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I.

THE FUTURE OF CALVINISM.*

THE year 1892 was a year of great importance for the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Two influential groups of Churches, both originating in a secession from the Established Church, the one in 1834, the other in 1886, were, after long negotiations, brought together, and in June of that year held their "First General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands." For various reasons this event has excited considerable interest. It was something unforeseen and unexpected. Both groups, to be sure, were one in their confession and form of government, and both shared the conviction that a Reformed Christian was in duty bound to his Bible and his confession to break with the Established Church. Still, concerning "the method of reformation," *i. e.*, the manner in which this breach ought to be brought about, there existed an appreciable difference of opinion. This difference in method gave rise to the different attitudes which the two sides assumed in relation to the property of the Established Church and the civil authorities. The Christian Reformed Church, originating in the secession of 1834, had gradually come to consider itself as an entirely new Church, and as having broken off all connection with both the governing bodies and the individual members of the establishment. Consequently it raised no claim in the civil courts to retain or recover the property of the Established Church, and presented itself to the civil authorities as a new and different organization. On the other hand, the so-called

* [Our readers are indebted to Prof. G. Vos, Ph.D., D.D., of Princeton Seminary, for the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper.—EDITORS.]

entirely, a great number of the instances which Dr. Trumbull adduces as allowable concealment would need to be transferred into the category of criminal falsehood. This, no doubt, would be a matter not of principle but of the application of principle—often a very difficult and doubtful process. But here lies the centre of the difficulty. If we are to collect the instances which Dr. Trumbull himself allows as justifiable, and make an induction from them, we shall arrive at a definition of the lie much narrower than the one he propounds. If we are to begin with his definition of the lie and apply it with any strictness, we shall exclude much that his moral sense appears to judge justifiable. Is this a hint that his definition is too broad, or that his application of it is too loose? According to our response to this question will we revert to the old effort to seek an additional *differentia* for the notion “lie,” or advance towards the position which Dr. Trumbull theoretically commends, that every enunciation of the false with purpose to deceive is a lie. The question is one of undeniable difficulty: of such difficulty that the tone of Dr. Trumbull’s strictures against those who follow the former path seem to us unjustified. Meanwhile, the Scriptural material needs more thorough study. Martensen’s mode of statement has always appeared to us the most helpful of those known to us: is not “the lie of exigency” always the product of weakness, and of lack of courage and faith?—*Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy*. A Miscellany. By William G. T. Shedd, D.D. Crown 8vo, pp. ix, 297. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1893.) These short articles of Dr. Shedd’s come to the hard-working student like springs of water in a thirsty land. Their literary form is as delightful as their religious spirit is high and their theological attitude enheartening. Dr. Shedd’s convictions have been formed with care, and he has the courage of them to a very unusual degree in these days of timid thinking and general indifference to truth. The language he uses in describing Calvin’s *Institutes* will apply also to his own book: “Luminous as the sky of Switzerland, and clear as the waters of Lake Leman, truth is enunciated in it with a confidence which the unbeliever calls dogmatism, and the believer knows to be insight.” It is a dangerous thing to collect into a book fugitive articles, the most of which have appeared from time to time in the newspapers. But Dr. Shedd’s fugitive articles stand the test, and give us, collected, a volume we would not willingly spare. May it perform its mission of clarifying men’s thoughts on the great themes of religion and truth, in a wide circle. Truly “books of this tenor are needed at the present juncture.”—*The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*. 12mo, pp. 193. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society [1893].) This is an instructive and valuable exhibition of the positions assumed by the chief Lutheran bodies in the United States. The bodies represented are (in the order of age), the Joint Synod of Ohio, the General Synod, the German Iowa Synod, the General Council, the Synodical Conference, and the United Synod of the South. The respective writers—each speaking for his own Synod—are (in the same order) Profs. Loy, Valentine, Fritschel, Jacobs, Pieper, and Dr. Horn. The clearness and ability with which the writers bring out the distinctive features of the several types of Lutheran doctrine deserve praise. The chief criticism which may be made on the volume is that it might well be more complete: and we hope that a second edition may be called for and that it will then be enlarged to include every independent Lutheran Synod. Of those enumerated in Dr. Carroll’s *Census Bulletins*, the Michigan Synod has, indeed, already united with the Synodical Conference. The Norwegian Church in America is understood to be in substantial accord with the Synodical Conference; but it is precisely this that it is worth making clear by including a statement of its doctrinal