyment of that salvation which he had purchased for us."

Now it seems to me that a divided Christ who is one, one can claim a part of the office with neglecting the rest. This is done practically when we, as *christians*, play out the one office of Christ against the other, or certain aspects of the offices themselves against themselves.

Is Christ divided means then: is there a *conflict* between the prophetic, the priestly and the kingly in Christ's office?

When there is schism in the church, party-strife over preachers then the unity of the service of God, as this flows from the unity of the Unction of the Holy One, is lacking. This means a conflict between the parts which are in Christ most harmoniously! The harmony in our life is rent. It is the harmony of the three parts of our *one office to serve God*.

What are these parts in our life as they flow from the harmony in Christ's anointing as Head of the church upon us as the living members? They are as given in the Heidelberg Catechism as follows:

1. "Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus *am partaker* of His anointing.

2. So that,

a. "I may confess His Name" (The secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption).

b. "Present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him." (Since Christ has redeemed us by His blood).

c. "That with a *free* and *good conscience* I may fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with

Him eternally over all creatures." (Since He governs us by His Word and Spirit).

Now it seems to me that to keep the unity of the body of Christ is really living according to the unity of Christ as expressed in this being anointed with Christ and partakers of these threefold benefits. He who does not do that breaks the *inner harmony* of Christ in His anointing as Head and as this anointing is ours as the body, living members!

Such is the inner harmony of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Now it will also become evident what the thrust is of Paul's question to the Corinthians: is *Christ* divided?

Is it so that the gift of prophecy can be played out over-against that of the presenting of ourselves in our life a living sacrifice of thankfulness to God? Or, again, can we play out the clear word of prophecy overagainst fighting against sin and the devil with a good and free conscience. When this inner spiritual cancer gnaws at the vital of God's people, at the spiritual life of the church then the inner harmony is broken, and unless repented of in heartfelt sorrow, will surely break forth into factions, party-strife, evil and sinful schism, giving untold heartache to those in Zion who will to say with Paul: for me to live is *Christ*, in the harmony of His threefold office and anointing, and to die is gain!

Often we are not too conscious of this sin of breaking the harmony of our life in Christ anointing!

It is good to be called to spiritual sobriety.

One cannot help but think of the brethren who so sinfully wrought "schism" within our ecclesiastical life. I can not help but ask when I see their life: is Christ divided?

Does one in *good* conscience speak of the right of his conscience, of the office of his priesthood where this does not harmonize with the office of the prophet, the proclaiming and believing of the full counsel of God concerning our redemption? In the Spirit of Christ such that it pits the priest in us against the prophet? Does the Spirit of Christ so anoint us that in one Court we can swear that the Kingship of Christ is not in Classical decisions, while in another Court we can swear before God's face that it does. Is Christ divided? And if this were an isolated event, when one in a moment of weakness became an "opportunist," one could understand it. But it is symptomatic!

Is Christ divided in His offices in the believers?

Paul didn't answer this question.

They who can put spiritual things with spiritual, in the required sensitiveness of the saints, will give the correct answer. And the rest will be treated with the rod of God!

G.L.

### Men's League

The Men's League meeting will be held in our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church on Thursday, Nov. 17, at 8 p. m. The Rev. H. C. Hoeksema will be our speaker. Men, show your interest by being present.

Jac. Oomkes, Secretary.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Speech That Manifests Fear

(3)

"Bad luck!"

"Good Luck!"

"A lucky break!"

"Maybe next time my luck will be better!"

"But just as fate would have it, I suffered more tough luck!"

"You were lucky, though."

Speech, all of this is speech which manifests a lack of the fear of the Lord. O, it manifests fear alright. But it manifests fear of the idol "luck." Such speech manifests no fear of the Lord. One walking in His fear never gives expression to the phrases and sentences above.

How often have not these expressions fallen off your lips of late? How many times have you used the one or the other today?

It is not a rare thing to hear those who claim to fear Him and advocate a walk in His fear let that word "luck" fall off their lips with the greatest of ease and use it with great frequency.

But it is atheistic and therefore far from the fear of the Lord. It rules God and His providence entirely out of the picture. It attributes circumstances and events to some impersonal, difficult-to-define thing that is given the credit or the blame; and it rules out all rime and reason, all planning and decreeing to explain things which God has performed.

These expressions go hand in hand with the superstition of the natural heart and mind. As Paul writes of the natural man in Romans 1:25. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." In acts of superstition man attributes the works of God to the creature. He puts his confidence in a thing he happened to be wearing, a thing he happened to be touching, a creature of this sort or that sort that was somewhere in the vicinity when the Creator wrought a work that either pleased him or brought him pain. He associates that pleasure or pain with the creature and serves and worships it rather than the Creator. He will not dare disassociate himself from that creature; or else he will flee as far as he can from that creature. It all depends on whether he was near it when he enjoyed pleasure or when he suffered pain. The Creator Who actually sent the pain thru a creature or realized the situation in which the pleasure was experienced is discounted and forgotten.

No different is it with all this "luck" business. It does not belong on the lips of the child of God except when he

mentions the word in order to condemn its use! For it definitely is acknowledging another god besides Jehovah. In answer to the words of the Only True God Who says "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me" such speech about "luck" (and often even "Lady Luck") declares "But we do recognize that undefinable thing called 'luck' which causes things to occur and which we have to pamper and worship in order to escape woes and obtain joys."

You who read these lines and utter this speech concerning fate and luck bear in mind that it is no innocent little thing to speak in that manner. It is insulting the Living God! An artist who has spent many hours of painstaking effort to produce his masterpieces would feel highly insulted and be very righteously indignant to hear an art critic attribute his beautiful piece of work to some art student who heretofore had produced nothing but crude pieces that reflected immature judgment. And He Who is God? The Omnipotent One? The Almighty One? The Sovereign One? Does He take it lightly and in the spirit of jest that men attribute what He has done to luck and fate? Does He ever take anything in a spirit of levity? Nay, He is and has every right to be a jealous God! And when you attribute HIS works to "lady luck" He is furious in His jealousy! You take His name in vain and He is furious in His jealousy; but you name the creature as the cause and author of the works of the Creator and He is just as furious in His righteous jealousy! He does not simply want to be God and want you to recognize Him as God. He IS God!

And fear before Him; reverence, awe and respect before Him as God manifests itself in speech that praises Him. Speech about luck and fate attribute His praises to the creature rather than to the Creator!

Because we are not spiritually minded we do not say, "God willed it thus." That is the language of the fear of the Lord! Instead of saying: "I had so much bad luck yesterday," the language of His fear says: "It pleased God to send many distresses and griefs yesterday." O, it is not easy to speak that way! But it is the speech that manifests His fear. It reveals a man to be consciously before the face of the Majesty on high. It gives Him His rightful place in all that which transpires in our fleeting life. It shows reverence before Him as the God of providence. It manifests a firm faith in Him as a sovereign God Who does as it pleases Him.

Instead of claiming to have been lucky today the language of His fear points to this sovereign God and declares that it pleased Him to make my lot a pleasant one today. How atheistic man is by nature! How hard it is to form these words by our lips and how quickly that word "luck" slides off and reveals that God is not in all our thoughts!

Or we go to visit someone who has suffered some tragic blow by the hand of this sovereign and all-wise God. And before we realize it we have said to him that it is too bad that this had to happen to him. Too bad? Dare we criticize the works of God and call them bad? Can a man stand in

the fear of the Lord? can a man stand consciously before Him in His majesty and tell Him to His face that He has done something bad? He has made a mistake? Is that reverence and respect? Is that standing in awe before Him? Is that the language of faith?

Nay here is the language of His fear: "... by His hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come *not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.*" Italics ours, and have quoted from the Heidelberg Catechism, the answer to question twenty seven. That worships the Creator rather than the creature. That praises God and ascribes all things to Him. It is the speech of one who stands in the fear of awe and reverence before Him. It displays a genuine love to Him.

And shall we pray to our "Father Who art in heaven" that His name be hallowed and that HE "give us this day our daily bread" and "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" and then ascribe the bread we get to "luck"? Are we then sincere in our prayer that His name be hallowed and that we be delivered from evil? How inconsistent is our life! How seldom we utter speech that manifests His fear!

Let us speak that language of the Heidelberg Catechism just quoted; and let us not be ashamed to do so before the world. Let us continue with the same Heidelberg Catechism and declare "... in all things that may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move." In His hands they are and not subject to some whim or fancy of "luck" and "fate."

Indeed, "in all things that may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father." But let us speak that way also. Man always looks to the future; and as a rational creature he cannot help but look forward to the future. In fact, what an awful thing if the regenerated child of God could not look forward to the future glory promised him? Yea, as rational, thinking, forward-looking people we are saved and sanctified. And for us it is wonderful to be able to look forward. The bed-ridden, believing saint who has more than filled the allotted "four score years" by reason of strength and now is full of woe and life becomes a burden surely with joy looks forward to what shall befall him. And God graciously and wonderfully gives him to look to the future, the future that knows no end and whose joys never cease.

But James warns us of a looking into the future which reveals its sinfulness by the speech that accompanies it. "Go to now," he says, "ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanished away.

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that," James 4:13-15.

There you have Scripture itself telling us what the language of His fear is: "ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." No "luck" there! Scripture knows no such thing except as an evil.

And again we must beware. There are those whose every speech is concluded with a "the Lord willing." For them it is a habit and nothing more. God is not in all their thoughts when they utter it. And to utter it thoughtlessly is as evil as to fail to speak it. But that there is more room in all of our lives to utter this beautiful, God-glorifying speech is self evident.

All too quickly we utter phrases which end with the creature rather than with the Creator when we look to the future as well as when we look back at an event that has just occurred. We say "weather permitting." We announce our plans "conditions permitting." How much more lofty and God-conscious that Scriptural phrase: "The Lord willing."

It is rather amusing to a child of God also to hear a radio announcer declare that "Due to conditions beyond our control we are not able to bring you the program scheduled for this time." And are some conditions in the hands of man? A wire has become loose; a tube has without warning burned out; a tape recording that usually arrived in the morning's mail failed to make its appearances. Conditions beyond man's control! And he will soon try to bring them under control. A mere speck of dust that is utterly dependant upon God will now go and find that loose connection and fix it? He can do that? He can replace that tube and trace that recording? If the Lord wills he shall. But his life is "even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." His life may be burned out too and vanish as a vapour before he ever reaches that burned-out tube.

But who thinks of those things?

He who walks in His fear does. He, by the grace of God, knows God and stands in reverence and awe before Him. And he shows his respect for God in his speech. He utters speech that manifest His fear.

Do you?

J.A.H.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

We hereby wish to express our sympathy to Mrs. Geo. C. Lubbers in the loss of her mother

MRS. GERTIE SCHUT

Is. 40:31, "But they that wait for the Lord, shall renew their strength."

The Consistory and combined Societies of the  
Creston Protestant Reformed Church  
P. Vanden Engel, Vice President  
Joe King, Secretary

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## 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).

(Continued)

Again, the very remoteness of Rome from the imperial court was favorable to the development of a hierarchy independent of all political influence and intrigue; while the bishop of Constantinople had to purchase the political advantages of the residence at the cost of ecclesiastical freedom. The tradition of the *donatio Constantini* (a reported gift of Emperor Constantine in which he is reputed to have made vast land concessions, among other things, to the pope at Rome—H.V.), though a *fabrication* (italics is of the undersigned) of the eighth century, has thus much truth: that the transfer of the imperial residence to the East broke the way for the temporal power and the political independence of the papacy.

Further, amidst the great trinitarian and christological controversies of the Nicene and post-Nicene age, the popes maintained the powerful prestige of almost undeviating ecumenical orthodoxy and doctrinal stability; while the see of Constantinople, with its Grecian spirit of theological restlessness and disputation, was sullied with the Arian, the Nestorian, the Monophysite, and other heresies, and was in general, even in matters of faith, dependent on the changing humors of the court. Hence even contending parties in the East were accustomed to seek counsel and protection from the Roman chair, and often times gave that see the coveted opportunity to put the weight of its decision into the scale. This occasional practice then formed a welcome basis for a theory of jurisdiction. The *Roma locuta est* assumed the character of a supreme and final judgment. Rome learned much and forgot nothing. She knew how to turn every circumstance, with consummate administrative tact, to her own advantage.

Finally, though the Greek church, down to the fourth ecumenical council, was unquestionably the main theatre of church history and the chief seat of theological learning, yet, according to the universal law of history, "Westward the star of empire takes its way," the Latin church, and consequently the Roman patriarchate, already had the future to itself. While the Eastern patriarchates were facilitating by internal quarrels and disorder the conquests of the false prophet, Rome was boldly and victoriously striking westward, and winning the barbarian tribes of Europe to the religion of the cross.

### THE LATIN PATRIARCH

These advantages of the patriarch of Rome over the patriarch of Constantinople are at the same time the leading causes of the rise of the papacy, which we must now more closely pursue.

The papacy is undeniably the result of a long process of history. Centuries were employed in building it, and centuries have already been engaged upon its partial destruction. Lust of honor and of power, and even open fraud, have contributed to its development; for human nature lies hidden under episcopal robes, with its steadfast inclination to abuse the power entrusted to it; and the greater the power, the stronger is the temptation, and the worse the abuse. But behind and above these human impulses lay the needs of the church and the plans of Providence, and these are the proper basis for explaining the rise, as well as the subsequently decay, of the papal dominion over the countries and nations of Europe.

That Providence which moves the helm of the history of world and church according to an eternal plan, not only prepares in silence and in a secrecy unknown even to themselves the suitable persons for a given work, but also lays in the depths of the past the foundations of mighty institutions, that they may appear thoroughly furnished as soon as the time may demand them. Thus the origin and gradual growth of the Latin patriarchate at Rome looked forward to the middle age, and formed part of the necessary external outfit of the church for her disciplinary mission among the heathen barbarians. The vigorous hordes who destroyed the West-Roman empire were to be themselves built upon the ruins of the old civilization, to Christianity and freedom, till, having come of age, they should need the legal school-master no longer, and should cast away his cords from them. The Catholic hierarchy, with its pyramid-like culmination in the papacy, served among the Romanic and Germanic peoples, until the time of the Reformation, a purpose similar to that of the Jewish theocracy and the old Roman empire respectively in the inward and outward preparation for Christianity. The full exhibition of this pedagogic purpose belongs to the history of the middle age; but the foundation for it we find already being laid in the period before us.

The Roman bishop claims, that the four dignities of bishop, metropolitan, patriarch, and pope or primate of the whole church, are united in himself. The first three offices must be granted him in all historical justice; the last is denied him by the Greek church, and by the Evangelical, and by all non-Catholic sects.

His bishopric is the city of Rome, with its cathedral church of St. John Lateran, which bears over its main entrance the inscription: *Omnium urbis et orbis ecclesiarum mater et caput*; thus remarkably outranking even the church of St. Peter—as if Peter after all were not the first and highest apostle, and had to yield at last to the superiority of John, the representative of the ideal church of the future. Tradition



tion says that the emperor Constantine erected this basilica by the side of the old Lateran palace, which had come down from heathen times, and gave the palace to Pope Sylvester; and it remained the residence of the popes and the place of assembly for their councils (the Lateran councils) till after the exile of Avignon, when they took up their abode in the Vatican beside the ancient church of St. Peter.

As metropolitan or archbishop, the bishop of Rome had immediate jurisdiction over the seven suffragan bishops, afterward called cardinal bishops, of the vicinity: Ostia, Portus, Silva candida, Sabina, Praeneste, Tusculum, and Albanum.

As patriarch, he rightfully stood on equal footing with the four patriarchs of the East, but had a much larger district and the primacy of honor. The name is here of no account, since the fact stands fast. The Roman bishops called themselves not patriarchs, but popes, that they might rise the sooner above their colleagues; for the one name denotes oligarchical power, the other monarchical. But in the Eastern church and among modern Catholic historians the designation is also quite currently applied to Rome.

The Roman patriarchal circuit primarily embraced the ten suburban provinces, as they were called, which were under the political jurisdiction of the Roman deputy, the Vicarius Urbis; including the greater part of Central Italy, all Upper Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. In its wider sense, however, it extended gradually over the entire west of the Roman empire, thus covering Italy, Gaul, Spain, Illyria, southeastern Britannia, and north-western Africa.

The bishop of Rome was from the beginning the only Latin Patriarch, in the official sense of the word. He stood thus alone, in the first place, for the ecclesiastical reason, that Rome was the only *sedes apostolica* in the West, while in the Greek church three patriarchates and several other episcopal sees, such as Ephesus, Thessalonica, and Corinth, shared the honor of apostolic foundation. Then again, he stood politically alone, since Rome was the Metropolis of the West, while in the East there were three capitals of the empire, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. Hence, Augustine, writing from the religious point of view, once calls Pope Innocent I the "ruler of the Western church;" and the emperor Justinian, on the ground of political distribution, in his 109th Novelle, where he speaks of the ecclesiastical division of the whole world, mentions only five known patriarchates, and therefore only one patriarchate of the West. The decrees of the ecumenical councils, also, know no other Western patriarchate than the Roman, and this was the sole medium through which the Eastern church corresponded with the Western. In the great theological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries the Roman bishop appears uniformly as the representative and the organ of all Latin Christendom.

It was, moreover, the highest interest of all orthodox churches in the West, amidst the political confusion and in conflict with the Arian Goths, Vandals, and Suevi, to bind

themselves closely to a common centre, and to secure the powerful protection of a central authority. This centre they could not but find in the primitive apostolic church of the metropolis of the world. The Roman bishops were consulted in almost all important questions of doctrine or of discipline. After the end of the fourth century they issued to the Western bishops in reply, pastoral epistles and decretal letters, in which they decided the question at first in the tone of paternal counsel, then in the tone of apostolic authority, making that which had hitherto been left to free opinion, a fixed statute. The first extant decretal is the Epistola of Pope Siricius to the Spanish bishop Himerius, A.D. 385, which contains, characteristically, a legal enforcement of priestly celibacy, thus of an evidently unapostolic institution; but in this Siricius appeals to "generalia decreta," which his predecessor Liberius had already issued. In like manner the Roman bishops repeatedly caused the assembling of general or patriarchal councils of the West, like the synod of Arles in 314. After the sixth and seventh centuries they also conferred the palium on the archbishops of Salona, Ravenna, Messina, Syracuse, Palermo, Arles, Autun, Sevilla, Nicopolis (in Epirus), Canterbury, and other metropolitans, in token of their superior jurisdiction.

#### CONFLICTS AND CONQUEST OF THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE

But this patriarchal power was not from the beginning and to a uniform extent acknowledged in the entire West. Not until the latter part of the sixth century did it reach the height we have above described. It was not a divine institution, unchangeably fixed from the beginning for all times, like a Biblical article of faith; but the result of a long process of history, a human ecclesiastical institution under providential direction. In proof of which we have the following incontestable facts:

In the first place, even in Italy, several metropolitans maintained, down to the close of our period, their own supreme headship, independent of Roman and all other jurisdiction. The archbishops of Milan, who traced their church to the apostle Barnabas, came into no contact with the pope till the latter part of the sixth century, and were ordained without him or his pallium. Gregory I, in 593, during the ravages of the Longobards, was the first who endeavored to exercise patriarchal right there: he reinstated an excommunicated presbyter, who had appealed to him. The metropolitans of Aquileia, who derived their church from the evangelist Mark, and whose city was elevated by Constantine the Great to be the capital of Venetia and Istria, vied with Milan, and even with Rome, calling themselves "patriarchs," and refusing submission to the papal jurisdiction even under Gregory the Great. The bishop of Ravenna likewise, after 408, when the emperor Honorius selected that city for his residence, became a powerful metropolitan, with jurisdiction over fourteen bishoprics. Nevertheless, he received the pallium from Gregory the Great, and examples occur of ordination by the Roman bishop.

H.V.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### SECOND HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

#### *Of the Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby*

Article 2. Since therefore we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons, or to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, he hath been pleased in his infinite mercy to give his only begotten Son, for our surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that he might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

The above translation, though in general correct, is a bit wordy and not as accurate as desirable. We would prefer the following translation, which conforms more closely to the original Latin and agrees with the Dutch rendering: "Since indeed we ourselves are not able to make satisfaction, and to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, God out of boundless mercy gave his only begotten Son a Surety for us, who, in order that he might make satisfaction in our behalf, was made sin and a curse on the cross in our behalf, or in our stead." A comparison with the accepted translation of our "Psalter" will reveal the variations; but we call attention chiefly to the fact that in the original there is no reference to God's good pleasure, as the accepted version would seem to indicate by the words, "he hath been pleased . . ." We call attention to this not only in the interest of accuracy, but also because the viewpoint of this article is strictly historical, and not the viewpoint of God's counsel, or good pleasure. That this last is true is plain from the opening clause, "Since indeed we ourselves are not able to make satisfaction, and to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God . . ." That is the historical and immediate reason why God sent His Son to be our Surety, not the reason of His counsel and good pleasure. And therefore this historical viewpoint must be maintained throughout the article.

Having established the basic unity of divine justice and mercy, and thereupon the necessity of satisfaction of divine justice as the only way to escape both the temporal and the eternal visitation of the divine wrath, the fathers now establish in Article 2: 1) Our own inability to make satisfaction and to free ourselves from the wrath of God. 2) God's boundless mercy, revealed in the sending of His only begotten Son as our Surety. 3) The truth that as our Surety He atoned vicariously, that is, made satisfaction in our place, as our substitute, by being made sin and a curse for us on the cross. Hence, we may say that the purpose of this second article is to demonstrate and to maintain the perfect harmony

of divine justice and mercy as revealed in the death of Christ and the redemption of men by that death.

The general thrust of the article is quite clear without any further elaboration; we may, however, make a few observations concerning the various elements of this paragraph.

In the first place, we may notice that the article simply assumes the inability of men to make satisfaction, without at this point producing any reasons for this assumption. We may explain this undoubtedly from the fact that the Arminian did not directly challenge this inability to make satisfaction, but denied the necessity of satisfaction as such. At the same time, it is not amiss to remind ourselves of the various reasons why we could not possibly make satisfaction. They are as follows: 1) We constantly owe our all to God, and therefore would never be able to pay any back debt to Him, once we have fallen behind in our obligation to love Him. On the contrary, however, we daily increase our guilt. 2) We are dead in trespasses and sin, and therefore, cannot, will not, and cannot will to love God and in the love of Him bring a sacrifice pleasing to Him. But this is exactly the nature of satisfaction. It is an act of loving obedience whereby one is willing to be a sacrifice for sin upon the altar of divine justice. 3) We could never bear the infinite wrath of God and live. But satisfaction requires exactly this, because the justice of God requires that sin which is committed against His infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal, but with eternal punishment. With regard to that eternal punishment we would never be able to say, as Christ did: "It is finished."

In the second place, we may observe that the fathers do not at all deny the supreme mercy of God, no more than they would deny the supreme justice of God. They clearly teach here that the giving of His only begotten Son is the revelation of God's boundless mercy. That mercy here appears boundless, or immeasurable, especially against the background of our inability. God Himself did what we were totally unable to do: He provided the satisfaction of His own justice. And boundless His mercy appears here too, because He did this though we were not in the least worthy that He should do anything at all in our behalf. But we may note further in this connection that the fathers clearly teach the proper relation of God's mercy and the gift of His only begotten Son to be our Surety, even as they have before. Cf. *Canons* I, A. 2. That relation is not that God is merciful because Christ Jesus died for us, but that Christ Jesus, His Son in the flesh, died for us because God is merciful. The gift of His only begotten Son is the revelation of God's mercy, therefore.

In the third place, we may note that the article teaches that the only begotten Son of God was able to make and actually did make satisfaction for our sins, and thus is our "Surety." Even the very idea of a "surety" already implies the notion of substitution. The Latin term here is *sponsor*, which means "surety, bail, guarantee." If one goes "bail"

for another, then he assumes responsibility for the other to the extent of his own life. Thus God's only begotten Son was given by Him as our Surety, that is, not God's surety to us, but the surety for us before the bar of God's justice. God, the only Judge of heaven and earth, also provided the Surety for us before the bar of His own justice. That Surety was His only begotten Son in the flesh, so that God Himself became our Surety. As our Surety, the only begotten Son stood before the bar of divine justice in our place, became our substitute, to answer for our crimes, for which we could not answer, and to assume all the responsibility for those crimes, even to the extent of His own life. Hence, He indeed was given *in our behalf*. However, even the Arminian would admit that Christ was given in our behalf, for our advantage. This must be more narrowly defined: He was given *in our stead*, to take our place, to be our substitute. Atonement is *vicarious satisfaction*. Such is the character of the "death of Christ, and the redemption of men thereby." In the expression that Christ "was made sin and curse on the cross in our behalf, or in our stead" we have a reference to two passages of Scripture which plainly prove this doctrine of vicarious atonement, namely, II Cor. 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. In the former passage we read: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And this stands in connection with the idea of reconciliation in the immediate context: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." vs. 19. And the text in Galatians reads as follows: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." These are but two of many passages of Holy Writ which speak of the idea of vicarious atonement, -- the doctrine which the Arminian could not maintain because he would not speak of limited atonement. And to be sure, the expression that Christ was made sin for us must not be understood in an ethical way. Ethically Christ was perfectly righteous and holy; and it was impossible for Him to sin and to fall from righteousness. But judicially He stood at the head of His sinful people. He was responsible for them. And in that position God treated Him as if He were the sinner of sinners, loaded all the guilt of our sins upon Him, so that He "was made a curse for us," and caused Him to bear our punishment. Thus He was indeed our Surety, taking our place in God's justice, and doing that which we could not, would not, and could not will to do.

Also in this connection the *Canons* do not enter into the reasons why God's only begotten Son in the flesh was able to make the satisfaction which we were unable to make. We are all acquainted with those reasons as they are stated or implied in our *Heidelberg Catechism*: 1) Being the Son of God, He was able to bear the punishment of sin and endure it to the very end. He could bear it and live. 2) Being the

Son of God *in the flesh* (real man), He could suffer that punishment in His human nature which He could not possibly have suffered in His divine nature, and could take our place. 3) Being as the Son of God wholly without sin and without guilt of His own, He could be perfectly obedient and offer Himself in the love of God for the sins of His people. 4) Being ordained from eternity the Head of His people, He could represent them before the bar of God's justice, assume their guilt, and die vicariously.

Such, then, is the Reformed view of the death of Christ. In it the boundless mercy of God is indeed revealed. The charge that the God of the Reformed faith is a terrible tyrant and an unmerciful despot could not be farther from the truth. In fact, in the real sense of the word that charge must be brought against those who maintain the governmental theory of the atonement. For in that view there is neither mercy nor justice in any real sense. But the very fact that the revelation of God's mercy takes place in the way of strictest divine justice, and not at the expense of justice, establishes that mercy as sure and unchangeable. Because the justice of God with respect to our sins is completely satisfied once and for all, it can never be that the mercy of God fails to reach us and that the Almighty after all holds our sins against us. "O the blessedness of the man unto whom Jehovah doth not impute iniquity!" He has tasted the mercy of the Lord indeed!

H.C.H.

#### SUNRISE IN MY SOUL

In doubt and darkness long I wandered,  
My will beyond control,  
'Till Jesus came and brought the glory  
Of the sunrise in my soul!

The clouds were rifted in a moment;  
I saw them backward roll.  
And oh, the beauty of the morning!  
It was sunrise in my soul!

He satisfied my longing spirit;  
He sweetly made me whole.  
And all the day my heart is singing:  
'Tis sunrise in my soul!

When earthly toil and care are ended,  
And I have reached the goal,  
I know that morning will forever  
Be sunrise in my soul.

Anon.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Election of Elders

#### Article 22 Continued

There are still many other requirements for the office of elder. Before discussing these we will digress a moment to comment upon a question which arose in connection with our former writing. The question is: "Is it proper to consider one a candidate for the office who has been guilty of some public, gross sin for which he has repented and made confession?" The elder must be blameless and have a good report of them that are without. Now it cannot be denied that the committal of such sins, even though they are confessed, leaves a mark upon the guilty one in the eyes of the community that is oft times never erased. If it is an offense that is punishable by the civil authorities, a public record of such misconduct is even kept. Sin is always a blemish, an indelible stain. When one becomes perpetrator of public wrong it is impossible to escape its stigma. From this viewpoint it could not be said that such a person is of good repute and, therefore, eligible for the office.

On the other hand, however, in the church of Jesus Christ, sin confessed is sin forgiven. And sin forgiven is sin obliterated and may, therefore, no more be used against the person who has fallen and by the grace of God been restored. It is ethically wrong to hold charges against a person for which confession has been made and forgiveness obtained. From this viewpoint it would appear that the position that declares such a person forever ineligible for the office is untenable. We think now of the apostle Peter who denied the Lord with vehement cursing. Surely a great and terrible sin this was. Yet, after the resurrection, the Lord restored him to his office.

Hence, my personal conclusion and answer to the above question would be as follows: (1) Where there are other capable and well qualified men in the congregation, these should be given first consideration; (2) Where such a person as mentioned in the above question is considered, a sufficient period of time must have elapsed so that it may be shown beyond question that the confession of the sin is sincere and valid; (3) Where this is the case and such a person possesses the other necessary qualifications, showing himself blameless in his present walk and life, he could not be refused. An evil that occurred in the remote past, and that was properly remedied according to Scripture, could not be used for the present basis of disqualification.

To further sustain this position, we cite the example of St. Augustine. In his "Confessions" he writes concerning himself as follows: "For this space of nine years then (from my nineteenth year to my eight and twentieth) we lived seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving, in diverse lusts; openly, by sciences which they call liberal; secretly, with a

false named religion; here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain." And again: "Upon how grievous iniquities consumed I myself, pursuing a sacrilegious curiosity, that having forsaken Thee, it might bring me to the treacherous abyss, and the beguiling service of devils, to whom I sacrificed by evil actions, and in all these things thou didst scourge me!" Yet, in spite of all this, Augustine, after his conversion, became a noted church father who occupied the high office well. We would not declare him disqualified on the basis of this miserable past. Nor does this imply justification of the things he did. Augustine, too, condemns them and humbly thanks God for forgiveness and deliverance from them.

It might, perhaps, be objected that Augustine did these things in his ignorant, unconverted state and that the matter is different with one who knowingly and wilfully commits gross sin. It is readily acknowledged that the two are not synonymous but, nevertheless, also in the case of the latter, a moment of weakness cannot forever disqualify for the service of God and His church if only sincere repentance is evident and forgiveness of the sin committed obtained. It may be added that the really penitent sinner is better qualified to serve God than the self-righteous Pharisee.

But let us now return to the qualifications of elders.

#### *c. Pedagogical Requirements*

An elder must be "apt to teach." In Titus 1:9 this requisite is more specifically defined. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." This means that the elder must not only have the ability to instruct others but he must certainly be well-founded in the truth and particularly in the doctrine of the church he serves. He must know how to handle the doctrine in instructing the catechumens, in building up the faith of the church and in refuting heretics. Only then will he also be able to fulfill the duty of the office described in the following excerpts from the Form of Ordination: "It is also the duty particularly to have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word, to the end that all things may be directed to the edification of the Church; and that no strange doctrine be taught, according to that which we read, Acts 20, where the apostle exhorteth to watch diligently against the wolves, which might come into the sheepfold of Christ; for the performance of which the elders are in duty bound diligently to search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith."

It is certainly a bad sign when common members of the church, for no legitimate reason, absent themselves from the study of the Word of God in the societies organized for this purpose but it is a matter of more serious concern still when elders neglect these opportunities and privileges to be more firmly founded in the truth and to use their gifts for the profit of others. In the societies they have an excellent opportunity to use their abilities of teaching for the instruction of

other members. Let them not neglect this solemn duty lest they disqualify themselves. As Ellicott states, "Apt to teach means not only able to teach but ready to teach and skilled in teaching." An elder must be diligent to utilize every opportunity to build up the church in the faith and the true knowledge of God.

Likewise able teachers are not novices in the faith. A novice is one who is recently converted to the faith. Such should not be installed in the office of elder. He has need first of a period of seasoning and growth in the faith before he is able to instruct and build up others. Many churches have an ordinance that stipulates the requirement that a person must have been a member of the church (denominationally) for a certain period of time and a member of the local church for a lesser period of time before he can be considered for the office. This is proper. One may be a person of excellent ability but this never precludes the necessity of allowing sufficient time for such a person to become well-founded in the doctrines of the faith. Moreover, the text also warns that the novice, hastily ushered into the office of the elder, is very really confronted with the danger of being lifted up with pride and thus falling into the condemnation of the devil himself. Calvin aptly states with regard to this: "There being many men of distinguished ability and learning who at that time were brought to the faith, Paul forbids that such persons shall be admitted to the office of a bishop, as soon as they have made profession of Christianity. And he shows how great would be the danger; for it is evident that they are commonly vain, and full of ostentation, and in consequence of this, haughtiness and ambition will drive them headlong. What Paul says, we experience; for 'novices' have not only impetuous fervour and bold daring, but are also puffed up with foolish confidence, as if they could fly beyond the clouds. Consequently, it is not without reason that they are excluded from the honour of a bishopric, till, in process of time, their proud temper shall be subdued."

#### d. Requirements of Conduct

In the passages of Scripture we have under consideration there are several things mentioned which might be classified under this general heading. The texts state that an elder must be of "good behaviour, sober, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, lover of good things, etc." It is not necessary to comment on each of these separately as their meaning is rather self-evident. In a word, an office bearer in the church must be a man of good deportment. It might not be superfluous, however, to point out that many of the qualifications listed here are inter-related. For example when one is given to too much wine, which means excessive use and even intoxication, it follows that such a person will not be sober-minded and, further, he will invariably be led to such vices as "striker, contention, covetousness and avarice." This is unavoidable. Sin works like a chain reaction. The elder must not be one who is caught in that chain.

It is also interesting to note the meaning of the term

"striker." A striker is a passionate person who is inclined to come to blows at once over the least thing. He is one of hot temperament, the very opposite of being gentle and meek. In our day the term is used most generally to designate those who use force and violence to strike at their lawful employer who refuses to grant them whatever they may demand. It is difficult to understand how persons affiliated with worldly and unprincipled labor organizations and, therefore, co-responsible for all their evil deeds, are permitted to occupy the elder's seat in many Reformed circles today. Scripture says that the elder must be "no striker!"

Finally, it must be understood what is meant by the statement that an elder must have "good report of them that are without." This is difficult because it appears unlikely that those who are without should give a good testimony of the man of God. Christ, Himself, tells us that "they will speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." How then can one who is faithful to God expect a good report of them that are without? Isn't it inevitable that the report of evil speakers will be evil?

Calvin solves this difficulty when he writes: "this appears to be very difficult, that a religious man should have, as witnesses of his integrity, infidels themselves, who are furiously mad to tell lies against me. But the apostle means, that, so far as relates to external behaviour, even unbelievers themselves shall be constrained to acknowledge him to be a good man; for, although they groundlessly slander all of the children of God, yet they cannot pronounce him to be a wicked man, who leads a good and inoffensive life amongst them."

#### e. Conclusion

We have emphasized all of these requirements to point out the exalted character of the office which Christ has instituted in His Church. That there are none who of themselves meet such requirements may be readily admitted. Our sufficiency is alone of God. It is alone by His grace that men are equipped and qualified to serve. By the same grace they stand and labor in their office. Indeed, then, it is a blessed and thankworthy privilege to be considered worthy to serve Him in the office of elder. All praise be to Him!

G. Vanden Berg

#### AS TO BOOKS

(Continued from page 77)

series. It is, however, impossible to give you a comprehensive report on its contents within the narrow scope of this public announcement. Buy the book and read it, and it will strike you again how our brother Hoeksema has received the priceless gift to write plainly regarding the deepest and most profound truths of Holy Scripture. This book is not only for ministers. It is very readable, as are the other 8 volumes. And there should not be a Protestant Reformed home without this wonderful series on the Heidelberg. G.V.

## ALL AROUND US

### *"Vacant" Churches?*

The Rev. Harold Petroelje, in the "Reformed Journal" of October, 1955, answers the question: What are "Vacant" Churches? He does not answer the question so much as to condemn the expression. Correctly, I think, he calls attention to the fact that the expression is really a misnomer as it is used by the majority.

Strictly speaking, so he tells us, a "vacant" church is like a vacant lot or a vacant house. It means that a certain building that had been used for church services has been abandoned. It is no longer in use. And as it stands there it is not only a picture of forlornness, but also may be in the process of deterioration. That is what the term "Vacant" church literally means. But that is not what most people mean when they speak of "vacant" churches. Nor is that what the Year Book means when it speaks of such churches. They mean that these are churches without a pastor. They mean that the parsonage is empty and that they are waiting for a minister to move into it. And because those who use this expression do not mean what they say, the Reverend insists that they should cease using the term. In reality a church without a minister, all things being what they ought to be, is not vacant. All things continue on schedule as though the church had a regular pastor of its own. The services are conducted each Sunday by a lay-elder or a visiting minister or student; catechism and Sunday School are conducted regularly; the societies meet at their regular time and place; the sick are visited and christian discipline is exercised, etc. In a word, the life of the church is not brought to a stand-still because no pastor for this church is available, but all things continue decently and in order. True, writes Rev. Petroelje, this church may be able to conduct her affairs a little more smoothly and efficiently if she had a minister of her own, but he can also conceive of a situation where a church could better get along without a pastor if he is of a troublesome kind. Such a church breathes a sigh of relief when such a pastor takes his leave. At any rate, a church without a pastor is never "vacant," and we should no longer say that she is.

I was thinking when I read his article that Rev. Petroelje certainly touched on an important truth. Certainly the office of the ministry is not to be minimized, nor is it to be so depreciated that the minister becomes some kind of an efficiency man the church hires to make it prosperous, or a door mat upon whom the people can wipe off their feet and when it becomes decrepit can lightly throw it on the ash heap. I fear sometimes that churches look on the office of the ministry and on the minister just that way. This is an evil thing.

On the other hand, I believe it is definitely wrong to expect so much of a minister that when he moves to another

place all the life and activity of the church comes to a stand-still. Churches should be so trained that they can and will conduct their church life just as well when they have no minister as when they have one. For this reason I believe it is wrong that the minister must be the president of every society and a member of every committee as some seem to think he should be. I realize, of course, that in smaller congregations a minister may want to be busy, and generally, unless he is lazy, he will aspire to leadership in all the church activities. But a minister who does all the work that can be delegated to others, simply leaves a crippled congregation when he transfers to another. I am told that in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands ministers generally do not even attend society meetings except on invitation to speak. There is something good in this. A minister, in a Men's Society, for instance, that always waits for the minister to explain the passage under consideration, may be detrimental to the development of that society. He may be the cause also that those members who would like to offer their explanation may remain silent. This is still more true in the ladies' or young people's societies. There often the minister preaches a little sermon, the members patiently waiting until he finishes and it is time to adjourn. Instead of training the members to become leaders, the presence of the minister often discourages this. Surely, if there is a doctrinal dispute, or it is a question of exegesis, should necessity require it, the minister could be asked for his advice. The Holy Spirit has made all to be prophets and with this unction of the Holy One let the members, each in his own place, function and bring to manifestation the life of the body of Christ. Indeed, the church that is really church is never vacant.

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### *Van Weelden Recants.*

Most of our readers by this time have heard that the former pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa, has departed to the Christian Reformed Churches. Not only so, but he has evidently taken the greater portion of his church along with him. First the Rev. Van Weelden broke with the P. R. Churches when he became schismatic with his schismatic Classis. But it didn't take long after his departure from us that he also left his schismatic brethren, with whom he evidently saw no future, to worm his way back into the Christian Reformed Churches from which he must have separated with his parents when still a youngster.

I said at the beginning of this article: Van Weelden Recants. Strictly speaking, this is incorrect. My dictionary tells me that "recant" means to withdraw formally one's belief in something previously believed or maintained; to disavow an opinion or belief previously held. But this can hardly be applied to Van Weelden. I am convinced that while he was with our churches he never had Protestant Reformed convictions. If he did, he could never leave them.



Ergo, when Van Weelden goes to the Christian Reformed Churches he does not withdraw his belief in something previously believed.

However it is not so simple to leave one church and enter another, especially if the other is the least bit careful whom they receive. The Christian Reformed Church also demanded of Van Weelden that he disavow all relationship to the P. R. Churches, and declare that he has erred grievously in his former condemnation of the doctrines of the Christian Reformed Churches. Here I think the Chr. Ref. Churches could afford to be a bit more lenient than they were. They never heard Van Weelden say anything bad about their churches or their doctrine. No one ever did publicly. Fact is he has been hobnobbing with ministers of that church for some time. And while he was still with us I do not recall ever hearing anything publicly said by him that seriously condemned the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Churches.

Yet it is difficult for some to understand how Van Weelden ever came to our seminary and later promised faithfully to preach Protestant Reformed doctrine, and then so easily could disavow it. The only explanation it seems to me is that he never at heart believed our doctrine. Van Weelden's sin is therefore that he either lied to us, or he is lying now to the Chr. Ref. Churches. No doubt the former is the case.

The Banner and De Wachter have given notice to the Chr. Ref. Churches of his acceptance by them. In the most recent issue of The Banner (November 4, 1955) appears a report of Classis Sioux Center relative to his case. The Stated Clerk of that Classis reports as follows:

"The most important task of the Classis was the consideration of the request of Rev. J. Van Weelden, a former Protestant Reformed minister of Sioux Center, to be examined and admitted to the ministry of our Church under Article 9 of the Church Order. After due consideration of the application, Classis declared that this was legally before Classis, and that therefore it ought to be considered. A question was raised as to the nature and character of the examination to be conducted. The statement of the synodical examiners that it would not necessarily have to be considered final was received by the Classis as its own. That evening Rev. Van Weelden delivered a message on Matthew 5:44, 45. The Classis was impressed with his handling of this significant text. On the following day he submitted to the examination required according to Article 9 of the Church Order. The examination was thorough and complete. The brother gave a good account of himself, having ready answers for his examiners for the most part. However, a weakness in philosophical background was quite apparent.

"This part of the business took up most of the time of the Classis. It was felt that whatever decision would be taken, it would be an important one. Something like this doesn't happen very often in our Church. It was felt that the decision must be free from any ill-advised action because of its importance. It had to be charitable and Christian, giving the brother all the consideration he deserved. But at the same

time it had to be cautious and wise. The exact decision taken by Classis on this matter was reported in The Banner of October 7, 1955. In the disposition of this matter Classis is greatly indebted to the wise counselling of the synodical examiners of its sister Classes." So far the report.

So Van Weelden "gave a good account of himself." That is probably more than could be said about him so long as he was a member of our churches. That he had a weakness "in philosophical background," must mean that Van Weelden did not learn much philosophy when he was with us. Well, what is that anyway? That is something I didn't learn in the P. R. seminary either, and I'm happy I didn't, if the philosophy is the Christian Reformed type. My conviction is that it were better if all their ministers were a little weak in philosophical background. Then maybe they would be able to understand Scripture a little better, and the Confessions without philosophical interpretations.

What will become of Van Weelden now? That is a question which the Synod of the Chr. Ref. Churches will have to answer. It may be when that assembly has to consider this question, it will not answer as favorably for Van Weelden as Classis Sioux Center did.

What about the congregation of Sioux Center Van Weelden abandoned to the Christian Reformed Churches? All except one family in this church left our churches in the recent schism. If they could support the schismatic action of "Classis West" and the doctrine that action supported, it is not difficult to understand how Van Weelden had little trouble to convince these people to return to the Christian Reformed Churches. Will the Christian Reformed Churches also make them disavow all the evil things they have said concerning these churches since they left them? Pity on those poor souls, for they will have to take a lot back. Especially two or three whom I have known personally. The easiest way, of course, is to say that they never were Prot. Reformed.

M. Schipper

## CONTRIBUTIONS

There is something in the lessons of history which we should not leave unnoticed to the readers of our Standard Bearer. History often repeats itself on certain points. Especially on the point where the liberty of the believers in Christ is at stake.

The leaven of Phariseism always wills to creep in.

Jesus did not say for nought: beware of the leaven of Phariseism!

Dr. Herman Bavinck gives a very succinct and accurate description of this evil in the churches of the Reformation, speaking of the history of Dogma, when he discusses the subject: *Faith and repentance*. (Geloof en Bekeering)

In these days where men like Rev. Hubert De Wolf stress the activity of faith as a "prerequisite" and as a "con-

dition" it is well to listen to the evaluation of Dr. H. Bavinck of the English and Scottish practicians.

Writes the late Dr. H. Bavinck on page 93, Volume IV as follows:

"Under the influence of the English and Scottish practicians a continued line of men arose, who complained about the bad state of affairs in the church, the corruption of morals, and announced the judgment of God, which they recognized in all kinds of woes and of wars, and who expected salvation and deliverance in a reformation of the heart and life. They reminded the rulers of the land and the ministers in the church to perform their duty, and urged all to serious and pains-taking self-examination. Uprightness in walk, membership in the church, birth from believing parents, baptism, confession, Lord's Supper are not sufficient.

"He who has no more reaches just short of the truth...

"Others took stronger issue with what they called "letter-knowledge" and uttered the sigh: O Lord deliver us from the letter which murders thousands, and place the stamp of Thy Spirit upon it. These labored for a practical, a sentimental-experiential life and Christendom.

"But even those who did not fall into this extreme no longer placed regeneration before baptism in practical life; they had very little confidence in the so-called Evangelical repentance and insisted on a brokenness of heart, conviction of sin and the feeling of misery as the *conditions* for obtaining part in Christ and His benefits and placed justification and regeneration *after* faith!" (Italicize, G. L.)

It's the old, old story of error, isn't it, dear readers. One has but to turn to Rev. De Wolf's articles in the "Reformed Guardian" to see this same error of the English practicians, and the "Oud Gereformeerden" in Netherlands and here. It is an old and persistent error, but it is not Reformed! This last observation rings a bell in me. I'm reminded of the remark of Rev. A. Cammenga, when I asked him in the presence of Rev. C. Hanko whether he regarded the church on earth as "potential candidates for heaven and hell"? He then said: "Wat denk je dat ik oud gereformeerd ben?"

Just a little syllogism:

1. The practicians (oud gereformeerden) place justification and regeneration *after* faith. Faith is the condition of salvation with these neonomists.

2. One has but to see the great attempt on the part of the Reformed Guardian to defend "faith" as being "before" salvation, to see in which direction they are moving in their defense of "conversion is prerequisite to enter the kingdom," Rev. A. Cammenga included.

3. Ergo: Let every reader draw the conclusion. Also Rev. De Wolf and Rev. A. Cammenga.

If these erstwhile Protestant Reformed preachers do not wish to fall under the verdict of the late Dr. Bavinck let them repent. What is this verdict?

"In this way (of these practicians) the peculiar tendency and teaching (richting) of the Rationalistic and Moralistic

School was positively prepared in the order of salvation (Ordo Salutis), which was followed by nearly all the Eighteenth Century theologians. Leaving the principles of the Reformation they joined forces with the Socinians and the Arminians and taught that faith, whether it be considered as assensus or as confidence (fiducia) in a measure, cannot justify, but that it was the fountain of virtue as it included the new obedience."

A little excerpt from Dr. H. Bavinck. Against a "little heaven"!

He that readeth let him take note!

G. L.

### Report of Eastern Ladies League

The Ladies' League meeting was held October 20, 1955, at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. The meeting was opened by singing Psalter number 290 and Psalm 116, after which our president, Mrs. F. Harbin, opened with prayer and read Malachi I and II. A word of welcome was extended to all the ladies present. A ladies' trio from Hope Church sang for us, and the president then introduced the speaker, Rev. H. Hoeksema, who spoke on "Confession and Promise" as based on the second and third questions of the Baptism form.

#### 1. Confession:

Everytime a baby is baptized the entire church, as well as the parents, make a promise. Ever since the Baptism form was composed in the 16th century it has always been a subject of severe controversy. The phrase, "doctrine taught here in this christian church" was left out of the early forms, but in 1618 and 1619 the Synod of Dordrecht maintained this clause exactly as it is in our present form. Scripture is not doctrine but the Church elicits the doctrine from Scripture, and the Church through its leaders systematizes this doctrine. All elements are expressed in the Baptism form for it confesses total depravity, and, in the second part, it so beautifully expresses, "God the Father establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us"—no condition, no invitation. No one is included except the elect. The Holy Ghost assures us that He will dwell in us. Our part in the covenant of God is not collateral with God's part but it is always simply the fruit of the work of God. The Baptism form looks to the spiritual seed only—always.

2. Promise is the answer to the third question. The age of discretion starts at birth. Our children must be instructed positively according to Protestant Reformed doctrine in the home, in Catechism, Sunday School, and Christian School. We are very grateful for our Protestant Reformed Schools, but we must not be satisfied with what we are doing; we must strive for our own schools also in higher education, knowing that our work shall not be vain in the Lord.

After this instructive talk opportunity was given to ask questions relative to the speech. While singing a Psalter number, a collection was taken for our Adams Street and Hope Protestant Reformed Schools. The ladies' trio sang

another selection, and Rev. Hoeksema closed with prayer. Our evening ended with refreshments served by the ladies from Hudsonville Church and the Priscilla Society of First Church.

We thank God for the precious truths He has revealed to us and pray for grace to be faithful that all things may be done to the glory of His Holy Name.

Mrs. Peter Decker, Reporter

### Report of the Western Ladies Aid League

The fall meeting of the Western Ladies Aid League of Protestant Reformed Churches which was held at Doon, Iowa on October 12 was opened by singing our theme song, Psalter No. 298, and Psalter No. 313. Then our president, Mrs. H. Veldman opened with prayer, read Romans 12:1-16 and extended a word of welcome.

The minutes of our spring league meeting and the delegate board meeting were read and approved as read after which the financial report was given by the treasurer.

Our speaker for the afternoon was Rev. H. Veldman who spoke on the topic "Personal Dedication and Consecration" based on Rom. 12:1-2. He first explained the difference between dedication and consecration. Our task of consecrating does not mean to consecrate ourselves to the betterment of our world, of society, and of humanity itself. We must not consecrate ourselves to ourselves, our husbands, our children, and our homes but to God and to God alone Who revealed Himself in Scripture in order that He alone may be praised and glorified. The task of consecrating cannot be performed of ourselves but only by the mercies of God Who gave us a renewed mind.

It is our calling as Protestant Reformed ladies and mothers to: 1. consecrate ourselves by knowing the truth—therefore, the Protestant Reformed truth, 2. consecrate ourselves by discussing these things with our husbands and instructing our children in these things; 3. consecrate ourselves in the sphere of education.

Our self consecration is possible only by the mercies of God. Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. Rom. 12:2a. Proceed not in ourselves but proceed in prayer. May His grace lead us in all we do unto His glory and praise.

After Rev. Veldman's edifying speech a musical number was given by the Hull ladies.

Then Rev. Heys conducted our Question Hour. He very capably answered the questions handed in by each society. After each question the audience was given opportunity to ask questions.

The Edgerton ladies then favored us with a musical number.

We sang some Psalter Numbers while the offering was received for Children's Retreat. Mrs. J. Heys, our vice president, closed with prayer.

A delicious lunch was served by the Doon ladies at the conclusion of the meeting.

With grateful hearts to our merciful God for a spiritually filled afternoon of Christian fellowship we returned to our respective homes.

Mrs. T. Jansma, Reporter

### Plainly speaking but not the truth

Dear Editor:

In the Editorials of the "Reformed Guardian," Oct. 10, under the topic: "Plainly Speaking" . . . Edward Knott's soul was moved as he was listening to some of the passages of Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, and particularly when he heard a portion of Isaiah: "Be not afraid, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee." And as Knott was struck by these words the matter of his churches came to his mind; and no wonder.

Knott is positive that his churches have a right of existence, although some in their midst are not so enthusiastic about it. There is a shrugging of the shoulders, a refusal to go along, a failure to face the future, whatever it may be in the way of obedience to our heavenly Father, confidently and resolutely.

However, that should not surprise you, Knott. Your future is not only dark, but there is no future at all for your churches, for the simple reason that they do not exist. And don't make your members believe that you have that right, and that your so called churches are the living continuation of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as you put it. Knott continues his oracle: "We took a position in 1924." And now Knott reveals himself as one who does not belong by us anymore. Listen: "That position does not belong to one man alone, or the group that follows him." Did that man ever reveal himself as such, Knott? When you were a student, Knott, you esteemed that man very highly, it seems. And you know that that man, who was your Professor then, never put himself upon the foreground, but was meek, and still is, by the grace of God. But that teacher you seemed to love then, you hate now. And with hatred in you soul toward your former Professor—who never did you any wrong, but always sought the best for his students, and still does, and instructed you all in the Protestant Reformed truth, and carried you all upon the wings of prayer before the God of Sabaoth—don't you remember that anymore?

You say, as long as the Lord gives us breath we will maintain that truth. You have not the truth but propagate the lie. A conditional God is an idol and that preaching is idol-worship.

Never say again, Knott, we have a right of existence. Classis and Synod denied you that right; and the Grand Rapids Court looked through your scheme. What you call your churches, they are out, and hopelessly entangled in your own confusion which you created yourself, and the Protestant Reformed truth, which you as preachers of the gospel have preached amongst us, you never loved.

It is the height of folly, Knott, to speak of a Mission program. As you know, the Church does Mission work.

And to re-establish the Theological School? What boldness of speech! Who in the world will be the teachers? Unless Kok can teach church polity and maybe Houwerzyl doctrine. Vermeer is out; collector he is.

And then to say: forward in faith, in the confidence that the Lord gives us a place. I suppose that is the faith before you are in the kingdom of God. Remember, the Lord did not give you a place. He will not strengthen you as you think He will, for He is the God of truth and He hates the lie.

Let me inform you, Knott, that our future looks bright. Praise the Lord! We have two Professors whom we love, and our missionary may see fruit upon his labors.

S.D.V.

### Brethren of the Prot. Ref. Churches: Beware!

Dear Editor:

Again we might say, "And what you don't hear!" First we, as churches, were sold down the stream to the Liberated churches, by Kok, and De Jonge. Then the "Hate Hoeksema-Ophof" campaign was subtly carried on in the dark. Following that, was that iniquitous "Cross-Bill," and the testimony in the Law-Suit in Civil Court. These corruptions are legion!

And what SOUND do we hear today? THIS: "We (namely Kok et alii) believe the same as you (the Prot. Ref. Churches, H.V.P.) do; there is not much difference!" Factually, then, my breath stops deadcold for want of the proper words, lest I should sin by writing the wrong thing, which I loathe to do. Thus, instead of expressing something angrily, I will try to accept Kok's assertions at face value for what they are worth, in the light of FACTS as we have experienced these, since 1948. Taking it as a premises, which Kok now classifies as: "Believing the same as we do . . . there isn't much difference;" and thus joining the two as ONE PREMISE, then it is safe to make these deductions:

If Kok (and those with him) have ever signed their own death warrant, then they have done so NOW! For, they show that they NEVER HAVE BEEN PROTESTANT REFORMED, and after all that has been said and done, Kok, etc., FRANKLY TELL US: "We understand NOTHING of the Protestant Reformed Doctrines, nor Church Order." From all that Kok, et alii, have revealed to us in the recent past, it is plain that: THEY BELONG WITH THE LIBERATED, OR WITH THE CHR. REF. CHURCHES, but NOT with us! LET US BEWARE of this honeycombed philosophy of Kok and others who are now casting their white robes of innocence over the dirty page of the history of our recent breach, of WHICH THEY ARE THE CAUSE. Now Kok tries to change the Leopard spots of iniquity with his softsoap

philosophy and wishes to join hands, and let bygones be bygones. But, before we, as Protestant Reformed Churches entertain such notions, we better see a good doctor and have our heads examined. Naturally, we care not what Kok and the schismatics NOW think. Kok's "Conscience" has weighed HIS PLIGHT, and HIS KINGDOM (or "Sovereignty in own domain") and it is NOW found wanting. So, Kok's career often changes. 1924: "There is NO Common-Grace!" 1948: "God's promise is for all" (Liberated). I advise Kok's "Conscience" to GO TO HIS FRIENDS, THE LIBERATED, because Kok and his "Conscience," and the Protestant Reformed Churches are two direct opposites and are, by no means, alike. And Kok's present contention is the final proof of that. HE KNOWS NOTHING OF OUR DOCTRINES NOR CHURCH ORDER. Would we KNOWINGLY take another chance TO WRECK THE REMAINING REMNANTS of our churches, just to give Kok et alii a job? God Forbid! LET US BEWARE OF KOK'S HONEY-COATED CORRUPTIONS, lest our end be worse than it ever has been before.

Yours in Christ FOR THE TRUTH.

H. A. Van Putten

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Under an Eastern sky . .  
Amid a rabble cry . . .  
A Man went forth to die,  
For me!

Torn-crowned His blessed head . .  
Blood-stained His every tread . .  
Cross-laden on He sped,  
For me!

Pierced thru His hands and feet . . .  
Three hours o'er Him did beat,  
Fierce rays of noontide heat,  
For me!

Thus wert Thou made all mine . . . .  
Lord, make me wholly Thine . . . .  
Give grace and strength divine,  
To me!

Anon.

"The nomistic pietism erred in the other direction, and transferred the essence of faith to the well-being of faith, which besides by special revelation, is only attainable in the way of self-scrutination, and a long and fearful way of self-examination. Instead of leading spiritual life in this way to a higher level, it more and more robbed this life of all certainty and of all spontaneity."

Herman Bavinck, Geref. Dogmatiek