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MEDITATION

THE FORSAKEN KING

"But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified." John 19:15, 16a

Quite a long time before the events of my text took place, Jehovah had a controversy with His people. And the subject of this quarrel was a king. Israel desired a king. They looked around them and noted the giants who led the heathen nations in battle. They heard the songs and the praises which were sung to those heroes of old, and . . . yearned for such heroes. They would have their pageants also. Hip, hip, hoorah!

Samuel! Give us a king such as the heathens have around us, so that he may go in and out among us.

And Samuel fretted.

But Jehovah was angry with His people.

And He explained the matter to kind and able Samuel: they have not forsaken you: they have forsaken Me!!

They are tired of My rule among them.

And the fools do not know what they asked for.

And I will give them a king.

But it shall be a king in My anger.

And Saul was given.

* * * *

There is a proverb which the Dutch quote very often: Through harm and shame one becomes wise!

Such was the case with Israel of those days.

They had their king, but what a king!

The end was shame and disgrace. Remember the moun-

tains of Gilboa! And those of the household of Saul gather the broken bones and bodies of Saul and Jonathan. Listen to the plaint of David as he sings the dirge of Saul's and Jonathan's death.

Evidently there were those that could pray and make confession in those days, for the Lord now gives to His people a king in His lovingkindness.

And that king is David, the man after the heart of God.

Look at that hero!

He battles the enemies of the Lord and of the Lord's chosen people. He sings the songs of Zion. He crawls in the dust before God. And works righteousness. He is a good king.

But, alas, he is not THE King of Zion.

He is a weak copy of the real King of Zion. A weak copy at his very best.

No, God has something better in store for the chosen Israel. The better David is coming.

For Him Israel is waiting. Oh, when will Goel arrive?

* * * *

Well, at long last the real King, of Zion appears, with healing in His wings. Jesus is born, grows, appears in public, preaches, heals, reveals the everlasting Father, gives Divine answers on earth, manifests the very heavens and heavenly power, and . . .? Does Israel acknowledge its KING?

Israel forsakes Him!

And this forsaking is so terrible that it chills the very bones.

The context of my text tells us that it was the preparation of the Passover! The very hour of the day is mentioned. And the Triune God uses a heathen to announce the King of kings to Israel: Pilate raises his voice to the choicest of Israel, the chief priests that led the multitude: Behold, O Israel, behold your King!

Of course, we know that Pilate was not serious about this announcement. We know that he derided the Jews whom

he despised. He meant to say: Behold this miserable Man! And he pointed to Jesus who stood there: bleeding, spit upon, scourged, beaten, a thoroughly miserable creature: Ecce Homo!

But nevertheless, the King of kings is announced to Israel. And it was prophesied in their own scriptures that Goel would come exactly as they see Him before Pilate. All they have to do is turn to Isaiah 53, and also the last verses of Isaiah 52. All they have to do is to look upon the rivers of the blood of the innocent animals throughout their own history, and they will see the Christ of God.

It certainly was the preparation of the Passover!

Remember? Blood on the posts of the doors? And the angel of the wrath of God passed over when he saw the blood?

The King of the Jews?

Indeed. He had proved Himself to be the King of kings. Nothing stopped His glorious reign. Death and the grave obeyed Him. Devils trembled at His very presence. Disease and misery fled at His approach. Indeed, He proved His Kingship.

And what does Israel do at this juncture?

They utterly forsake their King!

* * * *

And this forsaking is absolute.

They shout with emphasis, for they shout twice: "Aron! Aron!"

And this little word is a form of a verb which means that you take the object away, even as you take a dead and offensive body away from your sight. Pick Him up and throw Him away in such a manner that we never see Him again! That's the meaning.

They utterly forsake their King.

And that such is the meaning of their shout is clear from that which they add: "Crucify Him!"

Who would not tremble here?

Crucifixion is not only the most horrible death, but it expresses utter contempt for the sufferer. To be crucified means that you are not worthy to have a place on the earth. You specify that the sufferer is neither worthy of being on the earth nor in the heavens. To be crucified means that you are rejected by everyone, and deemed unworthy a place in the Universe.

'Aron! 'Aron!

Oh, it was the preparation of the Passover alright!

But we did not realize it at that time.

I say: WE!

For humanity stood before Pilate, and rejected the King of kings.

Our human nature, as we live it today, stood before Pilate and said: 'Aron! 'Aron!

We are not one bit better than those chief priests, and that multitude. We have no use for righteousness, holiness and real goodness and real love and lovingkindness.

It may seem so, but it is not so. It may seem as though we have regard for truth and righteousness and all those other shining virtues, but it is not so.

Just let conflicting interests arise, and we crucify Christ. Let the right (I mean, of course, the wrong) circumstances appear, and we will crucify Christ. And if you say: but how is that possible? Is not Jesus safely in heaven? Then my answer is: we will do so in His suffering people. There is some remaining suffering of Christ that needs must be suffered, and so Christ is crucified in His own. And therefore the Holy Ghost said: Grieve not the Spirit! That can only mean the Spirit of Christ as He dwells in the church.

But take it from one who knows: we often crucify Jesus. Then Jesus is in our way. Then we say: 'Aron! 'Aron!

If it only is plain to you, to me, to all of God's people, that we are not very far removed from that howling mob. Ever wept bitterly?

* * * *

But let us watch and listen to Pilate.

He asks wonderingly: Shall I crucify your King?

Now, today, after so many centuries of the exegesis of the Holy Spirit, I tremble when I read this question. And I realize that we have here the emphasis of the Godhead. It shall become very plain that God is righteous and that man is crooked. It shall become plain that Israel utterly rejects its King and Christ and God.

God wants to emphasize the filthiness of the human race. They are required to supply the answer to Divine Examination.

It is true that Jesus would again be rejected if He should appear today. We would by nature reject Jesus Christ, the Face of God.

Notice: the *chief* priests answered.

Those chief priests were men who were permeated with the Word of God. They were the cream of the crop. They were the leaders of the chosen people of God.

A priest is about the loveliest occupation a man might aspire to.

The outstanding point about a priest is love. A priest, according to Divine ordinance, is love personified. A priest is a man who is supposed to be concerned about the sins of the people. Hence, a priest must pray. He must go to God with all the sins of the poor people of God on his heart. And standing before God he must ask for forgiveness. A priest must bring a loving sacrifice to God.

If you translate this appraisal in New Testament language, it means that a deacon must be a lovely person. He must be filled with mercy and pity all the day long. He must seek out those that suffer and are in great need. Then he must listen to the sobs of the heart, and finally weep with those that weep. And in the name of Jesus he must alleviate the suffering of the poor people of God.

Now look at the *chief* priests. As far as their name is concerned, they excel in pity and sympathy.

But look at the monsters they have become. If ever pity was evoked, it certainly was Jesus who evoked it.

They should have embraced Him, bathed His wounds in healing balm, an hold Him aloft to God for mercy.

Instead they shout: We have no King but Caesar!

That shout, correctly interpreted, means: We adore the devil but hate God!

Caesar is the representative of fallen humanity, the world, in subjection to the devil.

Well, him they choose. And Christ, Salvation, God they reject.

* * * *

How marvelous are the ways of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments!

Yes, it was the preparation of the Passover.

Jesus was being prepared to be the Lamb of God.

Shades of Egypt.

The firstborn of the Egyptians choked and died.

But Israel sang for joy.

And why?

The Lamb of God, the Firstborn of the Father gave His life in prophecy, in a figure, in a shadow.

The fulfilment would come, has come, is here among us.

Blessed is he who hears!

G.V.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Wednesday, April 3, at 9 A. M., in the Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church. Will all consistories resorting in Classis East kindly take note.

M. Schipper, *Stated Clerk*

Teachers Meeting

The Sunday School teachers mass meeting will be held Friday, April 26, in the Hope Church at 8 p. m.

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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EDITORIALS

The Free Offer

In "De Wachter," an organ of the Christian Reformed Church, one of the editors, in a very brief paragraph, attempts to express his condemnation of my position on "the free offer." I refuse to reflect on this for two reasons. In the first place, because he presents no arguments whatsoever on my position. In the second place, he leaves a wrong impression on what I wrote.

Let this be sufficient.

I am willing, as anyone knows, to answer any real arguments. But I have not the time or the desire to reflect on any silly little editorials one may be pleased to publish.

In my last editorial on the subject of "the free offer" I discussed or was discussing the proposition of the authors of "The Free Offer" that God "desires the salvation of the reprobate by their repentance. The one "desire" is inseparable from the other.

In this connection, I called attention to the calling. Our confessions do not speak of a "desire" on the part of God, but of His calling. In the external calling He calls to faith and repentance all that hear the preaching of the gospel. In the internal calling, He applies this outward calling of the gospel to the hearts of those that hear by His Spirit so that they actually repent and believe. This He never does to the reprobate, but only to the elect.

This is the teaching, not only of our confessions, but of all the Reformed Symbols, also of the Westminster Confession to which the authors of "The Free Offer" are supposed to subscribe. Also this confession of faith does not, and never would or could, speak of a desire of God to save the reprobate. Instead, it speaks of the calling in this wise:

"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."

This is the effectual calling that comes, according to this article, not to the reprobate, but only to those that are predestinated unto life.

This chapter of the Westminster also mentions the external calling as follows:

"Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto

Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and to be detested."

Does God "desire" the repentance and salvation of all, even of the reprobate? Is not this very sentence a denial of the doctrine of reprobation? I ask: 1. Does God "desire" the salvation and repentance of those whom He hardens and does He also, evidently, not "desire" to save and to have them come to repentance? For we read in Rom. 9:18: "therefore hath he mercy to whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Is not this "will" of God to harden the reprobate the same as the "desire" to harden them? Or are there, perhaps, two "desires" in God, one desire that they come to repentance and be saved, the other that they never come to repentance but be hardened and damned? That, of course, is, principally, a denial of the truth that God is one. That gives us two gods. That is sheer dualism. No, but God is one, and that one God has one will. And that will of God is also His desire, for the desire of God cannot be in conflict with His will. That one will and desire of God is to harden the reprobate. 2. This is also evident from the contrast in the text we just quoted. The contrast is between the will to have mercy and the will to harden. Now, the will to have mercy is surely the desire in God that the elect come to repentance and be blessed with all the blessings of salvation. By the same token, however, because of the sharp contrast in the text, the will to harden means that there is no desire in God that the reprobate come to repentance and be saved in the way of repentance. 3. But how do those on whom He will have mercy ever come to repentance, and why is it that those whom He wills to harden do not and cannot come to repentance? Is this of their own free will? That would be a denial of the sovereign grace of God and of the efficacy of the saving calling of God. For no man can come to Christ, and no man can ever come to repentance except the Father draw Him. Also this error is implied in the teaching that God will have all men, even the reprobate, come to repentance and be saved in the way of repentance. All men are by nature dead in sin and trespasses. Hence, either they come to repentance by the efficacious grace of the Almighty or they are always hardened and that, too, by God, even through the external calling of the gospel. How, then, is it possible that God can "desire" the repentance of the reprobate and their salvation while He does not give them grace to repent? 4. Finally, do the authors of "The Free Offer" mean to teach that there is a possibility of repentance and salvation apart from the preaching of the gospel? I can hardly believe this. But what then? Is it not true that by far the majority of the reprobate never hear the gospel? In the old dispensation the gospel and the knowledge of salvation was limited to comparatively very few. For many a

century it was confined to the nation of Israel. But also in the new dispensation, though the preaching of the gospel is no longer confined to any particular nation, it reaches, in comparison with the whole human race, comparatively few. How, then, is this possible if God "desires" the repentance and salvation of the reprobate?

To me it is evident that the authors of "The Free Offer" do not like the doctrine of reprobation.

They camouflage it.

The authors of the pamphlet also quote Calvin. To say that God desires the salvation of the reprobate irrespective of their repentance and their faith is, they say, inconceivable. And then they write: "For it would mean, as Calvin says, 'to renounce the difference between good and evil.'"

Now, the authors do not furnish the reference so that I cannot check up on the context in which Calvin writes this.

But of one thing I am perfectly confident: Calvin would never write that God desires the repentance and salvation of the reprobate as do the authors of this pamphlet.

Often he writes the very opposite.

At this time, I want to refer to only one passage in this connection. It is found in *Calvin's Calvinism*, pp. 103 ff.

"The difficulty which according to Pighius, lies in that other place of Paul, where the apostle affirms that 'God will all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth' (I Tim. 2:4), is solved in one moment, and by one question, namely, How does God wish all men to come to the knowledge of the truth: For Paul couples this *salvation* and this *coming to the knowledge of the truth* together. Now I would ask, did the same will of God stand the same from the beginning of the world or not? For if God willed or wished (or "desired", H.H.) that his truth should be known to *all men*, how was it that He did not proclaim and make known his law to the Gentiles also? Why did He confine the light of life to Judaea? And what does Moses mean when he says: 'For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments as all this law, which I set before you this day?' (Deut. IV, 7, 8). The divine Law-giver surely here means that there was no other nation which hath statutes and laws by which it was ruled like unto that nation. And what does Moses here but extol the peculiar privilege of the race of Abraham? To that responds the high encomium of David, pronounced on the same nation, 'He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments they have not known them.' (Ps. 147:20). Nor must we disregard the express reason assigned by the Psalmist, 'Because the Lord loved their fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them' (Deut. IV, 37). And why did God choose them? Not because they were, in themselves more excellent than others, but because it pleased God to choose them, 'for His peculiar people.' What? Are we to suppose that the apostle did not know that he himself was prohibited

by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word in Asia and from passing over into Bythinia? But as the continuance of this argument would render us to prolix, we will be content with taking one position more: that God, after having thus lighted the candle of eternal life of the Jews alone, suffered the Gentiles to wander for many ages in the darkness of ignorance; and that, at length, this special gift and blessing were promised to the church: 'But the Lord shall arise upon thee; and his glory shall be seen upon thee' (Isa. 60:2). Now let Pighius boast, if he can, that God willeth all men to be saved. The above arguments, founded on the Scriptures, prove that even the external preaching of the doctrine of salvation, which is very inferior to the illumination of the Spirit, was not made of God common to *all men*."

I would say, in the words of Calvin, "now let the authors of "The Free Offer" boast that God willeth or desireth that all men, even the reprobate, shall be saved.

I have an idea that Calvin would be amazed if he knew that his name was used to defend the doctrine of Pighius and of the Arminians.

H.H.

QUESTION BOX

Mr. B. J. M. of Redlands, Cal., asks:

In regard to the question I asked in the *Standard Bearer* of February 15, 1957, I ask you for a little more of your time and space.

It has always been taught us that if someone comes with a private matter to the consistory, that the consistory ask the brother if he has walked with the accused according to Matt. 18, and if the answer is no, the consistory must admonish him that he is doing wrong; and that he is bringing gossip to the consistory, and the consistory may not listen to him. In as far as the consistory is concerned that he is the end of the matter.

As to your answer to the question:

1. I do not understand what you mean by *public* as far as the consistory is concerned.
2. How can the consistory become guilty of the same sin when they do *not* inform the accused?
3. How can the consistory act on a matter that does not belong there according to Church Order?
4. How can anything leave the consistory room if it is plain from Scripture and Church Order that it may not be laid before the consistory?

Answer:

I wish to say, in the first place, that I do not know anything about the case to whom brother M. is referring, although I surmise that he has in mind a concrete case and, most probably, his own consistory. I may, probably, also surmise that he was the one that brought the matter to the consistory, although, on the other hand, I can hardly believe

that the brother, whom I know personally, would commit such an error. Yet, I ask myself the question: how does he know about this private case, if it is not his own? How does he know what the consistory decided if he were not the person that reported the case to the consistory? Is the case, perhaps, public by the way of gossip outside of the consistory? I hope that you understand my problem. On the one hand, I can hardly believe that brother M. who, evidently, knows the Church Order, judging by his own questions, would commit the error of attempting to make a private matter pending with the consistory. And, on the other hand, I cannot understand, if it is not his own case, how brother M. can know anything about this private matter. I wish that brother M. would answer this question for me.

Further, I reply the following to the above questions:

1. The original question of brother M. was: "If someone brings a private matter to the consistory, before walking with the accused according to Matt. 18 (Art. 72 Church Order) may the consistory inform the accused party of the matter?" My answer was that the consistory is really under obligation to do so and I furnished three grounds for my answer: (1) The accuser made private matter public as far as the consistory is concerned; (2) The accuser is guilty of backbiting and, unless the accused is informed, the consistory would become a party to that sin. (3) The consistory has the calling to remove all offense from the congregation, also this offense of backbiting.

2. Now the brother cannot understand what I meant when I wrote that, by reporting a private matter to the consistory, the accuser made the matter public as far as the consistory is concerned. To me this is very simple. Suppose that the case referred to in these questions is not brother M.'s own case. Then he is not supposed to know anything about it. Suppose that the accuser tells brother M. about it, instead of walking the way of Matt. 18. Then the matter is no longer strictly private but public as far as brother M. is concerned. The same is true of the private matter brought to the consistory. By reporting the matter to the consistory, the accuser made the private matter public, for now all the members of the consistory know it. It is true, the consistory might ask the accuser before he has ever opened his mouth whether he has walked the way of Matt. 18. But that is, for many reasons, a practical impossibility. The accuser and he only is to blame for making the matter public.

3. The brother can neither understand how the consistory can become guilty of the same sin, of backbiting, if they not inform the accused. Also this is very simple. Again, let me proceed on the supposition that it was not brother M.'s own case. Then the accuser was guilty of backbiting to brother M., and the latter certainly had the calling to admonish him, but also to inform the brother whom the backbiter accused. Otherwise, brother M. would, at least, have become a party to the backbiting. To listen to a backbiter is to become a party to his backbiting. Well, then, apply this

to the consistory and you have your answer. The consistory had to inform the accused in order not to become party to the backbiting of the accuser.

4. The brother also asks how a consistory can act on a matter that does not belong to them according to Church Order. My answer is: they did not. In fact, they must have decided that they could not treat the case because the accuser did not act according to Matt. 18. They only treated the accusation from a formal viewpoint and decided to inform the accused of the matter. And this was correct, not only as far as the consistory was concerned, but also with reference to the accused. Would brother M. be pleased to know that someone lodged all kinds of accusations against him with the consistory of which the consistory did not inform him? I do not believe it.

5. The brother finally asks how anything can possibly leave the consistory room if it is plainly not a matter for the consistory. If the brother means to refer to what is called a "leak" in the consistory, my answer is: it should stay within the walls of the consistory. But if he refers to the fact that the consistory informed the accused about the fact that an accusation was lodged against him, my answer is given above.

But I know that I am a weak and short-sighted man. Brother M. may differ with me, of course. He may also develop his own opinion in our paper. He may also ask further questions. If he does, however, I would like to know whether he is the party that brought the accusation to the consistory (which I still cannot believe), and, if not, how does it happen that he knows all about this private case.

H.H.

Mr. G. L., Jr., of Rock Valley, Ia., asks:

How must we understand I Cor. 15:29?

Answer:

In the text referred to we read the well-known words: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

This verse has enjoyed numerous interpretations and, therefore, I am not surprised that the Men's Society of the Chr. Ref. Church of which G. L. is a member "got stuck with it" as the brother writes. The difficulty of the passage does not lie in the words of the text, but rather in the fact that the apostle Paul could write them. Nevertheless, I shall try to offer my own interpretation which is as follows:

1. The meaning of the words is plain. To be baptized, undoubtedly, refers to the sacrament of baptism. To be baptized for the dead means to receive the sacrament of baptism in behalf of, for the benefit of the dead.

2. From this we learn that in the very earliest times it frequently happened that, when those that were converted and confessed their faith in Christ, died before they had received the sacrament of baptism, the living believers that

were left behind were baptized for them or in their behalf. This was done, evidently, in the faith that baptism was essential and absolutely necessary for salvation.

3. This custom was, evidently, not general, but it prevailed in some circles. Nor did it last very long. Most likely it was rooted but already at the time of the apostles. After this it prevailed only with some sects. However, it seems that at the time of the apostle Paul it was also practiced in the church of Corinth.

4. The question is: did the apostle himself believe that baptism was absolutely indispensable for salvation and the living could be baptized for the dead? We know better. From all his epistles it is evident that this cannot have been his doctrine. Why, then, did he write these words here? Why did he not condemn this error? The reason, to my mind is, that he did not consider the error of being baptized for the dead as serious and fundamental as the error of denying the resurrection of the dead. And since, evidently, some of those that agreed with the error of baptism for the dead denied the resurrection, the apostle shows that this implies a contradiction. They cannot believe the one and deny the other.

H.H.

We still have two more questions of the Rev. E. E. of R., Wis. They are the following:

"In the light of all that has been said above, do we do violence to Scripture or to the decrees of God when we say: 'God does not punish and condemn a man on account of his sin, but *because of the decree of Reprobation.*'"

Principally we already answered this question. But the brother asks whether *we do violence to Scripture* when we teach that a man is not punished and condemned for or on account of his sin, but because of the decree of reprobation.

My answer is: we certainly do: Scripture everywhere teaches the very opposite. For this I could quote the Bible almost at random. But I will refer to only one passage, and ask the brother how he could possibly preach on this text in such a way that, instead of the words that speak of sin in this passage, he substitutes "reprobation." I am referring to Rom. 2:5ff.

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: Who will render to every man according to his deeds (according to his reprobation? H.H.): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious (that are reprobate? H.H.), and do not obey the truth (the reprobate? H.H.), but obey unrighteousness (the reprobate? H.H.) indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil (that is a reprobate? H.H.), of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: . . . For there is no respect of persons

with God. For as many as have sinned without law (the reprobate? H.H.) shall also perish without law (as reprobate? H.H.): and as many as have sinned in the law (who were reprobate in the law? H.H.) shall be judged by the law (shall be judged because they are reprobate? H.H.)"

Let this be enough.

I might also ask how anyone that teaches that a man is not punished or condemned because of his sin, but because of his reprobation, could ever preach on the basis of the Heidelberg Catechism, for instance, on qu. 10:

"Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion (reprobation? H.H.) to go unpunished?"

"By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins (reprobation? H.H.); and will punish them in his just judgment temporally and eternally, as he hath declared, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them (the reprobate? H.H.)'"

Hence, we conclude that, if anyone teaches that a man is not punished or condemned because of his sin, but because of his reprobation, certainly does violence, both to Scripture and the Confessions.

The last question reads as follows:

"Would you consider the following language to be 'double-talk' and confusing: 'God condemns a man, not on account of his sin, but in the way of his sin. Yet, the DEEPEST CAUSE for man's condemnation is the decree of God's Reprobation.'"

I would not know whether this would be double-talk, but it certainly is not true. As I have repeatedly shown in my answer to the above questions, God condemns a man on account of his sin. That a man walks in the way of sin makes him worthy of condemnation. When we say that God condemns a man, not on account of his sin, but in the way of sin, we leave the impression that God leads a man into the way of sin, that God is the author of his sin. And this we must always avoid.

Well, I have tried to answer these difficult questions to the best of my ability, and in the light of Scripture and the Confessions.

May we continue to be interested in the truth.

H.H.

Eastern Ladies' League

The Eastern Ladies' League will hold its spring meeting, April 25, at 8 P. M. in our Fourth Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. G. Lanting will be the speaker.

Reserve this date and enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. H. Velthouse, Vice Secretary

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH WITH THE PROMISE OF AN OPEN DOOR

Revelation 3:7-13

But the Lord has still more promises. He does not only come with promises for the present time, but also with promises of glorious blessings for the future: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Let us notice, first of all, the important fact that this promise is given in general to him that overcometh. The glory of the Messianic kingdom is preceded by the suffering of this present time. And the rule remains without exception that we must suffer with Christ in order to be glorified together. Christ and His people have a common cause. They are inseparably united. But they also suffer a common lot in the world. If they have hated Him, they shall also hate us. And if they have persecuted Him, they shall also persecute those that are His. Hence, only for him that overcometh is this future promise. Not for him that is defeated, not for him that falls by the wayside, not for him that succumbs to the devil, not for him that does not keep the Word of Christ's patience, not for him that denies the name of Jesus, only for him that overcometh. For the unfaithful the Word of the Lord has no promises. But him that overcometh shall be made a pillar in the temple of Christ's God.

Is it necessary to mention in this connection that there is no reference here to a literal temple, made with hands. If temple is taken literally, pillars must also be taken in the same sense. And it would be a poor consolation indeed for the people of God to learn that they all will be changed into pillars in the future. No, the sense is symbolical. Temple is symbolic of the dwelling of God with man, of His most intimate communion, of the full realization of God's covenant of friendship. God's temple is His people, living in most intimate communion and union with Himself. The pillar is figure of abiding firmness. The Lord Himself supplies the commentary of this expression when He adds: "and he shall go out no more." To be made pillars in the temple of God, therefore, is to enter lastingly and abidingly into the eternal covenant communion with God, the God of Jesus Christ our Lord. They that overcome in the present struggle, they that are firm in the hour of trial, shall finally enter into that eternal covenant communion with God which is life eternal.

The Lord further makes mention of a three-fold name which they shall bear that thus overcome. They shall bear the name of God; they shall bear the name of the city of God; and they shall bear the new name of Jesus. The name is the manifestation of their being. It is the expression of what they are. If, therefore, the Lord here promises that the faithful shall receive the name of God, He expresses that the image of God shall have reached its highest possible development. There shall be the highest possible degree of likeness between God's people and Himself, so that true and perfect covenant communion is possible, and they shall see Him as He is. We shall bear His name. We shall be like Him. O, no; we shall not be God, but the highest possible affinity that is conceivable in the creature shall exist between God and His people. And in that relation they shall see Him face to face. And He shall speak to them as a friend with his friends. They shall bear the name of the city of God. It is not necessary to go into detail as to the reality and the meaning of this new Jerusalem. Suffice it to say that it represents the society of the elect in glory, the body of Christ, the complete assembly of all the saints. In that society every individual shall have his own name. Individuality shall not be lost. Yet, his name shall always be the name of that city, that is, his individual being and manifestation shall be in harmony with the general society of all the saints, so that all together they shall form one grand harmony, manifesting the glory of God's grace. And besides, the communion of saints shall there be perfect, when they shall all bear that common name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem that cometh down out of heaven. Now that city is being prepared. And one by one the company of the elect are being gathered in heaven. But once it shall come down out of heaven from God into the new creation, there to live forever to the glory of the grace of the Almighty. And lastly, the Lord mentions His own new name. It is the name that was given Him at His exaltation at the right hand of God, a name of glory and power and strength and majesty. It denotes our Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord of all. For in the new creation He shall be King forever. That name shall also be bestowed upon His saints, that is, they shall share in His glory. With Him they shall reign. With Him they shall walk in the light of God. With Him they shall be prophets, priests, and kings of God forevermore.

Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. What doth the Spirit say? In the first place, that the church is of little strength outwardly. This is true today as it was at the time of the early church. In the task she is called to perform in the tribulation she will have to suffer, she may continually bear in mind that she is of little strength. She need not, she may not, rely on that strength. In the second place, the Lord is faithful and powerful. He has the key of David. He opens, and no one shuts; He shuts, and no one opens. No one shall pluck us out of His hand. No one shall root us out of the kingdom. And in all our work in the kingdom

of God, our reliance should be on Him alone. Of little strength itself, the church is mighty in her mighty Lord, faithful and true. In the third place, tribulation shall come, and temptation the church must expect. But in the midst of tribulation and the suffering for Christ's sake, the vision of the mighty King of kings may always be before us. He shall keep us so that we shall never fall. And with our eyes on Him we may be sure of the victory. That victory may surely be our consolation. It shall be the victory of eternal glory in the new Jerusalem, in the temple of God and His tabernacle with men, where we shall see Him face to face and love Him forever, as He hath loved us.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH NAUSEATING TO THE LORD

Revelation 3:14-22

Laodicea was an important city in Phrygia, southeast of Philadelphia on the river Lycus. It was noted especially for its industry and commerce, and therefore it was very prosperous. The letter addressed by the apostle Paul to the Colossians was also intended for the church in Laodicea. For in Colossians 2:1 we read: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea." At the time when Paul addressed his letter to them, the church at Laodicea had been in danger of being led astray by ascetic, Judaizing philosophers. Against them the apostle warns in Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." And this is further expressed in Colossians 2:16-23: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days," etc. This philosophy did not only concern the question of meat and drink and holidays, but was also an emphasis on voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, vs. 18. All these things, according to the apostle, have a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; but after all have nothing to do with the service of Christ. For the saints are no longer subject to such ordinances, seeing they are dead with Christ. vs. 20. At the time, however, when the Lord Jesus addressed this letter to the church of Laodicea, its outstanding sin was no longer this refraining from meat and drink, and voluntary humility, but it consisted rather in spiritual self-complacency, accompanied no doubt by a spirit of worldliness.

This letter closes the series of the seven epistles written to the churches of Asia Minor. And with it our discussion of the seven-fold picture of the church in general comes to an end. We emphasized as our view, that we may not consider these seven letters as so many historical predictions concerning seven consecutive periods in the history of the church, so that we will be able with tolerable accuracy to point out which period of history is presented in each of the

seven epistles. On the contrary, these letters rather picture the seven-fold aspect of the church in general at any period of her history in the world. Taken in general, the church always presents this seven-fold aspect, and appears with a mixture of light and darkness, good and evil qualities, attractive and repulsive features. The good qualities of the church ascribed to her in the seven-fold picture are soundness in doctrine, faithfulness in regard to discipline, an abounding in the work of the Lord, warmth and fulness of spiritual life, love, hope, and confidence, patience in suffering and persecution for Christ's sake. These features the Lord Jesus praises and strengthens. On the other hand, there are the evil features of the church in the world: coolness of spiritual life, lack of love, laxity in discipline, a tendency to false mysticism, lack of zeal in the work of the Lord, and, as we shall see in connection with the letter to the Laodiceans, a combination of all these evil features, manifesting itself as miserable lukewarmness. These evil features the Lord strongly rebukes, and in regard to them He admonishes to repent. In connection with the evil He found in the churches, the Lord always approaches them with His threatening judgments and coming. But at the same time, He never fails to promise life and glory to those that are faithful and that overcome in the battle of faith.

Yet, although we strongly repudiate the idea of seven definite periods represented in these letters, it must not be overlooked, as we said in our last essay, that there is a certain intentional arrangement in the order in which the seven letters appear. The last church to be discussed is that of Laodicea, a church most miserable in every respect. There is in this purposely arranged order an indication as to what we may expect in the future. From a human point of view the Word of God pictures that future not too bright. And those who live under the impression that toward the end of time and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ the church will appear in a most flourishing condition certainly find no support in Scripture. The order in which these letters occur seems to indicate that we rather may expect a gradual decline, till the church presents the aspect of the congregation of the Laodiceans. From Ephesus to Laodicea appears to be the path the church will follow in her outward development. The evil element in the church will assert itself and develop more and more, till the general aspect is such that the Lord is ready to spue the church out of His mouth.

The general description of the Laodicean church you may find in the words, "Thou art neither cold nor hot. Therefore, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This characterization applies, no doubt, not only to the works of the church in the outward sense, but to her entire condition, internal as well as external. It is useless to make the attempt to analyze this description and give an interpretation of the various elements, spiritualizing each one of them. This was done frequently, but exactly by such a procedure the point of the

figure that is here employed is lost sight of. To be hot was then interpreted as being zealous in the work of the Lord, and filled with true spiritual life. Naturally, to be cold was then understood in the opposite sense of the word, and applied to a condition of absolute deadness spiritually, to a complete lack of spiritual life. But, in the first place, the conclusion would then seem to be quite inevitable that in the light of such an interpretation, the condition of lukewarmness would always seem preferable to the state of being cold. But Jesus evidently prefers the latter above the former. For He says in this letter: "I would thou wert either cold or hot." Either of these is preferable to lukewarmness. Hence, such an interpretation seems in the nature of the case excluded and impossible. In the second place, as we have stated already, the point of the figure is entirely overlooked in that interpretation. The Lord employs a figure to describe the condition of the church in Laodicea. It is the figure of a drink of water. A hot drink is pleasing to the taste and recuperating in its effect. A cold drink is refreshing and delicious. But a lukewarm drink is disgusting to him that swallows it. It turns the stomach. It is sickening. It has a nauseating effect. Well, then, with this figure the Lord describes the general condition of the church and the impression she makes upon Him. He simply says: "Your condition is such that you are nauseating to me." That this is the meaning is emphasized by the form in which the Lord puts the threatening judgment: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Literally the Lord says in these words: "I am about to vomit thee out." The meaning, therefore, is very plain. We must not attempt to find a spiritual signification for every one of the terms employed in the figure, but rather understand the figure in its general meaning. And then it is plain that the Lord means to say: "The church of Laodicea is so miserable that I cannot tolerate her any more. I am about to reject her in disgust."

The question, however, arises: what is the condition of this church that makes her so nauseating to the Lord? Christ Himself gives the answer. He tells us that the church is "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." This, first of all. Of course, all these terms refer to the spiritual condition of the church. Hardly could we find a more emphatic description of miserableness in Scripture than the one here presented of the church in Laodicea. The word here used in the original for "wretched" is the same as that employed by the apostle Paul when, at the close of Romans 7, he exclaims: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There is no reason why we should not understand the word here in the same sense. Laodicea was wretched in herself. She was sinful and condemned. In herself she was nothing but the object of the wrath of God. In the day of judgment she would never be able to make both ends meet. That is why she was at the same time miserable, that is, according to the miserable, "an object of pity." She was to be pitied. Unless the mercy of God had compassion on her, she would be utterly lost. The wretched-

ness of the condition of the church in Laodicea is emphasized still more when the Lord says that she is "poor, blind, naked." She is the very opposite of the church in Smyrna. The latter was rich; Laodicea is poor. She does not possess the riches of grace. Faith, love, hope, patience, understanding of the truth, watchfulness, and a fighting of the battle of faith, — all these were sought in vain in the church of Laodicea. She was blind. Instead of being able to see the wretchedness of her condition, she was wanting even in the knowledge of self. She could not see her own misery. She was naked. In all the wretchedness of her condition, in all her sin and shame, in all her misery and poverty, in all her blindness and condemnation, the church of Laodicea stood without a cover for her shame. In her bare misery she stood before the eyes of Him that pierces and scrutinizes the darkest corners of the human soul. In a word, Laodicea was simply the picture of misery.

Nor is this all. Perhaps you would make the remark that there is nothing strange and extraordinary in this description of the church. Is it then not true of every church that she is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked in herself? Does not the Christian daily apply this very description to himself? This, of course, is true. But the nauseating condition and attitude of Laodicea consisted exactly in this, that she did not apply this to her own state and condition. She did not admit that she was wretched. Never would she recognize her own picture in this description by the Lord. The very opposite is true. The testimony of the church regarding herself was exactly the opposite from the picture which Jesus drew of her. Jesus said that she was wretched and miserable; the church in Laodicea's idea of herself was that she was rich. Jesus described her as being blind and naked; the church's opinion of herself was that she was increased with goods. Of course, all these expressions are to be taken in the spiritual sense of the word. It may be true that Laodicea was also rich in goods according to the world. It may very well be true that she had many possessions, and that her goods increased in the material sense of the word. Earthly riches and spiritual poverty often accompany each other. And also in the spiritual sphere it is true that it is very difficult to remain strong in faith and rich in spiritual life at the same time that we increase in riches in the material sense, in the riches of the world. Nevertheless, in these words the church of Laodicea is described in her state of spiritual self-satisfaction. They were well satisfied with their own condition. They thought themselves to be a strong church. Such followed exactly from their blindness: they never saw their own misery and their lack of every spiritual good. They formed quite an opinion of themselves. Spiritual poverty and spiritual pride went together. I take it that here, as in the church of Sardis, the angel of the church was chiefly and principally at fault, in the first place. The development of the church is often thus, that the leader, the angel, the minister of the church, becomes lax and unfaithful and falls

away first of all; and the congregation gradually follows. I imagine that the angel of Laodicea was a well-satisfied, easy-going, good-for-nothing sort of man. He must have been a man that always spoke of peace where there was no peace. He lacked the courage to lay his finger on sore spots. He was no fighter. He attempted to find out what the opinion of his people was before he expressed his own. And so he gradually flattered them into their self-satisfied condition. He preached no sin and condemnation; or, if he did, he knew how to do it in such a way that nobody could possibly be offended. He left the people blind and poor and naked, and he told them that they were rich and that their goods increased. Thus, I imagine, was the angel of the church in Laodicea. Small wonder, then, that the congregation followed. But however this may be, it was exactly this awful contrast between their actual condition and the opinion they had of themselves that made them perfectly nauseating, and that at the same time made their condition so hopeless. For indeed, the publican, that knows and confesses his wretchedness, is justified; but what hope is there for the miserable pharisee, who thanks God for his own goodness?

It may perhaps seem a severe indictment, but personally we have not the slightest doubt that the church of today begins to reveal an alarming degree of similarity with the church of Laodicea. Also in the church of today there is a goodly measure of self-satisfaction and self-righteousness. The church cries out more loudly than ever: "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." I am speaking of what calls itself the church in the modern world. Christianity of today boasts that she is waking up to the great task of the church of all ages. We speak of big things. We are going to bring righteousness and peace in society and state, and thus usher in the kingdom of God. It appears that man intends to do so in his own power, which, by the way, already miserably fails. The word spoken to the church in Philadelphia, "Thou hast little strength," is no more understood. In the second place, our age is characterized by a sad, but very emphatic lack of the knowledge of sin and misery. The church knows not that she is wretched and miserable and poor and naked. And also today, we take it that the leaders, the ministers of the gospel, are to blame primarily. Sin is no more preached. Of depravity and misery, of sin and guilt, we hear no more. And the result is that also the gospel of the cross, the gospel of the righteousness of Christ by faith in Him alone, is fast disappearing from our pulpits. Christ of Galilee, not of Calvary, is preached. The Christ that loved and did well, the social Christ, is held up as our example. But the Servant of Jehovah, the Suffering Servant, Who was punished for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, is lost out of sight. I am speaking, I repeat, of the church in the modern world in general. Is it a wonder that the church is asleep, that she imagines that she is rich and in need of nothing, while in actual fact she is poor and blind and naked, wretched and

miserable? A terrible blow it must have been to that profoundly self-satisfied church of Laodicea, when the message came to her: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." But would to God that the church of today might hear this same message, that she might be stirred up from her self-satisfied condition and stung to the quick.

Let us learn what message must be brought to such a church as that of Laodicea. First of all, we may notice that the Lord Jesus emphasizes strongly that not their opinion of self, but His opinion of them, is true and reliable. This He does in His Self-announcement. Says He: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." "Amen" denotes that which is firm, abiding, true. It is that on which one may rely. Hence, the latter phrase, "the faithful and true witness," may be considered as a sort of commentary and explanation of the name "Amen." Just because the Lord is the Amen in Himself, He is also such in His testimony. His witness is true and faithful. He never makes a mistake. Error is out of the question with Him. Neither must it be expected that He will become unfaithful, and cater to the good-will of men. And the result is that His testimony is perfectly in harmony with the condition of the church in Laodicea. The members of the church may certainly rely upon it, that if His testimony concerning them clashes with their own opinion of self, it is because the latter, and not the former, is erroneous. This the Laodiceans must hear, in the first place. They were filled with conceit. They had been flattered into the delusion that they were rich and in need of nothing. No easily would they exchange this view for that of someone else. If their minister had preached this gospel of wretchedness and misery and poverty and blindness and nakedness to them at this time, likely it is that they would have deposed him. And therefore, Jesus comes first of all with the gentle reminder that it is the faithful and true witness speaking, the Amen, upon which they may rely. And the same method holds true for the church of today. The church must again hear the Word of God. She must again understand that from her pulpit it is not to a private and personal opinion, but the authoritative voice of the Amen that is speaking. If she does not, there is no hope for her.

In the second place, the Lord reveals Himself as the rich and all-sufficient One. Already in the expression, "the beginning of the creation of God," this truth is suggested. The meaning of this phrase is, of course, not that Jesus is the first of the creatures, and therefore Himself a creature. For this would conflict with all that the Word of God reveals of Immanuel. He is from eternity to eternity God. But the meaning is rather that He is the principle of all that was created. In that sense He is the firstborn of every creature. All things are made by Him and through Him, the eternal Word. He is the fountain of all that exists. And because He is the beginning of all things that are made, they all subsist in Him and by Him.

H.H.

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE LIGHT OF ARTICLE 36

(The following essay was delivered by the undersigned several years ago before a combined meeting of the Men's Societies of South Holland and Oak Lawn. And it is here given to help fill the department usually filled by the Rev. G. M. Ophoff who is providentially hindered because of illness.)

We have been asked to deliver a paper on Article 36 of our Netherlands or Belgic Confession wherein it was especially desired that we express our opinion regarding the propriety or impropriety of the footnote which has been added to this article by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in the year 1910.

We might begin by saying that the article as such without the footnote has born perhaps more than any other of the articles of faith in the Confession the brunt of attack by criticism. The footnote is simply the result of one of these attacks. Though we had not any first-hand material in our possession to prove these statements, indirectly we learned from various sources that these statements are true and that the criticism made by the Christian Reformed Church was already expressed by the Reformed Synods in the Netherlands in the year 1905. Subsequently we learned from these same sources that as late as the years 1938 and 1943, the Christian Reformed Church in America has offered criticism upon their own criticism, and have attempted to remove the footnote by one Synod and to put it back by another. The point we wish to make is that there is still in the midst of these churches a question as to the propriety or impropriety of the footnote attached to this article by the Synod of 1910. It is small wonder then, that this question could arise in your midst and that you would like to discuss the problem involved.

In the treatment of our subject we feel that it would be advantageous to consider it from the following points of view shall this essay serve its purpose, to induce you to enter into a free discussion of the problem. We desire first of all to give a brief statement concerning the occasion that prompted the inclusion of this article in the Confession. We feel that this is necessary shall we be able to understand the article itself. In the second place, a fair understanding of the contents of the article will be necessary to decide upon the propriety of the footnote. Thirdly, you will expect our own criticism of the footnote which was added to this article. And finally, for the benefit of a good discussion we hope will follow, we propose to present to you several propositions respecting the article with its footnote in order that we may be guided somewhat in our discussion.

First of all, then, as to the occasion that prompted the inclusion of Article 36 in our Confession, which also to a great extent controlled the wording of this article. We gather from the article itself as well as from other sources

that this is to be found in the licentious practices of certain religious groups, known as Anabaptists, which refused to acknowledge the power of the state and attempted to establish a kingdom of God of their own. This is not the place, nor is it the purpose of this essay to describe in detail the practices of these fanatical groups; but a sentence or two will suffice to show what they did and how it became the occasion for the writing of Article 36.

As early as 1524, a certain Thomas Munster, Johann Denk and Hans Hut; and in 1536 men like Melchior Hoffman of Friesland, Jan Mathys, a baker of Harlem and Jan Beukelssen, a tailor of Leyden, began what is known as the Munster revolution. Melchior Hoffman claimed to have prophetic inspiration and declared that Strassburg had been divinely designated as the new Jerusalem where he the prophet of the New Dispensation should suffer imprisonment for six months and then the end of the world would come, and all who opposed the "saints" (the Anabaptists) would be destroyed. Jan Mathys, the baker of Harlem, gave himself forth as the prophet Enoch, and soon spread a fanatical propaganda widely through the Netherlands and adjoining parts of Germany. The baker with his colleague, the tailor of Leyden, Jan Beukelssen by name, declared that God had rejected Strassburg by reason of its unbelief and had chosen Munster as the new Jerusalem in its stead. Radicals flocked thither in large numbers. They gained the mastery of the city and drove out those who would not accept the new order. Mathys was killed in the battle when the bishop of Munster laid siege to the city. Jan Beukelssen was proclaimed king. Polygamy was established, community of goods enforced, all opponents bloodily put down. In Amsterdam, on one occasion, these fanatical groups including men and women, ran naked down the streets, and when the police apprehended them and put them in prison they refused to dress, saying, they were the "naked truth."

If you consider that in 1517 the Reformation was initiated by Martin Luther and that it was soon after that these revolutionary sects arose, it can easily be understood how that the governments of those days would conclude that the Reformation was no reformation at all, but a revolution and uprising against all authority and power of the state. The Reformed fathers, therefore, had to show that their Reformation was not identical at all with these revolutionary uprisings. Hence, the article respecting the attitude towards magistrates. The existing governments, having classified the Reformers and Anabaptists alike, unrighteously brought a heavy hand to bear upon the faithful Reformers, causing them to suffer unrighteously. Against this unrighteous treatment, they protested, while at the same time they carefully expressed their submission and obedience to the existing orders of the state.

As to the contents of the article itself, we notice that it may be divided into four parts. The first states that God has instituted government. How it is instituted of God, the

article does not say. It merely states the fact. The Heidelberg Catechism, as you know, connects it with the fifth Commandment, and the authority of the parents. This is undoubtedly correct. Government was not instituted at a certain period, but developed organically. The purpose for which God has instituted government, according to the article, is for the restraint of dissolute men and for the maintenance of good order and decency among men.

The second part of the article declares how God would realize this purpose, namely, by giving the magistrate the sword. With that power of the sword he was to punish evil doers and protect the good. Also he was to protect the sacred ministry, and all idolatry and false worship were to be removed and prevented, the kingdom of antichrist was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ to be promoted.

The third part declares it to be the duty of everyone to be subject to the magistrates, paying tribute, honoring, respecting and obeying them in all things not repugnant to the Word of God. All are to supplicate God in prayer for them, that He may rule and guide them in all their ways, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

The last part is a statement of the rejection of the error of the Anabaptists and other seditious groups who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and who would subvert justice, confounding decency and good order among men. So much as to the contents of the article as such.

Now it is the second part of the contents of this article that has caused so much dissatisfaction and criticism, and which really is the occasion for the footnote added by the Christian Reformed Churches in 1910. It has been maintained by the churches in the Netherlands and subsequently also in America that the article proceeds on the basis that church and state are one, on the principle of the Established Church. The part of the article referred to reads as follows: "And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of antichrist may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the Gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by everyone, as He commands in His Word." Over against this, the footnote expresses briefly the following: 1. That the phrase "and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry, etc." proceeds on the principle of the Established Church. 2. That history does not support the principle of state domination over the church. Rather, separation of the two. 3. That it is contrary to the New Dispensation that the state arbitrarily reform the church, and that the church be allowed to conduct its own affairs. 4. That the N. T. church is not to be governed and extended by political measures of the state, but by its own office-bearers and

spiritual weapons only. 5. That the church is autonomous and there is personal liberty of conscience in matters pertaining to the service of God.

The Christian Reformed Church in America expresses further in the footnote its agreement with the above statements, and declares moreover that they conceive of the duty of magistrates within their own sphere to uphold the first table of the Law as well as the second, and further, that both church and state as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties and reciprocal obligations to meet. However, they may not encroach upon each other's territory. The church has rights of sovereignty in its own sphere as well as the state.

In reply to the criticism of Article 36 offered in the footnote, we express the following: 1. That the blanket statement that the church and state are ABSOLUTELY separate, cannot be maintained. It must not be forgotten that the church in the world has also an earthly and temporal side. Then, too, the state has to deal with spiritual as well as mundane principles and relationships. The Christian Reformed Church also felt this when it declares in the footnote "that the magistracy has a divine duty towards the first table of the Law as well as towards the second, and furthermore that both state and church as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties appointed them from on high, and therefore have a very sacred RECIPROCAL obligation to meet through the Holy Spirit, etc." 2. We are not prepared to say with finality as the footnote declares that Article 36 proceeds on the principle of the Established Church. When we consider the occasion for the inclusion of Article 36 in the Confession as briefly stated at the beginning of this essay, as well as the time in which it was written, we question sincerely that the article assumes such a relationship of church and state. Was it not a time of Reformation? Had not the Protestant Churches only lately been liberated from the shackles of Roman Catholicism which had control also of the State? Did not the very Reformation give the church the very freedom from all imposition from without? We think it did. That the Protestant Churches, including the Reformed, later sought and obtained the unity of church and state, a condition that prevailed at the time of the Synod of Dort convened in 1618-19, does not make church and state one at the time of Guido De Bres. Then, too, even if it was true that church and state were one at the time the Confession was written, that still does not mean that the contents of the article is false that speaks of the duties of magistrates. We must not forget here that in this Confession we have a believer pleading with the tyrannical and cruel magistrate who was persecuting the believers and who should know it to be his duty to punish evildoers, not the righteous. 3. Surely we agree with the footnote that the church as well as the state also has individual duties and responsibilities, and that church and state may not interfere with these individual duties. Surely it is not the duty of the state to preach the

Gospel. That is the duty of the church alone. Politically it is also the duty of the church to discipline heretics and idolatry. But it is also our opinion that the state must countenance the preaching of the Gospel. And we hesitate to say that the state has not also a duty in eradicating idolatry and false worship. Must not the state uphold the Law that demands love of God, the only true God? We believe it should.

That our essay be not too long, and that we have ample opportunity to have a good and sound discussion, we close with the following statements or propositions which we believe should govern our discussion:

1. To determine the meaning and implications of Article 36, it is above all things necessary to know and understand the occasion that prompted its formation. It was not the Synod of Dordt, nor the conditions that prevailed at the time of that Synod that prompted the writing of this article. Rather, the author is Guido De Bres, a martyr who died at the hands of a tyrannical state who in this article pleads for justice and righteousness for the righteous, while at the same time he confesses submission to the authority invested in the state.

2. It is our opinion that church and state cannot be absolutely separate. They have mutual responsibilities, and very sacred reciprocal obligations to meet. This is due to the fact that on the one hand the church has an earthly side, and on the other, that the state has to do also with spiritual principles.

3. Though the separation is not absolute, there is nevertheless separation between church and state. Each has its own calling in its own sphere. The church, not the state, must preach the Gospel, while it is the duty of the state not to frown upon this preaching, but to protect the church while it preaches. The church also has its own policy whereby it regulates and governs in its own sphere and punishes evil-doers by the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. While the state also has its own policy whereby it governs in its own sphere and punishes evil-doers with the power of the sword. As we said before, we conceive the duty of the state to be also that it uphold the first table of the Law as well as the second. Therefore, when in its own sphere heretics such as the Anabaptists of Guido's days arise, who opposed all that is holy in church and state, it is the duty of the state to honor the Law of God and preserve it by punishing all who transgress it. We know this opinion does not meet the approval of many, but our opinion will hold nevertheless until this principle is proven to be false.

4. It is the duty of the church as a body and believers as individuals to obey implicitly the authority of the state in all matters not conflicting with the Word of God. And even when the state is ungodly and makes ungodly demands, the believer protests while at the same time he submits to the punishment the state may inflict. The apostle Paul and the

Lord Jesus Himself are examples of this sufficient to prove this principle. Romans 13 is also conclusive on this matter.

5. In close connection with the preceding principle, we believe it is Scriptural what the Confession expresses concerning "the duty of believers to make supplication for magistrates in their prayers, that God may rule and guide them in all their ways." This principle is undoubtedly based on the passage found in I Timothy 2:1, 2, where we read: "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Here it must be understood that this last expression "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, etc." belongs not to the contents of the prayer for magistrates. We do not pray for kings that they may cause conditions that are quiet and peaceable for us. Rather, the meaning is that he who can truly pray for the welfare of kings, etc., is already living a quiet and peaceable life. He is not in rebellion against them. Then, too, it should be noticed that the text does not say that we should pray for *the king*, etc., but definitely "for kings and for all that are in authority." We are not required to pray for a specific king, president or governor, but for God's people, even those in authority. We must pray for all of them. This is an element in prayer which is almost wholly forgotten today, especially in the pulpit. Where this attitude is reflected in our congregational, family and individual prayers, all Anabaptism, Communism, Bolshevism, and Socialism, which all are essentially Egoism, will be eliminated; and the honor and authority of God in church or state will come to its own.

I thank you,
Rev. M. Schipper

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, hereby wishes to extend its sincere sympathy to one of our members, Mr. Ryan Harkema, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. JENNIE HARKEMA

May our triune God comfort and sustain him in his sorrow.

D. Van Allen, President
R. Kamminga, Secretary

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, of which Mr. Bylsma is a member, wishes to congratulate

MR. and MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

on their 60th wedding anniversary.

May our God bless them in the way that lies ahead, and may they experience that there is no peace apart from God.

D. Van Allen, President
R. Kamminga, Secretary

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

III.

(I Cor. 12:4-11)

Anyone who studies the Scriptures will understand that it is proper and according to the rule of faith that the *spiritual gifts* in the church cannot be understood or seen in their proper light except they be seen in their relationship to the "Lord Jesus"!

For the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the risen and glorified Lord in heaven; all His content He takes out of Christ and gives it to the church. He dwells in Christ as in the Head and in us as in the members of the church. Anyone who speaks of the name of Jesus must certainly bless this Name. And, without the Holy Spirit taking the confession out of Christ and putting it in our hearts, we cannot possibly confess this Name, nor understand our place in the body of Christ so that the gifts in the church will come to their divinely designed end!

All the "gifts" in the church are given so that the one Spirit, the same Lord and the one God who is in all, through all and above all, may come to be seen in the glory and majesty of His work, the manifold fulness of His grace!

The passage to which we will particularly call attention in this essay is the following: "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to the one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*"

Thus reads the Scripture passage under consideration.

For the proper understanding of this passage we should bear the following facts in mind:

In the first place we should remember that the most general subject in these chapters 12-14 is the spiritual gifts in the church of God in this world.

Secondly, that Paul emphasizes the fact that all these spiritual gifts are placed in the church for the benefit of the whole body of Christ. To demonstrate the truth of this

premise Paul calls attention to the "diversity" of the gifts, as they come in the church by the one Spirit.

Let us try to understand what this diversity of gifts implies for the church and why it is so explicitly stated that they all come from not simply one Spirit, but that they come from the "same" Spirit. The emphasis does not fall in the term "same" (*autos*) on unity of the Spirit, but rather on the *identity* of this Spirit. This "identity" is the basis for the unity of the Spirit's work and gifts in the midst of its *diversity* in the church. It is the reasoning from cause to effect. The cause is one! The *efficient cause* in all the members is the *same identical Spirit*.

Further, it should not escape our notice that Paul does not at all give us any *explanation* and *interpretation* of these various "spiritual gifts" mentioned in these verses. He merely mentions them, cites them. Hence, he gives us no explicit statement concerning these gifts as to their inner nature. He merely mentions all of these gifts to show us both their *diversity* and their *common design*! And that common design is the profit of all in the body of Christ.

It stands to reason, that, whereas many of these gifts in the church were of a temporary nature — special gifts in the church — it is rather difficult for us to pin-point their exact function in the church. This is not possible, we believe. Nor is this necessary for the proper understanding of this passage. We are given an interpretation of the diversity of the gifts in the church, not simply for curious and inquisitive debate, but for the practical purpose of teaching us to properly use the gifts for the profit of all! All instruction of Paul is profitable for instruction, admonition, correction in righteousness, that the man of God be thoroughly furnished to every good work! Scripture does not have any teaching simply for the sake of teaching itself. It is never an end in itself. Not even the teaching of Paul. Even this letter itself is a gift of God to the church, for the profit of all! Paul himself is not an exception to the rule he here lays down. We have no dogmatics here, but instruction in righteousness and concerning the proper behavior of the saints in the household of God.

It is for this same reason, the practical purpose of this passage for the conduct in the church, that we must not read more into these verses than Paul intended them to express. We refer here, of course, to verses 4-6. Although these verses reflect the trinitarian character of God's works in the church, they, nevertheless, do not contain a dogmatical presentation of the truth of the *ontological* trinity. They present to us the *Trinity* of God in *relationship* to the gifts in the church!

Bearing this in mind, we must remember that in the verses 4-6, where Paul speaks of the "Spirit," the "Lord," and of "God," we have the trinity revealed to us, *manifested* in the gifts (*charismata*) in the church!

The "Spirit" here is certainly none else but the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity. Only he is here the

Spirit of the exalted and glorified Christ in the church, making this church the temple of God in the Holy Spirit. In this church the Holy Spirit gives to each one as he wills. He is the sole *dispenser* of gifts. There are no gifts but what they are from this same *identical* Spirit, the Spirit of the *risen* Lord. He, the risen Lord, received the promise of the Spirit. And through this Spirit these gifts are given, *constantly* given to the church.

The Holy Spirit *energizes* each of these various gifts in the church. From Him, as the agent, do all these gifts come to the saints. He is the efficient cause!

Such is the emphasis of Paul.

However, it should not be overlooked that since the Spirit is the Spirit of the risen *Lord*, all of these gifts are ipso facto gifts, which are of a *ministering* character. For they are gifts of him who came not to be ministered to, but who came to be a servant, giving his life a ransom for many. How could these gifts, coming from this Lord through the Spirit, be ought else but *administrations*?!

For this reason it is stated that these "administrations" are of and for the same Lord. These *administrations* are not to be conceived of as being apart from *spiritual gifts*. Rather they are an aspect of these gifts. Every gift is there for the profit of all. It is a gift through which the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the risen Lord, qualifies the saints to use their gifts for the salvation and benefit of the saints. They both are wrought by the same Spirit and both come from one Lord. In the use of these gifts none is Lord and master, but all are servants one of another. It is well to bear this in mind. It needed underscoring in the church at Corinth.

From this vantage-point it should not be difficult to understand why Paul also adds: there are *diversities of operations*. The term "operations" really means: *energies, powers*. These energies do not refer to any entity next to or in addition to the spiritual gifts or ministries. What they refer to is the divine energy, which is displayed *in them* all. O, the greatness of the energy in these spiritual gifts and administrations. Without these energies they would be meaningless and powerless. They could not be to be the profit of any member in the church. But now they are, indeed, to the *profit* of all!

In these gifts of the Spirit of the risen Lord we see the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, energizing the church, working into her both to will and to do, so that she may work out her salvation with fear and trembling!

Here, therefore, we have the only real basis for a godly walk. All is from God. Yet, it is from Him in such a way that it is in Christ and through the Holy Spirit! Here we take off the shoes from our feet. All is holy ground.

May we not be as fools, who rush in where angels fear to tread!

Only when our lives are such that we see the import of God over all in these gifts, shall the Spirit be *manifesting* Himself in and through us to the profit of all.

When looking at the catalogue of "spiritual gifts" as given by Paul in these verses, we notice that Paul has really three groups of gifts.

The first group we might call the gifts of *wisdom* and *knowledge*. See verse 10. Both are given by the same Spirit, and come from the same Lord, and therefore, are in His service. That Paul places them in this order is worthy of notice. He speaks here of "wisdom," which is evidently the virtue in the church whereby we walk in the *fear* of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning the principle of wisdom. And in the light of this wisdom, which sees all things in the light of God, "knowledge" must be placed as being of an administering kind. Both are from the Holy Spirit, and deal with the *sanctified intellect* of the church.

The second group is a group which falls under the gifts of "faith." In this group we find *gifts of healing, working of powers, prophecy* and the *discerning* of spirits. Although we are somewhat in the dark about the meaning of "faith" here, it seems to be according to the rule of faith to maintain that in our text "faith" refers to *saving* faith. It is not merely a faith which holds for true all that God has revealed in his word. It is rather a faith, which is vouchsafed in its reality by the gifts of healing, etc. For these "gifts of healing" and "working of powers" stand in the service of "prophecy" and the "discerning of the spirits." And they all therefore, presuppose faith in Christ, as a manifestation of the energy of the Spirit, which is for the profit of all!

In close connection with the foregoing group is also the third group which falls under the "speaking with tongues," giving utterance to the wisdom and knowledge, to the faith in manifesting itself in the prophetic word, as corroborated by these gifts of healing and the working of miracles. This speaking with tongues will receive further consideration in the next few issues of this series of articles. We here wish to simply remark that this speaking with tongues was, evidently, not speaking in any *known* tongues, that is, known by men and belonging to any of the Indo-Germanic languages, but rather a speech wholly different from any language ever employed on earth by men, or in heaven by angels!

And this all is simply thus in the church at Corinth because the Holy Spirit gave unto each as he *wills*.

There is nothing arbitrary or haphazard in all the workings of the Holy Spirit. There is wise purpose, choice and selection.

Nothing is left to man. All is of God, who worketh all things in all through the Holy Spirit. No man should, therefore, conduct himself with these gifts as if he had not received them, either in inflated pride or contrary to their objective design.

G. L.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE THIRD PERIOD (750-1517 A.D.)

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

THE GREAT SCHISM OF 1054 (3)

But when the pope's eyes were opened, he sent the bishop Marinus to Constantinople to declare invalid what the legates had done contrary to his instructions. For this Marinus was shut up in prison for thirty days. After his return Pope John VIII solemnly pronounced the anathema on Photius, who had dared to deceive and degrade the holy see, and had added new frauds to the old. Marinus renewed the anathema after he was elected pope (882). Photius denied the validity of his election, and developed an extraordinary literary activity.

But after the death of the Emperor Basilius (886), he was again deposed by Leo VI, misnamed the Wise or the Philosopher, to make room for his youngest brother Stephen, at that time only sixteen years of age. Photius spent the last five years of his life in a cloister, and died 891. For learning, energy, position, and influence, he is one of the most remarkable men in the history of Eastern Christianity. He formulated the doctrinal basis of the schism, checked the papal despotism, and secured the independence of the Greek church. He announced in an Encyclical of 866: "God be praised for all time to come! The Russins have received a bishop, and show a lively zeal for Christian worship." Roman writers have declared this to be a lie, but history has proved it to be an anticipation of an important fact, the conversion of a new nation which was to become the chief support of the Eastern church, and the most formidable rival of the papacy.

Greek and Roman historians are apt to trace the guilt of the schism exclusively to one party, and to charge the other with unholy ambition and intrigue; but we must acknowledge on the one hand the righteous zeal of Nicolas for the cause of the injured Ignatius, and on the other hand the many virtues of Photius tried in misfortune, as well as his brilliant learning in theology, philology, philosophy, and history; while we deplore and denounce the schism as a sin and disgrace of both churches.

PROGRESS AND COMPLETION OF THE SCHISM. CERULARIUS.

We shall briefly sketch the progress and consolidation of the schism.

The difference about Tetragamy

The fourth marriage of the emperor Leo the Philosopher (886-912), which was forbidden by the laws of the Greek

church, caused a great schism in the East (905). Leo himself had forbidden not only tetragamy, but even trigamy. The Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus solemnly protested and was deposed (906), but Pope Sergius III (904-911), instead of siding with suffering virtue as Pope Nicolas had done, sanctioned the fourth marriage (which was not forbidden in the West) and the deposition of the conscientious patriarch.

Leo on his death-bed restored the deposed patriarch (912). A Synod of Constantinople in 920, at which Pope John X was represented, declared a fourth marriage illegal, and made no concessions to Rome. The Emperor Constantine, Leo's son, prohibited a fourth marriage by an edict; thereby casting a tacit imputation on his own birth. The Greek church regards marriage as a sacrament, and a necessary means for the propagation of the race, but a second marriage is prohibited to the clergy, a third marriage is tolerated in laymen as a sort of legal concubinage, and a fourth is condemned as a sin and a scandal. The pope acquiesced, and the schism slumbered during the dark century. The venal Pope John XIX (1024) was ready for an enormous sum to renounce all the claim of superiority over the Eastern patriarchs, but was forced to break off the negotiations when his treasonable plan was discovered.

Cerularius and Leo IX.

Michael Cerularius (or Caerularius), who was patriarch from 1043 to 1059, renewed and completed the schism. Heretofore the mutual anathemas were hurled only against the contending heads and their party; now the churches excommunicated each other. The Emperor Constantinus Monachus courted the friendship of the pope for political reasons, but his patriarch checkmated him. Cerularius, in connection with the learned Bulgarian metropolitan Leo of Achrida, addressed in 1053 a letter to John, bishop of Trani, in Apulia (then subject to the Eastern rule), and through him to all the bishops of France and to the pope himself, charging the churches of the West that, following the practice of the Jews, and contrary to the usage of Christ, they employ in the eucharist unleavened bread; that they fast on Saturday in Lent; that they eat blood and things strangled in violation of the decree of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts, chapter 15); and that during the fast they do not sing the hallelujah. He invented the new name *Azymites* for the heresy of using unleavened bread instead of common bread. (The Feast of Passover was the feast of unleavened bread, during which the Jews were to eat unleavened bread. The Greeks (the Eastern Church) insist that our Lord in instituting the eucharist after the passover-meal used true, nourishing bread as the sign of the new dispensation of joy and gladness; while the lifeless, unleavened bread belongs to the Jewish dispensation. The Latins (the Western Church) argued that Christ during the feast of the passover could not get any other but unleavened bread—H.V.). Nothing was said

about the procession of the Spirit. This letter is only extant in the Latin translation of Cardinal Humbert.

Pope Leo IX sent three legates under the lead of the imperious Humbert to Constantinople, with counter-charges to the effect that Cerularius arrogated to himself the title of "oecumenical" patriarch; that he wished to subject the patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch; that the Greeks rebaptized the Latins; that, like the Nicolaitans, they permitted their priests to live in wedlock; that they neglected to baptize their children before the eighth day after birth; that, like the Pneumatomacchi or Theomachi, they cut out of the symbol the Procession of the Spirit from the Son. The legates were lodged in the imperial palace, but Cerularius avoided all intercourse with them. Finally, on the 16th of July, 1054, they excommunicated the patriarch and all those who should persistently censure the faith of the church of Rome or its mode of offering the holy sacrifice. They placed the writ on the altar of the church of Hagia Sophia with the words: God saw and judged.

Cerularius, supported by his clergy and the people, immediately answered by a synodical counter-anathema on the papal legates, and accused them of fraud. In a letter to Peter, the patriarch of Antioch (who at first acted the part of a mediator), he charged Rome with other scandals, namely, that two brothers were allowed to espouse two sisters; that bishops wore rings and engaged in warfare; that baptism was administered by a single immersion; that salt was put in the mouth of the baptized; that the images and relics of saints were not honored; and that Gregory the Theologian, Basil, and Chrysostom were not numbered among the saints. The *Filioque* was also mentioned.

The charge of the martial spirit of the bishops was well founded in that semi-barbarous age. Cerularius was all-powerful for several years; he dethroned one emperor and crowned another, but died in exile (1059).

The patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem adhered to the see of Constantinople. Thus the schism between the Christian East and West was completed. The number of episcopal sees at that time was nearly equal on both sides, but in the course of years the Latin church far outgrew the East.

The Latin Empire in the East. 1204-1261

During the Crusades the schism was deepened by the brutal atrocities of the French and Venetian soldiers in the pillage of Constantinople (1204), the establishment of a Latin empire, and the appointment by the pope of Latin bishops in Greek sees. A certain Roman cardinal admits that it was largely through the guilt of the Latin emperors that the hatred of the Greeks at the conquest of Constantinople, 1204, assumed gigantic dimensions. Although this artificial empire lasted only half a century (1204-1261), it left a legacy of burning hatred in memories of horrible desecrations and innumerable insults and outrages, which the East

had to endure from the Western barbarians. Churches and monasteries were robbed and desecrated, the Greek service mocked, the clergy persecuted, and every law of decency set at defiance. In Constantinople "a prostitute was seated on the throne of the patriarch; and that daughter of Belial, as she is styled, sung and danced in the church to ridicule the hymns and processions of the Orientals." Even Pope Innocent III accused the pilgrims that they spared in their lust neither age nor sex, nor religious profession, and that they committed fornication, adultery, and incest in open day, "abandoning matrons and virgins dedicated to God to the lewdness of grooms." And yet this great pope insulted the Eastern church by the establishment of a Latin hierarchy on the ruins of the Byzantine empire.

Fruitless attempts at Reunion

The Greek emperors, hard pressed by the terrible Turks, who threatened to overthrow their throne, sought from time to time by negotiations with the pope to secure the powerful aid of the West. But all the projects of reunion split on the rock of papal absolutism and Greek obstinacy.

The Council of Lyons. A. D. 1274

Michael Palaeologus (1260-1282), who expelled the Latins from Constantinople (July 25, 1261), restored the Greek patriarchate, but entered into negotiations with Pope Urban IV to avert the danger of a new crusade for the reconquest of Constantinople. A general council (the 14th of the Latins) was held at Lyons in 1273 and 1274 with great solemnity and splendor for the purpose of effecting a reunion. Five hundred Latin bishops, seventy abbots, and about a thousand other ecclesiastics were present, together with ambassadors from England, France, Germany, and other countries. Palaeologus sent a large embassy, but only three were saved from shipwreck, Bermanus, ex-patriarch of Constantinople, Theophanes, metropolitan of Nicaea, and the chancellor of the empire. The pope opened the Synod (May 7, 1274) by the celebration of high mass, and declared the threefold object of the Synod to be: help for Jerusalem, union with the Greeks, and reform of the church. Bonaventura preached the sermon. Thomas Aquinas, the prince of schoolmen, who had defended the Latin doctrine of the double procession, was to attend, but had died on the journey to Lyons (March 7, 1274), in his 49th year. The imperial delegates were treated with marked courtesy, abjured the schism, submitted to the pope and accepted the distinctive tenets of the Roman church.

But the Eastern patriarchs were not represented, the people abhorred the union with Rome, and the death of the despotic Michael Palaeologus (1282) was also the death of the Latin party, and the formal revocation of the act of submission to the pope.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

OF THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD, AND THE MANNER THEREOF

Article 8 (continued)

We have already stated that it is important to understand the background of this article and to note the Arminian accusation to which this article of the *Canons* is intended to be an answer. In our discussion of the translation we briefly pointed to this background. And on this we wish to elaborate now, and to call attention to the seriousness of the issue. First of all, we may note that the issue concerns the preaching of the gospel, and that too, to men without distinction, elect and reprobate alike. With the Arminians, of course, this presents no problem whatsoever: they have a general gospel, and are free to proclaim it to all men. However, it is obvious to both Reformed and Arminian that also according to the Reformed view the gospel must be proclaimed promiscuously. This is obvious for the simple reason that no man can single out the elect and preach only to them. Besides, of course, it is a fact that the Reformed preacher as well as the Arminian preaches to a mixed audience, consisting of both elect and reprobate. And we must well understand that such is also our calling. We may not preach and may not wish to preach only to the elect. It is God's purpose that the gospel shall be proclaimed also to the reprobate. In the second place, we must notice that this preaching of the gospel is of God. We feel this immediately when we read the article. It deals not with the seriousness and veracity of a human word and a human calling, but with the seriousness and truth of God's Word and God's calling in the gospel. It is true that men preach the gospel, but only in the sense that they are instruments, ambassadors, They represent God. Hence, the preaching and the message of that preaching are of God. Through the preaching of the gospel God speaks and makes known His Word and His will. It is this point that we must clearly see. Hence, when the Arminian attacks our right to preach the gospel without distinction, his attack is really aimed at our conception of God. He charges that the God of the Reformed faith is an immoral monster, Who though He wills, according to His sovereign decree, the salvation of a certain definite number of persons, and intends to save and does save only them, yet causes the gospel of salvation in Christ to be proclaimed to all men without distinction, as though they all may be saved. And it is in

answer to this attack upon the morality of the sovereignly predestinating God as He represents Himself in the proclamation of the gospel that this eighth article of *Canons* III and IV is proposed.

We must remember, moreover, that this attack is not aimed at the general proclamation of the gospel, but at the sovereign predestination of God. By this apparent dilemma the Arminian means to compel us to let go the truth of sovereign election and reprobation. He says it is either . . . or. If we maintain the truth of sovereign election and limited atonement, we must preach the gospel of that limited salvation only to those for whom it is divinely intended, namely the elect. If, on the other hand, we maintain that the gospel must be proclaimed to elect and reprobate alike, then we must no longer attempt to maintain that there is both in God's decree and in Christ's atonement salvation only for the elect. And, he maintains, since it is impossible to abandon the idea of promiscuous gospel-preaching, you must abandon the doctrine of salvation-for-the-sovereignly-elect-only.

Now it is passing strange, yea, incomprehensible, that there are those who in the name of the Reformed truth, in fact, under the very guise of the article we are discussing succumb to this Arminian attack, accept this Arminian dilemma, and cheerfully take refuge in the claim of "mystery" in order to escape being impaled on the horns of said dilemma. For what do they do? They calmly change "seriously" to "well-meaningly," first of all. Thus they introduce the idea of a general grace in the preaching of the gospel. And they present the gospel as though God intends the salvation of all who hear the preaching. God well-meaningly, that is, with every intention of their salvation, calls all men to whom the gospel is proclaimed. Thus the calling as a work of salvation becomes general, comes on the part of God to all men, is corrupted into an offer, well-meaning on the part of God, to all men, the acceptance of which depends on the free will of man. And thus the Arminian dilemma is accepted. For the one horn of that dilemma the Reformed man has already accepted, namely, the truth of sovereign election and limited atonement (a limited gospel). And the other horn, namely, that God yet causes the gospel to be proclaimed as though all may be saved and as though He desires the salvation of all is accepted by this corruption of the call of the gospel into a general, well-meant offer of salvation. The Arminian now has every right to say to such a "Reformed" man: "The way of escape from that dilemma is to abandon your doctrine of sovereign predestination. Don't you see that you involve yourself in a plain and inescapable contradiction? Don't you see that the God of your doctrinal presentation is unethical, is not upright, is a liar?" But as we said, having accepted this dilemma, this "Reformed" man blithely claims to escape its sharp horns by calling a contradiction a mystery. I say again: this is incomprehensible. Yet this is exactly what has been done in the Christian Reformed Churches and in other

Reformed circles. And it has been done under the guise of this very paragraph of our *Canons*. One can scarcely read a commentary on this article in which that word "seriously" is not changed into "well-meaningly" at some point along the line. And the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924 cited this article in support of the First Point of Common Grace in the same sense, as is obvious also from their writings in defense of the Three Points.

Now is that truly the meaning of this article? Did the fathers actually mean to give ground to the Arminians here? Do they indeed mean to maintain the Arminian line in regard to the call of the gospel and at the same time the Reformed line in regard to the counsel of predestination and the atonement of Christ?

It may be true that this article is not characterized by exemplary clarity. But its language is certainly plain enough to determine that there is no slightest tinge of Arminianism in it. On the very face of it, it is false to maintain that this paragraph teaches a general, well-meant offer of salvation to all who hear the gospel. Such would be contrary to the whole tenor of the *Canons*, and it cannot possibly be distilled from this article.

Let us engage in a little analysis of the thought here.

First of all, let it be noted that the paragraph deals not with the will of God's decree, but with the will of His command, or His ethical will. And it is from this point of view that the fathers here look at the call of the gospel. The gospel is viewed here not from the point of view of the fact that in it God declares His *good pleasure, welbehagen, beneplacitum*, but from the viewpoint of "what is pleasing to him, *wat Hem aangenaam is, quid sibi gratum sit*." Hence, as we have noted, the article also deals with the seriousness, and that too, in the sense of the veracity, truthfulness, and faithfulness of God in the call of the gospel.

In the second place, the fathers are here speaking of a calling that proceeds from God through the preaching of the gospel to all who hear, both elect and reprobate. This is sometimes termed "the external calling." However, the fathers do not use this term; and to use it is, in my opinion, both mistaken and confusing. It is better to speak of an external and an internal aspect of the one saving calling, and to insist that they are co-extensive: with a saving calling God calls only His elect, whether you view that calling from its external or its internal aspect. The fathers speak of those who are called by the gospel. And it is plain both from this article and from the two following that they have in mind a calling that can be and actually is obeyed or disobeyed. And it is true that the saving calling is irresistible: it cannot be disobeyed, but is always obeyed. Now it may be said that the call of the gospel and the saving calling in its external aspect are alike in form and contents. Nevertheless, we must distinguish, in order to maintain the efficacious and particular character of the calling unto salvation. And then we may say that the *sound* of the calling, externally considered, proceeds to all.

Or: God through the call of the gospel calls His elect unto salvation.

In the third place, we must consider the contents of this call of the gospel. To that call of the gospel belongs the preaching of Christ crucified in all His fulness, first of all. In that connection, we must bear in mind that to the content of the gospel-call belongs the proclamation of God's sovereign good pleasure also. So surely as God makes known in His Word the good pleasure of His will, so surely it must also be proclaimed in the gospel. Nor must it be camouflaged and covered up. It is inherently false to assert that one cannot go to the mission field with the gospel of predestinating grace, for the simple reason that it is of the essence of the gospel of Christ according to the Scriptures. In the third place, to the call of the gospel belongs the call to faith and repentance. And it is in that call to faith and repentance that you find the point of contact between Christ crucified and the heart of the sinner to whom the gospel is preached. Only it must be remembered that the call to faith and repentance is a calling of God, and therefore it is not to be characterized as an invitation, but as *Canons* II, 5 has it, as a *demand*, or a command. In the fourth place, therefore, it must also be stated that in the call of the gospel God even promises to all those coming to him and believing rest of soul and eternal life. This is the same language as that of *Canons* II, 5, that the promise of the gospel is that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But it must be noted that while this promise is generally proclaimed, it is not a general promise, but, in fact, quite particular, for the elect alone: for it is a promise only to those who come to Him and believe.

Now the question is: is there anything not serious about all this? Is there anything in this call of the gospel that is not according to truth? In the gospel God calls all to faith and repentance. And God is serious about it: no man has the right before God to remain in his sin and unbelief. Is that not in complete harmony with the truth of God? God in the gospel presents to the sinner the way of sin as a way that displeases Him and makes him the object of His wrath, as a way in which he heaps to himself treasures of wrath in the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment. And in that same gospel God presents the way of faith and repentance as a way that is pleasing to Him, as the way of life eternal and glory. Is not God serious about this? And is not this gospel entirely in harmony with the truth of God? In the gospel God opens for him that repents the way of reconciliation to God, the way of return to the heart of God, and assures him that repents and believes that he will never be cast out, and promises him eternal life. But in that same gospel God declares to the impenitent and unbelieving that the wrath of God abideth on him. Is not God serious about this? Is not this gospel entirely according to truth?

(Continued on page 310)

DECENCY and ORDER

Sundry Matters on Article 28

Having written at length concerning the relation of the church and the state in general, we will now return once more to the 28th Article of the Church Order. Considerable time has elapsed since we began to treat this article and so the reader will kindly pardon when we recapitulate just a little.

You will remember that we quoted the article from the original church order as adopted by the Synod of Dordrecht in the years 1618-19 and found it to be quite different from the present redaction which was first adopted in the revision of 1914. The original article maintains the principle of church subjection to the state; the same which was found in the original 36th Article of our Netherlands Confession. The function of the State, in addition to its task of caring for the civil state, is then to "protect the sacred ministry, remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship, etc."

Although it is easily understood that this view should be common in a country like the Netherlands where the State, functioning sometimes rather freely in matters of the church, appointing and calling ministers, etc., nevertheless, we cannot agree with it for reasons stated in our former writings. When the church allows the government to thus act, we believe the royal government over His church is being infringed upon. Civil magistrates are then engaged in labors that belong only to the spiritual trustees of Christ's church. This is wrong indeed!

Though, therefore, we disagree with the basic note of this original article, we may add that there are various elements found in it which are commendable and it is a loss to our church order that these have not been preserved in it. The article may be divided into two parts. The first speaks of duties of the government in relation to the church and the second speaks of the duties of the office bearers of the church, particularly with respect to their impressing upon the membership of the church its duty toward government. Both of these points are lost in the present church order and since Scripture itself speaks especially of the latter relationship rather frequently, we feel it would have been more proper to have in the revised article a corrected and clarified statement concerning this matter in addition to what we now have.

Our present article speaks of a different matter. The main thrust of the article speaks of the duty of consistories to see to it that their churches are properly incorporated with the state and that for two reasons:

Firstly, this is necessary in order that where the occasion may arise, they may seek in a legal way the protection of

the state for the retention and possession of their property. The schismatic action of that element that formerly belonged with our churches has made us realize anew the importance of this matter. Concerning this a great deal can be written. We will, however, refrain except that we wish to state: (1) that it is certainly evident, in the light of Article 28 of our church order, that the course which our churches have taken with respect to the possession of their properties is not only *right* but a matter of *duty*; (2) that only the blind are unable to see, especially in the light of the history since 1953, that these schismatics have "departed from the discipline, rules, and usages of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the U. S. A." and, therefore, lost all moral and legal claim to any properties of said churches even though they succeed in obtaining some of them through false witness and theft. God will judge! (3) that the oft referred to passage of I Corinthians 6:1-8 in no way conflicts with the principle of Art. 28 of the church order nor have our churches violated this passage in the action taken as is sometimes alleged. For a further clarification of this we refer our readers to Standard Bearer, Vol. 30, pages 126, 127.

Secondly, proper incorporation is necessary in order that legal protection may be sought, if necessary, for "the peace and order of the meetings of the church." This, too, sometimes becomes necessary, as for example, (and this actually happened) when a church is located next to the residence of ungodly people who make a practice of loudly hammering on roofs and wrecked automobiles during the time of services and, when they are decently told to quiet down, assault the office-bearers of the church and inflict bodily injury. Such circumstances demand action by the civil authorities and although also unincorporate groups are entitled to and may also seek protection by the civil magistrates, it is, nevertheless, better to obtain proper incorporation. The latter is imperative where physical property is involved.

Since the beginning of the present decade there has been a striving in Reformed circles to considerably revise the present church order. In 1951 a committee was appointed by the Christian Reformed Synod to work on this project. That committee is reporting to the Synod this year and has completed a first draft of a proposed revision. In this revision, printed in the Banner of November 30, 1956, the committee suggests that the present Article 28 be numbered Article 33 and be changed as follows:

"Art. 33. Consistories shall provide for the proper incorporation of their congregations so that they can claim legal protection for the retention of their properties. However, even at the risk of losing their church properties, consistories shall never permit the least infringement upon the royal government of Christ over His Church."

From this it is evident that the authors of this revision also understood the main thrust of the present Article 28 to refer to the matter of incorporation. Fact is, they make this

the sole point of the article and state as the only reason for incorporation "the protection and retention of their properties." No mention is made of the phrase, "for the peace and order of their meetings," which is found in our present redaction and neither are any of the commendable features of the original article reinserted in this proposed revision. Personally, we would like to see that done even at the expense of necessitating a longer article.

As to the matter of incorporation itself we may note that its necessity arises from the fact that the church institutionally in this present world has a material or earthly side. The spiritual essence of the church, of course, needs no other incorporation than that which she has in Christ. Regarding her temporal, physical properties and the general administration of the material affairs of her organization, however, it is proper that she incorporate with the state for the state not only has concern but also proper jurisdiction over these matters. As Monsma and Van Dellen point out, "Civil authorities, for instance, may insist for the safety of all concerned, that the general rules of fire prevention be observed as we erect our church buildings. For the protection of the health of the church members, as well as for the community, they have a right to insist on proper sanitation. In matters as these the state authorities have a certain God-given responsibility, also regarding churches." To these may yet be added matters of building code, zoning ordinances affecting the churches, taxation, and others. With respect to all such things the church must give due recognition to the rightful demands of the state.

There is, however, an important condition annexed to this article. The church may under no circumstances suffer the royal government of Christ to be infringed upon. She may not permit the state-power to interfere with matters of faith and confession. These she holds sacred and the privilege to maintain them is her God-given duty and right. It does not belong to the state nor may it be exercised by her. Ere, therefore, she will permit the state to interfere in these matters the faithful church will suffer the loss of all things for she realizes that she is certainly able to maintain her spiritual essence without properties, etc., but if she succumbs before the unjust demands of an ungodly state she will lose her spiritual identity and become as salt that has lost its savor. If incorporation becomes thus penalized, she will remain unincorporated! She must!

From all of this it is evident that there is an area in which the church stands directly related to the state. The former takes cognizance of and acknowledges this in the matter of her incorporation. We believe that many churches horribly abuse certain privileges which are given to her as a corporation of the state. For example, the matter of relief from property taxation. The state recognizes the church as a non-profit organization designed to minister to the spiritual rather than to the material needs of man. This is all very well but

when the reality is only camouflage and the church degenerates into a tax-free business corporation, we believe the state would be within her proper right to interfere, forbid certain prevalent practices, or impose the same tax it does upon other corporations. It seems as though there is room for a revision in the laws governing incorporation and provision ought to be made whereby churches and other religious, tax-free organizations be incorporated differently than business corporations. Then provisions could be made in the laws governing church-incorporation wherein the church would have to abide by its spiritual calling or fall under separate incorporation wherein it would also become subject to proper taxes. Perhaps something along this line will develop in the future for certain legislators are well aware of some of the abuses perpetrated by tax-free organizations and have begun to speak out against them. Of course, there is also the possibility that because of these violators the innocent will be penalized by having all the tax exemptions taken from this. There is also a trend favoring this position. Whatever happens it is certainly not a matter that interferes with the royal government of Christ over His Church and we, therefore, can also submit to the established law even though such a change would materially affect the heavy financial burden placed upon our churches. Surely we may and should speak up and write to our representatives in congress about things such as this so that the evil-doers may be punished and the righteous protected. And, as churches, we may and should give to Caesar what is his and be extremely careful that we do not give to him what is Christ's.

G. Vanden Berg.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 308)

And does not God always act according to this gospel in His judgment, so that those that believe and repent are saved, while those who continue unbelieving and impenitent are damned?

No, there is absolutely nothing false or deceitful in that call of the gospel.

Nor is there anything general in it. It is a particular gospel that is generally proclaimed.

And its seriousness and veracity is not at all affected by the fact that there are some who are unable to heed the call. The inability of man to repent and believe by nature does not change the seriousness and the truth of God's Word one iota.

Such, then, is the truth concerning the call of the gospel, according to our Reformed confessions. The question concerning the harmony of this truth with that of sovereign predestination is not touched on in this article, and may be dealt with in another connection.

H.C.H.

ALL AROUND US

More Reflections on Doctrinal Sensitivity.

In the last issue of the *Standard Bearer* we called attention to an article appearing in the February, 1957, issue of *torch and trumpet* on the subject of "Doctrinal Sensitivity" written by Professor Henry R. Van Til of Calvin College. His article appeared in a series of articles in this periodical entitled "The Pillars of the Church," written by various authors.

In the March issue of *torch and trumpet* Professor R. B. Kuiper, past president of both Calvin College and Seminary, continues the series, writing an article entitled "Calvin College and Seminary." In it he endeavors to show that these institutions serve as pillars of the church, i.e., the Christian Reformed Church. Because his article throughout reveals that he is deeply conscious of the principle that the Word of God is to permeate all the instruction given in and by these institutions which he considers the pillars of his church, we have named this present article "More reflections on doctrinal sensitivity."

Our general impression from the reading of Kuiper's article, of which we can give the reader only a few snatches here and there, is that he is quite a bit more conservative in his criticism of the church than was the Rev. Van Til. And perhaps we should say, also a bit more positive. Frankly, when I read Van Til's article, the impression was left with me that in his opinion there is not much hope for the future of the Christian Reformed Church. But when I read Kuiper's article there seems to be much hope for the future of this church. By this I do not mean that Kuiper is insensitive to the dangers that threaten the future continuance of his church. His article reflects that he is seriously conscious of these dangers. But I mean by this that he does not, like Van Til, point to specific evils that have practically infested his church. And one feels when he reads Kuiper's article that the latter does not see eye to eye with Van Til with respect to their criticism of the same evils. I have in mind particularly the Janssen case of 1922.

Relative to the Janssen case, writes Van Til, "Case number three. Another man writes a dissertation and tells the world that the Christian Reformed Church in the deposition of Janssen has snuffed out the progressive spirit and has become reactionary as a result. This indicates lack of doctrinal sensitivity with respect to the purity of the Word."

Kuiper, on the other hand, relative to this same case, writes: "The early twenties brought another doctrinal issue to the fore. Dr. Ralph Janssen, Professor of Old Testament in Calvin Seminary, was said by his colleagues to have been influenced unduly by the higher criticism. Unfortunately that matter was never threshed out thoroughly. Although several of our ablest ministers inclined to the opinion that

the professor could be defended, he refused to participate in his own defense at the Synod of 1922 on the ground that certain members of that Synod by their denial of the doctrine of common grace were disqualified from passing judgment on his teaching. That stymied the defense. Synod found Janssen guilty of some of the charges alleged against him. However much one may regret certain aspects of the procedure in that case, the church must be credited with unwillingness to tolerate so much as the semblance of Modernism."

Though both men are reflecting on doctrinal sensitivity, it appears to the undersigned that there is a considerable difference in the doctrinal sensitivity of Van Til and Kuiper relative to the Janssen case. The latter leaves the impression he is not so sure that the church did the right thing when it deposed the modernist professor in 1922. And this impression is strengthened by what Kuiper gives us in the very next paragraph of his article.

"Janssen had alerted the church to the presence in its ministry of deniers of the Reformed doctrine of common grace. Without delay the church took action. Under the guidance of a seminary professor the 1924 Synod drew up its famous three points on the doctrine in question, and soon thereafter certain ministers who could not subscribe to them were disposed."

The reader will judge that Kuiper in the last quoted paragraph carries no scruples at all with respect to the deposition of the deniers of common grace. The church in his judgment did absolutely right in this instance. But in the Janssen case he is not so sure. The very language he uses seems to indicate this. Notice, he says, "Dr. Janssen . . . was said by his colleagues to have been influenced unduly by the higher criticism." According to Kuiper, Janssen may have had "the semblance of Modernism," and therefore "the church must be credited with unwillingness to tolerate so much as the semblance of Modernism"; but Kuiper is not convinced that Janssen was a modernist.

Moreover, he states, "Unfortunately that matter was never threshed out thoroughly." He uses that word "unfortunately" because he is convinced that Janssen could have been exonerated if the able ministers who defended him had been allowed to carry out their defense. What Kuiper should have written is that in his opinion here was a case where the church was over-sensitive doctrinally. They should have kept the Modernist in the seminary. But the deniers of common grace who uncovered the Modernist must by all means get out. It seems that Kuiper is not doctrinally sensitive enough to discern that the very doctrine of common grace leaves the church wide open to Modernism.

It is also doubtful that Professor Van Til sees this inconsistency between the acceptance of common grace and the denial of Modernism. I would be very interested to hear what he has to say on this point. But I must return to the article of Professor Kuiper.

He certainly sounds the right note when he calls atten-

tion to the necessity of a twofold emphasis. Writes he, "Among the emphases which the Christian Reformed Church has the right to expect of its schools, two loom very large. They are learning or scholarship and orthodoxy or loyalty to the Word of God. And these two must go hand in hand. Never may they be divorced."

Kuiper in the naming of these points posits learning or scholarship first, then orthodoxy. But in his treatment of these two points he properly first calls our attention to the "Insistence on Orthodoxy." Under his discussion of this point he reminds the reader of several instances in the history of his church where insistence on orthodoxy was most necessary. He recalls the supra-infra lapsarian controversy, the Bultema and the Janssen case, the common grace controversy, and insists that in the treatment of these and other cases the church and school gave evidence of a determination to uphold the Reformed faith.

In respect to the second matter, namely, the matter of scholarship, Professor Kuiper makes some rather startling observations. He says: "In the opinion of the writer of this piece Calvin College and Seminary have in the past been less insistent on scholarship than on orthodoxy. . . . The observation may be added that academic degrees are not nearly always a reliable measure of scholarship. This writer has sat at the feet of truly great scholars who had neither honorary nor earned doctorates, and he has met Doctors of Philosophy who were incredibly stupid. Almost anyone can by going to school long enough acquire a doctor's degree. And, sad to say, even at so highly regarded a school as the Free Reformed University of Amsterdam the requirements for the Th.D. degree are not as rigid as they ought to be." He refers to the report in a certain magazine of an interview with a professor of the University of Illinois who insists that the modern methods of education have as their consequence that few young Americans are today receiving a truly broad and thorough liberal education. Kuiper agrees with the professor and says further, "Undeniable facts substantiate his criticism. And, sad to say, the deterioration which he observes has affected, not only the public school system of these United States, but to some extent also our Christian Schools. . . . Today Calvin College is compelled to teach many courses on the high school level. If the reader will permit a personal note, the graduates of Calvin College's pre-seminary course today know no more Latin, Greek, and German than the writer knew when he graduated from 'prep' school . . . in 1903; and more than a few students at Calvin Seminary are unable to write a sermon without flagrant errors of grammar and misspellings, or to deliver a sermon without unpardonable mispronunciations. Obviously the college pre-seminary course needs to be revised, and fortunately that is being contemplated. But that alone will not solve the problem. One of the saddest aspects of the present situation is that some of our prospective teachers, on

graduating from college, do not know the fundamentals as they should and consequently are unable to teach them to their pupils. . . ." At this point the writer calls attention to "two aspects of scholarship with reference to which there has for some time been room for improvement at Calvin Seminary. Not enough attention has been paid to contemporary thought. Specifically, biblical criticism has received too scant attention, and it took our seminary too long to wake up to the peril of Barthianism. Also, generally speaking, the method of teaching has been too elementary. That is to say, the professors have too often done nearly all the thinking for the students and have not stimulated their students sufficiently to productive thought. That helps account for it that too few graduates of the seminary aspire to the pursuit of advanced studies, whether by themselves or in other schools."

After discussing the subject of his article in "Retrospect," he then calls attention in the second main point to "Prospect," Here the writer assesses the present position of these institutions of learning and then, looking forward, inquires as to the future.

It is his claim that the Christian Reformed Church "still is one of the most orthodox churches on the face of the globe." But he hastens to ask, "Are there signs that it is weakening?" And again, "What will become of our church in the next hundred years?" He reminds his readers that "many an erstwhile sound church has degenerated into a false church, a synagogue of Satan. Such a fate may overtake the Christian Reformed Church. Nay, it may be said unhesitatingly that precisely that is bound to occur unless the Christian Reformed Church strives to retain its soundness. And it is the sacred duty of Calvin College and Seminary to take an active part, even to play a leading role, in that striving. They can do so by vigorously promoting Christian learning."

At this point in his article Professor Kuiper offers eight suggestions which he believes will aid these institutions, Calvin College and Seminary, in the performance of their task.

We are sorry there is not sufficient space to reflect on each of these suggestions. Briefly, they emphasize the necessity of a higher standard of scholarship and they insist on doctrinal sensitivity. Like Van Til, Kuiper warns against the fear of controversy. Writes he, "if Calvin College and Seminary are to continue to serve the Christian Reformed Church as pillars, they will have to remain orthodox not only, but they will have to be so insistent on sound doctrine as to constitute bulwarks of orthodoxy Some, it would seem, are 'so fed up' with doctrinal controversy as to be willing to forego a little truth in the interest of peace."

Though we cannot agree with all the professor writes, the general tenor of his article is quite acceptable to us, and we believe it is also of serious application to our own institutions.

M.S.

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST

March 20, 1957

Classis West of our Protestant Reformed Churches convened in Doon, Iowa, March 20, and a pleasant meeting was enjoyed. This does not necessarily mean that all the things that came up for discussion were equally pleasant. A censure case, for example, is never pleasant, except for the fact that such cases are proof that discipline is being exercised in our churches.

Rev. Vanden Berg, who presided at our previous classical meeting, opened the meeting with prayer after he read I Peter 4 and the singing of Psalm No. 65. The Rev. H. Veldman thereupon took the chair and Rev. Vanden Berg recorded the minutes.

Lynden was represented by two delegates. This was truly a novel experience, as far as Lynden is concerned, and also as far as our classis is concerned. Redlands, too, was represented by two delegates. This caused a marked increase in the expenses of this classical meeting, but this increase in classical expense is hardly worth mentioning. I refer, of course, to the advantages of having two delegates instead of one from a church. Besides, the Church Order is specific on this point.

A large amount of time was spent on the various subsidy requests. Farm conditions in recent years and the expenses involved in litigation struggles have imposed quite a burden upon our small struggling churches. This fact simply is not to be denied. Also this, however, is of the Lord. And, as far as the future is concerned we may confidently leave matters in the hands of the Lord. Trusting in Him and believing that we love His truth and represent His Cause in the midst of the world, we may believe that He cares for us.

Pella was again granted one classical appointment a month as follows: April 14—Rev. H. Veldman; May 12—Rev. Emanuel; June 2—Rev. Heys; July 14—Rev. Vanden Berg; August 11—Rev. Van Baren; Sept. 15—Rev. Kuiper.

This meeting of classis was also the time to elect delegates to our synod this coming June. The following delegates were elected:

Ministers

Primi

J. A. Heys
H. C. Hoeksema
G. Vanden Berg
H. Veldman

Secundi

E. Emanuel
R. Harbach
H. H. Kuiper
G. Van Baren

Elders

Primi

T. Feenstra
H. Huiskens
N. Kooiker
C. Van Der Molen

Secundi

W. Huizenga
L. Lanting
P. A. Poortinga
P. S. Poortinga

The classis also decided that the primi delegates call on their regular alternates if necessary and if their alternates cannot attend Synod, the secundi delegates be summoned alphabetically. The classis made this a permanent rule, and it applies to both, ministers and elders.

The undersigned was re-elected stated clerk for a term of 3 years, and Rev. H. C. Hoeksema was elected a deputy ad examina for a term of three years. The other deputies are Revs. Heys and Vanden Berg.

I may also report that the Rev. G. Lubbers was present at our meeting with two members of the Loveland church. He addressed a few words to the classis, as did also one of the members of Loveland present at our meeting.

The Lord willing, our September meeting of Classis West will be held in South Holland the third Wednesday of that month. Shortly after supper our business was finished, and the Rev. Heys closed the sessions of Classis with thanks to God after we sang Psalm No. 196.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk