

THE STANDARD

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXIV

NOVEMBER 1, 1957 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 3

MEDITATION

DIVINE LOVE

"And He said, A certain man had two sons:" etc.
Luke 15:11-32

The dreadful silence of that "certain man" has always seemed strange to me. Imagine the scene: a younger son demands of his father the portion of goods that falleth to him while his father is still living. And we read: "And he divided unto them his living." That is all. We would imagine that such a father would storm and rage at the ingrate, or perhaps that he would break down in tears and sighing at the callous exhibition of this unnatural son, but no: he divided unto them his living.

Dreadful silence.

I do not think that it is necessary to prove to you that this "certain man" in the parable is our Covenant Jehovah, neither is it necessary to point out that the two sons are children who are born in the church of God. And it will also be clear that the urge of this younger son to have the portion that falleth to him must mean that he determined to be free of all the ties that bound him in the church of the living God.

Oh, of course, he was brought up in the fear of the Lord; his parents sent him to Christian School and the catechism classes. He also found a place in the family pew on Sunday. From morning till night he heard the glory of the Lord extolled by friend and lover alike. All things in his youth smacked of that glorious name of the Lord. He had a covenant education.

But he was more than sick of it. His impatient question: his callous preparation for that far journey — it all witnesses of his loathing for Father and Father's house with its Bread and to spare — he must have no more of it; he is more than sick of it. Oh! that beautiful far country was beckoning; he heard in his imagination the sweet music of the dance and the timbrel, the carefree atmosphere of the godless world. Heigh-ho! Here I come! Make ready your banquets and your instruments! Here I come! At last I am my own boss.

My father has divided unto us his living. I have lordship over self.

And feverishly he gathers all his belongings together and leaves the house of the father. To a far country. The world and its wickedness.

And heaven is silent. Oh, that dreadful silence of Jehovah in our sinning. I read: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee; and set them in order before thine eyes" (Ps. 50:21).

Yes, God is silent during our sinning, but He does write the things down in His book of remembrance. So also here with this younger son. And they will come home to roost. At least for a while. And the things, the wicked, godless things, shall call forth the bitter tears of repentance.

No, it needs no stretch of the imagination to know that this far country is the world. It is far. Far from God. In the world all their thoughts and words and deeds are that there is no God. They have even murdered God in the imaginations of their wicked hearts. We live every day in this far country. But thanks to God we do not feel at home in it and we do not seek it with the new man, that dwells in us. It is a far country for it is alien to all the virtues of the Father in heaven. There dwelleth no good thing. All that they think and speak and do in that country is absolutely contrary to God's adorable perfections.

And notice that the younger son casts himself in the midst of this godforsaken world to live riotously.

Cruel world!

When he has nothing left they leave him. When a famine comes they offer him who is a Jew to herd the unutterable flesh: swine.

Small wonder. For the prince of that rotten world is the devil. And he is a murderer of men from the beginning. This younger son experiences the program of the devil: love them and leave them. Bring them to desperation and mock in their anguish. Swine for the Jew. Devilish sarcasm!

But, oh, heavenly God, how lovely art Thou!

I see the real author of that famine. It is the lovable Father, who uses this famine to bring that son to himself.

It is the nearness of God which will teach him that the world is cruel and never satisfies.

It is in the days of fasting that he is brought to himself by his Father. It is the Holy Ghost who comes and draws a picture of Father's House in the heart of this son. He is among the souls that are numbered from all eternity and so he cannot stay in that far country. It is time that Father bring him home. And he beholds in the eye of his mind a picture of that glorious church of Jesus. Notice that he hungers for the bread that is cut in Father's House. That bread is the communion of love with Father. That Bread is the heavenly Bread. That bread is Jesus Christ Who is given for the hungry hearts of the chosen children of the Almighty. Glorious event in the life of the younger son. Glorious event, even though he bows down and sheds bitter tears far out in the wilderness of the world. Glorious event for the hungry ones for Father's bread are blessed. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Does not that boy thirst and hunger after righteousness? Do you fail to see that Divine attribute operating in him? Listen to his piteous cry: I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. The hunger for righteousness speaks loudly in this confession. He condemns himself and expresses his longing for the father. And the Father is the righteous One. Longing for God is also longing for His virtues, for God and His virtues are one.

And he arose . . .

When the love of God begins to work in the heart, it forces itself through in the spoken word of confession; and when the heartfelt and true confession is spoken the selfsame love works through in the deed of repentance. Then we return to the Father. Then we forsake the wicked world and the wicked worldlings and all that is within us stretches forth, yearns for the home of the Father, for the Father Himself and His Bread.

But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him . . .

Oh, beloved, Father never lost sight of his son. Great is the love of God, so great that even in all eternity, and that is so long, even then you will never be able to thank Him enough for His great love towards us, His undeserving people. When he was yet a great way off . . . what does it mean? Ah, we are so great bunglers, we know not, we are of yesterday and know nothing. We do not even know how to act properly in our conversion.

Can you not see the scene?

The more he approaches the home of his father the more ashamed he becomes. His feet feel like lead, he walks ever slower, ever slower.

But Father, oh his loving Father, who never ceases to

love him, beholds him afar off and notices his ever slower approach. And then father has compassion on his son, he runs to meet him and does not even give the boy a chance to confess the misdeeds but restores him to the former state by falling on his neck and kissing him, him the ingrate. What adorable picture of the love of God.

Oh, yes, we yearn for our own children, we who are sinners. And also we, when our boy would go wrong, would never cease to love him. We also would run to meet him and kiss him, but . . . God is God. We, in our love for the child of our bosom, we are but a very weak shadow of the tenderly loving God in Christ. Never can a son sin against us as we have sinned against God. Never can we show our love to our own children as God has done to His children in the giving of His own Son on the accursed tree. Unending is the love of God . . .

Harken: . . . Father, I have sinned; Father, I am no more worthy . . .

Ah, what wonderful melody. When once this speech is translated into heavenly language, the very angels sing for joy. Joy with the holy angels over one sinner who repents in dust and ashes. It is the work of the loving Father Who works this repentance in the depth of the regenerated heart.

Noitce also the sweet inconsistency of the erring son who returned: Father, not worthy to be called Thy son . . . but he says: Father! It is the yearning and the groanings of the Holy Spirit Who constrains him to say: Abba, Father. The Spirit of adoption unto sons. Holy wonder of God!

And what is the answer of the Father?

How is this, my son, do you say that no longer you ought to be a son of mine? Here is my answer: Come on, you servants, bring the robe of priority and put it on him! I will judge of your status: you will be in a higher state than ever you were before in this My house.

You say that you are no more worthy? Bring here the ring of worthiness and place it on his finger. He that sees the ring of mine will know that this my son is received once more within my bosom.

A hireling you would be, my son, in this my house? God forbid. Bring hither the shoes as a sign of power and preparation of honorable service as the son in his father's house.

And now, bring forth the fatted calf. We shall have a feast of feasts. Listen, ye seraphim and cherubim; give heed ye hosts of heaven! This my son, was lost and was found again, this my son was dead and is alive again! There shall be joy such as the halls of the heavens have never seen; there shall be music and dancing: make ready the instruments and the banquets, we shall begin to make merriment; it shall be the merriment of the eternal covenant life of the Father.

But, strange, what means that skulking figure in the darkness? Be quiet, he grumbles, he speaks in angry tones: Come hither, ye servant: what means all this merriment?

And the answer: Oh, lord, thy brother has come; thy father has killed the fatted calf, and no wonder for he is safe and sound. And the anger increased. He would not come in.

Then father comes and entreats him.

Oh, horror! What wickedness this older son reveals: He is angry with the work of repentance; he is self-righteous so that he has no eyes for his sins: neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments — the dirty liar. But more, and most grievous of all: he criticizes the father for His love unspeakable in the reception of this son of His bosom. He frowns on the merriment of the heavens. (See Luke 15:1, 2).

But God condemns the selfrighteous son by the words of his own mouth. My son: All that I have is thine. That is your own confession: we have God for a Father. Well this repentant son is mine and therefore thine. But . . . if this is true: *it was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost and is found.*

Terrible condemnation! It was meet, that is, it would follow as a matter of course, that when you are really my son, and his brother, you would join in our merriment of heavenly glee. But you do not and hence you condemn yourself and you are where you belong: outside, skulking in the darkness. In the outer darkness where reigns the anger of the devil against all the merry works of Covenant Jehovah.

Father, we are not worthy to be called Thy sons!

But give us Thy heart of forgiving love.

For we would make merry with Thee.

In heaven, for evermore!

Amen, and Amen.

G.V.

Men's League Meeting

The Eastern League of our Men's Societies will hold their league meeting November 14 at 8 o'clock in our Hudsonville church. Candidate A. Mulder will speak on the "Evils of Modern Evangelism." All men are welcome.

The Board

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Holland Church expresses its sincere sympathy to the family and friends of

MR. HENRY VAN PUTTEN

in his recent home-going. May the Lord comfort the hearts of the bereaved. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4.

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr.
G. Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above
address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

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

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

- Divine Love49
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

- The Standard Bearer and Our Future52
Dr. Daane's Ravings53
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

- The Book of Revelation54
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS —

- The Prophecy of Zechariah58
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

FROM HOLY WRIT —

- Exposition of I orinthians 12-1460
Rev. G. Lubbers

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

- The Church and the Sacraments62
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

- The Canons of Dordrecht64
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

DECENCY AND ORDER —

- Reply to the Rev. MacKay66
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

- Our Creeds and the Mission Mandate68
The Doctrine of the Last Things69
Rev. M. Schipper

CONTRIBUTIONS —

- Letter from the Christian Reformed Church70
Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac70
Rev. G. M. Ophoff
Our Conception of Churches71
Rev. H. H. Kuiper

EDITORIALS

The Standard Bearer and Our Future

(Continued)

The next step in the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches and of our *Standard Bearer* is the deposition from their office of three ministers, the Revs. H. Danhof, G. M. Ophoff and the undersigned. All three were, at the time, ministers in the Christian Reformed Church, and all were deposed together with the majority of their consistories that agreed with them and followed them.

Our deposition would never have been accomplished, I am sure, if the four theological professors had not turned against us. Always we had labored together in the Janssen-case and in the struggle to maintain the truth in the Christian Reformed Churches, but shortly before 1924 they ceased to be our friends for reasons on which I do not wish to elaborate any further seeing that they had nothing to do with the truth. I even feel rather certain that the report of the synodical advisory committee, that proposed the well-known "Three Points" and that asked for our deposition in case we refused to sign them, was largely composed under the influence of professor Berkhof who was added as advisor to that committee. But, as I said, I will say no more about this, to me, unsavory matter.

At the synod of 1924 there were protests against the teaching the Rev. H. Danhof and myself because of their denial of common grace. The result, in brief, was the adoption of the "Three Points" with which we are, no doubt, all acquainted. The first of these points declares that there is a grace of God to the reprobate. It is true that it does not mention reprobation or the reprobate, but this is the evident implication of its formulation, partly, because this is what the Rev. H. Danhof and undersigned had always denied, and partly, because of the formulation of this first point as it was finally adopted by synod. Synod, namely, declared that "apart from the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general." This implies and is meant to imply the reprobate. And this has never been denied by anyone in the Christian Reformed Church.

This is the main point of the three.

The second point stands opposed to our teaching that God never restrains or checks sin but that sin develops organically in the human race. About this, synod declared simply "that there is such a restraint of sin according to the Scriptures and the Confession" and that, too, "in the life of the individual man and in the community." This point is, probably, not as important as the first but is nevertheless, closely related to the latter.

The same is true of the "Third Point." It, too, stands

closely related to the first as well as to the second. It teaches that by the "common grace" of God the natural man can do good. Literally it reads: "Relative to the third point, which is concerned with the question of civil righteousness as performed by the unregenerate, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confessions the unregenerate, though incapable of doing saving good, can do civil good." This is a denial of the total depravity of the natural man. Although it declares that the unregenerate can do no saving or spiritual good such as believing in Christ, he can, nevertheless, perform all sorts of good works in the sight of God.

We, of course, could not accept the "Three Points" for, although the synod of 1924 declared concerning all three of them that they were "according to Scripture and the confessions, in our conviction they were a flagrant contradiction of both.

However, synod did not advise discipline and that, too, in spite of the fact that the committee of pre-advice had plainly mentioned discipline in case we, on the floor of the synod, refused to promise to abide by the three points; and also in spite of the fact that a protest was delivered against the "Three Points" at the same synod that adopted them, which protest was read on the floor of synod and filed without further discussion or action.

We were, therefore, free and could continue to preach and teach as we always did, as far as synod was concerned.

Nevertheless, this was not the end.

The Classes East and West of Grand Rapids took up the matter illegally. I say advisedly that this taking up of the matter by the two classes was illegal because the Synod of 1924 had completely finished the matter and had refused to exercise or even to advise discipline. And, therefore, unless something new was brought up the classis could not discuss the same matter again. Nevertheless, they did. As far as my case in Classis Grand Rapids East is concerned, the classis first decided to demand of my consistory that they demand of me a promise that I abide in my preaching and teaching by the "Three Points" adopted by the Synod of 1924. My consistory answered that the synod had finished the case and that, therefore, the classis had no right to make such a demand to the consistory. Then the classis placed me before the same demand. My reply was clear and concise: that I believed the "Three Points" to be erroneous and that, therefore, I would never sign them, teach them or even keep still about them but would publicly expose their fallacy. The result was that I was deposed, that my consistory was also deposed, and that the largest part by far of the congregation followed my consistory and me.

Classis West followed a little different procedure which was, perhaps, a little more hierarchical, but the final result was the same. And since, in the meantime, the Rev. G. M. Ophoff has cast his lot with us and openly defended our position, he also was deposed.

Such is the origin of our churches.

For two years, until the Synod of 1926 of the Christian Reformed Churches we gathered separately under the name of Protestant Christian Reformed Churches. But after that synod had rejected the protest we had filed against our deposition and threw it in the waste basket, we adopted our present name: Protestant Reformed Churches.

Next time we expect to write, the Lord willing, more specifically about our *Standard Bearer* and its origin.

H.H.

Dr. Daane's Ravings

Thus I would characterize the chief contents of Daane's article in *The Reformed Journal* occurring under the heading: *The State of Theology in the Church*.

And I do so advisedly as I hope to demonstrate.

By ravings I mean irrational talk or writing accompanied with a certain furious attack upon others as well as with a rambling about without going in a definite direction.

This, to my mind characterizes the article of Dr. Daane. This I will prove.

Let me, first of all, quote from p. 7. The quotation is as follows:

"In Reformed theology the sovereignty of God was widely accepted as a central doctrine. While in the broader cultural sense of the term 'Calvinism' sovereignty has meant the Lordship of *Christ*, in the more restricted area of theology proper sovereignty has meant the sovereignty of *God*. Under the claim of the superiority of theocentric over christocentric, sovereignty came to be increasingly interpreted, not in terms of Christ as Lord in whom our election takes place, but in terms of God's sovereignty as expressed in terms of both election and reprobation apart from Christ."

In a note Daane writes:

"This fact alone explodes the myth that Reformed theology is a finely balanced system of truth which gives equal recognition to such equally valid but apparently contradictory truths as divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Did anyone ever suggest that human responsibility be regarded as the central doctrine or the fundamental principle of Calvinism? Did any Reformed theologian produce a system of theology which began with a consideration of man and his responsibility rather than with God and his sovereignty!"

In a second note on the same page, he writes:

"Thus, just as it discusses divine sovereignty before it discusses Christ, Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* discusses predestination, including both election and reprobation, before it discusses the person and work of Christ. Thus its very methodology lends sanction to both H. Hoeksema and C. Van Til's contention that election and reprobation ought to be the point of departure for theology."

Let this be enough for the time being.

Now, to begin with the last paragraph quoted above, it is true that Berkhof treats of predestination in the first *locus*

of Dogmatics, that of theology as do, in fact, all Reformed theologians. This Daane criticizes, that is, he thinks that the person and work of Christ ought to be treated before predestination. This I consider irrational for, logically, predestination is before the person and work of Christ. Christ is not the subject but the object of predestination. The elect, those He came to save, were chosen in Him. Hence, there would be no person and work of Christ except for predestination and the latter must be treated before the former. I challenge Daane to attempt to write a dogmatics according to his own methodology. I assure him that it will be mere ramblings.

In the same paragraph he mentions Van Til and me and declares it is our contention that predestination ought to be the point of departure for theology. Now, Van Til can speak for himself. But as for myself, I consider this some more of Daane's irrational ravings. I say this, in the first place, because he makes this important statement without any proof, without quoting a single paragraph from many of my published works. I say this, secondly, because, even if he would attempt to find proof for my alleged contention, he would fail because it is utterly false: I never wrote anything like it. And, thirdly, I consider this allegation of Daane's irrational because the very opposite is true: in all my writings as well as in my dogmatics in our seminary, my point of departure is not election and reprobation but the living God Himself as He has revealed Himself in His Word. Now let Daane, instead of raving, offer proof to the contrary.

As for the rest of the quotation from his article I claim that it is equally irrational as the one I just criticised. Note:

1. According to Daane, God's sovereignty, in Reformed Dogmatics, is expressed in election and reprobation apart from Christ. This is not true and it is utter nonsense. God's sovereignty implies much more than election and reprobation, also according to Reformed Dogmatics. Again, it is utterly irrational to speak of election and reprobation "apart from Christ." Nor is this done in Reformed Dogmatics. Daane is simply rambling on.

2. Daane calls it a myth that "Reformed theology is a finely balanced system of truth." Because, according to him, divine responsibility and human responsibility are equally valid truths yet no one ever suggested that human responsibility be regarded as the central doctrine or fundamental principle of Calvinism! No Reformed theologian began his system of theology with a consideration of human responsibility rather than with divine sovereignty!

It is a long time ago that I read such utter nonsense, such irrational ravings.

Suppose it be true that the doctrine of God's sovereignty and human responsibility are equally valid in the sense that they are both true, something which no Reformed theologian denies, does it follow from this that they are also equally important? Of course not! Does it follow from this that

(Continued on page 61)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER 13

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

Revelation 6:1-8

It is evident, then, that it was Adam's obedience that connected all the world as a kingdom with its God. As long as Adam would be servant of God in the world, creation was God's kingdom. But the moment Adam rebelled, the world stood in rebellion against the Sovereign of heaven and earth. If Adam, instead of kneeling in the dust as the king-servant before his highest Sovereign, would subject himself to the will of Satan, the kingdom of God would be changed into a kingdom of the prince of darkness. And this is exactly what took place. Not a new kingdom was created. Neither was the essential order that made the world a kingdom changed at all. But the kingdom of the world was subjected to the will of the devil, and became a kingdom of Satan. Adam fell. In his capacity of king of the world he rebelled against his rightful Sovereign, refused obedience to Him, in order to surrender himself and his kingdom to the arch-enemy of God. Man did not cease to be king; even though through sin he became a creature under the curse, nevertheless God preserved man and the human race for the sake of His own covenant and kingdom. And therefore, even in his sinful state man still reveals that originally he stood in royal power. Even though he lost much of his original power and glory, in relation to the world he still rules. Even though he is extremely limited, he still attempts to subdue the earth. Even in his sinful condition he reigns over air and water and brings the power of creation into subjection. And therefore, he did not through sin suddenly lose all of his royal power and position. If that had been the case, the devil would never have been able to realize a kingdom of darkness in the world, as he now does. But what happened was this, that man, the king of creation, delivered himself and his kingdom into the power of Satan, and instead of remaining obedient to the God of his life, he served the devil, became an ally of Satan against God. Not another world was created, but the world as kingdom was delivered to Satan, had become a kingdom of darkness. In this sense the devil was right when he pretended before Jesus that all kingdoms of the world were his.

In the fourth place, we must understand the most significant truth that this entire kingdom, all the world in the most comprehensive sense of the word, is given unto Christ, to be saved by Him, to be put into complete subjection under God once more, and to bring it to its highest possible glory in the kingdom of heaven. Unless we accept this cosmological

view of salvation, we shall never be able to understand Scripture, least of all perhaps the Book of Revelation. We are, alas, accustomed to run in the narrow track of our individual salvation, preferably in the rut of the salvation of our soul. We must be regenerated. We must come to faith in Christ Jesus. We must be sanctified and delivered from sin. We must go to heaven. This is in brief the entire story of our salvation as it lodges in the minds of many of us. Even the redemption of our body often recedes into the background. If only our immortal soul is saved! And no doubt all this is very significant. I do not underestimate the salvation of man. Surely, we must be regenerated. We must come to conscious faith in Christ. We must be justified and sanctified. And we must surely emphasize that here we have no continuing city, but that we seek the city that hath foundations. All this is perfectly true. Nevertheless, it is only part of the truth, and not the whole of it. Neither is it the truth conceived in its proper light. It is not the truth as Scripture presents it, not the truth as we must necessarily conceive of it in order to understand the Book of Revelation. Instead, we must again emphasize the Biblical truth that all the world, that entire kingdom which God originally created and which fell into the power of sin and the devil and lies at present under the curse, will again be restored and even raised to a far higher glory than it originally possessed. We must understand that after all sin and the devil can never do more than serve the realization of the plan of Almighty God to lead His kingdom to glory and to realize His everlasting covenant in Christ Jesus. This is plain from the very fact that the very world is a revelation of the name of God and is created to reveal the glory of that name. If there were nothing more, the conclusion would be fully warranted that the Lord of heaven and earth will lead that world to final glory: for He cannot give His glory to another. But this is also the general teaching of Scripture. God loves the world, John 3:16. Because He loves the world, He sent His Son, that in Him all things might be united. And in the meantime it is all creation that groaneth and travaileth together in pain. And all creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. 8:19-22.

If we understand this situation, we shall be able to grasp why there must necessarily be continual war in this world between God and the devil, between Christ and Antichrist, until the kingdom of God shall have been completed and shall have appeared in perfect glory. There are no two worlds; there is only one. If God and the devil could each have a kingdom, there would be no war. But this is impossible, and this, of course, is certainly not the case. There is but one world-kingdom. But in this historical dispensation there are two powers that fight for dominion over that one kingdom of the world. Or rather, there is one power that fights for that dominion while God, Who never fights, simply rules over all, even over the powers of darkness. On the one

hand, there is the dominion of Satan, who apparently gained the victory in paradise; on the other hand, there is the dominion of Christ, the representative of the Father, to Whom God gave all things, and Who is called to restore the kingdom to God and to bring that kingdom to everlasting glory. Hence, in the world there is a continual war of the devil against Christ and His church for the dominion and possession of all things. This is the war of the ages.

This war of all the ages may be traced from the earliest periods of history. The beginning of it we have in the declaration of war on the part of God in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This putting of enmity is nothing less than the beginning of the awful warfare of the devil and the powers of darkness against Christ and His church and the kingdom of heaven. Man had become friend of the devil, his ally. And God here declares that He will break the alliance. He did so by putting enmity into the heart of man against his very ally, or, if you please, by immediately regenerating Adam and Eve. I think there can be no doubt about the fact that our first parents were both regenerated, and that they were regenerated right on the spot in paradise. Since they were the natural root of the entire human race, the operation of grace should commence right there, and the enmity against Satan be instilled in their hearts. But as soon as they bring forth children, the conflict appears. For God follows the line of election and reprobation in all the history of the world. Before the flood this conflict is evidently of an individual character. We read nothing of kingdom against kingdom, but of the sons of God and the daughters of men, of Cain and Abel, of Lamech and Enoch, till through the amalgamation of the sons of God and the daughters of men the seed of the serpent threatens to exterminate the seed of the woman, and God saves His kingdom through the flood. Soon after the flood we notice a new stage of development. We read of mighty Nimrod and of the attempt to realize a world-kingdom of darkness with the tower of Babel as its center. And when the Lord frustrates the attempt, and separates the human family into nations, the same tendency to realize the ideal of a world-kingdom becomes apparent in individual kingdoms that strive to subdue every other kingdom under them. In the meantime God separates Abraham and his seed, and in them establishes His own kingdom, even presently in national form. Israel becomes the typical kingdom of God in the old dispensation. Hence, after the flood the struggle begins to assume the character of a battle,—not between individuals, but between different kingdoms. On the one hand are the heathen nations with their gods; on the other hand stands Israel with Jehovah as its King. Thus the struggle continues,—first up to the captivity, when it seems as if the kingdom of God suffers disastrous defeat; then, after Israel reappears from captivity, the struggle still con-

tinues up to the first coming of Christ. In the new dispensation the battle again reaches a higher stage of development and assumes a different form. Principally the devil and his powers are already defeated, and Christ through His cross and resurrection has the final victory. Nevertheless, also in the new dispensation the devil still attempts to maintain his own kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of God in the new dispensation breaks the bonds of Israel's national existence, and becomes international; but at the same time it becomes also purely spiritual. Christ has received the kingdom and now gathers His subjects from all parts of the world and out of every nation and tongue and tribe. It is no more a battle between the nations. We must therefore never compare our dispensation with the dispensation of Israel in the Old Testament as if they were principally the same. The battles Israel fought must not for a moment be thought of as similar to the battles of the world in our day. No war can ever be Messianic in the new dispensation. No war today can be called a war for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God fights a spiritual battle, and cannon and sword cannot destroy her enemies. But although the battle is now chiefly spiritual, it is nonetheless very real. Essentially the battle between the children of light and the subjects of the kingdom of darkness is still the same as in the old dispensation. The form has changed; the essential character nevertheless remains the same. On the one hand, there is still the power of darkness, aiming at nothing less than the establishment of his own kingdom and the subjection of the whole world under the devil in all the different spheres of life. And on the other hand, there is the power of grace through Christ, fighting the battle of the kingdom and claiming that all things are God's and His Christ's. Side by side these two powers exist in the same world, developing under the the same outward influences, principally radically different from each other, agreeing in no respect, fighting inch for inch in every sphere of the life of the world. They never meet; they never agree. They are always in conflict, and compromise is impossible. Thus is reality in our own dispensation.

Lastly, we must also understand that these two powers in the world make use of all the outward means and powers and of all the institutions God gives to the world in this entire dispensation. They live in the same world. They enjoy the same rain and sunshine. They receive outwardly the same benefits. They develop along the same lines in the purely formal sense of the word. It is here that our view often becomes obscure. Yet also at this point we must be clear. In this historical dispensation, in which the principles of sin and grace both operate in the world, God created various institutions in order to maintain the possibility of orderly life and development of the human race as far as possible in spite of the fact of sin, and thus to make room, to form a basis in the world, for the establishment and realization of His own kingdom and covenant. All these insti-

tutions are employed as well by the power of darkness and of antichrist for the realization of his own kingdom as they are by the power of the kingdom of light. There is the institution of the state. Government was instituted by God to maintain order in society and to punish the evil-doer, in order that the kingdom of God might have a place and develop. Without this outward check upon the development of sin, the principle of evil would develop prematurely, and life on earth would soon prove impossible. But ever since the attempt at Babel, the same institution of the state is also employed by the power of antichrist to realize his kingdom. And especially in recent times the tendency of history is again in the same direction as was indicated in the attempt to establish the world-power of Babylon. There is even the institution of the church, established in the world for the upbuilding and edification of the saints and for the establishment and extension of the kingdom and covenant of God. But especially in our own time the attempt is made again to employ that institution of the church for the advancement of the kingdom of darkness. There is the institution of society in general,—the home, the school, business and industry, in a word, the entire many-sided development of social life in our day. No doubt all of these institutions must be subservient to the kingdom of Christ and to the realization of God's eternal covenant. But one by one they are also employed by the power of darkness for the establishment and development of the kingdom of antichrist. And if you understand this clearly, you will be able to observe that the battle rages along the whole line. The two powers fight for nothing less ultimately than the possession of the whole world. And in this fight they both make use of all the institutions God has established for this dispensation. Nevertheless, once more: God never fights, God in Christ already has the victory. God simply makes use of the powers of the kingdom of darkness for the realization of His own everlasting decree and for the establishment of His own kingdom.

We are now prepared to discuss the answer to the question: what is the combined effect of these four horses on the history of the world? In this connection, however, and before we point out this effect specifically, we must remember this one truth, that the same causes do not produce the same effect necessarily. Fact is, of course, that the forces represented by these four horses are sent into the world in general, and that they also exert their influence upon that entire world. On the face of it, we might perhaps expect that this would not be the case. We might imagine such an arrangement of things that, since there are two powers in the world that aim at the complete dominion over the whole world, the Lord would separate His people and kingdom already in the present time from the kingdom and people of the devil in such a way that only the latter were affected by the evil forces of history, such as war, famine, death, etc., while only the benevolent influences of His power would be felt by His people. Or, to speak in terms of this particular passage of

Revelation, we might conceive of such a dispensation that the white horse would come into the world and have contact only with the people of God, with those whom He would call out of the world, while the last three horses would affect the evil world only. However, this is evidently not the meaning and is not the situation. On the contrary, all these forces are sent into the world in general, and they affect men without distinction. The white horse, for instance, we explained to stand for the positive progress of the cause of God's kingdom in the world through the influence of the Word and the Spirit. Does this imply now that as this white horse makes its drive through the world it affects the people of God, the elect, alone, and leaves no impression whatever upon the subjects of the kingdom of darkness? Does it mean that this white horse represents a certain secret power in the world, to be noticed and felt exclusively by the people of God? We know better. The influence of this white horse is by no means limited to the elect children of God. You will realize the truth of this statement immediately if only you remember that there is such a thing as an outward Christianity, and that in the external sense of the word we can speak of a Christian world in distinction from the world of heathendom, not as if every individual in this so-called Christian world were actually a child of God and a child of the kingdom of heaven,—for that is not the case. But there is a general influence of the Word and of the Spirit, so that in some way even those that do not belong to God's elect are influenced. Christianity has become the religion of the nations, at least in Europe and in our own country. The Word is preached publicly, not in secret. And there is even a general influence of the Spirit that is not unto repentance. Hence, with regard to the white horse, at least, it must be remarked that its influence is not limited to the citizens of the kingdom, but is much rather general. Still more evident this is in regard to the last three horses. It is very plain that the people of God are not exempt when the evil forces of war, social upheavals, revolution, scarcity and famine, and death are sent into the world. When the red horse makes its drive through the nations, the seed of the woman fights side by side with the seed of the serpent. Also the people of God belong to a certain nation. Also they are subject to authority. Also they must go when the call comes to arms. They, as well as the children of evil, see their sons go to battle. They, as well as the children of darkness, must see their homes destroyed and their fields devastated, and must suffer in general the evil effects of war. The same is true of the black horse. When it appears, the people of God are not exempt from its influence. They live in the same society as the children of evil. And in general it may even be stated that they belong to the poorer class of people. And that the pale horse knows of no distinction, but enters into the homes of righteous and wicked alike is beyond all dispute. Death mows away young and old, rich and poor, from the midst of the godly and of the ungodly. And in respect to Hades it might

indeed be said by the wise man that they all go to one place. Hence, once more: there is no distinction. These four horses have their influence upon all men without discrimination.

On the face of it, this fact might lead us to the conclusion that in this way the kingdom of Christ will never reach its completion. We are inclined to reason that the same causes have the same effect, and that what must be a blessing to the one must also be a blessing to the other, while what is destruction and injurious to the one must be equally harmful to the other. If this were actually the case, nothing could possibly be accomplished by these four riders, except that either both powers in the world are strengthened, or that both are ultimately destroyed.

This, however, will not be the outcome. We may state this from the very start as an established fact. Not both kingdoms, that of Christ and that of Satan, will be perpetuated; but the former will have the complete victory in the end, and the latter will be uprooted. But in order to understand how this is possible, we must learn to see that the same causes do not have the same effect, and that what is beneficial to the one is harmful to the other in the world. As the first rider, the one on the white horse, passes through the world and comes into contact with men in general, he has an entirely different effect upon the children of God than upon the subjects of the devil. To the former he is, of course, a benevolent power, through which they are called to new life and translated from darkness into light. But to the latter he becomes a curse, through which they develop in evil and ripen for the day of judgment. The same two-fold influence proceeds from the last three horses and their riders. They are injurious to the children of evil, but work together for good to those that love God, that are the called according to His purpose. The powers or forces represented by the horses are the same in each case; but the objects upon which they exert their influence are different from each other. The receptivity of the objects is not the same every time. Beautifully this is explained, at least with regard to the causes themselves beneficent, in Hebrews 6:4-8. There we read: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

This is indeed a very powerful passage of Holy Writ.

And many are of the opinion that they may refer to this passage as a clear proof that Scripture teaches the possibility of a falling away from grace. But rather than accept this

view of the text, we must maintain, first of all, that Scripture throughout militates against the falling away from grace and upholds the perseverance of the saints. That there is a falling away from grace is untenable on the basis of the truth of election and reprobation. God knows those that are His from all eternity, and no one shall ever pluck them out of His hands. They are securely sealed by the Spirit of grace, and every one of the one hundred forty-four thousand shall surely be saved. Salvation is of the Lord. And that He should first regenerate a person, in order then to allow him to fall away from grace, is inconceivable. "For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. 8:29, 30. No one shall pluck God's people out of His hands. There is, then, no falling away from grace. And this certainly is not what the author of Hebrews 6:4-8 intends to teach. Yet, we are told that it is possible that a man may once be enlightened, that he may taste the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, yea, that in a sense he becomes partaker of the Holy Spirit of grace. It is possible, therefore, that men come into very close contact with the Word of God and with the blessings of God's kingdom and covenant. Or, to speak in terms of our passage from Revelation, men may sometimes come into very intimate contact with that first rider on the white horse, so that they see the beauty of the kingdom of God and to a certain extent enjoy the outward blessings of that kingdom. Yet, they may fall away so deeply that they become hopelessly lost and that they become the bitterest enemies of the kingdom of God, so that they crucify again the Son of God and put Him to an open shame. Or, if you please, the very same power that makes subjects of the kingdom of Christ also accentuates the enmity in the hearts of its opponents, also makes most bitter enemies of God and of His cause in the world. And the author explains this fact by the illustration of a field. A field is blessed by abundant rain, — a blessing which is, of course, essential to the development of the good seed and the raising of the crops. But under the influence of that same benevolent rain, which in itself is a blessing, the thorn and the thistle also develop. If no rain descended upon the field, the thorn and the thistle could never grow. But the more abundant the outward blessings of rain and sunshine, the more luxuriantly also the thorn and the thistle will grow. Hence, under the same influence of identically the same blessings the good seed sprouts and the grain ripens in the ear, but also the thorn and the thistle prosper. The same fact is true of the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of God. We must remember, therefore, that this white horse and its rider have a two-fold effect as they make their drive through the world of men.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Zechariah

Restoration of the Exiles from Assyria and Egypt

Chapter 10:8-12

8. *I will hiss to them, and gather them, for I have redeemed them, and they shall increase as they did increase (before).* 9. *And I will sow them among the peoples, and in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return.* 10. *And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, and Assyria will I gather them, and to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them, and room shall not be found for them.* 11. *And He passes through the sea, the affliction, and He smites the waves of the sea, and all the depths of the Nile are put to shame, and the pride of Assyria is brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.* 12. *And I will strengthen them in Jehovah, and in his name shall they walk, saith Jehovah.*

8. The pronoun *I* of this and the subsequent verses denotes the triune Jehovah. It denotes therefore also our Lord Jesus Christ seeing that He is the only begotten Son of God according to His divine nature. Christ as the Christ of God is the one who is here speaking through our prophet as His organ. The promises of this section as is the case with all the promises of God are to the church principally the elect. In our prophet's day the chosen people for the most part were scattered among the heathen and thereby cut off from Jerusalem, the holy city, and from Jehovah who dwelt there in His holy temple. And in those heathen lands they were being afflicted by rulers and people alike, styled shepherds and hegoats (verse 3). This was their sad lot because of their transgressions. And is this not by nature the plight of us all, God's chosen ones, because of our imputed and actual sins? In Adam our common father and representative we disobeyed the commandment of life that was given. Like sheep we went astray. Each one of us turned to his own way. By nature therefore we are a flock scattered indeed. For sin scatters. Cut off spiritually from God the overflowing fountain of all good, we wander in a desert land where all the streams run dry — a land infested with enemies oppressing and afflicting God's flock. In their great sorrow and distress, the sheep, the penitent ones, cry unto the Lord (verse 6) and He is entreated of them. *He hisses* to them and gathers them. This is a figurative expression descriptive of the working of Christ from the beginning to the end of the world whereby He irresistibly calls His straying sheep. And by this working He gathers them, which means that being His sheep beloved of the Father they hear His voice and come to Him. And He in no wise casts them out because they are His sheep. And He calls His own sheep by name,

and leads them out. And when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice (John 10:3ff). This mercy He may shew them because *He redeemed them*. Blotting out all their sins by His obedient suffering and death on the cross, He delivered them from the bondage of all their enemies and procured for them the right to be His sheep, the sheep of His pasture. And the ransom was that shed blood of His. And they increase wonderfully in fulfillment of the promise already given to Abraham. I will multiply thee exceedingly, said the Lord to him. I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee (Gen. 17:1ff). They increase as they did before through all the ages of the past from the beginning of the world. And when they have done increasing they will be a multitude that, like the stars, no man will be able to tell (Gen. 15:5).

9. Our prophet's explanation of this amazing increase is that the Lord will sow them among the people, and that in far countries they shall remember Him their Sower. This sowing will be so universal as to its character that there will be no country where they will not be found. There is to this sowing an underlying reason. All the people of the earth, principally the elect, to be sure, are blessed in Christ, and not merely one people and that people the Jews. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. This explains the working of the exalted Christ whereby He poured of His Spirit upon *all* flesh when the day of Pentecost was fully come. What it means is that, seeing that Christ had redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us, the blessings of Abraham had now come on the gentiles through Him. Accordingly we have the resurrected Christ mandating His church just before His ascension that, seeing that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, they go therefore, and that going, they make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things that He commanded them, and assuring them that He is with them always even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:19ff). And they went and their going was His sowing them. In that hour the church began to spread over the whole earth so that today God's believing people are found everywhere even in the remotest regions of this earth. Christ sowed them among the peoples. And in far countries they remember Him. They pray with their faces turned now to the Jerusalem which is above. They seek the things which are above where Christ is at the right hand of the throne. And their conversation is in heaven. And they command their children and their household after them. And their children, their spiritual seed, keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. And with their children they live never to die, seeing that Christ in whom they are grafted by a faith that is living and indestructible ever lives to pray for them. So is the church in heaven always increasing, the house of God being built.

10. This verse tells us that Christ is not going to leave His people in those far countries where He has sown them, that in this world they are not going to abide permanently. He is going to bring them back from the land of Egypt, and from Assyria He is going to gather them. The meaning is not that the church is inclosed within the limits of these two countries and that therefore it is from these lands that she will be brought. This cannot even be said of the church of our prophet's day, scattered as she was among all the nations. And today the church is spread over the whole earth, sown among all the peoples. But Egypt had once been for the covenant people the house of a cruel and hard bondage. And when she was still a world-power Assyria had continually made war against Israel. It was by Assyria that the church as represented by the Israel of the ten tribes had been plucked up from the holy land and scattered among the nations. And Assyria in this verse is representative of Babylon, the world-power by which Judah was led into captivity. Egypt and Assyria here are every land and country where the Lord has sown His people. And as the church is spread over the whole earth Egypt and Assyria are the whole world and its kingdom of which the devil is the prince — the world that lies in darkness and for which Christ does not pray. That it can be indicated by Egypt and Assyria of old is because of identity of spirit and attitudes and purposes and strivings which are diabolical. In the world the sown ones have many tribulations as was the case with the covenant people in the Egypt and the Assyria of old. The world would destroy them from the face of the earth as did the Egypt of ancient times. But as Christ has overcome the world these sown ones shall live and return. He has said it. He will bring them back from the land of Egypt and from Assyria will He gather them (10).

And where will He bring them? To the land of Gilead and Lebanon. These names denote in the first instance northern Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, the former home of the exiled ten tribes. In this place the Lord promises to bring these sown ones. But He adds that room will not be found for them. He does not say why. Is it because this section of Canaan will largely be occupied by strangers? But the Lord can expell these strangers, if only He wills. So the reason for this lack of room will have to be that these sowed ones in those far off countries will form a multitude too vast. For such throngs there is room only in a land the size of the earth. And northern Canaan is but a small country. Are then the bulk of these sown ones doomed to permanent exile in Egypt and in Assyria. That would be a sad tiding indeed. And therefore it cannot be that what the Lord in the final instance is here promising these sown ones in far off countries is that He will bring them back again to the earthly Canaan. Surely our prophet in these verses is occupied also with the working of the incarnate Son of God. His thoughts are also with the church as set with Christ in the heavenly and as come to mount Zion, and unto

the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. And in heaven is the conversation of these sown ones. In this place the Lord brings them even now while they lie in the midst of death and complain that what they would they do not and do what they hate. In this place, the heavenly Canaan, He will bring them finally at His coming through their appearing with Christ in glory.

11. The sea in this verse is the Red Sea and the statement, "And the depths of the Nile are put to shame," denotes that the reference is also to the Nile. That the word *sea* stands in opposition to the term *affliction* indicates that the Red Sea and the Nile alike symbolize the afflictions of the church by which she was overwhelmed through Adam's transgression that was imputed unto her and through her own sins. Included is sin itself, and death through sin, physical, spiritual and eternal death, banishment from the presence of God and all the oppressions of the powers of darkness. The verse states that He passed through this sea. The reference is to Christ. Taking all the sins of His people upon him, He entered this sea of affliction in His assumed humanity. And with all the billows of God's wrath passing over Him, His cry was, My father I love thee, which is but another way of saying that as activated by a pure love He bore the burden of God's wrath against the sins of His own and thereby condemned sin in the flesh and deprived every power of darkness of the right to afflict and oppress His people. Then was the judgment of the world. Then was the prince of this world judged. In the imagery of this verse He smote the waves of the sea and the depths of the Nile were put to shame. Its waters divided and He passed through the sea, He with all His people as the captain of their salvation. Dropping the figure, God raised Him up on account of the justification of His people and made the church to sit in heavenly places with Him.

And therefore He will surely bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria and bring them to Gilead and Lebanon. But the way to Gilead and Lebanon still leads through the sea of affliction. And another way there is not. But these sown ones must have no fear. For they walk on dry land in the midst of the sea and the waters are a wall unto them on their right and on their left. Their faith shall not cease. Christ will preserve them. He will lead them through and on to glory. But the pride of pursuing Assyria is brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. They shall be destroyed.

12. But He will strengthen His people in Jehovah. Walking through the fire they are not burned, neither does the flame kindle upon them (Isa. 43:2). And in His name shall they walk — walk as abiding in Him who is all their salvation. And having passed through the sea, they shall walk in His name forever.

G.M.O.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

XIII.

(I Corinthians 14:26-33)

In the foregoing we have taken rather careful notice how Paul establishes the divine truth of the matter, that "tongues" are nothing in the church, when there is no "interpretation." They are then not bonafide evidences of the Holy Spirit, but they are mere gibberish. Shall "tongues" be more than *signs to unbelievers* to the effect that the Word of God is taken from them, the candlestick taken from its place, then surely they must stand in the service of the more sure prophetic Word, as this Word shines more and more unto the perfect day.

Surely "tongues" shall simply "cease" in the church. However, prophecy shall not simply cease but it shall have to be done away by that act of God, which changes our existence so drastically, that we shall no longer behold as in glass darkened, but "face to face!" Then shall we know Him even as we are known.

This relative merit of "tongues" should be understood in both its positive value, and as to what is the ultimate implication of "tongues" when divorced from the prophetic word, spoken in clear and understandable prose. For the "law" has spoken clearly on this matter. The Holy Spirit has spoken clearly to us by Isaiah concerning those who are weaned from the breasts of the clear teaching of the Word of God. To them there is nothing left but to be taught by the lips of those who speak not the Word of God. For prophecy is for believers, but signs are intended in their ultimate design, when divorced from the Word, for unbelievers, who have turned their backs to the Word!

In the verses 26-33 Paul will give a few practical and concrete directives as to how to orderly and properly conduct the services, so that all may tend to edification.

We read in the verses 26-33 the following, "*How is it then, brethren? when you come together, every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. . . . for God is not the (author) of confusion, but of peace.*" (Read entire text from own Bible).

In these words from the pen of Paul we would more particularly notice the following:

1. That Paul here gives some "regulations" concerning the proper conduct and order of worship among the saints at Corinth. They are regulations, rather in detail, as to how

to properly bring these gifts to their own in church, so that all are instructed and all are comforted. (See verse 31). These "regulations" are not purely legal ordinances, but pertain to good order and godliness in the church. They are the opposite of sinful confusion which cannot be a vehicle for edifying the church of Christ in the world.

2. We should further notice concerning these "regulations" (orderliness in the church services) that they are no mere arbitrary practical rulings, a make-shift ruling of Paul to unravel the snag into which the life in church of Corinth had become enmeshed; it was no arbitrary ruling of mere man, a practical rule which would simply "work" in this case in Corinth. This "regulation" is rooted in the very nature of God Himself, and of His works, (ad extra) His outgoing works in the church. Surely this is as it should be. Had not Paul shown from the "law" that it should be evident from the prophetic word in their midst, to those outside, that God was truly in their midst? This is not a small matter. It is a matter of life and death! Nothing may stand in the way of this Word of God; all must be subservient to it.

3. Besides, the very nature of God, the triune God, is such that He is not a God of *confusion*. There is perfect harmony and unity in the ontological Trinity, between the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost in their being the one, only, true and eternal God! That is fundamental to all christian thinking and conduct! It is basic for all "Church Order." For *confusion* in the church is ever and anew rooted in sin, in unbelief. (More of this presently). God, the triune God, is the God of "peace." He is such a God within Himself. There is perfect, essential unity in the Godhead. But there is also perfect ethical unity in God. God is love. Out of the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit — God is ethical perfection. And this "peace" in God is also revealed in this dispensation of grace, and in the economy of salvation! Are not all the gifts (charismata) in the Church worked by God, out of the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit? If all these gifts are wrought (energized) by one and the same Spirit, how can there be confusion in the economy of salvation and in the church of God. "Church Order" is the order of God, the peace of God amongst the saints, the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace. Christ died to make this peace, and to "establish" this order! He did not come to destroy the "law" but to fulfil it! Can a "ruling" anchored in this "harmony" in God even have the semblance of arbitrariness? To ask this question is to answer it — in the church! This "order" belongs to the finished works of Christ.

4. Hence, also in the "order of worship" this "order" and peace," rooted in Christ's "finished" work on the Cross of Calvary must be seen. It is all cut after that one pattern. Also the "Eere-Dienst" must be a revelation of the work of the Triune God. All the stones in the temple must be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets of which

Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone! Wherefore, there must be no inner root of sin, which makes for confusion in the gatherings of the saints and in the administration of the Word. For, according to the Scriptures, "confusion" is ever associated with and rooted in sin. Do we not read in James 3:15-16, "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual (psychical) devilish. *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*" To be sure, such confusion was present also in Corinth. And this inner envying and strife must be rooted out. Does not Paul say, evidently reflecting upon the evil of bringing the "prophecy" in the church of Thessalonica into disrepute, "Quench not the Spirit. Despite not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold that which is good. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" (I Thess. 5:19-22). And does this "appearance of evil" not refer, contextually, to anything which might even "appear" to bring the Word of God in disrepute? How easily the "best gifts" in the church are brought into disrepute due to "envy and strife." Ah, yes, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love . . . I am nothing!

5. It, evidently, requires a great deal of the "meekness of wisdom" to speak with tongues, or, what is more, to prophesy in the congregational worship service. Such *meekness* of wisdom is always pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them making peace. (James 3:17, 18)

6. According to this wisdom from heaven also the "gifts in the Church" must come to their own. In the first place, such is the case with the speaking of tongues. True, there was an abundance of gifts in the church of Corinth. There was "no lack" (I Cor. 1:5-7). It was however, a matter of the proper and orderly use of these gifts. Hence, Paul lays down the rule concerning speaking with tongues: (a) That there should, in one gathering of the church, never be more than two, and at the most three who should speak with tongues. No endless parade of speakers (b) That no one should be allowed to speak when another is speaking. One at a time, please! (c) That no one should ever desire to speak, nor ever speak when there is no one present who can interpret what is said. Safe, enough such a rule. Has anyone the need of using his gift of tongues for himself? Well, let him then speak "to himself" or "to God." In that case the brother edifies himself and God is glorified in his gift of tongues. But please spare the congregation the agonizing confusion of tongues when no one can interpret. That is the rule, rooted in the very nature of God and of His gifts, which Paul lays down. Simple and effective enough! In the second place, as pertaining to prophesying, let all things too be done with a view unto the edification of the church. This means: (a) That no more than two or three even speak at a given worship service. The poor flock would

not be able to assimilate more anyway! A good rule even for preachers to follow in principle; to be concise and to the point! (b) That when a certain individual "prophesies" good heed must be given to what he says: there must be discerning hearing by the other prophets. For the spirit of prophets is subject to prophets. (The elders must give good attention to the orthodoxy of their minister). (c) If the Holy Spirit, while the other is speaking, gives a "revelation" on a certain point, then this man must rise and speak, while the former speaker is silent. Thus the sequence of thought will not be broken, but the message will be more complete and full and comprehensive, and all will be learning and all will be comforted! All can prophesy; but not all can prophesy at the same time.

7. These rules seem so simple that one marvels at the need of them. But let it not be forgotten that often we need to be corrected by the most simple advice, which even children can understand. Let us, therefore, not be high-minded, but rather fear!

In the application of these rules all "speaking with tongues" which were not bonafide would be ruled out. They simply would not be able to be brought into the picture. Paul makes (?) rules her which are so water-tight that the imposter will be shown up. More and more the very "logic" of these simple regulations will force the members in the congregation to walk in meekness of wisdom, and to abstain from "every appearance (form—eidous) of evil" in the preaching of the Word.

Here are beautiful principles for the theory and practice of homiletics, Church Order, as rooted in the finished work of Christ, who has come to banish all confusion of sin, all instability rooted in malice, and to bring eternal peace into our lives. The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places—even in our order of public worship. A goodly heritage is ours!

G.L.

EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 53)

the doctrine of human responsibility can be made the central or basic doctrine of Reformed theology, as Daane suggests? No rational man will subscribe to such nonsense. Does it follow from this that a Reformed theologian or, in fact, any theologian, can begin his theology with a consideration of man and his responsibility? Some system of theology that would be! Let Daane attempt it once. I predict that his system will be just as irrational as his ravings in his article, in the *Reformed Journal*.

I have more on this, especially on his criticism of me to which most of his article is devoted.

But this must wait, D.V., till our next issue.

H.H.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

INNOCENT AND THE PAPACY (1198-1216 A.D.).

The coronation ceremonies were on a splendid scale. But the size of Rome, whose population at this time may not have exceeded thirty-five thousand, must be taken into account when we compare them with the pageants of the ancient city. At the enthronization in St. Peter's, the tiara was used which Constantine is said to have presented to Sylvester, and the words were said, "Take the tiara and know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the ruler of the world, the vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose honor and glory shall endure throughout all eternity." Then followed the procession through the city to the Lateran. The pope sat on a white palfrey and was accompanied by the prefect of the city, the senators and other municipal officials, the nobility, the cardinals, archbishops, and other church dignitaries, the lesser clergy and the popular throng—all amidst the ringing of bells, the chanting of psalms, and the acclamations of the people. Along the route a singular scene was presented at the Ghetto by a group of Jews, the rabbi at their head carrying a roll of the Pentateuch, who bowed low as they saluted their new ruler upon whose favor or frown depended their protection from the populace, yea, their very life. Arrived at the Lateran, the pope threw out handfuls of copper coins among the people with the words, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I the." (what a mockery this surely was! Imagine: the pope of this age repeating the words of the apostle, Peter, that he did not have silver or gold, and that at a time when untold riches were at his disposal. In this respect the successor of the apostle, Peter, surely did not walk in the steps of his predecessor. — H.V.) The silver key of the palace and the golden key of the basilica were then put into his hands, and the senate did him homage. A banquet followed, the pope sitting at a table alone. Upon such pomp and show of worldly power the Apostles, whose lot was poverty, would have looked with wonder, if they had been told that the central figure of it all was the chief personality in the Christian world.

When he ascended the fisherman's throne, Innocent was only thirty-seven years old, the youngest in the line of popes up to that time. Walter von der Vogelweide gave expression to the fear which his youth awakened when he wrote, "Alas! the pope is so young. Help, Lord, thy Christian world." The new pontiff was well formed, medium in stature, temperate in his habits, clear in perception, resolute in will, and fearless in action. He was a born ruler of men, a keen judge of human

nature, demanding unconditional submission to his will, yet considerate in the use of power after submission was once given, — an imperial personality towering high above the contemporary sovereigns in moral force and in magnificent aims of world-wide dominion.

Innocent's Theory of the Papacy.

The pope with whom Innocent is naturally brought into comparison is Hildebrand. They were equally distinguished for moral force, intellectual energy, and proud assertion of prelatic prerogative ("prelatic prerogative" means: special rights or privileges which belong to a prelate, a church dignitary. In this case, of course, the church dignitary is the pope. — H.V.) Innocent was Hildebrand's superior in learning, diplomatic tact, and success of administration, but in creative genius and heroic character he was below his predecessor (hence, what a figure Hildebrand would have been had he enjoyed Innocent's learning. — H.V.). He stands related to his great predecessor as Augustus to Julius. He was heir to the astounding programme of Hildebrand's scheme and enjoyed the fruits of his struggles. Their personal fortunes were widely different. Gregory was driven from Rome and died in exile. To Innocent's good fortune there seemed to be no end, and he closed his pontificate in undisputed possession of authority.

Innocent no sooner ascended the papal chair than he began to give expression to his conception of the papal dignity. Throughout his pontificate he forcibly and clearly expounded it in a tone of mingled official pride and personal humility. At his coronation he preached on the faithful and wise servant. "Ye see," he said, "what manner of servant it is whom the Lord hath set over his people, no other than the vicegerent of Christ, the successor of Peter. He stands in the midst between God and man; below God, above man; less than God, more than man. He judges all and is judged by none. But he, whom the pre-eminence of dignity exalts, is humbled by his vocation as a servant, that so humility may be exalted and pride be cast down; for God is against the high-minded, and to the lowly He shows mercy; and whose exalteth himself shall be abased." (indeed, what a strange mixture of pride and humility! The pope is "less than God and more than man!" Is it not rather true than all comparison between a man (in this case the pope) is absolutely impossible. — H.V.)

Indeed, the papal theocracy was Innocent's all-absorbing idea. He was fully convinced that it was established of God for the good of the Church and the salvation of the world. As God gave to Christ all power in heaven and on earth, so Christ delegated to Peter and his successors the same authority. Not man but God founded the Apostolic see. In his famous letter to the patriarch of Constantinople, Nov. 12, 1199, he gave an elaborate exposition of the commission to Peter. To him alone the command had been given, "Feed my sheep." The pope is the vicar of Christ, yea of God himself. Not only is he intrusted with the dominion of the Church,

but also with the rule of the whole world. Like Melchizedek, he is at once king and priest. All things in heaven and earth and in hell are subject to Christ. So are they also to his vicar. He can depose princes and absolve subjects from the oath of allegiance. He may enforce submission by placing whole nations under the interdict. Peter alone went to Jesus on the water and by so doing he gave illustration of the unique privilege of the papacy to govern the whole earth. For the other disciples stayed in the ship and so to them was given rule only over single provinces. And as the waters were many on which Peter walked, so over the many congregations and nations, which the waters represent, was Peter given authority—yea over all nations whatsoever (*universos populos*). In this letter he also clearly teaches papal infallibility and declares that Peter's successor can never in any way depart from the Catholic faith.

Gregory VII's illustration, likening the priestly estate (*sacerdotium*) to the sun, and the lights, civil estate (*regnum* or *imperium*) to the moon, Innocent amplified and emphasized. Two great lights, Innocent said, were placed by God in the firmament of heaven, and to these correspond the "pontifical authority and the regal authority," the one to rule over souls as the sun rules over the day, the other to rule over the bodies of men as the moon rules over the night. And as the moon gets its light from the sun, and as it is also less than the sun both in quality and in size, and in the effect produced, so the regal power gets its dignity and splendor from the pontifical authority which has in it more inherent virtue. The priest anoints the king, not the king the priest, and superior is he that anoints to the anointed. Princes have authority in separate lands; the pontiff over all lands. The priesthood came by divine creation; the kingly power by man's manipulation and violence. "As in the ark of God," so he wrote to John of England, "the rod and the manna lay beside the tables of the law, so at the side of the knowledge of the law, in the breast of the pope, are lodged the terrible power of destruction and the genial mildness of grace." Innocent reminded John that if he did not lift his foot from off the Church, nothing would check his punishment and fall. Monarchs throughout Europe listened to Innocent's exposition and obeyed. His correspondence abounds with letters to the emperor, the kings of Hungary, Bohemia, Sicily, France, England, the Danes, Aragon, and to other princes, teaching them their duty and demanding their submission.

Under Innocent's rule, the subjection of the entire Christian world to the Roman pontiff seemed to be near realization. But the measures of force which were employed in the Latin conquest of Constantinople, 1204, had the opposite effect from what was intended. The overthrow of the Byzantine empire and the establishment of a Latin empire in its stead and the creation of a new hierarchy of Constantinople only completed the final alienation of the Greek and Latin churches. To Innocent III may not be denied deep concern

in the extension of Christendom. But the rigorous system of the Inquisition which he set on foot begat bitterness and war of churchman against Christian dissenter and of Christian, against Mohammedan. More blood was shed at the hand of the Church during the pontificate of Innocent, and under his immediate successors carrying out his policy, than in any other age except during the papal counter-Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The audacious papal claim to imperialism corrected itself by the policy employed by Innocent and his successors to establish the claim over the souls and bodies of men and the governments of the earth.

Innocent and the German Empire.

The political condition of Europe was favorable to Innocent's assertion of power. With the sudden death of Henry VI, Sept. 28, 1197, at the early age of thirty-two, the German empire was left without a ruler. Frederick, the Emperor's only son, was a helpless child. Throughout Italy was a reaction set in against Henry's hard and oppressive rule. The spirit of national freedom was showing itself, and a general effort was begun to expel the German princes and counts from Italian soil.

Innocent III has been called by Ranke Henry's real successor. Taking advantage of the rising feeling of Italian nationality, the pope made it his policy to separate middle and lower Italy from the empire, and, in fact, he became the deliverer of the peninsula from foreign agents and mercenaries. He began his reign by abolishing the last vestiges of the authority of the empire in the city of Rome. The city prefect, who had represented the emperor, took the oath of allegiance to the pope, and Innocent invested him with a mantle and silver cup. The senator likewise acknowledged Innocent's authority and swore to protect the Roman see and the regalia of St. Peter.

The pope quickly pushed his authority beyond the walls of Rome. Spoleto, which for six centuries had been ruled by a line of German dukes, Assisi, Perugia, and other cities, submitted. Mark of Anweiler, the fierce soldier of Henry VI, could not withstand the fortunate diplomacy and arms of Innocent, and the Romagna, with Ravenna as its centre, yielded. A Tuscan league was formed which was favorably disposed to the papal authority. Florence, Siena, Pisa, and other cities, while refusing to renounce their civic freedom, granted privileges to the pope. Every where Innocent had his legates. Such full exercise of papal power over the State of the Church had not before been known.

To confirm her son Frederick's title to the crown of Sicily, his mother delivered the kingdom over to the pope as a papal fief. She survived her imperial consort only a year, and left a will appointing Innocent the guardian of her child. The intellectual training and political destinies of the heir of the Hohenstaufen were thus intrusted to the hereditary foe of that august house. Innocent was left a free hand to prosecute his trust as he chose.

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 16. But as man by the fall did not cease to be a creature, endowed with understanding and will, nor did sin which pervaded the whole race of mankind, deprive him of the human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death; so also this grace of regeneration does not treat men as senseless stocks and blocks, nor takes away their will and its properties, neither does violence thereto; but spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and at the same time sweetly and powerfully bends it; that were carnal rebellion and resistance formerly prevailed, a ready and sincere spiritual obedience begins to reign; in which the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consist. Wherefore unless the admirable author of every good work wrought in us, man could have no hope of recovering from his fall by his own free will, by the abuse of which, in a state of innocence, he plunged himself into ruin.

There are in this article several errors of translation, some of which are rather important, as a comparison with the Latin and Dutch versions will also reveal. And we can probably do no better than to produce a new translation of the entire article, in order to let the reader discover these errors for himself by making comparison with the above version. Our translation here follows:

But indeed even as through the fall man did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will, and neither did sin, which pervaded the whole human race, deprive him of the nature of humankind, but depraved and spiritually slew him, so also this divine grace of regeneration does not operate in men as in stocks and blocks, neither does it take away the will and its properties, or forcibly compel it against its will, but spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, powerfully and at the same time pleasantly turns it: so that where before the rebellion and opposition of the flesh had full dominion, now a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to reign, — in which the true and spiritual renewal and liberty of our will consists. And unless that admirable Artificer of every good deals in this wise with us, there is no hope that man should arise out of the fall through a free will, through which, when he stood, he plunged himself into ruin.

It is rather important again to view this article in its proper setting and to understand exactly why the fathers

added a statement of this kind to their description of the work of man's conversion. This is especially true because the very question that is treated in this article still arises frequently in our own day, and the well-known phrase "stocks and blocks" is rather often heard and used. Hence, we do well, first of all, to ask whether the fathers are in this article warning against the views of certain passivists, who had a warped view of the operation of God's sovereign grace in the work of man's conversion, or whether they are defending the Reformed truth against another of the false charges of the Arminians.

There are some who seem to hold the former view, namely, that the fathers are here warning against a misuse of the truth of God's sovereign grace in the efficacious calling and against drawing a false and passivistic conclusion from that truth. Thus, for example, the Rev. T. Bos writes in his commentary on this article: "Er zijn, die met het menschelijke in den mensch niet gerekend willen hebben. De mensch, die geestelijk dood is, is bij hen gelijk onbezielde stof: 'een stok en een blok.' Wij hebben wel eens gehoord, dat zij tot voorbeeld een molen of een wagen nemen. Een molen blijft stilstaan totdat de wind in de wieken waait; dan begint hij te draaien. Of een wagen blijft op zijne plaats totdat de paarden dien voorttrekken." Although he does not explicitly say this, the above author seems to feel that the fathers in this sixteenth article have in mind these people "who do not want to reckon with the human in man." The same idea appears in the commentary of the Rev. J. G. Feenstra on this article: "Velen menen, dat de mensch na de zonde geworden is als een stok en een blok. Dat is geheel onjuist. Daarmee wil men dan illustreren, hoe onmachtig de mens geworden is. De mens is zo machteloos, zeggen zij, dat hij zich niet eens bewegen kan. Maar dit is een grove dwaling. Want door dit beeld te gebruiken wordt de verantwoordelijkheid van de mens geheel weggenomen en opgeheven De valse mystiek leert, dat de zondaar als een stok of een blok is, die zelf lijdelijk is en geen voet verzet. Zij maken misbruik van de vrijmacht Gods. Zij wachten het rustig af. Zij doen een beroep op hun onmacht en verontschuldigen zich feitelijk, omdat zij maar een stok zijn. Ik kan een stok toch niet kwalijk nemen, als hij niet tot mij komt, evenals hij zich ook niet van mij verwijderen kan. Zij vergeten, dat de zondaar zich verzet en tegenwerkt."

Now we would not deny that there are such false mysticists, who teach a doctrine of passivism, nor that they can be found also in Reformed circles. Moreover, we agree with both the above authors that this sixteenth article of *Canons* III and IV condemns this passivism of these false mystics as being non-Reformed. But we disagree if by these comments about false mysticism they mean to imply that the danger of such passivism was what prompted our fathers to add this paragraph to our *Canons*. And we claim that this is neither realistic nor historically correct. Rather must we turn in another direction to seek the occasion for this article.

We must always remember that our *Canons* are written against the Remonstrants, and that when our fathers set forth the true, Reformed doctrine on various subjects in these *Canons*, they do so over against and in answer to the Arminian errors as well as the false charges of the Arminians against the Reformed doctrine. And here in this sixteenth article they deal exactly with one of those Arminian false charges. Just at the Arminians level against Reformed doctrine the charge, "This doctrine makes men careless and profane," so they like to bring the charge, "This doctrine makes of men stocks and blocks. The Remonstrants brought this charge against our fathers, and forced them to answer it in the *Canons*. And Arminians still in our day bring the same charge. In fact, the sad fact today is that many who claim to be Reformed will bring this charge against those who insist upon the truth of sovereign grace. They try to charge you with passivism and with denying all activity on the part of saved man. And even in our own recent "condition controversy" the whisperings of this same charge were not infrequently heard from the side of those who wanted a "conditional theology." We might almost say that this charge has through repeated use attained the status of a stock phrase, a pet characterization. There is a certain odium about it. One has really gotten his opponent in a corner when he can say, "You make of man a stock and block."

In this connection we also make the remark that it is far more realistic to conceive of this article as being directed against the Arminians. After all, the battle of the Reformed faith, both in the days of our fathers, and also today, has always been not a battle against false mysticism and passivism, but against free-willism. This is simply a fact. We repeat: we would not deny that there have been and still are these false mystics; nor would we deny that the church must do battle against them. But we do deny emphatically that the main battle of the church has ever been one against false mysticism. No, the battle of the truth, — and this was true long before Dordrecht, was true when the Scriptures were written, and always will be true, — has ever been a battle against those who would deny that salvation is absolutely of the Lord, by sovereign grace, and not through, by, or on account of any work of man. This is true today. It was true at the time of the Great Synod. It was true in the time of Calvin and Luther. It was true in the time of Augustine. It was true in the time of the apostle Paul. It has ever been thus. And the battle against those false mystics who claim that man is and remains completely passive in the process of salvation (and that is by no means all false mystics!) we may characterize as a side-skirmish rather than the main battle.

Now what may we say concerning this charge and the proper method of answering it?

First of all, we would suggest that the likelihood is small that when this charge is brought against anyone, it is brought fairly. The likelihood is far greater that the charge is false,

and that this false charge is really a negative evidence of one's doctrinal soundness. It is not impossible that those against whom the charge is brought are guilty of passivism, but it is highly improbable.

Secondly, it is necessary that a careful investigation be made as to whether the charge is true or not. Such an investigation is not difficult. The different doctrines against which this charge is brought are only two in number: the Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace and the false mystic's doctrine of passivism. On that account, therefore, it should not be difficult to distinguish. Besides, the Reformed doctrine of absolutely sovereign grace, against which the charge is falsely brought, and the error of passivism, against which the charge is correctly brought, are easily distinguished. The doctrine that God "by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which though therefore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable, actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions," — this doctrine, I say, can scarcely be mistaken for passivism. The doctrine that maintains, "Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received," — this doctrine is as different from the passivism of the false mystic as day from night. Hence, when one hears the charge, "This doctrine makes of man a stock and a block," he should certainly not be quick to listen.

In the third place, it makes a vast difference from what quarter this blast blows. If the charge comes from those who are known to be Arminian or who show Arminianistic tendencies, one can be almost certain without further investigation that it is a false charge and that it is being brought against one who insists upon the truth of God's sovereign grace in the regeneration and conversion of the sinner. And this much is absolutely certain: there is no danger that the charge will ever be brought against an Arminian.

Hence, in general we may say that if this charge is brought against you from known Arminian quarters, you may take it as evidence that you are Reformed in your doctrine.

H.C.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Adult Bible Class of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin, wishes to express its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Hannah Huizenga and Peter Tamminga, in the loss of their beloved mother.

May the Lord comfort them according to their wants in these days of sorrow.

Adult Bible Class
Randolph, Wisconsin

DECENCY and ORDER

Reply to the Rev. MacKay

We are discussing the position which is defended by Rev. MacKay concerning the matter of church and state. His view is expressed in the third article of the 23rd Chapter of the original Westminster Confession which we quoted in the previous issue. In regard to this we must now add the following:

1. This article is subject to the same criticism which has been cited against our position, namely, that it contains a significant contradiction. It begins by stating that the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven but then it continues to enumerate the duties of the civil magistrate as follows: "*It is his duty to make order that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed.*" What else is this but exercising the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven? (See Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 31). Is it not significantly contradictory, therefore, to say first that the civil magistrate may not assume to himself these duties and then to go on and say that it is his duty to perform them? Possibly it might be objected that the magistrate himself is not to do this but is merely to see to it that the church is faithful in the execution of this duty. To this we would then reply: Firstly, this is not what the Westminster Confession says and, secondly, the church does not receive the mandate to exercise discipline from the state but from Christ. This Confession delegates functions and authority to the civil rulers that properly belongs to the office bearers of the church. In so far we cannot agree with this position.

2. MacKay cites several examples from Scripture on the basis of which he claims to find support for the position that civil rulers are called to function in the calling of Synods and supporting, promoting and defending the true religion. He refers especially to the God-fearing kings of Judah, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. The whole argument here confuses the *ideal church state relation* as it is realized exclusively in the Kingdom of Christ and as it was typified in the Old Testament theocracy with the *practical church state relation* as it exists in the present world of sin. Would we dare to say that the position held by Hezekiah as king of Judah, God's chosen people, is equivalent to, let us say, the position of the President of the United States, the chief executive of a mixed conglomeration of people that vary from avowed atheists to true children of God? We agree with MacKay that *ideally* the civil ruler use his God-given authority to bring all things within the state into conformity with the true religion and

that this religion be upheld, defended and maintained. But the matter is not as simple as all that. It is one thing to speak of the *duty* of the magistrate and another thing to speak of his *capability to execute that duty*. MacKay's position presupposes that the rulers of the nations are men of Hezekiah's caliber who are capable of enacting such reformation. This is not the case and MacKay may say, "Mr. Vanden Berg is very pessimistic for he thinks that there is no possibility of the two powers—both of which are ordained of God—not continually fighting each other" but I would point out that this is not pessimism but reality. What is true with respect to the church—that she is the recipient of Divine grace, delivered from the bondage of sin and made through the same grace a willing servant of Christ Jesus—is not true of the State. Rather, as in David's time, so today, "The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed" (Psalm 2). That's reality. The church is no longer a national church as in the Old Dispensation but is dispersed and gathered from all nations of the world whose kings are hostile to her. I could not say that those kings have *the authority to keep pure and entire the truth of God in the church, etc.* I have no objection to MacKay's assertion that the rulers of the state have a calling before God but I disagree with his position in the *definition of that calling!*

This matter is significant. Permit us to reflect a bit further upon it. We do well to remember the factual effects of sin upon man also in his capacity of civil ruler. Man, originally created good and upright was endowed with a *Must* (obligation), a *May* (right), a *Can* (ability) and a *Will* (volition) to love and to serve God in harmony with his will as prophet, priest and king. Sin's entrance into the world effected this relationship so that the ethical right, the natural ability and the free volition to serve God no longer exists. Only the obligation remains for God does not change in His demands. Now, with respect to man in his capacity of civil ruler, the same is true. Man has lost his ability and will to bring the affairs of the civil state into compliance with the law of God. He has even lost the ethical right to do so since as king of the earthly creation he has allied himself with the Prince of darkness and rebelled against God, surrendering his kingdom to the devil. Hence, when tempted by the devil, the Lord did not dispute the claim of Satan that "all these kingdoms were his." Actually, of course this was not so. All things belong the Christ by whom and for whom they were made but from the ethical point of view, it may be conceded that the kingdoms of this world belong to the Prince of Darkness whom they serve. But here also the Divine obligation imposed upon man in his capacity of civil ruler is not abrogated but remains, God holds man responsible in spite of the fact that he is unable and unwilling to perform his rightful duties in the sphere of the state. Upon him the wrath of God abides that ultimately results in the destruction and ruin of all the nations of the world. (Daniel 2:44)

Now the position of MacKay advocates is that this civil magistrate takes to himself the authority to keep pure and entire the truth of God in the church, to suppress all blasphemies and heresies, to prevent or reform all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline. That is like saying that a drunkard is to enforce the laws of prohibition. I maintained that this is a practical impossibility in this world and that where the state attempts this an inevitable conflict will ensue. The true worship of God against which the kings of the earth have set themselves will not be protected but persecuted, heretics will not be punished but honored, corruptions and abuses will not be prevented but promoted even as they are within the sphere of the state. Nor is it the task of the state to do all this but it is rather a more correct circumscription of the duty and authority of the ruling elder in the church whom God has appointed as overseer of His house.

Hence, the fathers went too far in ascribing these duties to the heads of the state; duties which can be true only where church and state are a unity (one) as will be the case in the perfect Kingdom of Christ and as was the case in the typical theocracy. The church and state as they now exist are two separate entities and it is wrong to delegate the functions of either one to the officers of the other.

3. In the third place, the position which Rev. MacKay defends is tantamount to State domination over the church even though Rev. MacKay will likely not be ready to admit this. Nevertheless, notice that the functions of the preaching of the Word, administering the sacraments and exercising the keys of the Kingdom belong to the church and these, according to the article, the civil magistrate may not assume to himself. However, who is to determine what the truth of the Word is, what heretics are to be suppressed, what abuses and corruptions to be eradicated? These functions belong to the civil magistrate. If he considers your preaching or the doctrine of your church to be the heretical, he has the authority to suppress them. He may even convoke a Synod and be present there to provide that whatsoever is transacted there be in accordance with the mind of God. Would it not logically follow that the civil magistrate himself then also determines whether those transactions of the Synod are according to the mind of God? Thus the Synod and all the functions of the church are brought under subjection to the civil powers and this is certainly not in harmony with the Word of God. But then, perhaps MacKay will not accept these conclusions only then let him explain these difficulties in this position.

Now let us go back to consider the footnote of Art. 36 of the Netherlands Confession which MacKay criticizes for being inconsistent and contradictory. His objection is that this decision repudiates the Established Church idea and advocates the principle of church and state separation while at the same time insists that the state has a divine duty towards the first table of the law of God within its own sphere. This he terms contradictory. Concerning this we must note as to our position:

1. The entire decision should make clear to Rev. MacKay that the Synod in speaking of *separation of church and state* did not have in mind the Baptist construction which was also in the minds of the Deistic framers of the U.S. Constitution. It may be admitted that if the phrase is so construed, the decision contains an inexplicable contradiction. But this not necessarily the case. According to the framers of the U. S. Constitution the state is to be religiously neutral (religiously atheistic, physically separate) and leave all matters pertaining to God and religion to the church. This is plainly not the idea or meaning of the decision of 1910 which states: "*That both State and Church as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties appointed them from on high, and therefore have a very sacred reciprocal obligation to meet through the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from Father and Son.*" Absolute separation is not taught, Rather this separation must be construed in the sense that church and state are distinct institutions, distinct entities, distinct in nature, scope and operation. With respect to both of them the principle expressed in the Dutch saying, *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring*" applies. We do not deny that church and state both have a calling before God. They certainly do. Each in their own sphere! And each is the sovereign minister of God to execute that calling within its own sphere.

2. That these two distinct entities are also related to each other is evident. They do not simply co-exist side by side but in this world they belong to the same physical organism, the human race. Members of the church are citizens of the state and vice-versa. In bold type the Rev. MacKay speaks of this also by saying, "Church and State are joined together by God — there is a real unity between the two — but they are not organically united and they are not intermingled or confused." Related they are and yet separate so that neither may encroach upon the others territory. Let us then not confuse them. To the rulers in the sphere of the state God gives distinct and clear mandates and likewise to those whom He appoints to rule in His church.

G.V.D.B.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD

Thy righteous judgment, Thou hast said,
Shall in due time appear,
And Thou Who didst establish it
Wilt fill the earth with fear.

Thou teachest meekness to the proud,
And makest sinners know
That none is judge but God alone,
To honor or bring low.

The God of Israel I will praise
And all His glory show;
The righteous He will high exalt
And bring the wicked low.

Psalm 75:2, 3, 5

ALL AROUND US

Our Creeds and the Mission Mandate.

From time to time in recent years we have heard voices in the Christian Reformed Church reiterating the questions: How is it that our Reformed Creeds devote no special articles to give expression to the mandate of Christ to the church to proclaim the gospel to all nations? and, Should not the church append or revise her creeds to include an expression on this her particular duty as mandated by Christ?

The Reformed Journal of November, 1952 and January, February, 1953, included articles written by the Rev. Harry Boer on this subject; and the September, 1957 issue of *Torch and Trumpet* has in it an article written by Rev. Peter De Jong in which the question is brought up again. And he in his article reports that the Rev. Richard De Ridder, now missionary in Ceylon, in writing his master's thesis on "The Development of the Mission Order of the Christian Reformed Church" observes that "The Confessions of the church . . . do not make much direct reference to missions, nor do they bear a strong missionary character."

In the articles written by Rev. Boer, which we reread because of our interest in this subject, we are told in the November, 1952, issue of the *Reformed Journal* that even "a Christian Reformed consistory overtured the recent synod to submit for the consideration of the coming Reformed Ecumenical Synod a proposal that it 'draw up a creedal statement concerning Christian missions . . .'. The overture in question calls to the attention of the church the imperative necessity of missionary witness. The mandate roots — so the overture — in Christ's sending by the Father, in the sending of the apostles by Christ, in the Great Commission and in the fact of Pentecost. Proclamation outward (self-propagation) as well as propagation inward (self-preservation) is therefore a constitutive part of the divinely enjoined activity of the Christian Church. 'If the Church fails in this, or accepts its duty with reluctance, she cannot boast of being a true Church.' It is urged that a creedal statement concerned with missionary proclamation be made a fourth mark of the church because this 'fourth mark cannot be subsumed under the first mark — the true preaching of God's Word. Historically considered the first mark has an inward goal: self-preservation of the church.'"

Rev. Boer it appears goes along with this last statement. And Rev. Peter De Jong in the article "Mission Work in the Christian Reformed Church in the September, 1957, *Torch and Trumpet* insists there is a weakness in our creeds on this important point. Writes he, "If our creeds have little to say about the missionary responsibility of the church, what they do say speaks of it as a work of God, as a work of the

proper church officers, or even as the responsibility of the civil government. They do not hold it before us as the responsibility of the individual christian within the church! That fact is worthy of special attention. Our creeds at this point reflect a weakness that to a large extent continues with us right down to the present day and that the writer is beginning to suspect is the underlying source of perhaps most of our missionary problems. Again and again we have been slow to see the missionary job, and when we did we have usually had great difficulty in deciding who ought to do it. All too seldom has it been realized or pointed out that, at bottom, all of us ought to do it!"

When we read this we became curious enough to scan through the various creeds of the church, including our own, to see whether these things were true. We agree with the writers above mentioned that the creeds do not specifically assert what is the mission calling of the church. There were one or two exceptions to this. We call attention to what Schaff writes in his *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III, pp. 910-922, relative to The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. He informs us that the Westminster Confession, which was the basic creedal statement of this church, underwent a limited revision in 1903. It is interesting to note why this church came to make this revision, but that is beyond the scope of this writing. We did note, however, that this chapter was added to the creed by the church which has to do with our subject:

Chapter XXXV is entitled: Of the Love of God and Missions, and reads as follows:

I. God, in infinite and perfect love, having provided in the covenant of grace, through the meditation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, a way of life and salvation, sufficient for and adapted to the whole lost race of man, doth freely offer this salvation to all men in the Gospel.

II. In the Gospel God declares His love for the world and His desire that all men should be saved, reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation; promises eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Christ; invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy; and by His Spirit accompanying the Word pleads with men to accept His gracious invitation.

III. It is the duty and privilege of every one who hears the Gospel immediately to accept its merciful provisions: and they who continue in impenitence and unbelief incur aggravated guilt and perish by their own fault.

IV. Since there is no other way of salvation than that revealed in the Gospel, and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace faith cometh by hearing the Word of God, Christ hath commissioned His church to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. All believers are, therefore, under obligation to sustain the

ordinances of religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts, to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth.

And on page 924 of the same volume above referred to where a Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, 1902, is given, we read in Art. XVI—Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph—the following: “. . . We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . .”

It would be sinful of me to suggest or recommend that the Christian Reformed Church consider adopting the position of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as stated above. It would be sinful because that position is dead wrong, and we should never instruct anyone to do that which is wrong. But when I consider the direction in which the Christian Reformed Church has gone ever since 1924 when it adopted the Three Points of Common Grace, the first of which clearly proceeds from the same doctrinal basis as the Presbyterian Church described above, namely, that God is gracious to all men in that He offers salvation to all men in the preaching of the Gospel, then I can conceive that beginning there the church has come to feel the present need of expanding her creeds to include a doctrinal statement concerning missions. And I would ask them: Is not the position of The Presbyterian Church described above exactly what you want?

Personally we could not go along with such a change or addition as we could not go along with the church when she added to her confessions the Three Points of Common Grace. Nor do we believe we should have a separate creed for the task of missions as to serve as a sort of “fourth mark” of the true church. We do believe that it is possible and correct to make a statement upon the basis of Scripture and the Confessions relative to the position of the church in her missionary calling. We are inclined to go along with the remark of the Rev. H. Hoeksema in *The Standard Bearer* of December 15, 1952, when he suggested that “If anything special must be adopted as a basis for mission work, I would favor another ‘Declaration of Principles’ based upon all our confessions. This might, indeed, prove valuable.” It must certainly be admitted, as he also suggested, that our confessions do speak plentifully on the preaching of the Word which, of course, lies at the bottom of all missionary activity. It must also be admitted that our fathers in the formulation of our present creeds were cognizant of the church’s calling to preach the pure Gospel of salvation and that it is God’s purpose and work to realize His elect church exactly through such preaching. And since our confessions do set forth these precious truths, there could be nothing wrong in the church

formulating a Declaration of Principles expressing on the basis of these confessions what she believes is the task of the church and her constituency in the fulfillment of the mandate of Christ to preach the Gospel to all nations. And we suggest that she do so.

The Doctrine of the Last Things.

In the last issue of *The Standard Bearer* we called attention to several changes in the appearance of *Torch and Trumpet*, one of which was to be a series of Outlines on the Doctrine of the Last Things to be written by the Rev. William Hendriksen.

In the October, 1957 issue of this magazine appears the first contribution by Rev. Hendriksen on this subject. The writer distinguishes Eschatology, the doctrine concerning the Last Things, into two classifications: Individual Eschatology and General Eschatology. The first, he says, has to do with the things that are going to happen to *individuals*, when they die and afterward. The second discusses what will happen to the universe as a whole, just before Christ returns, at the moment of his return, and afterward.

He purposes in his outlines for this season to treat first of General Eschatology. In twenty-four outlines he plans to discuss such subjects as: “Old Testament Eschatology, the signs, two great preliminary signs, the one great final sign, Isarel’s Restoration, the great apostasy, the antichrist, Armageddon, the millenium, the second coming, the resurrection, the raptiure, the final judgment, the mission of the angels in connection with the judgment; the eternal state of the lost, the eternal state of the redeemed, the new heaven and earth.”

We are quite pleased with the four Outlines which appear in the above mentioned issue of *Torch and Trumpet*. What especially pleased us was the distinction and relation he gives between Old Testament Eschatology and New Testament Eschatology. He purposely avoids the error of neglecting the Old Testament when considering the doctrine of the Last Things. This point we find refreshing.

Also the author of the Outlines places Questions for Discussion at the end of each outline which make for helpful use by the society or study group that may choose to use this material for study.

As to contents, I have not had time to study too carefully all that the author presents, but a hasty perusal left the impression that we have here a neat piece of work, well documented with Scripture.

What the author will have to say in future outlines we will not guess, and whether we will be able to agree with all he writes will have to be determined after they are written. But from this perspective we are looking forward in anticipation of some rather thorough and helpful work.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Letter from the Christian Reformed Church

July 24, 1957

The Protestant Reformed Churches
Rev. George Lubbers, Stated Clerk
1125 Franklin Street
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Esteemed Brethren in Christ:

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in session during the month of June, 1957, made the following decisions in reply to your letter dated June 19, 1957, page 83, Art. 142, III)

A. Material:

A letter responding to our invitation to send a representative to our 1957 Synod in connection with the Centennial celebration. The invitation is declined, but we are asked to seek official contact to rehearse the history of 1924-25.

B. Recommendations:

1. Our invitation asking them to share in our Centennial implies our fraternal spirit toward the Protestant Reformed Churches.
2. The tone and contents of the letter are not such as give promise of fruitful discussion. — Adopted.

With Christian greetings,

The Christian Reformed Church

w/s R. J. Danhof, Stated Clerk

Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac

Abraham's faith reached its climax when it responded to offer up Isaac. Said the Lord, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains I will tell thee of." That the command had respect of literal offering is a view that has the firm support of the Scriptures. For Isaac is to be a burnt offering. Even the place where he is to be devoted is specified — one of the mountains of Moriah. Finally when Abraham was about to slay his son — his hand gripping the knife already extended — he was told not to lay his hand upon the lad and do nothing to him as now the Lord knew that he feared Him, seeing that he was prepared to offer his only son. It is plain that what satisfied the Lord is the spectacle of the extended hand holding the knife with Abraham poised to plunge its blade into the mortal frame of his son. We cannot but conclude therefore but that what the Lord had mandated him to do

is literally slay Isaac and not instead dedicate him to a religious life (Lang and others).

In framing His mandate the Lord stresses that he whom Abraham was instructed to offer was his only son, the one son in whom his seed should be called. Thus he was placed under the necessity of slaying the Lord's very promise to him.

Abraham had to offer Isaac a burnt offering. The burnt offering as well as the sin and trespass offering was accepted for him who brought it to make atonement for him. Now the thought symbolized by the action known in Scripture as *offering* or *sacrifice* (by blood) confesses God as a being of perfect rectitude who without fail causes sin to return to the sinner as punishment; but also as a being of that infinite wisdom and love capable of devising ways and means for throwing about the offender, ill-deserving and condemnable, His everlasting arms of mercy to pardon him in His love and cleanse him from all his sin and thereby prepare him for a place in His house as His son and heir in Christ. These thoughts were Abraham's. For he offered his son in faith, so that the thought prompting him to bring this sacrifice is the thought that he was in himself lost and undone. What he must have been hungering for is righteousness, and He whom he must have been thirsting for is God. And so he must be thought of as offering up Isaac in the firm belief that his only way of approach to God was through Isaac's blood. What the shedding of Isaac's blood was meant to proclaim unto him was that the sinning soul shall die and that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin, that he would be blessed of God only if he receive the blood of Isaac as a covering for his sins. For mark you, he was commanded to offer Isaac a burnt offering, one of the sacrifices *by blood*.

It is to be noticed that Isaac was to be offered up a burnt offering and not a sin or trespass offering. Though the burnt offering as well as the sin and trespass offering was received from the hand of the offender as a covering for his sin, there was a difference. The sin and trespass offerings were received as a covering for one who had committed some special sin, while the blood of the burnt offering was received as a covering for those short comings and imperfections that always cleave to the believer and pollute his best works. From this it may be gathered that the trespass offering was brought by one whose fellowship with God had been broken by evil-doing, so that the aim of this offering was the restoration of the offender to the state of fellowship with God. The burnt offering on the other hand was brought by one who all along had been walking in the light of Jehovah's countenance, keeping covenant fidelity, and thus living on a friendly footing with God, but who nevertheless felt the profound need of a covering for the sin that still cleaved unto him. The burnt offering met this need.

It was not without reason therefore that Abraham was

told of God to offer up Isaac a burnt offering instead of a sin or trespass offering. He had not by the commission of some special sin interrupted his fellowship with God. On the contrary, at this time he was walking with God. He was spiritual. This is proved by his offering his only son in obedience to his God.

The burnt offering had still another characteristic. When the offering was a burnt offering the body of the animal, when it had shed its life in death, was placed upon the altar, God's table, and wholly consumed. This symbolized a disposition of heart and mind of the worshipper to surrender and devote and consecrate his entire person with all his powers to the service and praise of God. This willingness to belong wholly to God went hand in hand with true contrition of heart. The burnt offering symbolized this sanctified frame of heart and mind which was seen in all its power and glory in Christ the true burnt offering.

But what may have been the reaction of Isaac, when he saw that he was to be offered a burnt offering. He behaved in a manner that proves him to be of the same faith as that of Abraham. He willed to be consumed by the sacrificial fire, willed to consecrate in that way his life to God. For when Abraham has built the altar and had laid the wood in order, Isaac permits himself to be bound and laid upon the altar. And he did not open his mouth. Behold the lad, bound to be slain, reposing upon a bed of sacrificial wood, with the scent of the fire that will consume his flesh in his nostrils—yet silent. He, too, offers himself. How strikingly he typifies Christ.

Abraham is mandated to offer Isaac a burnt offering. And he does so by faith in his heart and mind and according to his intention but he was prevented of the Lord from slaying his son in actual outward deed. But taking the intention of his mind for the outward deed, the Lord says that "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promise offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure (Heb. 11:17-19).

Even before he set out for the mountain, he had prepared the altar in his mind, bound his son, laid him on the altar, slain him, kindled the fire, the consumed his flesh. Did he do so in despair as thinking that he was permanently removing Isaac from the land of the living, so that the Christ, who was in his son's loins, could now never be born? No, such was not Abraham's imagining. For He had faith in the power of God to raise from the dead his slain son. Before his mind's eye therefore Isaac rises as recalled from the dead by His God who is ever faithful to His promise and keeps covenant trust forever.

Abraham received Isaac from the dead in a figure. That figure is the entire action of Abraham with Isaac: his bind-

ing him in obedience to the command, his laying him so bound upon the altar to be slain, his actually slaying Isaac in his intention, his loosening Isaac's cords in obedience to the voice of God, his receiving him back again from the Lord alive and unhurt.

G.M.O.

Our Conception of Churches

It is plain from the caption above, that I do not refer to our conception of the Church as such. The mystical body of Christ, His Church of all ages which He, by His Spirit and Word, gathers out of all kindreds and ages of men, is surely none else than the body of believers and their seed—the elect. Concerning that there is, or at least ought be no doubt among us. About that our instruction in times past has suffered nothing in clarity. And therefore any other conception on this point must be branded unscriptural and unreformed.

But I speak of our conception concerning CHURCHES, i.e., different, separate, denominational manifestations of the church in the world. And in respect to that conception there is a varied evaluation. Of that I would write being prompted by actual differences of opinion on the point as such, among leaders as well as the laity, and also by the appearance of articles that would ridicule specific denominational differences and evaluate such different views as narrow-mindedness. We have, therefore, two extremes: the one deeming our church denomination the one and only true church and all outside of it false; the other resolving all differences to unnecessary and so sinful narrowmindedness.

Let me, first of all, assure our reading public, that I do not imagine that I am able to answer all problems and to settle so weighty a question, nor is such my intention in this article. Secondly, and such is the purpose of writing as I do at this time, I hope to provoke serious thought on this matter in our churches at large so that, God willing, we may come to unanimity of opinion on this matter. And that, unto that end, finally, we ought to face the following issues, at this time dealing with the first extremity above referred to: our church is the true church, all others are false churches:

1. There should not be, and I doubt that there is, anyone among us who would deny that we are the purest manifestation of the church, the body of Christ and that therefore all others, some more others less, have apostatized. That is the conviction we have and must hold regarding even that church denomination nearest us, the Christian Reformed Church of America. If 1924 and its subsequent history do not mean that to us, we should return, as evidently is the intent of those formerly affiliated with our churches. But the Three Points of 1924, a binding confession of the Christian Reformed denomination, are a deviation from the Reformed faith and subscription to them is tantamount to embracing the lie. And let it be said right here that all activities

and institutions of that denomination have since then been characterized by apostacy. In particular this can be noted in its institutions of learning. That stands to reason too. And this is very evident according to the measure one climbs the ladder of instructional institutions in their midst. So only can it be explained that men, seemingly in good standing in that church, and therefore with approbation and official sanction, can propound the theory that the days of creation week were so many periods of many years. That is, at best, camouflaged evolution and sheer mockery with the plain teaching of Holy Writ. These indications of apostacy, we insist, none of us will or ought to deny.

2. It is also our conviction, and all history substantiates it, that those churches that have to a greater or lesser degree departed in such an official way from the truth, will never come back. An apostatizing church does not easily retrace its steps. This is all the more unlikely in light of the fact that they have failed to do so to date in spite of very clear and consistent testimony given by those who were cast out of their midst because they wished to remain loyal to the Reformed faith. That we have continually given such warning testimony almost without number, none can well deny. That our evaluation concerning common grace as a heresy was incorrect no one has ever successfully proven, though of late the group that recently left us and at present is vacillating between separate existence and returning to the bosom of the Christian Reformed Church, does insinuate such . . . without proof. In the light of the fact of that undisproved testimony and the fact that now for more than three decades there has been no repentance, the conclusion is valid that even the Christian Reformed denomination has reached the "point of no return" as institute. This, in turn, means because there is no standing still, that the process of apostacy will continue until this denomination with others, will ultimately run into the pool of amalgamation to the point of becoming the false church. God is not mocked. An official step of departure from the truth and tenaciously held on to in spite of all warnings, creates such a process.

3. In view of the last sentence above however, it is our conviction that neither the Christian Reformed Church nor others still called Reformed and Christian are as yet nor can be called the false church. This would be saying that they are completely apostate, antichristian. Nor are their schools of learning on the same plane with the institutions of the world . . . even the degradation may vary considerably in different communities. They may be (undoubtedly are) on their way to become apostate schools . . . they have NOT yet arrived!

Without any attempt now at an overture to return, which seems the desperate attempt of those that left us, we can and desire to draw the following conclusions as to our calling amidst this all: As to the apostatizing church institutes round

about us—to testify, "You have no future there! Come out, lovers of the truth, and join us." As to their institutions of learning—

a. Use them, where we do not have our own and support them as temporary manifestations of our vowed intent to bring up our children in the aforesaid doctrine to "the utmost of our power." It would be a sin not to.

b. Thereby to show a united front over against the instruction of the world, where we may NEVER send our children as a matter of choice.

c. The meanwhile not leave a stone unturned to have also our own schools for it is a simple *fact* of history that a church that refuses to have its own schools, is doomed. From the principle of separate churches follows logically that of separate schools . . . Christian instruction according to the tenets of our particular church.

Undoubtedly more could be said, but for the nonce enough space has been taken in our *Standard Bearer* and what has been written is perhaps enough to elicit further discussion to the end that also in these matters we may become united more firmly in our convictions.

H. H. Kuiper

CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION

What shall I render to the Lord,
What shall my offering be,
For all the gracious benefits
He has bestowed on me?

Salvation's cup my soul will take
While to the Lord I pray,
And with His people I will meet,
My thankful vows to pay.

Not lightly does the Lord permit
His chosen saints to die;
From death Thou hast delivered me,
Thy servant, Lord, am I.

The sacrifice of praise I bring
While to the Lord I pray,
And with His people I will meet,
My thankful vows to pay.

Within His house, the house of prayer,
My soul shall bless the Lord,
And praises to His holy Name
Let all His saints accord.

Psalms 116