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MEDITATION

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

"And the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate." Luke 23:1

We would like to point you to three moments in the text: first, we will see the behaviour of the accusers, the Jews; then, the behaviour of Pilate; and, finally, the world's condemnation in the sentence expressed.

First, then, the behaviour and attitude of the Jews who condemned Jesus. Yes, it seems strange to us that Jesus ever would come in the seat of the accused, but such is the case. Pilate approached the howling multitude that brought Jesus to him and asked: What accusation bring ye against this man? This blunt question puts the Jews on the defensive. And their answer is a mockery: If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to you! As though the mere fact that they brought Him to Pilate would establish guilt. They show at once in their first utterance to Pilate their utter contempt for things righteous.

Of course, they notice that their bombastic statement did not make any impression on the judge and therefore, they proceed to accuse Him. Accusation one: He perverts the nation; number two: He forbids the people to give tribute to Caesar; and, three, He makes Himself some sort of King! And finally they even come to the world with the claim of Jesus that He is the Son of God. But even in the form of the accusation they reveal their utter unbelief in this fantastic claim: He makes Himself the Son of God!

Notice first of all that these accusations are a mixture of truth and the lie and are therefore very deceitful. Christ certainly spoke the truth when He made Himself King. He *is* the King of the Jews, rightly considered. But here is the point: the Jews cunningly averred that Jesus made Himself an earthly King, a competitor to the other kings and rulers of the earth, while all that ever heard Jesus would have to admit that Jesus never aspired to earthly rule and sovereign-

ty. He is the King of the Jews indeed, that is, the praisers of God, but His kingship and Kingdom are both heavenly and glorious.

It is also true that Jesus perverted the nation, only He did so from evil to good, while they aver before Pilate that He brought the nation to ruin by teaching them evil things.

And, yes, He forbade to give tribute to Caesar, that is, undue tribute. And there was nothing evil in that. And finally, it was the simple truth that Jesus indeed is the Son of the living God. He did not *make* Himself Son of God, it is His glorious name from everlasting to everlasting.

As to the general claim that Jesus was a malefactor, we would say that His whole life testified to the contrary of that foul accusation. He went through the whole land doing good; both Pilate and Herod *see* His innocence at once, and three times Pilate tells the multitude: I find no fault in Him! Is that man a malefactor?

But the most terrible thing in this accusation is this: through it the Jews and their rulers utterly abandon their King, their real Sovereign, their God! God had promised that the Messiah would come to crush the head of the serpent and to deliver them from all evil and to crown them with all that is good and wonderful. And when He came they drag Him to the Roman worldpower which is not so utterly corrupted as the leaders of the Jews: He would release Jesus, but *they* would not. He shall be crucified! It shows the depth of human degradation! It reveals that the heart of man hates God and His Son!

* * * *

Now let us see the behaviour of Pilate.

First of all, we may expect of him the strictest justice. The Roman concept of law and righteousness was great.

Moreover, he is a judge, and a judge must above all love justice and right. And for that reason he must gather all the information he can, in order that he may know how to free the innocent and condemn the guilty.

Therefore, Pilate ought to be moved only and exclusively by the sole question: is this Man guilty or innocent. He is

called to judge, and therefore he really stood in the place of God in this instance, even as every judge throughout all history.

We may even go a step further: every judgment here on earth ought to be so strict and true and righteous that we would have a shadow of the great Judgment Day to come in the end of the world.

But what a miserable show of judgment we behold at the trial of Jesus! This weak man did not consider the question of justice at all. If he had, he would have pronounced Jesus innocent and would have given commandment to the guard to clear the court of the howling mob of the real malefactors.

But Pilate would be rid of Jesus. He wants to evade the whole procedure. This becomes plain, first, by his suggestion that the Jews take Him and judge Him according to their own law. But the Jews refuse to do that. They have not the right of pronouncing and executing the death sentence, and Jesus must die! And, second, we see how Pilate evades the issue by proposing a choice between Jesus and Bar-abbas! Surely, he thought, they will not choose a murderer in the face of this majestic man! They will choose Jesus and I will be rid of this thorny predicament! But here he also fails, for they do the awful thing: they choose a murderer rather than the Prince of Life! Third, he tries to evade the issue by sending Jesus to Herod. Surely Herod will treat this case and I will be rid of it. But Herod sends Him back and Pilate is no nearer to a solution of this problem. And, finally, he tries to evade the issue by repeatedly proposing to release Jesus, and as a sop to their hatred of Jesus he scourges Him, contrary to all righteousness.

Can you imagine the suffering of Jesus, the Son of God in human nature as He stands in the midst of all this corruption, hatred, torturing of justice and seeking of wicked self rather than the seeking of God and His virtues?

The nation that rejects Him harbors His elect children, even though they bear the very name of one of the children of God. They are called Israel, but they act like the heathen, nay worse than the heathen. The heathen Pilate would release Him, for the man knew that He was innocent. But they, although they have the Word of God and in it a description of the Messiah who was to come, they clamour and cry until they have their wish: Jesus must be crucified!

Moreover, He loves justice and righteousness and these virtues are degraded before His face. His very name is the Lord our Righteousness, but it is His torture to stand in the midst of those that pervert truth and equity.

Then too, He realizes at this dreadful hour that although He is innocent and just, He is nevertheless condemned, for He came in order to take upon Himself the guilt of all His sheep. Innocently condemned, and such that even the Triune God made Him to stand in the place of the guilty, such is the suffering of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Oh, God certainly

shall visit all this show of wickedness in the day of Judgment. But before God's own judgment Jesus must take the place of the guilty and He must and He *is* condemned and must walk the way of the Cross.

Unspeakable sufferings of the Son of God!

* * * *

But this spectacle is also the world's condemnation.

As far as the world is concerned, this is not the trial of Jesus!

Heaven, earth and hell proclaim His innocence! There is the voice from heaven at His baptism: He is the beloved Son of God. Also from heaven came the angels at His birth in order to tell men that He is the joy of the angelic hosts. There is also the record of His life on earth: He went through the land doing good. He healed the sick, gave bread to the hungry, raised the dead, made the heart of the widow and orphan sing for joy! The enemies admitted in spite of themselves that Jesus was innocent. Why would they otherwise seek for false witnesses? Then there is the thrice repeated testimony of the judge himself: I find no fault in this man. But most striking of all: hell itself will bear testimony. When Judas came to himself and saw what he had done, he wailed: I have shed the *innocent* blood! Certainly, this was not the trial of Jesus!

No, but the world was on trial! If this so-called trial emphasized anything at all it was the innocence of Jesus. But the world was on trial; there can be no doubt about it.

And also the world at its best. The very wisdom of Greece, absorbed by the Roman worldpower, was present here. And this wisdom of the world such as it never shone either before or after this trial, so-called, was linked with the Roman concept of law. Moreover, we also find here the world's religion. We behold before this tribunal the very flower of the Israelitish nation. However, make no mistake: this nation has deteriorated: they are legalistic, selfrighteous and hypocritical. Yes, they refuse to enter the judgment hall on this holy day and piously step backward: they shall not be corrupted by contact with these heathen abominations. Yes, but all this time they are crucifying the Christ of God!

And this world which really is on trial before and with Pilate proves its own corruption. They have taken the most wonderful revelation of God and deem it worthy to be cast out and crucified. God has never shown His goodness and wonders such as when He sent Jesus to this earth. Do you not see that the question: what shall I do and think of this Jesus determines your own state? It shall tell the whole earth and heaven what and who you are. Love Him, cling to Him, believe Him and worship Him, and you show that you are one of God's children. Despise Him, lie about Him,

torture Him and cast Him out to be crucified and you prove that you are utterly abominable.

And that is what the world did. Pilate, Herod, the Scribes and Pharisees with the howling mob were on trial for their lives, for their lives as they shall spend it in hell forever and ever.

And they have conclusively proven before the bar of God's justice and even before the bar of the world that reads the record of the so-called trial that they are utterly corrupt and abominable; that Jesus is innocent but that the world stands condemned. Casting out righteousness itself, they are proven to be unrighteous.

And all this happened according to the adorable wisdom of God. The Son of God, the Saviour of His people is unjustly condemned, so that the number of elect might be acquitted before the judgment seat of God in the day of days.

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*

THE CROSS OF CALVARY

My God, My God, I cry to Thee;
O why hast Thou forsaken Me?
Afar from Me, Thou dost not heed,
Though day and night for help I plead.

But Thou art holy in Thy ways,
Enthroned upon Thy people's praise;
Our fathers put their trust in Thee,
Believed, and Thou didst set them free.

Thy cried, and, trusting in Thy Name,
Were saved, and were not put to shame;
But in the dust My honor lies,
While all reproach and all despise.

My words a cause for scorn they make,
The lip they curl, the head they shake,
And, mocking, bid Me trust the Lord
Till He salvation shall afford.

I live and will declare Thy fame
Where brethren gather in Thy Name;
Where all Thy faithful people meet,
I will Thy worthy praise repeat.

Psalm 22:1-4, 11

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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EDITORIALS

The Free Offer

The last time we were discussing the fact that the authors of "The Free Offer" postulate a real desire in God to save all those to whom the "Free Offer" of salvation is brought or proclaimed. We compared this theory with the Westminster Confession and discovered that Murray and Stonehouse certainly do not believe but corrupt their own confession to which, nevertheless they subscribe.

However, we must say still more about the paragraph in their "Free Offer of the Gospel" we were discussing in the last number of our paper. For the convenience of our readers, we quote this paragraph here once more:

"Again, the expression 'God desires' in the formula that crystallizes the crux of the question, is intended to notify not at all the 'seeming' attitude of God but a real attitude, a real disposition of lovingkindness inherent in the free offer to all, in other words, a pleasure or delight in God, contemplating the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture proffered and the invitation given."

It is especially to the last words of this paragraph that we now wish to call special attention.

Notice:

1. The gospel is an overture to all men, i.e. a proposition presented to all that hear the gospel for their consideration, either for their acceptance or rejection.

2. The gospel is an invitation given to all men with the sincere desire on the part of God, that all may accept and comply with the invitation.

3. In that overture proffered and that invitation given, God expresses His pleasure or delight as He contemplates the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture or invitation.

This is what professors Murray and Stonehouse teach at the seminary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Is it wonder that one never hears a Reformed sermon from those that graduate from that Seminary?

For this is sheer Arminianism.

In fact, the "Five Arminian Articles of 1610," although principally in agreement with the above quoted paragraph, express themselves much more carefully.

They, indeed, confess an election on the ground of foreseen faith, but they also definitely express that "God, by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ His Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on His Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even unto the end."

Here, at least, it is, apparently, all attributed to the

powerful operation of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, that men receive the faith and are saved. But, in the above paragraph, this powerful operation of the grace of God is not even mentioned; in fact, it has no place in it. God, so the paragraph states, motivated by a sincere desire to save all men, and filled with lovingkindness for all is "contemplating the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture proffered and the invitation given."

What does this mean in connection with the entire paragraph?

It is evident that, in the paragraph the term "contemplate" means to consider something as probable and contingent on something else, to look forward to as a possibility. That which God thus looks forward to is "the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture proffered and the invitation given."

What results does God thus contemplate? Is it the salvation of the elect? No; election has no place at all in the above paragraph. God is filled with lovingkindness to all in proffering the overture and in giving the invitation. Hence, he contemplates the possible result that all that hear may comply with the overture of the gospel.

If words mean anything at all, they mean exactly this in connection with the entire paragraph. Moreover, this is exactly the meaning they are intended to convey.

Now, apart from the fact that God cannot "contemplate" such a possibility and that, in fact, He cannot and does not "contemplate" any possibility at all because He knows and determined all things from before the foundation of the world, this is Pelagianism and Arminianism of the worst kind.

On what is compliance with the proffered overture, or the possibility of accepting the invitation given, based? Certainly not on the sovereign grace of God. Then the contemplated result is certain. Then the invitation cannot be given in lovingkindness to all. Then the proffered gospel is no proof of "a real attitude or disposition of lovingkindness in the free offer to all." But it is based on the theory that God wills that all men be saved on condition that they, on their part and by their own free will, comply with the gospel invitation and the proffered overture.

Once more, I maintain that, if words have any meaning, the above is the only significance that can be given to the paragraph we quoted and are discussing at present. This is the meaning these words must convey to any reader. And this is the meaning the professors Murray and Stonehouse intend them to convey to the readers.

Reformed theologians and the Reformed Churches do not speak of a proffered overture or of an invitation given, but of the calling. It is true that, in the English translation of the Canons of Dordrecht, the term "invitation" once occurs, viz., in III, IV, 8, but even this is a corruption of the text. In the English translation, one reads: "for God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word what will be acceptable to him, that all who are called should comply with

the invitation." But in the original Latin, and also in the Holland translation we read: "Serio enim et verissime ostendit Deus verbo suo, quid sibi gratum sit, nimirum, ut vocati ad se veniant." The last part of this sentence does not, as it is translated in our English version, read: "That all whom are called should comply with the invitation" but: "that the called should come unto him."

For the rest, in the Reformed Churches, they usually do not speak of the invitation, but of the calling, which is in harmony with the Scripture. This calling is distinguished as outward and inward calling. The former is the preaching of the gospel and comes to all that hear. The latter, the inward calling, is God's own calling, the irresistible and saving calling that comes, through the Holy Spirit, only to the elect.

This the professors Murray and Stonehouse know just as well as I do, but all this they ignore and deny in their pamphlet "The Free offer," in order to replace it by a general overture and invitation to all without exception and that, too, as a revelation of the general lovingkindness of God.

* * * *

But I must still call attention to the last paragraph of the introduction to the "Free Offer."

I quote it here:

"Still further, it is necessary to point out that such 'desire' on the part of God for the salvation of all must never be conceived of as a desire to such an end apart from the means to that end. It is not desire of their salvation irrespective of repentance and faith. Such would be inconceivable. For it would mean, as Calvin says, 'to renounce the difference between good and evil.' If it is proper to say that God desires the salvation of the reprobate, then He desires such by their repentance. And so it amounts to the same thing to say 'God desires their salvation' as to say He desires their repentance.' This is the same as saying that he desires them to comply with the indispensable conditions of salvation. It would be impossible to say the one without implying the other."

The crux of the matter in the above paragraph must be found in the term "desire." God desires the salvation of the reprobate and He desires their repentance. It is, according to the writers of this pamphlet perfectly proper to say that God desires the salvation of the reprobate if only it is added that He also desires the repentance of the reprobate.

Note the idea is not that God calls all men to repentance in the preaching of the gospel. This is perfectly proper and Scriptural, provided that by calling is meant the outward call, apart from the efficacious calling unto salvation by the Holy Spirit. To be sure, that outward call, through the preaching of the gospel, comes to all, and is also a calling to repentance. God cannot permit any man to walk in sin and rebellion against Him. He is holy and righteous and just. Hence, He proclaims, especially in the preaching of the gos-

pel that His wrath is upon every sinner that does not repent and that, unless he repents, he will be sent unto eternal desolation in hell.

Such among other truths is the contents of the preaching of the gospel. I say among other things, for the preaching of the gospel also shows the only way out: faith in Jesus Christ. If the sinner does not repent while he learns about the only way out, it means that he must have nothing of God and His Christ, that he emphatically loves his sin and corruption, and that his condemnation is made the heavier and that, too, according to the justice of God.

This is the so-called external calling, which comes to all, elect and reprobate alike.

But there is also an inward calling. This inward calling is powerful and efficacious.

This calling is described in our confession, Canons III, IV, 10: "But that others who are called by the gospel obey the call and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free-will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others equally furnished with faith sufficient for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains); but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he calls them effectually in time, confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him that called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; and may glory not in themselves but in the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places."

More about this in our next issue, D. V.

H.H.

QUESTION BOX

The second question by the Rev. E. E. of R., Wis., reads as follows:

"Does this truth militate against the fact that, while the experience and witness of Pharaoh's heart will be that he goes to hell because he has sinned against God, the *deepest reason* for his punishment and condemnation is to be explained by the fact that this decree of Reprobation has *its source in God and in His good pleasure?*"

Also to this question he adds a word of explanation as follows:

"Is this not also true of Election? Mercy *was always* for the people of God — before they did any good. But the mercy reveals itself in this life and walk of the child of God, i.e. through appointed means. In this way, God takes His people to heaven, rewards their good works by giving them eternal life, the reward of grace. However, notwithstanding the above, is not the DEEPEST REASON of Eternal Life

Election which is revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ and in the Cross?"

I will try to answer this question as follows:

1. I said, in answer to the first question, that we must not say that God punishes the sinner in the way of sin, but surely on account of and because of his sin. Otherwise you are in danger of losing the truth of the responsibility of man. Reprobation is surely sovereign: God did not reprobate some on account of their sin (which is the Arminian error) but sovereignly. And we may also say that God sovereignly realizes His decree of reprobation. But He does this through the sin and willful disobedience of the reprobate. And the sinner is condemned and punished not for his being a reprobate, but for his sin and rebellion against God.

2. This is also revealed in the cross of Christ. The brother writes: "In this way, God takes His people to heaven, rewards their good works by giving them eternal life, the reward of grace. However, notwithstanding the above, is not the DEEPEST REASON of eternal life Election which is revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ and the Cross?" I do not know whether I understand the question. Hence, rather than risking the danger of giving a wrong answer, I will briefly draw the line and let the brother draw his own conclusions.

This line must be drawn as follows:

God's election is absolutely sovereign. He chose His own from before the foundation of the world. He chose them in Christ and unto eternal life. He chose them, not because of foreseen faith or because of any good work foreseen of the elect by God in His counsel, but solely in His sovereign good pleasure. The elect (and that is, no doubt, also according to the counsel of God) fall with the whole human race into sin, and are, therefore, with the entire race objects of wrath and eternal condemnation. But the elect are chosen in Christ, and God realizes His counsel of election in Him. Hence, it the fulness of time He comes, dies on the cross, and fulfills all obedience instead of and in behalf of the elect. He, and not the elect themselves, merits eternal life for them. He receives the Spirit and, through that Spirit he makes them partakers of eternal life and all the blessings of salvation. He gives them the new life, faith, justification, sanctification and the grace of perseverance unto the end. Thus, and thus only, they walk in good works. It is all a gift of grace to them, even their good works and the fact that they walk in them: it is not of themselves but it is the gift of grace. Not of works, lest any man should boast. Hence, it is not true that they receive eternal life as a reward for their good works. They have eternal life only for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ and by the power of His grace.

This is the Reformed line and the line of Scripture as far as election and its realization is concerned.

3. But how about reprobation and the punishment of sin and its condemnation is concerned?

In the question, the brother suggests the possibility:

a. That, on the one hand, subjectively, that is, for the consciousness of the sinner, he is condemned and goes to hell because he sinned against God.

b. That, however, the real and objective. "the deepest reason," is not the sin against God which the sinner commits, but the decree of reprobation, the fact that this decree has its source in God and in His good pleasure.

Now, of course, the deepest reason for all things in heaven and on earth lies in the sovereign counsel of God. In that counsel of God lies the salvation of the elect and the damnation of the reprobate. About this there is no question. But the question is not whether the damnation of the reprobate is sovereignly decreed by God, but whether the punishment and condemnation of the sinner is, not only subjectively, before the consciousness of the sinner, but also objectively, before God, and according to His righteous judgment, a fact that is based on His sentence of strictest justice.

To put it very succinctly, may we ever say to any sinner: "You think or imagine that you are condemned and go to hell, if you do not repent, but this is not true; the real reason why you go to hell is that God has from eternity, even apart from your sin, consigned you to eternal desolation"?

No one would ever dare to say this.

Nor would this be the truth.

The truth is: a. God sovereignly decreed reprobation. This is plain from Paul's reference, in Rom. 9, to the example of Jacob and Esau: before the children were born or had done good and evil, God loved Jacob and hated Esau. b. According to God's decree, man fell and plunged himself into the mire of sin and iniquity. This was not God's act but man's. It was willful disobedience. God is not the author of sin though He sovereignly controls it. c. For this God is filled with wrath over all the workers of iniquity and punishes them with eternal desolation. d. That this is true, not for the elect, but for the reprobate only, is due to the fact that God chose the former in Christ.

This is the truth of all Scripture. But it is also the testimony of the cross. If it were true that it is only before the consciousness of the sinner that God is filled with wrath and condemns him on account of his sin, and that this is not objective reality, then the experience of Christ on the accursed tree had no objective reality either. But that suffering was, nevertheless, very real. The wrath of God upon Him, which He bore His entire life but especially on the cross, not for His own sin but for the sin of His people, was also very real. God, in His wrath and for the just punishment of those whom the Father had given Him, sent Him to hell. And when He finally cried out: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me," this being forsaken of God was no imagination or a mere matter of His subjective consciousness, but was objective reality.

H.H.

THE MULTIFORMITY OF THE CHURCH

(Concluded)

The Church does assume different forms from the point of view of liturgy, the members that compose it, and especially from the point of view of the fact that the Church grows in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Yet we must remember that that is not the Scriptural idea of multiformity. It speaks always of the Church in this connection as a unity which is gathered from the beginning to the end of time. And thus the multiformity of the Church speaks not of the various forms that the Church as a whole assumes at different times, for that is not and cannot be true, but rather of the diversity of the various members that compose that Church. There is a manyformedness of members; there is a many sidedness of the saints that compose the membership of the body of Christ. This is fundamental, for from this diversity of membership flows the diversity of the manifestation of the Church in history. Of this we must speak later.

The multiformity of the Church means therefore, the diversity of the members that compose that Church. This diversity can be distinguished as a diversity resulting from the two attributes of the Church which we mentioned above. There is therefore the diversity and multiformity in the Church because the Church is catholic. This diversity is especially outward. It includes differences in outward appearance, differences of personality and character. These differences are as to physical and psychological make up. And undoubtedly the diversity of physical and psychological make-up shall be retained in heaven. Now it is true that this diversity exists also in every man without taking into account the fact that the Church is catholic. And yet it can be said that this diversity exists to a more fundamental degree in the various races. There are, e.g., the orientals that both physically and psychologically differ from the Negroid races. There is the physical and psychological difference between a Jew and a Teuton. These fundamental differences that were effected in the human race at Babel are carried over into the Church which is above where it becomes part of the multiformity of the Church.

There is then in the second place a diversity and multiformity in the Church because it is an organism, living and unified in Jesus Christ. This diversity is especially of three kinds.

There is first of all the diversity of natural gifts. We put this under the diversity that results from the fact that the Church is united to Christ for a good reason. For the individual member of the Church receives natural gifts to fit him for his peculiar place in the body of Christ. The natural gifts which the individual member of the Church may have include such gifts as the gift of speech, the gifts of intelligence, the gift of reasoning, the gifts that may fit one to be a minister of the gospel, the gifts that may fit another to be a teacher or laborer in the factory or shop. These gifts he

receives to serve the cause of Jesus Christ in his own peculiar way. And when the Church is perfected in heaven, these gifts will continue to serve the fulness of the body of Christ.

There is secondly, the diversity of spiritual gifts. This undoubtedly includes the gifts that are mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 12. The gifts of prophecy, the gifts of speaking in other tongues, the gifts of miracles are included; but also the gifts of grace, of the Holy Spirit, of insight into the truth of the Scriptures. And in these gifts also there is a wide diversity among the various members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

There is finally the diversity of the measure of gifts. One receives more than another of all these gifts. Some may not have them at all; others may have an abundance of them. The gifts of prophecy and speaking in other tongues are not even present in the Church today any longer. But as each person in his own relationship to Christ receives these gifts in time, he is prepared by these gifts and the exercise of them for his place in Christ's body, that with them he may occupy that place and serve in his own way the functioning of the whole organism. Because one member has the gifts that he has and not others, he can only occupy one particular place in the body of Christ and no other place will he fit into. No two places are alike; no two members are alike. Each has his own place, according to the way he has been prepared for that place in the world. And because the Church is the object of God's sovereign election, therefore the place and the individual to fit into that place are prepared by God eternally, so that there can never be a misfit. This view has been developed especially by Rev. Hoeksema who speaks of this multiformity thus: "However there is, in the body of Christ, an endless diversity of individual members, and because of this multiformity of the members they are interdependent, they supplement one another, they are in need of one another, and they constitute a real *communion* of saints."⁹ Then after a treatment of the various diversities as found in the unity of the body of Christ, he goes on to say, "This true multiformity of the members in the one body is, in our opinion, the sole multiformity of the Church we have a right to speak of in the light of Holy Scripture."¹⁰

However it is important to note in this connection that not only is that diversity a fact, but it is also absolutely necessary for a proper functioning of the entire organism, for a proper life of the organism, i.e., for a real communion of saints. Think of what it would mean if all the saints were identical in every respect. They would all look just exactly alike; they would all have the same thoughts, the same desires, the same emotions at exactly the same time; they would all do the same things at the same time. Thus there could be no real organism, no real fellowship of the saints, no real purpose of the whole unified body of Christ. But in the diversity of the saints, in the multiformity lies the possibility and reality of the life of the organism. The unity of the

Church "Is also characterized, however, by diversity. If it were not so, if all the saints were absolutely identical, there would be no body, no fellowship The members of my body all partake of the same life, and they are all controlled by the same mind and will. But they are not all alike. If they were, each would be complete and self sufficient. Now they have no significance in themselves. They exist only in union with the whole and to serve the whole. Each member has its own peculiar virtue, place, and function in the body. It is exactly because of this diversity in their unity that together they constitute the organic whole of the body . . . The same is true of the Church. Her members are all one in Christ . . . Yet, there is among them an endless variety of individual diversity."¹¹

Thus the Church is not composed of members that are as alike as the cars from an assembly line, nor as a set of books on the shelf of a library, but they differ as the needles and branches of the lofty pine. Just as there are no two needles alike, nor two branches alike, so that they may compose a harmonious functioning whole, so also is the body of Christ. Just as there is one rainbow in the heavens, that is the refraction in the drops of rain of the glorious light beams of the sun, yet is composed of a variety of colors, so also the Church assembled before the throne reflects and refracts the glory of the Son of God to the praise of the Father in a multitudinous way. Just as in a choir there are no two voices alike, yet under the baton of the conductor they blend in perfect harmony to produce one swelling note, so also the assembly of the saints, one in Christ, lift their individual and different voices in the one grand and harmonious oratorio of Moses and the Lamb. In diversity lies communion, in multiplicity lies the beauty of the body of our Lord.

This also is the teaching of Scripture in I Corinthians 12. On this chapter especially is based the whole doctrine of multiformity. We read there, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant . . . 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 which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to 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 divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one

member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." This is also the teaching of Christ in the parable of the talents.

We must now treat the question of the manifestation of that Church in its multiformity in time. The Church is manifested in time and is manifested in its diversity.

The first question that confronts us is, "How may we know where that true Church is?" This question our creeds also treat. In the French Confession of Faith we read in Article XXVII and the first part of Article XXVIII, "Nevertheless we believe that it is important to discern with care and prudence which is the true Church, for this title has been much abused. We say, then, according to the Word of God, that it is the company of the faithful who agree to follow his Word, and the pure religion which it teaches; who advance in it all their lives, growing and becoming more confirmed in the fear of God according as they feel the want of growing and pressing onward. Even although they strive continually, they can have no hope save in the remission of their sins. Nevertheless we do not deny that among the faithful there may be hypocrites and reprobates, but their wickedness can not destroy the title of the Church.

"In this belief we declare that, properly speaking, there can be no Church where the Word of God is not received,

no profession made of subjection to it, nor use of the sacraments."¹² In the Scotch Confession, Article XVIII this subject is also treated. "... It is ane thing maist requisite, that the true Kirk be decerned fra the filthie Synagogues, be cleare and perfite notes, least we being deceived, receive and embrace, to our awin condemnatioun, the ane for the uther . . . The notes therefore of the trew Kirk of God we beleve, confesse, and avow to be, first, the trew preaching of the Worde of God, into the quihilk God hes revealed himselfe unto us, . . . Secundly, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, quihilk man be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to seale and confirme the same in our hearts. Last, Ecclesiastical discipline uprightlie ministered as Goddis Worde presecibes, whereby vice is repressed, and vertew nurished. Wheresoever then thir former notes are seene, and of any time continue (be the number never so fewe, about two or three), there, without all doubt, is the trew Kirk of Christ: Who according unto his promise is in the midst of them . . ."¹³

By far the most important creed on this subject is our own Belgic Confession where in Article XIX we read, "We believe that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church.

"But we speak here not of the company of hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it; but we say that the body and communion of the true Church must be distinguished from all sects who call themselves the Church.

"The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself. With respect to those who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians, namely, by faith; and when they have received Jesus Christ the only Saviour, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof. But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they have remission of sins through faith in him.

"As for the false Church, she ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ.

Neither does she administer the Sacraments, as appointed by Christ in his Word, but adds to and takes from them as she thinks proper; she relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God, and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry. These two Churches are easily known and distinguished from each other."¹⁴

Thus the true Church is known by three distinguishing marks: 1) the pure preaching of the Word; 2) the pure and proper administration of the sacraments; 3) the exercise of christian discipline. And yet these three are essentially one. For both the sacraments and christian discipline are in reality the preaching of the Word. So the true Church is that Church which proclaims the Word of Christ. Thus Rev. Hoeksema once remarked in a speech quoted in the *Standard Bearer*, "It is a striking fact that the distinguishing marks are not the attributes of the Church, viz., holiness, catholicity and apostolicity, but that they are identical with the means of grace, including even christian discipline." Then after speaking of the Church as Christ's body, he goes on to say, "The question then is how do you determine where, among the gatherings in this world, Christ is? Christ is where His Word is, and where Christ is there is His Word for Christ speaks through His Word . . . Hence, if we can determine where Christ speaks, there we shall find the Church.

"Where does Christ speak? Not simply where the Bible is or where it is read . . . Where that Word is preached there Christ is . . . And Christ speaks where His Word is purely preached, i.e., only where it is proclaimed according to the Scripture . . ."¹⁵

Although most theologians who have claimed to be Reformed hold to these marks as the marks of the true Church, when the question arises, How the Church becomes manifest as multiform, and what the relation of the true Church is to the various denominations in this world, there is much put forth that is not Scriptural. Because this is a question that constantly arises in the Church, and is therefore of some importance, and because some of the views of these theologians are pernicious, it would be well for us to consider them at some length.

There is first of all the view of Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr. He treats this question in several of his works. We quote from just two which treat the problem more specifically. In *De Gemeene Gratie* we read, "Pluriformiteit is naar onze vaste overtuiging een fase van ontwikkeling waartoe ook de kerk van Christus in het zichtbare moest komen; maar de pluriformiteit is historisch op een wijze tot stand gekomen, die dat eenheidsbesef beleetigt. Hadde ook hier de zonde niet alles bedorven, dan had de pluriformiteit zich moeten ontwikkelen zonder de eenheid prijs te geven, ook al kon die eenheid niet dan federatief gevonden worden."¹⁶

Or more clearly expressed in his *Encyclopaedia* we read, "Juist met het oog hierop nu ligt voor ons het uitgangspunt voor deze periode in de ontluiking der pluriformiteit. Niet,

alsof hetzij Luther, hetzij Calvin zulk een pluriformiteit bedoeld hadden. Hier is in de verste verte geen sprake van. Zoo te Wittenberg als the Geneve leefde men jarenlang nog in he onwankelbaar besef, dat de belijdenis, die men zelf beleed, een absoluut en exclusief karakter droeg.”¹⁷ Or again, “Zoo diep was dan ook dit eenheidsbegrip in de toenmalige voorstelling ingedrongen, dat men, terwijl de pluriformiteit er reeds *de facto* was, en haar werking deed gevoelen, nochtans voort ging te redeneeren en te handelen, alsof er nooit anders dan van eene, uniforme Kerk sprake kon zijn.”¹⁸ “Deze pluriformiteit der Kerken leidde dan ook ongemerkt en van zelf tot de erkenenis, dat er, behalve de Armenische, de Koptische en andere kerken in het verre Oosten, met name vier grandtypen van kerkformatie openbaar werden; an wel ten eerste als vrucht der Reformatie de Luthersche en de Gereformeerde, en daarnaast de Grieksche en de Roomsche. Vier hoofdgroepen, die elk een eigen kerkelijk karakter vertoonen, een eigen streven openbaren, een eigen vorm aannemen, en als zoodanig ook een eigen theologische richting vertegenwoordigen. In het dogma van de *ecclesia visibilis* als openbaring der *ecclesia invisibilis* werd, zonder dat men het aanstonds merkte, deze pluriformiteit confessioneel geijkt. Zoolang toch de Roomsche-pauselijke eenheidswaan standhield, was het volkomen natuurlijk, dat men de zichtbare Kerk met de onzichtbare identificeerde. Waar slechts eene openbaring van het wezen is, moge men nog van een graduëel verschil gewagen, dat aan het adaequate der openbaring in den weg staat, maar door de scheiding tusschen clerus en laici was Rome ook deze bedenking te boven gekomen.”¹⁹ “Wat men zag, kon van toen af niet meer *de Kerk*, niet meer het *sooma tou Christou* zijn, en vandaar de noodzakelijkheid, waarmee tegelijk met de pluriformiteit der Kerkformatie, het dogma van de *ecclesia visibilis* als *niet* adaequaat aan de *ecclesia invisibilis*, of van het *corpus mysticum Christi*, opkwam.”²⁰ “Zoo werd de Theologie vrij, niet in dien zin, alsof ze ooi los van haar object en haar principium kon worden, maar zoo dat elk der kerkformatien van haar de vindiceering van haar streven verwachtte, en dus van dit ogenblik af ook met haar critiek te rekenen had. Want wel sprak het van zelf, dat de pluriformiteit der Kerkformatien, als uit verschil van geestelijken aanleg en geestelijke sfeer voortgevloeid, haar veelvormig stempel ook op de Theologie afdruckte, maar de Theologie als zoodanig kon toch nooit het probleem op zij schuiven, hoe deze pluriformiteit zich in harmonie liet brengen met de eenheid van het *sooma tou Christou*.”²¹

Although Bavinck is not very clear on his idea of pluriformity, he seems to agree with Kuyper, for he says, “Verschil van geslacht en leeftijd, van karakter en aanleg, van verstand en hart, van gaven en goederen, van plaats en van eeuw komt ook aan de waarheid, die in Christus is, ten goede. Hij neemt ze alle in zijn dienst en siert er zijn kerk mede. Ja, al heeft de gedeeldheid der menschen in volken en talen in de zonde haar aanleiding gehad, zij bevat iets goeds, dat in een gemeente ingedragen en alzoo voor de eeuwigheid be-

waard wordt. Uit vele geslachten en talen en volken en natien vergadert Christus zijne kerk op aarde.”²² Here Bavinck seems to be rather correct, but then goes on to say, “Indien wij daarom meer naar het N.T. spraakgebruik onder kerken de plaatselijke kerken in de gansche Christenheid verstaan, dan zijn er geen ware en geen valse kerken in *volstrekten* zin. Eene kerk is eene vergadering van ware Christgeloovigen op eene bepaalde plaats. Indien ergens geen enkel geloovige meer is, noch actu noch potentia, dan is er ook het woord Gods onbekend, en is er geen kerk meer. En omgekeerd, indien het woord Gods op een bepaalde plaats nog eenigermate bekend is, zal het zekerlijk zijn werking doen en is er eene kerk van Christus, hoe onzuiver en vermengd dan ook.”²³

Heyns acknowledges the diversity due to races when he says, “The chief cause of various churches within a denomination is geographical obstacles.

“As to the division in many special Churches or denominations, here the chief cause is undoubtedly sin . . .

“There are, however, circumstances that have to be taken into account as having contributed to this division in no small degree. We are strongly influenced by nationality, language and history . . . Where there is difference in these respects separate existence as a Church is preferable to a unity which would be more mechanical and external than real, and would endanger peace and concord in Church life.”²⁴ But in another place he says, “If we apply the test of these marks (the marks of the true church) we will find that there are true and false Churches, that among the first there is a difference as to the degree of purity, and that none is without defect. It does not follow, therefore, that a Church is to be rejected as soon as it shows faults and shortcomings in respect to one or more of these marks, for in that case we would have to reject them all.”²⁵

Berkhof agrees very much with Kuyper and Bavinck on this point. Says he, “In view of the present divisions of the Church, it is quite natural that the question should arise, whether these do not militate against the doctrine of the unity of the visible Church. In answer to this it may be said that some divisions, such as those caused by differences of locality or of language, are perfectly compatible with the unity of the Church; but that others, such as those which originate in doctrinal perversions or sacramental abuses, do really impair that unity. The former result from the providential guidance of God, but the latter are due to the influence of sin: to the darkening of the understanding, the power of error, or the stubbornness of man; and therefore the church will have to strive for the ideal of overcoming these. The question may still arise, whether the one invisible church ought not to find expression in a single organization. It can hardly be said that the Word of God explicitly requires this, and history has shown this to be infeasible and also of questionable worth.

"Moreover, the multiformity of Churches, so characteristic of Protestantism, in so far as it resulted from the providential guidance of God and in a legitimate way, arose in the most natural manner, and is quite in harmony with the law of differentiation, according to which an organism in its development evolves from the homogenous to the heterogeneous. It is quite possible that the inherent riches of the organism of the Church find better and fuller expression in the present variety of Churches than they would in a single external organization. This does not mean, of course, that the Church should not strive for a greater measure of external unity. The ideal should always be to give the most adequate expression to the unity of the Church."²⁶ In connection with his discussion of the catholicity of the Church, Berkhof raises some interesting questions: Does it condemn denominationalism? Is one denomination the true Church, and the other false? Are Churches more or less pure? At what point does a local Church or denomination cease to be an integral part of the one visible Church? (We may note here that the visible Church also includes only the elect; and therefore it is not a question of whether a certain denomination is part of the visible Church.) Is a single external institution or organization essential to the unity of the visible Church, or not? But rather true to form, Berkhof refuses to answer any of these questions.

These writers seem to hold to the following points on this subject: 1) There is no absolutely true Church in the sense that any one denomination is completely pure as regards the signs or marks of the true Church. 2) In the same sense there is no absolutely false Church in the sense that these marks are completely lacking. Therefore every denomination is in a measure a manifestation of the true body of Christ. 3) It also seems to be the view of Kuyper that not only is each denomination the manifestation in its own way of the body of Christ, but also that each denomination complements the others. What one may lack, the other emphasizes, and what one may emphasize to its own detriment, the other strikes the balance by not as much emphasis on that particular point. Then it can be said what Berkhof says, "It is quite possible that the inherent riches of the organism of the Church find better and fuller expression in the present variety of Churches than they would in a single external organization."²⁷

Yet this view is as pernicious as it is false. The following objections can be raised against this position.

1) It is not the Scriptural idea of multiformity, for these views seek the multiformity of the Church in the various denominations in this world.

2) It negates the seriousness of false doctrine. False doctrine is the work of the devil, has its source in hell, and is certainly as such a manifestation of the false Church. Because this is true, false doctrine cannot be tolerated in the denomination that professes to be a manifestation of the true Church. This view would certainly minimize the danger

of heresy in the Church. And a Church which does not root false doctrine out of its midst soon becomes the false Church.

3) It denies the fact that the true Church is pure in doctrine. This is an important point to maintain. It is true, of course, that the Church on earth is not pure as to walk. And it is also true that the Church on earth is not completely infallible so that there is never any question as to what the truth of God's Word is, or so that the minister on the pulpit never utters anything but infallible truth. Yet it is important that we understand that as far as the doctrine of the Church is concerned, as the Spirit has guided the Church into the truth of God's Word, that it is highly probable, and mostly the case that there is a denomination which denominationally confesses nothing but truth as it has been developed up to that point. That means that there is nothing false in its confession; that means that there is nothing lacking of the truth of God's Word as it has been taken from the Scriptures up to that point: that does not mean that there is nothing any more in God's Word to discover, but it does mean that what has been discovered is held to by a certain Church. There is upon earth a Church or denomination that preaches the pure Word of God in the pulpit on Sunday, in the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Church discipline.

That denomination may become impure through heresy which arises within it, but the faithful then come out of the corrupted denomination and form a new Church that is again pure.

It is interesting to note that the view discussed above was not the view of John Calvin. We read in his *Institutes*, "In the next place, that the ministry itself is not so far vitiated by smaller errors, as to be considered on that account less legitimate. It has further been shown, that the errors which are entitled to this forgiveness are those by which the grand doctrine of religion is not injured, which do not suppress the points in which all believers ought to agree as articles of faith, and which, in regard to the sacraments, neither abolish nor subvert the legitimate institution of their author. But as soon as falsehood has made a breach in the fundamentals of religion, and the system of necessary doctrine is subverted, and the use of the sacrament fails, the certain consequence is the ruin of the Church, as there is an end of a man's life when his throat is cut, or his heart is mortally wounded."²⁸

There is on the other hand the view held to by the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands that one particular denomination can be called the true Church, while all other denominations are the false Church. Neither is this view correct for it goes contrary to our own experience, and also it confuses the denomination on this earth with the true Church as it is revealed in time.

How then is multiformity revealed in time? In answer to this question first of all we would say that the same multiformity that will exist in the Church in heaven comes to manifestation in the sphere of the Church in time. But there

are differences — differences because there is yet sin in the Church which obscures the spiritual multiformity of the body of Christ; differences because of the hypocrites within the Church who are not in reality members of it; differences that stem from the physical nature of the members, e.g., the babies of the Church, and the old people of the Church who cannot manifest the multiformity as they will in heaven. Yet it is evident now in this world in part.

What then about the question of the relationship between the true Church and the various denominations in this world? We would answer first of all that it has nothing to do with the question of the Church's multiformity, but only comes up because there are those that confuse the two.

Nevertheless we must say a word about it. The relationship to my mind is as follows. The manifestation of the body of Christ in this world cannot be compared to any one denomination, nor yet to all denominations. From the beginning to the end of time it can be compared to a line which runs through the course of history. Perpendicular to this line at any one point in history is the false Church. It can always be found to be running exactly perpendicular to the line of the true Church. However also the false Church can not be limited to one denomination, nor can it be said that it is partially found in all denominations (at least as far as the dogma and creed of a particular denomination is concerned) but may be found in many. That line of the true Church represents the elect as they are called into the Church in time. The false Church represents the apostate Church as they have fallen away from the truth.

Now at almost any time, with few exceptions there can be found upon that line of the true Church one or more denominations. That means that that denomination or those denominations are foursquare upon the confession of the true Church, that the marks which mark the true Church are found in those denominations. However that denomination is wider than the line of the true Church because it also includes hypocrites which become in time or in their generations the false Church. Throughout the world there may be more than one Church upon that line, but each is broader than the line.

There are also various other denominations which are somewhere in between the vertical line of the true Church and the horizontal line of the false Church. These were at one time upon the line but have forsaken the truth and are irrevocably drifting toward the false Church. Also these denominations as to their membership might overlap slightly the true Church, for there may be true children of God in them. But as denominations they are drifting evermore toward the false Church. So also there may be at a point in history a certain denomination that is foursquare upon the line of the false Church, even to the extent that no true believers are found in her any more.

This, to my mind, is the relationship between the manifestation of the body of Christ and the various denominations.

And that, to my mind, is founded upon the truth of Article XIX of the Belgic Confession.

The line of the true Church continues throughout the ages of history, and as the end approaches, the lines between the true and false Church become evermore sharper until they are finally separated before the judgment seat of God.

In how far must we seek the unity of the Church of Christ? The Church on earth is divided. And that division does not stem alone from differences in race and geographical boundaries, but there are differences in creed, in liturgy and in Church government. Negatively we may say that this unity must not be sought in a compromise of the truth. We do not follow the slogan of modern day ecumenicism, "No creed but Christ." Nor do we compromise for the sake of unity. For compromise is only a step in the direction of the false Church. Unity is not achieved, but rather the false Church is the end.

Positively, that means that we seek the unity of the Church also in the midst of this world by constantly remembering that the Church is one regardless of what man may do. And the foundation of the unified Church is the Word of God. For by it God gathers His Church. Therefore in the purity of the preaching from the pulpit, in the administration of the sacraments, and in the exercise of christian discipline we seek unity with those who are like us. That is our calling, that we must do to the utmost of our power, remembering that in reality the Church can never be separated, but that it is and shall remain a unified living organism in Christ.

And because the multiformity of the Church is manifested even in the midst of this present world, it is the calling of every child of God to develop to the utmost the talents which God has given him so that in his own way with his own gifts he may serve God and thus serve the Church of Jesus Christ. As it is expressed in the Catechism in Question and answer 55, "What do you understand by the communion of saints? First, that believers, all and every one, as members of Christ, have part in him and in all his treasures and gifts. Secondly, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts, readily and cheerfully, for the advantage and welfare of other members." And thus in that way the beautiful diversified Church of Jesus Christ with Jesus Christ shall be perfected in heaven that the light of the Father's holiness may be reflected and refracted through the Church to the everlasting glory of God the Father.

H. Hanko

9) Rev. H. Hoeksema, *Abundant Mercy* (Grand Rapids, 1949), p. 72. 10) *Ibid.*, p. 75. 11) Rev. H. Hoeksema, *Dogmatics, Locus de Ecclesia* (Mimeographed notes), pp. 63, 64. 12) Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 375. 13) *Ibid.*, p. 460. 14) *Ibid.*, p. 419. 15) Rev. Hoeksema, *Standard Bearer*, XXIII, (Dec. 1, 1946), p. 119. 16) Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr., *De Gemeene Gratie*, III (Amsterdam, 1904), p. 231. 17) Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr., *Encyclopaedia der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*, III (Kampen, 1909), p. 615. 18) *Ibid.*, p. 616. 19) *Ibid.*, p. 618. 20) *Ibid.*, p. 619. 21) *Ibid.*, p. 620. 22) Dr. H. Bavinck, *Dogmatiek*, IV (Kampen, 1901), p. 51. 23) *Ibid.*, p. 52. 24) W. Heyns, *Manual of Reformed Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, 1926), p. 154. 25) *Ibid.*, p. 153. 26) Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans, 1937), pp. 573, 574. 27) *Ibid.*, p. 574. 28) John Calvin, *Divine Institutes*, translated from the Latin by John Allen (Grand Rapids, 1949), p. 302.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

II.

(I Corinthians 12:1-3)

In our first article we called attention to the salient points of doctrine and admonition, as given by Paul, in these chapters from the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

We need not repeat.

We will now attempt to understand the rather bold and strong statement of Paul in these first three verses of I Corinthians 12. The verses read as follows: "*Now concerning spiritual (gifts), brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed (Anathema), and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord (LORD JESUS), but by the Holy Ghost.*"

Two things we shall attempt to do in the study of these verses. Firstly, we shall try to analyse their import and meaning. And, secondly, we shall try to show the relationship of this introductory teaching of Paul to the entire argument of Paul concerning the spiritual gifts in the church of God.

In studying these verses we shall notice the following elements in the text:

First we notice, that, in verse 1, Paul speaks of "spiritual gifts." The original Greek here employs a form of the substantive noun, which allows also for the translation "spiritual ones" (men). However, we believe that the entire context shows that Paul is here speaking of spiritual *gifts*. Thus it is also uniformly translated in the King James Version, the Holland and the German translations.

Evidently some controversy and difference of opinion had arisen in the congregation of Corinth on this matter of spiritual gifts in the church. And, as always, sin entered in. And the very gifts, which were ordained for the unity of the entire body, became the occasion of strife and schism!

As always, so here too, there was a necessity of instruction on these spiritual matters in the church. It is simply instruction in the *first principles*, the simple A-B-C of the life in God's church. No wonder that Paul says "I would not have you ignorant . . ." A strange ignorance reigned in the church concerning the nature, scope, purpose and the relative importance of the "gifts." As always these "gifts" were made an *end in themselves* instead of being but means toward a more lofty and exalted end! If ignorance in the church were simply a negative quality the situation would not be so acute and serious. People would simply be ignorant and do nothing. But the "ignorance" of which Paul writes in

verse 1 is such that it creates a dangerous and an explosive situation. It is the danger of a little knowledge in us when we think that we know it all!

In such a situation Paul must ask the very arresting question: are all apostles? Do all teach? People then no longer know their God-appointed place. Dangerous ignorance, indeed!

Because of this very practical situation in the congregation Paul writes the very strong "I *will* not have you ignorant." This term "to will" does not emphasize the idea of "plan and counsel," but rather underscores the idea of "decision." And Paul will stand back of this decision and write these three Chapters on this matter. That he inserts the term "brethren" shows the point of contact. This is more than mere mass psychology. It is the new relationship in the church. Paul, while pulling the mote out of the eye of others, does not forget the proper relationship to them in so doing. They are "brethren" in the Lord, by virtue of the birth in Christ. Hence, it underscores Paul's great love in writing to these believers! The love of Christ constrains him. He knows none according to the flesh; he only knows them as brethren in the Lord.

All that Paul from here on says is, therefore, mellow and kind, even when it is as firm as the Rock of Ages!

Firmness and kindness are here truly blended so that we taste the quality of the body which "is tempered together!"

Now Paul proceeds to stir up the remembrance of these Corinthian believers, these "brethren," concerning what they once "were." They are this no longer. They are *spiritual* men and have the mind of Christ. I Cor. 2:14-16. No longer are they simply *natural* men, who have an eye merely for the "psychical" in the church! They can put spiritual things with spiritual. These spiritual things have been made known unto them by the Spirit of God, who searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. I Cor. 2:10. What eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and what hath never entered into the heart of man, the Mystery of God, that had been made known to these Corinthian believers. They come behind in no gift! I Cor. 1:7.

And yet they must be admonished and stirred up in the remembrance of what they were, that they may see, what they have become in Christ, in its proper perspective.

The contrast here drawn between the "past" and the "present" is very sharp and absolute!

In the former they were led unto "dumb idols" and in the latter it is the living God, the God who speaks to us in "JESUS!" In each case they are "led;" the former it is a being led in "slavery" in the latter led in "liberty!" And this contrast must be fully appreciated by the Corinthians. Its implication must be very really acknowledged, shall they see the A*B*C of the purpose of Spiritual Gifts" in the church!

In either case man is not autonomous in his knowledge. He is not a law to himself. He is either led about to dumb idols, *being possessed*, or he is led by the Holy Spirit, *being*

indwelt. The remembrance of the former should serve toward a humble and grateful acknowledgement that a great and mighty power made us free, and the learning what Paul would "give them to understand" is such that no one will lean upon his own *understanding*!

Except these basic truths and realities be confessed by the Corinthians, there is no hope of their ever understanding the lofty design of God in granting these "spiritual" gifts in the church. They will then needs press forward in a madness "with method;" sobriety will go out of the window; simply an exhibition of "gifts," a mad clamor for honor and the first seats in the assemblies — all to no edifying purpose, to the profit of all!

Yes, Gentiles, they were once. They were outside of the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. Simply led about, as often as they were led, to dumb idols. These idols had ears and could not hear. They had mouths and did not speak. They had no word of comfort for those worshipping them. And they had not reproof for those disobeying them. All was without meaning and purpose. They were simply the expression of man's vain imagination, turning the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness (Idol) of four-footed beasts, creeping things and man! And at that time, being possessed by their own lust and the instigation of devils, they were "led about." Really they were led *away*!

Now all is become different, fundamentally!

Wherefore, two factors in the work of God in Christ must be very strongly kept in mind.

The first factor is that it is impossible for the Spirit of God to say anything which is not the truth in Jesus. He cannot say that when He searches out the "deep things of God." However, He also "dwells" in the saints. They are the temple of the Holy Spirit, I Cor. 3:16. The Spirit dwelling in the church is the "Spirit" of *God*! Anyone who is thus *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit, and *impowered to speak* concerning "Jesus" by this same Spirit, will not "say": "ANATHEMA JESUS!" Such speech cannot possibly be forthcoming out of the influence, the enlightenment, love and joy, which the Spirit of God, works in the church as the fruit of grace. For He is the Spirit of *God*! He searches the "deep things" of God. And there is nothing in these "deep things" of God's counsel, and of "JESUS" in this counsel, which makes Jesus "ANATHEMA!" Such speech can only come from those who are led away to dumb idols by the spirit of error, the spirit of devils!

The second factor, which Paul here singles out, is that without the Holy Spirit, there is not one man that *can* say anything good about the name of JESUS! It should be observed that Paul underscores here that no one can say "LORD JESUS," except through the *Holy* Spirit. That he here does not speak of the Spirit of *God*, but of the "Holy"

Spirit is, evidently, due to his insisting, that, we must be "sanctified" in heart and mind and soul and strength, shall we "be able" to say in heartfelt and believing confession: Lord, Jesus!

These two factors must not be confused. In the former it is denied that anything abusive or dishonoring to the Name of "Jesus" ever comes from the lips of one speaking in the Spirit of God. That is true without exception. In the latter we have the categorical statement that no one *can* even say anything about Jesus in positive confession except as being *indwelt* and led by the Spirit, who sanctifies us to be a living temple of God!

About each of these elements we must say just a word.

What does it imply when one says: ANATHEMA JESUS! And why could such not possibly have as its primary author the Spirit of God? "Anathema" is a greek term meaning: a thing set up, a *votive* offering, and thus a thing "devoted to God, without hope of being redeemed; a person doomed to destruction." Thayer. In the Old Testament Scriptures such an "anathema" was connected with what was an "abomination." Trench in his "N. T. Synonyms" has the following note-worthy observation on this term, "In Attic writers it is the technical word by which all such costly offerings as were presented to the gods, and then *suspended* or otherwise exposed to view in their temples . . ." And he continues, "but with the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek a new thought demanded to find utterance. 1. The children of God were "devoted" to Him; God was glorified *in* them. 2. The wicked Canaanites were "devoted" to Him; God was glorified *on* them!"

It is in the latter sense of the term that it is used here in this passage. Such is uniformly its use in the New Testament. It means to devoted to God like the damned in hell. These do not satisfy the justice of God, but God's justice is satisfied *upon* them! Terrible thought! Yet, to say Anathema Jesus, means to deny that God would have Him, on the Cross; that he was delivered for our offences and that he was raised for our justification. Such cannot come from the Spirit of *God*. For God raised him from the dead!

For the same reason no one can say anything good of Him, except in the Holy Spirit, which sanctifies our lips, by the power of the same Jesus, who is not a "votive offering" *upon* whom He is glorified, but *in* whom He is glorified!

Gifts of the Spirit, then? They are such that they must serve this name of "JESUS," that is, Jehovah God, who is yesterday, today and forever the same.

Well may we, therefore, put off the shoes from our feet. For only the God, who dwells in Jesus, does not consume us, while his holiness fills us. In this holiness we have "spiritual gifts!"

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Respect and Obedience

(5)

"And they . . . went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last," John 8:9.

The setting of these words is well known to all of us. Jesus had been troubled by a group of self-righteous Pharisees who tried to make Him speak contrary to Moses and presented to Him a woman who had been caught in the sin of adultery. Jesus answered them in a way which they did not expect. He told them that the one among them who was himself without sin should cast the first stone. Convicted by their own consciences, we read, they went out one by one beginning with the eldest even unto the last.

We are not at present interested in the incident as such.

We quote the verse above because we are interested in that order in which the self-righteous Pharisees dismissed themselves. It was not the youngest that first left the presence of Jesus to go and hide his shame. All waited for the oldest to leave first. Then he who was next to the oldest turned on his heel and went away. The youngest stood his ground — tho inwardly he, too, wanted to flee from the searching eyes of Him Who so clearly read their inmost thoughts — until all the others had gone. Then he took his flight.

It was, we are told, an oriental custom so to behave. Respect was shown by the younger men for the older men.

The world today would say that it was the polite thing to do.

But is this nothing more than politeness? Is there not a certain respect that God demands of the younger for the elder even when these elder people are not the actual authorities over them in the home, in the Church, in the State?

We have, thus far, been speaking about respect for authority and showing respect to those in authority over us for God's sake. In this final article on this subject of respect and obedience we shall consider that respect which is demanded also for those that are not over us in authority and yet are in a position where due respect must be paid to them.

Were the words which we quoted above the only passage in Holy Writ which spoke of such respect of the younger for the elder, we could dismiss the whole thing and consider it nothing more than the precept upon precept and law upon law that the self-righteous Pharisees loved to observe and to dictate to men for the meriting of salvation. That is not the case, however. There are many passages of Scripture that speak in the same vein and present such behaviour as God's command.

In Leviticus 19:32 we find a very interesting law and

ordinance among Israel, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord."

The violation of this principle is recorded in Isaiah 3:5, as a calamity and evidence of God's curse. There we read, "And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one of his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient and the base against the honourable."

The same thing is recorded in Lamentation 5 verse 12: "Princes are hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honoured."

We do not have here simply the recording of breaches of etiquette. Nor are these things written to multiply words. The prophets, apostles and other writers whom God used to record His word did not have so much copy that they had to produce every so many days or in their life time and then simply multiplied words to be sure that they filled enough pages. These things are there for us to read. There is not a superfluous word in the whole Bible. And please note that in the same breath with the words of Leviticus 19:32 which gave Israel command to rise up before the hoary head — the aged man — and to honour the face of the old man, we are told "And fear thy God: I am the Lord."

Nor are these the only passages that speak of respect for those who are older than we are.

We read in Job 32:4, 6, "Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show my opinion."

Was Elihu afraid of these men? Was he, a younger man, afraid of these very old men? Was he afraid of punishment by the State, the authorities for speaking out of turn? Would there be imprisonment or death sentence or a severe monetary fine for such behaviour? No, Elihu knew that verse in Leviticus and knew the fear of the Lord.

We will now go to the New Testament and rather than weary you with many passages quote only the word of God as we find it in I Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one for the other, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." We have that last admonition in this series in mind: "Be courteous."

We are, of course, willing to concede that this word here translated "courteous" and used elsewhere in a different form in Scripture does not have that literal meaning. The word Peter uses means "low-minded." Yet who would deny that a haughty and high-minded spirit never displays courtesy but rudely tramples upon the rights and privileges of the humble and low-minded?

In the light of all these passages of Holy Writ we simply

cannot look with favour on the growing practice of allowing little children to address men and women who are old enough to be their parents, if not even their grandparents, as Mary and Bill and Pete and whatever their names might be instead of Mr. and Mrs. so and so. The relationship between children and their near relatives also is erased and little children no longer speak of Aunt Mary and Uncle Bill. No, it is Mary and Bill. Children rudely butt in when older people are speaking and do not even begin to emulate Elihu's behaviour. And parents encourage their children in these things by doing nothing at all to rebuke and silence them. Instead children are praised for their ability to argue, their fearlessness and "maturity." And then the parents wonder why they have a problem to make their children obey them and will not believe the teacher and the principle that their child can be troublesome — to put it mildly — in the classroom. Oh, no! It is just that the children of other parents are too shy, backward and just plain "weakwilled and cranky."

We firmly believe that in Leviticus 19:32 rising up before the hoary head and honouring the face of the old man stands in such a relationship to that next admonition, "And fear the Lord" that he who does not do the former does not do the latter either. He who shows no respect for the hoary head and for the aged man does not fear God. And we are also firmly convinced that when Peter admonishes us in God's name to "Be low-minded" (courteous in the English translation) he has in mind such respect for each other as was displayed by Elihu and indicated as proper in the other passages which we quoted. Indeed, Peter means more than that. We are to be low-minded in respect to many other things; but he who is disrespectful to the aged is not low-minded but high minded, proud.

Therein, undoubtedly is the error in not rising before the hoary head and in not honouring the old man. If we are going to condemn something as a sinful practice we must be able to show that it is contrary to God's will and is covered by one or more of His commandments. We can show that a thing is wrong by quoting from this or that book of rules on etiquette. But to show that a thing is sinful and is not done in the fear of the Lord we must be able to show that He has condemned it in His law.

No, it is not a respect of persons that demands that children be silent before those older than they. It is not a respect of persons that they show due respect by recognizing them as their uncle or aunt, their grandfather or grandmother as a man or a woman instead of on their own childish level. We want nothing of respect of persons. But it is an act of pride for children to address those who have attained to adulthood by their first names and to call those who stand in a special blood and legal relationship to them as tho this relationship does not exist. It often happens that one must call "Uncle" or "Aunt" one who is as far as years are concerned one's inferior. Yet we believe that the respect must be given in the use of those names nevertheless.

We must bear in mind that it is simply not true that God has made all men equal. All are not equally endowed with talents, with health or even physical beauty. Many are born maimed and deformed. Others are made to stand all alone with minds of exceptional brilliancy and talents that seem almost inhuman. Even socially God does not make all men equal. We understand that the family is the smallest, yet most important, unit of society. But in the home God does not make all equal. Socially, father and mother are in a class wherein their children are not when they are born. And they will never "catch up" with their parents. Beautiful is the passage in I Kings 2:19. King Solomon, in all the majesty, wisdom and honor that God gave to him by making him above all men, shows that in one thing he has not "caught up" with his mother. He "rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her and sat down on his throne." There is something refreshing about reading such things when we live in an age when man is so high-minded, discourteous, rudely brushing aside fellow men and women, to get the biggest advantage for self and children behave themselves proudly against "the ancients."

Relationships which God has established must be kept or we sin against HIM. And we do not walk in His fear when we rush against His established ordinances.

Pride is condemnend not only by the fifth commandment but surely also by the first and the tenth. Failing to obey the authorities is an act of pride. In it man sets himself above the authorities. By so doing he also sets himself above God who placed the authorities over him. And he declares everytime that he disobeys the authorities — in whatever civil law he breaks — that he has *himself* as the "other god" besides Jehovah. But therein is also revealed his coveteousness, his wicked heart that is not satisfied with the place where God has sovereignly been pleased to set him. And then all manner of disobedience will be brought forth.

Let us and our children learn to know that children and adults are not made to be equal by God; that by placing us on this earth before those so recently born, He has made a difference of which His word speaks and that they must, therefore, show respect to those older than they in low-mindedness. Then we will teach them obedience also to the authorities. But a child who does not learn to respect age and superior relationships of blood and legal ties, does not learn obedience before the authorities either. And he does not learn the fear of the Lord.

J.A.H.

Teachers Meeting

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

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 (2).

The principal sees of the East were directly founded by the apostles—with the exception of Constantinople—and had even clearer title to apostolic succession and inheritance than Rome. The Greek church took the lead in theology down to the sixth or seventh century, and the Latin gratefully learned for her. All the oecumenical Councils were held on the soil of the Byzantine empire in or near Constantinople (the church councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon—H.V.), and carried on in the Greek language. The great doctrinal controversies on the holy Trinity and Christology were fought out in the East, yet not without the powerful aid of the more steady and practical West. Athanasius, when an exile from Alexandria, found refuge and support in the bishop of Rome. Jerome, the most learned of the Latin fathers and a friend of Pope Damasus, was a connecting link between the East and the West, and concluded his labors in Bethlehem. Pope Leo I was the theological master-spirit who controlled the council of Chalcedon, and shaped the orthodox formula concerning the two natures in the one person of Christ. Yet this very pope strongly protested against the action of the Council which, in conformity with a canon of the second oecumenical Council, put him on a par with the new bishop of Constantinople.

And here we approach the secret of the ultimate separation and incurable antagonism of the churches. It is due chiefly to three causes. The first cause is the politico-ecclesiastical rivalry of the patriarch of Constantinople backed by the Byzantine empire, and the bishop of Rome in connection with the new German empire. The second cause is the growing centralization and overbearing conduct of the Latin church in and through the papacy. The third cause is the stationary character of the Greek and the progressive character of the Latin church during the middle ages. The Greek church boasts of the imaginary perfection of her creed. She still produced considerable scholars and divines, as Maximus, John of Damascus, Photius, Oecumenius, and Theophylact, but they most confined themselves to the work of epitomizing and systematizing the traditional theology of the Greek fathers, and produced no new ideas, as if all wisdom began and ended with the old oecumenical Councils. She took no interest in the important anthropological and soteriological controversies which agitated the Latin church in the age of

St. Augustin, and she continued to occupy the indefinite position of the first centuries on the doctrines of sin and grace. On the other hand she was much distracted and weakened by barren metaphysical controversies on the abstrusest questions of theology and christology; and these quarrels facilitated the rapid progress of Islam, which conquered the land of the Bible and pressed hard on Constantinople. When the Greek church became stationary, the Latin church began to develop her greatest energy; she became the fruitful mother of new and vigorous nations of the North and West of Europe, produced scholastic and mystic theology and a new order of civilization, built magnificent cathedrals, discovered a new Continent, invented the art of printing, and with the revival of learning prepared the way for a new era in the history of the world. Thus the Latin daughter outgrew the Greek mother, and is numerically twice as strong, without counting the Protestant secession. At the same time the Eastern church still may look forward to a new future among the Slavonic races which she has christianized. What she needs is a revival of the spirit and power of primitive Christianity.

When once the two churches were alienated in spirit and engaged in an unchristian race for supremacy, all the little doctrinal and ritualistic differences which had existed long before, assumed an undue weight, and were branded as heresies and crimes. The bishop of Rome sees in the Patriarch of Constantinople an ecclesiastical upstart who owed his power to political influence, not to apostolic origin. The Eastern patriarchs look upon the Pope as an anti-christian usurper and as the first Protestant. They stigmatize the papal supremacy as "the chief heresy of the latter days, which flourishes now as its predecessor, Arianism, flourished in former days, and which like it, will in like manner be cast down and vanish away."

THE PATRIARCH AND THE POPE. PHOTIUS AND NICOLAS.

The doctrinal difference on the procession of the Holy Spirit will be considered in the chapter on the Theological Controversies. Although it existed before the schism, it assumed a practical importance only in connection with the broader ecclesiastical and political conflict between the patriarch and the pope, between Constantinople and Rome.

The first serious outbreak of this conflict took place after the middle of the ninth century, when Photius and Nicolas, two of the ablest representatives of the rival churches, came into collision. Photius is one of the greatest of patriarchs, as Nicolas is one of the greatest of popes. The former was superior in learning, the latter in statesmanship; while in moral integrity, official pride and obstinacy both were fairly matched, except that the papal ambition towered above the patriarchal dignity. Photius would tolerate no superior, Nicolas no equal; the one stood on the Council of Chalcedon, the other on Pseudo-Isidor.

The contest between them was at first personal. The de-

position of Ignatius as patriarch of Constantinople, for rebuking the immorality of Caesar Bardas, and the election of Photius, then a mere layman, in his place (858), were arbitrary and uncanonical acts which created a temporary schism in the East, and prepared the way for a permanent schism between the East and the West. Nicolas, being appealed to as mediator by both parties (first by Photius), assumed the haughty air of supreme judge on the basis of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, but was at first deceived by his own legates. The controversy was complicated by the Bulgarian quarrel. King Bogoris had been converted to Christianity by missionaries from Constantinople (861), but soon after applied to Rome for teachers, and the pope eagerly seized this opportunity to extend his jurisdiction (866).

Nicolas, in a Roman Synod (863), decided in favor of the innocent Ignatius, and pronounced sentence of deposition against Photius with a threat of excommunication in case of disobedience. Photius, enraged by this conduct and the Bulgarian interference, held a counter-synod, and deposed in turn the successor of St. Peter (867). The Roman Synod, claiming to be the infallible organ of the Holy Spirit, compared Photius with a robber and adulterer for obtruding himself into the see of Constantinople during the lifetime of Ignatius, deprived him of all priestly honors and functions "by the authority of Almighty God. St. Peter and St. Paul, the princes of the apostles, of all saints, of the six (why not seven?) oecumenical councils, as also by the judgment of the Holy Ghost," and threatened him and all his adherents with the anathema and excommunication from the eucharist till the moment of death, "that no one may dare hereafter from the state of the laity to break into the camp of the Lord, as has often been the case in the church of Constantinople." In his famous *Encyclical Letter* of invitation to the Eastern patriarchs, Photius charged the whole Western church with heresy and schism for interfering with the jurisdiction over the Bulgarians, for fasting on Saturday, for abridging the time of Lent by a week, for taking milk-food (milk, cheese, and butter) during the quadragesimal fast, for enforcing clerical celibacy, and despising priests who lived in virtuous matrimony, and, most of all, for corrupting the Nicene Creed by the insertion of the *Filioque* ("and of the Son," — H.V.), and thereby introducing two principles into the Holy Trinity.

This letter clearly indicates all the doctrinal and ritual differences which caused and perpetuated the schism to this day. The subsequent history is only a renewal of the same charges aggravated by the misfortune of the Greek church, and the arrogance and intolerance of old Rome.

Photius fell with the murder of his imperial patron, Michael III. (Sept. 23, 867). He was imprisoned in a convent, and deprived of society, even of books. He bore his misfortune with great dignity, and nearly all the Greek bishops remained faithful to him. Ignatius was restored after ten years of exile by the emperor Basil, the Macedonian (867-886),

and entered into communication with Pope Hadrian II (Dec. 867). He convened a general council in the church of St. Sophia (October 869), which is numbered by the Latins as the *Eighth Oecumenical Council*. The pontifical legates presided and presented a formula of union which every bishop was required to sign before taking part in the proceedings, and which contained an anathema against all heresies, and against Photius and his adherents. But the council was poorly attended (the number of bishops being at first only eighteen). Photius was forced to appear in the fifth session (Oct. 20), but on being questioned he either kept silence, or answered in the words of Christ before Caiaphas and Pilate. In the tenth and last session, attended by the emperor and his sons, and one hundred and two bishops, the decrees of the pope against Photius and in favor of Ignatius were confirmed, and the anathemas against the Monothelites and Iconoclasts renewed. The papal delegates signed "with reservation of the revision of the pope." (The Monothelites owe their origin to an attempt to bridge over the difference between the orthodox position based on the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, which established the doctrine of the two natures united in the one Person of the Son, and the Monophysite principles, which set forth the one nature of Christ. And the Iconoclasts opposed images and image-worship. — H.V.)

But the peace was artificial, and broken up again immediately after the Synod by the Bulgarian question, which involved the political as well as the ecclesiastical power of Constantinople. Ignatius himself was unwilling to surrender that point, and refused to obey when the imperious Pope John VIII commanded, on pain of suspension and excommunication, that he should recall all the Greek bishops and priests from Bulgaria. But death freed him from further controversy.

Photius was restored to the patriarchal see three days after the death of Ignatius, with whom he had been reconciled. He convened a council in November, 879, which lasted till March, 880, and is acknowledged by the Orientals as the *Eighth Oecumenical Council*, but was denounced by the Latins as the *Pseudo-Synodus Photiana*. It was three times as large as the Council of Ignatius, and held with great pomp in St. Sophia under the presidency of Photius. It annulled the Council of 869 as a fraud, it readopted the Nicene Creed with an anathema against the *Filioque*, and all other changes by addition or omission, and it closed with a eulogy on the unrivalled virtues and learning of Photius. To the Greek acts was afterwards added a (pretended) letter of Pope John VIII to Photius, declaring the *Filioque* to be an addition which is rejected by the Church of Rome, and blasphemy which must be abolished calmly and by degrees. The papal legates assented to all, and so deceived their master by false accounts of the surrender of Bulgaria that he thanked the emperor for the service he had done to the Church by this synod.

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. As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called, should comply with the invitation. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life, and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him.

It is rather well-known that the above rendering of this article is far from accurate. The Christian Reformed "Psalter Hymnal" corrects what is perhaps the most serious inaccuracy in its revised translation, which reads as follows:

"As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. For God has most earnestly and truly declared in His Word what is acceptable to Him, namely, that those who are called should come unto Him. He also seriously promises rest of soul and eternal life to all who come to Him and believe."

Even this version, however, is not all that could be desired. And therefore I would like to furnish a thoroughgoing revision of my own, quoting first of all the Latin and Dutch versions of this article, by which I want to support my suggested changes, and pointing out what I consider some rather crucial points in the translation.

The original Latin of this article is as follows:

"Quotquot autem per Evangelium vocantur, serio vocantur. Serio enim et verissime ostendit Deus verbo suo, quid sibi gratum sit, nimirum, ut vocati ad se veniant. Serio etiam omnibus ad se venientibus et credentibus requiem animarum, et vitam æternam promittit."

The Dutch translation, adopted by the Synod of Dordt, is as follows:

"Doch zoo velen als er door het Evangelie geroepen worden, die worden ernstiglijk geroepen. Want God betoont ernstiglijk en waarachtiglijk in Zijn Woord, wat Hem aangenaam is, namelijk, dat de geroepenen tot Hem komen. Hij belooft ook met ernst allen, die tot Hem komen, en gelooven, de rust der zielen en het eeuwige leven."

Here follows my own translation of this paragraph, in which, for the sake of reference, I will italicize the corrections:

As many, *however*, as are called by the Gospel, are *seriously* called. For God has *seriously and most truly shown* in his Word, what is *pleasing* to him, namely, that *the called should come unto him*. He *even* promises *seriously to all those coming to him and believing* rest of soul and eternal life.

The reader may compare for himself the three English translations, and those who are able may also compare them

with the Latin and Dutch versions. Some of the changes suggested above may be rather minor. But there are others which, though they may at first glance seem rather innocuous, are nevertheless in my opinion rather important when we deal with this crucial subject of the calling as it is delineated in our Canons. And therefore I want to call special attention to them and also to their importance. This, I believe, will be of assistance in coming to a proper understanding of the subject at hand.

The crucial points of translation which I wish to note are the following:

1. The conjunction "however." This is *autem* in the Latin, and may be rendered variously. But it is aptly translated "doch" in the Dutch version, while it is simply ignored in both the extant English translations. Now this little term indicates that the fathers were not starting a new line of thought in this article, something that has nothing to do with the preceding. Article 8 does not stand all by itself. It is an integral part of the line of reasoning which begins in Article 7, and which is further developed in Articles 9 and 10 especially. The reader will note that in Article 7 there is a distinction made among men between those to whom the grace of the revelation of the mystery of God's will is communicated and those to whom this grace is not given and in whom the severity of God's judgments is displayed. And it is this statement of Article 7 which, in the minds of the fathers, might give rise to the Arminian charge that in the Reformed view the call of the gospel cannot be seriously meant to all to whom the gospel is preached,—seriously meant, that is, on the part of the God Who sends the gospel. It is the old, old accusation,—one to which in Protestant Reformed circles we have become quite accustomed to hearing even from those who as Reformed brethren are supposed to maintain the same *Canons* with us, but who corrupt them and deny them,—the charge, namely, that if you have a gospel of salvation for sovereignly elected men only, then you must also proclaim that gospel only to the elect, and cannot possibly have a gospel that can be proclaimed to elect and reprobate without distinction. Our Reformed fathers felt the sting of that charge from the Arminians. The Remonstrants accused them that in their view God really mocked men in the proclamation of the gospel, was not serious, tantalized them by dangling before them the precious gift of salvation which was not meant for them and to which they could not attain anyway. Over against this Arminian argument of the impossibility of a serious general gospel call under the Reformed view, the fathers here say: "*However*, as many as are called by the Gospel, are seriously called."

2. Secondly, there is the most glaring inaccuracy of the translation "should comply with the invitation." It is difficult to understand how the translators could ever arrive at such a rendering, except upon the basis that they deliberately attempted to insert their own view into the *Canons* and had themselves already lost the spirit of Dordt. For certainly

the article in the original breathes nothing of an "invitation." Both the Dutch and the Christian Reformed revision of the English render the Latin literally and accurately by "should come unto him." On the other hand, it is rather ironic that the Christian Reformed Churches who in 1924 principally adopted the Arminian view in their infamous First Point of Common Grace should make this revision, and thus eliminate from our creeds any mention of an "invitation." But thus it is. And surely, this same correction is long overdue in our official Protestant Reformed version of the *Canons*.

3. In the third place, we should notice the triple use of the term "seriously." In the accepted English versions the original Latin term, *serio*, is rendered by three different words. In the first instance a negative term is used, "unfeigned." In the second instance the word is translated "earnestly" (the use of the superlative "most," by the way, belongs only with "truly," so that the correct translation is "seriously and most truly.") And in the third instance the word "seriously" is used. Now while it may be true that all three of these translations are not far in meaning from the idea of "seriously," it nevertheless ought to be emphasized that in the original the same term is used throughout; and therefore we prefer to render it uniformly by "seriously." Besides, the term "earnestly" in many minds carries the connotation of an element of eagerness, and ought to be avoided in this connection, lest the idea of "well-meaningly" be introduced. Moreover, we ought to note in this connection that in the second instance the term *seriously* is associated with *verissime*, "most truly." The Dutch has caught the idea of this term in translating it by "waarachtiglijk." This is important, for it shows us what the fathers had in mind by their use of the term "seriously." "Most truly" does not merely mean to emphasize that God has indeed declared in His Word what is pleasing to Him, that it is a *fact* that God has declared this in His Word. But this expression has to do with the veracity, the truthfulness, the trustworthiness of God and of His Word as it comes to men in the gospel. In this way it is related to the term "seriously." Does God reveal Himself according to truth in the gospel proclamation? Does He mean what He says? Is it possible that when one obeys the call of the gospel, he will be disappointed and not receive that which he seeks? Is it possible that those who come will be cast out, and not received by God? That is the question. And the answer is: God has seriously and most truly, or truthfully, shown in His Word what is pleasing to Him, namely, that the called should come unto Him.

4. We should, furthermore, notice in the last sentence of this article the term *etiam*, "even." This last sentence is not merely an additional statement, as the translation "also" or "moreover" would indicate. But it is intended as an emphatic statement of the seriousness of the gospel call, and that too, as that gospel call comes to men, elect and reprobate, without distinction. God not only states what is pleas-

ing to Him, namely, that the called should come to Him. He even seriously promises to all those coming and believing rest of soul and eternal life.

5. Finally, I think it well to maintain in the English translation as much as possible the word order of the original Latin in this last sentence, in order that the connection between the call to come and believe and the promise of rest and life be maintained. Perhaps I can illustrate best the importance of this by giving a translation that slavishly follows the order of the original, as follows: "Seriously even to all those coming to him and believing, rest of soul and life eternal he promises." This is rather clumsy English; but the same sense may be kept by the translation I have given above, and which also agrees with the Dutch rendering. In this connection it is well to keep the emphatic and all-comprehensive "all," *omnibus*, rather than the "as many as" of our accepted version.

These observations should be helpful in coming to an understanding of this article and those which follow it.

A careful study of these articles is necessary for more than one reason. In the first place, I believe that it must be conceded that the fathers of Dordt are not at their best in this and the ninth article. That is not to say that they were not Reformed; they certainly were. But I do not believe that at Dordt the Reformed truth concerning the calling and closely related subjects had reached the zenith of its development. And there is admittedly a lack of clarity here on certain details, even though the main line of the truth is clearly maintained in this article when it is read in its context. What the immediate reason for this lack of clarity and this failure to touch on certain aspects of the subject is, I could not say with certainty. But in studying the various opinions on this subject which were handed in by both the foreign and domestic delegates to the Synod I almost gained the impression that under the circumstances this was the best doctrinal statement that could be made, and that possibly dissension and contention would have arisen if the Synod had attempted to say more. At least I found in many of those opinions statements to which I would not subscribe, and which, to my mind, cannot be made to harmonize with the truth as it is expressed in our *Canons*. In fact, as I studied these opinions. I was at times almost surprised that in our *Canons* we have as strong and as clear a statement as we actually have. Perhaps in a separate article (for we are studying the *Canons*, and not the opinions of the delegates) we could quote some of these statements and examine them. But certainly we must be careful to catch the spirit of Dordt in our explanation of this article. And to do this, we must surely view the article against the background of the Arminian conflict.

In the second place, this article and the ninth are of special interest because they were cited by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 in support of the First

(Continued on page 286)

DECENCY and ORDER

The Church and the State

(Concluded)

The State is the temporal and creaturely institution which originates in creation itself. From the very fact that man was created to rule and given the mandate of God to "Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," stems the State. Adam was both head of the family and head of the earthly State. His dominion extended over all the earth.

Now we may ask what the specific function or calling of the State is? What is its purpose? It is not easy to circumscribe this within a simple definition but we might attempt it by saying that the State is called to maintain the order and righteousness (or righteous order) of God within the earthly domain. She has the authority to enforce God's law and to demand of the creature obedience and subjection. Adam must subdue the earth. He must rule in the earthly creation so as to bring all things into subjection to his Creator.

From this it may be observed, firstly, that the authority of the State is not absolute but derivative. The State is not the highest power; it is power only under God. It is limited in its function by the will of the Creator. It cannot do with all things as it pleases; it may not press all things into the service of the creature man; neither can it reject or oppose God's will with impunity. The State is subject to God. "There is no power but of God." (Rom. 13:1)

In the second place it should be evident that separation in the law of God cannot be made when that law is made applicable to the State. This is sometimes done. We cannot, however, speak of the State's concern about the second table of the law and give it license to ignore and repudiate the first table. The State cannot be concerned with "social relations" (relation of men to each other within the complex order of human society) without being concerned about man's relation to God. Such an arbitrary separation within the law of God is impossible. The law is one and, therefore, inseparable. The second commandment is like unto the first. The love of the neighbor must be rooted in the love of God. Consequently, we may not derogate from the function of the State by referring to its task as limited to mundane things, natural relations, etc. to the total exclusion of spiritual relations. The State has also a spiritual calling by virtue of the fact that it is ordained, instituted and established by God. She is rightly the servant of righteousness.

Thirdly, it may not be overlooked that the fact of sin has also totally perverted the function of the worldly State. Man, in his capacity as king, is a rebel who cannot, will not, cannot will to, and may no longer function as the servant of God's righteousness. He is cast out of God's Paradise. He lost his ability and volition to serve God in the things that are made and his right to do so has been taken from him by virtue of his covenant with the Prince of Darkness. From this the world's problems originate and to complicate matters still more it may be added that as the disordered process of the world's social and cultural development takes place, the problems in that disordered State become increasingly intricate. The Sin-process does not remain dormant, neither is it retarded by a common grace, but it unfolds simultaneously with the social and cultural development of humanity. It is no wonder then that the world today is plagued not only with myriads of problems but with problems of the most prodigious and admittedly insolvable nature.

But there is still more. The world is no longer one. Since Babel it is divided into many states and these in turn stand in a dis-ordered relation to each other. Out of this rises the insatiable lust for power and supremacy; international jealousies and envies; refusals to acknowledge mutual rights; tensions; cold and hot wars; etc. To all of these problems the world has no solution; the State is impotent to remedy them for the very problems are rooted in the very power that holds the world in bondage, viz. SIN! The State may enact and enforce certain legislation and wield a powerful sword whereby she temporarily curbs the dissoluteness of men but all this is a far cry from an actual solution.

All of this must be remembered in considering the relation of church and state. We are not confronted with the question of the proper relation of the church to the ideal state but rather to the state in her present condition under the curse.

* * * *

In that dis-ordered State exists the Church. To define her is not as difficult for we have the clear testimony of the Word. Accordingly, the church may be called the spiritual, mystical body of Jesus Christ, consisting of all the elect of God. She has her origin, not in creation as does the State, but she "has been chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:3) Her origin is in grace, the free and sovereign grace of God. In the world she comes to manifestation through the institute which may be distinguished in the visible and invisible aspects. This institution, with its offices, ministry and sacraments, serves as the medium through which the riches of grace and glory are bestowed upon her members for "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:12) Thus, her principle task and calling is to administer the Word and Sacraments and to exercise that holy disci-

pline of the Word whereby, as much as possible, the purity of the body may be maintained. She is called to fight a holy war, opposing the damnable heresies of men who lie in wait to deceive; she must provide positive instruction in the truth enabling her members to grow in the knowledge of her Lord Jesus Christ; and she must serve as the medium to administer the mercies of Christ, assisting the poor and distressed. Hers is a high spiritual calling.

The Church, in distinction from the State, is not under the power and dominion of sin. Grace is her Lord. She is delivered through Christ from the curse and dominion of sin. This does not mean that sin does not remain in the church. Even as the particular believer is now not yet delivered from the body of this death, even so the church in the world is not yet made perfect. She struggles with sin within her and against the power of sin about her but she does not serve sin. She lives the life of regeneration and thus manifests obedience to God through her Lord Jesus Christ. In all of this there is a vast difference between the church and state even though today this difference is greatly obscured by the fact that much of the so-called church has conformed itself to the state and many states have put on the likeness of a religious face. A common thing it is to hear one speak of the "christian state" as well as of the "worldly church." Naturally the two have much in common.

Finally, it should be remembered that the church's inheritance is heavenly. She recognizes the fact that the present creation has fallen deeply under the curse and that the end thereof is certain destruction. (II Peter 3:10) She lives by faith in the promise of God and sets her hope upon better things, a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness dwells. (Vs. 14) She does not expect utopia here but rather is prepared to endure tribulation for Christ's sake for she knows that in the present evil world she has no abiding place. She watches fervently and pays earnestly, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." (Rev. 22:20)

* * * *

As to the relation of the church and state, therefore, we shall conclude with the following observations:

(1) These two are two separate entities, different in nature and essence, and must therefore be kept distinct. Water and oil are two separate substances. They cannot be mixed. No more can the church and state be unified. Such unity shall be possible only in the Kingdom of Christ, the perfect Theocracy, where the church shall be the redeemed State.

(2) While these two exist together temporarily in the present world, they have a mutual calling with respect to each other. The sovereignty of each in their own sphere must be mutually recognized. The church, therefore, must "honor the king," "submit to every ordinance of man for

the Lord's sake," "be subject to the higher powers," etc. The state may not infringe upon the rights of the church nor interfere with the function of her Divinely imposed duties. Where this mutual recognition is not acknowledged there is bound to be conflict and even bloodshed which, in the present sinful world, is frequently unavoidable.

(3) Since the State is duty bound to require of its subjects obedience to the whole law of God for the maintenance of good order and the preservation of righteousness in her domain, and since the Church, in its earthly institute, is the possessor of property and other material resources, it cannot be avoided that there will be an overlapping of rule and concern in some of these things. This follows because the State, a natural organism, is also given a spiritual calling by virtue of the fact that she stands related to God, and the Church, a spiritual organism, has a material side by virtue of the fact that she is in her present institution earthly. This, however, should not and, if everything was in order in both church and state, would not create disharmony for there would then be mutual respect in the overlapping area.

(4) The disharmony between State and Church rises from the fact that in this sinful world, one or the other or both overstep their rightly appointed boundaries or neglect their Divine calling. Thus, to cite but a couple of examples, we may point to instances where the State attempts to determine what the doctrine and confession of the Church shall be or when the Church, rightly proclaiming the Word of God concerning morality in such relations as marriage, divorce, etc., comes into conflict with a State that is lax and anti-christian in regard to these things. And likewise, we might mention the cases of many "churches" that are guilty of intermeddling in those things that pertain strictly to the domain of the state.

G.V.D.B.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 284)

Point of Common Grace, as follows: ". . . This is evident from the Scriptural passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5 and III, IV, 8 and 9, which deal with the general offer of the Gospel . . ." And without conceding for a moment that the Synod of 1924 cited this article properly, I nevertheless believe that the lack of clarity in this article to an extent gave occasion for its being quoted in support of so Arminian a doctrine as that of the general, well-meant offer of salvation. And of course, the Synod of 1924 is not alone in this field. It is surprising how easily various writers and readers make the "jump" from "seriously" to "well-meaningly." But again, rightly to understand this matter requires that we study this article carefully against the background of the Arminian controversy.

H.C.H

ALL AROUND US

Doctrinal Sensitivity.

We have been reading with some interest the series of articles appearing in the *torch and trumpet* under the main heading "The Pillars of Our Church." This series is presented by different authors evidently to remind especially the members of the Christian Reformed Church of their heritage. The occasion is the centennial year of the existence of these churches as a denomination.

The article appearing in the February issue of this periodical, written by Professor Henry R. Van Til of Calvin College under the above named title, aroused more than usual interest. He not only emphasizes correctly the importance of doctrinal sensitivity, but also with great boldness dares to enumerate and define with evident fear for the future of his church the weaknesses of his church and its leaders with respect to this doctrinal sensitivity. There have been those outside of his church who, looking in, have given critical appraisal of the things they have seen and heard. But to our best knowledge no one in the last three decades within his church has come out in the open with such daring criticism of his church. That the writer was deeply conscious of what he was writing and the repercussions it might have is evident from the following quotation: "I would speak plainly on this important matter; I may not do otherwise. So did Elijah and Amos. The latter was told to begone from the king's private altar. However, the words of Amos we cannot escape even today: 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come' (Amos 6:1)."

We cannot, of course, quote the entire article. Only a brief synopsis can here be given. We would, however, advise those who can obtain a copy to read it. It would be worth your effort.

In his introductory remarks Van Til defines the term "doctrinal sensitivity." He defines "sensitivity" as "spiritual awareness by which one senses danger. It is made up of knowledge of the truth and a tender regard for the Word of the covenant God." Concerning doctrine, he writes "In its most elementary sense 'doctrine' simply means teaching. It may refer to true or false teaching, to the teaching of Christ or of his enemies, the Pharisees, to the teachings of Paul or of demons . . . Secondly, doctrine consists of fact plus its interpretation. Dr. Machen uses the Pauline phrase, 'Christ died for our sins,' to illustrate this.

"That Christ died is a fact of history, but without God's authoritative interpretation we do not know its significance. Some said, 'he died as a blasphemer,' others, 'he died as a deluded fanatic,' still others, 'he died a martyr for his cause.' But Paul preached the gospel that Christ died for our sins.

This is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Accepting it is not a matter of taste but of life and death, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved.

"Furthermore, let us not be duped by modernism which creates a false antithesis between doctrine and life. Without the truth there can be no Christian life; truth is the foundation. The cry of 'No creed but Christ' is but a fundamentalist variant of the modern creed.

"Since doctrine, then, is inevitable, it boils down to the question whether we have the true or false doctrine. This is where doctrinal sensitivity functions. Our hearts must be attuned to the Word of God . . . As we learn to make every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, we become increasingly doctrinally sensitive."

Prof. Van Til develops his article under three main headings. Under the first he shows from Scripture what the Word of God teaches respecting this doctrinal sensitivity. Writes he:

"We find this sensitivity to the truth of God very pronounced as we study the history of revelation. But let us never forget that it is first of all a heart question. Christ said to his disciples, 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself' (John 7:17) . . .

"In the Old Testament God expects his people to be sensitive in distinguishing between the heathen gods and Jehovah . . .

"Furthermore, the Lord expected discernment of his people and he developed their doctrinal sensitivity by warning them against false prophets (Deut. 18:20-22) . . .

"Jehovah also commands his people to educate the children to be doctrinally conscious and alert to false doctrines (Deut. 6:7-9) . . .

"When apostacy did set in God complains through Hosea, 'My people perish for lack of knowledge' . . .

"Furthermore, there are cases in which Jehovah reprimanded his people for lack of doctrinal sensitivity. Jehoshaphat, the godly king of Judah, for example, is told by Jehu the seer, 'Shouldest thou help the wicked, and love them that hate Jehovah?' This man had made an alliance with wicked Ahab and given his son in marriage to Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel . . .

"The New Testament, however, gives us the most striking example in the sudden apostacy of the Galatian believers, *who continued in the apostles' teaching* (Acts 2:42). Jesus himself while here upon earth had given the example of developing doctrinal sensitivity in his disciples, when he warned them against the leaven (doctrines) of the Pharisees and Sadducees . . .

"Luke records the doctrinal sensitivity of the Berean believers who daily searched the Scriptures to see whether the things spoken by Paul were true . . ."

Much more does the author write in this section of his

article referring to those passages of Scripture that exhort to doctrinal purity and warn against doctrinal indifference and false prophets within and without the church who come with seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, and in sheep's clothing. He closes this section with the statement: "True love of God and the brethren reveals itself by a spiritual awareness when the danger of false doctrine threatens the church. It is doctrinally sensitive."

Under the second part of this article Van Til calls attention to doctrinal sensitivity in the life of the church. He introduces this part with the statement: "In the second place, that the church universal as well as our own particular segment of the body of Christ has been peculiarly sensitive to the importance of doctrinal purity is evident from the creeds."

He points out that "the very fact itself that the church expressed itself creedally, that it undertook the arduous task of delineating its doctrines versus heretical opinions of false teachers, indicated its spiritual apprehension and its concern for the truth."

He points up the history respecting the struggle against Arianism, Pelagianism, the false doctrines of the Romish Church, Arminianism, etc., reflected in the Nicene, Athanasian creeds, the protest of the Reformers, the Canons of Dordt. He points to the various forms for ordination of office-bearers and the Formula of Subscription which every office-bearer must sign, in which they are committed to preserve and proclaim sound doctrine and battle against all doctrine repugnant thereto. He reflects on the history of the Secession of 1834, the Doleantie of 1886, and the history connected to the origin of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857. And he closes with the following significant paragraph:

"It is impossible within the limits of this paper to treat this question exhaustively. However, I merely wish to cite what others may call an insufficient reason for our denominational existence, *the concern of our fathers for doctrinal purity*. In this Centennial celebration the question of whether they were right or wrong ought to be of real concern to us. If our fathers were wrong, we have no right to celebrate their folly; or, even worse, their sin of schism. Instead we ought to repent and sue for re-admittance to the Reformed Church of America. On the other hand, if we believe our fathers were right, we ought to disavow the inclusivistic spirit of modernism, which in the name of ecumenicism would join all churches together without regard to doctrinal purity or basic agreement concerning the creeds."

It is under the third heading of his article entitled: "In the Christian Reformed Church of Today" that Prof. Van Til points up the particular weaknesses of his church with respect to doctrinal sensitivity. He first writes in general terms, and then closes his article referring to specific cases that have appeared in the history of his church where this weakness in doctrinal sensitivity were manifested. Writes he:

"I am fully persuaded that our people are losing their

doctrinal sensitivity (*Gereformeerde voelhorens*). So many no longer judge a sermon on the score of its doctrinal soundness first of all, whether it maintains the purity of the faith. But depending on one's education and predilection, the sermon is good when it gives practical advice on everyday living, when it stirs us emotionally, when it has persuasive logic or beautifully turned sentences, and other equally superficial criteria. This same attitude of doctrinal laxity is to be observed in the songs that are sung . . .

"Furthermore, we lack sensitivity on the doctrine of the covenant, which is being broken with impunity in many mixed marriages appearing in our circles.

"Another distressing phenomenon is lack of personal piety among many of our members. Yes, many are 'respectable people' (*brave mensen*) and are counted as leaders in the church, some of them are elders and deacons, others are captains of drives or Centennial chairmen. But it is easy for them to stay home together at the cottage on a Sunday evening, or to drive most of the Lord's Day to or from a week-end of personal pleasure; they have the Sunday papers scattered all over the living room floor, or even listen to the ball game on Sunday afternoon. All these things and many more indicate a lack of sensitivity as to the Lord's Day, sanctification, the offices in the church and the keeping of the covenant . . ."

The writer further points to the loss of doctrinal sensitivity when he refers to the "ease with which many change their church affiliation today . . . and the ease with which we receive members from another church;" and the way elders are chosen to the holy office in the church; and finally, to the fact that "as church we no longer appreciate controversial preaching." In this connection he writes: "We no longer can bear doctrinal debate (ever since the common grace issue we have more and more closed our official papers to debate for fear it would lead to schisms) while militancy in the church militant is often seen as belligerency . . ."

He then points to specific cases: the notorious Wezeman case;" to the case of the writing of a certain minister whose name is not mentioned who wrote a dissertation on Kierkegaard's theology and who now wants Masons to be accepted into the membership of the church; to the fact that the doctrine of the antithesis is being denied by a certain minister; to the Janssen case; and to two or three other cases.

I am sorry there is not enough space to quote his comments on each of these cases. I am sorry, too, that there is no space left to make a few comments of our own. Enough has been quoted, we hope, to encourage the readers to find a copy of his article and read it in its entirety.

A careful perusal of Van Til's article should also have the salutary effect upon us who are Protestant Reformed to be doctrinally sensitive respecting our own heritage.

M.S.