
The Standard Bearer

Convention Number

IN HONOR OF

*The Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Reformed
Young People's Federation*



Psalm 119:9

Hearty Congratulations



In view of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ministry of Rev. Hoeksema, the following resolution was adopted by the P.R.Y.P.F. at the business meeting of the Convention.

"Resolved that the 1940 Convention of our Protestant Reformed Young People undertakes herewith to extend the most hearty congratulations of the Federation to the Reverend Herman Hoeksema upon the completion of his twenty-fifth year as a Minister of the Gospel, feeling confident that all of us will be ever grateful for the work he has done for us as Protestant Reformed people.

Our prayer is, however, that our lives will so clearly testify that we have had a truly Reformed training, that he, as our leader, will be encouraged to continue that good work in the development of the Truth of the Scriptures.

And above all, may he be assured that he personally is not the end of our praise — but that truly we have learned that God alone is worthy of all Glory, and that men are praise-worthy only in-so-far and in-so-much as He has seen fit to work through them."

EDITORIAL NOTE

Once again our *Standard Bearer* appears in a special garb. This time it is upon the request of the P.R.Y.P.F. that just recently held its second annual convention in Grand Rapids. We assure our young people that we are both proud and happy to serve them through the *Standard Bearer* in this way.

The convention we just mentioned was a wonderful success. Our hearts were warmed and gladdened when we saw the zeal and activity of our young men and young women, their interest in the things of the kingdom of God. They certainly manifested a Christian spirit throughout, not only in their business sessions, but also in the banquet with which the convention was closed.

May the Lord further keep and bless them!

This number of the *Standard Bearer* contains the addresses delivered at the convention and other material connected with the activities of the P.R.Y.P.F.

H. H.



First Protestant Reformed Church
Meeting place of the Second Annual Convention of the P.R.Y.P.F.

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Attitudes

INSPIRATIONAL ADDRESS

It is a privilege and a great delight to me that this evening I may deliver the inspirational address at the opening session of the Convention of Protestant Reformed Young People. The task assigned to me is wholly a pleasurable one. I take it that this convention is proof of the fact that in our churches there is a flourishing society life, particularly now with a view to young people's societies. And this is a good sign. It shows that our young people are interested in the church, the things of the Kingdom of God, the cause of the truth as we believe and profess it. Catechism is, of course, of first importance. But the difference between catechetical instruction and the activities of our societies is that the former is compulsory, while in the latter one participates of his own free choice. That our young people evince an active interest in the life and activities of their societies reveals, therefore, that they take a personal interest in the things of the Kingdom of God. And this is a hopeful sign. For you represent the church of the future. Besides, a well conducted young people's society, or, wherever this is possible, young men's and young ladies' society may, indeed, be a power for good in the church. Catechism serves the specific purpose of indoctrinating the youth of the church and preparing them to make confession of their faith and to assume their covenant obligations. But our societies may serve the wider purpose, through mutual edification, to prepare their members to take their place in the church and in life in general as Christian men and women. You will understand, then, that when I look upon this convention as a tangible proof of the fact that our young people are taking an active interest in the things of the kingdom of God, in the truth as we profess it, it is altogether a pleasure to me that I may deliver the opening address of this second convention of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

There is still another, a more specific reason why I take particular delight in addressing you tonight. I am reminded tonight of a similar occasion at which I delivered the inspirational address. It is some twenty years ago that I spoke at the opening of the Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies, the first meeting of that federation. I had helped to organize it. I was its first president. And I had the honor of being the first editor of its publication, *The Young Calvinist*. But that federation did not spring into being until after the Christian Reformed Churches had existed for more than half a century. When I compare that occasion with the present one, my heart is filled with joy and gratitude to God. It is only about fifteen years ago that we were expelled from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Churches. And we were very small. Our enemies predicted, the wish, no doubt, being the father to the thought, that we had but a very short time to live. And when I recall all this, and then look upon this gathering of young people, having come from far and near, representing the young people's societies of several of our churches; when I consider that after so short a period of our separate existence we may already meet as a convention of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies that are very much alive, I am inclined to exclaim: "what hath God wrought!"

My task for tonight was assigned to me: I am supposed to speak on the theme of this convention, "Attitudes". I find this somewhat difficult just because it is the convention theme. During the course of this convention there will be other speakers who are asked to speak on specified topics, that are, however, all related more or less directly to the general theme that constitutes the subject of my address. In order not to conflict with them I will, therefore, have to be careful and confine myself to some general remarks. I shall try, therefore, to be as specific as possible without colliding with the other speakers of this convention. And I will try to make clear to you, that, in the sense in which we now speak of "Attitudes";

- I. Principally there are but two possible attitudes.
- II. In actual life one meets with various attitudes.
- III. We must strive to cultivate the proper attitude.

I. The word attitude in its simplest and original meaning denotes a physical concept. It means *posture*. Thus we can speak of the attitude, that is, posture, of a person, the attitude of an animal, the attitude of a statue. But as the posture of the body often reflects the disposition of the mind and heart of man, the word attitude is frequently, if not most generally, used to denote this mental or spiritual disposition with respect to some object. Hence, we speak of one's attitude to war, to politics, to Christian education, to woman suffrage, to religion, etc. It is in this latter sense that we use the term in our speech tonight, and that especially with regard to the things of the Kingdom of God as represented by our Protestant Reformed Churches: our church, the truth, our doctrine, the "three points", the activities of our churches, our mission, our societies, "The Standard Bearer". Attitude as I use the term, therefore, denotes the mental and spiritual disposition as reflected in our actual life, with respect to the specific things for which we as Protestant Reformed people stand.

Now, I stated that principally there are only two possible attitudes. We are either *for* or *against*. Another attitude is fundamentally impossible. This is often emphasized in Scripture. The Lord Jesus declares: "He that is not for me is against me". You cannot serve God and Mammon, for either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will cleave to the one and despise the other. The apostle writes to the Corinthians: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" II Cor. 6:14-16. The tree is either good or evil, and accordingly its fruit is good or bad. And he that is friend of the world is an enemy of God. It is either or. It is for or against. Neutrality with respect to the truth and the things of the kingdom of God is impossible. Here one must choose.

What it means to be "for" is well expressed by our Form for the Administration for Baptism, which it teaches us that it belongs to our "part" of the covenant that we love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life. This declares in the first place, that our attitude to God, to Christ, to the truth and the things of the kingdom of God, is a matter of the heart and of our whole being and life: "with all our heart and mind and soul and strength" we must love the Lord our God. In the second place it teaches us that to be "for" covers all our active life: we must

love the Lord our God "with all our strength". To love the Lord our God implies that we serve Him, that we keep His commandments and apply them to every department of life. Not only in the church and on Sunday, but also during the week and in our daily life we are "for" and "walk in a new and holy life". In the home and in the school, in shop and office, in society and in the state, always and everywhere our calling is to love the Lord our God with all our strength. And, thirdly, this part of our Baptism Form reminds us that to be "for" implies the antithesis; for to love the Lord our God also requires of us that "we forsake the world, crucify our old nature" and thus walk in a new and holy life. You cannot serve God and Mammon, but neither can you merely serve God without assuming any attitude over against Mammon whatsoever. If you love the one, you despise the other. You are called to be of God's party in the midst of the world that lieth in darkness. Hence, you cannot avoid the antithesis. To be friend of God implies that you assume an attitude of enmity over against sin within and without, the world and its prince.

To be "against" signifies the very opposite and this in the same comprehensive sense as to be "for". It means that we are enemies of God with all our heart and mind and soul, with our whole being. And this inner spiritual disposition of enmity against God reflects itself in a hatred of God with all our strength, that is, in all our actual life and all its departments. And this implies that we love darkness rather than light, that we indulge in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life; that we love the world and seek after its pleasures and treasures rather than after the things of the kingdom of God; and that we walk in the old corruption of the flesh. You are "against" God and His Christ, and, therefore, "for" the world and the forces of darkness.

The question might be asked: why is it that with respect to the things of the kingdom of God there are only two attitudes possible fundamentally? And why is it, that man must necessarily assume either of these two attitudes? Why is it that an attitude of neutrality is impossible, so that one may be neither for nor against? Or why can there be no compromise, so that one is partly for and partly against, and so that he may serve both: God and Mammon, Christ and Belial?

The answer to these questions is objectively in God. God is God! He is the sole Sovereign of heaven and earth, Who is the Creator of all things, and Who made all things for His own Name's sake. And He is One. There is no God beside Him, next to Him, under Him. The Lord our God is one Lord! And He is a light. There is no darkness in Him at all. He is good, not merely in the supreme sense of that word, but as the only Good, the implication of all infinite perfections, the Holy One of Israel. There is no division in God. There is no compromise in the sole Sovereign of heaven

and earth. From this it follows that the end of your existence is in Him only. To serve and glorify Him is your sole purpose, that is, it is the end for which you are made. And He will have your all. There is no Lord you can serve beside Him. To Him belongs your body and your soul, your mind and your will, your talents and your strength, all that you are and have. Hence, it follows that your attitude to Him is either or: you are wholly "for" Him, or you are wholly "against" Him; you love Him or you hate Him with all your heart and mind and soul and strength.

And subjectively the answer to the above questions must be found in the fact that our attitude to God is a matter of the heart, whence are the issues of life. From an ethical viewpoint the heart is the center of our whole life. As our heart is so are our thoughts and desires, our longings and aspirations and all our actions. As the heart is so are we. And that heart is either good or evil. It is never both. It cannot be neither, good nor evil. By nature our heart is corrupt, perverse, moved with enmity against God. And if our heart is corrupt, so are all the issues of our life. It follows that in our natural state we hate the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. From our corrupt heart we cannot partly love God and partly love sin. And on the other hand, regeneration is a radical change of the heart, a change from death into life, from darkness into life, from corruption into holiness, from enmity against God to the love of God in Christ. It is a change of the whole man in principle. Hence, principally the regenerated man loves the Lord his God with his whole heart, and therefore with all his mind and soul and strength. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new!

Perhaps, you would object, that although with respect to God and Christ it may be true that only two possible attitudes are conceivable, so that one must be either for or against, you can hardly apply this truth to one's attitude to the specific cause and truth which we represent and maintain as a Protestant Reformed people. Here one must draw the line less sharply. Whether one is Protestant Reformed or Christian Reformed, or even Baptist or Methodist can hardly be a matter of "for" or "against". But this objection is an error. One is principally either for or against our Protestant Reformed faith. In fact, I would even maintain that the difference in attitude is here rather accentuated. The truth as we confess it concerns the doctrines of God, of Christ, of man, of salvation, of sin and grace, of our life and walk in the midst of and over against the world. These are fundamental doctrines. And they are all concerned in our controversy with the Christian Reformed Churches. One of their spokesman said in the well-known conference of the Pantlind said that we had a different

theology from theirs. He spoke the truth. Grace is either particular or common,—it cannot be both. God either loves or hates the wicked,—both at the same time are impossible. Man is either wholly depraved or he is not. The "Three Points" are either true or they are very fundamental errors. And our Protestant Reformed Churches have maintained the truth over against corruptions and errors, so that they have a right to exist as churches; or they erred in 1924 and then they are a mere sect. Hence, here one must choose. You cannot be neutral. You are either Protestant Reformed or you are opposed to the Protestant Reformed truth. You are for or against. And if you are Protestant Reformed you reject all heresies repugnant to our confession.

II. Fact is, however, that in actual life one does not meet very often with this sharp antithesis of "for" and "against". Life seems to be different. Somehow it appears as if this uncompromising theory of the antithesis does not prove itself capable of application in reality. One is not always "for" or "against". There seem to be many other possible attitudes one may and actually does assume. The "for or against", the "either or" of Scripture are not practicable in the world. A certain measure of compromise, of "appeasement", is required by actual life. The man that would really bring the antithesis into practice often stands alone.

The reason for this must not be sought in the "world". It is always world. The natural man is always "against", even though there may be different degrees of manifestation of this attitude. He is never for Christ and the truth. But the Christian individually and the Church collectively are not always clearly and uncompromisingly "for". This is true, not only of the Christian and of the Church of today, but equally holds for the people of God as they are pictured to us in Scripture. The reason for this is in the flesh, the old nature in the Christian, and the carnal element in the Church. The Christian is a new man, a new creature, but he is such only in principle. He has only a small beginning of this new obedience that causes him to walk in a new and holy life. His heart is radically changed, and, therefore, he is principally "for". But his old nature is a powerful factor still in his life. That old nature is inclined to seek sin and the world. And to the inclination of that old nature the Christian often yields. And the same is true of the Church. Not all are Israel that are of Israel. Not only is there always a carnal element that arises from the Church itself, carnal children of the covenant, but a carnal element also joins itself to the Church for various reasons, and their entrance into the Church cannot always be barred. If this were not the case I could close my lecture right here; now, however, I must call your attention to various attitudes

which the flesh often causes the Christian individually and the Church as a whole to assume. I will limit myself to a few typical attitudes that are illustrated for us in Scripture.

One of the most striking and frequently assumed is the utilitarian attitude. This is a big word, but the meaning of it may be very simply and concretely expressed in the question: does it pay? They that take this attitude always ask themselves the question: how does the application of the truth affect my life in the world, my natural well-being, my name and position, my wealth and influence? They are people who are "for" Christ and the truth, for the Protestant Reformed faith and cause, as long as this attitude does not come into conflict with their earthly position and carnal desires. They are practical people, not men of principle at all. They certainly dare not lose their life in the world. Rather than lose the world they would lose their own soul, though it is their deliberate attempt to save both. If the cause of the truth requires sacrifice they forsake the cause. And if their carnal interests conflict with their calling in the cause of Christ they deny the latter and pursue the former. A fine illustration of this attitude you have in the men of Succoth and Peniel at the time of Gideon. You know the story. The Lord had wrought a glorious victory and a great deliverance in Israel through Gideon and his brave band of three hundred. They were pursuing the Midianites in the land across the Jordan. It had been a strenuous day and the men were faint. Faint, yet pursuing! And Gideon asked the men of Succoth and later those of Peniel: "Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian". But the men of Succoth and Peniel answered: "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?" You see these men "played safe". They wanted to see results first. They were afraid that Gideon might fail, and that the kings of Midian might return and take revenge upon them if they aided and abetted Gideon and his men in their pursuit. They wanted to be sure that they did not risk their own necks, before they would take sides! You know Gideon's reply to these miserable curs. He promised the men of Succoth that he would tear their flesh with thorns and briers of the wilderness when he would return and the Lord had delivered the kings of Midian into his hand; and he threatened that upon his victorious return he would break down Peniel's tower. Judges 8:4-9. And I for one would like to have been present when Gideon's thorns and briers lashed the backs of those wretched cowards who preferred their own safety to the victory of God's cause! Always one finds these utilitarian bargainers. If they belong to us, they are Protestant Reformed only in as far as their faith and confession do not conflict with

their earthly position and carnal ambitions. As soon as this conflict arises they easily depart from us.

Then there is the attitude of selfish pride and ambition. They that assume this attitude would let the things of the kingdom of God revolve around the glory of their own ego. They want to be the greatest, and do not understand that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is he who can humble himself as a little child. You may find this class of people very active sometimes in the affairs of the Church and the kingdom of God in the world. They are zealous. They usually have capacity for work, too. They are able and willing to take the lead. But their zeal is largely motivated by the desire to realize their personal ambition. They are in it for their own glory. We find this type of attitude illustrated in the pride of Ephraim in Gideon's time once more. He had taken the initiative against Midian, as he was called to do so by the Lord. And Jehovah had given him and his men a glorious victory. And only after the decisive battle had been fought and the Midianites had been routed, did he call upon the men of Ephraim for help in the hot pursuit. And we read in Judges 8:1 that the men of Ephraim "did chide with him sharply". They said: "Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?" They were hurt in their pride. The Lord had wrought a great salvation in Israel, but for it they cared little; what concerned them was that the glory would go to Gideon, not to themselves! Of course, they had had abundant opportunity to make the attack upon the host of Midian themselves, had they had the faith and the courage to do so. But they had failed. But now salvation had been wrought through Gideon and his band, they chide with him, because they were far more concerned about their own honor than about the cause of God! A very dangerous attitude this! People that take this attitude in the Church, in society, in respect to any activity in the kingdom of God, are always a menace. In this frame of mind one is ready to sacrifice the cause of God to his personal ambition and pride!

There is, in the third place, the attitude we might describe by the French phrase: "laissez-faire", the "let it run" attitude. We find some such attitude illustrated in what Scripture tells us about Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, in Acts 18. You recall the incident, no doubt. There was an insurrection of the Jews against Paul, and they brought him to the judgment seat. But Gallio refused to be judge in the matter and drove the Jews away from the judgment seat. Then the Greeks, making the best of the occasion, took Sosthenes and beat him right in the presence of Gallio. And then we read characteristically: "And Gallio cared for none of these things". He assumed the "laissez-faire" attitude. Just let it go! Well, one finds Gallio's in the church. They are, perhaps, among the most regular members of the church. Faithfully they attend

public worship and contribute to the needs of the church. They never cause trouble. But they are inclined to avoid trouble and strife at all cost. They see and admit that the church is apostatizing, departing from the truth and becoming worldly minded in life and walk. But they "care for none of those things". At all events they will do nothing about it. They do not like trouble. They love peace. The truth of the matter is really that they love their own leisure and tranquility more than the things of the kingdom of God. If it were left to them you would never have a secession in the church on earth, a reformation would never be started, the church would be permitted to go to destruction in the way of apostacy. A fitting example of people of this frame of mind and attitude is, according to my opinion, that often lauded scholar of Luther's days, in whose honor, to the shame of that Dutch city, Rotterdam erected a statue, which even escaped the destruction caused by the German air raid. I mean, of course, Desiderius Erasmus. Well he knew the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. But he loved the leisure of his study too much to do anything about it. *Laissez-faire!*

Closely related to those we just mentioned are those who assume the attitude of self-complacency and cold indifference. They are people that are really well satisfied with the goal that has been attained, with the actual condition of the church, no matter what it may be. They have no ambition, no zeal for the cause of the kingdom of God. They are self-satisfied. You can never persuade them to do anything in the interest of the church. They are not member of any society, and if they are they might better not be. They take no part in any activity. Their biblical picture you may probably find in the condition of the church of Laodicea. Its members are described as being neither cold nor hot. While they consider themselves rich and enriched and as having need of nothing, the Lord judges that they are naked and wretched. They are nauseating to Him and He threatens to spew them out of His mouth. Also this sort of people you usually meet with in the church wherever it exists. And there is no need of saying that they are never an asset to the church. You can do nothing with them in any sphere of the church's activity.

Fifthly, I must call your attention to a type of people that assume the attitude of what is often erroneously styled "broadmindedness", the latitudinarian attitude. They are really not broadminded at all, but rather lacking in definite and well established convictions. They halt between two or, perhaps, between a dozen or more opinions. They are Protestant Reformed merely in the sense that they happen to belong to a Protestant Reformed Church, not because in their conviction that church is the purest manifestation of the Body of Christ in the world. Yes, they can agree with the doctrine of the church of which they are a

member, but they can see the good of the "Three Points" too. They do not like sharp lines. Their sympathies are very broad. And they hate controversy. They like to bury the hatchet. They do not like us to assume the attitude that we know it alone. We ought to have due respect for the opinions of others. There is some good in every view, no matter how far it may be beside the truth of the Word of God. The attitude of these people is not unlike that of the people of Israel in the old dispensation, who served Jehovah, but also worshipped the gods of the nations round about. Thus it was, for instance, at the time of Elijah. But the prophet must have nothing of their "broadminded" attitude and urges them to make up their mind as to who is God. No longer must they halt between two opinions. It must become either or. If Baal is God, very well: let them serve him then; but if Jehovah is God let them worship Him alone. If the "Three Points" are the truth, very well: embrace them and confess them openly, without a pretense as to being Protestant Reformed; but if they are errors, oppose and reject them as being repugnant to the truth of which you are convinced!

The last type of attitude to which I wish to call your attention in this connection is that of the double minded man. He is, of course, very closely related to the type just mentioned, yet he is also distinct from the "broadminded" man. James mentions this type when he speaks of the double minded man that is unsteady in all his ways. It is the attitude of those that are never sure whether they would serve the world or confess the Lord in word and walk. They divide their devotion. On Sunday they are with the people of God, on Monday they are friends with the world. They sway to and fro. And as it is with their walk, so it is with their attitude toward the truth. One never knows where they really belong. They are members of the Protestant Reformed Church, but they often talk as if they belong to the camp of our opponents. They are as two-faced as they are double-minded. They are people who in their double-faced attitude are a shame to any church of which they happen to be member. They should, of course, be persuaded, if at all possible, to make up their mind and then go where they belong.

III. These are some of the outstanding types of different attitudes mentioned in Scripture and exemplified in the actual life of the people of God in the world. No doubt, other types could be described than those we characterized above, but these are sufficient to show that the only two possible attitudes of "for" and "against" are not always clearly manifested by those that profess to be of Christ. And it also proves that here we have a calling, a task to perform. I mean that as a church and as a people, particularly also as young people, we should be careful and diligent to cultivate the proper attitude. What this attitude is we have,

in general, already indicated. It is that we love the Lord our God with our whole heart, and with all our mind and soul and strength. It means that we assume an attitude of opposition over against the world and the flesh, and that we walk in a new and holy life. Specifically it implies for us as a Protestant Reformed people, that we embrace the truth we profess with all our heart and mind and soul, that we consistently reject every heresy repugnant thereto, and that we are faithful to this truth in profession and walk.

If we analyze this attitude I would say that it implies especially three things: singleheartedness, wholeheartedness, and steadfast-heartedness. It implies singleheartedness because the Lord our God is one. Lord God is one, Christ is one, the truth is one. It follows that the only proper attitude we may assume with relation to this one God, this one Christ, this one truth is that of singleheartedness in confession and walk. It implies wholeheartedness, because God is God, the Lord, the sole Sovereign of heaven and earth, and His Anointed, our Lord Jesus Christ, is at the right hand of God, and has a name which is above every name. And He is our Lord. We belong to Him with body and soul, for time and eternity. Hence, there can be no division in our devotion and obedience. Wholeheartedness, and therefore, complete consecration of our whole mind and will and all our powers in every relation and in every department of life, is the only attitude that may be assumed toward this one Lord of all. We must serve and confess Him always and everywhere. And it implies steadfast-heartedness, because God is Jehovah, the eternal and immutable One, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, and the truth is unchangeable. Hence, we must be steadfast and unmoveable and not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, assured that our labor shall not be vain in the Lord. And in all this we stand antithetically over against the world and the powers of darkness, fighting the good fight even unto the end, that no one take our crown!

This only proper attitude we are called to cultivate. When I say this I do not mean that this only true attitude is merely a matter of cultivation. Christianity is not a matter of cultivation, but of regeneration, of the efficacious operation of the Spirit of Christ and the grace of God in our hearts. The natural man cannot see the kingdom of God. He certainly cannot reform himself and cultivate the only proper attitude over against God and His cause in the world. You cannot train a natural man to become Protestant Reformed. But the Christian, he that is in Christ Jesus and has become a new creature in Him; who principally stands in the right relation and proper attitude to his God and the things of the kingdom of God; but who has but a small beginning of this new obedience, while he is daily tempted by the flesh, the world and the devil,—that Christian has the sacred calling to watch

and pray and fight that he may assume and maintain the only proper attitude of being singleheartedly, wholeheartedly and steadfastly "for", and never "against".

How this may be done, you ask? In answer to this question I would emphasize in the first place that instruction in and study of the truth is paramount. We must study the Word of God. We must be founded in our Reformed doctrine. This is all important. The ignorant Christian is a weak Christian. The more we grow in the knowledge of the truth, the stronger we will become spiritually, the more firmly rooted will be our convictions, the better we will be able to oppose all false doctrines and reject all heresies. In the second place, I would emphasize that we should study the Word of God *prayerfully*, and that our whole life should be in the attitude of prayer. Mere intellectual knowledge is not sufficient. It must become spiritual knowledge, so that we spiritually discern, love and appropriate the truth of God in Christ. This can be realized only through the grace of the Spirit, which God will give unto us in the way of prayer. Thirdly, I would emphasize the necessity of close fellowship with the church in which you have a place, faithful attendance of public worship, employment of the means of catechetical instruction, exercise of the fellowship of the saints, active participation in society life. And here I would emphasize that our societies, also our Young People's Societies, may be a power for good in this task of cultivating and keeping the right attitude. May they always keep this purpose before their consciousness as the ideal after which they strive. And may this convention serve as a means to strengthen us in the determination to cultivate that one and only proper attitude: to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, forsake the world, crucify our old nature and walk in a new and holy life! Be ye therefore steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor shall not be vain in the Lord!

H. H.

IN MEMORIAM

Gedurende de zomervacantie heeft het Gode behaagt om tot Zich te nemen uit onze vereeniging, ons medelid:

THYS HELMHOLDT

Moge dit heengaan ons allen aansporen tot meerdere bereidheid om rekenschap te geven van ons rentmeesterschap. Trooste de Heere de bedroefde familie.

Namens de Hollandsche Mannen Vereeniging
van Fuller Ave. Kerk.

H. Knot, Pres.

J. Miedema, Sec.

Our Attitude Toward Recreation

Mr. Chairman, Board-members, delegates, visitors, and friends:

It is a privilege to address you on this occasion for more reasons than one.

The chief reason is that you as a Covenant youth represent the emerging Church of tomorrow. You are the timber from which future elders and deacons and ministers of the Gospel are formed; but no less the material for future Covenant parents and teachers, valiant soldiers of the cross and faithful witnesses of the Name of God in these last days.

And I admire your undaunted zeal. You might be compared with a rosebud unfolding its petals to the light of day, or a butterfly, just emerging from its cocoon, testingly spreading its wings as it basks in the morning sun. But these comparisons would fail to express your ambitious enthusiasm as you challenge the future before you. Your problems are vital just because you are preparing yourselves for your place in God's Church and Kingdom, and you have the vitality, the zeal and the daring to face your problems with a challenge.

The more reason why it is a privilege to discuss these problems with you, especially in an assembly where a large number of our Prot. Ref. young people from at least three States are represented.

No less does the subject appeal to me on which I am to address you briefly this morning.

Not one of us is unaware that especially for the youth of the Church recreation presents its own problems and has created much discussion even in ecclesiastical assemblies in the past. The time in which we live is partly responsible for this. Not as if our young people of today are any worse than they were some years ago, but the many developments of our day have created new problems. There was a time when a person hardly stepped beyond the narrow sphere of his own church and family. Long working hours, horse and buggy transportation, etc., simply made it impossible. There were not so many outside amusements, nor was the opportunity of participating in them so great. But today with the radio and the automobile, not to mention the wide range of amusements of every type offered wherever you turn, the problem becomes far more acute than ever before. Especially for the Protestant Reformed youth who are not willing to follow the dictates of sinful flesh, nor satisfied with merely placing the question, "may we do this or that", but who want to apply their principles to every sphere of life, the question becomes vital, "what must be our attitude toward recreation?"

Let me add that the word recreation is much better for the purpose of our discussion than the word amusements. First of all, because especially in common

usage the word amusements includes much which the Christian condemns. But also amusements, although they do have a place in our lives, can only serve as recreation.

In answering the question before us we should first agree on what we understand by recreation. An answer to that question will also determine our attitude toward it.

I. What do we understand by recreation?

The word comes from a Latin word to which is added the prefix 're', so that the meaning becomes. 'to create again or anew'. You readily recognize the word re-create in it. As such it means, refreshment of the body or mind; diversion, amusement, as a pleasurable occupation or exercise.

Recreation, from the very nature of the case, must be some engagement, whether physical or mental or spiritual, which tends to refresh a person. It must be something different than the regular occupation, a diversion from the strain of our daily work. We are so constituted that we can put forth our best efforts into a certain task only for a limited time. Then we need a rest, which need not necessarily be inactivity but must be a diversion, a relaxation.

Therefore recreation also includes the idea of pleasure. Health authorities tell us that a pleasant conversation during a meal aids digestion. A person who cannot sleep should rest himself by enjoying pleasant, refreshing thoughts. A laugh is healthy. This is certain, that doing a thing purely for the pleasure that is in it affords relief and rest. As such the question of recreation is closely related to the matter of amusements.

The question must be put, what is the place of recreation in the life of a Christian?

In answer to this question it is sometimes maintained that recreation is an end in itself. It is its own excuse for being. Thus, for example, young men who have toiled in manual labor all day will go out evening after evening to engage in a game of ball, simply for "the fun of it". Young women who have spent the whole day nailed down to an office chair will come home in the evening and settle down to a romance in some magazine, only because they "like it". In that case the only argument for recreation, if you can call it such, is the common idea that "we need some fun". The old adage of "all work and no play" is taken to mean that life is too short that we should not get out of it all the pleasure we can. Work is drudgery which we cannot escape, but in our spare time we do as we please, give vent to our feelings and let our emotions run riot. You will all agree that there is nothing Christian in such an attitude toward recreation; neither is the defense very strong.

Again there is the idea, not too strange, that recreation must serve as a sort of antidote for an overdose of religion. We go to Church, to Catechism, to Society

possibly, maybe to this or that other meeting, but we also need some sport or amusement. The argument is raised that we cannot always walk with long faces, nor sit in a corner twiddling our thumbs and acting like old men and women. The idea seems to be that religion is alright, but it needs an antidote; we are willing to serve God, but we want our days off and our time out. Recreation is then the Christian's safety valve. It possibly might be called a "necessary evil". There can be but one conclusion, if that is the case, recreation has no place in the life of a Christian.

But how, then, can we defend it and what place does it occupy in our lives?

As a proper approach to this question it is essential that we are reminded of the fact that we are created as image bearers of God. God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life, whereby he became a living soul. Man was created with what we sometimes distinguish as the three H's, head, heart and hand. He had a mind to think and know and understand; a heart as a center of feeling and impulse whereby he could will and desire, love, consecrate and devote himself; and a body to use in subjecting all things of this earthly creation unto his service. His calling with mind and heart and body was to replenish the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it. All that remains the save even after the fall. But the point is, and that is significant, that Adam was called to serve God as God's friend-servant. He was king in this earthly creation only as vice-regent under God. He had to use all things and do all things in the service of God, not as drudgery but in willing devotion, a consecration of love. That was Adam's calling in Paradise and that, no less, is our calling as we are restored in the image of God in Christ Jesus.

That limits and determines the place of recreation in our lives.

It means, first of all, that also our recreation must be a service of God. I consider it essential that we view it in that light. In God's service there are no days off, no vacations, nor even recesses. God demands of us in every moment of our lives that we shall love the Lord our God with our whole heart and mind and soul and strength. And the application of the parable of the Unprofitable Servant is, "and when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." That is certainly also the attitude of the true child of God. We serve God not out of force of duty, but willingly and in love. As we also sing from our Psalter:

Thy precepts are my heritage,
For daily they my heart rejoice;
To keep Thy statutes faithfully,
Shall ever be my willing choice.

This is also the command of all the Scriptures.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1-2. And again, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31.

In the second place, recreation can be of a three-fold nature. It can be physical, mental or spiritual. By physical recreation must be understood those sports or pastimes which especially tend to exercise and develop the body. It is but natural that one who is engaged a very large part of his time in mental work must seek his diversion in some physical relaxation. While, on the other hand, anyone who is engaged in manual labor should seek it in something that is almost entirely free from physical strain, in some form of mental recreation as music, reading or study. But it makes no difference whether your labor be mental or physical, there always remains room for spiritual recreation. True religion must be more than recreation, but also that. By spiritual recreation I mean such engagements as reading the Word of God, the church papers and spiritually upbuilding literature, attending Catechism and Societies, preparing for these meetings, discussions on spiritual matters when we visit with one another, and anything of that nature. If our service of God is a pleasure instead of a mere drudgery we shall not only find time and place for it, but what is more, develop a liking for it as a pleasant form of relaxation.

And finally, whatever our form of recreation may be, it must always be and remain a diversion. Recreation must never be an end in itself, but must always serve to relieve the strain of our daily toil and thereby refresh us. It may never take the place of or hinder us in performing our duties, but always aid us to do the very best work of which we are capable. Even so it must serve the purpose that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works. 2 Tim. 3:17. Instead of being in conflict with, it must serve toward a more perfect service of God.

II. That already determines our attitude toward recreation.

If we have learned to properly evaluate our recreation we are ready to condemn all those forms of amusements which from the very nature of the case are sinful. I have in mind such entertainments as the world has to offer us. Pastimes and sports which bring us right into the midst of the world and cause us to rub elbows with the works of iniquity. Gala events and amusements where the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are given unbridled rein. Any entertainment where the Christian must necessarily forsake his faith and give himself as a slave to chance, to carnal pleasures and to sin. Amusements

such as dances, theaters, games of chance and all that they represent.

That also means that our own entertainment in the Church will necessarily be of a nature that is worthy of a Christian. Any social or banquet which is so filled with hilarity that one all but laughs himself sick can hardly be classed as a Christian form of entertainment, no matter if it is opened and closed with prayer. No more does a reel of pictures, whether it be of Mickey Mouse or anything else, have a place in Christian amusements.

Moreover, recreation can never take a predominant place in our lives. A while ago I mentioned that young men will sometimes indulge in a game of ball evening after evening. Purposely I chose what may be called a very healthful sport. There can be no real objections to the game as such. And yet it would be wrong for any of us to live purely for that sport as well as for any other. By indulging purely in physical exercise a young man may vie with a gorilla for strength, but he certainly can expect nothing else than that his forehead, too, like the gorilla's will begin to run back just above the eyes. Likewise, what good does mental development do for a young woman if she has learned nothing more than the fine arts of making love and how to share the vain fashions of the world. Christian young men are strong, but their strength is spiritual rather than physical, "for", says the apostle John, "they have overcome the evil one." Theirs is the battle of faith against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. Christian young women adorn themselves with the truth. They are examples of true Christian modesty, beauty and virtue.

Even that demands of us the self-denial of Christian discipleship. Jesus warned the over-enthusiastic candidate for the discipleship that the "foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head." And His demand to all of His disciples is, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." If we are ready to do that, we are also ready to allow recreation only that small place in our lives that it can serve us physically, mentally and spiritually unto the service of the living God.

Finally, the question might be asked whether the Church should supply entertainment for its youth. The Catholics, as you know, have gone to the extent of preparing public boxing bouts for Catholic youth. Even in Reformed circles the possibility has been mentioned of preparing "movies of a high order" within the Church to satisfy youth's demand for that form of entertainment. Personally, I want to go on record as being adverse to the whole idea. What is more, I am of the conviction that it spells the ruin of the Church and its youth if the Church must preserve the youth by compromising with the world and bringing the world's entertainments into the Church. The

distinctive calling of the Church is to preach the Word, in season and out of season, and we may certainly expect that where the Word is preached in all its purity the true Covenant youth will also walk according to it.

In conclusion, there can be no objection to games or Christian amusements, but let them never escape from their subservient place in our lives. They must serve to refresh, recuperate, and thereby aid us in fulfilling our God-given calling in every sphere of life. And as to spiritual recreation, we are more liable to suffer from a lack of it than from an excess. Let us have more of it.

In all that you do, equip and prepare yourself for a well-rounded Christian life in the service of God.

The man of God must be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.

Thank you,

Rev. C. Hanko.

Our Attitude Toward Politics

Introduction.

I have been asked to speak to you this afternoon on the subject, "Our Attitude Toward Politics". Allow me to say that I found this a rather difficult subject due mainly to two things. In the first place it is a subject about which I have concerned myself but very little. Hence, I am not acquainted with the subject either in theory or in practice. I am a minister and not a politician. In the second place, this is a subject that is rather far removed from the sphere of our interest, generally speaking, both as individual christians and as Protestant Reformed Churches. I do not mean to justify this attitude, but I state it simply as a fact. We have been concerned with other things and have taken our citizenship, with its various implications, as a matter of fact. This is not the case in the Netherlands. There the christian is vitally interested in the things that concern politics. There a christian party exists which propagates its own Calvinistic principles and produces candidates for the various offices. Hence, one can very easily understand that the question of the christian's attitude toward politics is a vital one in the Netherlands. Perhaps we should have said that these things *were* the case instead of *are* the case, because we do not know how things have been altered since the Netherlands has lost her independence.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the difficulties, you have asked me to speak on this subject and I have consented to do so. I shall now endeavor to comply.

In discussing the subject, I shall call your attention to three things:

- I. *What we must understand by politics.*
- II. *How politics affects us.*
- III. *Our attitude in respect to it.*

I. *What we must understand by politics.*

The word "Politics" has in our day acquired a very unfavorable sense which it does not have of itself. Today the word is used to denote scheming and trickery on the part of a ruling body or a member of such a body. One who is engaged in politics, who is called a politician, is regarded as a most untrustworthy individual. None of us, I am sure, would feel ourselves complimented if we were called a politician. We would be inclined to interpret such a remark as a reflection upon our honesty and sincerity.

The fact is that the word politics has such an unsavory connotation that one, upon hearing the word, involuntarily associates with it the adjective "rotten". The two seem to fit together. "Rotten politics" is a very common expression. However, we should understand that that is not the fault of politics itself but of those who are engaged in the field of politics. The blame for the universally unfavorable conception of politics lies at the door of the crooked individual who uses his position and influence in the sphere of politics, to promote his own selfish interests at the cost of the welfare and honor of others. It would not therefore be fair to judge politics in the light of the crooked politician, no more than it would be fair to judge the church in the light of her worst member.

Politics in itself is not evil. It is not necessarily "rotten" and underhanded. For the purpose which we have in mind at this time, we want it to be clear that we do not speak of politics in an unfavorable sense. We ask you therefore to disregard as much as possible the unfavorable aspects of politics and think of it in its more favorable sense.

What is politics? The word politics comes from a Greek word, the root meaning of which is "city". Hence the word politics means literally, that which pertains to the city, particularly with a view to the government of the city. Politics may therefore be defined as the science of government. As the science of government it includes within its scope:

1. Principles of government, with a view to the internal affairs of the city, state or nation and also all things that pertain to international affairs, i.e. the relation of one nation with another.
2. Methods of government, e.g. specific policy of managing public affairs.
3. The propagation of principles, e.i. putting principles into effect through the application of its methods in actual operation, appointment of officers, etc.

In this light one can readily understand that politics is hard to conceive of apart from parties. In fact,

politics without a party is impossible. The party is the natural result of politics. The party in politics is composed of like-minded individuals who band together formulate principles, propose methods, produce candidates for office, advocate their specific principles, methods and candidates and work for the execution of their principles and methods through the election of their candidates.

It is in this party form that we come into contact with politics in our own country. This form is very outstanding in our land because of our democratic form of government and because there are principally two parties that vie for power. But that is no less true in other countries, even in such nations as Russia and Germany. The difference is that there one party is in power and holds sway to the exclusion of all other parties. There no one dares to oppose the party in power; to do such is to place one's self in danger of life imprisonment or death.

We stand before the question: how did politics originate? To answer this question we must go back to the very beginning when God created man. When God made man, He did not create him as an individualist, as a creature who could live entirely alone apart from others, but as a social being. God created him so that he stood in relation with others. Therefore when the Lord had made man, He said, "It is not good that man should live alone". So the Lord created Eve to be a helpmeet for him. Moreover God put in him the social urge, as is plain from the fact that what God did for Adam became the rule for all others. One shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. There God laid the foundation for the family, the social structure in the narrow sense, and for the community and nation as well, the social structure in its broader sense.

And God ordained government for the family both in its narrow and broad sense. In the family proper, the husband is the head of the house and the wife is called to be in subjection to her husband. In the community, state and nation, God has set places of authority. Hence Scripture teaches us that government is an institution of God and a servant of God as well.

In Israel, in its theocratic form, God did not merely ordain places of authority but also directly appointed men to fill those positions. Prophets, priests and kings were appointed by the Lord directly.

In our day the form of government is different from that of Israel. The difference consists in this that today men are appointed or chosen by the people to exercise the offices instituted by God. The office always remains, however the people elect and determine the individuals who are to fill them. (Of course, not apart from God's providence. Nothing can be separated from God's providence. In the providential sense, God puts individuals in office also today.)

There you have the beginning of politics. Politics

begins there where the people, either in greater or lesser degree, have a voice in their government. I think we may safely say that it is the human element in government that produces what we call politics, in the practical sense of the word.

For the correct understanding of our subject, it is necessary that we make a few distinctions. We must distinguish between *politics* and *government*. They are not identical; the one serves the other, politics serves the government. *Government* is an institution. *Politics* is the practical science that concerns itself with institution. The question is therefore not, "What is our attitude toward our *government*?" That question is rather simple to answer; briefly we might say, "Our attitude must be one of obedience in the love of God". But the question is, "What is our attitude toward *Politics*?" that is, toward that science that deals with the operation and administration of government. And shall we come to any definite conclusion, it will be necessary to ask:

II. *How does politics affect us?*

There are some who deny the necessity of being affected by politics in any way. They are the Anabaptists. These people withdraw themselves from everything that is of the world and refuse to be affected by anything in it. They believe in a local separation; they want to live alone. Actually such a thing is impossible. To realize such a local separation, "we must needs go out of this world" and that is impossible. Hence, one may maintain that he will not be affected by politics or anything else in the world, the fact is that he cannot help himself in that matter. As long as he is in the world, he is affected by it, also politically.

Politics affects us in the first place as citizens. Politics is vitally connected with government, so much so that the principles and methods of government are controlled by politics. And the government has authority over us as citizens of the nation. Its laws concern all its citizens, the christian citizen as well as the ungodly. Also we christians must meet its demands and abide by its regulations. Now, the nature and character of these laws, restrictions, regulations and demands depends largely on politics, is influenced by politics. A practical example of that one may find in the many changes that take place in the forms of government when the administration goes from the one party to the other in our own land. Hence, in as far as the government is controlled by, or influenced by politics, we are affected by politics as citizens or inhabitants of the country under whose government we have placed ourselves.

However, politics affects us to an even greater extent as Christians. That is due to the fact that there is often conflict between the principles of the Christian and the world. Politics is of the world, in the spiritual sense of the word. Its principles, purpose and methods

are worldly, earthly, sinful, wicked. The *principle* of the world, and therefore also of politics in that world, is the enmity against God and the exaltation of man. In the last analysis the world always says there is no God and its religion, so-called, is at best nothing but humanism.

Its *purpose* is plainly stated in that oft-repeated phrase, "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; a heaven on earth, but a heaven without God, a full, rich life on this earth apart from God, that is what the world wants, seeks and strives for in all its spheres, politics not excluded. And that is what politics always promises. So it is today in our own land. Wilkie promises the people that should he be elected, he will give them exactly that which they desire, life, liberty and happiness. And strange though it may seem the world is always foolish enough to believe that it can be done. Foolish, because in the past there have always been those who have promised these things and have failed. Yet today people desire a change in administration because they think that another party, another president will be able to give them what they long to have.

Its method is always that of cunning deception, force and domination. It deceives by means of lies, it promises much with no intention of fulfilling the promise. It threatens and harasses; it persecutes.

And as Christians we may not and cannot agree with such principles, purposes and methods. Our *principle* is expressed in the admonition of the Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God. . . ." Our principle is the love of God. Our *purpose* is the glory of God and we declare that all that misses that purpose is sin. Our *method* is that of love, love of God and love of the neighbor.

In this light it is not difficult to understand the conflict which arises between the Christian and the world and it is easy to see that the politics of the world oftentimes affects us adversely. And that conflict shall continue to exist as long as this world exists and the Christian is called to live in it. The world does not want the Christian way. And we may not follow the world's way but must testify that it is evil. Hence, the conflict is inevitable, a conflict which usually ends in the persecution of the people of God.

If, then, these things are true, and we believe they are, the question very naturally arises:

III. *What must our attitude be?*

In the first place, negatively, it should not be one of false optimism as we find in the world. The world always expects something better, even in the face of disaster. The world is always willing to try something new, new methods and different systems in its expectation of better things. The world expects to succeed, expects politics to succeed. We, on the other hand, should not foster such expectations. God's Word teaches us that He makes foolish the wisdom of the wise and that He will bring it to nought. What expect-

ation therefore can we have of the world or its politics?

Neither should our attitude be such that we would attempt to improve the situation. We cannot change the politics in this nation. That is not pessimism but simply fact. The Christian has no voice in the world. Should he attempt to alter the politics of the world, he would doubtless soon be branded a traitor to the nation and the cause of the people. That would be especially true of us as Protestant Reformed people. We would stand entirely alone. Even those who call themselves Christians would refuse to give us their support. This cannot be otherwise because we must always reject their imaginary basis of compromise with the world, the theory of common grace, expressed in the well-known Three Points. The fact is simply this, that we have no voice in the world and even though we should try, we would find it impossible to change the politics of the world.

In the second place, positively, our attitude should be that of faithfulness. Faithfulness to God in all our life's spheres, to let our light shine and testify to the world that its politics is evil and that it cannot succeed.

Moreover our attitude must be such that we seek the kingdom of heaven. Practically, with a view to politics, that would mean that we should support that party, system and candidate, whose policy is conducive for Christian liberty. Not for the sake of the principles of that party but for the sake of the kingdom of heaven as we are called to seek it and its wellbeing in the midst of the world.

Finally, it should be our aim to organize and establish a politics of our own. We should have our own party, Christian party with Christian principles, Christian methods and Christian candidates. Then, although even that would not give us a voice in the politics of the world it would insure for us the freedom of conscience which we desire.

I thank you,
Rev. H. De Wolf.

Our Attitude Toward Missions

It affords me great pleasure to have had the privilege of attending your convention of Protestant Reformed youth. In the first place, because a convention such as this is a wholesome sign, that God has blessed and is blessing our churches, and that our churches have a future. For in our *youth*, under God, lies the future welfare of our Protestant Reformed denomination. This is indeed for you a great privilege, but also at the same time a grave responsibility. In the second place I am very happy at this occasion because your

convention reveals that our young people have a desire and a yearning to serve God. It has been said that the youth needs the church, and that the church needs youth, and this is indeed the truth, providing that it is a youth that fears and loves the Lord. That is essential. In our day we often hear the complaint that there is such a great lack of true spirituality and of sanctification. I dare not say that these complaints are unfounded, for we are certainly living in a time, when not only youth, but men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. We are living in days of great apostasy as great or greater than the world has ever known. But having spent these days in your midst, we do not complain, but rather take courage, and wish you God's blessing upon your convention and upon your societies.

Your committee requested me to give a brief talk on "Our Attitude Toward Missions", a subject which harmonizes with your convention theme. I am glad this subject was assigned to me, because undoubtedly you also have often heard the slurring remark that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not believe in doing mission work, in fact we are accused of being anti-missionary. We must not let such slurring remarks frighten us, for this accusation is not something new, but was also hurled at the reformers and at our Reformed fathers. To the carnal mind the great fundamental truths of God's sovereignty and man's total depravity seem to be incompatible with the command of Christ to preach the gospel to all nations. Whenever, in the history of the Church, there were those that maintained, defended and preserved the doctrines of God's sovereign grace and the total depravity of man, they were immediately accused of having no place in their theological thinking for the cause of missions. This accusation always savors of Arminianism. According to their bigoted and narrow-minded conception, one must be an Arminian before one can truly be an enthusiast for missions, and let me hasten to add that to be an enthusiast for missions in the current sense of the word, namely, to save souls for Christ, one indeed must be an Arminian. On the other hand, the real significance of missions and of the missionary task is understood by him, and by him only, who believes, maintains and defends the truth of God's sovereign grace.

We must beware of this subtle argument, that one must be an Arminian, before one can believe in, and enthusiastically support, the cause of missions. It is maintained that the denial of the first point of 1924, which teaches a general well-meant offer of salvation, on the part of God, to all that hear the gospel, makes it impossible to heed the command of Christ Jesus, to preach the gospel to all nations. They do not seem to be able to distinguish the difference between the phrase *to preach Christ* to all nations, or *to well-meaningly offer Christ to all*. The first is Reformed, the second

is Arminian. The Christian Reformed Church maintains the latter, while our churches believe the first. It has been said that we only preach the gospel to the elect. This statement is as untrue as it is absurd. How would it be possible to preach only to the elect, seeing they are known but to God. But why is it impossible to preach to all men in general, unto whom the Lord sends us, a gospel, that as to God's intention is only unto salvation for the elect. To put it very concisely, we believe in a *general preaching* of a *particular gospel*. Certainly the Word of God is made known to all that hear, even as the apostle expresses it in Romans 10:18: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world". But its message of comfort, its assurance of salvation, comes only to those that believe, whose faith is a gift of God. Again I would ask, why is it impossible to believe in election, that God does *not* will the salvation of all men, but only of His elect, and still believe in a general preaching unto all men promiscuously? Would it be impossible over a national radio hook-up, to address only those of foreign birth? All that tuned in would hear, but the message would only be for those who were born outside of our shores. Thus it is also in the preaching of the Word of God. When God's Word calls the hungry and thirsty, the weary and heavy laden, the blind, the naked, the poor, the lost, then *all* hear the sound of these words, but the Lord calls a very distinct and a very peculiar people. For thus He calls His sheep by name, and they hear His voice. He does not call the righteous, and by nature every man is righteous in his own eyes, but he calls sinners to repentance, i.e., those that acknowledge their sins, and that hunger and thirst after righteousness. No, not *we* make the distinction, we must bring the Word to all unto whom the Lord sends us, but the Word of God, as a sharp two edged sword, makes distinction and separates between the righteous and the wicked, between those whom God has chosen and those whom He has not. Not we, but the Word of God separates the sheep from the goats. In this world this separation is not local, but spiritual and ethical, while its visible manifestation awaits the day of judgment. Therefore the purpose of God, in the preaching of the Word, is not only obtained in those that believe, but also in those that do not believe. And the minister of the gospel, the preacher of the Word of God, must know, that he is a sweet savour unto God, *not only* in those that are saved, but also in those that perish. 2 Cor. 2:14-17.

After these preliminary remarks it must have become evident that our attitude over against missions can never be that of the Arminian conception, of a well-meaning offer of salvation unto all men promiscuously, and which has as its primary purpose the saving of souls. All Arminianism is essentially humanism and therefore must lead to Modernism, because it makes

man, and his well-being, the ultimate purpose of all things, instead of the glory of God. No, our attitude towards missions must be the Calvinistic one, that seeks its point of departure, not first of all in the salvation of man, but in the glory of God. Even as the apostle expresses it in the above-mentioned passage of 2 Cor. 2:14-17: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. (And what is that savour of His knowledge? That God wills all men to be saved? Indeed not, for the apostle continues;) For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: (Such as those that make of it a well-meaning offer of salvation for all men.) but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

The word *Missions* literally means to send, to delegate, to perform some service or function by authority. In connection with our subject, in the theological sense of the word, it means to send forth men with authority to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, and that upon the authority from God. The term *Missions* is not a Scriptural term. It is not literally found in Holy Writ. All that the term implies, however, is found in the so-called great commission, Matthew 28:19, 20: "Go ye, therefore, and teach 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, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." These words indeed embody all that is implied in the term *Missions*. The Lord sent forth His apostles with the authority to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. *Go ye. . .* To do mission work, to preach the gospel is a command of Christ. Not to do it is disobedience. No church, that is worthy of the name, can be disobedient to this clear command of its Lord and King. "And teach all nations," not merely the Jews, but *all nations*; both Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free. Beginning at Jerusalem, Luke 24:47, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. "*Teaching them to observe all things*," mark you, *all things*. Hence the preacher or missionary must not come with a gospel that can be written on a thumbnail, or that you can put up on a billboard or spare tire, but he must teach men to observe *all things*, the whole counsel of God, as it has been revealed unto us in His Word. "*Whatsoever I have commanded you*." A missionary or preacher may never speak his own word, or his own opinion, but only that which Christ has commanded him. Strictly speaking he has nothing of his own to deliver, and whenever he speaks his own word, apart from the

Word of Christ, he ceases to be a missionary. Even as an ambassador, who has a definite message to deliver in the name of his government, may not express his own opinion, and if he does he cannot do so in his capacity as an ambassador, even so a missionary or preacher, has a very definite mission, and that mission is, to speak only whatsoever Christ has commanded him.

These words of Christ were first of all addressed to the apostles. They were delegated by Him to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. The word *apostle*, literally means, one sent forth. They were directly sent by Christ, "*Go ye. . .*" These words, however, cannot possibly be limited to the *persons* of the apostles, but were addressed to them as the representatives of the New Testament Church. The apostles *personally* could not fulfill the task of preaching the gospel in *all the world*. Neither can the promise, "And lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world," be limited to the lifetime of the apostles. Hence it is to the New Testament Church in the world that the Lord addresses His command, "*Go ye!*" It is well to emphasize this, especially in our day, that the work of missions is not the calling of the individual, of societies, of boards, or of alliances, but the Church, and the Church only has the commission to preach the gospel. Indeed, by virtue of the office of believers, every child of God has an earnest calling to let his light shine and to bear witness of the truth, but only the Church as institute has the commission to preach the word. Therefore Christ has given unto her "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" Eph. 4:11, 12. Hence, not the individual believers, but the Church has received the divine commission to preach the gospel, and she fulfills her task through the ministry.

Therefore the missionary or preacher, who has truly been called of God through His church, goes forth upon the command of, and in the name of Christ. They are the ambassadors of Christ, who is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. From this follows that they come with authority. They do not come with a mere invitation, or a wellmeaning offer, but they come and speak with authority. The returning refrain of their ministry is, "Thus saith the Lord!" They come with the command, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord"; and "Be ye holy, even as I the Lord thy God am holy; "Not to heed them is to disobey Christ. Indeed, with the same authority, they assure all those that repent and believe, of divine forgiveness and of eternal life, while upon all those that do not believe and repent they pronounce the wrath and the judgments of God. And such a true ambassador of Christ has the assurance that he is a sweet savour unto God, not only

in those who believe but also in those that perish. 2 Cor. 2:14-15.

We must warn against the wrong attitude towards missions of the Pelagians and Arminians. They go out from the erroneous doctrines of universal atonement and of a general well-meant offer of salvation. According to them, the atonement of Christ, as far as God is concerned, was intended for all men, but whether or not it shall be effective depends upon man's free will, whether he accepts or rejects the gospel invitation. Hence, they believe that the Kingdom of God depends upon the free will of man and upon our efforts. Man must save souls for Christ. Many thousands, according to them, perish every year, yea, every day, which could have been saved, if we had brought them the offer of salvation. This conception induced a well known secretary of missions, to base his appeal for missions upon a line of David, "The king's business requires haste." But their very actions belie their words, for if this were actually true, that many thousands are perishing daily, that could be saved by our efforts, how can they stand so idly by, when every day thousands of souls are perishing. Such a conception is a denial of the most fundamental reformed truths. It is a denial of God's sovereignty, of man's total depravity, and also that faith is a gift of God. Essentially the first of the "Three Points" of 1924, which teaches a well meant offer of salvation unto all, goes out from this erroneous doctrine of Arminianism.

Over against this erroneous conception we must maintain that Christ and He alone, gathers His church, which has been chosen unto everlasting life. *He* is the great missionary, even as our Heidelberg Catechism expresses it so beautifully, where we read, "That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life." According to this, it is all His work, and His alone. There is absolutely nothing of man in it. It is all of God, according to His good pleasure, through Christ's Word and Spirit. God is the beginning, the middle and the end of all missionary labors, and Christ is *the* missionary. And thus it is indeed. All that departs from this truth, all prattle of saving souls for Christ, no matter how pious it may seem, is a departure from the truth. And if for this truth we are accused of being anti-mission, let us bear this reproach for Christ's sake. Thus also the Lord Himself taught us, when He said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . . And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." John 10:14, 16. Also in John 12:32: "And I, when I shall be lifted up, shall draw all unto me." Again I Rev. 3:7: "These things saith he. . . that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no

man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." Thus also expressed in our Psalter,

"The Lord our God builds of His church,
He seeks her wandering sons,
He binds their wounds and gently heals,
The broken hearted ones."

But you ask, does He not use men for this purpose? Indeed He does. As we have seen He gives some to be apostles, some prophets, etc. And those whom He calls unto this task must indeed be faithful in their calling. But even then it is *Christ* that gathers His church, and never is it the work of men. It is *His Word*, *His Church*, *His Spirit*. It is *His mission*, *He sends*, *He regenerates*, *He calls*, *He gathers*, protects and preserves. And when the great task of missions shall have been accomplished, and the great multitude of the elect from every nation shall have been gathered, *then* it will be perfectly evident that it was all the work of Christ, and of Him alone. There will not be one single part, of which we will be able to say, this or that is our contribution to the kingdom of God. (*Soli Deo Gloria!*) There will not be any stars in *our* crown, but we shall all be stars in *His* crown.

We must also warn against those that would emphasize missions (?) at the expense of the truth. Those that care nothing about pure doctrine, and who would erase every line of demarcation, not only between denominations, but even between the church and the world, but are so concerned about bringing the Gospel to the poor heathens. They are willing to sacrifice so that children of heathen lands may be instructed in the truth, but entirely neglect the Christian education of their own children, yea, send them to schools, where Christ and His Word are denied. Let me warn you against such an attitude, and remind you that God realizes His covenant in the line of generations. Our first calling is to instruct our own children in the fear of the Lord, for if we do not, our own children might soon degenerate into heathendom. Not many generations ago, (there are approximately but 150 generations from Noah unto the present time) even the very darkest of heathendom had access to the Divine revelation of salvation. It is positively wicked to be an enthusiastic supporter of Missions (?) and at the same time sacrifice our own children to the Molochs of this world. Indeed we must do the one and not neglect the other, and in our missionary labors we must always begin at Jerusalem.

Hence it is first of all our calling to preserve the glorious heritage that is ours. In the midst of a world that is flooded with the heresy of Arminianism, we have been privileged with the truth of God's sovereign grace. That torch of truth has been handed down to us by the generations of God's covenant people. In spite of dungeon, fire and sword. For that truth our fathers have suffered and died. It is our calling to preserve

this torch of truth, and hand it down undiminished, yea, burning brighter than ever, to the coming generations. In order to do this we must know our Reformed Confessions, study them, cherish them, maintain and defend them over against all heresies. Especially as covenant youth in our societies. Ye are indeed the salt of the earth, not in the sense of being a preservative against the corruption of this world, as it is often erroneously explained, but from the point of view of its savour. If salt has lost its savour, it is good for nothing, but to be trodden under the feet of men, so also we as Protestant Reformed youth only have right of existence as long as we are faithful to our distinct Reformed heritage.

We must also propagate these principles beyond the sphere of our own churches. We must seek to share this glorious truth of God's sovereign grace with others, and warn against those that would deny this truth. First of all it is our calling to do this over against the churches that have so cruelly cast us out. We must seek to reveal unto her the error of her way and call her to repentance. This task has especially been entrusted unto me as your home missionary, and by the grace of God I have labored in this difficult calling for the past three years, and your convention has served as a great incentive to continue. And may God's blessing so rest upon you and upon our churches, that the day may come that we may carry the banner of the truth of His sovereign grace to ever wider fields of labor.

Rev. B. Kok.

Minutes of the Convention

In this report of the minutes of our latest Federation Convention the undersigned will confine herself to the business transacted, as the other activities such as speeches, banquet and program numbers will be recorded in this issue of the Standard Bearer by others.

The business sessions were opened in the morning of Thursday, Aug. 22, by the Rev. L. Vermeer, after our President, Homer Kuiper, read Psalm 144 and the Psalter number 371 was sung by the delegates. The roll call was then taken and all societies were represented, including the three new member societies of Creston, Kalamazoo and Roosevelt Park. The minutes of the previous convention were then read by the secretary and declared approved by the President when no remarks were registered against them. It was moved to accept the three above mentioned societies as members of our Federation, which motion was accepted.

Mr. A. C. Boerkoel, representing the Men's League, asked and received the floor and extended the greet-

ings of his organization. Upon request of the president, the Rev. L. Vermeer responded in the name of the Federation, assuring the League of our well wishes and heartiest co-operation in matters wherein the two organizations have joint interests. A motion was also accepted to extend a courtesy vote to all ministers present.

Miss Betty Van Dellen then gave a formal report of the constitution committee, which report was accepted for information. It was decided that with the reading of the various articles of the proposed constitution, any article or by-law upon which no remarks were made, was automatically accepted. Various articles were amended or changed, which need not be reported here, since the constitution as revised and amended will be printed and sent to all societies holding membership in the Federation. We may remark here that a lively and interesting debate centered about the question whether any articles in the constitution should be unalterable or unchangeable, especially as pertaining to the article on the purpose and basis of the Federation. This debate brought to the foreground the question whether or not a fallible body or group of Christians could in the future change an article which positively states "we stand on the infallible Word of God". However it was decided that the one article pertaining to basis and purpose could not be changed. Also the change was approved to elect as President and Vice-president, only those who are members in full communion in one of our Prot. Ref. Churches. It was decided to eliminate from the by-laws the rule that future conventions be held in the month of August, and instead to have the executive board stipulate the time of future meetings, after consulting the societies. Further it was included in the by-laws that: "all officers must retain membership in a Y. P. Society during their tenure of office, otherwise the officer must resign." After all proposals pertaining to the constitution were approved, the constitution as changed and amended, unanimously ratified by the delegates present. The committee chosen to have the constitution printed were Alice Rietsma, Hanna Bloem and John Piersma.

The reports of the Secretary and of the Treasurer were now read and approved. An auditing committee to examine the books was appointed consisting of George Lanting, Jacob Regnerus and Janet Smits. A letter of greetings was received from the Young People's Society of Manhattan, which was accepted for information. A committee was appointed to study the idea of organizing our Societies into leagues, this committee, which is to report at the next convention, consists of Jennie De Jong, Ann Windemuller and Grace Monsma. During the morning recess coffee was served and tea in the afternoon by the host societies of Fuller Ave. We need not mention that this was enjoyed by all. After recess a proposal was considered

and accepted to attempt uniting the Western League with our Federation. The committee appointed to carry out this work consisted of John Piersma, June DeZeeuw, Grace Lubbers, and Walter Hofman.

A proposal of the Fuller Ave. Societies to find a more suitable means of expression for the Federation than is now offered by "Our Church News" was put into the hands of the publication committee of South Holland. A motion to express our thanks to the Fuller Ave. Societies in being our hosts this year was unanimously accepted. Also it was decided to accept as our own, the expression of congratulations to the Rev. H. Hoeksema on the 25th anniversary of his active ministry which appeared in our Souvenir Booklet. Being notified of this expression from the Federation, the Rev. Hoeksema appeared and asked for the floor in order to express his heartiest thanks for this remembrance and wished the Federation the Lord's richest blessings.

The election of officers took place as follows: Vice Pres.-Walter Hofman; Treas.-John Piersma; Vice Sec'y-Treas.-Alice Rietsma and Advisor the Rev. B. Kok. The President, Secretary and our two advisors will continue another year in office. An invitation of the Fuller Ave. Societies was extended to meet in Grand Rapids again the coming year. This invitation was declined with thanks, upon an invitation coming from Oak Lawn to meet there in 1941. The latter invitation was accepted by unanimous vote. Due to the late hour it was decided to leave in the hands of the Executive committee the approval of the concept minutes. After the motion to adjourn was adopted, the president asked the Rev. L. Vermeer to close the meeting with thanksgiving, after which the Doxology was sung.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Van Baren, Sec'y.

Help Wanted!

Wanted—hundreds of lively, peppy, Protestant Reformed young men and young women who are willing to give a generous part of their time and energy to the development and support of our Federation.

What work is there that must be done? First of all, the Publication Committee is endeavoring to launch a Federation paper in the near future. This is going to be your paper, devoted to the current needs of young people. Among its features will be included a Bible study outline suitable for Bible discussion hour in the various societies. Another feature will probably be the offering of a Scripture memorization plan. This plan will include a systematic arrangement of texts as well as hints and suggestions as to the best methods to follow in memorization work. Still another feature

will be timely editorials on questions and problems which we as young people must face today. Now in order that this project may be a success, it is necessary that the Publication Committee has your full support. This is an ambitious undertaking, yet it can and will be a success if YOU get busy and see that your Society has a hundred percent subscription.

Another project requiring your aid is the lecture plan which the executive board will sponsor during the winter months. We plan to have a combined lecture and social gathering. We assure you that worth-while topics will be treated as well as the best speakers will be available. Your very important part is that you give the proper publicity to these arrangements so that they will be a smashing success.

Thirdly, begin to work to come to the big annual convention at Oak Lawn next year. Anyone who has been at our last two conventions will certainly say that if you miss this meeting, you are missing the greatest inspirational gathering of our young people.

Perhaps your society is not a member of the Federation. Well, now is the time to do something about it. Don't let distance or any factor hinder you or cause you to have any misgivings. We have provisions for associate as well as full membership and we suggest that you instruct your secretary to correspond with the Federation secretary, Miss Alice Van Baren, 1129 Bates St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and you can be sure that a suitable arrangement will be made with your local Society.

Let's get busy, then. Roll up your sleeves and pitch in and you can be sure of a blessing, for as you sow, so shall you reap.

Homer G. Kuiper.

IN MEMORIAM

The undersigned consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa, wishes to express its sympathy to its fellow-member and elder, Nick Buyert, in the loss of his father. May God give us peace in all our troubles.

Consistory of the Prot. Ref. Church,
John Broek, Vice Pres.

Sioux Center Iowa.

NOTICE

The new address of the Treasurer of the Standard Bearer is 1101 Hazen Sreet, S. E. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Please bear this in mind when you send in your Subscription Dues.

An Interesting Discussion

At the after-dinner program of the banquet which marked the closing of the second convention, the host committee had arranged an interesting debate on the topic, "Should doctrinal differences be minimized?" The affirmative position was maintained by two young men of Fuller Ave. Young Men's Society, John Piersma and Walter Hofman. The negative was represented by two young ladies from Talitha Society, Alice Reitsma and Eileen Slopsema. No judges were needed because the Messrs. Piersma and Hofman capitulated to the negation in their closing speeches. In order that the views expressed might have a wider circulation, the debaters have consented to the publication of their speeches. They are as follows:

Debate

RESOLVED: That Doctrinal Differences Dividing
Denominations Should Be Minimized.

Pro:—

AFFIRMATIVE—1st Constructive Speech

Strictly speaking, this is not a debate. It might better be called a series of pro and con speeches on the stated topic.

We of the affirmative can already feel the prick of the thorns and briars of the "scourge" in our backs and hear the epithets of "despicable curs and miserable creatures" ringing in our ears.

To allay a misunderstanding, we feel that a few words of explanation are in order. Because of the nature of the subject, it becomes necessary for us to affirm several things which are not necessarily our heart-felt convictions. We hope to show rather by our speeches the complete absurdity of the supposition of the resolution. We ask you to bear this in mind as we proceed.

As is customary for the first affirmative speaker, it is my task to define the terms of the subject. By "minimized" we understand the "process of reducing to the smallest possible part". "Denomination", which is derived from the Latin "Nomen", meaning "to name", and with the prefix "de" means "that which is named". In our subject, therefore, "a group named alike". Denomination is not strictly an ecclesiastical term. It is used in connection with several things, as for example money, bills being of one denomination, etc. In ecclesiastical circles, however, there are several denominations—unnecessarily so, as will be pointed out. Bringing to mind a few, there are the Protestant Reformed, Christian Reformed, Reformed, Episcopalian, etc.

"Doctrine", also derived from a Latin word "docere" means "to teach" or that "which is taught". Doctrine, therefore is the teaching of a particular group. A mere definition of this term does not designate its real meaning. What it really implies in relation to our subject will be brought out a little later.

I will point out that doctrines should be minimized because it is not *the* essential thing, nor is it understood as such.

My colleague will show the way in which peaceful harmony can reign in a united Church.

There are a few observations I would like to make concerning the subject. First, it admits of differences—nor would anyone deny this. All that is necessary is to look around and see the several names of the several Churches, revealing the great disagreement among church-goers.

Secondly, it implies that these differences are of an essential nature for they divide denominations. But, is this really a fact? By investigation we find that these differences are really non-essential. The example which lies closest to our hearts is the split between the Protestant Ref. and Christian Ref. Churches. A separation not of essential differences, but merely a difference of teachings. We, and they, still have the same Creeds, the same standards. We still both strive for the same goal. The difference is only one of opinion.

The same is true of the differences between the Reformed and the Christian Reformed Churches. Neither was this split of an essential nature. Its cause was a difference of opinion among the various leaders over such questions as "admission of lodge members", the "insurance question", and other minor matters.

So we could go on comparing Baptists and the Reformed, or the Methodists and Episcopalians, and we would have to conclude each time that the differences were really not of an essential nature.

Thirdly, besides essential differences, there are also non-essential differences, which may still exist within a particular Church. Nor can anyone deny this. I am quite tempted to say that no two people see "eye to eye" on all of the various minute details involved in Church teachings. No, not even in our own denomination, which pounds away at doctrine so fervently.

This is all we ask, that differences among individuals be acknowledged and tolerated.

Everyone knows and feels that it is much more preferable to live as congregations in a spirit of love and fellowship, rather than to be continually bickering and quibbling about non-essentials.

Doctrine is harped upon often at the expense of true Christianity.

Many believe that because they belong to a certain denomination professing a logical system of thought, that they will be saved. No matter how they may treat their neighbor, they go to "the" Church and possess all that is necessary.

That is what doctrine does. It constricts us in body and mind so that we lose sight of the important truth that Christ died and will save all His own, and not only those in a special group. All the elect are not present here tonight. All those that will inherit the Kingdom of God do not go to the Protestant Church. Who dare deny that some from every nation and creed will see God and reign with Him?

What difference does it make then whether we all agree as to what is taught in its entirety. All profess the same God and receive the same reward of life everlasting where love shall reign. That, too, should be our aim in this life, forgetting petty differences and having no Creed but Christ and Him crucified.

Think, too, of the ugly picture the Church must present before the world when engaged in one of her periodic quarrels. We, who should be an example before men, arguing and quarrelling not as Christians living in love, but as men and women of the world who are self-centered and self-righteous.

Neither is this the way we are taught to do. Christ's teaching was not so. His was informal and constructive, deriving its great power from His works.

The Scribes and Pharisees on the other hand were steeped in doctrine. Theirs was a formal compact body of knowledge strictly adhered to and handed down from one generation to another. Of them we are warned—"beware of doctrines of the Pharisees". But what is the testimony of Christ? "He taught as one having authority and not as the Scribes".

What then was the essential teaching of Jesus? In its development by the apostles it has three main characteristics:

- (1) That Jesus was Christ.
- (2) That He was risen from the dead.
- (3) That salvation was by faith in His name.

It is further developed by Paul in his Epistles. There are several references in his Epistles to sound doctrine, which implies that a body of teaching had emerged which should serve as a standard of Orthodoxy. The content of this is nowhere implicitly stated, but it is a very probable inference that these references are to the Roman formula, which later became known as the "Apostles Creed". Upon this Creed rests the Church. It must become the great common denominator, which will unit all of the factions into a Universal Church of God.

All who profess this Creed have said enough.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty
Maker of Heaven and earth

And in Jesus Christ his Only Begotten Son, our Lord
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
He suffered and died under Pontius Pilate.
Was crucified, dead and buried.

He descended into Hell.
 The third day he arose again from the dead,
 He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right
 hand of God the Father,
 From thence he shall come to judge the quick and
 the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Ghost.
 I believe an Holy Catholic Church,
 The communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins,
 The resurrection of the body, and
 Life everlasting."

Walter Hofman

Con:-

NEGATIVE—1st Constructive Speech

The proposition has already been stated. We of the negation maintain that doctrinal differences dividing denominations should not be minimized, but on the contrary, that they should be emphasized. Doctrine is the very backbone of the Church; therefore to minimize that doctrine would rob her of her very right to exist.

Doctrine, we understand from our opponents, means teachings—teachings of the Word of God, teachings of the true Church with respect to that Word. You will agree that God entrusted His Word to His Church that she might preserve it, propagate and proclaim it, maintain it, and defend it. Now when the Church so maintains and defends it and also when she so rejects the errors of those that preach contrary notions thereto, that Church expresses her doctrine. Therefore inasmuch as the Word must be proclaimed and defended, we *must* have doctrine, and inasmuch as these will always be those that oppose that true doctrine, we *must* have doctrinal differences.

Since doctrine is then the ground on which the true Church is built and since doctrinal differences are therefore inevitable, I shall attempt to prove that to minimize that doctrine would in the first place be a very definite step in the wrong direction, a very definite aid to the false church. My colleague later will point out that to minimize doctrinal differences would cause the Church to hide the truth.

According to Article 29 of our Belgic Confession, one of the marks by which the true Church is known is the preaching of the pure doctrine of the Gospel. I repeat, the *pure* doctrine of the Gospel. It is only that pure doctrine with which we are concerned tonight; we are not considering those doctrinal differences which might separate two or more false churches. Now it must follow that if the preaching of the pure doctrine of the Gospel must characterize the true Church, all churches who do not bear that distinguish-

ing ear-mark must in that same measure be classified as the false church.

What is wrong with so many of our modern churches today? Why is it that sound, well-founded, shall we say "well-doctrinized" Christians cannot enjoy or gain spiritual benefit from many sermons preached from their pulpits? Why is it that from many of them you would hear little more than an inspirational address, a pep-talk or a sermonette? Why? Because their doctrinal differences that once existed have long since been so minimized that they no longer have doctrinal standards; they have no doctrinal differences and therefore no basis of unity. They now concern themselves with present-day economic conditions and perhaps can give you a fairly good remedy for them or can tell you what's wrong with Hitler or who shall win the war. The ear-mark of the true Church, the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel, is obsolete and old-fashioned. To be sure their inspirational address will be based on a Scripture text, but for illustration and authority, they will hand you just a bit of Shakespeare or the theories of some supposedly great scientist.

The calling of the true Church according to 2 Tim. 4:2 is "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Now we are asking our opponents to reconcile, if they can, that text, that sacred calling, with their idea of minimizing doctrinal differences. Is it possible, do they think, to preach the Word and at the same time to minimize it? We have proved that to minimize doctrine would inevitably mean minimizing the Bible,—God's Word can never be separated from doctrine. Or perhaps can they reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" and at the same time minimize that very doctrine? We maintain it is impossible!

Allow me to show by way of illustration how a policy of minimizing doctrinal differences with respect to church membership would lead to a false church. Picture with me a church, probably a small one, one that has heretofore consistently borne the ear-marks of the true Church. Fifty percent of this congregation is made up of parents and smaller children while the other fifty percent consists of young people, "eligibles" we'll call them, all about to be married to young people from other churches between whom there do exist very definite doctrinal differences. I'll stop right here to admit that this illustration is preposterous and far-fetched to be sure, but what is impossible at a point of time may easily become the result of a gradual development over a period of several centuries.

It so happens that all of these prospective husbands and wives have been persuaded to become members of this church not because they acknowledge that the doctrine taught there is the true and most perfect doctrine of salvation but because the doctrinal differences were

not so essential after all and "at all cost they must have peace in the family". The church officials having had visions of the results of a fifty percent membership increase, now decide to accept our opponents' policy of minimizing doctrinal differences and accept the new members on that basis. As a result you have a picture something like this. One third of the congregation remains as before; another third is made up of the new members who disregard what they consider "non-essentials", and the other third consists of those who have compromised with the previously mentioned third. Those who have a real concern for the mark of the true Church are now in the minority—a sad picture indeed!

I repeat, this is a fantastic and impossible illustration but not too fantastic to develop over a period of three or four generations. Look about you—it has happened in history!

We believe that our opponents' strongest argument is that of the desirability of unity in the Church. We certainly agree that the Church as the Body of Christ is One and that it ought to be made manifest in the world as such. However we want unity in the true Church—never a unity between the true and false Church! Unity, but not compromise!

Rev. Hoeksema in his book on the history of our own church said, "Far more precious than any external unity is the truth, and while the former must often be sacrificed on the altar of the latter, never may truth be sacrificed for the cause of an external oneness of the Church as an organization in the world".

Shall we then as our opponents suggest, minimize those doctrinal differences that are dear to us, minimize that pure doctrine of the gospel that marks us as the true Church? On the contrary, we of the negation maintain that we should not only *not* minimize it, not only emphasize it, but that we should study it, talk about it, and make it our own. We as young people should find where we stand, then stand there, and as Paul says, stand fast!

Elleen Slopesma.

(The first affirmative speaker filled in for Gertrude Yonker who submitted to an operation just a week previous.)

Pro:-

AFFIRMATIVE—2nd Constructive Speech

The negative so far in this debate has assumed a good deal and has accused no little without a semblance of support. For example, the speaker that has just left the floor has stated that we must agree that "doctrine" is the backbone of the church. And allow me to assure you that we certainly do agree that doctrine is an essential thing in the Church. We must agree with that statement, and you must agree to it, no

matter where you stand in relation to this question. Every movement, whether religious, or political, or social, or whatever it may be, must have, and necessarily does have certain teachings, or ideas that are fundamental to it, and without which that movement by the very nature of the case would drop out of existence. If the orthodox Christian denominations would eliminate the doctrines of the substitutionary atonement, or justification by grace, or any other similar tenet, it is very evident that the very idea of Christianity would have to be eliminated.

Nor do we have any desire to squelch all dissention, and hide under certain phases of the Christian faith in order to preserve peace. Discussion is a good thing. However, we wish to eliminate all quibbling, and bickering—in short, we wish to grant to every person agreeing to the doctrine set forth in the Apostles' Creed a right to his or her opinion in regards to the details of these doctrines. Let us be tolerant, and not attempt to force our conceptions on someone else!

For after all, none of us would dare to admit that we agree perfectly in every little thing with any one other person, whoever that person may be. They tell me that even husbands and wives do not always see eye to eye on everything, and, although I really know very little about this from personal experience, I suppose, that if in that intimate relation agreement is not entirely possible, among men not so closely bound together agreement is still less possible. And this fact is not difficult to understand, is it? For after all, all of us are very really different. We are all individuals, having our own personal traits, natures, characteristics, etc. None of us can view the same thing and see, I mean "see" in the broader sense of the word, the same thing. Strange as perhaps this may sound to you, it nevertheless is true. Therefore, the negative postulates here that those doctrinal "differences" dividing denominations should be minimized.

And, if we analyze the subject material furnishing cause for disagreement among Christians we can readily see that agreement is hardly possible. Examine with me for a moment such tremendous concepts as Immortality, Creation, the Incarnation, and, even the concept of God, Himself! Who will dare to claim the last word in respect to these and all of the other things discussed in the Scriptures? To ask the question is to answer it. None of us will presume to believe that he or she has exhausted the potential wealth of thought that any one of these subjects contains. We agree to them, that much is sure. And nevertheless, although we agree to them, we must admit that there must be much about any one of these fundamental doctrines that we do not understand. Therefore, the affirmative draws the conclusion here that any attitude that seeks to exclude dissention in regards to the details of these doctrines is not practicable, nor the right attitude to assume.

This becomes still more apparent when we take a glance at the average member in the pews. What about Mr. John Q. Churchmember—is or is he not able to come to a real logical conclusion in regards to these machinations of the theologian. That is what most of these doctrines are, I mean those dividing denominations, aren't they? They spring, of course, from the minds of those most able and most active in these matters, the ministers and professors in the seminaries, whose daily round of activity brings them into contact with the doctrines of the church constantly. You and I, the average "layman", do not manufacture hypotheses and conclusions in regards to what should be believed and practiced in the church, do we? Of course not. We seem to have all we can do to assimilate that which is given us from the pulpit, in catechism, in the Society and in the Sunday School, and through any other means employed by the church. And, isn't it true that amazing discoveries are frequently made when we seek to discover that which is actually understood by the average man. In spite of all the efforts of the above-mentioned agencies, very little seem to sink into the understanding. Consequently, when theologians begin to argue and to disagree on a certain matter, most often a good deal of the argument goes over our heads. We spend our time, for the most part in secular work, in activity that excludes from our attention the things of the spirit. Especially now, in our day and age, when competition is keen in all lines of endeavor, and we are required to exert the best that is in us to keep our jobs, do we find it difficult to hold fast to that which we have. Besides, we have not been trained to think into the more difficult aspects of these doctrines. All of this, and more, forces us to conclude that it certainly is useless to expect the laity to be vitally concerned with the argumentation of theologians.

Finally, we wish to recommend the following plan to you in regards to this situation. Do not think that we desire to minimize the problem as such. Rather, we wish to maximize its importance as a destructive power among orthodox Christians. It is sad that certain groups are denied the possibility of fellowship with us because they feel that they must disagree in regards to our conceptions of various aspects of our common faith. Let us therefore advocate that the church seek to confine itself to certain prescribed fundamentals; and that these fundamentals be prerequisite to membership. And also, that upon these fundamentals entire agreement is not essential, although desired, of course, but, that everyone is entitled to his or her own interpretation of the more remote details of these doctrines. Then, if the fear of being branded as a heretic is removed from the scene of argument and discussion, men will feel encouraged to meditate and to think for themselves upon the doctrines of the church.

John Piersma.

Con:—

NEGATIVE—2nd Constructive Speech

All that our opponents have done so far in this debate is to try and find a road that runs between the narrow road of the truth and the broad road of the world. But they can't find any because there isn't any there. There is no road that runs parallel to these two roads; but there is a road, a cross road, that branches off from the narrow road of emphasizing the truth and run directly into the broad road of discarding the truth and that is the road of minimizing the truth. And by the end of this debate, you will see clearly that that is the road which our opponents must take.

Our opponents stated that we should not always be harping on and wrangling and quibbling over doctrinal differences; that we should not have hair-splitting and quarrels, because after all, we are all striving to go to the same place. That is not the point, however. We are called to live our lives as closely to God as possible and God is Truth, therefore, we must have truth at all costs. That this causes friction, we are willing to concede, but we must not be afraid to offend with the truth. Christ Himself says, "Think not that I came to send peace, but a sword."

Our opponents went on to point out that the average layman does not understand these underlying doctrines anyway. However, if the people in the church are too ignorant to understand and appreciate the basic principles, things surely are not as they should be. This certainly can not be used as a reason for minimizing these principles. On the contrary, instead of minimizing the doctrines to suit those ignorant people, those ignorant people had better do what Paul tells Timothy to do, that is, study so that he may be approved of God and able to rightly tell what is truth and what is not truth.

And that brings us to our second point, namely, that if doctrinal differences are minimized the truth will remain hid. It stands to reason, the church must have the truth to begin with. And since we believe that our church has that truth, we wish to use our denomination as an example.

If we as Protestant Reformed Churches, were to minimize our doctrinal differences with other denominations, we would, in the first place, have to discontinue the publication of these pamphlets on "The Millennium", "Sin and Grace", "Baptism", etc., for, after all, if we wish to minimize our doctrinal differences with other denominations we surely do not want these pamphlets floating around, for they express what we uphold as the pure preaching of the Word of God—our Doctrine. In the second place, we would certainly have to call home our missionary. For, if we wish to minimize our doctrinal differences with other denominations, what in the world would our missionary be doing



out in that field, working amongst the other denominations, telling them what we uphold to be the pure preaching of the Word of God—our Doctrine. And in the third place, I am very much afraid we would have to cut out our Standard Bearer completely, for that is the Bearer of our Standards—our doctrines, and if we are going to minimize our doctrinal differences with other denominations, we surely would not want to publish a magazine filled with what we uphold to be the pure preaching of the Word of God—our Doctrine.

So you see, if in our own denomination, we were to minimize our doctrinal differences with other denominations, we would have to discontinue all our efforts to reveal the truth. And that certainly is not what the Bible teaches us to do. The Bible tells us let our light shine, to gird our loins with the truth and in Titus 2:7 we read, "In all things showing thyself an example of good works; in doctrine, uncorruptness."

What is true of the denomination as a whole, is also true of the individuals of the denomination.

Our opponents have implied that for the sake of peace and friendship, it is much better that friends do not talk about their doctrinal differences because all it does is create hard feelings and everyone goes home hot, under the collar. Well, sometimes it does take a little heat to produce the necessary effect, but at least if you are a hot-head about your doctrine, you won't be accused of having cold feet. And, after all, what does a friendship amount to, if friends cannot talk about and agree on the thing which should be dearest to the heart of a Christian, that is the truth.

Let us see what happens when friends do not discuss their doctrinal differences. I read a book a short time ago all about the Negroes. You know, when one darky starts singing a song, then all the other darkies start chanting the same tune. Now, if you, and your friends of other denominations talk about the Bible and religion in general, but when it comes to your doctrinal differences, you think you had better let that slide, so you sort of beat around the bush and talk over it and around it, well, then, all you are really doing is just chanting the same tune. And, of course, there is always the method of keeping still completely. But, when you go fishing, is there anything that irritates you more than when the fish keeps its mouth shut? Well, that is the fish's method of staying out of trouble. And it is also the method used by a great number of Christians.

And, now, if you do not care to join in and chant the same tune, or use the fish's method of keeping your mouth shut to stay out of trouble, you will become conscious of a strong bond of fellowship between yourself and your friends with whom you agree doctrinally.

So you see what is true of the denomination as a whole, is also true of the individuals of the denomination. Now, then, our opponents must either, on the one

hand, maintain that doctrinal differences should be minimized, and then also admit that the church will then have the existence of a jelly-fish because it will be robbed of its doctrinal backbone, that it will no longer bear the mark of the true church, and that it will have to be satisfied to bury its principles for which it stands; or on the other hand, they must agree with us that doctrine is the very backbone of the church, that the only way to maintain the true church is to maintain the principles for which it is in existence, that the only way to let our light shine out clearly is to reveal the truth; and that the only way these things can be done is by emphasizing doctrinal differences between denominations.

Alice Reitsma.

Convention Theme Song

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

The Church's one Foundation,
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation,
By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her,
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.

Elect from ev'ry nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With ev'ry grace endued.

Tho' with a scornful wonder,
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, How long?
And soon the night of weeping,
Shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consumation,
Of peace for ever more;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious,
Shall be the church at rest.