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Preface

The story of Dr. Abraham Kuyper's life and work takes us across the sea to historic Holland, for Holland was his country. There he was born in 1837. There he spent his long and active life. There he died in 1920. And all Holland is his grave.

Nehemiah 4:18 reads, in part: "And the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." So, but in a figurative sense, did Kuyper. Primarily and essentially a builder in the major areas of religion and the church, of education and the university, of politics and government, he had to fight it out on every front. Dr. Kuyper was indeed a controversial figure; in Holland he was at once the most devotedly loved and most violently hated man of his day. Yet, out of the monumental labors and bitter conflicts of fifty years he emerged a national figure of commanding stature.

The story of Dr. Kuyper's far-flung career constitutes a saga in the history of modern Holland. Notably significant, too, is the fact that his work lives on. When Kuyper died in 1920 at the age of 83, able co-workers and successors carried his life work forward without a break. Even today, many years after his death, the spirit of Kuyper still hovers over the cities and the fields of Holland.

This biography has a single purpose: to introduce Dr. Abraham Kuyper to the general reader. Its chapters are intended to give a factual and interpretive account of the days of Kuyper's years.
1: A Home by the Sea

On the north bank of the Maas River, midway between the Hook of Holland and the great port of Rotterdam, lies the city of Maassluis. During the 1830's, Maassluis ranked among the Netherlands' cities as a fishing center of some importance and as one of the smaller harbor towns. Ships rode at ease in the spacious harbor. Ships drove up the river to Rotterdam, some ten miles distant, and into the “hinterland.” Ships glided downstream some eight or ten miles to the North Sea.

In late September of 1834 the Maassluis State Church received a new minister. The Rev. Jan Frederik Kuyper was born in Amsterdam in 1801; took his literary studies at the Athenaeum Illustre, now the municipal university of his city; went for theology to Leiden University, which graduated him in 1828; accepted an invitation to the pastorate of the Hoogmade State Church; married Henriette Huber; served in his first charge two years; transferred to Geervliet, where he remained four years; and came to Maassluis in 1834.

The manse was a two-story-and-attic brick house, built wall to wall with its neighbors and directly up to the wide, brick-paved street walk, beyond which lay a canal. In that manse on the “street” called the Zuidvliet, there was born to the Rev. J. F. Kuyper and his wife on Sunday, October 29, 1837, their third child and first son. They named him Abraham for his paternal grandfather. On Sunday afternoon, December 3, the child was
baptized in the Groote Kerk.

In his childhood home and among the people of the neighborhood and the town, many of them hardy, unsophisticated fisher folk, the little boy received his first impressions of life and the world. Outdoors he saw the people, the houses, the stores, the trees, the leisurely canal traffic. He looked up in childhood wonder at the beautiful Kruiskerk and the elegant town hall. After someone took him to the harbor and the river, however, his interest in the town proper quickly faded out. From that day forward he wanted only to look out on the thrilling harbor scene or stand on the river bank to watch the river pageant. He specially liked to "visit" the elderly lock-tender whom he asked naive questions and to whom he made his quaint comments. And his genial host took a great liking to this little fellow who talked endlessly.

To the young Bram Kuyper, that first home by the sea was indeed a lively world of color, movement, action, and romance. But he lived in Maassluis only three and a half years, for in the spring of 1841 his father accepted a call from the Middelburg State Church. On April 25 the family moved to their new city, where they lived for eight years. It was there, then, that Abraham Kuyper spent the major part of his boyhood.

Middelburg, the capital and chief city of Zeeland province, was situated on the island of Walcheren, in the far southwesternmost corner of Holland. Although the present trans-island canal from Veere through Middelburg to Vlissingen had not yet been constructed in the 1840's, Middelburg had such ample access to the sea that even ocean-going vessels, many of them of the East and West Indies lines, anchored in the extensive harbor. Again the boy Bram had a home by the sea.

With its streets of a century ago, its great harbor and bustling waterfront, its open fields — the city still had one foot in the open country — its nearby massive dikes and high dunes (all suffused by the patriotic glamor of a wealth of historical traditions), Middelburg was an ideal boys' town. Having all this, what more could a lad ask? In that far-off day your playground was where you found it. In the streets and fields, on the docks, amid the dunes, and atop the dikes, Bram and his friends played their games and perpetrated their pranks.

Bram's parents gave him his early schooling. He never attended grade school. His mother, a former governess and
assistant teacher at a young ladies' boarding school, was thoroughly conversant with the French language, while his father knew the English. Both, of course, knew Dutch well. Both had received a good education and possessed excellent teaching talents.

Hardly had young Bram mastered the art of reading when he became an avid reader of newspapers. But Father Kuyper observed his young son's passion for the newspaper with growing disapproval. “Bram,” he finally said, “I don’t want you to look into any more papers. They aren’t good for you. There’s much better reading matter for a boy your age.” But if the ten-or-eleven-year-old Bram could somehow lay his hands on a copy of *De Opregte Haarlemmer*, he would steal to the attic, perch himself on a packing case, and read, read, read.

During the latter part of their Middelburg residence, the Kuyper family lived in the immediate vicinity of the harbor, near the spot called “The Point,” where merchant ships always rode at anchor. How often Bram stood before a window of the manse to look out with strong boyish interest on the harbor, the ships, the sailors! An insatiable curiosity often drove him to the docks. There he would look up in awe at the towering mazes of masts and spars, rigging and sails.

When Bram finally mustered the courage to walk up the gangplank of a ship and found himself among the seamen, he promptly bombarded them with a barrage of questions. Pointing at one piece of equipment after another, he asked, “What is this for?” “And this?” “And that?” “What do you do with this?” “And that?” “And that?” No, the men did not shoo the dark-eyed, curly-haired lad ashore. In the strange jargon of sailors they answered him, and so Bram often returned to talk about the sea and sailing. He haunted the docks and the decks of vessels. With him the sea became a passion. He quickly talked sailing and dreamed sailing and wanted desperately to attend the Maritime School to study navigation. He soon envisioned himself as a captain, treading the deck of some merchantman.

Who was the Rev. J. F. Kuyper confessionally and theologically? By no means a Modernist or even a middle-of-the-roader, nor, on the other hand, an out-and-out Reformed man, a thoroughgoing Calvinist. He was indeed orthodox, but a representative of that “golden mean” in which the most distinctive and incisive tenets of the Reformed Confession were toned down.
When the church reform movement known in the ecclesiastical history of the Netherlands as the Secession broke out in 1834, Rev. J. F. Kuyper had already been a State Church minister six years. He did not choose to affiliate with the new group but remained in the State Church ministry.

In Middelburg, as in other cities, the State Church was a city-wide organization with more than one minister and more than one sanctuary but with only one consistory. In 1849 the rising tide of orthodoxy in the Middelburg church brought to its ministry the Rev. J. P. Hasebroek, a man of strongly orthodox convictions, an able preacher, and a cooperative colleague. His coming proved a significant event. The lines of demarcation between the different confessional groups now became more clearly drawn. To all appearances the Middelburg church was not going to remain as comfortable a place for the Rev. Kuyper as it had been.

Then, on a spring day of 1849, there came to him a thrilling message — nothing less than a call from the Leiden church. That invitation found him in a receptive mood. For one thing, the ecclesiastical atmosphere at Leiden would, he believed, prove much more congenial than that in Middelburg would most likely become. For another, his two sons could, if they so chose, in time train for one or another of the learned professions. For those reasons he did not hesitate to accept the call. On June 24 he preached his final sermon to the Middelburg church.

In the early summer of 1849, the Kuyper family came to Leiden, in South Holland province. Up to this time Bram Kuyper had lived in a fishing center and a commercial metropolis. Now he came to a university city. But was it a home by the sea? Let us be charitable and say yes. Leiden was only five or six miles, in a straight line, from the North Sea, and one could reach the sea by way of a zigzag, cross-country canal.

When the family had settled in this new city, the boy Bram enjoyed a novel experience: his parents sent him to school. This school, the first that he attended, was the gymnasium, which prepared its students for the university. He soon discovered that his parents had taught him so well that in the solid subjects he was measurably ahead of his classmates. But young Bram did not quickly forget his stay in Middelburg, especially the magnificent harbor, the gallant ships, the brave sailors. He could not. Nor could he fail to recall his earlier longing for a seafaring career. As
time passed, however, the glitter of the shining Middelburg years
dimmed in his thoughts. At the end of the six-year **gymnasium**
road, the university beckoned. The urge for a life at sea went into
eclipse, then passed entirely. His early love for newspapers,
however, remained. Indeed, magazines and newspapers captivated
him more than ever. During his **gymnasium** days he kept abreast of
developments along the political, the economic, and the broadly
social front. He followed history in the making with an interest that
was deeply rooted.

So the years sped by. Young Bram enjoyed his **gymnasium**
years to the full, consistently ranking among the better students. On
September 6, 1855, he graduated. Now a young man of near
eighteen, he looked forward eagerly to the Leiden University years
that lay ahead of him.
2: Letters and Theology

In 1855, during his eighteenth year, Abraham Kuyper, who had enrolled, as Netherlanders say, “for letters and theology,” entered Leiden University. Founded by William the Silent in 1575, the school had already witnessed the coming and going of professors and students for 280 years. We must not, however, think of it as comparable in size to some of our present-day mammoth American universities. Holland, which then had a population of roughly three and a quarter million, also had a university in Utrecht and still another in Groningen. Besides, the three schools were not then coeducational institutions. And only a limited number of young men were privileged by circumstances to enter the universities. In 1855 the enrollment of Leiden probably did not exceed five or six hundred.

Because the knowledge of the classical and the Biblical languages was considered indispensable for clergymen, aspiring ministers studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. They also followed courses in history, philosophy, natural science, and advanced Dutch language and literature, to name only four. At home and in the gymnasium, Kuyper had already learned the English, German and French languages.

Kuyper enjoyed his studies intensely. They charmed and fascinated him. He felt as if he stood on enchanted ground. Instead of looking down on those linguistic and cultural disciplines as only
so many prescribed courses, he positively reveled in them. Memorizing long poems, he recited them at home in a stentorian voice that resounded through the house from cellar to attic. In fact, it seemed for a long time as if his future lay in the field of language and literature. At any rate, the call of the church at that time does not seem to have been a strongly compelling one.

Kuyper worked hard and concentrated effectively. He did everything with strict regularity. He took brisk walks. Unless he had earlier classes, he arose about ten-thirty and never retired before two o’clock next morning. Father and Mother Kuyper naturally protested against this sort of daily schedule, but the young man insisted that he could study to advantage only after eleven o’clock, when friends no longer called and the house was perfectly quiet.

In the Kuyper household, Abraham (‘Bram’ to the family), who was of a jovial disposition, whose exuberance was contagious, and who was a master of repartee and table talk, was the center of the family’s animated life.

Behind the house lay a large, well-tended lawn from which one had an excellent view of the neighboring lawns and gardens. There students often gathered on a summer’s afternoon, had tea, discussed whatever they felt needed a “going-over,” and made the apparently necessary neighborhood “racket.” The lawn bordered on a local canal, one of that network of man-made waterways which crisscrosses Holland. With members of the family or with friends, Kuyper made many boat trips through the Leiden region, sometimes taking along food for a picnic and going as far as Katwyk on the North Sea.

Although Kuyper’s name appears in the Album of the university-wide student club, he did not take an appreciable part in the club’s activities. Moreover, costly amusements and diversions were simply out of the question. Because his father’s salary was not a munificent one and because the family was large, Mrs. Kuyper had to manage the family income with strict care and prudence. So the young man Abraham never flourished a roll of bills. To make some money, he tutored fellow students. With part of those earnings he one day purchased a picture, “Christ Crucified,” which became one of his most prized, inspirational possessions.

Of the men on the staff of Leiden’s college of the liberal arts, one in particular, Professor Matthias De Vries, exerted a peculiarly
strong and lasting influence on Kuyper. Just as Kuyper and a few others proved to be the type of student for whom the alert professor is always looking, so Dr. De Vries stood out as the type of professor for whom the alert student looks throughout his academic career. Dr. De Vries portrayed for his classes the development of the laws of language, beginning at the Gothic stage and passing through the middle-Netherlands era. He revealed to them the beautifully precise shades and nuances of word meanings. So he led his students to a deep appreciation of the strength and beauty of their native Dutch language.

It goes without saying that no professor can create talents. He can only develop gifts that already exist. But the fact is that when De Vries and Kuyper met, there took place the meeting of the superb teacher and the superb student, with superb results. Kuyper, whose sense of language was already acute, profited greatly from his professor’s lectures. To Kuyper, who already at that time and in his own right was a master of style and diction, Professor De Vries gave an inspiring impetus and literary competence. The men became fast friends. For many years afterwards they corresponded, till 1892, when the death of Dr. De Vries at the age of 71 dissolved their friendship. Kuyper always remembered him with deep gratitude.

In April of 1858, Abraham Kuyper, a magna cum laude and summa cum laude student all the way, completed the requirements of the pre-theology curriculum. Those two and a half years in the University’s college of the liberal arts had done much for his theological studies, brought him a wide-ranging store of cultural knowledge, vigorously developed his mental talents and power of literary expression, trained him in scientific pursuits, and inspired him to a lifelong scholarly career. All this and more was definitely to the good. But that is not the entire story. Holland’s three universities were national schools, owned by the nation and operated and controlled by the national government. By 1855, the year of Kuyper’s enrollment, Modernism was taking over the Groningen and the Utrecht school. But in Holland, Leiden University was, if not the modern Athens, at all events the Athens of the Modernists.

What is Modernism? It is rationalism, the elevation of reason over authority. More specifically it is the exaltation of human reason over the divine revelation contained in the Scriptures.

During his two and a half years at the university, Kuyper did
not escape the impact of his academic environment. He soon felt very much at home in the university’s Modernistic world of thought. We have his own word for this, spoken many years later: “I entered the university a young man of orthodox faith, but I had not been in the school more than a year and a half before my thought processes had been transformed into the starkest intellectual rationalism.”

Abraham Kuyper, then, had resolved to train for the church. Why? And, in view of his change from the orthodox faith to the faith of Modernism, why did he persist in his original purpose?

There had been a time in his boyhood when his parents hoped that he would eventually enter the gospel ministry. But by 1858 he had drifted very far from his orthodox moorings, and we may well believe that his parents now recoiled from the prospect. Certainly not all ministers’ sons trained for the church. Kuyper’s younger and only brother chose to train for military service. Nor was Kuyper motivated by the prestige and the economic security which the State Church ministry offered. Moreover, as a son of the manse, Kuyper had a firsthand knowledge of conditions in the State Church. Of that church he did not entertain an ecstatic opinion. He was not at all consumed by a supreme devotion and an all-consuming love for that church so that he wanted to dedicate his life to her service. Nor did Kuyper, in the enthusiasm of youth, plan to reform the church. At this time Kuyper did not have a conception of the church according to the Scriptures. That insight only came some years later.

Why, then, did Kuyper choose to train for the church? While it is perhaps impossible to give an authoritative answer to the query, it seems that one may reasonably reconstruct the situation as follows. Precisely when he made the choice is not clear. We do know that shortly before graduation from the gymnasium, Kuyper enrolled at the university “for letters and theology.” He was then a young man of about eighteen and of orthodox faith. His whole thought evidently centered on the gospel ministry as his life calling. It appealed to him as the calling to which he would give his all. But the university revolutionized his thinking. He turned from orthodoxy to Modernism. Yet he did not abandon his earlier resolve. He did not turn to letters, law, medicine, or natural science. His original purpose to train for the church remained intact. That purpose had imbedded itself so deeply in his soul that
neither the charm of literary studies nor his change of outlook nor
his awareness of the deformed condition of the State Church nor
any other circumstance or allurement could uproot it. Nothing was
able to draw him away from his original objective.

But what, it is pertinent to ask, did he propose to preach and
teach? What did he hope to accomplish for his future
parishioners in a religious way? Such questions need not have
troubled him. The State Church was a congenial organization.
Every shade of belief and of unbelief found a home beneath her
hospitable roof. In that church one could preach and teach what
one pleased — if only one found the right congregation. So we may
probably conclude that, whereas Kuyper once hoped to become an
orthodox minister like his father, in 1858 he hoped to find a place
in Holland’s State Church ministry as an exponent of religious
liberalism and an apostle of the liberal theology.

One fact stands out prominently: Kuyper’s theological studies
and his service in the gospel ministry contributed in a superlative
degree to make him the type of national leader that he was destined
to become.

On November 24, 1858, Abraham Kuyper, just turned 21,
entered the Leiden University divinity school. We may smile at the
idea of a divinity school in a national or “state” university. What,
we ask, is the theology of the state? To what theological system
does the state subscribe? What body of doctrines is a professor
supposed to teach? Is it a theology above creedal division?

The explanation is a historical one. During the Eighty Years
War (1568-1648) and immediately thereafter, the Calvinists of the
Netherlands established six universities. Three of these universities
were later discontinued. The Reformed religion was then the
dominant religion and the Reformed Church a full-fledged state
church. The founders of the universities included divinity schools
for the training of the ministers and the scientific cultivation of the
Reformed theology. The Dutch Calvinists did not invent this close
connection between church and state. Nor did they accept it as
something which followed logically from their basic principles.
That strong linking of church and state was rather a relic of pre-
Reformation times which those men had not yet outgrown or
discarded. And it was probably the best arrangement for that time.

From the national point of view, the divinity schools had
always occupied an anomalous position because the Netherlands
was never all-Reformed or all-orthodox or all-Protestant. Furthermore, when the once great Reformed Church of Holland split into various confessional divisions while maintaining the one organization, the position of those schools of theology became wholly untenable. In 1858 they constituted a sad anachronism. Further, those divinity schools, once citadels of Reformed theology and bulwarks of the Reformed faith, had undergone a grave metamorphosis. Once the Reformed theology had been in honor, but now, in 1858, at Leiden, Groningen, and to a degree at Utrecht, the liberal theology ruled. That was the situation when Abraham Kuyper entered the Leiden University divinity school. The Reformed theology had fallen upon evil days and the liberal theology was in the ascendancy.

At Leiden the liberal theology was represented by at least three men. Dr. L. W. Rauwenhoff, who came in 1860 as professor of church history, developed into one of the leading liberal theologians of the day, particularly in the field of philosophy. Dr. Abraham Kuenen, a student of Scholten, graduated from Leiden in 1851 with the doctor of theology degree and assumed his professorate at his alma mater in 1853. Already an able and decided exponent of the negative-critical movement in Old Testament scholarship, he taught his own subjective theological views. Kuenen became one of the foremost higher critics of Holland and Europe. His most important work and writings and consequent influence date from 1861 and later years.

But Dr. Joannes Henricus Scholten was the greatest of the three in profound and lasting influence on his students, including Kuyper. A graduate of Utrecht in letters and theology, he served the Meerkerk State Church from 1838 to 1840. Afterwards he held a chair in Franeker University till 1843, when the government discontinued that school and transferred him to Leiden.

Who was Dr. Scholten theologically? Systematic theology, also known as systematics or dogmatics, was his field. Systematic theology is that theological science which treats scientifically the doctrines, that is the articles or truths of faith, by tracing them back to, or deducing them from, the principium given in God’s revelation, the Scriptures, by searching out their mutual unity and coherence and finally by setting them forth systematically as one organic whole.

With all the energy of his remarkable genius, Scholten, a strong, systematic thinker, concentrated on systematic theology. In
1848 appeared the first volume of his *The Body of Doctrine of the State Church*, *presented and evaluated in its fundamental principles from the sources*. In the course of time he published the remaining volume, plus various other writings.

A sketch of Scholten’s career could well have the title: “A Liberal Theologian’s Progress.” While Scholten was still quite conservative in 1848, he moved progressively in the liberal direction. After 1864 he departed more and more from the old Christian religion and went ever further in his Biblical criticism.

Scholten’s attempt to build on the past and link his theology with the teachings of the early pioneer Reformed theologians undoubtedly gave his students a better understanding of the history of doctrine and of the significance of the Reformed Confession than would otherwise have been possible. In that way, too, he stimulated them to the study of the church and the church’s theology. That was excellent, and in Kuyper’s case of inestimable value. However, Scholten was not teaching the Reformed theology but a distortion, a travesty of it, namely, his own subjective system of liberal theological thought.

Kuyper, then, learned his liberal theology at first hand from its foremost exponent in the Netherlands.

During those years, Scholten, who in 1858 reached the age of 47, stood at the height of his magnificent powers. For the young men who crowded his lecture hall, those were glorious days as he lectured on the system of Reformed doctrine, to which the State Church still officially subscribed. To Kuyper and his fellow divinity students, Dr. Scholten was the peerless professor of theology. He ranked among those university men who far surpassed the ordinary professorial type, not only as scholars of wide and thorough knowledge but also as eminent figures and distinguished personalities. He enjoyed an extraordinary reputation as both preacher and lecturer. He advanced a theological system which was more than semi-revolutionary. He clothed his lectures in a vigorous, glowing literary style. His entire manner, in and outside the lecture room, inspired confidence. He spoke with authority, but it was not the authority of Scripture.

Weren’t Scholten’s students opposed to, afraid of, or at least dubious about his theology? As far as the majority is concerned, the answer is no. With possibly an occasional exception, they weren’t disturbed, much less alarmed. The University’s liberal arts college had conditioned their minds to the acceptance of his system
as the very latest in scientific theological thought.

As days, weeks, and months passed, Scholten’s lectures burned themselves into Kuyper’s soul. To Kuyper’s mind, orthodoxy, in particular the Reformed Confession, became a strangely outmoded thing, a historical but pitiable relic of a bygone day, while his professor’s bold thought system shone brilliantly as the theology of the future. Scholten virtually captured his soul. Under Scholten’s influence, Kuyper, still in his early twenties, permitted himself with all the eagerness of his enthusiastic nature to be carried away with the current of rising and advancing Modernism. And when Professor Rauwenhoff in one of his lectures declared that he no longer accepted Jesus’ bodily resurrection as a historical fact and his students applauded, Kuyper applauded with them. Still, however far Kuyper went on the highway of the liberal theology — and he went a very long way — he never became a victim of positivism or irreligion. His deep reverence for the Scriptures, inculcated in his youth, never left him entirely. Yet, notwithstanding this modest reserve, he himself stated about twelve years later: “I, too, have dreamed the dream of Modernism.” We have, indeed, every reason to believe that if a profound change had not come over Kuyper, he would eventually have gone further even than Scholten. However, the change came. It was not the result of a momentary crisis or the conclusion of long, painstaking intellectual research. It was through a chain of gripping life experiences that Kuyper turned in another direction.
3: Books and a Book

While Kuyper was still in divinity school, Prof. De Vries one day called Kuyper’s attention to a treatise contest which the Groningen University theological faculty was sponsoring. That faculty desired a considered comparison and evaluation of John Calvin’s and Johannes A Lasco’s views on the church, together with a treatment of the problem of the church as that problem had been solved during the days of the Reformation by these two reformers.

The project appealed to Kuyper. He set to work. Through the courtesy of the director of the library of the Leiden University, Kuyper soon had Calvin’s works in his room at home. But to obtain A Lasco’s writings, he soon discovered, was an entirely different matter. The libraries of The Hague, Utrecht, and Groningen were no richer. Even the catalogs of the Paris, St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), and London libraries listed only a few of A Lasco’s writings. Wherever and however much Kuyper investigated, not one of the greater libraries of Europe possessed a collection of Lasciana which was at all complete. At that time the known writings of A Lasco numbered 16 titles. Some years later this rose to 24. Yet, of the wealthiest, most amply stocked, and therefore most famous libraries of Europe’s chief cities, not one possessed a collection of Lasciana of more than three or four writings.
One can appreciate how this experience affected Kuyper. When one of the Leiden theological professors assured him that A Lasco’s works were not to be found, that they were without a doubt permanently lost, he drew his own conclusion. He did the “logical” thing. He definitely decided to drop the project. This, and his reason, he told Dr. De Vries.

De Vries, however, was not quite so “logical.” He did not agree that Kuyper must forego the plan. “There’s no good reason, Kuyper, why you shouldn’t make the attempt. Bear in mind that your fellow contestants are in the same predicament. Moreover, the situation is not yet so hopeless. In our good Holland there may be private libraries where you may discover more or less of what you want. I suggest that you begin your search by calling on my father, who is a minister in Haarlem. He has a good deal of material on church history. And if he should possess nothing by A Lasco, he may nevertheless be able to direct you further in your quest.” Knowing that Dr. De Vries had made the suggestion from genuine interest and in all sincerity, Kuyper went to Haarlem, a city some twenty miles north of Leiden.

At the manse the venerable clergyman received Kuyper most cordially. Kuyper told him why he had come. The minister listened eagerly.

“Kuyper,” he said, “that’s an excellent project you’ve undertaken. And I’d be more than glad to help you, but so far as I can recall, I have none of A Lasco’s writings. I do have a pamphlet by Menno Simons directed to him. But of A Lasco’s works, no, I don’t believe I have any at all. All the same, I’ll investigate. That may take some time, though. So, suppose you come again in about a week.” Kuyper wasn’t disappointed. The outcome of this visit was just what he had anticipated.

A week later he again boarded the train for Haarlem, but it was with the prospect of spending a pleasant afternoon in Haarlem Forest rather than in the expectation of success in his search. Again the gray-haired minister received him most graciously. Imagine Kuyper’s astonishment when the aged clergyman pointed to a fairly large collection of books and brochures on a table and said, as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world, “Look, Kuyper, that is what I have found.”

Kuyper hardly believed his own eyes. Nowhere had he found a worthwhile collection of Lasciana. In all florilegia, in all catalogs of rare books, in all literary compendia, he had read again and
again that men simply listed the titles of A Lasco's works without ever having seen them, that his writings were among the rarest, that probably most of them were permanently lost, and that with the exception of two or three writings, no one had handled them during the last two hundred years. Yet, here in the Haarlem manse, he saw before him a collection of Lasciana richer than any library of Europe possessed. A loyal friend, who did not know of their existence, had referred him to the owner, who himself a week previously only faintly recalled the name of A Lasco and did not know whether or not he owned any of the Polish reformer's writings. Kuyper came across these books, as he wrote later, "as by a miracle of God." The experience, he felt, was like meeting with a miracle of God on life's pathway. It gripped him so strongly that he resumed his prayer of gratitude, something that he had not done for quite some time. It convinced him that it was no old wives' tale to speak of the guiding hand of God in the affairs of men. He recognized the experience as a providential ordering of events.

About twelve years after the event, Kuyper wrote: "The impression which that almost unbelievable experience made on my soul was in consequence so profound and lasting that whenever I go back in memory to commemorate the seeking love of my God, I still always, whatever my train of thought may be, arrive at the marvelous dispensation as to the Lasciana."

As a direct result, Kuyper's work on the treatise took on a sacred and dedicated character his studies had thus far lacked. And when he won the prize, he was perfectly willing to ascribe a part of the honor and the gratitude to a power other than that of his own spirit.

Kuyper spent some eight months on the project. His treatise, written in Latin, won the prize, the gold medal. The Groningen theological faculty's evaluation, written up by Professor Muurling, gave the young divinity student and his production unstinted praise.

Did Kuyper's study of the works of these two outstanding Reformers make him a Calvinist or an A Lascian? Neither. Both were to him at the time no more than interesting figures from a long dead past. The thought did not occur to him that what they had taught and written could be the truth. He studied them in order to explore a historical problem, a formal question, and he simply tore their conceptions of the church from their basic, underlying systems. The content of his treatise was a sustained, continuous
battle against Calvinism and an approach to the Groningen school of theology, which appealed to him in those days.

Kuyper’s work on his treatise benefited him highly in a number of ways. The better part of a year of concentrated study of his subject in a spiritual, grateful, humble frame of mind impressed on his mind and soul and spirit a bent which endured long after the contest itself had been forgotten. The study brought him an early, thorough, yet not sympathetic acquaintance with John Calvin. That knowledge was going to serve him well not many years later. His painstaking delving into the problem of the church and its solution in Calvin’s and A Lasco’s time illuminated for him the problem of the Netherlands State Church in his own day. His work on the treatise estranged him for a time from the Leiden spirit, while it carried him into better company than the Leiden school offered, that is, into fellowship with the great and serious spirits of A Lasco and Calvin. His success in winning the prize gave him, while still a divinity student, a solid reputation for thorough scholarship. That, in turn, inspired in him a justified self-confidence.

After action comes reaction. Kuyper had completely overworked himself. He had totally overtaxed his powers and temporarily broke under the strain. In his state of utter exhaustion, he would sometimes sit with a book before him while not even the title registered. For rest, relaxation and recreation, Kuyper now bought tools and materials and set to work on the construction of a model ship. Weeks on end he worked at his two-master until it was complete in every detail. Experts have declared it a masterpiece. His fiancée made a diminutive flag for the little ship and, to humor him, embroidered her name, Johanna, on it.

Still, that fascinating project — Kuyper was a great lover of ships — did not bring recovery. On his physician’s advice he went to spend some time in Caub, near Wiesbaden, Germany, where friends of his fiancée lived. It proved the correct move, for it brought recovery. In six weeks the beauty of the scenery, the novelty of his surroundings, and the absence from his Leiden friends, who were able to carry on, caused a turn for the better. On his return to Leiden he still had to take things easy, however. Two hours of reading per day were permitted him; studying in the accepted sense remained out of the question for the time being.
One of the books Kuyper read during the months of his convalescence was Charlott M. Yonge’s *The Heir of Redclyffe*, a 591-page English religious novel that appeared in 1853 with scenes laid in Hollywell House in England and in Recoara, Italy.

The reading of this novel made a powerful impact on Kuyper’s soul. He followed with intense interest the unfolding of the plot, in which two wholly different, mutually conflicting characters clash, repel each other, struggle stubbornly, and yet finally become reconciled through the defeat of the seemingly stronger and the complete triumph of the apparently weaker.

Philip de Morville is a man of the world. He possesses a keen mind, is a brilliant conversationalist, and moves easily in all circles. But he is also a man of audacious self-confidence, an opportunist, a person not susceptible to gentle emotions, one who imagines that to the power of his will nothing is impossible, and who, overbearing as he is, derives a peculiar pleasure from lording it over others.

Guy, so entirely different from Philip, is gentle, sensitive, sympathetic, not gifted with a great deal of stamina and physical courage. He is timid and prefers to let others act. But this youth is strong through his faith, through a power that flows into his soul from a higher source. His is the pulsating life of the heart. Perhaps he is too introspective. Yet his heart goes out to others with all the tenderness of his impulsive, compassionate nature.

These two characters meet. Philip wants to dominate. Guy accommodates and is satisfied to play the role of the lesser. But even this yielding on Guy’s part does not satisfy the haughty Philip. He goads Guy into resistance, but defeats him time and again. Indeed, in popular opinion, no other young man in the Hollywell region is as sterling, upstanding, and solid as Philip de Morville, while by contrast poor Guy, plagued, quickly excited, shunted aside, cuts a sorry figure.

That estimate Kuyper shared. Philip’s character charmed, captivated and fascinated him. Guy he scorned. Philip was his hero, whom he admired. A figure such as Philip’s was great in Kuyper’s eyes, the more splendid to the degree that Guy’s feeble personality retreated into darker shadow.

As the story develops, the scene shifts to Italy. There Guy, en route to Venice, learns that an English lord named Morville lies ill at Recoara. Again the two chief characters of the drama meet. But how different things are now! Philip’s sickroom is so different
from the world in which he can shine, but that same room is for Guy the place in which the greatness of his soul can disclose itself.

After Philip’s recovery, Guy himself is attacked by a grave malady and sees his life’s end approaching. Then the roles are so simply, so naturally, yet so visibly reversed that the once great Philip emerges in all his insignificance and spiritual poverty while Guy’s greatness and inner spiritual strength stand out clearly.

This drama gripped and chastened Kuyper before he himself realized it. At first it was a purely aesthetic emotion. But when the author with fine talent at last breaks Philip down in his own estimation, leads him step by step to a realization of his own littleness and Guy’s moral superiority, gradually awakens in him a sense of dissatisfaction with his own nature and of self-reproach over his past treatment of Guy, lays on his lips words of repentance for his wicked arrogance, and finally brings the haughty Philip to his knees before the feeble Guy, then it was to Kuyper as if in the broken Philip his own heart was crushed, as if each word of self-condemnation that Philip spoke cut through his soul as a judgment on his own endeavors and character. Kuyper envied the fortunate penitent when he read: “His had been real repentance so far as he perceived his faults. He had resolved to speak and had found neither an accuser nor a judge, not even one consciously returning good for evil but a friend with honest, simple, straightforward kindness, doing the best for him in his power, and dreading nothing so much as hurting his feelings.”

Kuyper read on.

The day comes which will clearly be Guy’s last on earth. The Anglican clergyman meets with the members of the family to administer the sacrament of holy communion to the dying sufferer. But Philip dares not enter. That, he feels, is not for him. “I cannot. I am not worthy,” he answers Amabel, who urges him again and again. And when the devout noblewoman whispers to him the word of Scripture, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,” Kuyper read: “It was a drop of balm, a softening drop. He arose and, trembling from head to foot from the excess of his agitation, followed her into Guy’s room.”

Kuyper was then alone. He felt the scene overpowering him. Later he wrote: “What I lived through in my soul in that moment I fully understood only later, yet from that hour, after that moment, I scorned what I formerly esteemed, and I sought what I once dared to despise.”
That same evening Kuyper read still further. He read how Guy died in holy calm, how he was carried out to the Recoara cemetery, and then came to this sentence: "The blessing of peace came in the precious English burial service, as they laid him to rest in the earth, beneath the spreading chestnut tree, rendered a home by those words of his mother church — the mother who had guided each of his steps in his orphaned life."

Kuyper stared at the page in amazement. But there it was — the mother church. That was Kuyper’s dilemma. Such a church he had never seen. Such a church he did not know. Oh, to possess such a church which as a mother directs one’s steps even from one’s earliest youth! That became the longing, the thirst of his life. That he had always lacked. That must be the means of deliverance. And in that brief moment, his ideal of church life was revealed to him. That thought, planted in his soul, proved the genesis of an ideal, the blueprint of the church according to the Scriptures.

That’s how Kuyper read *The Heir of Redclyffe* and how it affected him. It is no wonder that he prized the book as a peculiarly precious volume.

The year 1861, Kuyper’s third in the divinity school, witnessed another meaningful step in his new spiritual-religious course. Three years before, Dr. Scholten had argued that, provided you elided a few verses, the Gospel according to John definitely and clearly proved its own genuineness. Now, in 1861, Scholten issued a writing in which he stated that this Gospel contained no word by John himself. To Kuyper that complete reversal was the end of the authority of the higher criticism.

During his three years in the divinity school, Kuyper carried the regular student load, spent eight months on his Calvin-A Lasco treatise, and lost ten months through illness. Still, on December 6, 1861, he completed the requirements of the theological curriculum — certainly no ordinary achievement! On May 7 of the following year, the Provincial Church Board of North Holland admitted Kuyper to the candidacy for the State Church ministry. However, Kuyper first wanted to obtain his doctor of theology degree. He was already working on his dissertation. Dr. Scholten was his advisor.

Kuyper originally planned to write a biography of A Lasco. However, his illness had cost him nearly a year. Besides, the time was too short for writing the type of A Lasco biography which would answer the purpose. With the consent of the Groningen
University senate, Kuyper prepared his dissertation from the material contained in his Calvin-A Lasco treatise. Among the things that he told in his introduction was an announcement of his intention to provide, if possible, a republication of all A Lasco's available works together with an A Lasco biography and a history of the churches under the cross. That plan was, one will agree, an ambitious program for a 24-year-old divinity school graduate. Kuyper did not, however, write this biography and this history. Church reformation and church building demanded so much time and effort that Kuyper became a maker rather than a writer of church history.

The dissertation on which Kuyper spent the better part of a year is a scholarly piece of work. It was still written in a strongly Modernistic vein. Over its pages breathes the mighty spirit of Scholten. It is a book of nearly 200 pages, with old-fashioned blue binding, and it contains 26 theses. Like his treatise, the dissertation was written in Latin. Kuyper read the language easily, wrote it admirably, and spoke it fluently, which was one aspect of the classical scholarship of that day.

On September 20, 1862, Leiden University conferred on Kuyper the doctor of theology degree, slightly more than a month before his 25th birthday.

Now Kuyper was available to the church. He "preached" in churches here and there. Some Hollanders said in their picturesque way that such candidates "went out in search of a parsonage."

On a day in early 1863, Kuyper sat down to compose a Good Friday sermon. Now, if one is fully liberal or soundly orthodox, that is not too difficult to do. For Kuyper, however, it was not easy. If orthodoxy were the Right and Modernism the Left, Kuyper stood at that time somewhat appreciably to the right of center. That being the case, it is no wonder that he "sweated" over sermons. To Kuyper, Jesus was still not the Savior and Mediator as the Scriptures reveal Him but rather a noble martyr who had died at the hands of His enemies for the courage of His convictions.

For his Good Friday sermon Kuyper selected the text: "... and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30).

While he reflected on that passage, Kuyper often looked at the picture "Christ Crucified" in order, if at all possible, to transmit to the congregation the same gripping impression which the picture made on him.

That sermon Kuyper preached in the country church in the
village of Beesd. He had not preached there before. That sermon took the congregation by storm. This youthful speaker, of somewhat less than the average height, with dark, waving hair and expressive eyes, captured the audience's imagination. His sermon—neither strictly orthodox nor loosely liberal—his literary style and diction, his voice, his gestures, his entire pulpit manner cast a spell over the congregation. The young man of 25 scored a brilliant success. The Beesd church had no minister at the time. It soon invited Kuyper to its pastorate. He accepted the call.

On July 1, 1863, Dr. Kuyper married Johanna Hendrika Schaay, a young lady of Rotterdam, who was four years his junior. He now left the comparative seclusion of purely academic pursuits to take his place in the gospel ministry in Holland's State Church.
4: Village Clergyman

The village of Beesd lies some fifteen miles south of Utrecht, in that extreme southwest area of Gelderland province which is called De Betuwe.

Ordained to the gospel ministry and installed as a pastor of the Beesd church by his father in the morning service of Sunday, August 9, 1863, Dr. Kuyper preached his inaugural sermon in the evening service on the same day. He chose to speak on I John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

When Dr. Kuyper came to Beesd, he was half Modernistic, half orthodox, though he already leaned to the gospel of the cross. Kuyper indeed preached, but as an honest, conscientious young minister, he followed the only ethical, honorable course and preached only that which he himself consciously believed. In and outside his pulpit he could not and would not teach beliefs except insofar as he personally held them.

The members with whom Dr. Kuyper associated during the early part of his Beesd ministry were, with commendable exceptions, conservative in religion, even of orthodox tint, but they lacked genuine religious fervor and spiritual power. In their church life one heard no cry out of the depths, no voice from the reaches of
history. Men and women of the status quo, they were satisfied with the state of things as they were. Some of them said to Kuyper: “In this church, pastor, you will find a few malcontents. They’re peculiar, critical people. They make life miserable for every minister. So, also because they’re of such insignificant economic and social status, you’ll do well, as former ministers did, to pay no attention to them.” But Kuyper couldn’t do that. It wasn’t in him to bypass any of his parishioners. So he called on them, too, but not without some degree of trepidation, as any young clergyman would approach such “adventures.”

The so-called “malcontents” did not lay out the welcome mat for him. On the contrary, they received him coolly. They did not object to Kuyper on personal grounds. However, because they had heard that his orthodoxy still remained to be demonstrated and because they saw in him a high officer of a church which was hostile to them, they set themselves against him. Yet, those people did not repel Kuyper. Among them, he felt, there was at all events not a deadening routine. They had convictions. They were interested in a spiritual order of affairs. Moreover, they possessed a rich store of Bible knowledge. They had, in addition, a well-ordered life-and-world-view, albeit one of the old Reformed type. Those Reformed people did not “talk religion” or “talk about religion,” but in their own assured, yet natural, humble manner they spoke about the eternal truths revealed in the Scriptures and, to use the ancient Psalmist’s words, “what he hath done for my soul” (Ps. 66:16).

Kuyper naturally talked — and even argued — with them. And he called on them more often. That in turn created a friendly response. Soon arguing made way for conversation. Although he did his best to maintain his ministerial prestige, Kuyper, in spite of himself, felt more inclined to listen than to speak. He also sensed that after such calls, preaching came more easily on Sundays.

However, those Reformed parishioners clung tenaciously to their convictions. That troubled Kuyper. So much of a spirit of accommodation as he showed deserved, he believed, some concession on their part. But they never gave the slightest sign of conceding. They knew nothing about adjusting, conforming, or compromising. More and more Kuyper felt in his soul that he must choose: he must set himself sharply against them, or he must go with them all the way until “full sovereign grace,” as they expressed it, was essentially acknowledged, without leaving any
room, however small, for any human work or merit in man’s redemption.

What would be the outcome of all this for Kuyper? He himself has told us. “I did not set myself against them and I still [1873] thank my God that I made the choice I did. Their unwavering persistence has been the blessing for my heart, the rise of the morning star in my life. I had been taken hold on but had not yet found the word of reconciliation. They brought me, in their simple language, in that absolute form in which alone my soul can find rest: in the adoration and exaltation of a God who worketh all things, both to do and to will, according to his good pleasure.”

It seems that the only one of those Reformed people of Beesd still known by name is Pietronella Baltus. Born December 5, 1830, she was in her early thirties when Kuyper came to Beesd. The family lived on the manorial estate Mariënwaerde, the property of the Count of Bylandt, on which her father held the position of miller. She was unmarried and a woman of unqualified conviction. She lived from the unequivocal confession of the faith for which the martyrs had died. Her Reformed life-view led her to dwell spiritually in the depths, in deeply serious contemplation of life. She would have nothing to do with the half orthodox ado in the church. She could not endure superficial, insipid, honey-mouthed preaching and refused to listen to it. Though some ridiculed her, she insisted that the soul could not live, certainly not thrive, on such sermonic nourishment. So then, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of kindred spirits, she satisfied her soul’s hunger by reading the rugged old books which the church’s writers had produced in its golden age.

When Dr. Kuyper came to Beesd, Pietronella Baltus wasn’t interested. She told herself, most likely, that he was another half-hearted, double-minded destroyer of the church. When Kuyper, in making the rounds of his congregation, called on people in the vicinity of her home and a neighbor woman said to her, “The minister is visiting the people in our neighborhood and will probably soon come to see you,” she replied curtly, “I have nothing to do with that man.”

“But don’t forget, Pietronella,” the other cautioned, “that our pastor, too, has an immortal soul, and that he, too, is traveling to eternity.”

That did it. When shortly afterwards Dr. Kuyper came to her
tome, her dislike was already essentially broken. For a long time she spoke to him about the soul’s deep need for time and eternity. She told about her own assured hope for the eternal future and admonished him that he must have that same hope or he would be lost forever.

Kuyper often returned to talk with her. He came ever more under her Reformed influence. It was especially this peasant woman among his Reformed parishioners at Beesd who brought the change in Kuyper’s religious and theological convictions to its culmination. The influence of those Reformed members carried him from his semi-orthodox, semi-liberal views to a soundly orthodox and essentially Reformed position.

In a writing of about ten years later, Dr. Kuyper summarized his spiritual struggle of those days. The reason for omitting the details is not far to seek. His inner struggle was one of those intimate personal experiences that remain behind the veil. One does not publicize them in detail, not even to one’s friends. And one certainly does not tell them in Gath or publish them in the streets of Ashkelon.

Kuyper surrendered completely and unequivocally not to men or to a movement or to a tradition but to the triune God. In that hour of surrender there came to him the peace that passeth knowledge. Out of the stress and storm of an intense spiritual conflict he emerged fully orthodox, essentially Reformed. He broke completely with Modernism. Unreservedly he accepted the Reformed faith. He had now enrolled beneath the Reformed banner. He had caught a vision, and to that vision he was not disobedient.

It became clear to Kuyper that those common people hidden away in a corner of Holland had told him in their simple local dialect what Calvin had written in choice Latin. Calvin lived on in those unschooled farm workers and Calvin had so taught that, centuries after his death, in a foreign country, in a forgotten hamlet, his teachings lived on in the minds and hearts of ordinary working people. For that Kuyper found but one explanation: Calvin had founded a church, and through that distinctive type of church he had spread blessing and peace in receptive hearts among all the nations of Europe and across the seas, even among the poor and those whom the world held to be of little account.

When Dr. Kuyper reflected on this, old memories revived. His earlier experiences exerted their former influence. He recalled what Calvin had so beautifully written in Book IV of his *Institutes of the
Christian Religion about God as our Father and of the church as our mother. There came to him again those soul-moving words from The Heir of Redclyffe: "His mother church, the mother who had guided each of his steps in his orphaned life."

Kuyper’s contacts with the spiritual sons and daughters of Calvin opened his eyes to see the power which a spiritually organized church that understands her high calling still wielded. The lack of such a church had been his own personal tragedy. Was it any wonder that his soul reached out to build such a church, and that the realization of that purpose became the high goal of his life?

However, Kuyper needed more and fuller knowledge of the Reformed faith and theology than his Reformed parishioners could give him. Their thought world was literally a stereotype of that which obtained in the early post-Reformation era, an age which naturally differed markedly from their day. Kuyper read Dutch and foreign theologians with real profit and genuine enjoyment, although they did not entirely satisfy him, however much he tried to tell himself otherwise. In time Kuyper came to Calvin. As he read the Genevan reformer’s works anew, he found what he had sought — a solid foundation. While he quickly perceived that one must go forward and continually build exegetically, psychologically and historically, he nevertheless found in Calvin’s works the foundation on which the temple of faith could be reared in strictly logical style, with the wonderful result that the loftiest ethics would rule in all its courts and chambers.

The work which Dr. Kuyper accomplished during his Beesd ministry for his local church and for the church at large possesses distinctive value. But the outstanding personal event of this period was the essential completion of his transformation from Modernism to Reformed orthodoxy.

A minister of the gospel preaches the Word; he teaches the Word; he shepherds from the Word; he governs by the Word.

Dr. Kuyper preached. But his sermons could not as yet be classified as thoroughly Reformed. Because the Modernistic leaven still operated more or less strongly in his thinking, some time would elapse before his pulpit discourses could stand the Reformed test. Kuyper taught the youth of the church in the regular classes and gave communicant members a special course in the history of the Christian Church. He called on the families of his church. He presided at the meetings of the consistory, which administered the
church's spiritual and material affairs. In a word, Dr. Kuyper gave his full devotion to his ministerial calling, which evidenced itself in every aspect of his task.

Dr. Kuyper soon ranked as an outstanding clergyman plus. He contributed in a significant way to the welfare of the church at large beyond the call of his local congregational duties. In 1866 there appeared the two-volume Latin edition of Johannes A Lasco's works, with Kuyper's 121-page Latin introduction dated December, 1865. The reissue of these works had been no easy or small task. Because this Polish Reformer's writings were still extremely rare, Kuyper experienced much difficulty in obtaining certain copies or even the use of them. These volumes possess real value. Ecclesiastical history "portrays the career of the institutional church." In the chronicle of the Reformation, A Lasco fills a large place. For any and all who would make a study, from the sources, of A Lasco's significance for systematic theology and of his influence on the organization of the churches, those of Holland included, this edition of his works constitutes a priceless collection. But the question may be asked: Why a Latin republication? The answer is: because A Lasco had written in Latin, the official ecclesiastical language of Reformation times, and because in the 1860's a considerable number of clergymen and theologians in Holland and elsewhere still read the language profitably, and because the foreign theologians who could read the Latin could benefit from it, which would not be the case if these writings had been translated into Dutch.

Already during his first pastorate, Dr. Kuyper looked beyond his own congregation to the country-wide State Church. In the mid-1860's there existed in Holland's State Church the 50-year-old "problem of the church." We now focus our attention on one single vital aspect of the general problem.

Confessionally the membership of numberless local churches, particularly in the large cities, presented a fantastic picture. Outright Modernists, semi-liberals, orthodox men and women, and Reformed members, to mention only certain chief groups, all presumably managed to live together more or less amicably beneath the same ecclesiastical roof. In each local church, the consistory, the governing body composed of ministers, elders, and deacons, not only were in charge of the administration of the church's spiritual and material interests but also elected the ministers, the
elders, and the deacons and filled vacancies in their ranks. If a given church had a liberal consistory, where did that leave the orthodox element? What was the predicament of the Modernists in a church that had an orthodox consistory? It is easy to see how such a state of affairs created endless confusion, uncertainty, unrest, and protest. How could this problem be solved? We might say: let each confessional group organize into a distinct, separate congregation and have the church properties divided on an equitable basis. But the Synodical and government officials had a different idea: give each church a new deal; introduce a large measure of democracy; have the people speak; let the majority rule. By a royal decree of March 23, 1852, from the hand of King William III, the Netherlands State Church received a new constitution. Article 23 of this document read: “The right to appoint elders and deacons and to call ministers is lodged with the congregation, which shall either do this itself or authorize others in accordance with regulations to be adopted in the future.” The Synod, however, did not promptly implement Article 23; hence the question arose as to precisely how the congregations were to exercise this newly given right of suffrage.

Fifteen years passed. Then, on March 1, 1867, the Synod decreed: “In congregations of less than 100 qualified voters, these voters shall choose the consistory members and the ministers. In congregations of 100 or more qualified voters, these voters shall elect the officers themselves or the officers shall be chosen by an electoral commission.” This electoral commission was to consist in each local church of the general consistory plus an equal number of able men to be appointed for the purpose.

Exactly how this measure would solve the specific problem or any other problem is not too clear. Nevertheless, it had tremendous consequences of which men did not dream at that time. This statutory innovation promptly created great excitement throughout the State Church. Article 23 and its implementation enjoyed a wide discussion in pamphlets, church papers, and other media. People not only talked and wrote on the subject from the standpoint of church polity, they also wondered what would happen if and when the new method went into effect. Since no one had any figures on the confessional composition of the congregational memberships, as such a census had never been taken, a heavy mist of uncertainty veiled the outcome.

Dr. Kuyper, not finding what he wanted in any of the writings
Abraham Kuyper

that came to his attention, felt impelled, against his own wishes, to set down his views. This he did in a brochure entitled *What must we do — retain the right of suffrage for ourselves or authorize the consistory to act for us? A question relative to putting Article 23 into operation.* This brochure on Article 23 presented a study in ecclesiastical history and explained the relevant principles of church polity which the reformers of previous centuries had held. On the one hand Kuyper rejected Article 23 as it proposed an un-Reformed procedure. The point was well taken. The Church Order of Dordt, under which churches of the Reformed type operate, knows nothing of, and therefore makes no provision for, what is known as the congregational meeting. The status of such meetings in American churches of the Reformed group is explained on a special basis, which does not need to be discussed here. At the same time, Kuyper gladly accepted Article 23 as a tacit admission on the Synod’s part of the illegal condition (by the Dordt standard) in which the Church had been held since 1816 and as a concession of the right to begin the reconstruction of the Church at the late date of 1867. Kuyper deemed the Article an effective instrument toward achieving a specific goal. For the rest, he recognized it as an emergency measure, a temporary expedient, a transitional arrangement. The writing of this brochure stands as the first significant church reform act of Kuyper’s career. Article 23 became effective March 1, 1867. Which sector or sectors would triumph was now largely a question of organization. The general result throughout the entire State Church is properly told in the next chapter.

Dr. Kuyper, while at Beesd, did not engage in politics. If he took any action at all, it was negligible and in the conservative direction. Originally his studies had in no respect moved in the political area. However, in his reading he became acquainted with Calvin’s time. In the sixteenth century, church and state were closely connected (a carry-over from pre-Reformation times), and therefore his studies involuntarily gravitated to a degree toward political science and government.

While at Beesd, Kuyper became convinced that he must leave the conservative standpoint and affiliate with the Christian political movement headed by Mr. G. Groen van Prinsterer.

In those days, too, Kuyper did not feel any urge to attempt a revival of that spirit which had inspired the founders of Holland’s independence and had created Holland’s Golden Age, to which
Kuyper and his generation looked back as to the national Paradise Lost.

Dr. Kuyper lived not only among but also with his parishioners. Hence he met human problems in the social-economic field. The observing young clergyman saw that in his agricultural community, the relation between the land owners and their farm laborers was unsound. He perceived clearly that the existing political, economic, and social structure led to the creation of a sinful inequality instead of a divinely willed inequality between the different groups in the nation. He observed a measure of social injustice and maltreatment. It is no wonder, therefore, that Kuyper became a Christian democrat so early in his career.

Dr. Kuyper, during his stay at Beesd, did not enjoy a life of comfortable ease amid the pastoral scenes of an idyllic environment. Some of his activities have already been noted. Then add conferences, vast reading, personal studies, and correspondence, to name no more, and it is perfectly clear that his life was not one of leisure. Sometimes Kuyper worked in his study till four o’clock in the morning. Often Mrs. Kuyper had to call a halt and “order” him to get some sleep. This self-imposed load of overwork nearly carried him to the brink of collapse.

In 1867, after only four years in the gospel ministry, Dr. Kuyper already enjoyed a reputation as a pulpiteer of rare power, a scholarly theologian, a forward-looking churchman, a rising figure among the younger clergy. Hence it is not surprising that in June of 1867, the Utrecht church invited him to its pastorate. But Kuyper did not without any hesitation accept the call and leave Beesd just as soon as the rules of propriety permitted. Even though he would have preferred to remain at Beesd for another two years of growth and experience, pursuing his favorite church-historical studies, for which he had more time at Beesd than he would have in Utrecht, Kuyper decided to transfer. After his experience of some years in the ministry, he felt duty bound to serve the church to the full extent of his ability. Moreover, for the work of church purification he would be in a much better position in a city like Utrecht than in a hamlet like Beesd. Then, too, he did not want to give pastorless congregations of the country the impression that he wanted to stay more or less indefinitely, at least for a long time, in his present charge. Besides, life and labor in Utrecht offered obvious advantages above a village. Both Dr. and Mrs. Kuyper felt
clearly that they were not country folk. He realized that he was not a "country preacher" and she that she was not a "country preacher's wife." They were city people. During their four years in the village, they must have felt as if they were living in a world different from the one they had always known.

On November 3, 1867, Dr. Kuyper closed his Beesd ministry with a uniquely appropriate sermon on the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Dr. and Mrs. Kuyper, with the two sons born to them at Beesd, now moved to Utrecht.

Pietronella Baltus and the other Reformed people of Beesd were very sorry to see Kuyper leave, even though they understood perfectly that their loss was Utrecht's gain. She, especially, felt Kuyper's departure as a keen personal loss. It deeply saddened her. She looked on him — and rightly so, we believe — as her spiritual son. She lived on for another 47 years till her death on March 26, 1914, at the age of 83 years. She always followed his career with intense and cordial interest. She never doubted the genuineness of his accession to Christ. And Dr. Kuyper always remembered her gratefully.
5: The Utrecht Pastorate

Dr. Kuyper, who knew orthodox Utrecht only from a distance, transferred to that ancient city in a spirit of glad anticipation. In Utrecht — to Kuyper, a Zion of God — he expected to meet the foremost orthodox leaders of the Netherlands State Church. Didn't Utrecht enjoy a solid reputation as a citadel of orthodoxy? And didn't the apologetical school of Doedes and Van Oosterzee (Utrecht University divinity school professors) count as orthodoxy's outstanding bulwark?

In Utrecht, as in other cities, the State Church (with a total membership of 35,000) was a city-wide organization. One large consistory administered its affairs. The eleven ministers preached in the different sanctuaries in rotation. To localize the pastoral care, the city was divided into districts, each with one assigned clergyman.

Dr. Kuyper's installation took place in the Domkerk (the Protestant cathedral church) in the morning service of Sunday, November 10.

In the evening service of the same day and in the same sanctuary, Kuyper, just turned 30, opened his Utrecht ministry with a sermon on “God Become Man: The Life Principle of the Church.” His text was: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

In the orthodox and Reformed sense of “an opening of the Scriptures” or “the ministry of the Word,” this discourse does not
classify as a sermon. One could better call it a timely, profound, significant, captivating address on the church. Competent, friendly critics, who had no desire to depreciate Kuyper, have said that it was not wholly and soundly Reformed or entirely orthodox throughout. One of them even detected some Hegelian notes. We have good authority for believing that the critics were right. But the explanation for Kuyper's views at that time lies near at hand. When the Israelites had left the house of bondage, they had indeed gone out of Egypt, while at the same time something of Egypt still clung to them. So, too, immigrants to our North American shores do not suddenly break with the traditions and way of life of "the old country." Kuyper's case was similar. Only a few years out of divinity school, where men of stature like Scholten and Kuenen had drilled the liberal theology into him, Kuyper had not yet been able to remove all the liberal leaven out of his thinking. It still remained, but as a diminishing factor.

That inaugural sermon also tells us something else. When Dr. Kuyper came to Utrecht, he believed that the time to reform the State Church had arrived. Witness this sentence: "Whether we must undertake church restoration or the founding of a new church, we are in any case called to build, be it according to the ancient pattern or be it according to the purer style and the loftier architectural design which the Spirit of God will reveal to us."

The orthodox and Reformed people of the Utrecht church were very happy about Kuyper's coming to their city. Whether he conducted the service in one of the Utrecht churches or elsewhere, he always preached to "capacity" audiences.

As at Beesd, so in Utrecht, Dr. Kuyper had his classes to teach and his pastoral work to perform, to say nothing of the meetings of the consistory.

During the later 1860's two series of events considerably disturbed the already very uneven and doubtful peace in the State Church.

I. CHURCH VISITING

This ecclesiastical function is a periodic (usually annual) inquiry by the church at large (denomination) particularly into the religious-spiritual but also the administrative-financial condition of each local church (congregation). This inquiry at its best is an on-
the-scene investigation by appointed committees which visit the churches and the consistories. Reports by the committees to higher church bodies follow, and, if necessary, corrective action. Rightly conducted, church visiting serves admirably to maintain both the spiritual character of the local churches and the spiritual unity of the entire church. The State Church Synod evidently was not greatly concerned about the religious conditions in the Church. It did not take church visiting seriously, but rather as a routine affair. The fact alone that it conducted church visiting once in three years by means of committees and twice by means of questionnaires clearly reveals it laxity.

In the Utrecht battle over church visiting, the first shot had already been fired before Kuyper came to the city. In 1868 the questionnaires again appeared. But now the Utrecht consistory, positively refusing to be co-guilty with the Synod in banning the spiritual substance from church visiting while more or less retaining the form, rebuked the Synod more severely than in 1867, by way of a similar but much stronger resolution. On motion of Dr. Kuyper, the youngest of the Utrecht ministers, the consistory decided on April 15, 1868, to return the questionnaires without answering a single question "inasmuch as those questions are asked in the name of a synod with whose present membership the consistory enjoys no communion of faith and confession."

Although the Synod, by saying nothing and doing less, beat a tactical retreat, the consistory’s action did not pass unnoticed in the country. The church press, the newspapers, and sundry periodicals carried so much "news," discussion and editorializing on this matter and so many rumors were afloat that Dr. Kuyper decided to tell the church public precisely what had taken place. So he wrote a brochure entitled Church Visiting in Utrecht in 1868, historically reviewed in contemplation of the critical condition of our Church. The titles of the five sections read: (1) The Untruth in the Church, (2) The Synod and Its Constitution, (3) What Is Church Visiting? (4) What the Utrecht Consistory Did, (5) Conclusion. This brochure, which appeared in August, 1868, was followed by a further explication and a collection of related official documents.

To one who does not understand Kuyper’s passionate devotion to the church of Christ, Part I of the brochure might read like a lethal exposé, a murderous attack on the State Church, when as a matter of fact it was a perfectly honest, outspoken, unsparing disclosure of conditions in that organization.
When churchmen and laymen read Kuyper's masterpiece of publicity, there appeared a flood of pro and contra writing. Certain overly circumspect church leaders who lacked valor and clear vision actually strengthened the forces of unbelief. Some friends, of whom better things were rightfully expected, spent much energy in attempts to pour the proverbial oil on the proverbial waters. Others contended that if Kuyper were not to be deposed, he must cease and desist from his efforts at reform. The entire controversy would have ended then and there, but the Classical Board of the area sent requests, warnings, and threats. The Provincial Board also determined to enter the fray. But the consistory stood its ground. And there the matter rested.

The Synodical *Journal of Proceedings*, containing as it does only a brief mention of the Utrecht episode, gives the impression that everything was settled. Then, in order to forestall any more unpleasantness, the Synod adopted a resolution, effective January 1, 1870, which devalued church visiting still more. One fact stands out beyond question: the entire controversy strikingly revealed the grave conditions in Holland's State Church.

II. THE CHURCH ELECTIONS

During 1867 and 1868, an electoral hurricane had swept through the State Church. That Church, with a total membership of about 1,950,000, consisted of 1323 local churches. It must be borne in mind that the great city-wide church of Amsterdam, for example, counted as one local church. The Church had about 1600 ministers, of whom at most 500 were orthodox.

On March 1, 1867, Article 23, as implemented by the Synod, became operative. The church elections of that year and of 1868 had remarkable results. Nothing so far-reaching or so deeply significant had taken place in the Church since 1816. Village churches, small-town churches, even big-city churches — most notably, that of Amsterdam — failed to elect or re-elect liberal, Modernistic elders and deacons but chose orthodox and Reformed men. The wholly unexpected victory amazed even the victors themselves. It was no wonder that not a few lost all sense of balance and that they prized Article 23 as the panacea for all the Church's ills. Through these elections, they hoped in time to "capture" the consistories, the Classical Boards, the Provincial Boards, and eventually the Synod itself. What a day of glory that would be!
Naturally the result of the ecclesiastical elections gratified Kuyper. Yet he had his own opinion of the entire matter. This he set down in a 31-page brochure, dated January, 1869, and entitled *The Operation of Article 23*. Its gist can be recorded in a few sentences. Kuyper repeated his conviction, already stated in his 1867 brochure, that popular sovereignty has no place in the church. Article 23 might be used as no more than a temporary expedient. The church founders of Reformation times were able to make the congregations more or less democratic because those congregations were confessionally homogeneous. This was by no means true of the Netherlands State Church. As it had thus far operated, Article 23 had failed to do justice to the large liberal sector of the church. In the existing composition of the Church, one section had no right to smother the rights of another sector or to lord it over other confessional elements. The orthodox element had not triumphed everywhere in the country. In entire rural areas, congregations had voted decisively against orthodoxy. In cities of the second and the third rank, the outcome had not favored orthodoxy. Yes, the victory seemed brilliant. But the victory was largely due to the circumstance that so many of the opposition had let the matter go by default; in other words, they hadn’t bothered to vote. And the latest elections already had in a measure reversed the results of earlier elections. Over against the super-optimistic and excessively buoyant, Kuyper took a courageous stand when he declared that they entertained a vain hope. They must not expect to go from victory to victory until they stood in the Synodical citadel. By an incisive analysis of the State Church representative structure plus an illuminating set of calculations, Kuyper demonstrated conclusively that Article 23, with its new electoral method, would not alone lead the Church to the ecclesiastical promised land. But inasmuch as the Church had since 1816 lacked a lawful form of government by Scriptural standards and as prescribed in the Dordt Church Order, this circumstance not only permitted or legitimized but demanded that Article 23 be accepted as a transitional expedient and used to arrive at such a form of government.

One readily senses that these problems and situations, far from being the heart of “the problem of the church,” were only so many symptoms of deterioration. What, in Kuyper’s considered judgement, was the ultimate solution? In a series of *Heraut* articles on “The Liberation of the Church,” which also went out as a reprint, he stated his position: negatively, the liberation of the Church from both the state and the hierarchical organization
capped by the Synod; and positively, its rehabilitation into a soundly, wholly Reformed church. Kuyper was a man of Reformed ecclesiastical principles. That was his strength. Although a number of churchmen rose up in violent opposition, Kuyper refused to liquidate the Reformed character of Holland’s State Church.

Kuyper had been in Utrecht no more than two years when a range malady attacked certain of Holland’s foremost State Church leaders. The best name for it is Kuyperphobia: an unreasonable fear of, and morbid dislike for, Kuyper. Those men were orthodox in the general sense but irenic, peace-loving — even to the point of pacifism, if not appeasement. While they desired certain reforms in the church, they did not want to stir up any hornets’ nest. Some even viewed Kuyper as a firebrand. They saw in him too much fire for a cause which to them was not worth what they thought of as an ecclesiastical revolution. Moreover, they saw in the offing the rebirth of scholarly Reformed theology and the revival of the Calvinistic life-and-world view. And they didn’t like what they saw. So a number of them banded together to publish a quarterly called Protestant Presentations. All in all, their action amounted to a declaration of war on Kuyper. To change the figure of speech, they virtually cast him out of their synagogue.

Although Holland had its state, or public, elementary school system, many members of such groups as the Reformed people, the Lutherans, and the Catholics deemed the state schools unsatisfactory, even unusable, primarily for religious-spiritual reasons. Therefore they founded their own grade schools. However, they received no financial aid in any form from the government. Meanwhile they were required to pay their assessed taxes toward the maintenance of the public system. Naturally, those public school men and women wanted only one system, the public schools. The entire nation judged the standpoint of the dissenters as a clear case of nonconformism in education.

The Reformed, Calvinistic Christian school movement had its own nation-wide association, the Society for Christian National Education, founded October 30, 1860. This Society would meet in a national convention in Utrecht on May 19 and 20, 1869.

Mr. Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, a Christian historian, publicist, statesman, political leader, and the Society’s honorary chairman, traveled from his home in The Hague to Utrecht to attend the convention. Now in his sixty-eighth year, his health failing, his followers not numerous, and the harvest of many years
of devoted labor painfully meager, this Christian idealist nevertheless toiled on in faith.

At the general public meeting in the cathedral church, on the evening of May 18, Dr. Kuyper delivered the pre-convention address on “The Appeal to the National Conscience.” How Groen’s eyes shone and how his spirit revived when he heard Kuyper’s opening sentence: “Among our men the conviction is visibly gaining ground that the strength of our movement lies in the appeal to the consciences of our people.” It was the echo of what he, Groen, had cried for years. For many years and in his own way, he had appealed to the national conscience for justice and fair play in elementary education. In life’s evening he still longingly awaited the awakening of that conscience.

In his stirring address, Dr. Kuyper discussed the school question on the national level by stressing the national character, the national calling, freedom of religion, liberty of conscience, and parental autonomy in educational action. Groen was enraptured. Every sentence fell on his weary spirit like a refreshing dew from heaven. There on the platform, he felt, was the man who could sweep with a powerful hand over the keyboard of the national conscience as he, Groen, had never been able to do. Groen thanked God and took courage.

Although Groen and Kuyper had corresponded on various subjects from time to time, they had never met personally. Now, after the mass meeting, they met in the consistory room of the church — Groen the man of 67 and Kuyper the man of 31. Both were thrilled. To Kuyper, that first meeting with Groen van Prinsterer remained a lifelong benediction. Says Kuyper: “. . . till May 18, 1869, when in the consistory room of the Utrecht cathedral church on an unforgettable evening I for the first time met the man who by the steadfast look in his eyes and by his earnest, trenchant words at once took such a strong hold on me and so profoundly impressed me that from that hour I became his spiritual associate, no, more, his spiritual son.”

Groen returned to his home in a grateful, joyful state of mind. He had “discovered” his successor. And only a few months later, on September 1, Groen in a public writing pointed to Dr. Kuyper as the future leader of the Antirevolutionary political party.

On June 23, 1869, Dr. Kuyper affiliated with the Utrecht Antirevolutionary Voters Club. About this time, too, the Groen-Kuyper
correspondence took on an increasingly political character. Both men were fully agreed on basic principles, overall policy, and general method. If one wonders why Kuyper was interested in political affairs, the answer is clear from something he wrote those days: “Politicophobia is not Calvinistic, is not Christian, is not ethical.”

In the 1869 national elections, the school question was a leading issue. The reason was simple enough. Parliament alone possessed the constitutional authority to legislate on education. Hence the school question was bound to enter politics.

Although the 1869 election result was discouraging for the group with whom he had cast his lot, Kuyper did not give up hope. He had only begun to fight. He wrote: “We are working for the future. We are not concerned with the seeming victory of the moment but with the final triumph. With us the question is not what influence we can exert now but what power we can exercise 50 years hence, not how few men we have today but how many will arise out of the younger generation who will be men of our principles. We know how to practice patience. We know that the fruit cannot be plucked before the harvest time has arrived. Yet we also know that the hour of victory will some day come.”

In the same year Kuyper entered the field of journalism. Dr. C. Schwarz, editor-in-chief of De Heraut, a semi-religious, semi-political weekly, invited Kuyper to fill a place as associate editor. This meant that he would regularly contribute articles for both departments. He consented. Kuyper’s first article appeared in the October 8 issue. That modest beginning marked his entrance into the realm of journalism, which he never left. Kuyper’s decision to write for De Heraut deeply gratified Groen and thousands with him in Holland. Kuyper himself, staunch advocate of publicity and firm believer in the power of the press, found in this position an exceptional opportunity to educate and train his readers. And he made the most of it.

On February 12, 1870, the Amsterdam State Church invited Dr. Kuyper to its ministry. On March 6 he accepted the call. Why did he leave Utrecht after a pastorate of less than three years? Inasmuch as Kuyper had come to Utrecht in good faith, his relatively brief stay can in no way be interpreted as an intentional stopover on the way to Amsterdam. He certainly did not run away from a fight when he left Utrecht. He knew that an even more severe battle awaited him in his new charge. Dr. Kuyper decided on
transfer to Amsterdam, the chief city of Holland, for a sound strategic reason. He was convinced that the restoration and purification of Holland's State Church must proceed from the Amsterdam church, which all recognized as the most commanding church of the country. Moreover, events had convinced him that a vigorous campaign of education must necessarily precede direct efforts at reform. For that purpose Amsterdam excelled every other city as a base of operations.

In the evening service on Sunday, July 31, 1870, in the cathedral church, Dr. Kuyper took leave of the Utrecht church with a sermon on a clause from Revelation 3:11: "Hold fast that which thou hast." He gave his discourse the title "Conservatism and Orthodoxy." As he had done in his opening sermon, so now Kuyper treated "the problem of the church" in a timely, impressive address on "True and False Conservatism." And Kuyper left the Utrecht church with the dramatic injunction: "Do not bury our glorious orthodoxy in the treacherous pit of a spurious conservatism."
The Amsterdam church had a total membership (men, women and children) of about 140,000 out of the city's population of some 265,000. It had 28 ministers, a general consistory (ministers, elders, and deacons) of 136, ten sanctuaries (one of them a cathedral), and four chapels.

For the Amsterdam church, the year 1867, when article 23 went into effect, was a historic year because then began the exit of liberal elders and deacons from the consistory. The Electoral Commission chose only orthodox and Reformed men. Later elections carried the trend still further.

Prior to 1867, the liberal clergymen had dominated the consistory. But ministers had no fixed tenures of office as did the elders and deacons. The Electoral Commission could not dislodge them. Only departure to another church, resignation, disability, emeritation, deposition, or death could create a vacancy. All the diverse confessional elements wondered what would take place if and when such a vacancy occurred in the ranks of the clergy. In 1870 they learned. The Electoral Commission, called for the first time to elect a minister, chose Kuyper. He accepted the call and came in midsummer.

Installed on August 7, Dr. Kuyper assumed the ministry in the Amsterdam church three days later with a sermon in the cathedral church entitled "Rooted and Grounded," with the subtitle, "The Church as Organism and as Institution." Ephesians 3:17 reads:
“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.” Out of this verse, itself part of a paraphrase, Kuyper lifted the phrase “rooted and grounded” to characterize the church. He did not “explain his text” but delivered another timely, clear-cut, forceful address on church reform. The church, he explained, is both rooted and grounded. “Rooted” characterizes the organism, the essence of the church; “grounded” describes the institution, the form of the church. The church is first rooted, then grounded. The church not only grows; it is also built. Organism and institution are intimately connected and must harmonize perfectly. As to church reform, Kuyper declared, “We must rebuild or move out,” and, “Our church must again become, not only Christian, not only Protestant, but Reformed.”

At Amsterdam Dr. Kuyper attained magnificent heights as a preacher of the gospel. He always addressed large, solid, eager masses of listeners. To young and old, to rich and poor, to employers and workers, to educated and unschooled, he brought the old but ever new message of the living Word. He reached the innermost souls of those who came to the sanctuary.

Kuyper had passed through the crucible of a profound religious-spiritual metamorphosis. He lived a deep, rich personal life of communion with God in Christ. He spoke from the heart and from inner conviction. Earnest, concentrated, dedicated study of the Scriptures had given him, and continued to give him, an exceptionally clear insight into Bible-revealed truth, together with an unusual grasp and growing comprehension of that truth, with its implications for all of practical living. He possessed, too, a clear, profound insight into the religious needs of his listeners. The orthodox, particularly the Reformed listeners, felt that he was their ideal, heaven-sent preacher. The richest glory of his pulpit was that he came to them with the Scriptures. Those Scriptures he preached in all their wealth. Dr. Kuyper’s sermons, neither theological lectures nor emotional homilies nor urge-to-work preachments, possessed spiritual balance. He stressed neither the intellectual nor the emotional nor the volitional aspect of life and truth to the exclusion of any other. In harmonious symmetry he appealed to mind, heart, and will. His sermons pulsed with life; in them one frequently heard the note of church reform. They contained new, sound, choice, vivid thoughts and insights, and they were always up to date. Although Kuyper never preached the social gospel, he did
frequently accentuate the social implications of the gospel.

But there was more. While many a speaker, pulpiteer, and writer must “sweat” to produce elegant diction, Kuyper had no such difficulty. He was a master of language. The precise words, phrases, illustrations, and figures of speech welled up spontaneously. His vocabulary was something simply fabulous. His sermons were masterpieces of literary style. Kuyper’s diction was at once dignified, classical, graphic, and sparkling. His every sermon stood out as a consummate work of art. One listened to him with spiritual profit and with aesthetic enjoyment as well. With his magnificent voice, his accomplished delivery, and his magisterial yet spirited pulpit manner, Kuyper always thrilled great audiences as he preached in timely exposition of timeless revealed truth. No wonder that vast throngs always greeted him in whichever sanctuary he preached.

When the Reformed members of the Amsterdam church heard Kuyper preach, read his published sermons, learned of his reform efforts, and became better acquainted with him, they felt instinctively that he was one of them. While they did not worship or idolize him, they did profoundly appreciate him. They showed their love and esteem. They thanked God for such a minister.

Another feature that entranced Kuyper’s audiences was the unique quality of the way he read the Scriptures. Throughout his life, his reading was at the same time interpretation. As late as 1947 Dr. Grosheide wrote: “In a public meeting many years ago I heard Dr. Kuyper read the 148th Psalm. The impression which that reading made on me remains to this day. That distinctive, characteristic reading manner gave a better insight into the Psalm than four or five explanations would have done.”

On October 29, 1872, Dr. Kuyper would reach the age of 35. To mark the occasion, a number of Kuyper’s friends made him a present of the elegant, commodious house at 183 De Prins Hendrikkade as a birthday gift. Some work had to be done in the house before the Kuyper family could instal itself there. Then, on August 18, 1873, Dr. Kuyper, to mark the event of the gift in an appropriate and appreciative manner, delivered a glowing, special occasion sermon on a clause from Ecclesiastes 12:5: “Because man goeth to his everlasting home.” This going to one’s eternal home Kuyper portrayed as the inescapable law which explains our human life, which give that life its nobility, and which invests that life with its seriousness.
Nine of Dr. Kuyper’s Utrecht sermons and twelve from his Amsterdam period appeared in print shortly after he delivered them. One must agree that many of Kuyper’s pulpit discourses are very peculiar sermons. If one judges them by the strict standards of exegesis and homiletics, they do not classify as a ministering of the Word — and that is what a sermon really ought to be — but rather as addresses on specific subjects. While Kuyper’s sermons of the years between 1863 and 1874 do not constitute fully Reformed preaching, the fact remains that in general he brought the gospel of Jesus Christ, in a rich and profound exposition and in a gripping manner. To read these sermons is still a soul-thrilling experience today.

As at Beesd and Utrecht, so in Amsterdam, Dr. Kuyper conducted instructional classes for both the youth and the adults. Throughout the history of the Christian church, such teaching has amply demonstrated its superlative value. Between six and seven thousand members, young and old, lived in Kuyper’s pastoral district. How could a minister render pastoral service to such a host? He simply did the best he could. But in the nature of the case, there could be, except on special occasions, little of that precious personal contact between a minister and his parishioners which can be a blessing in the lives of men.

During his Amsterdam ministry, Dr. Kuyper was again an eminent clergyman and a church reformer. He worked tirelessly; as a matter of fact, he nearly wore himself out in heroic efforts to purify, revitalize and build not only the Amsterdam church but the entire State Church at large. And he already moved with ease on that larger stage. We shall pinpoint a few of Kuyper’s activities in his crusade for a better church, a regenerated church.

How could one arrange matters to do justice to the divergent confessional elements that existed in the Amsterdam church? In 1870 Kuyper, with others, submitted to the consistory a modus vivendi, that is, an arrangement by which all confessional groups could enjoy the use of the church properties while leading ecclesiastically separate lives. In the state of the church at that time, it was evidently the most equitable plan that could be devised. How the scheme, if it had been adopted, would have worked out only time could have told.

Kuyper proceeded on the assumption that eventually the
Abraham Kuyper

Amsterdam church would probably clash with the higher church authorities, even with the Synod. From history he knew the results of past reform movements. So he persuaded the consistory to adopt such regulations and to take such measures that in case of conflict, the orthodox element would not lose their interest in the church’s physical properties and immense wealth without due process of law and the verdict of the civil court.

The Amsterdam orphanage was a municipal institution. While the city council operated this home, it had delegated the religious instruction of the orphans to the Amsterdam consistory. When Dr. Kuyper came to Amsterdam, he found the orphanage totally in Modernistic hands. He could understandably not endorse that state of affairs. Acting on the advice of the orphanage committee, to which Kuyper had been appointed and of which he was the moving force, the consistory introduced some drastic changes, for instance, all the religious services which the orphans would attend and all their religious instruction would henceforth be orthodox. While in 1873 much remained to be done, Kuyper and his co-workers had already achieved much for the unfortunate children.

In view of the fact that the Amsterdam consistory was composed of heterogeneous elements, it is little wonder that constant friction plagued the meetings. But in 1872 something took place in the consistory which the liberals and their “helpers” branded as mutiny.

The facts are these. Seventeen elders prepared a statement, under date of March 27, 1872, in which they declared that in the future, so far as their ecclesiastical office permitted, they would absent themselves from all religious services, rites, and ceremonies conducted by the liberal clergymen. Hence they would not be present, to be quite specific, when those liberal clergymen administered the sacraments. The elders gave their reasons in their statement. Far from engaging in revolt, those men acted from a profound religious conviction. Their statement reveals a sound Christian spirit. They distributed copies of this statement, together with a letter of explanation, to the consistory and the members of the Amsterdam church. Certain religious liberals now promptly drew up a document of protest and, when they had obtained the signatures of 1,077 male members, forwarded it to the consistory under the date of April 17. At the same time, 245 women members
sent the consistory a statement in which they expressed their agreement with the protest of the men. The special consistory (ministers and elders) met on April 18. That body received all the communications, took note of their contents, then referred them to a committee of four with instructions to prepare a reply and submit the same at a later meeting. The committee delegated the task to Dr. Kuyper as a one-man subcommittee. He accepted it.

At the September 27 session of the special consistory, the committee submitted its report. That body adopted the report and ordered it printed and distributed to the membership of the church. For this action they had a twofold purpose: to give every signer of both protests the opportunity to examine the consistory’s position for the information of the entire State Church membership both in and outside Amsterdam. Kuyper included in the 141-page brochure, *The Mutiny of the Seventeen Elders*, all the documents and communications pertaining to the case, even the names of all the signers of the protests. It contained a point-by-point analysis of the men’s protests, and answered it with overwhelming facts and arguments. In his unsparing, yet perfectly objective manner Kuyper figuratively tore the protest to shreds.

The reply was courteous but crushing. It was a factual, expertly written, very effective document. Even liberal church officers, though enraged at the content, had to credit Kuyper with having produced a document which would prove of permanent value among the consistorial archives. Naturally, the open and aboveboard action of the 17 elders created a tremendous stir in the Amsterdam church. In the liberal sector of the church there remained for a while a certain amount of sputtering. But the excitement eventually died down.

The entire affair stands out as another manifest symptom of decadence in the State Church. Both sides in the conflict sensed that the arrival of the decisive struggle, the battle royal, was only a question of time, although that time proved further away than both sides then realized.

The Amsterdam consistory was far from a united consistory. Confessionally it was a colorful body, actually a house divided against itself. In its bosom there raged a continuous battle between the orthodox and the liberal element. The consistory consisted of 136 men (ministers, elders and deacons). If the orthodox element did not want to be defeated through, for example, the absence of
some of their members, or by a hasty, incomplete discussion or some unexpected incident, they definitely had to meet in advance in order to present a united front in the discussions and in the voting. Hence, on October 9, 1872, Dr. Kuyper organized the like-minded orthodox and Reformed members into a society or fellowship. Though practically a closed circle, this fellowship must not be thought of as a consistory within a consistory. The group met from time to time, as occasion demanded. The men bound themselves to vote as the group had decided. If a particular member did not endorse a group decision, he was required to reveal his views and intentions in advance at a meeting. Kuyper presided at these meetings during the balance of his Amsterdam ministry.

In forming such a society those men followed a precedent set by other groups in prior years.

Since October, 1869, Kuyper had regularly contributed religious and political articles to De Heraut (The Herald). On August 25, 1870, Dr. C. Schwarz, the editor-in-chief, died unexpectedly. Kuyper, at the publisher’s invitation, consented to serve as editor to the end of the year. The December 30 issue, the last of the paper’s twenty-first year, contained a leading article by Kuyper in grateful recognition and remembrance of Dr. Schwarz’s life and work.

On Kuyper’s initiative, the Heraut Society was organized in the latter part of 1870. Kuyper knew clearly what he was about. Because his purpose with De Heraut was the dissemination of his religious, ecclesiastical, and political views, the founders limited the Society’s membership to those who recognized the Word of God as the foundation for the life of both the church and the nation. This Society purchased De Heraut and decided that, beginning January 1, the paper would continue as a weekly with Dr. Kuyper as its editor-in-chief. Its high goal (“For a free church and a free school in a free land,”) was boldly printed in its masthead. Kuyper consented to take on this extra work. The first issue appeared on January 6, 1871. By serving Kuyper as a rostrum from which he addressed his reading audience each week, De Heraut immensely widened and deepened his influence.

Since time immemorial the words “I baptize thee into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” had been spoken at the administration of the sacrament of baptism. In
1870 the State Church Synod, surrendering to the Modernists and the men of the Groningen school of theology, decreed that henceforth ministers were permitted to baptize “unto faith, hope, and love” or to use some other phrase which they deemed fitting. What a sorry pass the once illustrious Protestant Church of Holland had come to!

Among churchmen of the considerable orthodox group throughout the country, the Synodical resolution evoked a prompt and vigorous, but not too intelligent or level-headed, reaction. Some, evidently hysterical, fancied that they now stood at Armageddon. With the high resolve of saving Christian baptism, they planned a great gathering to meet on Reformation day in the choir of the Amsterdam cathedral church. Kuyper, though not optimistic, willingly cooperated. But that “great gathering” was never held. It proved impossible, even in the general orthodox group, to discover unity and peace by a policy of give-and-take, that is, by elastic formulas and high-sounding phrases.

The pulpit soon proved too narrow and confined a place for Kuyper’s crusading spirit. During his Utrecht years, he had in a major address assailed an organization which was then mobilizing all its resources to crush, if possible, the non-state grade schools. He had also delivered a stern lecture against those who were attempting a spiritual regimentation of the entire nation. In De Heraut, in addresses and sundry writings, Kuyper, almost a lone warrior, hurled bomb after bomb into the camp of the opposition.

On March 14, 1871, Dr. Kuyper delivered first in Amsterdam and later in some other cities of Holland a lecture entitled “Modernism a Fata Morgana in the Realm of Christianity.” Toward the end of August the lecture went out as a brochure, with the customary notes.

Kuyper did not treat Modernism as a way of life or as a comprehensive, all-inclusive life-view but solely as the liberal theology. This liberal theology he subjected to a searching, critical analysis by drawing a parallel between it and the Fata Morgana. The Fata Morgana is an extraordinary aerial phenomenon, of rare occurrence though well known, which is observed in the Strait of Messina and at other points in Italy and Sicily. It usually lasts only a short time. One sees at a great distance, often high above the horizon, houses, palaces, towers, even entire cities, all in constant motion and continuous change. Concerning the Fata Morgana and
the liberal theology, Kuyper declared that both are majestic, entrancingly beautiful, captivatingly gorgeous phenomena; that both appear according to a fixed law, create nothing, but only reflect what already exists; and that both are devoid of reality and lose themselves in unreal forms and shadows. In a word, the lecture exposed the liberal theology in all its emptiness and poverty. Note a few excerpts from the third section. “The god of the liberal theologians is an abstraction.” “Their prayer lacks the essence of genuine petition.” “If they are logical, they must deny their own conception of a divine government of the universe.” “As to their evolutionistic conception of man — if his moral nature evolved from something in the beast, there can be no talk of morality.” ‘Nor do they possess a correct knowledge of sin. To their mind sin is an inner unrest, a never-slumbering remorse, a restlessly being driven by the moral ideal. But that moral ideal, too, is unreal.’ Their church lacks all those marks, qualities, and characteristics which determine the church’s nature. The Modernist cannot convert the church into something radically different and at the same time call it the church of Christ.” “The Liberal theologians are themselves the most obstinate dogmatists. ‘We believe,’ says the church, ‘and let him who confesses otherwise leave us.’ Says the Modernist, ‘We confess, and whoever speaks differently forfeits his right to the honored title of cultured and educated man.’” Said Kuyper: “Or tell me, what, except unproved premises, and thus, from their standpoint, cheap dogmas are these statements when Modernism in all its preaching proceeds from this confession, which I present in bold but only partial outline: ‘I, Modernist, believe in a God who is the Father of all men; and in Jesus, not the Christ but the rabbi of Nazareth. I believe in man who is good by nature and needs only to strive for perfection. I believe that sin is only relative, that forgiveness of sins is therefore simply a human invention. I believe a hope of the better life and the salvation of all men, without a day of judgment.’”

While the outstanding theologians and the second-hand, dwarf theologians felt pointedly wounded by Kuyper’s bold frontal attack on their system and while each reacted in his own way, as to the main thrust of the lecture, history has vindicated Dr. Kuyper, the Modernists themselves being witnesses.

In those days the State Church, instead of institutionally carrying on mission work, left this to private, individual, and social
initiative. In his pre-convention address of September 6, 1871, for the eleventh annual mission festival of the Netherlands Reformed Mission Society, Dr. Kuyper outlined his basic convictions on missions. He took as his point of departure John 20:21: "Jesus therefore said to them again: Peace be unto you; as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Kuyper raised three questions and gave his answers. Who must send missionaries? The organized, institutional church. Whom must the church send? Her sons and daughters. She must pray to God for children who are born to be emissaries of the cross. What is the purpose which alone gives missions their nobility and power? Indeed, the conversion of the heathen, the salvation of souls, and the increase of the church are high objectives. Yet they are only means toward that ultimate goal, which is the glory of God the Father.

Three hundred years before, in 1568, there had been held at Wezel, Germany, a convocation of the Reformed churches of Germany and Holland. When 1868, the tercentenary year, approached, leading Netherlands churchmen conceived the thought of renewing the ancient fraternal bond between the Calvinistic churches of the two countries through another convocation. European conditions, however, were of such a nature that the conference had to be postponed. It was held on September 24 and 25, 1872, at Zeist, a city a few miles east of Utrecht.

How outright liberal, semi-liberal, orthodox, and Reformed — in fact, churchmen of every type and stripe — could fraternize in a convocation to commemorate the important Reformed assembly of 1568 is desperately unclear. When Dr. Kuyper, who was given the floor by prearrangement, raised the question whether the time had not come to make the conference what it stated itself to be but was not, namely a bond of union between two sister (Reformed) churches, his brief, terse, to-the-point remarks aroused a storm of antagonism. Men hissed and booed; they scraped and stamped their feet to drown his voice. While, so it seemed, the assembled ecclesiastics somehow muddled through, the convocation was foredoomed to failure. In its primary objective it did fail.

Why, asked many, is Dr. Kuyper so vitally interested in the problem of the church? That question he answered in a 114-page brochure published in 1873, which he gave the title Confidentially. After relating some of his experiences in the church and as editor,
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Kuyper set down his chief, three-part disclosure.

1. “Whence my predilection for the problem of the church.” This section tells the story of his discovery of A Lasco’s works, of his reading of The Heir of Redclyffe, and of his conversations with the Reformed people of Beesd.

2. “Why I deem that predilection for the problem of the church justified.” The needs of individual persons, of the church, of family and national life demand that the church be effectively revitalized.

3. “In which direction that predilection is leading me.” Here he produces a blueprint of the ideal church as he conceives of it. To his mind, the State Church must become Reformed, democratic, autonomous, and self-supporting. It must possess a threefold, well-ordered ministry — of the Word, of worship, of missions and philanthropy.

All this Kuyper wrote in a literary style for which there is only one adjective — Kuyperesque. Confidentially stands out as a masterpiece of revealing content. It is a priceless human document. Certainly no churchman who read Confidentially’s spirited pages could possibly be in the dark as to Kuyper’s objectives.

How did Dr. Kuyper fare throughout the ecclesiastical storms of those years, and what was his reaction? Already by 1874 he was attacked and denounced more than any other State Church ecclesiastic. Why? Because of his battle for the Reformed faith and the Calvinistic life-view and of his aggressive action not only in the church but also in the realms of education and politics. But Kuyper’s defenders were few. He rode the storm in the solid conviction that he was right. On purpose he did not read half of what the opposition wrote. He wanted to preserve his heart from bitterness. Further, with his ministerial and editorial work, his studies, correspondence, and much more, Kuyper simply did not have the time to reply to all the contra writing and criticism. Much of it did not deserve a reply anyway. And he saw that the way things were developing would answer his critics far more effectively than what he could have said.

If these brief outlines of certain selected events in the area of church reform could not be a thrilling story of richly productive effort, they at all events give us a sort of X-ray picture of conditions in Holland’s State Church during the later 1860’s and the earlier 1870’s. But must we, because Kuyper and his associates
did not achieve large, significant, tangible results, write off all their reform work as so much futile labor and lost effort? By no means. Church reformation is not the work of a day but a herculean task. Kuyper and his co-workers were sowing the seed. That seed needed time to germinate, to sprout, to grow, so that it could finally bear fruit. What was written and achieved by those men, especially Kuyper, needed time to educate and train and thus to carry out its mission in the souls of many thousands of Netherlanders.

But the Synod, with its adherents in pulpits, church boards, consistories, and pews, wanted nothing of church reform. Then, too, because many influential churchmen refused to put their shoulders to the wheel, church restoration had to await a more auspicious day — if such a day should ever come.

To the Reformed and the thoroughly orthodox members of the Amsterdam church as well, Dr. Kuyper's ministry was a radiant time. They highly appreciated him as the preacher after their own heart, the trusted teacher of their children, their pastor-counselor in things spiritual, and their leader and spokesman in the powerful consistory.

Dr. Kuyper served the Amsterdam church for three and a half years. That service ended quite abruptly in the spring of 1874, when Kuyper left the familiar confines of the church and transferred from the pulpit to Parliament.

During his ten and a half years in the active gospel ministry, Dr. Kuyper had wielded both trowel and sword with marked talent. That ministry had neither followed a stereotyped pattern nor set a type that others could follow. The young clergyman of 1863 had developed into the mature minister of 1874.
In order to orientate ourselves in the Netherlands political area as of 1874, we should take a rather close but brief look at the situation as it had developed historically. In 1848 Holland received a new, liberalized constitution. The next year four political parties arose.

(1) The Liberals. For years they constituted the dominant party. Mr. Johan Rudolph Thorbecke, jurist, professor of law at Leiden University, statesman, from time to time a member of Parliament, and three times prime minister, headed the party all those years. Although in the early 1870's there already appeared a more advanced, more democratic Liberalism, yet in 1871 the party still recognized Thorbecke at 73 as its able and distinguished leader.

(2) The Conservatives. In their fundamental political philosophy, the Conservatives did not differ from the Liberals. They were merely less progressive and less enthusiastic about Thorbecke's Liberalism. The distinction was only one of tempo. Whatever the personal religion of the Liberals and the Conservatives, neither group could be designated as a Christian political party.

(3) The Catholics. For many years they had been allies of the Liberals. However, the Catholics' objections and opposition to the education in the public schools progressively increased, particularly after the bishops issued their Education Manifesto of 1868. For this and other reasons, the Catholics around 1871 were breaking away
from their one-time political confederates.

(4) The Christian-Historicals. Better known as the Anti-revolutionnaires, they followed the leadership of Mr. Groen van Prinsterer. This party often cooperated with the Conservatives.

Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer was born August 21, 1801, at Voorburg, near The Hague, of wealthy and socially prominent parents. At Leiden University, Groen, a brilliant student in letters and law, formed a friendship with a fellow student, Johan Rudolph Thorbecke. Although later they became political opposites, their personal friendship lasted throughout their long lives. Groen graduated from Leiden in 1823. In 1828 he married Elisabeth Maria Van der Hoop, daughter of the mayor of the city of Groningen. Throughout their long married life, she rendered him the ultimate in secretarial service. By 1830 both had left the standpoint of general Protestantism to embrace the Reformed religion, faith, and confession. Groen rendered distinguished national service as secretary to the King's cabinet and as supervisor of the publication of the archives of the House of Orange. He also cooperated in the attempt to purify the State Church from within, but he remains best known as a Christian historian, publicist, political leader, and statesman.

What was Groen’s basic political philosophy? Since about 1830 he saw ever more clearly the spuriousness and pernicious influence of the fundamental philosophy and the principles of the French revolution. “No God, no master!” had been the revolutionary cry. To Groen this was revolt, rebellion, revolution against the Most High God, the absolute Ruler of the universe. But Groen saw that in ordinary times too, men rise up in revolt and mutiny against the Lord of all the earth when they reject the Word of God and despise His ordinances. So he cried, literally, “Over against the revolution, the gospel,” by which he meant: over against the spirit, the principles, and the methods of revolution in that sense, we must raise the banner of the Word of God and apply its teachings to the whole of human life. Groen’s political antithesis was something entirely new in Dutch politics. When he decided on a name for his party, he chose “Antirevolutionary” to denote its negative character, and “Christian-Historical” to indicate its positive character.

Groen has been called a “general without an army.” That designation is hardly correct. From time to time he held a seat in Parliament. Six or seven men of his party also held seats around the
year 1871. In the country, Groen had his following. In his writings he developed Christian political principles. As occasion demanded, he addressed the voters in specific writings. Nevertheless, it must be said that during his lifetime Groen plowed a lonely furrow. After decades of toil, he enjoyed only a meager harvest. The reasons lie near at hand. Groen was a pioneer and as such he had to perform foundational work. He had to combat the spirit of the time. That great sector of the common people who did not yet possess the ballot took little or no interest in politics. Many Christian leaders were mortally afraid of political parties and even abhorred the very idea. The Liberals and the Conservatives were in complete control. They dealt out the political offices, the university professorates, and the honors. In season and out of season they preached their doctrine of "national unity," a phrase to conjure with in those days. What they envisioned was a nation dominated in the entire range of its life by themselves, their philosophy, their policies, and their spiritual regimentation.

Groen was not a leader of the masses. Though he wrote a classic style, he did not capture the imagination of the man in the street. He was an able speaker in Parliamentary debate, but he could not gather great audiences about him and electrify them by his oratory. A dedicated and able worker in his chosen fields, he nevertheless lacked the talent to create an effective organization and galvanize men into action. Yet, amid the most disheartening conditions, Groen toiled on. Then, in the mid-1860's, the dynamic young clergyman Kuyper appeared on the horizon. Their early correspondence introduced each to the other. On May 18, 1869, they met personally for the first time in the Utrecht cathedral church. By 1871 their acquaintance had grown into cordial friendship, mutual understanding, and fraternal cooperation.

There were a few Antirevolutionary Voters Clubs in the country but they did not yet form a general alliance. Party representatives met informally from time to time to talk things over and to plan. While men hoped that these small gatherings were prophetic of a better day, one cannot call them national conventions. In 1871 Dr. Kuyper presided at one of those meetings.

In 1871, Groen faced a serious situation. He saw with increasing disfavor that, while the Antirevolutionary representatives in the Second Chamber of Parliament did not deviate markedly from the accepted party principles, they
nevertheless failed to take a firm stand in attitude, policy, and action on the basis of those principles. Groen also saw with growing concern that the Conservatives were simply using them as tools to further their own ends, and that if he did not keep a watchful eye, his entire party would be absorbed by the Conservatives. This situation called for drastic action.

In 1871 Groen acted, at first with a degree of hesitation, then with great decisiveness. When in that year, the election approached, he broke with the Antirevolutionary representatives in Parliament. He refused to support them for re-election. Instead, he nominated only three men: Keuchenius the jurist, Kuyper the churchman, and Van Otterloo the schoolmaster. At the same time he broke with the Conservative party. Henceforth there would be no more temporizing with or subservience to the Conservatives. So Groen crossed his own Rubicon. That action stands out as the most critical, the most drastic, the most painful of his long career. In order to remain loyal to his principles, Groen forfeited personal friendships. "I cannot, I may not, I will not do otherwise." When Groen abandoned fusion with the Conservatives, he rescued his own party from their fatal embrace. From that time forward, the Antirevolutionary party stood beside the other political parties as an independent, self-dependent organization. For the Antirevolutionary party, 1871 was the resurrection year. Groen wrote: "In our isolation lies our strength." He meant this: while he desired rapprochement with other political parties, the Antirevolutionary party must be independent and separate through loyalty to its own standpoint and principles, for therein lies its strength.

Both as editor of the political section of De Heraut and as candidate for a seat in Parliament, Dr. Kuyper took an active part in the 1871 campaign. But, while Groen’s followers heeded his advice, not one of his three nominees was elected.

On August 21, 1871, Groen van Prinsterer reached the age of 70. To the Dutchers outside Groen’s circle, the event passed unnoticed. But a group of about twelve men, Kuyper included, gathered at Groen’s home to congratulate him, to present him with an artistic memorial of the occasion, and to enjoy a session of Christian fellowship.

How the times have changed! There was once a day when the newspapers of a country practically dominated its politics. In these
latter days, however, radio and television have made serious
inroads on that onetime power.

During the 1870’s, political parties depended on newspapers for
their growth and the furtherance of their principles. Yet, in
1871 the Antirevolutionary party did not possess a single daily
newspaper. Nor was any existing newspaper committed to its
principles. Only a few friendly weeklies were a help to the party.

In Kuyper’s view, the daily press was certainly not an
invention of satan but a gift of God to our human race. And when
Kuyper saw how men seized that powerful weapon to promote all
types of principles and to battle against all that the Christian
element in Holland held sacred, he said to himself: if that weapon,
a gift of God, exercises such a power when men turn it against
God’s people, why, then, should God’s people hesitate any longer,
and why shouldn’t they, too, seize that weapon to battle for God’s
glory? Hence Kuyper decided that the Dutch Christians, too,
should have their own daily newspaper which would speak what
lived in their hearts.

But the founding of a daily newspaper was not a light matter.
After a great deal of thought, study, discussion, and planning, the
Heraut Society, which owned De Heraut, decided on Kuyper’s
initiative to convert this weekly into a daily newspaper with the
name of De Standaard (The Standard). De Heraut would cease to
exist as a separate paper; it would henceforth appear as a religious
supplement to the Saturday issue of De Standaard. Dr. Kuyper
consented to serve as the editor of both. The knowledge that he
would do so contributed superlatively to the success of the plan.

On April 1, 1872, the first issue of De Standaard came from
the presses. In a noteworthy editorial, Kuyper introduced the paper
to its readers. April 1, 1872, had been chosen for a psychological
reason. It was the tercentenary of the capture of Brielle, a city on
the Maas River, by the Netherlands during their Eighty Years War
with Spain. That event, a major victory, would be celebrated
throughout Holland with great patriotic enthusiasm.

One may be inclined to wonder whether a man’s being engaged
in the active gospel ministry and editing a political daily newspaper
at the same time does not constitute an incongruity. In Kuyper’s
conviction, the Scriptures not only disclose the way to the bliss of
heaven but also shed a radiant light on every area of life with all its
problems. One who appreciates Kuyper’s resolve to instruct and
inspire his readers along these lines will applaud his heroic undertaking.

Because Kuyper realized that such an editorial position demanded the entire personality, he did not at that time think of attaching himself to the paper permanently. Besides, Kuyper was not responsible for the paper's entire content. His task included the writing of the leaders and the editorials plus the general editorial direction. From the Groen-Kuyper correspondence, it appears that Kuyper actually attempted too much when he added the editorial task to his other duties. Still, when the need of the Anti-revolutionary party and of the times called him, he gladly shouldered the additional burden.

The founding of *De Standaard* raised the party members' enthusiasm to a new pitch. They now felt that they were really forging ahead. Especially Groen, who felt his strength gradually diminishing, greeted *De Standaard*, small paper though it was beside Holland's great dailies, with genuine gratitude. It greatly eased his own task, since he could now leave political journalism to Kuyper. This was Groen's chance to retire to his favorite historical studies. In 1872, a new Antirevolutionary Voters Club was organized in Amsterdam on Kuyper's initiative.

The year 1873 was again an election year. For the first time, the Antirevolutionary party's preliminary national committee, of which Kuyper was the chairman, managed a political campaign. It had 120,000 circulars distributed throughout the country. Kuyper himself, committee chairman, editor of *De Standaard*, and candidate in the Gouda district, took an active part in the campaign. Although the Liberals won the election, the Antirevolutionaries, whose candidates received nearly 12,000 votes (two and three-fourths times as many as in 1871) made a serious impression. The other parties, taking note of this remarkable showing, felt that in the future they would have to reckon seriously with Groen's party. Dr. Kuyper won in the primaries in the Gouda district but lost out in the election.

Ever since his rediscovery of Calvin in the Beesd manse, Dr. Kuyper continued his study of Calvinism — not only the Calvinistic (Reformed) theology but also the political and historical developments of Calvin's system of thought. Tracing the lines of historical development, he found that human life had attained its freest, richest, and most nearly divinely ordained development in those countries that had embraced Calvin's teachings — first
among the Huguenots in France, then in Switzerland, later in Holland, thereafter in Scotland and England, and lastly in the United States. Groen van Prinsterer had expressed his own positive conclusion on the political-historical significance of Calvinism thus: "In the Calvinistic Reformation according to the Scriptures lie the origin and the guarantee of the blessings of which the French revolution of 1789 gave the deceptive promise and the ghastly caricature."

In November, 1873, Dr. Kuyper delivered at Utrecht a lecture entitled "Calvinism the Origin and Guarantee of Our Constitutional Liberties." By adding the phrase "A Netherlands Reflection," he indicated his full agreement with Groen's basic thought. He also gave this lecture at the Christian Reformed seminary in Kampen, as well as in Amsterdam, Groningen, and Gouda. Under the date of May 24, 1874, the lecture appeared in print. On June 20 of the same year a second printing appeared.

One can summarize his lecture in a brief paragraph. The Calvinistic nations (Switzerland, Holland, England, and the United States) are the lands where political liberty originated and developed. The United States, the country of the greatest freedom, was founded by the Puritans. The strength of the Puritan spirit was a product of England's Calvinism; the struggle of the Independents (Pilgrims and Puritans) in England was a continuation of the convictions that once inspired the Huguenots of France. These mighty spiritual movements originated in the same source. And the germinal thought from which they sprang is to be found in the towering spirit of Calvin. His life watchword, "God absolutely sovereign," possessed a power that still astonishes us, giving authority its staunchest support while at the same time causing the unhindered growth and expansion of liberty.

In reading the lecture and the accompanying notes, one stands amazed at Kuyper's wide reading and his formidable array of sources. To name but a few, he quoted Washington, Jefferson, Bancroft, Macaulay, Burke, and De Tocqueville.

It must not be supposed that Kuyper meant the lecture to contain a political program. Nor did he design it as a springboard for entrance through the polls into Parliament. The lecture was not bound to the political constellation of the day. It is a timeless piece of work, the value of which the passing of the decades has not diminished.
In our country a man “runs” for political office. And how he runs! In Europe a candidate “stands” for office.

In Holland, able men of the Antirevolutionary party time and again permitted the use of their name when they knew that defeat was in point of fact almost downright certain. That was the spirit of Groen, Kuyper, and like-minded men. Because their Christianity was of the wholesome type and because they knew that time is of the essence in politics, they looked beyond every current election to the next and the next. They entertained the larger vision. They urged: *Ora et labora* — Pray and work.

As for Kuyper himself, at an interim election held in the Gouda district (South Holland province) on January 21, 1874, he was elected to the Second Chamber of Parliament by a vote of 1504 to 1252. The Liberals, of course, fumed and stormed, but that did not change the vote.

Did Dr. Kuyper now promptly and gladly resign from the ministry? Not at all. The victory at the polls confronted him with a most difficult problem. As to the active ministry and a seat in Parliament, it was an either/or case. The constitution stipulated in Article 91 that “the members of Parliament may not be ministers of religion.” That provision explicitly excluded clergymen, priests, rabbis, and other similar ecclesiastics. So Kuyper had to make a choice. He chose to accept the mandate for Gouda. But what about Article 91? One could readily detour that Article, so to speak. To satisfy the law and to pave the way for his entrance into Parliament, Kuyper requested of the Provincial Church Board of North Holland honorable emeritation. On March 3, 1874, this Board granted his request. His emeritation became effective on March 16.

Kuyper, however, would not now forsake the church, which he loved with a whole-souled devotion. He would continue his religious journalism and other religious writing. He would maintain his Amsterdam residence, be chosen elder of the church, and so continue to carry on for internal church reformation. However much it pained Kuyper to relinquish his active ministry, he interpreted his election as a divine call to a different field of labor.

Whoever would restrict Kuyper’s genius to the church does not grasp the range of his vision. Kuyper did not live in a secluded valley. He stood on the mountain top. His eyes already had the sweep of the eagle’s. He saw all the sectors of life as so many
provinces which, largely secularized, had to be won, redeemed, and made to prosper to the glory of the triune God and in conformity with His revealed will and ordinances. That grand vision had come to him in essence a decade earlier in the secluded village of Beesd. He now set out on a bold course of pioneering.

What, it may be asked, did Kuyper hope to achieve in Parliament? Although conditions did not hold out much promise, he would declare the principles for which he and his party stood, both in and out of Parliament. He would do his level best to obtain such legislation as could stand the Christian test. The outcome he would leave to a Higher Wisdom. One also wonders how long Kuyper expected to hold his seat in Parliament. That question involved imponderables which defy calculation, more particularly in the parliamentary form of government. At all events, Kuyper decided to continue living in Amsterdam for the time being.

The scene now shifts to The Hague.
8: "Congressman" Kuyper

Holland's States-General (Parliament), a bicameral legislature, corresponds to the United States Congress. The First Chamber is comparable to the Senate, the Second Chamber to the House of Representatives. The De Vries cabinet, which had taken office after the 1873 election and which leaned toward the Young Liberals, headed the government when Kuyper came to Parliament.

March 20, 1874, after taking the required oaths, Kuyper took his seat in the Second Chamber. Now 36, he was the youngest member but one. The Liberals and the Conservatives did not roll out the red carpet for him. On the contrary, he virtually walked into a den of lions. The fellow members of his party received him in a friendly manner. But their number was small. They lacked unity in political thinking. Except with respect to the school question, each went his own way. In his efforts to weld the small group into an effective working body, Kuyper enjoyed only limited success.

On August 27, 1874, the De Vries cabinet was succeeded by the Heemskerk ministry, a coalition government.

At that time the government and Parliament faced at least three major issues — the grade schools, the colonial question, and the socio-economic problem. Kuyper, never a yes man, did not hesitate to voice his views on these questions and on others that arose.

The elementary schools. Were they, or did they now become, a
Abraham Kuyper

political football? No. But since the question of elementary schools filled such a large place among the political issues of the 1870's and later decades, we should visualize the situation. Because Parliament alone legislated for the country's elementary schools and also because Parliament in part provided the funds for the operation of the schools, the problem was already there. The political Liberals and Conservatives, who modestly appraised themselves as the intellectual sector of the nation, wanted nothing less than to monopolize elementary education, to organize it according to the demands of their own culture, to permeate it with their own philosophy, and to instil their own life-view into the souls of all the nation's children. To this total effort, the men and women of the non-state school movements emphatically said no. If, in the conviction of these Netherlanders, the political Liberals and Conservatives won the day and their philosophy found universal acceptance, the inevitable outcome would be the dechristianization of education and the ultimate dechristianization of the nation.

In late 1874, Prime Minister Heemskerk, Secretary for Internal Affairs in his own cabinet, introduced his elementary education bill in the Second Chamber. The bill proposed various improvements. These would, of course, cost money. The patrons of the non-state grade schools would also have to introduce the improvements, but at their own expense. The government would give financial assistance to the public schools only. In addition, the non-state schools' patrons would have to continue to pay the usual taxes toward the maintenance of the public system.

On December 7, Dr. Kuyper delivered his first major speech on the question of grade schools in the Second Chamber. Did he hold out a tin cup and beg alms or a dole? Or did he submit a categorical schedule of demands? Neither the one nor the other. On the contrary, he raised the question to the highest possible Parliamentary level by discussing it from the broad, national point of view. "It should be possible," Kuyper declared, "to give our country, too, a school system in which party politics need not play any part whatsoever. Education is, in my view, not first of all a political but a social question, and in that respect I agree fully with the attitude of Mr. Forster, the English Secretary for Education, who, when he moved leave to bring in the elementary education bill, declared in the English Parliament, ‘There never, I believe, was any question presented by any Government to this House.
which more demanded to be considered apart from any party consideration.

To Kuyper's mind, education should be given a self-dependent position, that is, an autonomous status, with a complete organization of its own, in the spirit, so he said, of what the English call a body corporate. How? There should be local boards of education and also provincial boards and a national board. This organization must be invested with the entire control, administration, and operation of the school system — naturally, within the limits prescribed by law. He did not mean that the state should not concern itself at all with the schools. He recognized the state's obligation regarding education. In his view, the state possessed the right of legislating on general instructional standards, the right of teacher certification, the right of control and inspection, and the right (within limits) of enforcing school attendance, to name only these four. But the state has also certain obligations. It must make it possible, financially and otherwise, for all parents, including the poorer, to send their children to schools of the parents' own choice. It must meticulously respect the parents' demand of conscience. Then, too, the state should, in all fairness and as elemental justice, reimburse the non-state schools the amount of money which those schools were saving the state.

These are only a few of the high points of Kuyper's speech, in which he spelled out his position on the question of grade schools. In that speech he raised the banner of equal rights for all parents in education. How many of Kuyper's demands would be met in that session of Parliament or in the years that lay ahead remained to be seen. While the speech possesses historical and biographical value, the principles that he enunciated are of enduring value for all countries and all times.

The next day, December 8, Mr. Johannes Kappeyne van de Coppello, a chief man among the Young Liberals, also delivered a speech on the school question. Far from sharing the convictions of Kuyper and like-minded men, Kappeyne concluded his speech with the astounding declaration: "Now I ask, can any father assert that it is his duty to withhold elementary education from his child when the school in which that instruction is enjoyed has been opened to the child without cost? If it be said, 'If that is what you want, you are oppressing the minority,' I would almost say, Then that minority had better be oppressed, for in that case it is 'the fly which causes the oil of the perfumer to send forth an evil odor' (Eccl.
Kuyper, in that same session, replied with a dignified but blazing attack on state absolutism and Liberalistic despotism. Kappeyne's insinuation about fathers withholding elementary education from their children was both beside the point and contrary to fact. For Kappeyne's political future, that speech, particularly the above excerpt, proved extremely unfortunate. Although he had said "the fly" — and not "dead fly" — he thereafter became known in wide circles as "the man of the dead fly." Non-state school people understood. And while Kappeyne's tempering clause "I would almost say" has often been lost sight of, his "Then that minority had better be oppressed" was a perfect illustration of Liberalistic arrogance. It reverberated in Netherlands politics with telling effect. It drove together all those for whom the perpetuation of the non-state schools was a life-and-death matter, irrespective of their religion or church affiliation.

Heemskerk's school bill pleased practically no one. Even the Liberals and the Radicals were dissatisfied with it, because to them it was not sufficiently drastic. The bill died when the Heemskerk cabinet retired in 1877.

A second major problem was the colonial question.

The Dutch East Indies, besides bringing Holland great wealth, gave her both her high rank as the second colonial power of the world and signal prestige in world affairs. Not being a colonial expert, Dr. Kuyper refrained from going into details but sketched the broad outlines of colonial policy. On November 11, 1874, he delivered his memorable speech on Holland's moral obligations toward her colonial possessions. Not only as churchman but also as sociologist and statesman, Kuyper demanded the Christianization of the Indies through churches, missions, and Christian schools. Further, there should come an end to the economic exploitation of the Indies, whether for the benefit of the national treasury or for the profit of individuals. The Achin war, then raging in northwest Sumatra, should be stopped. The traffic in, and consumption of, opium must be terminated. The schools must be improved. The moral training and elevation of the many millions in the Indies must be vigorously carried forward. There must be more equitable administration of justice. There must be firm, sympathetic, and educative government, which should train the Indies for eventual independence.
This program of far-reaching demands raised by Kuyper 80 years ago strikes us today as sound, progressive, forward-looking, and Christian. One cannot help wondering what the situation would be today in the former Dutch East Indies if the Netherlands government had initiated Kuyper's program for that archipelago and had carried it to success.

During the 1870's another problem, the socio-economic question, arose to plague governments and to haunt legislatures.

In those European countries where the industrial revolution progressively developed, the socio-economic history is not a pleasant contemplation but a chronicle of sweat and tears and bitter misery.

The classical school of thought reigned supreme. It was the day of laissez faire. Free trade seemed to be a sort of religion, non-interference on the part of the government an almost universally accepted dogma, and unrestricted competition an infallible doctrine. The most rapacious among the employers practically set the wage scales, the working hours, and the conditions of labor. Labor contracts, insurance against financial loss through sickness, accident, unemployment, retirement, and old age benefits were still unknown. Severance pay, paid vacations, fringe benefits — who ever heard of them 80 years ago? The few lights that flickered among the brooding shadows only accentuated the general darkness. A few Christian leaders raised their voices. The result was hardly revolutionary. What had the Liberals and the Conservatives done in their long era of undisputed power toward solving the socio-economic problem? Practically nothing. They seemed wholly unable to read the signs of the times.

In Holland as elsewhere, lawmakers had to elect from the three R's — Revolution, Reaction, and Reform.

Kuyper saw the social unrest and the labor problems. He chose immediately for social reform. He was far ahead of his time. Even in his own circles he had to overcome a measure of lethargy and opposition. Some men who indeed possessed social consciousness did not, at least not yet, want to convert social wishes into coercive law. Long before Kuyper ever thought of entering Parliament, he had shown pronounced social sympathies in his sermons and in his *Heraut* and *Standaard* articles. He had not preached the social gospel, but he had from time to time laid the social implications of the gospel on the consciences of the church. In 1871 he had already
written: “One will readily assent to this: to help where the need has already arisen, to battle against an isolated social evil, to rescue individuals is, while excellent, something different from taking hold of the socio-economic problem itself with the sacred enthusiasm of faith.”

Kuyper, as I said, chose immediately for reform. He advocated state interference, not state paternalism; organization of labor, not the revival of the medieval guilds; the national interest, not that of any class. Understandably, a certain vagueness characterized his proposals. He did not submit a comprehensive concrete solution to every phase of the complex problem. He was doing exploratory work. But the basic pattern was there.

On November 28, 1874, Dr. Kuyper addressed the Chamber in a noteworthy speech on the socio-economic question. He called for a code of labor laws, which should be a companion code to the one which existed for trade and commerce. Did Kuyper mean to suggest that a royal commission, composed exclusively, or almost so, of lawyers and professors, immediately gather in solemn conclave and over their coffee and cigars write up a body of laws which prescribed both the obligations and the rights of labor? Note what he said: “There must come and there can come a new, organic life, provided that the organization be not imposed by the state but first take form spontaneously in real life by right of custom and usage, thereafter to be enacted by the state into a code of statutes.”

How did the influential leaders of the day, in and out of Parliament, greet Kuyper’s proposals? A cabinet member ridiculed the idea of a code of labor laws. The Chamber shrugged its shoulders. Part of the press flouted the suggestion with the sarcastic question whether the gentleman who had submitted the idea was himself able to write up one single law for such a code. And a Liberalistic paper branded his action “playing with fire.” Men raised such questions: Isn’t that Kuyper giving the workingmen ideas? Isn’t he that demagogue preacher from Amsterdam?

In the same session of the Second Chamber of November 28, 1874, Dr. Kuyper opened his small son’s pocket Bible and read, as he alone could read the Scriptures, that powerful indictment from the Epistle of James: “Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you . . .” (5:1ff). The bitterness of the opposition then turned the Chamber into a near madhouse. In the dreary social-economic wilderness of the 1870’s, Kuyper’s was
"Congressman" Kuyper

the most magnetic voice that spoke — in the national interest, for social justice and economic security. His keen sense of social responsibility, his sympathy for the laboring classes, and his love for the great multitude of the common people made him a pioneer on the social frontiers early in his career.

Whatever his subject, Kuyper invariably had the full attention of the Chamber. There came a moment when Heemskerk, captivated by one of Kuyper's speeches, thanked the gentleman representing Gouda on behalf of the Chamber for the literary treat that he had given them. That was fine. But Kuyper wanted results.

1875 was again an election year. About this time Groen more and more left practical politics to Kuyper while he devoted himself to his historical studies. The arrangement worked out well. Groen understood perfectly what Kuyper was facing in Parliament. He, too, had been there. During those years, a new political pattern was emerging. Groen had divorced his Antirevolutionary party from the Conservatives. The Catholics were being led in the ultramontane direction to assume eventually the status of a political party.

While in the 1875 campaign there was no evidence of an impressive cooperation, far less of a coalition between the Antirevolutionaries and the Catholics, there actually did exist a measure of understanding. In certain quarters that "understanding" created no ecstatic applause. A Rotterdam newspaper spoke a curse on "that monstrous marriage of Rome and Dordt," that is, of Catholics and Calvinists. A provincial paper pontificated that, because of their cooperating with the Catholics, the Antirevolutionaries "deserve the contempt of every right-thinking person." In the good old days, of course, the "marriage" of Catholics and Liberals had been a glorious union. But naturally, it was hard to see a useful confederate go over to the enemy.

In the 1875 campaign, Kuyper again used the newspaper De Standaard effectively. He never attacked an opponent's personal religion or character, but he did emphatically assail the Liberals' and the Conservatives' principles, objectives, policies, and methods. Day after day he attacked Kappeyne and his allies with a brilliant series of articles on the modification of the school laws. These editorials, reprinted as six pamphlets that sold for ten cents per copy, served as unsurpassed campaign literature.
If Kuyper had remained in the active ministry, had "confined himself strictly to his pastoral duties," had lectured and written books, brochures, and articles on the problems of the day, the opposition members would have smiled condescendingly and gone their smug way. But now Kuyper's enemies wondered how they could cope with this new and impressive cooperation — not yet a coalition — between forces in politics. They knew that thousands read De Standaard. Their leaders, too, had to read what he wrote in it.

In the campaign, the Liberals and the Conservatives advanced very little in the way of solid arguments. In the heat of the battle, however, they did indulge in mudslinging and make malicious charges and disgraceful insinuations. Kuyper did not reply in kind. As a result of the 1875 election, the Heemskerk cabinet stayed on.

About this time Dr. Kuyper moved his family to The Hague.

On March 16, 1874, Dr. Kuyper's emeritation had become effective. June 1 the Amsterdam church's Electoral Commission chose him as an elder. But the pressure of his work in Parliament was so heavy that in 1875 he already very seldom attended the consistory meetings. So on February 7, 1876, he requested and received honorable discharge.

Although Dr. Kuyper appreciated what was good in the national universities, he was fully aware of their grave shortcomings and of the spirit which dominated them. From 1870 on, he had declared both in and outside the Second Chamber that the higher education law, as it was going to be revised, could lead to no other end than to an official break with the Christ, and that the Christians of Holland would have to found a school of higher education of their own. So Kuyper and other men of education, standing, and influence conceived the thought of founding a Christian, Protestant, orthodox, non-state, non-church university. One would think that all Netherlands orthodoxy could have banded together to call a flourishing, orthodox Christian school into existence. But Dr. Bronsveld, Dr. Van Toorenbergen, and some others even declined to meet in order to explore the situation. That was in 1875. So the project never even reached the point of discussion.

During those days, the peerless American evangelist Dwight L. Moody, with Ira D. Sankey and Robert Pearsall Smith, conducted revival meetings in England. This evangelistic campaign of 1873-1875 was Moody's first in the British Isles. In 1875 Smith invited
the orthodox men and women of Europe to a great meeting planned at Brighton. Dr. Kuyper attended with many friends. He heard the incomparable Moody. He saw the devotional fervor of the thousands who had gathered. He joined in the singing of the great hymns of the Christian church. The spirit that prevailed at those Brighton meetings fell on his soul like a refreshing sea breeze. When after a number of glorious days in late May and early June the group from Holland prepared to go home and each member asked to express his reaction in a Scripture passage, Kuyper said, "My cup runneth over." Dr. Kuyper entertained high hopes that much good would come from that evangelical movement for the churches of Holland. He knew how sorely they needed it. At mission festivals he spoke on the Brighton theme. He wrote on it in the religious supplement of De Standaard in a series of articles on "The Sealing of the Elect" and one on "Reformed Fasting." Later he began another series, this one on "The Christian's Vows," which ran for only a few weeks, when it was abruptly terminated. Kuyper had completely collapsed.

When Kuyper entered Parliament in March, 1874, he was already a greatly overworked man. Within two years, in February, 1876, he fell into complete nervous exhaustion.

Overwork was the chief, though not necessarily the only, cause of his collapse. Even during his decade in the ministry, he had seriously overworked. It is a wonder that he did not break down before 1874. In Parliament, too, he took on too much. He took his duties seriously. His speeches of the two years, covering as they do a wide range of important subjects, tell the story of extensive and thorough orientation. He read, studied, reflected, and prepared speeches far into the night. He worked hard, but not wisely. He drove himself relentlessly. It couldn't last. Besides, there were De Standaard and its weekly religious supplement, for both of which Kuyper wrote and both of which he edited.

But we should note also a number of contributory causes. For Kuyper the two years in Parliament were a baptism of fire. To the great majority in the Second Chamber, he was not a popular man. Some spoke of a "whited sepulcher." Others accused him of the design to overthrow the monarchy, establish a republic, and set himself up as another Cromwell. The opposition, arrogant and bitter, sometimes resorted to tactics that violated all common courtesy and Parliamentary good form. Newspapers and maga-
zines, too, attacked him viciously. To Kuyper, opposition and antagonism were a quite familiar experience which he probably did not take more seriously than they deserved. Yet, it is difficult to believe that he particularly liked it. Further, it seemed that the recent ecclesiastical elections were giving the work of the church reform a setback rather than a forward impetus. Again, the clearly evident impossibility of establishing a Christian university on the broad basis of orthodox Protestantism certainly weighed heavily with Kuyper, the more so as he saw the trend of higher education in the national universities and learned what was going on both before and behind the scenes after Heemskerk introduced his higher education bill. Finally, we also have every right to believe that Kuyper had financial cares. Ten years in the ministry had not enriched him. He was not a well-to-do man. He knew, too, that he was ill, and that illnesses are costly experiences.

Kuyper nevertheless carried on with all the fire of his personality. Danger signals told of trouble ahead. He failed to act on them. Total nervous exhaustion threatened. At length there came the day when he had to give up the unequal, impossible, superhuman struggle. When collapse came, Kuyper could not so much as read two pages at a time or write a post card. On his physician's advice, Kuyper now left Holland for a stay in southern Europe — chiefly Italy and Switzerland. The Kuypers sold their Amsterdam home, apparently because they needed the money.

As Kuyper wandered along the shores of the Adriatic Sea or in the mountains of Switzerland, his thoughts were always in Holland.

During those Swiss months, Kuyper began in a modest way to do some mountain climbing. Soon he became an enthusiastic devotee and finally one of the noted Alpinists of his day.

Dr. Kuyper's illness lasted about fifteen months, from February, 1876 to May of the following year, a period which he later called "the year of my exile."
9: **Dr. Kuyper Organizes His Forces**

During Dr. Kuyper’s absence from the country, a deep gloom settled on the progressive, militant Christian forces of Holland. To them the future looked dark indeed.

Groen van Prinsterer suffered acutely. The death about this time of elderly friends and co-workers, as also of younger men of promise, lay like a deep shadow across his closing years. Groen had sown the seed, often in tears. Then, when he saw the once-barren fields slightly greening, there came the near-crushing blow of Kuyper’s collapse. Groen never came rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Already in his 75th year, he eyes fixed heavenward, he resolved to carry on as best he could in the old active way. He wrote another of his “Netherlands Reflections.” It was his last. After an illness of three weeks, he died on May 19, 1876. Four days later, in the forenoon, loving hands laid him to rest in his grave in the cemetery Ter Navolging at Scheveningen, near The Hague. His wife, who had been a never-failing help and source of inspiration to her husband in his difficult lifework, followed him in death three years later. She was laid to rest beside her husband. The Groens had no children.

Kuyper returned to Holland in May, 1877.

It was in significant respects a new Kuyper who emerged from the “exile” of desperate illness to wield again both trowel and sword. Both his architectural plans and his overall strategic concept
were now as nearly complete as he could make them. The time to organize and consolidate his forces, Kuyper felt, had now arrived. That he would do. He would continue to build for a better national future. Besides, he would fight it out with the opposition along the entire front — not for a summer, not for a decade, but if need be, for a lifetime. So the years from 1877 to 1880 stand in the record as a time of organization and, we may say, of the laying of foundations.

First of all, Kuyper had to organize his own life. This he did with amazing thoroughness. He had learned the hard way that there is a limit to human endurance. Henceforth he would no longer attempt to do the impossible. He organized himself, his work, his time, and his vacations. From that time forward, he followed a self-established inflexible schedule which brooked no interference. To this he adhered with an iron will. It was well that Kuyper did so. On October 29, 1877, he became 40. How many years would still be allotted to him he did not know. But he did realize that he must use his energies and his time to supreme advantage. The introduction of his system, kept inviolate, made that possible. Kuyper did not break down again.

On July 1, 1877, Dr. Kuyper resigned his seat in Parliament. For a man of his active spirit and temperament, now slowly recovering from severe nervous exhaustion, Parliament was hardly an ideal place. Besides, his two active years in that body had convinced him that very little could be achieved in the States-General as it was then constituted. Moreover, Kuyper had in mind certain projects which he judged of far greater immediate and ultimate importance than his own present personal service in Parliament. Yet he did not plan to abandon politics. He would even intensify his political action, with eventual victory as his ultimate goal.

Dr. Kuyper's ministerial status in the State Church was that of pastor emeritus. Now that he had resigned his seat in Parliament, he could return to the active ministry. A number of churches, one of them the Amsterdam church, invited him to serve them. But Kuyper declined all the calls, though not without a severe soul struggle, for the church of Christ was his first and his last love.

At this time, too, Dr. Kuyper already reached the conclusion that
a movement of the Brighton type was not for Holland’s State Church. That church, he felt, needed revitalization, but not of the revivalist type. What it really needed was a return to the soundly Reformed ways.

During Kuyper’s absence from the country, Mr. A. F. de Savornin Lohman, a jurist, had edited De Standaard, while Dr. Ph. J. Hoedemaker, a State Church clergyman, had largely supplied the material for its Saturday religious supplement. On Kuyper’s return, the Heraut Society’s Board of Directors invited him to resume his religious and political journalism. Kuyper agreed. In fact, it was precisely what he wanted. However, men who think alike ecclesiastically do not always think alike politically. Kuyper therefore proposed to the directors that De Standaard continue as a daily newspaper, that the supplement be discontinued, and that De Heraut now appear as a purely religious weekly. The directors approved. But since the summer months were not an auspicious time to launch the project and since a heavy load of work had been forbidden Kuyper, the Board, at Kuyper’s suggestion, postponed execution of the plan to late autumn. De Standaard remained what it had been since its founding in 1872, now again with Kuyper as writing and managing editor-in-chief. On December 7, 1877, the first issue of the new, reborn Heraut appeared, with Kuyper as editor-in-chief and with a distinguished array of theologians as departmental editors.

Kuyper promptly set to work. But he wrote: “Pray, still have some patience with the sick man, now by God’s grace recovering, but let no one ask that, with the past experience in mind, I shall attempt to do more than I am able.”

Kuyper had hardly re-entered Holland when the fight over the grade schools was on again. The Liberals won the 1877 election. On November 3, 1877, the Kappayne cabinet succeeded the Heemskerk government. Mr Kappayne, one of the brilliant legal lights of his day, a lawyer’s lawyer and at the time the most prominent of the Younger Liberals, headed the government as prime minister. He took the portfolio of Secretary for Internal Affairs. Heemskerk had not seen his elementary school bill enacted into law. Kappayne, of the same spirit but far more radical, would make the great gamble. He lost no time whipping his bill into shape. On March 11, 1878, he introduced it into the Second Chamber.
Kappeyne proposed all kinds of improvements — in the training, the salaries, and the legal status of the teachers; in buildings and equipment; in government supervision and inspection; and in more aspects of elementary education. All the proposed betterments would be compulsory for all schools. The Kappeyne government stated unequivocally that any financial assistance to the non-state schools was judged not permitted. At the same time, the patrons of the non-state schools would, as usual, have to pay the entire cost of their own schools besides paying taxes toward the maintenance of the public school system. In that way their financial burden would become unbearable and would very probably drive the non-state schools to the wall. It is perfectly safe to say that not a few liberals had that goal in mind. While it was too late in history to outlaw the non-public schools, they believed they could crush them out of existence by oppressive legislation.

During the debate, many addresses, collective notes, and similar protests came to the Chamber. In spite of these and notwithstanding the strong opposition of the Antirevolutionary and Catholic representatives, both Chambers approved the bill. Only the King’s signature was now required to make it a law.

On May 2, 1878, while the bill was still before Parliament, the Society for Christian National Education met in general convention. Those men realized that in all probability, Parliament would approve the Kappeyne bill. With that prospect in mind, Kuyper moved that, if Parliament adopted the Kappeyne bill, a petition should be prepared requesting the King not to sign, that signatures should be obtained, and that a delegation should present the petition to the King. The convention agreed. A committee, of which Kuyper was a member, received the mandate to write up the petition, to assume the leadership, and further to do whatever needed to be done. That committee understood its business. It promptly set up comprehensive operating machinery. Then, as soon as Parliament approved the bill, the committee set the machinery in motion. In the incredibly short time of five days, 305,689 signatures were obtained. That massive success astonished friend and foe alike.

At two o’clock in the afternoon of August 3, 1878, the delegation, by prearrangement, submitted the great petition to King William III at the palace Het Loo at Apeldoorn.

Separate addresses from 306 State Church consistory, 108 addresses from the Christian Reformed Church, 7 addresses from
Evangelical and Reformed Lutheran Churches, plus collective notes from a number of societies and corporate bodies supported the great petition. The Catholics presented a petition with 164,000 signatures. Meanwhile, On August 13, Kappeyne, in connection with all the protests, handed the King a report in which he scandalously attacked the petitioners, in particular their leaders. On August 17 the King signed.

On October 2, Kappeyne wrote Kuyper that he considered the great petition a purely political demonstration. It was indeed, but in a different way than Kappeyne had in mind. While the great petition and similar documents failed of their immediate purpose, the great petition (to confine attention to that alone) showed how strongly the non-state schools were rooted in the lives of many thousands of Netherlanders. It revealed the tremendous following Kuyper and his fellow leaders had. Every observant political analyst saw plainly what a magnificent reservoir of voters those men possessed — that is, when many more, even thousands of them, were given the ballot. It gave a sort of preview as to what would happen when those thousands would be able to go into effective political action.

Apparently Kappeyne had won the battle. The Liberals and the Conservatives hoped that the law, by irrevocably bankrupting the non-public schools, would eliminate them from the scene. Wishful thinking!

While the school law of 1878 meant complete legislative defeat for the Antirevolutionaries, yet that same law strongly promoted the founding of Christian schools and the growth of the Antirevolutionary party.

To preserve the enthusiasm aroused by the great petition, the solid unity of the petitioners, and the excellent organization of the local committees, the Christian school men on January 24, 1879 organized the educational alliance called "The School with the Bible." Though not a political society, the alliance was bound to exert political influence. As a matter of fact, the signers of the petition became to a large extent the material out of which the Antirevolutionary party was organized. The local committees resolved to receive a special offering each year on August 17, the day on which the King had signed the Kappeyne law. All things considered, the annual offering produced a considerable sum of money. Later the date was changed to August 3, the date of presentation of the petition, so that the annual offering served both
as a protest, renewed each year, against the Kappye law and as an
annually renewed petition to the King.

In the days of Thorbecke and Groen, one could speak of
political parties in only a loose sense. Party organization was
unknown. Platforms were not written. What held the party
members together were the personalities, principles, and policies of
the leaders, the influence of newspapers and periodicals, people's
group interests, and a general community of spirit.

Although Groen van Prinsterer realized the need of
organization, he was not the man to bring it into being. Nor would
it have been fitting or courteous or practicable if others had
attempted to do so during his lifetime. Groen died in 1876. On
Kuyper's return to Holland in 1877, the Antirevolutionaries looked
to him, the leader-designate, for leadership. They did not look in
vain. Before going to Parliament in 1874, Kuyper had already sent
Groen a sketch of a program of principles. Groen had expressed his
general agreement with its content.

Later the Antirevolutionary Voters Club of Gouda asked
Kuyper for a similar declaration. So he elaborated his sketch and
submitted it to a number of leading men in the Antirevolutionary
movement, with his request for their comments. The replies that
Kuyper received led him to revise the declaration. He now
forwarded his revised platform to them, at the same time
requesting them to let him know whether the declaration as it then
read could depend on their support. Under the date of December 3,
1877, Dr. Kuyper now sent the draft to the members of the
preliminary Antirevolutionary National Committee. These men
approved the Declaration of Principles. This platform, dated
January 1, 1878, was then forwarded to all the known
Antirevolutionary Voters Clubs. It also appeared in De Standaard
of January 3. During 1878 and early 1879 the Antirevolutionary
Voters Clubs of 21 cities declared their agreement. Kuyper also
proposed that the party leadership be entrusted to a strong national
committee and that all shades of Antirevolutionary opinion be
welded into a unified and dynamic party formation. To reach
forward still further, in Kuyper's view a full-fledged political party
must possess an effective local, regional, and national setup, a
platform, a headquarters, a treasury, and journalistic organs.

On Thursday, April 3, 1879, the Antirevolutionary party met
in its first national convention. To be precise, the gathering
Dr. Kuyper Organizes His Forces

consisted of the preliminary committee plus 28 delegates of voters' clubs plus some representatives of the Antirevolutionary press. It was clearly a time of small beginnings. Kuyper presided. By adopting the proposed Constitution and by-laws, and the Declaration of Principles, this convention cemented the clubs into a national federation. It elected a national committee of 13 men and chose Kuyper as chairman. This action made him the titular, recognized party leader.

Although the Antirevolutionary party had already existed for many years under Groen's personal leadership, 1878 is correctly considered the birth year of the organized Antirevolutionary party. The organization of the party was Kuyper's work. He was the craftsman who forged the instrument which was destined to exert such a powerful impact on Holland's political life. At that time no other party in Holland possessed an organization and a platform. In that respect, Kuyper pioneered for all the parties of the country.

The party's Declaration of Principles is both an instructive and an interesting document. It is a brief statement, no longer than five ordinary book pages. One may call it the party's charter or its political confession of faith.

Its 21 articles treat such matters as basic political philosophy, the constitution, the budget, decentralization, the schools, public health, finances, the national defense, the colonial problem, the social question, the problem of church and state, and more such.

Neither Groen nor Kuyper wanted a one-issue party, that is, a party which had the single objective of modifying the country's school laws. While this question held the center of the stage for the Antirevolutionaries through force of circumstances at least through the 1880's, the efforts of Kuyper and his associates encompassed the entire political-governmental terrain.

Yet, Dr. Kuyper felt that the party needed something more. In his view, the Antirevolutionary voters ought to have a crystal-clear conception of the party's principles and objectives. He felt, too, that men of other convictions should at least have the Antirevolutionary basic philosophy and practical goals set before them.

For that purpose Kuyper used De Standaard. Still small, it could not compare with the great organs of the Liberals. It could not compare with them in Dutch and foreign news service. It did not have much space to devote to economic and financial departments. But De Standaard was read from beginning to end.
Having this newspaper, the party members felt immeasurably rich.

In April, 1878, Kuyper began in *De Standaard* his exposition of the Antirevolutionary Declaration of Principles. The articles ran for about a year. In March, 1879, they appeared in book form with the title *Our Program*.

Kuyper added to each chapter relevant supplementary material. That made it a 1300-page volume. The next year, however, he eliminated all the “extra” material in order to reduce the price and secure a wider distribution. He now included a 70-page reprint of a series of articles from the *Standaard* entitled “Antirevolutionary Also in Your Family.” The political exposition fills approximately 400 pages. Kuyper stated explicitly that his explanation must not be rated as the only orthodox and authoritative one, and further that affiliation of voters’ clubs was based on the Declaration of Principles, not necessarily on his exposition. As a textbook for political study and a manual of political action, Kuyper’s *Our Program*, written in his lucid, convincing literary style, has wielded a masterful influence through the years.

When Holland’s Antirevolutionaries saw Kuyper blaze a trail for them through the trackless forest of national politics, their spirits revived. They recognized him as their heaven-appointed generalissimo. They took their places in solid ranks behind him. They now had, too, both a priceless newspaper, *De Standaard*, and a splendid textbook of political action. A widening of the suffrage base would give many more thousands a voice in their government. At long last they were on the march. “Beyond the Alps lies Italy.”

In 1879 the voters of the country would again go to the polls in a national election.

On April 4, the day after the Antirevolutionary national convention, Kuyper began a series of pre-election *Standaard* leaders. Kuyper and his associates conducted the most enthusiastic campaign in the party’s history although they did not in the least expect to win a majority of the seats in the Second Chamber. They worked and built for the future.

The Conservatives won the election. Kappeyne evidently deserved much of the blame for the defeat of the Liberals. For about ten years now, the Catholics had been deserting the Liberals, which was irreparable loss. Moreover, the patrons of the non-state schools were determined, insofar as they possessed the ballot, to
dethrone Kappeyne and to scuttle his school law. Besides, as an astute political leader, Kappeyne left much to be desired. He failed to understand the internal strength of the non-state school movement. He failed to grasp the breadth and the intensity of the opposition to his caesaristic policy. And he failed to reckon with the indomitable Kuyper. Kappeyne at this time gives all the appearance of a statesman working overtime to commit political suicide. He was never again able to secure a seat in the Second Chamber. He did for a while hold a seat in the First Chamber, whose members were chosen by the provincial legislatures.

On August 19, 1879, the Van Lynden van Sandenburg cabinet, a ministry of affairs, succeeded the Kappeyne government.

In the election of 1879, the Antirevolutionaries elected eleven representatives to the Second Chamber, a result which clearly gratified Kuyper. Naturally he expressed his intense satisfaction. But while Kuyper’s efforts were paying off so richly so soon, the Antirevolutionary setup contained a serious flaw. According to the fitness of things in Dutch politics, the leader of a party should hold a seat in Parliament, preferably in the Second Chamber. But in Kuyper’s case that was out of the question. The press of other work simply forbade it. Moreover, Kuyper believed that if the Antirevolutionary representatives kept in close touch with the National Committee and adhered loyally to the party platform, things would work out well.

The unprecedented Antirevolutionary progress at the polls startled the Liberals and the Conservatives. The great petition had not escaped their notice. Their chieftains read De Standaard. They knew that Kuyper had a much larger following than the election figures indicated. They saw, too, that the Antirevolutionaries and the Catholics were gravitating toward each other. All this boded no good for the Liberals and Conservatives. In May, 1880, a daily newspaper published in the province of South Holland declared that it saw the day approaching when Kuyper would be the Protestant pope of Holland. That same paper expressed the quaint wish that Kuyper with his followers might decide to emigrate to some far-off uninhabited land, there to experiment in the formation of an ideal state.

All this time the thought of church restoration was never out of Kuyper’s mind. Since December, 1877, Kuyper was again educating his readers in the religious weekly De Heraut. In its
columns he also carried on for church purification. Further, he planned to move his family back to Amsterdam. The Electoral Commission of the Amsterdam church would choose him to the place of elder. Again in the consistory, he would be in a strong strategic position.

During the period 1877-1880, Kuyper and his co-workers achieved notable success in another major field: they founded a Calvinistic university. That story is told in the next chapter.
In 1876 Holland had a population of nearly 4,000,000. It possessed three universities — those at Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht. These were national schools, owned by the nation, operated and controlled by the national government. The Modernists, rationalists, humanists, and radicals exulted in the universities. For many years they had monopolized higher education. By filling the university chairs with men of their own “persuasion,” they propagated their own life philosophy. In that way and by that process they indoctrinated the nation with their own “enlightenment.”

We are specifically interested in the attitude of the Reformed people, the Calvinists, toward the Utrecht, Leiden, and Groningen schools. While they sent their sons there, they did so with considerable trepidation. They viewed those universities, especially the divinity schools, with grave and growing concern. Their position can be summarized thus: those institutions graduate clergymen, lawyers, professors, doctors, and other professional men who with few exceptions, each in his own place and manner, carry the principles of unbelief into the soul of the nation. Besides, they cultivate the sciences not on a Christian basis but on a rationalistic basis. The dechristianization of the nation will be the eventual, inevitable result.

Although the efforts of Kuyper and like-minded men earlier in the 1870’s to establish a Christian school of higher education on the
broad basis of orthodox Protestantism had not met with success, in fact, had not even reached the state of general discussion, the desire to possess a definitely Christian university had persisted, but only as a forlorn hope.

In the annals of Dutch higher education, 1876 is a historic year, for in that year Parliament enacted the Heemskerk higher education law.

A move by the Amsterdam Athanaeum Illustre, which was advancing toward university status and wanted to convert into a full-fledged university, started the legislative proceedings. This school also wished to have Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Van Ronkel in its new divinity school. Kuyper and men of like mind who conferred among themselves on the Amsterdam plan deemed it unacceptable. They knew very well that that school was not going to be the kind of university which they envisioned.

When Heemskerk introduced his higher education bill into the Second Chamber of Parliament, Kuyper was still an active member. He took part in the early deliberations. In February, 1876, he suffered his nervous collapse. When he returned to Holland in May, 1877, the law was already on the statute books.

The constitution of 1848 declared the freedom of higher education. However, neither the constitution nor legislation for many years prescribed how and under which conditions non-national universities could be established. Then, in 1876 Parliament enacted enabling legislation.

Certain provisions of the Heemskerk law must be noted. The law declared individuals, each legally recognized society, and all religious denominations legally competent to establish a university, provided, of course, that they met certain legal requirements. The law gave the city of Amsterdam the liberty to organize its Athanaeum into a university on condition that it satisfied the demands which the law made of the national universities. One of the provisions was that the school must be a five-college university: liberal arts, theology, law, medicine, and natural science. Its examinations, diplomas, and degrees would then possess the same status as those from the national universities. While the law definitely permitted the founding of non-public universities, it did not accord the diplomas and degrees of such schools the legal status called effectus civils. For entrance into the learned professions, the graduates of those schools would have to pass examinations at the national universities in order to have their diplomas and degrees
validated. Would they, however, be able to enter the State Church ministry? That question will arise presently. Nor did the law provide for, or even hold out the promise of, financial aid in any form to such schools, no matter what high scholastic standards they might attain.

One problem with which the government and Parliament had to wrestle was that of the divinity schools of the three national universities. So long as the Reformed Church, during the old republic, was the only recognized church, it did not seem at all strange that the national universities trained the clergymen for that church. When, however, after the restoration of Holland's independence, the separation of church and state was maintained intact, those divinity schools became more than ever an anomaly. Premier Heemskerk favored their discontinuance. Nor did he want to transfer their courses to the colleges of the liberal arts. The lawmakers, however, resolved to retain the divinity schools. The final result was that the Heemskerk law converted the divinity schools of the three national universities into schools of the science of religion. Actually, the Modernists in the government and in the universities had already so converted them. Parliament merely took official cognizance of the actual situation and of the trend and stamped its approval on both by giving them the sanction of statute law. The implications are self-evident. Briefly, systematic theology was shunted out of the curriculum. Practical theology also fell by the wayside. Henceforth Christianity, religion, theology, the church, to name only these four, would be studied as were any other historical, psychological, intellectual, and sociological phenomena. The law therefore signified the official triumph of the liberal theology.

Why weren't the divinity schools discontinued and their courses transferred to the colleges of the liberal arts? The Liberals in the Second Chamber strongly insisted on retaining them. They wanted to break the power of orthodoxy in the land. They reasoned in this fashion: "If we scrap the divinity schools, what will happen? The liberal sector of the State Church will not pay the cost of maintaining theological faculties. But the orthodox element will establish seminaries. Those 'preacher factories' will graduate only orthodox candidates for the ministry. In time the country will be overrun by orthodox preachers."

But why didn't the Liberals in Parliament at least discard the traditional name "divinity schools" or "schools of theology" and
honestly call them "schools of the science of religion"? The old name must be kept for historical and linguistic reasons, it was said. That was not correct. The science of religion is not the same as theology. The object and content of theology is the supernaturally revealed knowledge of God. The science of religion studies religion as a general phenomenon in human life. So the Liberals in Parliament wanted to create the impression that as to the divinity schools things had not changed.

But the Liberal lawmakers readily sensed that such a school of the science of religion would attract hardly any students, and also that thousands throughout the country would insist on the retention of the traditional theological courses at all costs. So Parliament gave the Netherlands State Church Synod the opportunity, if it so desired, to establish at the universities one or more chairs of higher education for the training of its clergymen. The State Church Synod decided to accept this offer, while the government agreed to pay the salaries of six professors — two for each national university. The Synod adopted a governing set of regulations effective January 1, 1878. Whom did the Synod now appoint to the new chairs? Five of the six men were of the Groningen school of theology — the point of no return to orthodoxy. The sixth was orthodox but was not appointed for systematic theology. Naturally, even these "supplemental" professors did not satisfy the general orthodox sector. So the Society for Theological Education in Accordance with the Confession of the Netherlands State Church appointed Dr. A. W. Bronsveld as special professor at Utrecht university. For such a situation, too, the law of 1876 had made provision. This action of the Liberals supplied Kuyper with a powerful leverage with the Reformed people of Holland.

The Amsterdam municipal school asked the Synod to allocate funds so that this school, too, could have two theological professors.

The Synod refused. Then the school’s directors, failing in their efforts to raise 10,000 guilders through gifts from private sources, appealed to the city council. This body agreed to pay the Synod 10,000 guilders annually if the Synod would allot two theological professors to the school and — note this well — if the Synod would agree to admit to the State Church ministry those only whom the three national universities and, of course, the Amsterdam municipal university graduated. The Synod agreed.
That, in sketchy outline, is the background to Kuyper's efforts to found a Calvinistic university.

How did Dr. Kuyper react to the Heemskerk higher education law? During his stay in Italy and Switzerland, he had thought about many things, among them the university question. Then, while he was still away, Parliament opened the door to the house of his hopes. Not too far, but far enough. He and his group now possessed the legal right to found a university after their own heart. However severely the higher education law of 1876 limited the chances of non-state universities for growth and development, it was nevertheless an enabling act. Others besides the state now possessed the legal right to establish their own institutions of higher education. Even with its limitations, the law stands as a long step in the right direction. But Kuyper could not, and others did not, take advantage of the law. The situation haunted him like a fearful nightmare.

On his return to Holland, Kuyper did not re-entertain the idea of a university on the broad basis of orthodox Protestantism. He now resolved, or had resolved, that there must arise a university which embodied the Reformed life-view and incorporated the Calvinistic Weltanschauung.

Precisely what Kuyper wanted can be briefly stated thus: a complete, free, Calvinistic, national university.

He wanted not a seminary only, not a liberal arts college only, not a pre-professional school only, and not a combination of two or more of these only. In those days, a full-fledged university included five colleges — liberal arts, theology, law, medicine, and natural science. Nothing less than such a five-college school could ultimately satisfy Kuyper. If lack of funds or other circumstances prevented the immediate inclusion of a medical school and a school of the natural sciences, he would content himself for the time being with colleges of the liberal arts, theology, and law. He would take what he could get. He would at the same time entertain the larger hope, that is, he would work toward the future attainment of his ideal. Kuyper, then, envisioned more than a divinity school. In his conviction, the Christian spirit must not only inspire theological education but must reveal its regenerating and sanctifying power in every field of science.

The school must also be free. This "free" has no reference to finances. A free society or association of individuals who have
banded together for the purpose must own, operate, and control the school. Over against the church and the state, the university must be free. In the regulation of the curricula, in the appointment of the professors, and in all the school’s similar concerns, neither the state nor any institutional church must have any say. That was the freedom which Kuyper envisioned for the proposed school. The national laws would, of course, govern certain aspects of the university, as they must of all universities.

The school must be Reformed, Calvinistic. That must be its hallmark. The Society for Higher Education on the Basis of the Reformed Principles, which was soon organized, adopted statutes. Article 2 read: “For all the instruction that is given in its schools, the Society stands wholly and exclusively on the foundation of the Reformed principles and therefore recognizes as basis for its instruction in theology the Three Forms of Unity as they were definitively adopted in 1619 by the National Synod of Dordrecht for the Netherlands Reformed Churches, attaching to them such authority as the aforesaid Synod — witness its own acts and official documents — has ascribed to the confessional standards of the Netherlands Reformed Churches.”

As for the non-theological curricula, all science, not in the sense of natural science only but in the comprehensive meaning (German: Wissenschaft; Dutch: wetenschap) is based on faith. In his thinking, every person proceeds from certain fundamental assumptions that fall into one of two categories: the theocentric and the homocentric. The Word of God or the word of man, divine revelation or human reason — these constitute the age-old antithesis. There is no escape.

Even in the Christian area, Calvinists, Lutherans and Catholics, to name no more, think differently to a greater or lesser degree on religion, theology, the interpretation of history, the basic principles of political science, economics, sociology, jurisprudence, and all the other sciences. The Kuyper group — for so we may well call them — held to the Reformed, Calvinistic Weltanschauung (life-and-word-view).

Finally, the school must be a national university. It was the Calvinists who had fought Holland free from the tyranny of Spain and who had stamped their character on the soul of the nation. The projected university must possess and reflect that same character. It must develop that heritage. Rooted in the national tradition, unfurling the Calvinistic banner, training the future leaders of the
nation, and fostering all the sciences in the light of divine revelation, the school must be a beacon light, a city set on a hill. It must be a free university for the nation’s service.

In 1877 the prospect was bleak indeed. Kuyper faced discouraged co-workers. However grand and alluring the design of a Reformed university, they asked: How can we possibly establish such a school? Then Kappeyne unwittingly gave the cause a big boost. By his infamous school law of 1878, he drove the patrons of the Reformed grade schools into a mighty army of defense. From devotion to their elementary schools to enthusiasm for a Calvinistic university was a long step, to be sure, but Kuyper helped them negotiate it.

One has a perfect right to speak of Dr. Kuyper as the founder of the Free University. It goes without saying that he could not possibly have succeeded alone and unaided. Yet, while the books and records give his associates the full credit that is their due, Kuyper is universally recognized as the school’s founder because it was by common consent his far-flung vision, his dynamic leadership, his inspiring persuasiveness, his commanding influence, his unexcelled organizing talent, and his tremendous driving power that led to its creation.

The present generation, whether in Holland or elsewhere, does not have the faintest idea of the difficulties which Kuyper and his co-workers faced. Let us note three major ones.

Plainly speaking, where would the money come from? While certain men of means would contribute liberally, much of the school’s income, year in and year out, would have to come from Reformed people of the common, humbler walks of life. Would they shoulder the burden? Because Kuyper believed they would, he did not judge the financial question an insurmountable difficulty.

Where would the university obtain a qualified staff of professors and instructors? The Free University would need men who were not only thorough scholars and capable instructors but also understood and loved the Reformed principles, who were not “Calvinists and scholars” but Calvinistic scholars, and who possessed the genius to transmit their own knowledge and enthusiasm to their students. Men of such professorial stature were not plentiful. In addition, everyone who was at all informed on university matters knew that because of its poverty, the school would for a long time be understaffed. Teaching loads would be extremely heavy. Time for scholarly study, research, and writing would be
painfully limited. From these and other angles, the offer of a chair in the school was not an alluring one.

How would the school obtain students? What would attract young men to the Free University? A large staff of professors and instructors? A multitude of courses? Splendid plant and equipment? A solid reputation for scholarship? A host of proud alumni? A wealth of academic traditions? Money for expansion and betterments? The projected university possessed none of these. How many years would elapse before it did? Besides, any young man who enrolled handicapped himself immediately. After graduation he would still have to pass examinations at one of the three national schools before he could enter one of the learned professions. And the path of the divinity students into the State Church ministry was effectively and fanatically barred. Indeed, only young men of Calvinistic principles, thorough conviction, and unusual courage would come to the Free University. Kuyper was certain in his own mind that such would come. On that score he entertained no doubt, for he knew the soul of the Dutch Calvinists. But if that assurance failed, the professors would devote themselves wholly to the cultivation of their respective sciences, publish their findings and their studies, and in that way still bless the nation.

These were difficulties, to be sure, but would Dr. Kuyper and his associates also encounter opposition? Soon after Kuyper's return to Holland in the spring of 1877, rumors circulated to the effect that he with others planned to establish a university. Until such time, however, as an official announcement came from the Kuyper group, any possible critics and enemies were pretty well muzzled. The announcement came. On December 5, 1878, the Society for Higher Education on the Basis of the Reformed Principles was organized at Utrecht. That Society was the answer of Holland's Calvinists to the Heemskerk higher education law. As early as February 12, 1879, the Society's statutes received the royal approval. The Society was now recognized as a legal entity. Mr. Kappeyne had helped to expedite matters. On June 4 of the same year, the Society elected four directors and four trustees for the university that was to be.

Meanwhile, in August, 1878, Dr. G. J. Vos, Amsterdam State Church clergyman, speaking for some members of the Amsterdam city council, felt out Dr. Kuyper and later Dr. F. L. Rutgers about possible appointments to the chairs of systematic and practical
theology, respectively, at the municipal school. The idea didn’t appeal to them in the least. Such a professorate at a Modernistic university, they believed, would be only patchwork. Any man, they declared, who lent himself for that purpose was guilty of apostasy to the Reformed principles.

Dr. Kuyper and his co-workers had hardly informed their own public through *De Heraut* about the founding of the Society and the proposed establishment of its university when an avalanche of questions, criticisms, and opposition descended on them.

Not a few were considerably nonplussed. They didn’t understand what it was all about. They asked: Don’t we in our small country have all the universities we need?

Some gladly hailed the undertaking as eminently deserving of moral and financial support but raised the questions: May the proposed university include a school of theology? Isn’t that the institutional church’s function and prerogative?

Others wondered: Isn’t Kuyper’s proposal to establish a Calvinistic university an act of treason against the spirit of a united Holland? Shades of “national unity”!

There were those, too, who smugly pontificated: “By founding his own school, Kuyper is simply cutting himself away from all true science and genuine scholarship.”

Again, certain men predicted: Kuyper’s school will not last. It may fold up any day. It will exist only five or ten or at most 20 years. It will be a fly-by-night affair, as the history of universities goes.

While rabid anti-Kuyper men entertained considerably more respect for Kuyper than they were usually ready to admit, they nevertheless harbored a deep-seated hatred of him and all his works. To them he was the incarnation of the Reformed theology and the Calvinistic worldview. They knew about his great influence. Now, one Kuyper in the land was bad enough. But what would come to pass if and when Kuyper’s disciples and graduates took their places in the national life. True enough, the enemies had seen to it that the divinity school graduates could not enter the State Church ministry. There would, however, also be graduates from the university’s other colleges. Those enemies had already locked horns with Kuyper on numerous occasions and found it a hazardous diversion. They knew that the good old pre-Kuyper days were past. He had now gathered an array of distinguished men about him with the avowed purpose of creating a university. Those enemies couldn’t stop Kuyper. They refused to join him. So they
clipped their pens in gall.

If one could wade, or crawl, through all that men wrote in opposition during those days, the overwhelming part of which fortunately lies buried in oblivion, one would without a doubt find that somewhere someone branded the project “Kuyper’s Folly.”

At least two of the opponents, both prominent State Church clergymen, ranked as “big guns,” that is, prominent, influential men.

The argument between Dr. Kuyper and Dr. J. J. Van Toorenenbergen largely concerned a historical question, which need not detain us. To it we owe two excellent brochures by Kuyper: *The Leiden Professors* [of the early post-Reformation period] and *the Dordt Legacy*, and *Revision of the Revision Legend*. What strikes one especially in these writings is Kuyper’s amazing research into, and knowledge of, ecclesiastical history.

The other opponent was Dr. A. W. Bronsveld. He declared positively and insisted emphatically that the church and the state alone possessed the right and the prerogative of university founding. That proposition does not excite us in our country, for no one accepts it. But in 1880, there were in Holland still those who agreed with Bronsveld.

The argument between Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Bronsveld has given us two Kuyper brochures: *The Petition for a Twofold Correction*, and *Strictly Speaking*. Of the former, Bronsveld wrote: “Strictly speaking, Dr. Kuyper has given more than one had a right to demand of him.” Kuyper seized on that phrase “Strictly speaking” and took it for the title of his second brochure. In this he discussed the right of university founding from three angles: (1) Strictly according to statute law, (2) Strictly from the scientific point of view, (3) Strictly, in all seriousness.

*Strictly Speaking*, dated September 10, 1880, is with its introduction and its supplementary material, a magnificent document — rather, a book of 216 pages.

It is Dr. Kuyper’s greatest and most famous polemic. The second part, especially, reveals his amazing historical knowledge on the founding of universities. In its lively pages he completely demolished Bronsveld’s entire argumentation. It evidently settled the question at issue once and for all. At all events, no serious scholar has since its publication doubted the cogency and the validity of Kuyper’s constitutional, historical, and philosophical
arguments. They impressed his contemporaries as perfectly decisive.

In spite of all the difficulties and opposition, all the antagonism and bitterness, Kuyper went inexorably forward. Amsterdam was selected as the university's city. Since the Society as yet possessed no real estate or buildings, the choice was not too difficult or necessarily final. That selection of Amsterdam, too, was in the eyes of certain enemies a brazen affront. That Free University, they felt, would stand in the country's chief city, the "front yard" of the State Church, as a living protest against the age-old, "ivy-covered," tradition-hallowed national universities.

On November 7, 1879, the directors appointed Dr. Kuyper and Dr. F. L. Rutgers to chairs in the divinity school of the university-to-be. They accepted. This was not a matter of course. They were not well-to-do men. Like the vast majority, they depended on the regular salary check. Now, it was the common people, those of modest income, who would have to contribute much of the school's revenue. Little wonder that some men predicted that Kuyper and Rutgers would find themselves enrolled among the inmates of the Amsterdam poorhouse before long.

Dr. Kuyper now moved his family back from The Hague to Amsterdam.

Because the school would not be opened for another year, Kuyper and Rutgers, at the request of the directors, spent the year on some special assignments. They advised the directors. They performed preparatory work. Accompanied in the northern provinces by Mr. Keuchenius, they traveled from city to city addressing meetings, answering questions, replying to objections, receiving suggestions, and conferring with leading Reformed men of the communities. That promotional trip proved a triumphal journey. Wherever they went, the project captured the goodwill, the cordial interest, the visible elation, and the pronounced agreement of Reformed people.

The directors set October 20, 1880, as the university's opening day.

On the evening of the 19th, an impressive service of prayer and dedication was held in the Protestant cathedral church of Amsterdam. Dr. Ph. J. Hoedemaker delivered the dedicatory address. He spoke on 1 Samuel 13:19: "Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the
Hebrews make them swords or spears.” If we visualize for a moment the difficult position of the Dutch Calvinists in the matter of higher education, we readily agree that Dr. Hoedemaker could not have chosen a more fitting theme.

October 20, 1880, was a day of days in Dr. Kuyper’s life. It was a day of jubilee for Holland’s Calvinists. It was a landmark day in the history of Reformed Christendom.

In the afternoon, a distinguished audience assembled in the choir of the cathedral church. Throughout the entire program, a dignified religious and academic ritual was followed. We mention only three program numbers.

Mr. W. Hovy, chairman of the Board of Directors, announced the appointment of five professors: Dr. Kuyper, Dr. Rutgers, and Dr. Hoedemaker for theology, Mr. D. P. D. Fabius for law, and Dr. F. W. J. Dilloo for letters.

In a short, felicitous talk, Jonkheer P. J. Elout van Soeterwoude, speaking for a committee that represented forty men and women who are gratefully remembered as the Founders, presented to the school 100,000 guilders, the initial capital which the law prescribed.

Then, while the organist played an aria from “The Elijah,” Dr. Kuyper ascended the platform to deliver the opening address on “Sovereignty in the Individual Spheres of Life.” He sketched that sovereignty in its national significance, its scientific objective, and its Reformed character. Thus he unfurled the university’s banner to the breeze. Whereas certain assorted enemies had all along ridiculed the Reformed university, after Kuyper’s devastating brochure against Dr. Bronsveld and still more particularly after the magisterial founding day address of October 20, 1880, the ridicule died away. Animosity and hatred indeed remained, but scoffing and derision ceased.

So the Free University was born. That Dr. Kuyper in a comparatively short time made the Reformed people of the Netherlands so university-conscious and so university-minded that they willingly, even gladly, gave (some of their reasonable wealth, the vast majority of their modest means) still stands as one of the near-miracles of his career. And that those men and women caught the vision and followed the gleam stands to their everlasting credit.

Dr. Kuyper and his co-founders succeeded in their quest. Faith in God, confidence in Holland’s Calvinists, urgent prayer, years of discussion, decision, planning, organization, publicity, promotion,
and fund-raising, with the indispensable divine benediction, transformed a forlorn hope into a radiant reality. Holland’s Calvinists carried the day. Following Kuyper, they reached out into the future.

As for Dr. Kuyper himself, the plan to establish a Calvinistic university stands out prominently as the boldest and most original and most creative thought of his career.
11: University Professor and Builder

In December of 1880, the Free University got under way with five professors and five students. The professors lectured in rooms of the Scotch Mission Church of Amsterdam. Each morning anew, professors and students found scribbled on the doors with chalk: “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.”

Dr. Kuyper’s chief courses were systematic theology and encyclopedia of sacred theology. Of these in a later chapter.

In the present chapter we take a rather close look at Dr. Kuyper the university professor, rector, builder, and writer of the 1880’s.

For a time Kuyper taught Hebrew. Although he knew the language well, the course itself was not, strictly speaking, higher education. Kuyper gave the students that basic familiarity with Hebrew which they needed in preparation for successful Old Testament exegetical studies.

For a number of years, Kuyper taught homiletics, that is, the science and art of preaching. Visualize, if you can, Dr. Kuyper, the master pulpiteer, teaching ordinary mortals how to preach. How did he go about it? The divinity student, given his native abilities, learns the art through observation, theory, and practice.

It is a well-known fact that a country’s ablest pulpiteers easily gravitate to the big-city churches. Such outstanding preachers can serve aspiring clergymen as first-class models. Let it be true that a
young man may possibly adopt his favorite preacher's stance, general method, even his mannerisms. Well, worse things could happen to him.

To Kuyper the sermon was something alive, a power; it was vital, living preaching of the Word, the cardinal means to deepen and to enrich the life of the church. Through the years he impressed on the aspiring clergymen that preaching is to lay the full Word of God before the soul of the church. He imbued them with that conviction of his. That thought received his full emphasis. This followed naturally from his exalted conception of the gospel ministry and of preaching. The sermon must possess unity. The preacher must himself be stirred without guiltily surrendering to sentimentality. There must be close spiritual rapport between him and his listeners. These were Kuyper's general principles of preaching.

Then, too, there were the inevitable practice sessions. A nightmarish feeling crept over the seminarian who saw his "turn" coming up within a short time. On a certain day Kuyper would give the young man a Scripture text and tell him to come to the Kuyper residence at two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon about a week or ten days later to submit his quite detailed sermon outline. At that hour the aspiring theologian called, was ushered into Kuyper's study, and handed the professor his outline. Kuyper would read it with complete concentration for perhaps ten minutes, then hand it back with his criticism, which was in nine cases out of ten everything except flattering. The student now returned to his lodgings in a more or less dejected state of mind to revise his outline, reckoning, of course, with the professorial comments, and complete his sermon. And he had to memorize his discourse. Under no circumstances would Kuyper permit him to read it. He must also deliver it as if he were facing an actual congregation.

On a Saturday afternoon about three weeks later came the practice session. When the seminarians were in a lighter mood and talked among themselves, they called those sessions "preaching for Bram." In not so jocular moments, they had a more realistic name for them — "the homiletic torture chamber." The student "preached his sermon." Two fellow seminarians, appointed in advance, gave their oral estimate of the effort. Then Kuyper gave the closing criticism, which, for the "preacher" of the day, was rarely encouraging and sometimes almost merciless.

The reason Kuyper demanded such a high standard in student
sermons was his exalted conception of the ministry and of preaching. He wanted the sermon to be not a cold, intellectual discussion but a living ministry of the Word, a bearer of the Gospel, of the power of God unto salvation to him who believes. The students took Kuyper's severe criticisms to heart and did not think of protesting against such a method. From a professor of ordinary format they perhaps would not have "taken" such treatment. From Kuyper they did. Why? Because, although it brought them now and then a discouraging hour, they felt in their hearts that he was right. They realized in their own minds that it must be as he wanted it to be.

Dr. Kuyper also lectured in the University's college of the liberal arts on Netherlands language and literature and on aesthetics.

As he treated the development of the laws of language, Kuyper showed himself a grateful student of Dr. M. De Vries, who was employing the historical method at Leiden University. He gave his auditors a broad, sweeping survey of what Holland had produced in the field of literature and inspired in them a great love for especially the Calvinistic poets Jacob Cats, Willem Bilderdyk, and Isaac Da Costa.

And then there were Kuyper's lectures — so unforgettable to his listeners — on aesthetics, a field which does not exactly directly adjoin the province of theology. As Kuyper lectured in a literary style which accorded with the high demands of the subject matter, his listeners often felt inclined to lay down pen and pencil to listen and to enjoy. Something thrilled in their souls when Kuyper drew aside the veil and led them nearer to the soul of architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, and music. Those were Gothic lectures. They pointed upward. They instilled a wondering reverence for the Creator of harmony and beauty. They enlarged the vision and taught the students to seek the Soli Deo Gloria, also in the world of tone and color, form and line.

During the academic year 1880-81, Dr. Kuyper served the Free University as its first rector magnificus. The rector was the school's administrative head. He was appointed from the faculty, served for one year, then transferred the place to his successor at a public meeting after delivering an oration on a subject of his own choosing. Since the formal opening of the school had taken place
on October 20, the directors fixed that date as the day for those exercises. If that date were a Sunday, the program was to be carried out on the immediately preceding Saturday.

October 20, 1881, Dr. Kuyper, before transferring the function to Dr. F. L. Rutgers, delivered an oration on "Present-Day Biblical Criticism in Its Destructive Impact on the Church of the Living God."

In his oration Kuyper made no effort to treat the higher criticism exhaustively. That would have required a sizable volume. So he narrowed his subject down to focus attention on the havoc which this rationalistic vivisection of the Scriptures creates in the church of Christ. Of this vandalism toward the Holy Bible, Dr. Kuyper declared: "Biblical criticism, as carried on in our time at virtually all the Protestant universities of continental Europe, (1) destroys the church's theology, (2) robs the church of her Bible, and (3) destroys her liberty in Christ."

The theological climate at Holland's national divinity schools being what it was, and Dr. Abraham Kuenen, a foremost higher critic and Kuyper's onetime professor at Leiden being the darling of the liberal theologians, one admires Kuyper's courage in speaking out as he did on a notable occasion against the sabotaging of the Bible.

Each year the Society for Higher Education on the Basis of the Reformed Principles met in annual convention. (Hereafter I shall speak of the Society or the Free University Society.)

Particularly during the early years, a time when the school had to endure scepticism, detraction, and opposition, the officers of the Society had to spend considerable time and energy in publicizing the University, affirming and reaffirming its principles and objectives, expanding the Society, educating its membership, systematizing and consolidating its organization, directing its activities, and raising funds. Besides, they had not only to meet the needs of the immediate present but also plan for sound early and long-range development. As time went on, the financial burden would become all the heavier.

At the annual one-day conventions, the Society members listened to addresses, carried on discussions, and transacted business. A prayer service, held the evening before, set the spiritual tone. Those gatherings of delegates and members and friends of the school from every section of Holland proved memorable events.
“Calvinist days” they were called. Ties of unity in a spiritual enterprise were drawn ever more firmly. Those prayer services and those conventions served signally to keep the fire burning on the altar.

“What are the prospects of the Free University’s graduates?” The reference, of course, is to their chances of entering the State Church ministry and the professions. Both among and outside the school’s constituency, men asked this question. Dr. Kuyper gave his answer to the query when he treated that subject in his pre-convention prayer service address of July 5, 1882. Entertaining no illusions but giving his realistic judgment, he discussed those prospects: (1) as they can already be accurately measured within the narrow limits of the present actual situation, (2) as they appear when seen on the horizon of well-founded expectations, and (3) as they take shape to the prophecy of faith.

Let a single brief excerpt from Kuyper’s address give at least some idea as to how he inspired and spiritually fortified his audience. “What we are doing is to inculcate principles. What we are doing is to train those young men for a life of struggle and self-denial. What we are doing is to point them not to enervating ministerial financial security or to intoxicating clerical incense, but to the crown of glory that beckons to them from beyond the grave. We desire to train men of granite and steel who, like the Puritans of old, will stand steadfast and immovable; men who, like the old Covenanters, will, in the words of Maurice, if necessary fight the living devil in hand-to-hand combat; men who do not look forward to a place of ease and quiet and deference but who dare to fight the battles of the Lord and who will sing songs in the night if they are ever accounted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for His name’s sake; in a word, men whose hope is not fixed on Synodical accommodation or the favor of half-friends but who, filled with power and the Holy Spirit, trust even as you do in Him who has called them.”

Father and Mother Kuyper.

In 1880 they were about eighty years old. He was already pastor-emeritus. They had now been married fifty-two years. They still resided in Leiden. How often during the half century in the Maassluis, the Middelburg, and the Leiden manse they had talked about their children. With what attention and interest they had followed their son Abraham’s career, so unusual, so significant — the gospel ministry, political action, university professorate,
religious and political journalism. "What will the harvest be?" they asked. Yes, they asked many questions. January 6, 1881, Mother Kuyper died; December 7, 1882, Father Kuyper followed her.

The first four pre-convention prayer services had been held in auditoriums of State Churches. The fifth convention was scheduled to be held at The Hague on June 30, 1885. When, however, the committee on arrangements requested the use of the Kloosterkerk, a State Church edifice, for the prayer service, the ecclesiastical authorities said no. Why? In 1885 the church reform movement of the decade was already surging toward the inevitable crisis. The powers of The Hague were out of sympathy with that movement, so they denied the request. But the consistory of the French Church immediately offered the committee the use of its auditorium. There the service was held. Long before the service was to begin, every nook and corner of the auditorium was filled. As many stood as were seated. Hundreds had to be turned away.

Although the church was packed to twice its normal capacity, on that hot, humid, most uncomfortable evening, Dr. Kuyper’s audience listened in breathless silence with the ultimate in rapt attention as he addressed them on "Iron and Clay." With his flair for arresting titles, he took this one from the last clause of Daniel 2:43: "Even as iron doth not mingle with clay." Kuyper developed the fundamental life principle that, as iron and clay do not combine and intermix, so among men those things which differ in their nature and essence — in the address, faith and unbelief — cannot abide in permanent union. On that thought he elaborated with an appeal to the Word of God, to history, and to the conscience.

On June 16, 1887, the Free University Society’s seventh convention was held in Middelburg, the city where Kuyper had spent eight happy boyhood years. As in The Hague in 1885, so now in Middelburg, the committee on arrangements encountered the ill will of the State Church authorities. No church was made available. The reason was again the attitude of the ecclesiastical powers toward the church reform movement. The committee found other accommodations.

Kuyper conducted the prayer service. After reading from Hebrews 11, that mighty chapter on the heroes of faith, he spoke on "A Twofold Country." "We Christians have a twofold coun-
try, and we live as a twofold people under a twofold King. Both
fatherlands God has given us in His grace. Through our fault, our
son, our guilt, both have come into conflict. In this conflict both
can be valued and appreciated only by the light of God's Holy
Word.”

During the academic year 1887-88 Dr. Kuyper had served the
school the second time as its rector. Before formally transferring
the post to his successor, he delivered an oration on “Calvinism
and Art.” Is there any connection between them? The age-old,
erroneous, prejudiced notion says there is none.

Kuyper had at least two reasons for selecting this subject,
which certainly lies far afield from theology. For one thing, he
wanted to dispel the notion that to hold Reformed convictions
necessarily excluded any sense of art and appreciation of art. For
another, the subject readily lent itself to an exposition of those
basic principles which underlay the university’s existence.

In his oration, Kuyper explained to what extent Calvinism has
promoted the development of art or influenced its progress.
Calvinism, said Kuyper, has not given the world great architecture and
sculpture but has concentrated on painting, poetry, and music, in
which areas it produced masterpieces. Reading the oration gives one
an inkling of what it must have been to attend Kuyper’s lectures on
aesthetics.

“Is there at the public universities in our land a place for a
theological faculty?”

That question Dr. Kuyper discussed at the June 19, 1890, con-
vention of the Free University Society. He treated the subject
logically, thus: (1) What is a departmental faculty? (2) What is a
theological faculty? (3) What must the government do as to the
universities of the Netherlands in general and specifically as to their
schools of theology?

What was Kuyper’s position? At the public university, a
school of theology has no place. The state must proceed to the
complete discontinuance of the divinity schools. From that point
the state must take the next step, namely to liberate all higher
education. “That the theological faculties,” said Kuyper, “will
sooner or later disappear from our public universities is an equally
assured as gratuitous prophecy. But how long they will stretch their
existence no one can guess at this time.”
During this decade, the 1880's, Dr. Kuiper produced a vast amount of religious and theological writing. (His church reform and political writing have their own place in the story.)

There was *De Heraut*. Of this weekly Kuiper was both the writing and managing editor-in-chief. He used it with a clear-cut objective, namely to reacquaint the Reformed and orthodox people of Holland with the Reformed principles, specifically, in the area of religion and the church. To his mind, the Reformed Confession must be further developed; it must be orientated to the thinking of the current century; and it must answer the needs of the new time.

Dr. Kuiper chose three departments of *De Heraut* as his special province — leaders, meditations, and the ecclesiastical scene in the Netherlands. Writing in *De Heraut* through the 1880's and for many years thereafter, Kuiper's name became so closely linked with *De Heraut* that mention of the one instantly called to mind the other. Kuiper's *Heraut* writing is universally recognized as creative religious and theological journalism at its best by a master craftsman.

Kuiper's leaders filled the entire, newspaper-size front page. In them he presented Bible studies. In them, too, he explained and developed the Reformed Confession, related it to the thought of his own age in order to meet the needs of the time, and defended it against the heresies of his day. He frequently treated subjects on which he was currently lecturing in the divinity school — university extension in the columns of *De Heraut*.

Did men and women actually read these lengthy, "interminable" articles that ran in long, "endless" series? They did. Why? Because Kuiper gave them expositions of high intrinsic value which they felt they so urgently needed. *Heraut* readers had a high standard of values. What Kuiper wrote easily met it, in fact, more than excelled it. Besides, Kuiper's vivid, crystal-clear literary style made the reading a keen enjoyment.

A series of *Heraut* leaders on "The Work of the Holy Spirit" ran from September 2, 1883, to July 4, 1886. In 1888 and 1889 the series appeared as a reprint in three volumes. In this notable work, one of Kuiper's most valuable, he treated the work of the Holy Spirit for and in both the church as a whole and its individual members. The late Dr. Warfield of Princeton University pointed out in his three lectures on *Calvin the Theologian* that Calvin was the first to develop the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit, that he gave the entire doctrine of the Holy Spirit a systematic for-
nulation, and made it an assured possession of the church of God. Among theologians in the Netherlands, Dr. Kuyper was the first to present the work of the Holy Spirit in a unified, systematic exposition, that gave readers a comprehensive view of the entire subject.

Among Kuyper's other writings of the period one may note the second three-volume set of Bible studies entitled *From the Word*, a treatise on *the sabbath*, and *The Twelve Patriarchs* (character sketches.) During the 1870's he had published his first series of Bible studies under the same title, *From the Word*, in three volumes.

For each issue of *De Heraut*, Dr. Kuyper wrote a piece (a newspaper column in length) known as a meditation. These meditations were not sermonettes but a very special, indefinable type of composition. Someone has correctly called them "melodies of a holy mysticism." In those exquisite devotional literary gems, Kuyper spoke to thinking hearts. To Dr. Kuyper, the writing of these meditations was one of the great joys of his life. It seems that he could not do without it. He sensed that through this channel he felt the bond of union with the Reformed people.

Dr. Kuyper always wrote his *Heraut* meditations in the hallowed atmosphere of Sunday morning. Whether he was at his home in Holland or aboard ship or in a foreign hotel room or in a mountain cabin or wherever — on Sunday morning he always wrote a meditation or two. He never deviated from that fixed custom.

During the 1880's, many of the meditations went out in book form with the titles *Honey from the Rock* (two volumes), *Days of Glad Tidings* (four volumes), and *Omer for the Sabbath*.

Dr. Kuyper's third *Heraut* department may be called the ecclesiastical scene in Holland. For this category of writing, the ecclesiastical era in Holland provided ample material, particularly the state of affairs in the State Church. Of controversy, therefore, there was plenty, more specifically, during the storm that swept through the Church during the 1880's. During that heroic decade, Kuyper wrote much on intra-church events, actions and movements. Except for what went out as a reprint, and that was not a great deal, all Kuyper's writing in this class, having served its time and purpose well, reposes in the files of *De Heraut*.

Spiritual depth, intellectual breadth, simplicity, power, and a burning devotion to the Word of God characterize Dr. Kuyper's *Heraut* writings.
Through this religious journalism Kuyper educated the Reformed and orthodox people in the Scriptures and in the church's Confession. He trained them for church reform and church building. No wonder that there were, in Holland and beyond, divinity students who "read Kuyper day and night."

The influence, the value, and the power of Kuyper's *Heraut* writing in his three departments defies all calculation. How can one measure spiritual values with human yardsticks? In the State Church, *De Heraut* created an interest in the Reformed Confession such as men of that era had not seen before. And in Kuyper's hands *De Heraut* proved an effective instrument for promoting the church reform effort and for building the Free University.

In all his *Heraut* writing and in his political journalism as well, Kuyper never was afraid of "men breathing down his neck." He recorded his insights, his convictions and his position regardless of what critics might write in criticism or opposition.

Subscribers each week received *De Heraut* gladly, treated it with a respect akin to reverence, read it with a devoted mind, laid it aside for leisurely rereading, and preserved the issues with the greatest care.

That Dr. Kuyper wrote so much during the 1880's is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that he lectured in the Free University in two colleges, that he played a major role in the church reform movement of the 1880's, that he served the Antirevolutionary party as its leader, that he edited the daily newspaper *De Standaard*, that he was working on books that would appear in the 1890's, and that he conducted an extensive correspondence.

This chapter would not be complete without a thumbnail sketch of the Free University's history during its first decade, always a critical period in the existence of such a school.

In 1890, three of the original five professors remained — Kuyper, Rutgers, and Fabius. Dr. Dilloo felt called to return to his former work in Germany. Dr. A. H. De Hartog succeeded him. In 1887, Dr. Hoedemaker, who had not gone along in the church reform movement, resigned his professorate to return to the State Church ministry. Dr. G. H. J. W. Geesink meanwhile came to the divinity school, Dr. J. Woltjer to the liberal arts college, and A. F. de Savornin Lohman to the law school.

During the 1880's the student body increased to approximately
In 1890 Holland's three national universities had a combined enrollment of some 1800. I submit that the Free University, only ten years old, financially poor, still too young to have achieved impressive scholastic laurels and national prestige, and still desperately handicapped by the law, had made a remarkably creditable showing by 1890.

In early 1884, the directors purchased a large, handsome, four-story residence at 162 De Keizersgracht. The acquisition of this property virtually decided the question as to the school's permanent location. When the building had been remodeled, it served its new purpose admirably. To keep the students' living costs down to as reasonable a level as possible and at the same time to provide them with satisfactory living quarters, the directors provided dormitory facilities as the finances permitted. Through gifts and purchases, the library grew until by 1890 it contained a sizable number of books and reference volumes. Scholarships were also established as circumstances made possible.

Did Dr. Kuyper, now that the Free University had weathered the vicissitudes of its first decade, feel that he, his associates and the school had arrived? No. On the contrary, because he was realistically aware of the gulf between his ideal and the actual situation, Kuyper often spoke of the school in a tone of deep humility. It still lacked so much. The school was understaffed: the professors had to teach too many courses. Moreover, the school must expand to include a medical school and a school of the natural sciences. Finally, to mention no more, the law did not place the school's diplomas and degrees on a par with those of the public universities.

This tiny sketch of the Free University's history during its first ten years tells its own story. All those connected with the school in any way gave it their supreme devotion. It enjoyed their sacrificial dedication. There had indeed been solid, substantial progress. But so much still had to be acquired. Yet, while struggle, toil, and poverty were, to put it thus, stamped on the school, and would be for many years to come by all indications, the Free University's entire constituency felt themselves immeasurably rich, indeed, thrice blessed.

We now return to the year 1880 to follow Dr. Kuyper through the dramatic church reform decade.
By royal decree of January 7, 1816, King William I converted the country-wide Protestant Church of Holland into a full-fledged State Church. He discarded the Church's Reformed structure and polity (government) and foisted on the Church a new, hierarchical organization capped by the General Synod. For this action he had no legal or other authority. Even in the 1880's this was generally admitted. Without the least doubt, a large share of the responsibility must be laid on his advisers. Although the King evidently meant well and while Holland owes much to him, this action still stands to his discredit to this day.

Through the years this church enjoyed the luxury of at least three names, the commonest of which was "de Hervormde Kerk." The title "de Hervormde Kerk" has no English equivalent. We cannot call it the Reformed Church. Theoretically, it is true, the Church still held to the Reformed confessional standards, but in practice the Church had departed so far from those Reformed standards that it would be a travesty to call it Reformed. Besides, by doing so one easily confuses this church with denominations that were actually Reformed.

In 1852 the Crown gave the Church a new constitution. In 1867 the Synod implemented Article 23 of the Constitution of 1852 by introducing into the Church a considerable measure of democracy. While all these measures more or less relaxed the "State" character of the Church, the actual changes were not so
great that "State Church" would be a misnomer. So I have consistently called it the State Church and shall continue to do so.

Although the Church was in 1816 already considerably less than wholly Reformed, the sixty-some years that followed witnessed a progressive deterioration, a drifting further and further from the Reformed standards toward religious liberalism and the liberal theology. For many years, individuals, consisters, other official bodies, and unofficial groups had worked devotedly, but with painfully meager or no results, to purify and to revitalize the Church from within. Yet — and that was much — all those efforts kept the reform spark alive.

In 1880 nearly one half of Holland's population of 4,000,000 were enrolled as members of the State Church.

That church was honeycombed with rationalism. As religious liberalism infected the divinity schools, the pulpits, the classrooms, the consisters, the boards, the Synod, and the pews, it acted like a poison in the body ecclesiastic. In the preaching, in the administration of the sacraments, in the teaching, in the pastoral care, in church discipline, and in the government of the church, Modernism had made tragic inroads.

Yet, there existed oases in the desert. A considerable number of individual ministers, elders, deacons, consisters, and other members still held to the Reformed faith and life. In the multi-colored State Church, it remained possible to lead a limited Reformed life. So the sternest orthodoxy lived side by side, so to speak, with the most brazen liberalism. And they somehow managed to live together more or less amicably under the same widespread ecclesiastical roof. As a matter of fact, while the thousands on the Church's rolls were technically sons and daughters of the same ecclesiastical house, no one who understood conditions classified them as brothers and sisters of the same spiritual family.

Verily, "Ichabod" ("the glory has departed") was written boldly across the Church of the Fatherland.

"Reform was patently the order of the day."

Dr. Kuyper was again, since 1879, a resident of Amsterdam and still pastor emeritus of the State Church. In March of 1882, the Electoral Commission chose him as elder. However, the state of his health (the result of his 1876 collapse) permitted him to attend the consistory meetings only very seldom. But in 1884 and later, he could attend more regularly. Kuyper being who he was, that
position as elder was an exceptionally strategic position in the church.

In 1882 Kuyper organized like-minded consistory members into a fellowship similar to the one he had formed in 1872. At the meetings he read papers on church reformation. Discussions followed. The general consistory of 136 men, called to administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of the great city-wide Amsterdam church, had much business to transact and many decisions to make. At the fellowship gatherings, the important matters were discussed in advance so that all the members would have a clear understanding of the questions and would all vote alike. Kuyper had determined that if the opposition won on any point, it would have to do so by its own strength.

The State Church Synod possessed a positive genius for creating furors in the Church. So again in 1883.

There was a time when candidates for the gospel ministry had been required to promise that they would preach the Word of God in accordance with, and as interpreted in, the Three Forms of Unity. This pledge had already been altered to read that the candidate pledged himself to maintain the spirit and the major content of the Confession. Now, in 1883, the subscription of ministers-to-be was again deleted. No mention was made of "the full counsel of God as to salvation, particularly his grace in the Lord Jesus Christ." Aspiring clergymen merely agreed "to promote the interests of the Kingdom of God in general and especially those of the State Church." This radical innovation became effective January 15, 1883.

Not only the Reformed people but the entire orthodox element stood aghast. In De Heraut Dr. Kuyper immediately met this new appeasement head-on with a three-point program. (1) He declared to the churches that it was their sacred duty to guard the Church's Confession by warding off this new evil. (2) He wrote that the consistories must take measures so that no man would be called to the gospel ministry in their respective churches unless he had declared over his signature his sincere and cordial agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. (3) He proposed that each Reformed consistory at once appoint four of its members as a committee to serve the consistory with information and advice on the most recent Synodical decision, and that all the committees of the entire country meet afterwards in a general conference to deliberate on the necessary further course of action.
A reform movement was clearly in the making.

The Amsterdam consistory took the initiative. Its committee of four, which included Kuyper and Rutgers, issued a call for the general conference for Wednesday, April 11, 1883, at Amsterdam. The call included a distinct proviso: registration at the conference would include a declaration of hearty accord with the Three Forms of Unity as a fixed basis for discussion and action. Kuyper now, for the cause, saw to a republication in appropriate form of those confessional standards.

This convention of delegates adopted noteworthy resolutions. It decided to admit no one to the ministry in their churches unless and until such person(s) had signed the Three Forms of Unity, with declaration of hearty accord. It decided further: If the Synodical Hierarchy, which had been imposed on the Church in 1816, prevented the Reformed people from honoring the King of the Church as Sovereign, the union of churches under this Hierarchy must be terminated. It resolved: If in any church or churches the Reformed people were actively opposed by their consistory or consistories in their recognition of Christ as Head and King of the Church, such Reformed people would, after earnestly warning the consistory, decline to recognize such consistory or consistories and would choose their own elders and deacons, not to secede definitely from the State Church but, as in the time of the difficulties with the Remonstrants, to appear as grieving (or mourning) churches, in the hope that the State Church would return in confession and polity to the Reformed standpoint, in which case the mourning churches would return to the fold.

The conference also designated the Amsterdam consistory as the body to call another conference in case one or more churches became entangled in difficulty with the Synodical Hierarchy in their obedience to the King of kings.

In 1883 Dr. Kuyper published a 204-page monograph on The Reformation of the Churches. The preface is dated October 1. He "presented" the book to the sons of the Reformation on the 400th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther (November 10, 1483).

The volume is in four parts: (1) General Principles, (2) On the Sound Formation of the Churches, (3) On the Deformation of the Churches, and (4) On the Reformation of the Churches. Though written in a lucid, popular style, the book bears all the earmarks of wide and profound study. One may well call it Dr. Kuyper's church reform handbook.
How many of Holland's leaders in church and state read the volume? But the sons of the Reformation took note of the book, read it, studied it, and absorbed the content. They now understood not only the Why and Whither of church reform but also the How. It seemed to them, too, as if a courier had come to them to announce the impending church conflict.

We want to follow the church conflict of the 1880's as it arose, raged, and ended in the case of the Amsterdam church. This church, a city-wide organization, had 28 ministers, a single general consistory (clergymen, elders, and deacons) of 136, a total membership of about 165,000, and 10 sanctuaries and 4 chapels.

The reason for focusing our attention on the Amsterdam church is easy to see. That church ranked as the largest and most notable of the country. There, too, the three component factors in any thoroughgoing reform movement were all present — the Confession, the organizational structure, and the control and administration of the physical properties and wealth. Again, both parties to the conflict enjoyed the benefit of the most eminent ecclesiastical and legal talents. Further, at Amsterdam the struggle was a fight to the finish. Both parties did everything that could advance their cause; neither party left undone anything that could contribute to victory.

Throughout the country, men knew instinctively that the decisive battle would be fought at Amsterdam. They understood perfectly that the outcome in that church would be conclusive and determinative for the Church throughout the entire country. No wonder, then, that men in all of Holland earnestly watched the Amsterdam developments.
Up to late 1884 the Amsterdam church coasted along, — if a church that is divided against itself can be said to "coast."

As of late December of 1884, the clash between the Amsterdam consistory and the higher church authorities was going to take place to all appearances on that extremely important church function which we may designate as "acceptance on profession of faith."

What is "acceptance on profession of faith?" Take an illustrative case. A young man is, with his parents, member of a congregation of moderate size, say, one of 150 families, whose minister, elders, and deacons are Reformed men. This youth was baptized in infancy. He has received instruction in his pastor's church classes. Now at the age of 17, he desires to make his orthodox profession of faith. So he appears before the consistory. If on examination the consistory is satisfied that he possesses an adequate knowledge of Bible truth and of the church's Confession, that his personal profession of faith is orthodox, and that his conduct is known to be honorable and above reproach, the consistory accepts him into communicant membership. Confirmed at a public worship service, he is now entitled to all the privileges of such communicant membership. That, in bold outline, is the time-honored procedure in churches of the Reformed type. It was on this specific ecclesiastical function, certainly an issue of overshadowing significance, that, so it seemed, the decisive battle was to be fought.
Obviously, what is possible in a small congregation is not necessarily practicable in a church the size of the Amsterdam church. A real examination of a larger number of catechumens by a large consistory was simply out of the question. So the consistory employed the "representative" method. A clergyman, assisted by one or two elders, examined his own catechumens. Naturally, orthodox young people went to orthodox ministers and liberal young people to liberal clergymen.

In the heyday of Modernistic supremacy in the Amsterdam church, the liberal clergymen did as they pleased in admitting their catechumens into communicant membership. However, the election of orthodox and Reformed elders and deacons in 1867 and subsequent years called a halt. No wonder the liberal preachers cried alack and alas. But the State Church Synod met the situation in its own unique way. It decreed that, when persons came to make profession of faith, their personal religious views could not be a ground for refusal to accept them into communicant membership, provided their intellectual knowledge of the prescribed courses was deemed adequate. That was really letting the bars down. That decree meant an abject surrender by the Synod to the forces of religious liberalism.

Now, there was once a time when the elders who assisted clergymen in the examination of catechumens possessed authority to refuse to accept a catechumen who entertained liberal religious views. In time, however, this authority had already been so diluted that only the presence of an elder, or elders, was required. The clergymen decided. The elders had no say, no control.

As one easily imagines, the Reformed and the thoroughly orthodox elders had objections of conscience to serving the liberal clergymen as tools. So, when the liberal ministers wanted to examine their catechumens, those elders simply did not appear. When certain elders — we may call them "weaker brethren" — who still accommodated those clergymen eventually dropped out of the consistory, those clergymen were at their wits' end.

No, not yet. The regulations furnished a clever expedient. Take again an illustrative case. A young man of liberal religious views desires to make profession of faith. But his minister and consistory are orthodox. All he need now do is to ask them for a certificate of good moral character, which they must give if his conduct warrants this. He presents this document to a neighboring, liberal consistory. This group examines him, accepts him, and con-
forms him at a public worship service. It then informs the other consistory of all this. This original consistory is then bound to enrol him as a confessing member.

By following this rather devious route, liberal catechumens whom consistories barred at the front door sneaked in through the back door. Then, if they were so minded, they laughed at their own consistories to their faces.

In late 1884, the Amsterdam church still had three liberal clergymen. Shortly before Christmas of 1884, a number of catechumens of the Ministers Ternooy Apêl and Laurillard told these liberal clergymen that they desired to make profession of faith and thus be admitted to communicant membership. The two ministers were prepared to examine them and so informed "their" elders. But those elders, knowing that by their mere presence they would admit unbelievers to confessing status, declined to attend the examination. The clergymen now informed the catechumens' parents of the elders' refusal. Those parents, supported by some other members of the Amsterdam church, protested the elders' refusal to the consistory. That body, however, supported the elders.

The catechumen-applicants now demanded certificates of good moral character with the transparent intention of presenting those documents to a "friendly" consistory, to be examined, accepted and confirmed by that body, soon thereafter to be enrolled as communicant members of the Amsterdam church. On March 23, 1885, the consistory decided not to issue the certificates unless the catechumen-applicants were motivated by a desire to confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Savior "who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." By letter of that date, the consistory so informed the applicants and their parents. There was no response.

Why was this matter so important to the consistory? Because Christ had instituted the Lord's Supper for His disciples, and any consistory which admitted unbelievers to participation in Holy Communion would be derelict in its duty and would violate their pledge of office by condoning the desecration of this sacrament. The consistory did not act in a vindictive spirit but with a heart of love toward the catechumens — yet in a clear sense of their duty.

The applicants now appealed to the Classical Board, which, however, replied that it lacked jurisdiction in the matter. No one
informed the consistory of this appeal and the reply. The applicants then turned to the Provincial Board of North Holland. Of this the consistory was not informed either. That Board, without hearing the consistory, on October 24, 1885 ordered the consistory to issue the certificates within six weeks, that is, on or before December 5.

On November 5, the special consistory (ministers and elders) learned for the first time of the Classical Board's and the Provincial Board’s action. After some discussion of the latter Board’s order, Dr. Kuyper and three fellow members proposed that the order be forwarded to the Synod for review and nullification on the ground that it was contrary to the Word of God.

On November 20, the Synodical Committee denied the request for review of the Provincial Board’s order and further decreed that the consistory must issue the certificates before January 8, 1886. That committee seemed determined to invite a clash. It evidently looked on the Amsterdam consistory as a hotbed of rebellion against the Synod and all its works.

One wonders why the Provincial Board and the Synodical Committee did not keep the matter of the certificates pending for a few weeks. In that case the whole question would have lapsed: according to a new revision of the relevant rule, such certificates would not even be required after January 15, 1886.

At its December 3 meeting, the Synodical Committee’s adverse decision came to the special consistory’s attention. The consistory’s original committee of four now submitted a comprehensive proposal: (1) Not to discuss the Synodical Committee’s demand at that session, (2) To refer that demand to itself, the four-man committee, for consideration and advice, (3) To add four clergymen and four elders to this committee, (4) To give this enlarged committee a threefold mandate: (a) to inform the congregation as to what had taken place, (b) to contact other consistories, if necessary, and (c) to propose to the consistories such action as in its judgment the situation required or, if it chose, to take such action in the name of the Amsterdam consistory.

All the ministers and elders realized the gravity of the occasion. Adoption of the proposal would be tantamount to open rebellion against the Synodical Committee. It could, and probably would, lead to suspension or deposition of those who voted in favor. After a lengthy, thorough discussion, the proposal was adopted. A minority seemed as yet unprepared to cross the Rubicon.
For the twelve-member committee Dr. Kuyper wrote a 46-page brochure, *The Threatening Conflict*, in which he explained the entire certificate question. He included 16 relevant documents. This brochure, dated December 23, 1885, a masterpiece of publicity, could be purchased in bookstores by the general public. Widely bought, read, and discussed, it proved a potent weapon in the battle against the Synodicals.

The consistory still had till January 8, 1886, to comply with the Synodical Committee’s order to issue the certificates. To all appearances, then, the Amsterdam consistory was bound to collide head-on with the Synod over the question of certificates with all that it involved. On that supremely important issue, the battle should have been fought to the end. But it was not. The Synodicals raised a smoke screen.

Some years earlier, in 1869, the Amsterdam church membership had voted overwhelmingly in favor of retaining its local autonomy in the administration of the church’s physical properties and great wealth. It authorized the consistory to exercise this administration. The consistory did so through the Administrative Board, a committee of twenty-four appointed from its own membership.

Now, thanks to the ecclesiastical elections, the Kuyper group — we may as well call them that — constituted the majority in the consistory. Those men saw a clash between the consistory and the higher church authorities as a distinct possibility, if not a probability. If such a conflict materialized, they felt that those higher powers might unexpectedly depose this majority of the consistory and so secure possession of what the church possessed in the way of buildings, money, and all other forms of wealth.

The Kuyper group had no desire to be dispossessed in that manner. To forestall any such surprise move, the general consistory (minister, elders, and deacons), on December 14, 1885, adopted certain alterations in the relevant Article 41, which changes, submitted by the Administrative Board itself, had already been under consideration for a long time. The principal alteration stipulated that in case of possible eventual conflict between the consistory and the higher church authorities, the Administrative Board must recognize the original consistory as the lawful consistory and must therefore carry out the instructions of that body. This would keep the matter *in statu quo* till such time as a civil court decided the
issue. Eighty members voted in favor. Many eminent legal lights, of both the Kuyper group and the other group, have agreed that those men committed no wrong when they did that.

In the organization which was the State Church the Classical Board stood above the consistory, the Provincial Board above the Classical Board, and the Synod above all. In order to get the full flavor of events, we shall have to follow somewhat in detail the proceedings which now took place.

December 15, the day after the Amsterdam consistory took its memorable action, the Classical Board met. This body consisted of seven ministers and three elders. The Rev. Adriani headed the Board as chairman. Dr. G. J. Vos was its secretary.

At this meeting, the clergymen Berlage and Ternooy Apel lodged a complaint with the Board against the consistory for its action in altering Article 41. The Classical Board, taking note of this document of complaint, decided to demand from the consistory certain information, to be furnished by January 1, 1886: (1) a copy of the general consistory’s constitution, rules, and regulations and of the alterations introduced, (2) a transcript of the consistory’s decision of December 14 re Article 41, (3) the names of those who had voted in favor of the alterations, of those who had voted against, and of those who had been absent, and (4) such other information as the consistory desired to give.

To keep our time bearings we shall have to follow the calendar closely, for that Classical Board worked fast and deviously.

The Rev. P. C. Vander Horst, chairman of the consistory for that month, received the Board’s letter the same day, the fifteenth, but, acting as if time and a deadline did not matter, blandly neither informed the secretary nor revealed the content of the communication but called a consistory meeting for December 21.

At 7:15 that evening, the roll call showed one less than a quorum. Yet, although informed that one of the ministers was on the way, the chairman declared “No Meeting” but said that a meeting would be held a week later, December 28. At the “meeting” of the 21st he did not reveal the content of the Classical Board’s letter. That was contrary to custom. At an elder’s urging, the letter was read — but after Vander Horst had already declared “No Meeting”. Nor did he mention the fatal deadline.

December 28 the general consistory met. The Classical Board’s letter was read. All the information which the Board demanded had
to be in the hands of the Board’s secretary, Dr. G. J. Vos, by January 1. If, so the letter stated, the Board received no satisfactory reply by January 1, it would find itself compelled to proceed in the matter without the consistory.

The consistory, by no means intimidated, first faced the question whether it would recognize the Classical Board’s intrusion into its affairs. Ten members exercised their privilege, contained in Article 9 of the by-laws, of demanding that the Board’s demand be referred to a committee for study and for report at the next meeting.

The consistory resolved to inform the Board that since it was already December 28, complying with the Board’s injunction before January 1 would be virtually impossible. The consistory would, however, forward the required information at the earliest possible moment. This reply was dated December 29. Meanwhile, still in effect were the orders from the Provincial Board and from the Synodical Committee to hand certificates of good moral character to the catechumens.

We step back a week in time. On December 21 the Classical Board met in secret session. One thing and another, however, leaked out. The Board adopted a resolution suspending the 80 consistory members who had voted for the alterations in Article 41 “if the Board should not be satisfied with the consistory’s reply” to the Board’s demand for information. That was really anticipatory action, both illegal and unethical. The chairman (Adriani), the secretary (Vos), and the Rev. Vander Dussen were appointed a committee and given the following bizarre mandate: if the committee deems the consistory’s reply unsatisfactory, it must have the required forms for suspension printed; it must call such meetings as it judges necessary; it must fill in the printed notifications of suspension; it must have everything in readiness for the Board’s January 4 meeting.

When the committee learned from the consistory’s letter of December 29 that the consistory was not acceding for the moment to the Board’s demand, the committee met at the Adriani home and went to work to carry out its mandate.

At ten o’clock on the morning of January 4, 1886, the Classical Board met. The consistory’s letter was read. The Board judged the reply to be wholly unsatisfactory. In pursuance of the decision of December 21, the Board now formally suspended the 80 consistory members from their respective offices. The notifications
of suspension were read. Some questions were asked and answered. The Board approved the notices. At eleven o’clock they had all been signed and were ready for delivery. The suspension was made effective as of twelve o’clock noon that same day. To deliver all those 80 messages to the homes of men living in every corner of the great city of Amsterdam was no small order. The messengers reached most of the homes by twelve o’clock noon, some an hour or two later.

So the Classical Board suspended 5 ministers, 42 elders (among them Kuyper, Rutgers, Fabius, Woltjer, and De Hartog, all professors at the Free University), and 33 deacons — a total of 80 consistory members. There remained in the good graces of the Classical Board 21 clergymen, 11 elders, and 24 deacons — a total of 56. The Board also informed the suspended officers thus: If any of the 80 men had a change of mind and heart, he must so inform the Board by January 18, after which date the Board would hear him, or them, at such time and place as it would fix.

So then, 80 members of the Amsterdam consistory were suspended from exercising their ecclesiastical offices. That was no light matter. One can set down at least three grave comments on the Board’s illegal, brutal action. (1) The Board suspended those men without giving them a hearing. (2) Except in cases of extreme misconduct, such as drunkenness, suspension ordinarily took effect two weeks later. (3) The notifications should have been signed by all the members of the Board, whereas Adriani and Vos alone signed.

Just as Kuyper had explained the question of certificates in his brochure *The Threatening Conflict*, so he now promptly clarified the issue of the administration of the church properties in a new brochure entitled *The Conflict Has Arrived*.

That Classical Board now went on a rampage, tossed all relevant rules and regulations, even the dictates of common sense, out the window, and drove ahead with relentless dispatch. It seemed jet-propelled.

In the afternoon of the same day (Monday, January 4), the Board met with the badly decimated consistory, which was reduced from 136 to 56 members. The meeting quickly disposed of the matter of certificates by deciding to issue them. With that and some other business transacted, the gathering adjourned. The consistory and the Classical Board combined did not constitute a legal ecclesiastical body, and therefore their action was totally illegal.
Besides, the 56 members of the consistory who had not been suspended were not all in accord with the Classical Board’s action, but for the moment they were helpless.

At adjournment the Rev. Westhoff spoke the closing prayer. Then, instead of handing the key of the consistory room door to the custodian, he pocketed it himself. He had no right to do that. The custodian alone, who had charge as authorized employee of the Administrative Board, had the duty and authority to lock and unlock doors.

That week of January 4 was one of excitement and tragedy in the history of the Amsterdam church. One episode was the so-called panel-sawing incident, of which so much ecclesiastical and even political capital was made during those days.

In the night between Tuesday and Wednesday, Westhoff, by order or not by order of the Classical Board (an illegal act in any case), had the lock removed from the consistory room door and another lock installed instead. He, of course, kept the key. He also had iron plates attached to the inside face of that door to cover all the four panels. Guards, hired by Vos on Monday evening and working shifts, were on hand to prevent anyone from trying to enter the room. Wednesday forenoon, Dr. F. L. Rutgers, chairman of the Administrative Board, Dr. Kuyper, vice-chairman, J. W. Meyer, a member of the Board who had not been suspended, W. C. Beeremans, superintendent of buildings and as such an employee of the Board, and attorneys for the Board came to the church (i.e. the cathedral church). When Westhoff came, Rutgers asked him to unlock the consistory room door. He refused, then soon left.

Kuyper advised that the Administrative Board institute a damage suit against Westhoff. One greatly regrets that this was not done. Had Kuyper’s advice been followed, the story of Westhoff’s action of Tuesday night and of that Wednesday morning’s happenings would have appeared in black and white on the records of the civil court.

Board member Meyer instructed Superintendent Beeremans to have the door opened. A locksmith was called, but for some reason he did not succeed.

What took place during the next half hour or so was actually this: the strips of molding that held the panels in place were removed, the panels taken out, the iron plates struck off the inside face of the door, the screws that held the new lock taken out, and the door opened.
Why devote any space in this record to the incident of the consistory room door of the cathedral church? For chiefly two reasons: (1) Out of this incident, with its perfectly legal and appropriate action, certain Synodicals fabricated the panel-sawing legend — as if Kuyper and the other men had forced an entrance into the consistory room by sawing a panel out of the door. (2) That door became a piece of ecclesiastical, even political, history. Although politically Liberal newspapers broadcasted the panel-sawing fiction far and wide, the facts castigate the legend as a falsification of contemporary history, a libel, a defamation of character. On January 31, Dr. Rutgers dared the Classical Board to make a legal case out of the Wednesday happenings. The only response was a deafening silence.

The events of the week, widely heralded, created a tremendous sensation not only in Amsterdam but throughout the country.

During January and the following months, the Classical Board filled all manner of vacancies, real and declared, in the Amsterdam organization. Also, in one way or another, by hook and by crook, largely with the help of the police, the Synodicals secured physical possession of the church buildings. They had the backing of Mayor Van Tienhoven and the support of the influential Liberal newspapers and magazines. The journals of proceedings, the archives, the membership records, the correspondence — in fact, everything came into their hands.

And then, on March 24, those 234 whose certificates of good moral character had been issued by the pseudo-consistory on January 4, accompanied — or shall we say chaperoned? — by the Rev. Ternooy Apel, took a boat trip from Amsterdam to Koog aan-de-Zaan, a small town a few miles northwest of Amsterdam. There, amid a great demonstration of interest, they made profession of faith, were received into communicant membership, and were confirmed by the local clergyman. Their names were then sent by that consistory to the Amsterdam church for enrolment on the membership records.

Sunday, January 10, brought a welcome relief from the tensions of the past week. Police protection, granted at the request of the Vos faction, proved entirely unnecessary. Not one of the churches witnessed any disturbance or disorder.

That Sunday the five ministers under suspension, also the elders Kuyper and Rutgers, who were ministers not in active ser-
vice, conducted a special type of religious service, called "Bible readings," in auditoriums rented for the purpose. Dr. Kuyper conducted the service in the auditorium Plancius. The service was scheduled for six o'clock. At four o'clock many had already taken seats. At 5:30 the doors had to be closed; no more could be admitted.

Dr. Kuyper read from Hebrews 11, that majestic chapter on the heroes of faith. The thirteenth verse tells of the faithful of the Old Testament era that they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." He then spoke a uniquely impressive and beautiful sermon on Psalm 119: 19: "I am a sojourner in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me." Although Kuyper and the other speakers who conducted the services had ample opportunity to whip up the passions of their audiences, they scrupulously refrained. They hardly, if at all, mentioned the events of the past week. On his audience Dr. Kuyper laid the apostolic injunction to live in all respects in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Those Bible readings, which we may call a type of truncated worship service, continued throughout 1886, nearly to the year's end, while the appeal of the suspended officers was pending before the Synod. They enjoyed a very large and devoted response. Soon three additional auditoriums had to be rented, making a total of eight. Sunday after Sunday, the auditoriums were filled to capacity.

Because these were not services of the organized church, the ministers did not administer the sacraments. But how did the followers of Kuyper, Rutgers, and the other leaders feel about this lack? There was a simple solution. The Rev. C. A. Renier had not been present at the December 14 meeting of the consistory because of illness. Had he been present, he would have voted as did the 80. So, the Classical Board had not suspended him. He now promptly chose to side with the Kuyper group. He was too Reformed a man to do otherwise. While Renier helped Kuyper and the others at the Bible readings, he also, a clergyman in good and regular standing, preached in the Amsterdam State Church at the regular services. To his services came the members of the reform group for the administration of the sacraments.

At no time did Kuyper and his associates attempt to secure and to keep physical possession of the State Church sanctuaries. While they entertained no intention of returning as humble suppliants for
pardon, they at the same time had no mind to forment trouble and revolution. They didn't recognize their suspension as legal. Yet they recognized that their status was that of suspended officers. They acted on the basis of this while they bided the time when the Synod, the highest church judicatory, would either nullify or confirm the action of the Classical Board.

While all this was going on, five of the 80 suspended officers "returned to the fold."

On February 9, 1886, the General Synod met in extraordinary session.

That State Church Synod constitutes a study in itself. Notwithstanding the operation of Article 23 since 1867, only about one fifth of its 22 members were in principle orthodox in the early 1880's.

The Synod had received from the Classical Board a transcript of the Board's action. The Synod now chose one half of its 22-man membership as a "synodus contracta," which we may call the Little Synod. It was little in more ways than one. This Little Synod sent a copy of the Classical Board's document to each of the 75 suspended officers and asked them what they wished to advance in their own defense. Assigned this task by their associates, Kuyper and Rutgers prepared and forwarded the necessary documents. Rutgers and Lohman also prepared a large brochure for consideration by the Little Synod. On March 9, 1886, the Little Synod declared the decision of the Classical Board technically out of order, therefore null and void, and ordered reconsideration.

On March 15, the Classical Board at once proposed to the Provincial Board the deposition of the 75 Amsterdam consistory members. For the purpose of information, record, defense, persuasion, and convincement, the 75 officers presented their case to the Provincial Board in an extensive document on April 5. On July 1 the Provincial Board formally and definitely deposed the 75 men. At no time had either Board given these officers the semblance of a hearing.

On July 19, the 75 deposed officers appealed their case to the Little Synod, at the same time handing that body a "Memorial of Grievances." What, now, should the Little Synod have done? Fairness dictated that it send the case back to the Provincial Board. That Board should then have referred it back to the Classical Board. The Classical Board should thereupon have heard the 75 out, after which it could have decided. Instead, the Little Synod,
Having in mind to give the 75 a hearing and so considering the case from the beginning, itself on September 2 summoned the men to appear before it for that purpose at the Willemskerk in The Hague on September 15, 16, 17 and 18.

Dr. Kuyper alone came. Most of the others sent the General Synod letters in which they explained their objections to obeying the summons. They and the few who did not write acted thus because they knew that Kuyper would appear before the Little Synod to state the objections in extenso. At eleven o’clock on the morning of September 16, Dr. Kuyper appeared at the Willemskerk in The Hague. What took place at this meeting with the Little Synod is a short, simple, sad chronicle. From the chairman’s opening speech, it was evident that this Synod proposed to delve into the case as such, not to treat the case as one on appeal. To this Kuyper objected. He insisted that a hearing such as this Synod planned was definitely out of order at this stage of the proceedings. He asserted that such a hearing should have been given by the Boards which had deposed the men. Was Kuyper splitting hairs or dodging behind technicalities? By no means. He demanded elemental justice. Kuyper and the chairman argued back and forth. The chairman persisted in his attitude. Dr. Kuyper left and next day handed the Little Synod his grievances in writing.

On September 24, the Little Synod ratified the Provincial Board’s action in deposing the 75 officers of the Amsterdam church.

Appeal to the full Synod followed on November 3. More documents were prepared and presented, among them The Last Word to the Conscience of the Synod, written by Dr. Kuyper for the group of deposed officers. This document was a calm, serious, factual, courageous appeal to the consciences of the General Synod.

What should that Synod have done? We would say: throw the case in its entirety out of the ecclesiastical court or refer the entire case back to the lower authorities and order them to follow the only just, honorable, prescribed procedure. But on December 1, 1886, the full Synod ratified the action of the Provincial Board. The 75 officers had gone the full length of appeal. From the verdict of the General Synod there was no further appeal. With the deposed men it was now one of two: reinstatement on the terms prescribed by the church authorities or permanent exclusion from their respective offices.
Why, in the final analysis, were Dr. Kuyper and his 74 fellow officers of the Amsterdam church deposed? Not because the consistory had refused to issue the certificates in question. Not because those officers had reinforced Article 41 on the administration of the church properties. Not for both these actions taken together.

The basic cause of the deposition lay far deeper. In Holland's State Church there were, on the one hand, the Reformed and orthodox sector, and on the other, the liberals and Modernists. As iron and clay do not intermix and as a house that is divided against itself cannot stand, so there was in the State Church no room ultimately for the two groups who were bearers of mutually exclusive life principles.

Because this chain of ecclesiastical events, which began with the Classical Board's action of January 4 in suspending 80 officers of the Amsterdam church and ended with the General Synod's ratification on December 1 of the deposition of 75 of these officers, took place in 1886, the entire church reform movement is known as the Reformation of 1886.

While the Amsterdam church was the storm center of the reform movement, all was not tranquil throughout the country beyond the city's boundaries. Far from it. The attendance, the spirit, and the discussions at the 1883 conference had already shown that there existed a strong reform sentiment outside Amsterdam.

During 1886, even before the Synod had rendered its verdict, at least six churches "cast off the yoke of 1816." They did so in a spirit of contrition for having endured the burdens as long as they did. They broke away in the assured conviction of obedience to the King of the Church. Although the churches that withdrew in 1886 before the Amsterdam church were for the most part small, certainly non-strategic churches, their action demonstrated how the reform leaven had already operated and was still operating. The Synod not only saw those defections but heard rumblings from many directions.

In the State Church, a considerable number of ministers, elders, deacons, and other members were of such strong Reformed convictions that they were ready to bid the organization adieu. That was in spite of, not because of, the dominant atmosphere in the church.
All the efforts over many years, in which Kuyper had taken an active part since 1867, that is, for nearly 20 years, to purify and rehabilitate the Church from within are collectively designated as the battle for church restoration. In mid-December, those 75 officers inaugurated the second phase of the reform movement. This phase lasted from the time when the Amsterdam church and other congregations withdrew provisionally to the time when those churches organized their own church communion.

Up to this time, those officers had not left the State Church organization. They had recognized their suspension not as right or justified but as a fact. They had refrained from exercising the duties of their ecclesiastical offices. As long as they held physical possession of the church buildings, they permitted their use by the Synodical clergymen, while they themselves held services in rented auditoriums. All this during part of 1886. Then in mid-December, the 75 officers, deeming themselves the lawful consistory of the Amsterdam church, resolutely but provisionally cut the tie of that church with the Synodical organization. They declared the act of deposition null and void. Under date of December 16, they published a three-part brochure, written for the group by Kuyper: (1) Announcement by the Consistory, (2) Statement of Reformation, and (3) Declaration by the Deposed Consistory Members. While these titles seem prosaic enough to us, to the loyal members of the Amsterdam church the content of the brochures was vital.
The brochure had hardly appeared and been eagerly read when 7,000 members of the Amsterdam church recognized the 75 officers as the church’s rightful consistory. This consistory now instituted regular preaching services, the administration of the sacraments, and the other ecclesiastical functions.

Thereby the church entered the second phase of the reform movement, which is known in Netherlands ecclesiastical history as the “Doleantie.” Doleantie is from the Latin doleo, to mourn, to grieve, and further, to make one’s sorrow known, to speak one’s complaint, to lodge one’s grievance, especially with the judge. The position of this consistory and church can be briefly stated thus. We constitute the historic Reformed Church of the Netherlands. We have not seceded from the State Church. We are not a new church or a new denomination. We have cast off the yoke of 1816. We do this not as individuals or families for the purpose of organizing a new church but as the Amsterdam Church. What still remains there is not the historic Reformed Church but the Synodical organization. We are leaving that organization provisionally in the hope that the entire State Church will cast off the yoke of 1816 and so continue with us as the Reformed Church of Holland. We do not waive our rights to the Church’s buildings and all other forms of wealth but, on account of the superior power of the opposition, we abstain for the time being from exercising those rights. We mourn and grieve over the state of the Church and over the injustices presently being committed against us.

Throughout the country, all this action created a profound impression — more than that, a most serious soul-searching. Consistories, ministers, elders, deacons, and the other members now faced their own question: Would they go ahead with the reform movement or would they remain where they were?

Pursuant to the decision of the 1883 conference, the Amsterdam consistory (of the reform group) now called another conference, to meet at Amsterdam on January 11 and three following days of 1887.

The call stated specifically that whether the churches should leave the State Church was no longer a question for discussion but an assumed and accepted certainty. Clarification would be in order, but not Whether or No. Admission to the conference would be on that basis. Those only who agreed with that basis and so in-
dicated by their signatures would be admitted. This limitation excluded those who were forever sorrowing about conditions in the State Church but recoiled from direct, decisive action. The large attendance unmistakably demonstrated a wide and profound interest: some 300 were from Amsterdam, about 1,200 from all other sections of Holland.

Before the sessions, inspirational addresses were delivered. Religious services were held in the evening. At the sessions, Rutgers, Lohman, Kuyper, and other leaders read papers. In sectional meetings men treated all sorts of local, regional, and special interests and problems. Papers and discussions produced a wealth of advice and counsel on relevant matters: how to proceed in casting off the yoke of 1816; the position which must be assumed toward those who chose to remain “beneath the yoke”; the relation to the Christian Reformed Church and others who had earlier left the Church; and many more. The conference indeed proved both an inspirational and an educational gathering, certainly without a doubt precisely the type of congress, as it was called, which the situation demanded.

For Dr. Kuyper especially, who served as chairman and had a very large part in the preparations for the conference and in its actual work, those days were a strenuous time. But the church reform plans must not fail.

The Kuyper concept of church reform stressed the autonomy of the local churches on the basis of this thought: a religious denomination does not “consist of” a number of congregations. The congregations, each an autonomous local church, live in accord and fraternize, with the Three Forms of Unity and the Dordt Church Order as the bond of unity. Therefore the local churches must leave the State Church not as individuals or families but as congregations.

Within a relatively short time after the conference of 1887, some 200 congregations, with a total membership, old and young, of about 100,000, left the State Church. From the standpoint of Kuyper and his co-reformers, the movement proceeded soundly and smoothly. Thanks in very large measure to the strong, capable leadership of men like Kuyper, Rutgers, Lohman, and others, the congregations followed a uniform plan, so far as feasible in each case.

In June of 1887, a Synodical Convent was held at Rotterdam;
in 1888 and 1889 preliminary Synods were held at Utrecht. In 1890 a Synod was held in Leeuwarden, and in 1891 in The Hague.

Even so, for a number of reasons, the church reform movement did not enjoy a complete success. Its success was limited.

It is well to know what master plan Kuyper and his co-reformers had projected. (1) Not an outright secession or a forthright exodus out of the State Church, with the immediate organization of a new communion. But (2) Education of the State Church membership over such a period as might reasonably be necessary. (3) Action by all the congregations of the State Church to "cast off the yoke of 1816," the "yoke of the second hierarchy." That naturally meant the disestablishment of the State Church. (4) Reorganization of the self-liberated churches into conformity with the Dordt Church Order. (5) Rehabilitation and revitalization of these churches and of the church as a whole into churches and a church that would be in every respect genuinely Reformed. (6) If at all possible, the retention of the Church's physical properties and immense wealth. (7) Voluntary resignation or removal by discipline of those who were nominally members but actually, spiritually, not members of the church.

From his knowledge of ecclesiastical history, Dr. Kuyper knew, of course, that thoroughgoing church reform is a herculean task. He realized also that the liberation of Holland's State Church from the state and from the bureaucratic hierarchy capped by the Synod and its restoration to its pristine glory as a Reformed church was not to be accomplished in a day or a year or a decade. Hence the long-range program. But when the Synodicals made their fast moves, used illegal procedures, shunted aside the main issue (one of overshadowing importance), substituted for it an innocuous consistorial decision, and brazenly practiced the most unethical tactics, the master plan of Kuyper and his co-reformers could not succeed as those men had hoped.

It now clearly appeared that the process of education by which Kuyper had actively worked to prepare and train the church for decisive reform had not yet proceeded far enough. The reform leaven had not yet had time to operate in the State Church widely and effectively. The unethical haste with which the Synodicals railroaded their nefarious plans into execution had cut the time short. Their action caught thousands of members unawares, so that
They were not prepared to take decisive steps.

There were many orthodox members who saw evils in the Church but didn’t deem them sufficiently serious to warrant an open rupture. They found their place in the Church, if not ideally to their taste, at least tolerable, if not more or less comfortable.

However, just as 50 years earlier during the Secession, also known as the Reformation of 1834, by no means all the Reformed ministers, elders, deacons, and other members went along with the reform movement. They had always held membership in the State Church. That church had always been held up to them as the Church of the Fatherland, the shrine of every patriotic Netherlander’s religious devotion. They dreaded the thought of a sharp break with their ecclesiastical past. For them also, many of very modest means that they were, it would be a serious matter to affiliate with the new group since it involved heavy financial contributions. And we may believe that there was also pressure from families, relatives, and friends — to say nothing about a loss of business patronage, professional clientele, or even daily wages, as individual cases might be. Undoubtedly there were some who adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Besides, it was still possible to lead a limited Reformed life in the State Church. What does this mean? The Church authorities did not particularly trouble the ministers who were Reformed in their preaching, their teaching and their pastoral work. Nor did they specially hinder the elders and deacons who performed their work in a general way as Reformed officers should. At the same time, there was no possibility of thoroughly applying the Reformed principles of church government. The ecclesiastical boards and the Synod demanded unswerving obedience to the Synodical rules and regulations. Of the many illustrations that could be adduced there are these: even those who denied the basic truths of the Christian religion could make profession of faith; consistories could not even bar unbelievers from participation in the Lord’s supper.

Cold type cannot sketch the heat and passion and bitterness which the controversy of those embattled years engendered. Families and churches were split wide open. Friends turned into enemies. Emotional flare-ups blighted lives of neighbors and acquaintances. The Synodicals, especially, fought with a malevolence that spared no one, using language often violent and vitriolic.
The State Church authorities seemed to have embarked on Operation Persecution. That included violation of basic justice and also outrages and brutalities. They acted at times with the connivance, at times with the direct help, of the civil authorities. Seizure of church buildings from the reform group was common; day and night guarding of those buildings, the usual thing. Evictions of tenants from church-owned houses because the tenants were of the reform sector (even though they regularly paid their rent) also tells something, but especially the eviction of elderly widows, with their few meager possessions, from State Church deaconate-administered small cottages. Synodicals had homes searched for church books, documents, and archives to whose possession they were not entitled. Weak-kneed and biased mayors failed to protect citizens in their persons. In certain cases, ruffians attacked men of the reform group and hurled stones through the windows of their homes.

Some State Churches in Holland were wealthy, a few of them immensely rich. The Amsterdam church, for example, had a cathedral, nine sanctuaries, four chapels, cash on hand and in bank, special funds, income-producing real estate, securities, and other forms of wealth. Naturally, the vast majority of churches were by no means so affluent. Yet, even the smallest and poorest congregation had its church building, its parsonage, and at least some money.

It is easy to realize the importance of these physical properties and wealth of several types. For the reform group, especially, they were of paramount value. If the courts granted them all this, they would not have to bear a tremendous financial burden. But the Synodicals wanted everything, and they wanted it at once. Their frantic, cold-blooded, hard-hearted attempts to seize and retain possession make grim reading. In this they were aided and abetted by mayors, police, detachments of soldiers, and the local rabble. All this while the Synod and the Classical and the Provincial Boards had no legal say whatever over the church edifices. Their henchmen committed violence and outrages to secure physical possession for the Synod and the Boards. When Mr. Lohman called Parliament’s and the government's attention to the flagrant injustices, Prime Minister Heemskerk and the Second Chamber weren’t interested. As in the days of the Secession of the 1830's, there was evidently a good understanding between the national...
The group that had withdrawn enjoyed the benefit of eminent legal talent: the two Lohmans, Keuchenius, Fabius, Heineken, and Th. Heemskerk, son of the then prime minister.

On June 15, 1888, the Supreme Court of Holland, in session at The Hague, rendered its verdict. The Court’s line of reasoning and what one can advance in rebuttal need not detain us. It is enough to record that the Court decided against the reform group. The members and congregations of the “new religious denomination,” as the Court viewed them, lost all interest in, and claim to, any of the Church’s buildings, funds, resources, and other wealth of every description. That verdict was final. There was no appeal possible.

Now, in this entire matter, one or at most very few suits at law would have settled the church properties question, at least from the legal point of view. But the Synodicals, instead of waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court, instituted many wholly unnecessary suits. And they won. The ecclesiastical organization, which was the State Church, retained possession of, and legal title to, everything.

The costs to the reform churches reached the staggering sum of about 50,000 guilders. That amount was the responsibility of the churches as a whole. This was exclusive of what certain congregations paid in whole or in part for their own suits.

What were the results of the Reformation of 1886? We look in different directions.

If the movement did not entirely or even on a very large scale depopulate the State Church, it nevertheless created a considerable vacuum. The Synodicals stared in open-mouthed wonder at the great defection. Knowing, also, that the leaven and the impetus of the movement persisted, the Church authorities dreaded the thought of further sizable leave-takings. The movement exerted a salutary impact on the State Church. For a time, at least, the Synodicals would have to step softly.

In the large circle of those who now formed the new communion, the final outcome of the reform movement proved a genuine deliverance. For them a splendid time now arrived. True, the financial burden, already heavy, would become increasingly so. For them life would be a career of sacrifice and self-surrender, of fearlessness in witnessing, and, in not a few cases, of ridicule and persecution for their faith. But they could now organize their churches strictly along Reformed lines. They could re-make the elder-
ship, the deaconate, and the other church offices and functions to
accord with the Reformed ideal. In a word, they were now also ec-
clesiastically what they were personally, namely Reformed.

The church reform movement affected the Free University in
several ways. Many State Church members who were also mem-
bers of the Free University Society and paid their annual dues now
resigned. Whereas formerly many State Churches contributed quite
liberally to the school by gifts and offerings, this support ceased
virtually entirely. Among not a few of the Reformed men who
remained in the State Church, there was evident a loss of sympathy
for the school. By their total action, the Synodicals, to all intents
and purposes, banished the Free University beyond the pale of the
State Church. When the reform movement had spent its course, the
school stood apart in the public mind as the university of a com-
paratively small group, a band of Reformed people, a brotherhood
of Calvinists.

But that movement within the church certainly had no political
repercussions, did it? It need not have, but it did. From the outset,
the Synodicals reveled in the strong, gratuitous support of powerful
metropolitan newspapers, to say nothing of smaller papers and cer-
tain magazines. Their twisted news reports, biased editorializing,
and scandalous cartooning prejudiced many thousands of readers.
It was especially the Liberal press which set itself up in business as
the advocate for the old dame who was the State Church. The in-
formal alliance between Synodicals, the political Liberals, and the
great, influential Liberal newspapers presented a somber spectacle.

It is fairly easy to see why men injected the church conflict into
politics. Certain leaders in the church reform movement, notably
Kuyper, Lohman, and Keuchenius, to name only three, were also
foremost men in the Antirevolutionary party. So they were in
politics, and their party was growing. Although there were still
Conservatives in the country, the Conservative party was already
walking the road to oblivion. The Liberals were so divided among
themselves that political mechanics nailed the sections of the party
together in what they called the Liberal Union. Although the
Liberals were in power, the far-seeing among their chieftains
sometimes wondered how much longer they would be able to
dominate the country.

In the church reform movement, Dr. Kuyper played the chief
role. While this was not a one-man reformation, and while his
Abraham Kuyper associates received ample credit, the fact remains that without Kuyper the Reformation of 1886 is simply unthinkable. He was at the same time the leader of the Antirevolutionary party. Kuyper therefore received the brunt of the attack. He was the chief target of the opposition. We note only a few of the many accusations that were hurled at him.

On a day of 1886, the *Algemeen Handelsblad* of Amsterdam howled: “This ex-clergyman threatens our general society, our liberties, and our institutions with infinitely greater dangers than that other ex-clergyman F. Domela Nieuwenhuis.”

Said a paper: “Anyone can see with one eye, or even half an eye, that a schism is inevitable. That’s what Kuyper wants. He planned it that way.”

Again: “Kuyper is plotting to seize the vast wealth of the Amsterdam church and other congregations for the benefit of his university and of the churches that he will organize out of his malcontents.” That charge was something out of this world. As if one could slip a church building into his vest pocket and sneak off with it. Every informed person knew that the civil courts would decide the title to all this wealth.

Because the foremost men in the Free University circle were at the same time foremost leaders in church reform, the Synodicals played up that simple situation into something fantastic. Trumped they: “The prospects of Kuyper’s theological graduates are all right, not to say wonderful. Kuyper and his ilk, while they pose as reformers of the Church, are plotting to create a schism in the State Church so that he will have churches for those graduates. Kuyper and the others are lying in wait for congregations that will secede of their own accord or that can be induced to secede. That’s where Kuyper’s theological graduates will go. Simple, isn’t it?” All this harangue — while as a matter of fact the Free University did not have a single divinity school graduate. Why then would Kuyper try to create some 50 vacancies which the school could not fill for years to come?

As a result, whatever Holland has “taken” from Kuyper, thousands never forgave him his leadership in the church reform movement of the 1880’s, which brought the State Church the severest blood-letting in all her history.

But Kuyper, too, was a journalist. He was not at the mercy of newspapers and magazines. He did not depend on them to get the reform story across. In his *Heraut* and his *Standaard*, he spoke to
his followers directly and, of course, to all others who were genuinely interested. Besides, men and women who wanted to remain informed eagerly purchased and read all Kuyper’s reform writing. Two famous brochures that he published in 1886 were: *The Threatening Conflict* (regarding certificates) and *The Conflict Has Arrived* (on the matter of the administration of the church properties). Besides directing endless conferences on present plans and future policy, Kuyper alone, very occasionally with others, wrote the numerous official documents which the developing situation required.

As for Dr. Kuyper himself, we have every reason to believe that the outcome constituted, if not the severest, at all events one of the greatest disappointments of his life. Had he set his sights too high? Had his enthusiastic crusade for church reform swept him from the solid footing of conservative expectation into a state of unjustified but pardonable optimism? We may assuredly believe that Kuyper had expected better of those orthodox and Reformed members who remained where they were, particularly the ministers, elders, and deacons. How could Kuyper have foreseen the timidity and the apprehension of so many men who should have taken their stand with him? What an inspiring example of heroic courage those ministers and those lay leaders would have given had they, too, attached themselves to the departing reform group! But when the showdown came, they didn’t measure up. Whatever their reasons or reservations, some of them understandable yet not to be justified, those men chose to continue in their ecclesiastical *status quo*.

For Dr. Kuyper, churchman of churchmen, the tempestuous, electrically charged 1880’s constituted the most unique, the most strenuous, the most dramatic decade of his life.

Whether during those hectic days Dr. Kuyper was in actual danger of physical violence or even assassination is not certain. He did receive threatening letters, some of which at least were undoubtedly the work of cranks. Kuyper took little or no notice of threats. When his family and friends urged him to ask for police protection, he positively refused to do so.

Not long after the deposition, the police of their own accord offered him a bodyguard of plainclothes officers. “Dr. Vos and the Rev. Hogerziel,” said the Police Commission, “have accepted our offer.” But Kuyper declined in his own courtly way. And when
the Commissen insisted, he replied, "I place my life in the hand of God."

We return once again, now for the last time, to the year 1880 in order to follow Dr. Kuyper's career through a decade of party leadership and political action.
15: Political Leader

By 1880 the Antirevolutionaries stood firmly organized as a small but promising independent political party. Dr. Kuyper headed the party as chairman of its National Committee. The party had eleven representatives in the Second Chamber of Parliament; in the First Chamber, as yet none. *De Standaard*, with Kuyper the writing and managing editor, continued to appear as a daily newspaper. A number of small, friendly papers supported the party.

Kuyper construed and conducted his party leadership in his own characteristic way. He served as chairman at meetings of the National Committee; presiding officer and keynote speaker at the national conventions; co-maker of top-level strategy; editor of *De Standaard*; participant in political conferences; general adviser; campaign manager and speaker; political observer, with a watchful eye on the party throughout the country, on its representatives in Parliament, on Parliament itself, on the government (the cabinet in power), on allies, and on the opposition.

One of the Antirevolutionary representatives elected in 1879 was Mr. Alexander Frederik de Savornin Lohman, of Kuyper's age, eminent jurist, forceful personality, able speaker, man of strong personal convictions. Although Lohman had no taste for politics and no inclination in that direction, he went to Parliament in 1879, but solely to obtain justice for the non-state elementary
It was the beginning of a distinguished career of more than forty years in national politics.

The eleven Antirevolutionary representatives organized themselves into a legislative bloc in the good sense, or a sort of permanent caucus, called the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club, with Mr. Elout van Soeterwoude as chairman. Although there was in the group still too much individualism and independentism, yet the organization proved more successful than that of the early 1870's. The formation of the Chamber Club was, however, an innovation strongly in conflict with the then parliamentary conceptions that it was still a long time before it received a meeting place in the building of the Second Chamber.

In 1880 the Breda district sent to the Second Chamber Dr. H. J. A. M. Schaepman, who was born in 1844 and ordained to the priesthood at Utrecht in 1867. Schaepman, professor of ecclesiastical history at the Catholic seminary in Rysenburg, a man of commanding presence, a distinguished orator, a leader who belonged to the more progressive Catholics, now in 1880 came to take his place beside his co-religionists. He was the first priest to hold a seat in Parliament since the founding of the monarchy in 1813.

The Van Lynden government, which followed the Kappeyne cabinet in 1879, was supposed to carry out the provisions of the Kappeyne school law of 1878. But because it lacked both the courage and the money — there was no such thing as free spending — the cabinet at first did nothing toward instituting the remarkable improvements which that law prescribed. When it did get around to doing so, the Secretary for Internal Affairs went at it in an irritating, even aggravating manner.

Lohman, ably seconded by Schaepman and supported by representatives of both their parties, succeeded in his attempt to have a few of the most obnoxious provisions of the law removed — a considerable achievement under the circumstances. Even some Liberals had already concluded that the law contained serious defects.

This question aside, on the whole the cabinet governed not too ineptly — in fact, with some ability — for four more or less mediocre years.

Since the Liberals were too divided among themselves, the
Conservatives won the 1883 election. Mr. J. Heemskerk Azn., an able Conservative, formed an extra-parliamentary cabinet. Of the 86 members of the Second Chamber, 49 were of the Left (Liberals and Conservatives) and 37 of the Right (Antirevolutionaries and Catholics). Heemskerk now headed the government for the third time as prime minister.

The outstanding achievement of the Heemskerk government was a revision of the constitution which more than tripled the number of qualified voters.

Since 1848, the number of voters had been increased from time to time until it stood in 1887 at 100,000. Compared with other nations, Holland was in its suffrage limitations not a backward country. (This in passing.)

This revision of the constitution brought chiefly three things:

(1) By widening the suffrage base, it gave an extension of the suffrage so that an estimated 350,000 now possessed the ballot. That extension stands as a concession to the spirit of democracy in the air and, as such, an evolution in the democratic direction. It ushered in a new political era.

(2) It increased the membership of the Second Chambers from 86 to 100, the representatives to be elected for four-year terms, the terms of all to expire at the same time, and all to be immediately eligible for re-election.

(3) It enlarged the First Chamber from a membership of 39 to one of 50 and somewhat liberalized their qualifications. They would continue to be chosen by the provincial legislatures.

On November 30, 1887, public proclamation took place throughout the country.

The law required that elections be held within four months from that date.

On December 20, 1887, the Antirevolutionary party met in special, pre-election national convention. Eight years earlier, in 1879, 28 delegates had convened; now 141 came — a notable increase in less than a decade. For the first time in its history, that party adopted a program of action, broadly equivalent to our party platforms.

For another reason, too, the convention proved a landmark of historic importance. The gathering received overtures from the Catholics, which at one stroke brought the two parties much nearer together. It was now distinctly possible for the leaders to provide a
basis for co-operation by perfecting a mutually acceptable agreement.

"Calvinists and Catholics? What a team!"

The matter certainly warrants an examination.

As everyone knew, and knows, a wide, deep chasm separates Calvinists and Catholics in religion and in theology, in comprehensive life-and-world-view, (including basic political and social philosophy) and also in their solutions to some of the problems of the time.

On the other hand, in distinction from the Left (Liberals and Conservatives), the parties of the Right (Antirevolutionary and Catholic) stood politically, each with its own interpretation, on the common ground of the Christian faith. Both held that in political administration and legislation, the norms of the Scriptures must govern. Besides, Catholics and Antirevolutionaries knew, or discovered, that they had a number of objectives in common. The school question, for example, operated, not as the only, yet as the first, federative bond.

Although it was therefore possible to bridge the chasm for the purpose of joint political action, the achievement of cooperation and coalition was not the result of one day's work.

In his day, and particularly toward the end (1876) of his career, Groen pointed younger men in his party to the necessity of cooperation with the Catholics in order to break the power of political Liberalism.

Kuyper, in his early years in politics opposed to such participation with the Catholics, first had to convince himself of its imperative need. He saw the drawbacks which it entailed. He appreciated the possible glory of a party that could go its own way during and between political campaigns without having to confer with allies. In 1875, during his first service in Parliament, cooperation seemed to Kuyper, if not impossible, at any rate extremely difficult. Precisely when Kuyper became convinced is not clear. Nor is it material. But Kuyper saw the light. His sound judgment prevailed. While he had his reservations, Kuyper saw that in the main, Groen had chosen the right path. So, once convinced, he did not hesitate, in conjunction with his friend Lohman, to pave the way for cooperation with the Catholics.

The polemical storms of the 1870's and early 1880's served a useful purpose by clearing the atmosphere. At the same time, the years from about 1873 to 1888 actually witnessed occasional con-
certed action in one and another electoral district. Nevertheless, Antirevolutionaries and Catholics did not take to each other too kindly. A natural antipathy, the product of history, brought it about that neither attempted desperately to woo the other. When the Catholics broke away from the Liberals, they did not flock to the Antirevolutionary camp. And when Groen in 1871 divorced his Antirevolutionary party from the Conservatives, he did not lead them en masse to the tents of the Catholics.

What was it, then, that produced rapprochement? Simply this. Neither party had, or could in the foreseeable future expect to have, a majority in the Second Chamber of Parliament. If they were to achieve any legislative success, they must practice a policy of mutual assistance. They must inexorably cooperate. The exigencies of the political situation drove them together and made joint ventures mandatory. Cooperate or fail!

One must not underestimate the difficulties which the leaders of both parties encountered in their efforts to create something of a political partnership.

Through the years, Kuyper, when he deemed it in order, did not hesitate to point out the errors of Roman Catholicism. You will find these "pointings-out" scattered throughout his writings. Once a minister of the gospel, now a professor of theology and editor of the religious weekly De Heraut, Kuyper naturally felt that comment, evaluation, and criticism of Catholicism easily fell within his province. In addition, in 1872, the tercentenary year of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, Kuyper issued a reprint brochure on that massacre. For sheer power of graphic, dramatic, startling recital of deeds of blood and horror and inhumanity, it is a piece that Kuyper alone could have written. All this — and there was more — did not exactly "win friends and influence people" among the Catholics. It is no wonder that the Catholic leaders found it difficult to persuade their followers of the necessity of joint action with the Antirevolutionaries.

Kuyper's task, too, in building a coalition was everything except an easy chore. He could not wave a wand and shoo his followers into joint enterprises with the Catholics. Yet, once himself convinced, he courageously steered in that direction. The fact that Kuyper did actually talk his party members into alliance with the Catholics for the attainment of specific goals reveals more than words can tell of Kuyper's magnetic influence.

Of course there was also the question as to precisely how the
parties were to engage in united action. On the *modus operandi* of cooperation, Kuyper soon wrote out the specifications. He carefully crossed his "t's" and dotted his "i's." In a series of *Standaard* articles that went out as a brochure entitled *Rome and Dordt* in 1879, Kuyper had already set out his views for all to read. He had defined his position in unambiguous language. As to the Antirevolutionary party, he explained, there must be, negatively, no alliance with Rome against the Left, no alliance with the Left against Rome, no isolation or aloofness toward Rome, no fusion or amalgamation with Rome. On the positive side, each party must retain its own organization, unfurl its own banner, be perfectly independent as to the other, but the two parties must cooperate or not in each specific case that arises, each party to decide in every particular instance which party it would support. This policy, which Kuyper had promulgated and elaborated nearly a decade earlier, the Antirevolutionary convention of 1887 adopted.

With the Right now lined up against the Left, two diametrically opposite political philosophies engaged in mortal combat.

The Liberals, still united in the Liberal Union of 1885, possessed a clear, definite program; but lack of effective leadership, also internal difficulties and failure of the constituent sections to cooperate, paralyzed the party's chances of victory.

With an important election in the offing and possible victory in sight, enthusiasm in Antirevolutionary circles ran high. The party leadership had much to do. The increase in the Second Chamber membership from 86 to 100 had necessitated on the government's part a drastic redistricting of the country. Kuyper and his co-workers left nothing to chance. They had maps of the new and altered electoral districts drawn and distributed. They kept the local leaders and committees thoroughly informed on developments. With volunteer help they wrote countless letters and mailed out thousands of circulars.

Although, naturally, difficulties had to be overcome, in the 1888 campaign the cooperation between the Antirevolutionaries and the Catholics left nothing to be desired. At the primaries, each party in each district nominated its own candidate. Then, at the election, both parties concentrated in each district on the candidate whose chances appeared best. This mutual assistance augured well for the future. (For want of a better phrase I have used primary
The March 1888 election resulted very significantly: 28 Antirevolutionaries, 26 Catholics, 44 Liberals, 1 Conservative, and 1 Socialist were elected. The Right, then, won 54 seats, and the Left 46.

The Heemskerk government, which had maintained itself through the support of the Liberals, now retired. Mr. Aeneas Baron Mackay formed the new cabinet, an Antirevolutionary-Catholic coalition ministry. It took office April 21, 1888.

When the Mackay Cabinet, a new departure in Dutch politics, took office, its enemies looked on in angry amazement.

Mackay, an experienced statesman, possessed special qualifications for the premiership, particularly for this time. He enjoyed the respect of men of all parties. He proceeded carefully and diplomatically. He cooperated fully with Kuyper, the party leader. Mackay not only submitted his legislative program to Kuyper; he also asked Kuyper whether he had additional wishes. For two reasons Mackay had to tread warily: the Right majority in the Second Chamber consisted of diverse elements, and the Left still dominated in the First Chamber. He knew what was legislatively possible and knew how to obtain it. He showed political finesse of a high order.

What was expected took place in due course. April 13, 1889, Mackay, Minister of Internal Affairs in his Cabinet, introduced his elementary education bill into the Second Chamber. Negatively, the bill included a partial revision of the 1878 Kappayne law. Positively, it provided a measure of state subsidy to the non-state grade schools. In his bill Mackay included what he believed stood a fair chance of adoption. It must be borne in mind that he had also to deal with the First Chamber, which still had a Liberal majority. After Mackay had made certain alterations in his bill to satisfy the opposition, the Second Chamber adopted it by a vote of 71 to 27.

At this time Mr. Kappayne, author of the school law of 1878, held a seat in the First Chamber. When the Mackay bill reached that Chamber, Kappayne "hit the ceiling." He understood perfectly that if the bill were enacted into law, it would at once undermine his law of 1878, and that later legislation might even virtually nullify his own law. So he fought the bill vehemently.

But the Chamber adopted it in December by a vote of 31 to 18.
And the King signed.

The subsidy to the schools was not great. In some cases the cost of the improvements and betterments necessary was greater than the subsidy. For these reasons the happiness over the law was not entirely general. Nevertheless, the enactment of the Mackay school law stands out as an epoch-making legislative event. Its far-reaching significance can be stated thus: Parliament for the first time recognized the equality in law of the public and the non-public schools; for the first time, too, Parliament adopted the policy of subsidization.

On Friday, May 3, 1889, 600 delegates from some 200 Antirevolutionary Voters Clubs met in the party's tenth annual national convention. The party had grown in numbers, in local and provincial organization, in knowledge of and devotion to its principles, in unity and political experience. Their annual national conventions were already the envy of the other parties.

Elections for the provincial legislatures (not for the Second Chamber) were to be held that year.

1889 was the centennial year of the French revolution, which broke out in 1789. Kuyper seized on the occasion to deliver his keynote speech on "Not the Liberty Tree but the Cross." That speech, the first of Kuyper's keynote speeches to be published, appeared as a 32-page brochure.

In the Mackay Cabinet, Mr. L.W.C. Keuchenius held the portfolio of Colonial Secretary. He was a Leiden graduate in law, a former resident of the Dutch East Indies (where he rendered distinguished government service), a Christian gentleman of character, courage, and strong Antirevolutionary convictions, but also a man for the single harness, with whom some men found it difficult to cooperate.

January 31, 1890, the First Chamber, which still had a Left majority, rejected his colonial budget, clearly for the most part for reasons that lay outside that budget. Personal animosity against the man of outspoken Christian principles betrayed them into thinking they should strike a blow at both him and the cabinet. It was now one of two things: either Keuchenius must resign or the entire cabinet must resign. Only a short time previously, in December of 1889, Kuyper, sensing that trouble was brewing in the First Chamber, had threatened in De Standaard that the fall of Secretary
Keuchenius would mean the retirement of the cabinet.

But Keuchenius himself didn’t think so. He reasoned in this fashion, as he wrote Kuyper on February 3: the collective resignation of all the ministers would only have brought the Liberals back to power; for the dissolution of the Second Chamber there extended no sufficient reason; and dissolution of the First Chamber would lead nowhere because its members were elected by the provincial legislatures, which would simply return the incumbents. So he judged it the most advisable course to request of the King discharge as minister of the Crown. Keuchenius’s explanation impresses one as a thoroughly adequate analysis of the situation.

The incident also gives us a glance into intra-party affairs: from his study in his Amsterdam home, Kuyper could give party orders and suggestions, in his own way, of course, through De Standaard and otherwise — but other men of influence in the party did not always follow Kuyper’s instructions. While they recognized and admired him as the party leader, there were times when they felt that they must follow their own judgment.

Premier Mackay now somewhat changed the cabinet portfolios. He himself took over the post of Colonial Secretary. Mr. Lohman, professor of law at the Free University and representative in the Second Chamber for the Goes district, became Minister of Internal Affairs. The Free University granted him leave of absence, The Goes district chose Keuchenius to take Lohman’s place in Parliament.

In De Standaard of February 19, Kuyper expressed his deep concern over the cabinet’s action in letting Keuchenius resign instead of retiring as a body. That action of the cabinet pained many Antirevolutionaries deeply and lost the cabinet some sympathy in the party. Even so, the entire affair soon blew over.

On November 23, 1890, tragedy again cast its shadow over the House of Orange. On that day King William III died after a long illness and a reign of 41 years, at the age of 73 years. The burial service took place on December 4. His body was placed in the burial vault in the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) at Delft.

When William III, the last male representative of the House of Orange, died, his only living child, Princess Wilhelmina, automatically became queen, but because of her minority — she was then a girl of ten — the queen mother Emma would serve as Queen-Regent till 1898, when Wilhelmina would reach her
majority. At her father’s death, Wilhelmina became the hope of a dynasty whose history had for three centuries been bound up with that of the nation.

For the government, the policy of drift in socio-economic affairs was by this time a thing of the past. In 1887, a nine-man commission, appointed some years earlier to investigate conditions in factories and other work places, reported in three volumes after energetically carrying out its mandate. The report revealed deplorable conditions in not a few places of employment. Notwithstanding the very mild Van Houten child labor law of 1874, the abuse of child labor appeared of alarming proportions.

That investigation gave a strong impetus to legislative measures for the protection of men, women and children in industry. The first general labor law was enacted. The worst evils were checked by providing statutory protection of men, women, and children in industry. The number of work hours for women and children was cut down and night work by them forbidden.

In Holland, as in other European countries, there appeared about this time the new socio-economic-political currents of socialism and radicalism. (Socialism, Social Democracy, the Socialist party, the Social-Democratic Labor party all refer to the same group of men and ideas.) The increasing significance of Social Democracy constitutes one of the most remarkable phenomena of Dutch political history during and after the 1880’s.

Army, navy, and defense bills have plagued Dutch cabinets, ministers and Parliaments no end.

Bergansius, Minister of Defense and one of three Catholics in the cabinet, took vigorous hold of the problem. In his bill he included compulsory personal military training and aimed to eliminate substitution, with its attendant evils. Those proposals proved the cabinet’s undoing. A stumbling block to many Catholics, they temporarily drove a wedge between the two parties of the Right. Dr. Schaepman, who was satisfied with the exemptions which the bill provided, stood virtually alone among the Catholic leaders. Without exception, the Catholic representatives in the Second Chamber were opposed to Bergansius’ proposals.

While Parliament debated Bergansius’ army bill, the political campaign of 1891 was already under way.
At the Antirevolutionary national convention in May of that year, Kuyper delivered a deeply earnest, most impressive, profoundly gripping keynote speech on "Maranatha" (The Lord is coming). He discussed the two general antithetical principles: The Christian life-view versus the anti-Christian. The Antirevolutionaries, he declared, advocate a development along the lines laid down in the Scriptures while the Conservatives, the Liberals, the Socialists, and the Radicals, all of whom form one spiritual family, hail the worship of man. Kuyper summoned his party "to cling to the banner of the Cross, to go heroically into battle, not for personal honor or power, for high office or financial gain, but for the Christ and His future, and in connection with that future of our Lord, for the spiritual deliverance of our country, so that, when Christ returns, there will be found on our soil, too, which once received the blood of the martyrs, a people that does not strive against Him but hails Him with a Hallelujah!"

Fifty-two Liberals, two Radicals, 20 Antirevolutionaries, 26 Catholics, no Conservatives, and no Socialists were elected. In the Antirevolutionary camp, that defeat (Left, 54; Right, 46) caused deep dejection. But the Mackay cabinet had shamed the doleful predictions of its enemies. It had intelligently administered the country’s affairs. It had secured valuable legislation. It had demonstrated that the parties of the Right possessed the genius for government.

On August 21, 1891, after a government of three years and four months, the Mackay Ministry retired. The Van Tienhoven cabinet (Liberal) took its place.

During the 1880’s, the Antirevolutionaries also achieved success on other political levels than the national.

From time to time they elected their men to local and provincial elective offices. To "capture" the First Chamber of Parliament, the parties of the Right would have to "capture" enough provincial legislatures. The provinces of Limburg and North Brabant, being predominantly Catholic, already had Catholic majorities in their legislatures. In 1885, the Utrecht provincial legislature turned Right, in 1887 Zeeland, in 1889 Gelderland. In 1886, Mr. Elout van Soeterwoude entered the First Chamber, the first Antirevolutionary member of that body, which up to that time had consisted entirely of Liberals, Conservatives, and Catholics.
When "Patrimonium," the Christian workingmen’s association of Holland, resolved to sponsor the First Christian Social Congress, in conjunction with the Antirevolutionary National Committee, they naturally looked to Dr. Kuyper for leadership.

On November 9, 1891, he delivered the opening address on "The Social Problem and the Christian Religion" (translated into English under the title Christianity and the Class Struggle). Just as the address created an unforgettable impression on his audience at that time, so it still does when read today, because of Kuyper’s unusual command of the subject matter and the decisiveness with which he heralded the new era. It is one of Kuyper’s most valuable addresses, a timeless production whose significance the passing years have not lessened. Kuyper presided at the general sessions. At sectional meetings, men and women discussed fundamental principles and examined proposed solutions to problems.

The 1880’s constituted the most strenuous decade of Dr. Kuyper’s long career. What with his university professorate, his church reform action, his political party leadership, his religious and political journalism, and his extensive correspondence, to name no more, those 1880’s were for Kuyper a decade of superbly productive efforts in parallel careers in major fields.
16: The Early Nineties

As in the 1880's, so during the 1890's, Dr. Kuyper lectured on encyclopedia of sacred theology and on systematic theology. What is theology? It is not the science of religion. The object of theological science is the supernaturally revealed knowledge of God. Theology assumes that God has revealed Himself. Theology must accept the Holy Bible as His special revelation — inspired, infallible, authoritative. What the theologian studies is that knowledge of God which God Himself has brought within our reach.

Dr. Kuyper lectured on encyclopedia of sacred theology. Our everyday understanding of “encyclopedia” does not fit here. Encyclopedia of sacred theology aims to determine the nature of theological science, to point out the place of that science in the entire organism of the sciences, and to describe the organism of theological science itself in its different component parts. After fixing the place of theology in the constituency of science as a whole, it gives a classification of the theological sciences in their nature and mutual relation.

Kuyper couldn’t merely teach the encyclopedia (with or without further elaboration) which he had once learned from Dr. Kuenen at Leiden, for the Modernistic and the Reformed encyclopedia differ radically. Further, in distinction from other, much used theological encyclopedias, he limited himself to that which, strictly speaking, belongs to the encyclopedia. He appraised
and reconstructed that science.

In 1893 and 1894, there appeared Dr. Kuyper's three-volume Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology. Volume 1 is introductory; Volume 2 is general; Volume 3 is particular. Of all the scholarly writings that Kuyper has produced in the field of theology his Encyclopedia is his most scientific work. It is a superb product of the highest theological scholarship.

But systematic theology was pre-eminently Dr. Kuyper's course.

What is systematic theology? I repeat the definition from Chapter 2. Systematic theology is that theological science which treats scientifically the doctrines, that is, the articles or truths of faith, by tracing them back to or deducing them from the principium which is given in God's revelation, by searching out their mutual unity and coherence, and finally by setting them forth systematically as one organic whole.

As Kuyper, a man of somewhat less than average height, broad-shouldered and compactly built, stood at the lectern, in his right hand his glasses, which he used to glance occasionally at his notes, at the same time making short, forceful gestures as if to underscore certain thoughts, his entire appearance, more particularly his massive head with its expressive lines and sparkling eyes that seemed to penetrate into the very souls of his auditors, completely electrified his students. As he lectured, they couldn't simply sit there and write in their notebooks. They had to see him too, for Kuyper's lectures glowed with radiant energy.

One can tell of Kuyper's phenomenal erudition, his universal outlook, his encyclopedic grasp, the magisterial structure of his argumentation, the captivating literary style of his lectures, and most particularly, the deeply religious substratum of his instruction. Theological doctrines, as he taught them, lived. They captured those young men before him as the power of the truth of God; they took hold of their souls. By his instruction, Kuyper inspired or intensified in his students a profound love for the Reformed Confession and at the same time, of course, for the gold mine of revelation out of which it was drawn. Kuyper never hedged on, or apologized for, this Confession. Nor did he ever try to steer a middle course or adopt a pick-and-choose attitude. He trained to a rare degree men of immovable conviction. Under his leadership, they, too, dared to enter the struggle against the spirit of the age. His credo found its way into their innermost being and met with a
true amen in their youthful souls. The more they learned to understand Kuyper's instruction in its spiritual sense, the more eagerly they longed for the day when they, too, would enter active life as teachers and defenders of the Reformed faith.

The problems which Reformed theology placed before thinking minds were not anxiously ignored or ingeniously glossed over. On the contrary, Kuyper posited them with awe-inspiring frankness and clarity in all their full reality. With those problems he and his students wrestled. Yes, they spent tense hours in the lecture room. Were the problems solved as naive spirits would perhaps have wished that they were solved? No. They were laid in God's hand. The mighty thinker always remained the child who bowed in humility before the Word of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). When the human mind could go no further, the professor and theologian retreated into the shadow of the prophet.

During his professorate, Dr. Kuyper did not have more than 200 divinity students (probably fewer). On graduation, these students, of course, preached and taught the Reformed Confession in their churches. (It may be said, in passing, that Kuyper, too, was not spared what many a man of his learning, position, and eminence has had to contend with, namely, that some of his disciples at times went further in their views than he did.)

Kuyper had never created in his students' minds the impression that he had said the last word, and that Reformed systematic theology definitely closed with him. That his work, when in due course he must lay it down, would call for others to continue it — of that Kuyper was far too much the scholar to doubt even for a moment. Furthermore, he continually urged his students to study the systematic theology of others in order that they might avoid the pitfall of a one-sidedness which all too easily lames the urge to personal study and reflection. Kuyper did not want to train men who would in later life merely recall what he had taught them and then only repeat it as if saying a lesson. He wanted to train thinkers who would work forward with independent and mature judgment along the line which he had pointed out to them.

Yet Dr. Kuyper did not write a three or four-volume "Systematic Theology." Although he at one time hoped to do so, and also to produce commentaries on one or two books of the Bible, he did neither. We know that in 1894 and many following years, Kuyper devoted increasing time, thought, and effort to
politics, as must still appear. We also know that Kuyper had much work on his hands. To what degree these factors had their influence one cannot say. The fact remains that we have no "Systematic Theology" by Kuyper himself.

About 1902 there appeared a five-volume work of student notes on Kuyper's lectures in this course. These volumes were not, however, placed on the market. While these notes cannot, of course, stand as Dr. Kuyper's "Systematic Theology," yet they do show clearly what such a work by Kuyper would have been. Any theologian or clergyman who is in a position to study these volumes of student notes impoverishes himself if he fails to do that.

Kuyper was a student of theology. He did not, however, concentrate on the writers of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, for among them he found few who revealed originality and who had contributed measurably toward the development of theological science. He found what he wanted in the works of Calvin and those of the early post-Reformation era. There he found a priceless treasure. These works and their authors he introduced or reintroduced to the Reformed people. And it was Kuyper's constant endeavor to carry theological science forward. As to the courses he taught, Kuyper indeed did actually bring them to a greater development than they had thus far enjoyed, notably as to the doctrine of common grace.

After serving the Free University as its rector the third time during the academic year 1891-1892, Dr. Kuyper on October 20 of the latter year transferred the office to his successor after delivering an oration of Kuyperesque quality and literary style on "Pantheism." He gave his oration an arresting title which has been literally translated "The Obscuration of the Boundary Lines."

But Dr. Kuyper's professorate by no means exhausted his significance in the field of theology. Kuyper's literary work in theology was not confined to scholarly treatises, whether on the grand or a minor scale. He also wrote much for the common people, particularly popular expositions which appeared as Heraut leaders. Many of these leaders later came out in book form. In all his popular writing, Kuyper never lost the common touch. As he wrote, he had the Reformed people in his mind before him. It was one aspect of his genius that, while men and women of no more than a grade school education readily understood and easily enjoyed these writings, even educated men as well found them a
source of real instruction and genuine delight. In that way, Kuyper popularized Reformed theology, that is to say, he wrote in his Heraut leaders in such a way that the great tenets of the Reformed faith became understandable to the common people insofar as religious truth and theological doctrines can be understood by the human mind. Too, he created in thousands a love for, and a profound interest in, the Reformed faith.

A major production of this popular type is Kuyper's E Voto Dordraceno, generally known by the abbreviated title E Voto, a four-volume exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) had expressed the wish that there might come such an exposition. Kuyper's title means "According to the desire of the Dordt Synod." While Kuyper himself modestly called his exposition a practical explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism, it is actually a work of such superior excellence that many ministers in churches of the Reformed group have very largely used these volumes through the years in preparing their pulpit discourses on the Catechism.

Through his theological writings, both scholarly and popular, Kuyper exerted an influence, unparalleled in his time, on the thinking and the living of Reformed men and women the world over. In fact, he was a theologian such as the Christian church has rarely produced.

Although it is perfectly clear from his writings that Dr. Kuyper possessed those qualities which make for success in that phase of scholarship which we may designate broadly as research, Kuyper the scholar was more the architect and master builder than workman builder, more the man of the broad, heroic concept than the producer of the materials that are needed for the erection of the structure.

Kuyper did not rest until he had developed his views on an all-comprehensive life-and-world-view, with the Calvinistic thought of the absolute sovereignty of God as its core, into a well rounded-out scientific system. He was an encyclopedic man of learning for whom the moral world order itself, and not so much the details of the visible creation, formed the object of investigation. It is one of his greatest merits that he inspired something of that sense for the universal in the souls of that common rank and file, whose leader he was for many, many years. In his students and disciples especially, he created that genuine university urge to search for
the spiritual unity of science and the sciences.

In or soon after 1888, Dr. Kuyper and his co-leaders in the church reform movement that reached its crisis in 1886 organized the churches that had withdrawn from the State Church into a distinct communion. These churches then called themselves the Netherlands Reformed Churches.

There also existed in Holland the Christian Reformed Church, whose beginnings went back to the 1830’s. Many of their foremost men at once gladly greeted the reformation of 1886. More than that, they suggested, if not urged, the union of the two groups of churches. In the churches of 1886 there existed the same sentiment toward the Christian Reformed Church.

Both the Christian Reformed Church and the churches of 1886 stood confessionally on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity — The Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt. In organizational structure and in government, both, too, held to the Dordt Church Order. Both were therefore fully Reformed and wholly homogeneous. This being the case, one’s conclusion is inevitable: the two should merge as soon as practicable, for that would be a case of church union at its best.

Nevertheless, certain problems existed and certain questions had to be settled.

During the later 1880’s, entire congregations (if possible), otherwise parts of congregations, left as such, that is, as local churches. Those who departed from the State Church conditionally did not affiliate with the Christian Reformed congregation if one existed in their community but maintained their own congregation in so far as possible. As a result, one found in cities, towns and villages Reformed Churches of the groups of 1834 and 1886. It was the result of the concept of reformation which they held.

Further, in 1869 the Christian Reformed Church had had a constitution written up and handed to the government, since the law required that this condition be met before the government would recognize the church as a legal entity and permit the church to use “Reformed” in its name. In the view of Dr. Kuyper and his fellow leaders, this was wrong. They declared that the government must recognize the church not on the basis of a constitution and bylaws, neither of which a Reformed church has, but on the basis of the Dordt Church Order. The Christian Reformed Synod of 1891, held at Leeuwarden, decided to set aside for the church its
constitution of 1869. The Mackay cabinet, a Christian coalition ministry, headed the government from 1888 to 1891. The government now, in 1891, granted the Christian Reformed Church that legal recognition which had been so long and so stubbornly denied them.

The Christian Reformed Church already had a history of some 50 years. The memory of those decades formed a noble body of heroic traditions. Was it any wonder that many of its members dreaded the prospect of a merger with the churches of 1886, considering all the adjustments which such a move involved?

Furthermore, in 1854 the training of clergymen in the Christian Reformed Church had crystallized in the founding of their seminary at Kampen, a church-owned, church-operated, church-controlled school. This theological school held a warm place in the hearts of the Church’s membership. Deeply attached to it as they were, they spoke of it as “our school.” For nearly 40 years, it had rendered the church inestimable service in the training of ministers and the cultivation of theological science. What will happen, many asked in concern, to “our school” if union materializes? Will both the Kampen seminary and the Free University’s divinity school be continued? Will one of them be closed? If so, which one?

The churches of 1886, on the other hand, possessed no school. The Free University Society owned, operated, and controlled the University. True, Kuyper and his co-workers were foremost men in the churches of 1886 and in the University. Yet the two were separate, distinct institutions.

Two things seemed clear: the Society did not plan to close the University’s divinity school, nor would the Christian Reformed Church under any circumstances agree to the discontinuation of its seminary. The arguments and reasons for and against both views cannot detain us.

The two-schools problem was resolved by a compromise. The Synod held at The Hague declared: the principle must be maintained that the Church is in duty bound to have a school for the training of its ministers, at least so far as the theological training is concerned; that the Reformed principle of “free study,” that is, study at a non-church university, is not denied; nor is it desired to make alterations in the examination of aspiring clergymen; nor is it desired to minimize the need of scholarly training, on which the Reformed churches have always insisted; and to the united chur-
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chies the privilege of taking further decisions in the matter, if necessary, is reserved. Both schools still exist today.

Finally, while Dr. Kuyper could by no means be considered an obstacle to union, he was in a unique way nevertheless one of the realities of the situation. Why? Very many in the Christian Reformed Church deeply appreciated Kuyper as a superb gift of God to Reformed Christendom. They especially valued and enjoyed his Héraut and other religious writings. At the same time, there lurked in the minds of some ministerial and lay leaders and members the fear that if church union came, the powerful figure of Kuyper would dominate the scene, even perhaps domineer over the merged churches.

The combined Synod of the two groups of churches, held at Amsterdam in 1892, witnessed the formal consummation of the union. The Synod adopted a new name for the combined churches: The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. About 400 Christian Reformed congregations and about 300 congregations of the Churches of 1886 united to form the new group. Time and wise guidance were now needed to make the organizational merger into a spiritual synthesis. A small section of the Christian Reformed Church declined to enter the union. They organized their own communion and retained the old name.

In the entire process of some years of overtures, negotiations, and discussions, with the customary pamphleteering and other writing, Dr. Kuyper had a large, active part through his Héraut journalism, many conferences, and Synodical gatherings. He was cordially happy over the union.

The Van Tienhoven ministry, clearly a Liberal cabinet, with the advanced Liberal wing predominating, succeeded the Mackay government in August, 1891.

Secretary of the Treasury N. G. Pierson, through study and experience a financial expert, quickly saw his much needed, long desired tax reform proposals enacted into law.

But the exciting, explosive events of the regime centered about efforts at ballot reform. At the storm center stood Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. J. P. R. Tak van Poortvliet. The 1887 increase in the number of qualified voters had whetted the appetite of many more for the same privilege. Before entering the cabinet, Tak had agreed to undertake ballot reform, but only with the distinct understanding that if the project failed, the cabinet would resign in a
body. In the existing law, one voter qualification was "signs of fitness and economic well-being" — a quite elastic phrase, to be sure. Tak interpreted the phrase to include all who could write and did not receive charity. That practically meant universal manhood suffrage.

In view of the fact that the Second Chamber consisted of 52 Liberals, two Radicals, 20 Antirevolutionaries, and 26 Catholics, it seemed that on a strictly party basis, Tak did not have much leeway. In other words, he would presumably have to step softly.

But Tak didn’t step very softly. His bill, which he introduced on September 21, 1892, would increase the number of eligible voters from about 350,000 to some 800,000. In the Second Chamber, sentiment for and against the bill cut across party lines. Tak’s bill had rough sledding. Seeing that he was getting nowhere with it, Tak withdrew his bill. On February 3, 1894, Tak introduced a modified bill. However, the debate showed that on the whole, the Chamber didn’t favor it. Tak promptly withdrew his bill. Because Tak had made it a condition for entering the cabinet that his suffrage proposals be a cabinet question, dissolution of the Second Chamber was decreed on March 17, effective March 20. This called for a general election.

When Tak came with his proposals, Kuyper and the Antirevolutionary party at once faced the question whether they would support or oppose the cabinet. The Antirevolutionary party’s 1878 Declaration of Principles demanded ballot reform (Articles 8 and 11) but said nothing about head-of-household voting. Yet, in his exposition of this Declaration of Principles, Kuyper advocated it (Chapter 12, Article 3). The 1888 Platform (Section 2, Article 1) demanded both ballot reform and family-head voting. The 1891 Platform (Article 2) also asked for this type of suffrage. To this extent the party was committed to it.

What is head-of-household voting? Because the family is the basic unit of the nation, because the family possesses in itself the most natural stability, because families are those smallest cells or circles through which a nation is a nation, the Antirevolutionary party wanted voting by family heads. In that system, only household heads would vote. There would be no restrictions as to age, education, economic status, and such, but only as to moral character.

Notwithstanding his own exposition and the demands of the 1888 and 1891 party platforms, Dr. Kuyper from the outset sided
with Tak and came out flatly in favor of Tak’s proposals. Though a man of principle, Kuyper was no stark doctrinaire sort. Head-of-household suffrage, not Tak’s plan, was his ideal and that of his party. The system in use at the time was not head-of-household suffrage. Nor could that be then achieved. The system in use was not organic but individualistic. Within the limits of the Constitution, Tak could not propose family-head voting. Nor, assuredly, did he want to. So that was out.

Kuyper knew that politics is a very practical business. As long as household-head suffrage could not be achieved anyway, the question was simply whether the current suffrage base was to be widened to make many more thousands of citizens qualified voters. Certain features of the Tak bill pleased him. For one thing, it did not circumscribe the right to vote by totally material and financial considerations. For another, the bill was not a piecemeal measure; it offered everything then possible. And Tak’s bill did to a degree evade inorganic, mechanistic suffrage.

While the Antirevolutionary representatives in the Second Chamber had their say and their vote there, Kuyper for months defended the Tak bill in *De Standaard*. When the Council of State, which gives the Crown prior advice on legislative proposals, deemed the bill unconstitutional, Kuyper had a simple remedy: amend out of the Constitution whatever conflicts with the bill.

The suffrage problem must, to his mind, be solved so completely that it would not continue to arise from time to time. That problem out of the way, Parliament could then fruitfully deliberate on and solve other problems, such as the school question, the socioeconomic problem, and many more. For Kuyper, suffrage expansion was a matter of more than privilege; that is, it was a matter of right. From the beginning he took this position: as soon as the government begins to concern itself by legislation which in such wide circles touches the conscience and the vital interests — Kuyper thought, for example, of elementary education — the moment has arrived to give the ballot to that entire group. He saw in the opposition of many to Tak’s proposals an expression of a conservatism which wanted to hold back the influence on national affairs of those who are less fortunately situated.

The dissolution of the Second Chamber called for a general election. This in turn called for an Antirevolutionary national convention. Amid the confusion and the conflicts in all the political parties, the Antirevolutionary National Committee called a party
national convention to meet at Utrecht on March 30, 1894.

Before the convention met, ten of the 20 Antirevolutionary representatives issued a manifesto to the Voters Clubs of their respective districts, explaining that they could not promote Tak’s plans and why. Lohman was not opposed to some extension of the suffrage but he was opposed to a large expansion. Certainly, ballot reform as Tak proposed it was by no means on Lohman’s “must” program. And Lohman was not alone in his attitude.

About a thousand delegates — a large attendance — gathered for the convention. Kuyper delivered the opening address, this time not the customary keynote speech. A three-sentence excerpt tells much: “I have always taken my place between the two groups of our nation — the aristocracy and the common people. To both I have extended a hand in the hope of bringing them together and holding them together. The one group always grasped my hand in love; the other often spurned it.”

At one point in the sessions, the delegates gave Kuyper a rousing vote of confidence with thunderous applause. Moreover, after a three-hour debate, the convention adopted six resolutions which embodied Kuyper’s views. It seems clear that Kuyper dominated the convention.

When the convention adopted the resolutions, Mr. Lohman and his confreres left. They took a walk, politically speaking. They bolted the convention.

The departure of Lohman and his group deserves a closer look. Mr. Lohman was an exceptionally able man. He and Kuyper were personal friends, colleagues at the Free University, in the 1880’s brothers-in-arms and co-workers during the church reform movement, and already associates in politics for about fifteen years. While Kuyper and Lohman had a common outlook and were in basic accord on fundamental principles, there were honest differences of opinion and also personality differences.

The friction between Kuyper and Lohman began in or about 1882. Although Kuyper had not held a seat in Parliament since 1877, he nevertheless wielded tremendous power through his party leadership and De Standaard. From time to time he took occasion to criticize the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club. Whether his criticism was always justified is a moot question.

Lohman’s position was an unusual one. He strongly appreciated Kuyper’s great talents. He gladly recognized Kuyper as the party’s chosen leader. To Lohman, politics had no special ap-
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He had entered Parliament originally with cordial reluctance. During the 1880's, Lohman worked hard to make the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club an effective organization through the solid cooperation of its members. While he enjoyed some success, there did not come a closely-working-together organization. Lohman prized his personal independence, even over against the party leadership. He took offense at Kuyper's rather continuous critical attitude. As Antirevolutionary floor leader, he, with his fellow representatives, had to do practical work in Parliament, while Kuyper, the party leader, did not serve there but did criticize their action.

Lohman repeatedly urged Kuyper to take a seat in Parliament. Only two years previously, in 1892, he had again urged Kuyper to stand for a seat in the Second Chamber, in order to give the party representatives that leadership which he, Kuyper, deemed necessary and desirable. But Kuyper declined. He felt that all his present work and his plans made it inadvisable for him to go to Parliament.

In the issue that separated Kuyper and Lohman, Schaepman sided with Kuyper. Like Kuyper, he was not afraid to move forward in the democratic direction.

During the 1894 campaign, Takkians and anti-Takkians fought each other fiercely. Tak's suffrage ideas constituted the one issue.

In the Antirevolutionary party, Kuyper swung the tomahawk. "Our battle," he thundered, "is this time against conservatism — not conservatism of a specific brand but against conservatism of every description." Lohman would in any case, be supported. For the rest, Kuyper would only support those candidates who took the position embodied in the convention's resolutions.

It was a weird campaign. Kuyper believed that straightforward cooperation with the Liberal Democrats for specific goals was possible. He aided their candidates and even delivered speeches in their support. But hardly any Takkians of the Left voted for candidates of the Right. This action of his, Kuyper later admitted, was an error of judgment on his part.

Although the Takkians enjoyed the support of the large influential Liberal press, they lost the April 24 election: 44 Takkians and 56 anti-Takkians were elected. Kuyper evaluated the result as a triumph for conservatism.

From 1877 to 1894, Dr. Kuyper does not seem to have en-
visioned for himself another Parliamentary career. He had all along resisted varying pressure in that direction.

Now, in 1894, widely urged to stand for a seat in the Second Chamber, Kuyper declared that he was available, but with the distinct understanding that, if elected, he would restrict his work in Parliament to the debate on such suffrage bills as the present or the new cabinet would submit. Kuyper knew, as did everyone else, that ballot reform was not dead. Because suffrage had been the one issue, the question was bound to reappear in the next government. In those deliberations, Kuyper wanted a direct part.

He realized, too, that since Lohman had left the party (at least for the time being), the Antirevolutionary representatives of his, Kuyper's, group would appreciate his leadership. Moreover, he wanted by all means to save the Christian political cooperation, if not the coalition.

The Sliedrecht district sent Kuyper to the Second Chamber of Parliament in 1894. That was 20 years after the Gouda voters had chosen him in 1874.
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Now that Dr. Kuyper, the party leader, held a seat in Parliament, the situation was traditionally normal. The Lohman group (Mr. Lohman the leader) called themselves Free Antirevolutionaries. Dr. Schaepman headed the Catholics.

On May 9, 1894, the Roëll cabinet, another Liberal ministry, succeeded the Van Tienhoven government. Of Kuyper’s work in Parliament during the Roëll regime, I will tell in a later section of this chapter.

In 1896 Mr. Lohman severed his connection with the Free University by requesting and receiving honorable discharge.

Was this action the climax of a serious, growing estrangement between Kuyper and Lohman? One must be careful here. In 1884 it had required all of Kuyper’s persuasive powers to induce Lohman to accept a law professorate. Except for the time that he held a portfolio in the Mackay cabinet, he had served the school. But he had not found the work attractive or congenial. He much preferred a judgeship to a professorate.

For nearly two decades now, Kuyper and Lohman had cooperated in ecclesiastical, educational, and political movements. Yet, in party and political affairs their relation had often been less than perfectly harmonious. Between Kuyper and Lohman there existed no difference in outlook on the profoundest theological credos. Yet they did differ to a degree in philosophical outlook and
practical political views. These led to the break of 1896. But because both were Christian gentlemen and thus men of good will, the breach was only partial and temporary.

The reformation of 1886 had hardly become a fact when Kuyper immediately urged that the institutional church assume the responsibility for mission work, instead of leaving it to individual and society initiative, as had been the practice in the State Church. In his address at a mission conference of the churches of 1886, held in early January of 1890, he stated his views at considerable length. Of his 27 declarations, the following three clearly show the trend of his thought.

(1) All mission work "flows forth out of" the sovereignty of God; rests on man's creation after the image of God; is necessary by reason of sin; and lies rooted in the confession that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son.

(20) The right and the duty to conduct mission work lies with each local church. Because the individual churches are unable to do so singly, cooperation of churches for this purpose is advisable. But this cooperation must be sought, not through separate organization but through the regular ecclesiastical connection and must thus be left to the decision of the associated churches united in their Synod.

(21) Those who are to be sent out as missionaries must receive an education and training which is in no respect less than that of ministers who will serve homeland churches. They must, in addition, receive an adequate knowledge of the idolatry, the social conditions, and the language of the people to whom they will go.

These three will suffice, I believe.

Two years after this conference, in 1892, the formal union of the Christian Reformed Church and the Netherlands Reformed Churches (of 1886) took place. The 1896 Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (the united churches) stands out as an epochal gathering because it inaugurated a new mission policy, one based on Reformed mission principles.

Prior to that year, the General Synod appointed a mission board, which administered all the affairs of the mission posts according to its best judgment. On Pentecost and other occasions, offerings for missions were received. In sermons and in congregational prayers, missions received due mention. For the rest, both in organization and practice, there existed no vital, active connection between the Church and missions.
A committee appointed by the Synod of 1896 was given the mandate to present in writing the principles and the basic lines which must, in the judgment of the Synod, govern the Reformed Churches in establishing the proper method for mission work. This committee, of which Kuyper was a member, presented an extensive report. It embodied the principles he had already enunciated from time to time.

Kuyper was never a missionary in the usual sense. Without doubt he at no time served on the board of a mission organization. Thus his part in the actual work of administering, supervising, and controlling mission activities has been a relatively small one. But Kuyper was a churchman, and church and missions are inseparable. Kuyper exerted a far-reaching and salutary influence on missions, for in *De Heraut* and elsewhere he explained the connection between church and missions with the utmost clarity and by so doing restored missions to their rightful place.

The mission principles contained in the committee’s report and adopted by the Synod can be set down in brief thus: (1) The ultimate purpose of missions lies in the triune God. (2) Missions must be conducted and carried on by local churches, with due regard for the unity of the entire church or denomination. (3) The major tasks must be assigned to able men, ministers of the Gospel. (4) Mission areas must be selected after careful consideration of providential direction. Missions must seek the individual persons, not in their national relation. (5) Mission efforts may use the method of persuasion and conviction only. (6) Missions must carry on in the proper relation to other factors, such as the government, other churches, and other missions.

These mission principles, later to be known as the "Magna Charta of Reformed missions," were exemplified and put into practice. The mission work of the Reformed Churches was revitalized. In all this Dr. Kuyper achieved something great and unique.

In the life of Dr. Kuyper and in the history of the Antirevolutionary party, April 1, 1897 was a festive day.

On that day, which was the silver anniversary of the first issue of *De Standaard*, the Antirevolutionary party and its press of not less than 20 organs gathered in the great auditorium of the Palace of Applied Art at Amsterdam to thank God and to pay tribute to *De Standaard* and to Kuyper, who had edited this daily newspaper with unusual talent for 25 years.
Congratulatory addresses were delivered. Dr. Herman Bavinck, professor of systematic theology at the Kampen seminary, delivered the main address. In speaking on “A Fourth of a Century,” he reviewed the Party’s history in broad outline and told of the power wielded by Kuyper through De Standaard for the welfare of the nation.

Kuyper was presented with an artistic memorial of the event. To the address he replied in his own illuminating and felicitous manner. In his address, Kuyper re-enunciated one of the basic convictions of his life and work. We may state it thus: The Scriptures not only serve to find justification through faith and cast light on the path to eternity, that same Word of God also reveals the foundations of all human life, that is, the sacred ordinances which must govern the whole of the life of men in the family and the church, in the state and in society at large. The Word of God contains the ordinances for our personal, our family, our ecclesiastical, our educational, our political, our industrial and commercial, our cultural life — indeed, for every sector of human life.

On that anniversary occasion, virtually the entire Netherlands press paused for a courteous truce. Even his enemies — and few men have had more bitter and implacable foes — stopped at this silver jubilee for a brief moment to lay their prejudices aside and present their bouquets while Kuyper was still living. Naturally, a few diehards among the opposition were bound to disturb the otherwise harmonious chorus by injecting their own sour notes.

In 1897, too, the first Kuyper memorial volume was published, a book of explanation, evaluation, and appreciation.

Fellow journalists in Holland already recognized Kuyper as the greatest of their craft. And Dr. Schaepman, himself a distinguished Catholic journalist, wrote of Kuyper as “our greatest journalist.”

Why was Dr. Kuyper willing to devote himself to his daily newspaper? Because he saw his own day in the light of the great day of the future of his Lord, Kuyper dedicated the day, served the day, directed the day, mastered the day, triumphed over the day.

For his Standaard, Kuyper wrote instructive leaders on political principles, problems, policies, and methods. Through these he gave the Antirevolutionary people day-to-day training in political science. His terse, triple-starred editorials delighted his followers, entertained so-called independents, and enraged his enemies. Some of those editorials were nothing less than literary
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cartoons in which he lampooned the opposition. Kuyper’s journalistic style was at once clear, convincing, elegant, and picturesque, that is, the style of lively but dignified journalism.

In the editorial chair, Kuyper did not write and manage in puppet-like fashion while others pulled the strings. He was in full control. He did not have to look over his shoulder at some businessman or politician and ask: What do I think? Nor did he have to approach some editor, hat in one hand and manuscript in the other, and plead: Will you please publish this article, and will you kindly print it exactly as I have written it? Kuyper’s paper was a shining example of personal journalism. Kuyper was De Standaard.

De Standaard was an independent newspaper. Independent of whom or what? An editor sees things from his own personal point of view. He discusses accordingly. For an editor of integrity, it cannot psychologically be otherwise. He also wants to win others to his standpoint. Both the telling of news and the editorializing are not only the presentation of information but also the promotion of an outlook.

What was the secret of Kuyper’s distinguished success with his relatively small newspaper? How did he accomplish so much with so little? Kuyper understood the real function of journalism: to explain the significant news of each day, but in the service of that which endures through all the centuries.

Kuyper’s enemies read and feared De Standaard, for he was no mean antagonist. He did not assume an apologetic position. He not only defended; he struck back. Often he struck first. And his antagonists knew that behind De Standaard stood the aggressive forces of the Antirevolutionary party.

Although during his lifetime De Standaard never had more than 5,000 subscribers, Kuyper didn’t moan or groan about that. He knew that he had many, very many more readers. In fact, many thousands read the paper. More than that, they believed it. They had confidence in it.

“My Standaard has never been for me anything except a horse which I rode in order the sooner to reach the end of my journey, and in that destination lay the objective of my life,” said Kuyper.

There were those who taunted, “Oh, yes, Kuyper’s followers are puppets. He manipulates the strings, and they do his bidding.” Kuyper replied, “Try it out for yourself and see if you can make puppets out of our Netherlands Calvinists.”
The Roëll cabinet, the product of an election in which the suffrage question had been the only — and stormy — issue, saw its work laid out for it: the solution of that problem. That task devolved on Mr. S. Van Houten, Minister of Internal Affairs. In due time Van Houten introduced his suffrage bill, declaring that he had remained within the bounds of the constitution.

Although the bill quite considerably widened the suffrage base, thus markedly increasing the number of qualified voters, Kuyper opposed Van Houten’s proposals. He criticized the bill severely. That criticism can be summarized in a short paragraph. The bill prescribed financial qualifications to too great a degree. The man, not the coat he wears or the guilders he possesses, should determine his right to vote. The bill gave far too much latitude to those who would be called to administer the law. The law did not surround the ballot with sufficient safeguards against manipulation and intimidation. The bill contained all sorts of inequities plus artificial inequalities. The bill did indeed widen the suffrage base but that base still remained too narrow: only the better paid workingmen were included.

Said Kuyper in the course of the debate: “At present it is not possible for me to introduce the true and sound principle of household-head voting into the constitution. I must of necessity live under another principle. But then I also demand that this other principle not cease to operate at that point where those who confess the same political principles with me would exactly be profited by being given the ballot.”

Perhaps, too, Kuyper harbored this fear: If the Van Houten bill becomes law, many years will probably elapse before any further major suffrage improvement comes to pass. If my surmise is correct, Kuyper’s thought proved well founded, as events demonstrated. The law was in effect for about 20 years (1897-1917) before the floodgates were opened.

The Second Chamber adopted the bill in June, 1896, and the First Chamber in September. The law would go into effect on January 1, 1897. It increased the number of qualified voters to about 700,000 and fixed the quadrennial elections to begin in 1897.

The law proved a decided boon to the parties of the Right. The question of the ballot had been a point of serious dispute between them. Now, by adopting the Van Houten bill, the Liberals obligingly removed that obstacle, which had seriously hindered the cooperation between the Christian political parties.
Now that the cabinet and Parliament had solved the suffrage problem (for the time being at least), Kuyper could have resigned his seat in the Second Chamber in accordance with his 1894 plan. But he did not. With an election coming up in June of 1897, why resign a few months before his term expired? And perhaps he had other plans.

The Roëll cabinet was of the thoughtful type. They recognized, somewhat vaguely perhaps, the desirability of social reform. But they would not be stampeded into rash action. There would be no impetuosity. So the Liberals finally got around to attempting something, perhaps accomplishing something, in the way of social legislation. But nothing epoch-making was accomplished. A commission appointed during this regime reported when the next cabinet had already taken office.

In 1895 Kuyper published as reprint a series of Standaard articles of his on what may be called social insurance. The 103-page brochure, which appeared under date of November 1, 1895, is quite a document by a one-time clergyman turned professor of theology. There must in his view be separate chambers of employers and chambers of labor. These must meet in conferences. No regulation may be introduced by the government until the interested parties have been heard. Regulations must not proceed from the top down but grow up out of life itself, as it were, and must be treated in connection with a further regulation of the labor contract. The coercive power of the government is indispensable if anything in the way of a successful pension system is to come to pass. Any worthwhile pension system must proceed from a general system of insurance of the working class against financial loss from untoward events, such as sickness, accident, unemployment, and the death of the breadwinner. As a general figure, 65 would seem the most desirable retirement age. Ideally considered, social insurance should include an adequate pension for the workingman’s old age, an adequate weekly allowance in case of sickness, adequate financial support in case of incapacitating injury caused in his employment, an adequate payment in times of unemployment, an adequate pension for widows of workingmen, an adequate allowance for a workingman’s children in case he leaves them as orphans not otherwise provided for.

These few notes tell where Kuyper stood on the social insurance and pension questions.
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The first election under the Van Houten law would be held in June of 1897.

On April 29, some 1,300 delegates met in the Antirevolutionary national convention.

How was the Lohman defection of 1894 affecting the party? Only slightly. In all the party’s Voters Clubs, the total loss of members did not exceed 300. Moreover, many who had for one reason or another refused to follow Kuyper, who never were Antirevolutionary and would not easily have joined the party, now sided with Lohman, insofar as they believed in Christian politics. It seems that the Lohman departure actually strengthened the parties of the Right. Lohman and his group, who called themselves Free-Antirevolutionaries, won adherents in circles in which the Antirevolutionary party had never had success. Their number progressively increased. And both parties promptly felt: what we cannot attain as a single party, we shall strive to realize through federated action.

At the election 575,000 voters cast their ballots. The final tabulation showed that the Left had won 55 seats, the Right 45. However, of the 55 Left, 48 were Liberals, 3 Socialists, and 4 Radicals. The Left would now hold 55 seats, but on a strict party basis the Liberals were at the mercy of the Socialists and the Radicals. That surely was not in the Liberal tradition. Yet, the Liberals assumed the burden of government. July 27 the N. G. Pierson ministry succeeded the Roëll cabinet.

The Sliedrecht district returned Dr. Kuyper to Parliament in 1897. But hadn’t he stated plainly in 1894 that he was available for candidacy to the Second Chamber solely for the deliberations on the suffrage question? Then why stand for re-election?

It would not seem too difficult to discover at least some reasons. He knew that the situation from 1879 to 1894, when he, though the party leader, had not held a seat in Parliament, had caused him much grief. Now he was in the Second Chamber. His fellow Antirevolutionary representatives appreciated his leadership. So why leave? He knew, too, that he could achieve legislatively far more in Parliament than outside. He knew, also, with his wide, detailed knowledge of the political picture throughout the country, that the Liberal party, already split several ways, was clearly losing ground. He knew further that although the Right might still lose some elections, they would nevertheless, if trends meant anything, triumph in the not too distant future.
At this point in the Kuyper story (about 1897), it may be wise to pause briefly to take a closer look at the man and his method.

Kuyper possessed a strong physique and enjoyed robust health. He always gave the impression that he had reserve strength which he could call into play. He "exhaled power." He had a keen, active, independent mind, well trained by early education and long experience, a phenomenally retentive memory, and intuitive, trustworthy judgment. His intellectual power, his swift grasp, his power of concentrated thought, and his wide reading and study made him a man of vast erudition and encyclopedic knowledge. It enabled him to get quickly to the heart of problems and the core of what came to his attention. He stood out from the crowd as an original, systematic, and constructive thinker. He lasts intellectually. He purchased books, books, books. Newspapers, magazines, and periodicals poured into his home.

Although Kuyper possessed a thorough theoretical knowledge of music, from the practical point of view he was a stranger in that art. When the family gathered about the organ, he sang lustily, spiritedly, with heart and soul, but to hold a tune — that he could not do. Kuyper regretted this. In his course on aesthetics he also lectured — and that not briefly but fully — on music and its theory. Listening to those lectures, one easily thought of Kuyper as a musical genius of unmatched brilliance.

Kuyper's bearing revealed strength, courage and determination. His movements were deliberate, dignified and graceful. In his manner there was nothing apologetic or by-your-leave. He had a confident air, with manners of distinction, a persuasive way, and the charm of personal magnetism. An easy conversationalist, he was businesslike and came directly to the point. Urbane and courtly, he moved easily in all circles of society.

Kuyper's domestic life was a happy one. The spirit of Christ pervaded the home. Mrs. Kuyper was an understanding wife and devoted mother. With her husband, she trained their children well. She was a capable household manager, a warm-hearted, gracious hostess, a cultured lady who spoke the modern languages (especially English) fluently. She stood beside and with Kuyper as an inestimable blessing in his life and work. Five sons and three daughters were born to the Kuypers. Of the sons, one died in 1892 at the age of nine years.

Except at luncheon and at dinner, Kuyper had few hours he could give to his family in close companionship. On festive oc-
casions, however, he laid all else aside to spend the evening in the family circle. Dinner, especially, was the time of joyous family life, even when guests were present, as they frequently were. And in the Kuyper household, the family altar was still held in honor.

With his wife and children in the family living room, Kuyper was all life and joy. At luncheon and dinner, too. Whoever saw him at such times received the impression that he was a man not plagued by cares and difficulties. Seeing him so, one did not surmise what a tremendous load he was carrying. He bore that load not downstairs but up in his study.

The commodious, elegant house at 173 De Prins Hendrikkade, in an older section of the city not far from the Free University buildings, housed the Kuyper family during the greater part of the two decades from 1880 to 1900.

Kuyper’s study was a large, second floor room at the front of the house. The furniture and furnishings made it a room of cheerful dignity. In the seclusion of this study, whose location, double glass windows, and many solidly filled bookcases provided insulation against distracting noises, Kuyper carried on his work from day to day.

For his work Dr. Kuyper entertained a holy passion. That work, always in his mind, constituted his life purpose. His work was his life and his life was his work. He searched out and put into practice whatever could help his work; he shunned and averted all that might hinder. He efficiently planned his work and effectively worked by his plan.

Kuyper made arrangements with his university colleagues so that he would lecture in the afternoons. He devoted his entire mornings, and his mornings only, to his writing. In the forenoon Kuyper did not come down from his study to chat with possible callers. Nor were visitors shown into his study. He had adopted a rule, unalterable like a law of the Medes and Persians, that he must not be disturbed during his morning writing hours. To his self-set regimen he adhered with consummate strictness. In those morning hours, Kuyper produced such an unbelievable amount of writing of high quality that men wondered in amazement in his day — and men still wonder today. He refused to by-pass any of his self-assigned tasks. They had to be done, all of them, and done on time. Whatever success others might achieve or not achieve under pressure of time, Kuyper didn’t want to work under pressure. It was his thorough conviction that a journalist must be ahead of his
work. Writing, to his mind, must not be a race against time.

What did Dr. Kuyper write during his morning hours of monastic seclusion? He wrote full-page, newspaper-size leaders for *De Heraut*, also articles on intra-church affairs. The meditations he wrote on Sunday mornings. He wrote *Standaard* leaders and editorials. He wrote books. (Think of his monumental *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology.*) He wrote special studies, introductions to republications, brochures, speeches, and orations.

Kuyper did not prepare written outlines of large subjects even though the finished series of articles would run over several years and appear as a reprint of two or more volumes. That outline he kept in his mind. Nor, as he sat down to write, did he have to think, write, think, write, think some more, write some more. He had already thought it all out in advance.

With his superior literary talents, superb command of the Dutch language, fabulous vocabulary, and mastery of the telling phrase, Kuyper was a stylist of rare power. He did not write a single style but several styles — more accurately, several variations of his basic style. Leaders, meditations, editorials, orations, speeches — in every case the nature of the occasion and of the subject matter determined the style. He composed with both incredible facility and incredible felicity. He was noted for his luminous as well as voluminous prose. In all his vast writings, you will not find a dull sentence. And in the quiet of his study, without benefit of stenographers or typists, he wrote it all out in longhand.

Dr. Kuyper had a handwriting all his own. He sent in beautiful copy, with his writing in straight lines across the page and with corrections and interlineations entirely absent. Examining the manuscript somewhat more closely, one saw that his handwriting looked more like a series of dots and dashes than letters and words. Yet, Kuyper’s copy did not irritate one. It was a delight to the eye. Besides, what he had written had to be there, naturally, and had its meaning. Only, what had Kuyper written? That was often a more interesting diversion than reading a rebus. Typesetters, of course, had their difficulties. To do the job correctly and with proper speed, they needed to be familiar with both Kuyper’s handwriting and his general trend of thought. One day one of them was actually “stuck” and told Kuyper so. “Well,” he replied, “if you can’t read it, I’d better not try, either.” Yes, he tried to improve. After a time he sent a note: “You will have noticed that my handwriting is getting better. The most recent manuscript was already almost
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legible.” That “almost legible” was a human touch which the men prized as a treasure.

After lunch he lectured at the Free University and did all manner of light work. People called to see him. He called on friends. He took care of his correspondence.

Dinner was from 5:30 to 6:30, strictly on schedule, not as things happened to happen. No matter how busy, Kuyper always took this full hour for family dinner. The Kuypers often had guests. The dinner hour was the highlight of the day in the family’s life.

After dinner Kuyper corrected printer’s proofs. He did not need to check the proof sheets against his manuscript. And he never copied even himself. If he struck out some picturesque figure of speech, it was only to replace it with one still more striking.

Kuyper spent two hours each day in outdoor walks, not just to walk or to learn what was going on up or down the street but to keep himself physically fit, to think, and to plan what he would write next day. So he walked alone. On only the rarest occasions did he ask someone to accompany him. And he always followed precisely the same route.

After evening tea, Kuyper completed his unfinished “walking time,” returning at precisely 10:30 o’clock. He then retired.

Just as Dr. Kuyper had a fixed daily weekday schedule, he had a program for the year. Each year Kuyper took three vacations — the long summer vacation and short vacations of about ten days each directly after New Year’s Day and in the spring. Like everything else in his life, those vacations were made to serve his work. Such regular and complete vacations were simply indispensable to a man who worked as hard, as steadily, and as concentratedly as he did.

To make his vacations genuinely effective, he always left the country to spend the time elsewhere. It was not a predilection for other countries and peoples that made him do so. The reason was the simple fact that in Holland “everybody” knew him. There would be many callers and visitors. Only in some foreign country, where he would be a virtual stranger, could he enjoy genuine rest and recreation.

One of Kuyper’s recreations was mountain climbing. He did not entertain a plainsman’s respect for heights. He felt the pull and the lure of the mountains. Without any attempt to shatter records or to achieve the hitherto impossible, Kuyper, with the heart and
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the courage of the mountaineer, each year thrilled to the climb, to
the vistas, to the vast panoramas, to the solitudes, to the immense
brooding emptinesses, to the glories of the lofty Swiss Alps. A
hazardous type of recreation? When Kuyper went mountain clim-
ing, he always engaged two of the most competent guides, even
though they sometimes asked high wages.

In 1897 Dr. Kuyper reached the age of 60. He never knew an
eight-hour day or a 40-hour week. Nor did he look forward with
glad anticipation to the day when he could retire. The self-chosen
path that stretched ahead was one of dedicated work.
18: The Later Nineties

On an August day in 1898, Dr. Kuyper left Holland for a stay of some months in the United States.

Princeton University had chosen to confer on Kuyper the Doctor of Laws degree, honoris causa. It had asked him to be present for the occasion and invited him to deliver a series of lectures on a subject of his own choosing under the auspices of the L. P. Stone Foundation.

In October, in the seminary auditorium, Dr. Kuyper delivered six lectures on Calvinism: (1) "Calvinism a Life-System," (2) "Calvinism and Religion," (3) "Calvinism and Politics," (4) "Calvinism and Science," (5) "Calvinism and Art," (6) "Calvinism and the Future." As expositions of historic Calvinism, these semi-popular lectures still stand as classics.

A Dutch writer (not a Calvinist) has said that Kuyper dreamed of a world Calvinism. That seems hardly possible. Kuyper had far too realistic and penetrating an insight to believe that Calvinism would ever be the dominant force in the world. But, suppose he had entertained the fancy? What Catholic leader does not dream of a world Catholicism? And is there any Communist chieftain to be found who does not dream the dream of a world Communism?

Kuyper had a conversation with President McKinley, with Carroll D. Wright, then Secretary of Labor, with the mayor of Baltimore, and with other public officials of the country.

He addressed the College Women's Club of Rochester, New
York, and the Philadelphia Country Club; lectured before the 
Historical Presbyterian Society of Philadelphia on “The Antithesis 
between Symbolism and Revelation”; delivered three lectures at 
McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago; and gave a one-and- 
half-hour lecture on “The Political Principles of Calvinism” in 
the Old Stone Church (Presbyterian) of Cleveland, Ohio, at which 
Dr. Charles F. Thwing, then president of Western Reserve Uni-
versity, presided and introduced Kuyper.

He visited universities and high schools — in fact, institutions 
of all types. Then there were, of course, the sightseeing trips as well 
as banquets and dinners in his honor.

It goes without saying that Kuyper included in his itinerary the 
chief cities and areas which Netherlanders had originally founded 
or in whose population emigrants from Holland and their descen-
dants formed a large element. He now saw with his own eyes what 
those early pioneers, the later emigrants, and the descendants of 
both had already accomplished and were still achieving in their 
American homeland. At mass meetings Kuyper received sponta-
naneous ovations. He addressed large, enthusiastic audiences. 
Many thousands delighted to honor this man of many talents and 
of dedicated life, this heroic battler and master builder in the 
Kingdom of God in life’s every area.

One may safely say that Dr. Kuyper genuinely enjoyed his 
American stay of several months. Not that he failed to see the 
shadows that rested on American life. But here he saw what a free 
people, unhampered by traditions, class distinctions, and adverse 
social and economic conditions, were achieving.

When Dr. Kuyper returned to the Free University after the 
Christmas recess, to lecture as usual, his students that first day had 
no intention of listening to a lecture as usual. They had a different 
idea. They removed the tables from the lecture room, brought in 
extra chairs, and decorated the room in a festive way. On Kuyper’s 
arrival, their spokesman cordially welcomed their professor back in 
a felicitous talk. Kuyper easily sized up the situation. He under-
stood. He thanked them graciously and obliged them with a two-
hour Kuyperesque talk on what he had learned about religious and 
ecclesiastical life in our country.

Born on August 31, 1880, Princess Wilhelmina on August 31, 
1898, reached her majority.

On September 6, a Tuesday, at 10:30 in the morning, she was
sworn in and inaugurated Queen of Holland in an impressive
ceremony in a joint meeting of both Chambers of the States-
General in the Protestant cathedral church of Amsterdam.

Thanks to her formal education and general training, she was
well fitted for her place as Queen, a fact which the years of her
reign have amply demonstrated. One sentence of her short
inaugural address reads: “I make my dear Father’s words my own:
‘The House of Orange can never do enough for the Netherlands.’”

On his return to Holland, Dr. Kuyper resumed his far-flung,
self-determined lifework with renewed strength and zest, as always
after an absence.

In 1892, Dr. and Mrs. Kuyper had lost by death a nine-year-
old son. In 1899 tragedy again came to the Kuyper family. While on
vacation in Switzerland, Mrs. Kuyper was attacked by a fatal
illness. On August 25 she died at Meiringen, in the Berner
Oberland. Born March 8, 1841, she reached the age of 58. Dr.
Kuyper and his wife had been married 36 years. Besides her
husband, four sons and three daughters survived her. After the
funeral, Dr. Kuyper and his children returned in the sorrow of
bereavement to their now desolate home.

Through many years, Mrs. Kuyper had been to her husband a
source of strength in the background as loyal wife and wise, faith-
ful mother. Now, already near 62, he would have to continue
without her.

Not long after her death, Dr. Kuyper moved from the house
on the Prins Hendrikkade to the house at 164 De Keizersgracht,
which adjoined the Free University building. Soon, also, he wrote a
series of Heraut meditations on “Asleep in Jesus.” To one of his
friends, R. C. Verweyck, Kuyper said, “Now the poetry has gone
out of my life.” Dr. Kuyper did not marry again.

During the academic year 1898-99, Dr. Kuyper had served the
fourth time as rector magnificus of the university.

In past years, before formally transferring the office to his
successor, Kuyper had spoken on “Biblical Criticism” (1881), on
“Calvinism and Art” (1888), and on “Evolution,” beginning with
the keen characterization: “Our nineteenth century is dying away
beneath the hypnotic spell of the evolution dogma.”

No one will deny that Kuyper’s subject, evolution, lay very far
outside his own field, i.e. theology. So it may be well to record the
judgment of at least two men of science who did not share Kuyper's convictions.

Professor Hugo De Vries, of the mutation theory, of the Municipal University of Amsterdam, while combatting this study by Kuyper, spoke of it with the greatest appreciation and praised particularly the manner in which Kuyper had objectively set forth the evolutionistic system.

Professor Hubrecht of Utrecht University, though opposed to Kuyper's views, spoke of the oration as a masterly address. He said, further, that Kuyper had attacked the evolution theory not with the hollow phrases of a declaiming pulpiteer but after diligent, solid, thorough study; that Kuyper was notably familiar with the latest literature; and that he would shame many a biologist by his correct insight into many and various difficulties and unclear points treated in that literature.

In that year 1899, nineteen years after its founding, the Free University was a small and struggling but at the same time solidly growing school. It now had an enrollment of 128, classified thus: theology, 75; letters and theology, 4; letters, 25; law, 22; theology and law, 2. The universities at Leiden, Groningen and Utrecht had a total student body of approximately 2,000. All things considered, the school was doing very well.

Nevertheless, the university still had only the three colleges of the liberal arts, theology, and law. Funds for departments of medicine and the natural sciences were not yet available. The school received no aid from the government in any form. Nor did the law as yet give the school's diplomas and degrees that preferred legal status which those from the national universities enjoyed.

Again, in the 1890's, as during the previous decade, Dr. Kuyper did a vast amount of religious and theological writing.

I have already mentioned his monumental Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology, the most scholarly work of his career.

After completing the E Voto series of Heraut leaders on the Heidelberg Catechism in the May 27, 1894 issue, Kuyper wrote a series on "The Angels of God," which ran for a year and then appeared in book form in 1902.

In the September 1, 1895, issue he began a series on "Common Grace," on which he was writing in 1899, which would run to July 14, 1901 (a period of nearly six years) and would appear in three
volumes from 1902 to 1905.

What is common grace? Let us describe rather than define it. "God's common grace must be sharply distinguished from His saving grace, inasmuch as it is of an essentially entirely different nature. It does not save unto eternal life. God has made His common grace the portion of all individuals, mankind as a whole, and the cosmos. Even the evil and the reprobate are included. By His common grace God bridles the evil of fallen human nature, restrains the ruin which sin has produced and spread, and enables even unregenerated men to do good in the broad, non-redeemed sense. It is the source of the good, the true, and the beautiful which remain, in spite of sin, in human life, even in human life which has not been regenerated. It operates in the family and the state, in science and art, in education, society at large, in fact, in every area, even in the life of men and humanity who have not been renewed by regeneration, although human nature has been corrupted by sin and although nature outside of man lies under the curse. It will endure to the end of time. In the future eternity, there will be no common grace of God." (This explanation is taken from the Christelijke Encyclopedie, published in the Netherlands by J. H. Kok of Kampen.)

Calvin laid the groundwork and gave the outline of basic concepts, to put it thus, of the doctrine of common grace. But Kuyper did more than set forth Calvin's views. He enlarged on the doctrine and systematized it. He developed it in its full extent and expounded its significance for the different sectors of life. Kuyper was the first to cultivate this doctrine in a large and detailed way. But he felt and said that it must be still further developed.

For some time, Dr. Kuyper, Dr. F. L. Rutgers, and Dr. H. Bavinck had worked jointly to provide Bible readers with a Bible whose language was that in current use. This Bible appeared in 1895.

Then there were those marvelous, profoundly spiritual meditations. These, too, ran in series on general themes and appeared later in book form. The Myrtle Tree Instead of the Thorn, on baptism, making profession of faith, and participating in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. In the Shadow of Death, meditations for the sick chamber and at the bedside of the dying. When Thou Sittest in Thine House, on the home, the family, and the family's life. His Decease at Jerusalem, on the suffering and death of our Lord.
Kuyper also wrote *Women of the Sacred Scriptures*. These sketches of 50 women from the Old and 30 women from the New Testament first appeared in the *Amsterdam Church Messenger*. In a book entitled *Three Little Foxes* Kuyper wrote about intellectualism, mysticism, and practicism in the Church.

On July 27, 1897, the Pierson cabinet succeeded the Roëll ministry. Although the Left commanded 55 seats in the Second Chamber, the Liberals held only 48. The Socialists held 3 seats, the Radicals 4. In 1897, however, the Liberals still dominated the First Chamber. The Liberals did not, then, constitute a majority in the Second Chamber. To obtain their own specific brand of legislation, they would need help.

In its composition the Pierson cabinet was more progressive than its predecessor. Prime Minister N. G. Pierson, Secretary of the Treasury in the Tak government, took the same portfolio in his own cabinet. All in all, principles aside, the cabinet constituted a competent government.

What could the cabinet expect from Kuyper and his fellow party members in the Second Chamber? In the course of a speech on December 1, Kuyper outlined his own and the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club’s position.

“As her Majesty’s loyal opposition, we, too, greet these servants of the Crown with respect and deference because, indeed, of their personal position and eminent abilities but especially because they appear here as servants of the Crown. I also gladly give the cabinet my assurance that I hope to cooperate with the government insofar as, and so long as, the principles which to me are sacred and which separate us are not too severely violated in the cabinet’s proposals and would not be too severely weakened by such cooperation.”

That was a candid and honest declaration. That promise Kuyper and the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club loyally kept.

In 1899 there took place in world history the first peace conference.

Tsar Nicholas II of Russia took the initiative with his historic note to the diplomatic representatives at the Russian capital. The Hague was selected as the city of assembly. In accord with the Russian government, the Dutch government sent out the invitations. But no invitations went out to the two Boer republics of
South Africa — Transvaal and the Orange Free State. From the floor of the Second Chamber, Dr. Kuyper called the Pierson cabinet to task and held the fire to its feet for this exclusion. Minister for Foreign Affairs DeBeaufort did not produce a sound reason for the omission. But he had an explanation: as he saw it, the Dutch government was duty bound to make the coming conference serve the cause of world peace, not the interests of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. And more of the same.

The entire Dutch press, of whatever political persuasion, protested loudly against this treatment of the Boer republics. After harassing the cabinet and smoking the government out, Kuyper declared himself not entirely satisfied but desisted from further assaults. The real reason for not inviting the two Boer republics to the conference appeared soon enough. (The conference met from May 18 to July 29, 1899.)

In the summer of 1899, when very serious war rumors already led to the fear that a war between England and the Transvaal was in the offing, a war whose end would be the liberty or the death of the Boer republics, the English newspaper *The Daily Chronicle* published a collection of monographs by prominent men on the crisis. Among them was a letter by Dr. Kuyper, in which he explained the situation realistically and virtually told the British government that its policy in South Africa was both illegal and immoral.

On July 29, 1899, the peace conference adjourned.
Within three months, in October, the Boer War broke out.

The February, 1900 issue of the (French) *Revue des deux Mondes* contained an article by Dr. Kuyper on the South African crisis. In this well-documented article he set forth for French readers the real reasons for the crisis and ended with a magnificent defense of the two republics. Public opinion in Holland and beyond cordially endorsed Kuyper’s article. It was translated into English, Dutch, German, and Swedish.

In his *Standaard*, Kuyper repeatedly pointed to the deadly earnestness which spoke from the blood that was flowing in South Africa. Again and again he awoke in the nation the spirit of liberal offerings of love for the Boers and the heart of never-ceasing prayer in their behalf. In Parliament, however, neither he nor anyone else could do anything effective for the Boer cause. Public opinion throughout Europe and beyond was outspoken in favor of
the Boers, but the governments were lethargic or suspicious or fearful.

During its four years in power, the Pierson cabinet achieved considerable legislation. A law to improve housing conditions, a public health law, laws designed to combat child neglect, and a franchise law — and there were more — need only be mentioned in passing. Although a revision of the liquor law should have been accomplished during 1901 at the latest, the revision attempt came to nothing.

Three legislative proposals may be set down as major.

(1) The bill on compulsory personal military training included the elimination of substitution. By getting this bill enacted into law, the Cabinet obligingly settled a question which had caused serious friction, if not estrangement, between the Antirevolutionaries and the Catholics.

(2) The compulsory school attendance law, enacted in the spring of 1900, was prescribed to go into effect on January 1, 1901. The bill squeaked through the Second Chamber by the narrowest of margins: 50 for, 49 against. Of the “for” votes, two were by the cabinet members Lely and Borgesius, who, on entering the cabinet, had not resigned their seats in the Chamber — a rather bizarre mode of operation, we think. The First Chamber adopted the bill by a good majority.

Kuyper and the entire Right except for two members voted against. Why? The position of the Right is readily understood. For a variety of reasons, many parents deemed the public schools unusable. But often enough there was no other school in their town or village or rural community. Moreover, many could not afford to pay the tuition (not excessive either) which the non-state schools had to require. For that reason the question “Is compulsory school attendance desirable, necessary, and imperative?” did not admit of an absolute yes or no answer. No answer was valid for all circumstances. Under some conditions no one would oppose it, under others no one would plead for it. The real solution was this: after weeding out the chiselers and frauds, do justice to the bona fide objectors. How? By making it possible financially and otherwise for all parents to have their children receive that school education which they, the parents, deem best. That done, compulsory school attendance was in order. Otherwise not.

The Borgesius bill included an increase in the subsidy, also improvements, some of which benefited the non-public schools in
general and up to a point. The salary increases which the law granted the state school teachers proved an irritation, if not an exasperation, to their non-state school colleagues, inasmuch as the law did not prescribe increases for the non-public school teachers.

In a general way, Borgesius’ attitude toward the non-public grade schools was one of rather greater good will than the Liberals had shown in times past. It appears that at long last the Liberals were learning to live with the non-state schools. Yet the problem of grade schools still remained far from solved.

(3) Social legislation. In the socio-economic area, too, the Liberals no longer had their backs squarely to the future. The outstanding piece of legislation which the cabinet achieved in this direction was the Workmen’s Compensation Law, which may also be called the Accidents Law. This law was designed to protect the workingmen against a measure of financial loss due to accidents incurred while engaged in their trade or occupation.

Kuyper, of course, endorsed the basic idea of the Workmen’s Compensation Law, that is, the protection of workingmen and their families against financial loss resulting from industrial accidents. His total idea in the matter was: for the workers, adequate protection; the employers carrying the financial risk as individual companies, or on a cooperative basis by insuring themselves with private insurance companies or paying their premiums into a government bank created for the purpose and called the State Insurance Bank; the need of timely and effective intervention by the government when and where needed; organization of labor as well as of employers; the need of organized cooperation between employers and workers; Chambers of Labor as well as Chambers of Commerce, with close contact between them; and a Code of Labor Laws; with the government, strong in power, with a will to enlightened justice, legislating and enforcing. That, in broad outline, was Kuyper’s position.

The Workmen’s Compensation Law, when it appeared on the statute books, by no means satisfied or exhausted Kuyper’s interest in socio-economic reform measures. He knew that sickness, accidents, incapacitation, and other adverse events in life cause severe financial hardship in untold numbers of cases. In a speech of October 25, 1899 in the Second Chamber, he said: “I wish to declare openly in this Chamber that I deem the battling against all human misfortunes a divinely decreed duty for all men, and that we are to recognize the system of insurance as a good gift from God.
By means thereof it is possible to spread human suffering, which up to this time, because the full weight fell on individuals, could not be borne communally, over times and persons in such a manner that the financial pressure, at least, is hardly felt.”

Kuyper’s attitude toward the Pierson government was, on the whole, one of strong opposition. Not because he thought it lacked ability: he recognized those men’s competence and talents. Nor because he judged it a do-nothing cabinet: he publicly conceded its legislative productivity. As a matter of fact, the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club, under Kuyper’s leadership, had on occasion purposefully, however difficult this sometimes was, supported, upheld, and bolstered the cabinet over against less friendly quarters of the Left and lent their constructive cooperation during the cabinet’s four-year tenure.

Kuyper opposed the Pierson ministry, as he had opposed liberal cabinets in the past, because it did not display, champion, promote, and exemplify Christian principles in legislation and administration.

Kuyper’s politics were not some accidental, opportunistic assortment of ideas on the questions of the day but the product of his life philosophy. The chief, all-governing principle of Kuyper’s political science can be set down briefly thus: to declare in the political area, too, not only by the word of profession but also by deeds of legislation and administration, the absolute sovereignty of God and the supreme validity of the divine ordinances for the life of the people and the nation.

Kuyper’s place in Parliament gave him a responsible part in the national government. He took part in the deliberations with great dedication. Every subject and problem, even those of lesser import, captured his interest.

Kuyper, Lohman and Schaepman were three of the major lights in the Second Chamber. When it was known that one of them or a noted orator of the Liberals was to deliver a speech of unusual significance, the Chamber coffee shop became deserted, the representatives were in their places, and the galleries were filled.

When Kuyper arose to speak, one saw a figure who at once impressed one as a man of strength and unlimited reserve strength. He dominated by his physical appearance: height, somewhat less than average; build, solid, compact, deep-chested, with magnificent sweep of shoulders; head, massive, well-shaped;
features, strong and regular; clean-shaven; hair, dark, waving, slightly graying; eyes, penetrating, full of intelligent expression, beneath thick, shaggy brows, glowing at times with flashes of burning energy and seemingly possessing hypnotic power. A remarkably handsome man was Kuyper, now already in his early sixties.

As Kuyper spoke, one liked the timbre of his voice, resonant, well modulated, vibrant, with perfect enunciation, noted for fullness and strength. He spoke in the decisive and authoritative tone of one who is accustomed to having his advice construed as conclusive directions, if not orders. Kuyper’s speeches possessed rugged and sustained force. They were never ghostwritten but were self-produced; even the greatest were extemporaneous efforts but well thought out in advance and clothed in a superb literary style that captivated his listeners. They revealed his mastery of his subjects, his amazing knowledge of facts, figures, and trends, and his familiarity with legislation in other countries. What he said invariably impressed one as coming from a distinguished mind. At no time theatrical, he did not play to the galleries. Kuyper spoke without histrionics as a substitute for the solid substance of thought. He never went on oratorical flights into the wild blue yonder.

Quadrennial elections would again be held in 1901.

The Antirevolutionaries constituted a Christian, inter-church, national, democratic party; also a vertical party, that is, a distinctive cross section of the nation, including, as it did, citizens from all economic and social classes and ranks. And Kuyper and his party understood perfectly that a political party can deserve and receive appreciation only if it always places its national task ahead of and above all else, when it never evades or slights its calling from fear of unpopularity.

The Antirevolutionaries formed a country-wide network of Voters Clubs, which sent delegates to the national convention. That convention was the party’s national rendezvous. It was something unique in Dutch politics. Originated by Kuyper in the late 1870’s, it established a precedent which the other parties were already following in 1901. Those conventions were conducted with the most excellent decorum and in a most serious, businesslike manner. Naturally, when the conventions had grown to consist of about 1,300 delegates, while they did transact a certain amount of
business, they could not possibly engage in protracted, consider-
every-factor-and-angle discussion. While a certain amount of
business was transacted, it was especially Kuyper’s keynote speech
and hours of choice fellowship in a national political enterprise that
made the day a memorable one for every delegate.

The Antirevolutionary National Committee, of which Kuyper
was chairman, was not a sovereign body or a debating society or a
glorified lunch club but a board of directors — to all intents and
purposes, Kuyper’s party cabinet. Although the national commit-
tee men were by no means puppets, Kuyper’s was the dominant
voice. To the party’s rank and file, too, Kuyper stood as the per-
sonification of the Antirevolutionary principles. Subject in certain
respects to ratification by the convention, the National Committee
made the top decisions, decided on grand scale strategy,
crystallized policy, and wrote the party platforms.

The 1901 Antirevolutionary national convention met on April
17, in Utrecht. Kuyper presided, as usual. As usual, too, he
delivered the keynote speech, this time on “Perseverance in the
Pursuit of Our Ideal.”

Neither in his keynote speech nor during the campaign did
Kuyper howl and scream that the Pierson cabinet was the worst the
country had ever had. Nor did he castigate the Pierson ministry as a
hear-nothing, see-nothing, do-nothing government. Instead he
gave them full credit for their achievements.

But note. “The only question which awaits decision in June is
this: whether the Christian sector of the nation or whether our
fellow countrymen who have, in the political sense, be it under-
stood, broken with the Christ, shall win a majority in the Second
Chamber.” “Our battle is not against persons but against the spirit
which forsakes God in matters political and governmental and
which incorporates itself in the political policies of all Liberals.”
“To arms! Not only against Social Democracy, which drives the
energy of the revolution-principle to the ultimate extreme, but also
against dignified Liberalism, which likewise and equally ignores
God in its political science and practical politics.”

Kuyper declared all the diverse shades of Dutch political
Liberalism to be in their essence one with Socialism, inasmuch as
both held that the Scriptures have nothing to say about, and
nothing to do with, politics and government. Those parties con-
stituted the Left. Over against them stood the parties of the Right.
That, to Kuyper’s mind, was the two-party system in Holland.
In Holland, political parties did not conduct front-porch or whistle-stop or — in 1901, of course — radio-television campaigns. Nor did candidates frantically try to meet everybody and his brother or engage in handshaking marathons in department stores or at factory entrances. Speakers, Kuyper included, addressed indoor audiences. They met opposing speakers in debate. Besides, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, campaign literature, personal contacts — all of these had their use to influence the voter, who was king for a day.

As usual, long before the election Kuyper set to work in his Standaard with leaders and editorials, which we may call outpost skirmishes. As the election neared, the tempo increased till the very day when Holland’s citizens went to the polls. Whatever the difficulties and the obstacles, he always carried on with inspiring optimism. Kuyper managed the 1901 campaign with his customary finesse. His fabulous familiarity with the political map of Holland in minute detail enabled him to offer his own party and his allies the necessary suggestions. As the election drew near, he filled the entire front page of De Standaard, sometimes even more, with terse editorials in which he directed his words of advice or warning to electoral districts, if need be, to parts of districts, as each individual case required. Although a few competent men assisted him, Kuyper did most of this work himself.

Between the parties of the Right there existed notable harmony and effective cooperation on the basis of a clearly defined, ably written, and mutually acceptable political compact.

Without the benefit of those modern oracles, the pollsters, Kuyper usually knew quite well in advance from the available data as they came in what the election outcome would be. About this time a feeling that the Right would now in 1901 finally come into its own seems to have pervaded, or at least invaded, the Antirevolutionary ranks. Kuyper, always an enemy of complacency and over-confidence, strongly discouraged that optimism.

The primaries already showed that the Right would win. At the election, the Right won 58 seats, the Left 42. A breakdown shows:

**Right:**
- 24 Antirevolutionaries
- 7 Free Antirevolutionaries
- 25 Catholics
- 1 Frisian Christian-Historical
- 1 Christian-Historical

**Left:**
- 9 Liberal Democrats
- 18 Union Liberals
- 8 Free Liberals
- 7 Socialists

In 1901, then, Kuyper, with his own party in solid ranks behind him, with Lohman and his Free Antirevolutionaries, with the leaders of two small groups of the same general political mind
and their followings, and with Schaepman and the Catholics, led the great charge that drove the Liberals from the political beachheads. To the Liberals that defeat proved a crushing blow.

So ended the campaign of 1901, which would be Schaepman’s last — he died in 1903 — and which carried Kuyper and the Right to victory.

Queen Wilhelmina invited Dr. Kuyper to form the new cabinet. He made no attempt to evade the responsibility of cabinet formation. He accepted the mandate. Indeed, a Right cabinet without Kuyper, even a Right cabinet without Kuyper as prime minister, was unthinkable.

In the eight-member cabinet, three posts went to Catholics. No statesman of the Lohman group had made himself available for a cabinet post. Kuyper himself took the portfolio of Internal Affairs. To all appearances, the cabinet’s composition did not disappoint the press of the country. With the inevitable exceptions, the papers discussed it not without a measure of good will.

On August 1, 1901, the Kuyper cabinet took office.

On February 7, 1901, there had taken place the marriage of Queen Wilhelmina and His Highness, Duke Heinrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, four years her senior, by a simple ceremony which took place in the Groote Kerk in The Hague. Dr. G. J. Vander Fliere, the court preacher, officiated.
Dr. Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister.

His accession to power came ten years after the retirement of the Mackay cabinet and 25 years after the death of Groen van Prinsterer. What had seemed utterly impossible 30 years earlier had now, at the turn of the century, actually come to pass. To the Christian political forces of Holland, the day of the Kuyper cabinet’s advent to power was a day of days, a magnificent climax to a long, hard, often bitter struggle of decades. But they were not naive enough to imagine that they were witnessing the dawn of the political millennium or to think that Holland would overnight be converted into a garden of the Lord. While their hopes ran high, the prospect did not stampede them. Having seen other cabinets come and go, they circumscribed their expectations. Yet, all felt that great changes were at hand. They were convinced that the Liberal domination had now ended or would at least end soon.

Now Prime Minister, Dr. Kuyper had to move to The Hague. He took the two-story brick house at 5 De Kanaalstraat. It had a quiet dignity and unpretentious charm. On the second floor he arranged two adjoining rear rooms as his study, rather, workrooms.

The Free University gave Dr. Kuyper a leave of absence. Those who knew Kuyper well realized that he did not relish this relatively abrupt ending of his professorate. The school’s constituency, although they could do nothing about it, yet thought in alter-
natives: how much Kuyper could still achieve for the Free University, for theological science, for the church if he had remained; on the other hand, how much he would be able to accomplish as premier for the national welfare and for the country's progress.

Kuyper retained the writing of the *Heraut* meditations. The other two departments were transferred to others “for the duration.”

He resigned his seat in the Second Chamber, not wanting, as the cabinet members Lely and Borgesius of the previous cabinet had done, to combine membership in Parliament with a cabinet position.

After the election of 1901, Kuyper did not stand with his neck festooned with irremovable albatrosses in the form of lavish promises, irredeemable pledges, and impossible commitments. He had not promised everybody everything. He had not compromised himself.

Of the opposition, the Liberals especially found Kuyper's advent to power no occasion for rejoicing. After all these many years, they were now unequivocally in the minority. Kuyper in the premiership — the very thought was an overdose of mortification. Their faces were a study in exasperation.

The premiership of even a small country like Holland is not a sinecure. The strains and stresses of that office make it an imposing task. A cabinet must administer a country's domestic and foreign affairs and it must obtain legislation which its principles demand.

Kuyper was now a man of near 64 and the key figure in his cabinet, for he took the portfolio of Internal Affairs. In that area the outstanding battles of his administration would be waged.

To prepare bills that are based on officially known facts, figures, and conditions requires long, studious effort. So it is easy to see that the Kuyper cabinet, in fact every cabinet, would need a very reasonable period of time to get started on its Parliamentary legislative program, even if no untoward events held up progress. But of such unusual hindrances the Kuyper government experienced more, and more serious ones, than usually fall to a government's lot. They could not be sidestepped. They consumed an inordinate amount of time and effort, emphatically slowing down the legislative process.

One was the very grave illness of Queen Wilhelmina in early
1902. For a brief while, her life was despaired of. The situation was extremely serious. An enactment of Parliament did not become law without the Queen's signature. She did not sign perfunctorily but conscientiously and informedly.

Another circumstance added to the gravity of the situation. The royal pair had no children. As Queen Wilhelmina was the last of the House of Orange, in the event of her death there would be no successor to the throne. In all haste, the Cabinet, in consultation with the Council of State, had to make the necessary arrangements to provide for eventualities. It was a task of such urgency and of such a comprehensive character that all other work had necessarily to be deferred.

Those who were not directly or indirectly concerned with the government of the country underestimated, in many cases seriously, the gravity of the situation. It is an assured fact that for months, the ministers of the Crown were filled with anxiety over the Queen's illness. It requires little imagination to appreciate the crippling effect of all this on the Cabinet's constructive efforts.

The nation eagerly scanned the bulletins for news of the Queen's condition, for she was greatly loved by her people. When she recovered, songs and prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God ascended from countless homes and churches and schools of Holland. In September of 1902, she again opened the sessions of Parliament.

When the Kuyper cabinet took office in 1901, the Boer War was still raging in South Africa.

While the story of the British/Boer conflict properly lies beyond the scope of this biography, that murderous war profoundly affected the Dutch nation. Their hearts have always gone out to their South African brothers and sisters in distress, more especially when British Imperialism and greed under Joseph Chamberlain and his associates unleashed the Boer War. Was there not, many Netherlanders anxiously asked, some way to bring the war to an end and secure a peace with honor?

But what could Kuyper do? In the early part of Kuyper's premiership, an official delegation from the South African republics came to The Hague. Things had come to such a pass that peace had to come — not an inglorious surrender on the part of the Boers but an honorable settlement. The Dutch government was asked to use its influence with England. During the war, the Dutch
government (both the Pierson and the Kuyper cabinets) had maintained the policy of neutrality as the course which the stern exigencies of the situation inexorably dictated.

The indirect part which Kuyper and his government played toward ending the Boer War can be stated in brief summary. The Dutch government dispatched a note, composed by Kuyper, to the English government, in which Lord Lansdowne was Minister of Foreign Affairs. And although the British government declined to accept the intervention of any foreign power, in due time overtures which were the indirect result of the Dutch note led to the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging on May 31, 1902.

All the discussions and deliberations in connection with the Boer War and the efforts to devise some way to end the bloodshed consumed much valuable time, which would otherwise have been devoted to the securing of constructive legislation.

1903 was the year of the railroad strike in the Netherlands. The story of that strike is a long one and cannot be told here in detail. Only the major facts can be set down.

In the first week of January, 1903, there was an uneasy peace in the water transport industry in Amsterdam. As a matter of fact, the harbor seethed with a certain wild unrest.

On January 9, a water transport company's employees went out on strike. While the strike was soon settled, the company refused to discharge the workers whom it had hired during the time of the strike. A new strike resulted. This finally spread over the entire Amsterdam harbor.

When the union stevedores refused to unload a steamship in company with non-union men, the company attempted to have it unloaded by the employees of the Holland Railway. The Railway's board of directors ordered their employees to unload the ship. The men refused to handle the goods which other workers on strike had refused to handle. The officers of the stevedores' and the railway workers' unions wired the board of directors, asking that the order be revoked. Their request was not granted. The railroad workers had taken the position that by carrying out the board's order they would jeopardize the success of the strikers in their economic battle. Since both groups were freight handlers, it is easy to see how the longshoremen and the railway employees time and again came into contact. And among the railroad men, too, the "contamination" theory was making headway. According to this
theory, any freight which non-union men had handled was "contaminated" and must not be handled by union men.

The railway employees were organized in part in the Netherlands Society of Railway and Transport Personnel, which stood under the leadership of Social Democrats. In addition, three other unions of railroad employees had in 1901 formed a federation, in which the syndicalists wielded a strong influence. In January of 1903, there had come about what amounted to a fusion between the Society and the Federation. There were also many railway workers who had not joined any of those unions. Nor had the Christian workingmen, Protestants and Catholics, as yet founded each their own organization.

The Society and the Federation now adopted resolutions for a nation-wide railroad strike if the Railway's board of directors did not meet their demands. They issued a manifesto in which they declared that they would refuse to work for any company with which the stevedores had trouble. Although the railroad workers at the time had grievances, in many respects explainable, which certainly demanded correction, their decision and action of January, 1903 were not motivated primarily by their own situation but by a spirit of solidarity with the longshoremen. The strike, then, would be a solidarity strike.

The directors of the railroad, though they appeared not unwilling to grant the strikers' demands, informed them that the law and their franchise compelled them to accept and transport all goods offered them. At the same time, they would ask the government for release on this point. But the government did not consent.

So, on January 29, the railroad employees went on strike. Almost automatically, all the Amsterdam personnel were involved. The leaders proclaimed a nationwide strike. Before long different categories of workers went on strike, so that on January 30 and 31, all railroad transportation was at a standstill. Passengers were stranded wherever they happened to be. Even the transportation of troops from Amersfoort to Amsterdam encountered difficulty because the engineers and firemen refused to operate the trains.

One should not imagine that because Holland is a small country, this railroad strike was a comparatively large tempest in a relatively small teapot. The strike virtually tied up the country. It disrupted all transportation communication. It brought all industrial and commercial life as between the different sections of the country to a standstill. It ignored, even sacrificed, the general in-
Abraham Kuyper

interests of the nation. It operated in total disregard of possible international complications, that is, diplomatic difficulties with those governments with whom Holland had agreements as to international railroad connections. It played fast and loose with the strikers' own future, for if transportation in Holland was at a standstill, it would naturally transfer to Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere, and stay there. So the strike brazenly threatened the orderly processes of national life.

And why? The conflict was begun by some 20 or 30 men who had a grievance against their employer. Then, to defend the alleged right of those men, the railroad employees, with a spurious concept of solidarity, very largely brought the economic life of the nation to a standstill.

The strike promptly came under socialistic, syndicalistic and anarchistic influence. Men who stood entirely outside the affair issued orders, which the employees virtually unanimously obeyed, even though many strikers violated their oaths. It was a dangerous situation. It is easy to see that if one man or a small coterie of men at Amsterdam could stop all rail transportation, the government would be unable to carry on its work or have troops brought where needed or even mobilize for war. For the country, the days of that strike were a time of anxiety and alarm, of paralyzing uncertainty, and of insane violence against the economic, political and social interests of the nation.

Up to January 29, when the strike began, the government had received no word or report or communication on the Amsterdam situation from the Railway directorate or the mayor of Amsterdam or the Chamber of Commerce or the Commissioner of the Crown for the province. No government department had any inkling of the serious trouble brewing in Amsterdam. So the disturbance had come with the suddenness of an explosion. But Kuyper did not rush pell-mell into some ill-advised action that would not have solved anything but would only have aggravated the situation. He immediately saw through the revolutionary character of the strike. It was his solid conviction that whatever might take place, the government must maintain law and order; that it must not permit any power in the state to overshadow it; that under no circumstances and in no way must the government stand aside for any organization that openly or by implication issues orders to the government. So the government called up a part of the national militia — this in order to prevent further atrocities such as had
taken place in Durgerdam — to instil respect for authority into the riotous elements and restore to the peaceful citizenry of all classes the sense of security which the strike situation had taken from them.

On January 31, the strike spread to Rotterdam, Haarlem, Amersfoort, The Hague, and other railroad centers. Then, on the evening of that day, the government received word from the directors of the Holland Railway that they had granted the unions' demands on all points. The unions would formulate their demands in greater detail and present them to the directors, who had agreed in advance to accede to them. The strike was raised. Sunday, February 1, traffic was restored. On the face of it, then, and for the present moment, the strike had succeeded.

When a new strike threatened after February 1, the government promptly took the necessary steps to render such emergency railroad service as was then possible. It strengthened the Amsterdam garrison. Its vigorous action and rather drastic measures served as stern warning to the revolutionary element.

Meanwhile, in early February the strike fever became epidemic. The country's workers seemed to be in revolt. There was a rash of strikes. Especially in the large cities, the mania for class influence stalked ominously. Men deemed the strike a handy, effective, strong-arm instrument. The municipal employees of Amsterdam presented their own ultimatum. To satisfy their own class interests, they would, if they judged it necessary, stop the operation of the water system in this city of 500,000 population, thereby compelling the citizens to use water which they, the employees, knew to be unfit for human consumption. On February 9 the city council agreed to the workers' terms. Then followed the coachmen's strike. Those coachmen would, if they could, forcibly prevent physicians from visiting their patients unless the doctors met their demands. There were also efforts to prevent the operation of bakeries, to prevent the transportation of flour and other food products, to prevent the publication of all except anarchistic and social democratic literature, to persuade the soldiers to disloyalty and abandonment of duty, to isolate the great cities, to bring the postal service to a standstill, and more of the same.

All in all, Holland seemed to be taking the first steps on the way to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Kuyper looked into the future. He realized that the country's
position would be untenable if a group of workers could paralyze its transportation system. To his mind, the situation, with its clear potentialities, definitely constituted a national hazard. He knew that no nation can permit a paralysis of socio-economic and governmental functions and survive. So he would not permit men to break down law and order. He wanted orderly government within the constitutional framework. But if the revolutionary element raised their heads, he would not hesitate to use the mailed fist. In a word, Kuyper spoke softly but carried a big stick.

On February 24, Parliament met for the first time since the strike. Next day, in the Second Chamber, Dr. Kuyper made a declaration for the government in a magisterial speech on the entire affair. He then introduced three bills, which the Chamber applauded and which the overwhelming majority of the nation cordially endorsed. The content of the bills can be briefly stated.

(1) Among the instruments always available to the government there must be created a railroad brigade which in case of emergency can assure railroad service by manning the trains.

(2) It is necessary to cultivate a different spirit among the railway personnel themselves by doing justice to them in the case of those grievances which are proved just. For that purpose, a government commission must investigate their legal status and their working conditions and submit proposals which will for the present and for the future assure the personnel of job security and of sound legal status under government protection.

(3) It is not justified to postpone any longer in designating in law as crime what actually is criminal; this, as well to surround personal liberty in the field of labor with better guarantees, as also to set down in statute law that besides public offices, there are services to be rendered on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the public, in which not every abandonment of duty may be tolerated by the government without meting out punishments to those who desert their posts. This is known as the anti-railroad strike law.

The government's meaning in the three bills was unmistakably clear. Troelstra, Oudegeest and others of the strike leaders understood them perfectly. They didn't object particularly to the government commission of investigation, nor too vehemently against the thought of a railroad brigade. But they protested violently against the anti-railroad strike bill.

Soon after Kuyper laid his bills before the Second Chamber, the socialistic and anarchistic leaders organized a committee of
resistance. This Committee had one sharply defined goal: to prevent the enactment of the bills into law. It was a motley crowd of Social Democrats, Free Socialists, and Anarchists. From the outset, the Radicals dragged the moderates along against their will. Certainly the unity left a good deal to be desired — much more than befits a militant organization.

Meanwhile, Christian organizations did not stand idly by. They held many mass meetings. Prominent speakers addressed them. They published a manifesto in which they took a courageous stand.

Parliament did not immediately adopt Kuyper’s bills on February 25. Naturally not. The members had to deliberate — which was as it should be. After some delay, the Second Chamber resumed debate in early April. Discussion took place on April 2, 3, and 4. On April 5, the resistance committee proclaimed a nationwide railroad strike and a strike of transport workers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zaandam, and Dordrecht. All those employees would be expected to stop work the next day. The committee at the same time announced the prospect of a general, country-wide strike.

But the railroad and transport strike, pompously declared, and not an economic but a political strike to intimidate the government, proved mostly a fiasco. Only a couple of thousand workers obeyed the revolutionary command. The government was ready. It took a firm stand. Troops were on hand. The railway directors immediately called for volunteers and informed the strikers that all who did not return to work within 24 hours would be summarily discharged.

Evidently unable to read the signs of the times, the resistance committee on April 8 declared a general strike for the entire country. It was a measure of desperation. But if those gentry thought they could scare Kuyper, they soon discovered that Kuyper did not scare easily.

On April 9, the Second Chamber adopted the bills, the vote on each being: (1) 78 to 15, (2) 81 to 14, and (3) 86 to 6.

Even before the First Chamber acted, the committee of resistance by implication admitted defeat. They decided to take no chances. Safety first! They didn’t hanker for a term in the penitentiary. So on May 10 they called off the general strike once so pompously announced before it could become a fiasco. It seems that the gentlemen had consulted lawyers, who had assured them that if the
bills were enacted into law, the leaders could immediately be arrested. So they countermanded their strike order.

On Saturday, April 11, the First Chamber adopted the three bills by a voice vote. The Queen signed them the same day.

But the Socialist and Radical press was bitter and spoke about brute force and strangulation laws.

When the laws were enacted and the resistance committee did not dare go ahead but lifted the strike instead, those gentry had themselves a rough time. Nieuwenhuis and his fellow Radicals accused the Social Democrat members of treason. In two night meetings (April 11 and 12), pistols were even drawn. Finally, a special committee of investigation reported its conclusion that there had not been treason but that the strike had failed because of the weakness of the movement itself. The revolutionary leaders did not admit the moral error of their way but only tactical errors: that is, they had acted too soon, they had not been sufficiently well organized, they had not been thoroughly prepared. Draw your own conclusion: they will repeat their anarchistic operation when they are better organized and prepared.

Kuyper had rendered the country the highest type of national service. What was the long-range effect? Was Kuyper's policy sound in its inception and effective in its operation? Since that year 1903, there has been no railroad strike in Holland. The laws of that year have remained on the statute books. Not even a Socialist minister of the Crown has thought of repeal or alteration. The labor movement has never agitated against them. As time passed, men have more and more generally recognized their reasonableness.

Listening to the siren song of the revolutionary agitators cost many workers their jobs. The railways discharged 2,000 employees; the municipality of Amsterdam, 400. Kuyper readily agreed that the entire complex of strike affairs had caused great misery. But from many letters that he received, from what he heard and read from wide circles closely related to Troelstra, the Socialist leader, and his allies, Kuyper learned that men almost unanimously laid the blame with Troelstra, Oudegeest, and their ilk.

Troelstra, however, evidently suffering from an uneasy conscience, tried to throw the blame for the misery on the government. When the government did not go out of its way, however loudly the Socialistic-Anarchistic lion roared, Troelstra and his confederates tried to minimize the entire affair in the public mind. They made as
if they hadn’t meant it all so seriously.

The report of the committee of investigation, which had organized itself as early as April 20, 1903, appeared January 14, 1904, in six printed volumes. That was within ten months of the enactment of the laws. As a direct result, improvements in the workers’ legal status and working conditions were an early achievement.

From the strike affair in its totality, the Christian workingmen, both Catholic and Protestant, and public officers as well, drew a valuable lesson: the Socialist-Anarchist-dominated unions were no place for them. They were convinced, insofar as they had not already been convinced, that they must as a matter of principle organize under their own banner. That lesson was not lost on them. Early following years witnessed definite results in that direction.

How did it all affect the cabinet’s legislative program? To prepare bills for introduction into Parliament was itself a formidable task. When the cabinet was ready to introduce its legislative program, the railroad strike with all its involvements intervened to rob it of several full months of precious time — the more unfortunate, as certain bills had to be postponed till after the summer recess, while they might have been enacted before. This legislative delay was a lamentable fact, not least because the reckless revolutionary leaders made the enactment of the cabinet’s social reform bills if not impossible for lack of time at least very dubious. And who suffered in the end? None other than the workingmen themselves.

A unique by-product of the complex of events was a bitter cartoon by Albert Hahn, a cartoon that became a classic.

It is an almost square-shaped drawing of the Kuyper head, with heavy cheeks, out-jutting lower lip and chin, fiercely penetrating eyes, and deep-furrowed frown. It gives the impression on the one hand of power and determination, on the other of wrath and ferocity. Evidently Hahn didn’t love Kuyper. While he meant to ridicule Kuyper, Hahn created a masterpiece. The publisher (friendly to Kuyper) of two small volumes of Kuyper cartoons included it in both — of course, not without Kuyper’s consent.

Hahn gave the cartoon the title “Abraham de Geweldige.” This has been translated “Abraham the Terrible.” It could also conceivably mean “Abraham the Man of Brute Force.” I am inclined to think Hahn had something else in mind: as history
books speak, for example, of Alexander the Great and other "Greats," so probably the cartoonist tried to deride Kuyper by giving him this "exalted" title. At all events, Hahn produced the cartoon best known by friend and enemy alike and interpreted by each as he wills.

In February of 1904, the Russo-Japanese War broke out. Because the Dutch East Indies lay in the general war zone, the Dutch government was concerned to maintain the policy of neutrality toward both combatants. The coaling and repair of warships were the touchy problems which produced protests and diplomatic notes. Japan’s unexampled victory over the Russians made a profound impression on Kuyper.

That conflict, with the problems which it created, also slowed up the cabinet’s work markedly.

These four emergency problems with all their involvements acted as a severe brake on the legislative process. Besides, two ministers of the Crown died and other men had to be found to take their places. There was, too, the annual time-consuming budget debate. Nor must one overlook the long deliberations on the liquor law and the dissolution of the First Chamber, of which in their place. With all this in mind, one wonders how much actual time remained for the cabinet to carry its legislative program through Parliament. One must bear in mind that the greater part of the cabinet’s work was also concentrated into the department which Kuyper headed, while Kuyper had to be in Parliament much of the time to explain and defend bills.

The Pierson ministry had left a legacy to its successor: to put into effect the Workmen’s Compensation Law and the Compulsory School Attendance Law. The former, especially, required much work and time for setting up the machinery and beginning this social service efficiently. Kuyper, as Minister of Internal Affairs, also had to spend time the first year in setting up the machinery for putting into effect the Militia Law, the Public Health Law, and other laws that we may catalog as a legacy from the Pierson government.
One of Dr. Kuyper's most significant legislative achievements, perhaps the most outstanding of all, was the Higher Education Law of 1905.

The story of the bill in its tortuous passage through both Chambers of Parliament deserves a more than passing notice. Not because the specific question at issue is a live issue among us: it is not. Nor because it stirred deep emotions: it did not, since it was largely of an academic nature and did not arouse such profound feelings as the strike law, although it did experience a wider opposition. The story remains one of biographical and historical interest because it gives such a vivid picture of Kuyper the Prime Minister battling against the Liberals and the Socialists for the embodiment in law and practice of a profound principle which has always been accepted among us — the freedom of higher education.

It may be said without fear of successful contradiction that Dr. Kuyper was pre-eminently the man to carry higher education reform through Parliament. He had received his own training at Leiden University; that gave him far more prestige in the discussion than if he had been a seminary graduate or, let us say, a businessman. He had founded the Free University. He had held chairs in two of its colleges (theology and liberal arts) for a score of years. He had built that school into a strong and flourishing institution. He had produced a wide variety of scholarly writings. He
Abraham Kuyper had clarified and popularized higher education and the university idea in wide circles. He loved higher education with the scholar's passion. He was amazingly familiar with higher education in Holland and in other lands. He realized its importance. He understood what its effective organization would mean for the country's future.

While Kuyper's higher education bill was not at all an "omnibus" bill, one may certainly call it a "package" bill. Its chief proposals can be summarized under four heads: (1) the gymnasia, (2) special chairs at the national universities, (3) technological higher education, more particularly, the Delft school, and (4) the general university, specifically, what was called the effectus civilis, of which a little later in this chapter.

On March 11, 1903, Dr. Kuyper introduced this package bill into the Second Chamber of Parliament.

(1) Gymnasia. The bill placed the final examinations at the non-public gymnasia (under prescribed conditions, naturally) on a par with those at the public gymnasia, and it markedly increased the subsidies to those schools. This section of the bill enjoyed quite general agreement. To those preparatory schools, the validation of their diplomas was the greater of the two benefits, though the other was by no means to be despised.

(2) Special university chairs. The bill made it possible for a church, an institution, or an association to institute special chairs at the national universities. One reason for such chairs may be stated thus: in order to set before the students the expositions of those views and convictions and philosophy to which, in the thought of the chair's founders, the universities themselves did not do adequate justice. While men had for a long time asked for and urged such chairs, they had not yet received them. If in the future the privilege were largely used and many chairs were established, the cost could run high. It is axiomatic, of course, that such founders of special chairs would have to meet certain legally prescribed conditions and follow the legally prescribed procedures.

While Kuyper apparently did not think highly of such special chairs, he included provision for them in his bill for several reasons. They did not solve the problem of higher education, but they did give something. They would make the freedom of higher education more nearly real than it had thus far been. And their inclusion satisfied the wish of some of his fellow Coalitionists.

(3) Technological higher education. By 1901, the Delft
Polytechnic School (founded in 1842) had for a considerable time already outgrown its character as a secondary school and was actually giving education on the university level in training young men for the higher industrial careers, such as electrical and mechanical engineering. The Kuyper bill included the elevation of the Delft school to the rank of technological university. It further made possible the establishing of an agricultural and a commercial university.

That was an ambitious program, to be sure. Kuyper saw the need of developing two of the country’s major, basic economic operations — agriculture and commerce. He wanted to raise Holland to as high an economic level as possible. For that purpose, agriculture and commerce needed higher education of their own. He was convinced that these complexes of studies required a distinctive scientific treatment plus a separate organization in a distinct category of universities.

Kuyper’s concern for technical education on the university level is all the more remarkable because his own training had been classical and theological. His past would have led no one to expect from him the much needed and highly desired revision of higher economic education. Yet he undertook it. Not blindly, however. In Holland and during his travels in other countries, Kuyper conferred with educators and specialists in this field. He made it a point to become informed. His consultations, observations and reflections led him directly to the conclusion that Holland must have not only the Delft school but also higher education for agriculture and commerce.

The Kuyper bill, as everyone in Holland today admits, revealed Kuyper’s wide vision. But in 1904 and 1905, the men of the Left could not in their ingrained provincialism persuade themselves to give any evidence of appreciation. In consequence, of the technological higher education provisions that Kuyper defended with so much talent, only the elevation of the Delft school remained.

Much later, the successive establishment of the agricultural university at Wageningen and of the commercial universities at Rotterdam and Tilburg, as also the regulation by law of commercial education on the university level, vindicated Kuyper.

(4) The general university question. The Kuyper higher education bill did not aim to solve all the higher education and university problems. Nor did it include provision for the liberation
of higher education from the state and its return to the people. Knowing that that goal was unattainable, he tried to secure what was next best.

There still existed the divinity schools (actually, schools of the science of religion), which constituted a sad anachronism. The Kuyper bill did not attempt to solve that problem. It would certainly have been impossible to obtain legislation which would discontinue the divinity schools. As to reforming those schools, that would have been far from easy. If and when systematic theology were to be reintroduced, for example, the question would arise: Which systematic theology — the Reformed, the Catholic, the Lutheran, or which? That is a pertinent question because they were national schools.

If the reorganization of higher education should come during Kuyper's tenure of office, he would attempt to reconstruct the divinity schools in such a way that they would be schools of theology not only in name but in fact as well. They would in that case no longer teach the science of religion but would teach theology in the historical sense as the knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ and the Scriptures. While Kuyper was willing to undertake the task, possibly in the near future and under certain definite conditions, he did not contemplate such work in his current bill.

Finally, when Kuyper introduced his bill, he did not come to Parliament with a tin cup or a quarter-sawed oak collection plate, for alms or a dole for the Free University.

The Heemskerk higher education law of 1876 had not spawned a swarm of universities. In fact, the Free University, founded in 1880, was still in 1903 the only non-public university. It must be distinctly understood that Kuyper's bill contained no provision in any form for state subsidy. Whether state subsidy would ever be granted to the one existing and to other possible future non-public universities, and under which conditions and in what amount, were all, therefore, questions for the future.

The cabinet did, however, include the insignificant annual sum of 4,000 guilders for the non-public universities. The special chairs at the national universities would entail certain expenses, such as salaries, light, heat, and the use of buildings and equipment. These expenses the government would pay. If, asked Kuyper, the government exempts those who establish special chairs from paying these costs, should it not in fairness to the Free University, which must
bear the competition with those chairs, or some of them, pay this school the small amount of 4,000 guilders annually? Oh, but wouldn't that sum, small though it be, resemble the proverbial camel's nose? No, replied Kuyper. The government does not submit this proposal as the beginning of subsidy. He declared repeatedly that no implication in the direction of subsidy was to be deduced from the bill. The legislative battle was fought chiefly, we may say almost entirely, on that part of the general university section of the bill which was the effectus civilis provision. The effectus civilis may be described as the legal validation of a school’s diplomas and degrees, which automatically, without further ado, admitted the holders to the practice of the professions. Hence we should focus our attention on this hard core of the bill.

The professors at the public universities naturally examined their own students. Those students, if successful, received diplomas and degrees which possessed the legal status known as effectus civilis; that is, they automatically admitted their holders to the practice of law, medicine, and the other professions. Of course, such a diploma or degree guaranteed nothing. You could be appointed to certain positions and you could practice certain professions. But whether you received an appointment depended on him — or those — who appointed. And whether you would have any success in your profession would be determined by the confidence of the general public in your abilities. It was only necessary to see the list of applicants for certain positions to realize the great distance between the receipt of the effectus civilis and the receipt of an appointment. How many there were who had received the effectus civilis but never profited from it as long as they lived!

Now, in 1903 the Free University’s diplomas and degrees did not yet possess this effectus civilis. What did the school’s graduates do about this? Those who went from the divinity school into the gospel ministry in the Reformed churches didn’t need the effectus civilis. The others took the examinations at the national universities after having, or not having, attended certain lectures and followed certain courses. If they passed the examinations, they were handed diplomas and degrees with the effectus civilis.

This situation calls our attention to the matter of double examinations, first in their own university and then in one or another of the national universities. They were, to put it bluntly, the bane of a student’s existence. More than that, Kuyper judged double examinations indefensible from the educational and the
Abraham Kuyper scholar's point of view — also as unfair and unsuccessful. He produced opinions from a number of professors at the public universities to the effect that those men all agreed in favor of students being examined by their own professors. As a rule, a student would have to attend two sets of lectures or attend one set and study another set of lecture notes. With the second examination in mind, he would not study as a university student should. Double examinations were the ruination of genuine study. If at his school he has been taught in a scholarly manner not only facts but also scientific method and research, he will not — or hardly — understand the questions of strange professors. To play perfectly safe, he would not only want to attend at least some lectures and in a general way follow certain courses at another than his own school; he would at least want to visit examinations to learn how the professors conducted them. Consider, too, that certainly not every professor was a skillful examiner, that some professors possibly rode hobby horses, and that a few might have a feeling of antipathy toward “foreign” students who came to be examined.

The Kuyper higher education bill granted the legal status called \textit{effectus civilis} to the diplomas and degrees of non-public universities under certain prescribed conditions and adequate safeguards. That was the crux of the bill. Kuyper's ultimate goal was none other than the liberation of higher education from the state and its return to the people. But because he knew that his ultimate goal was not to be realized, he followed the only practical course: to bring to pass the equality of all universities both in theory of law and in actual living practice. How long a step that would prove toward the liberation of higher education — it was at all events an unmistakable step in that direction. As matters stood, higher education was not free. No university was free without the \textit{effectus civilis}. Without it, freedom was only a fiction.

However, to grant the priceless \textit{effectus civilis} to non-public universities was something so new and unusual that it fairly took the Liberals' and Socialists' breath away. In the Second Chamber, this matter of the \textit{effectus civilis} encountered bold, strong opposition. That is to the American mind a more than Asian mystery. The graduates of our recognized colleges and universities do not have to pass examinations at state universities in order to have their diplomas and degrees validated.

While the opposition contained some more or less conciliatory men who wanted to be reasonable and only demanded adequate
guarantees, the majority wanted nothing of freedom of higher education. They would have liked nothing better than to witness the discontinuance of the only existing non-public school, the Free University, and to make impossible the founding of non-public universities in the future. Their opposition to the bill was absolute. No amendments or alterations would make it acceptable.

Kuyper appealed to their sense of justice and fair play. He tried to lift them to a higher level, where they would see the question from the national point of view. He said the Liberals would later realize that they had taken a wrong attitude toward the bill. But the Liberals refused to be elevated.

Kuyper did not have merely the Free University in mind. He was formulating and trying to establish broad national educational policy. Yet, because the Free University was at the time the only existing non-public university, it would be for the present the only school to benefit if the bill became law.

Although the Left fought the bill vehemently (especially the effectus civilis section) and arrayed their heavy artillery against it, the deliberations were by and large conducted on such a high — we could almost say academic — level as had seldom been reached before or perhaps attained since. Kuyper took occasion to compliment the Second Chamber on this high level.

When Kuyper was to deliver his major speech for the bill and reply to the opposition on February 26, 1904, all the Second Chamber members were in their places. Many other interested persons filled the galleries. Not a few had to be turned away. In that speech he spelled out his ideas at length. The auditors listened from the beginning to the end with unconcealed enjoyment. Kuyper did not read his speech. He had thought the material out in advance. So he spoke extemporaneously, without notes. He spoke a few hours, sometimes facing to the left, then swinging to the right, stressing argument after argument. He gave the impression of a master workman who delights in his work.

In this speech, Kuyper defended the liberation of higher education: (1) as lying in the line of historical development, (2) as promoted by the bill in a reasonable manner, and (3) as demanded by the present state in the process of science. Nearly all the members of the Chamber had attended university. Now Kuyper’s speech constituted a unique university extension lecture in Parliament. In it he explained matters with which some of the gentlemen, at least, were less well familiar.
An important question that we must consider is this: With what guarantees and safeguards did the Kuyper bill surround the *effectus civilis* to assure the state that the students of non-state universities received a scientific, scholarly training?

Before proceeding, we may ask: What guarantees did the national universities offer that those who passed their examinations possessed the necessary knowledge and the required scientific skill and training? As a matter of fact, the national universities were severely handicapped on this point. At those schools, many students, after hardly following courses and attending lectures, had someone tutor or drill them, took the examinations, largely passed, and received the *effectus civilis*. Even those who had not attended a university at all but had prepared themselves or had had others tutor or drill them had to be accepted at the examinations and, if they passed, had to be given the *effectus civilis*. Nor were such persons even required to write a dissertation and defend it in public. No more was required in this respect than the defense of a number of theses (propositions).

Kuyper faced the question of guarantees squarely. He declared that as to the *effectus civilis*, the faculties of the public universities rendered only one service, namely, that of examination commissions to determine whether those to be examined possessed the required fitness for the public service or for service of the public in law and medicine, for example. To his mind, then, the question was this: whether according to the bill the faculties of the non-public universities offered sufficient guarantees that they were qualified examination commissions to whose judgments the state could attach weight and value.

What safeguards did the Kuyper bill contain? Examination in all the courses in which these were held at the national universities. Instruction in all the courses in which examinations were to be held and given by the professors who would be the examiners. A minimum of three professors in each university college. The writing of, and public defense of, a dissertation (a heavy demand). Further: non-public universities were not automatically authorized to issue the *effectus civilis* to those who passed the examinations. The schools must be specifically designated. Finally, in case such a school did not satisfy the requirements and did not appear to be what the government rightfully expected, such authority to issue the *effectus civilis* could be rescinded — and that without giving reasons. The designation of such a university as one competent to
hand out the *effectus civilis* would thereby be cancelled.

It is difficult to see what more the opposition could have demanded in the way of guarantees and safeguards. Those contained in the Kuyper bill were stronger than those that existed at the national schools.

As the time for the vote neared, interest in the bill, also the interest of the general public, increased. March 24 arrived. The Chamber members were in their seats. The galleries were filled. Even members of the diplomatic corps were present. The atmosphere grew tense.

As was to be expected, all the 40 members of the Left who were present voted against the bill; the 56 members of the Right, except one, in favor. On that day, then, the Second Chamber adopted the Kuyper higher education bill in its entirety by an almost strictly Right versus Left vote. One member of the Right voted against.

But the Left still had a majority in the First Chamber, which consisted of 22 members of the Right, 27 of the Left, and 1 Conservative. In this body the bill received a genuinely hostile reception. The debate substantially reflected that held in the Second Chamber. It soon appeared, however, that the Left had definitely resolved to vote the bill down. There was yet a slim hope that the Left, by having a few members purposely absent, would let the bill pass. But even that slim hope failed.

At the hour set for the vote, one could see in the galleries many Second Chamber members, some national universities professors, a considerable number of Kuyper’s loyal followers, besides not a few other much interested men and women. On July 14 the First Chamber rejected the bill by a vote of 27 to 22. One member was absent.

Kuyper, though defeated in the First Chamber, decided to lose no time and promptly followed up his victory in the Second. With his detailed knowledge of the political map of Holland, specifically the composition of the provincial legislatures, Kuyper knew that the First Chamber no longer reflected those legislatures and the country. So the Cabinet decided, not lightheartedly but in deep seriousness, to advise dissolution. The Queen agreed. By royal decree of July 19, the First Chamber was dissolved, effective July 23, and August 3 was fixed as the date when the provincial legislatures would elect members of the First Chamber.

Only twice before (both times in combination with the Second Chamber) had the First Chamber been dissolved, in those cases not
because the Chamber had rejected a government bill but because
certain revisions of the Constitution had been tentatively adopted,
to await ratification by the newly-to-be-elected Parliament. This
then, was the first time since the Constitution of 1848 that the First
Chamber was dissolved without such constitutional requirement.
That dissolution was a spectacular event. It created a violent furor
among the Left. A part of the Liberals broke out in a storm of in-
dignation. They saw the possible end of their long regime. The
Liberal press exhibited the most offensive, small-souled narrow-
mindedness. But all the writing, both pro and contra, did not alter
the situation: the First Chamber was dissolved.

Kuyper went inexorably forward. But the move was not a leap
in the dark. The political affiliation of the provincial legislators was
known, naturally. Kuyper was certain that the results of the post-
dissolution elections would be what they actually proved to be.

The dissolution decree fixed August 3 as the day when the
eleven provincial legislatures must meet in special session to elect
members of the First Chamber of Parliament.

In ten legislatures the elections proceeded normally. When the
Liberals in the legislature of Overijsel province attempted a
delaying action, Kuyper promptly expedited matters by a special
act of Parliament. The result of the elections was a victory for the
Right.

So Kuyper outmaneuvered the opposition. He had held the
whip in hand and had used it. He remained master of the situation.
The contra vote of the Liberals had thwarted him for a time but
could not stop him. The Right now commanded a majority in the
new First Chamber.

The government promptly reintroduced the bill. Again the
members of both Chambers engaged in lengthy debates. On March
9, 1905, the Second Chamber adopted the bill by a vote of 53 to 38.
Not one member of the Left voted in favor. On May 20 the First
Chamber adopted the bill by a vote of 27 to 15. The Queen signed
two days later. Kuyper immediately proceeded to carry out the law.

What were the results of the Kuyper higher education law?
The non-public gymnasium now really had breathing space, that
is, more or less ample room for rather unhindered growth.
The institution of special chairs at the national universities en-
joyed a considerable, unexpected development. Greater use was
made of those chairs than Kuyper had anticipated.
The law elevated the Delft school to the rank of technological university. On July 10, 1905, the Delft Technological University was opened by Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina in impressive ceremonies. In his inaugural address, Rector Magnificus J. Kraus, who had loyally and effectively cooperated with Kuyper, paid tribute in genuine admiration to Kuyper’s practical sense, broad view, and powerful initiative.

To the Free University, the law was a priceless boon, a silver anniversary gift of inestimable value, one which had stood at the head of its gift list for years. True, the law did not provide a subsidy but only an insignificant sort of equalization sum of 4,000 guilders annually. But the *effectus civilis* — not a few or more paltry guilders — elated the school. The double examinations were now a thing of the past. Through the years, the school’s lack of the *effectus civilis* had been a definite deterrent to possible prospective students. Because the school now stood officially on a par with the public universities, a notable increase in the number of students could be expected. Essential justice had been done. Now the school could really exist and grow and flourish. Indeed, the Free University faced a bright and shining future.

All the provisions of the law would apply equally, of course, to any non-public universities that might be established in the future.

In 1923, eighteen years after the enactment of the Kuyper higher education law, the Sint-Radboud-Stichting, designated by royal decree of October 9, 1923 as competent to establish a university, founded the Catholic university at Nijmegen. On October 17 this school was opened. Its name: De Keizer Karel Universiteit.

As for Dr. Kuyper himself, his higher education law stands out as the greatest — at any rate, as one of the most notable — legislative achievements of his career. One is inclined to wonder if anyone except Kuyper could have carried the bill successfully through Parliament. In 1880 he, with his associates, had founded the Free University. Now, in 1905, some 25 years later, he “re-founded” the school; that is, he gave it a place of equality in law beside its sister universities.
One of the problems that still remained was the question regarding elementary schools.

The Mackay elementary education law of 1889 had ushered in a new era. In essential theory it recognized the equality of all grade schools — public and non-public — before the law and granted the qualifying non-public schools some very modest financial aid called subsidy. In principle, then, that law solved the problem insofar as was then possible. The Van Tienhoven cabinet, which followed the Mackay government, had honestly and loyally carried the Mackay law into effect. The Pierson ministry had secured from Parliament an increase in the subsidy to the non-state grade schools. Even so, much remained to be achieved before all the grade schools were on an equal footing in full practice.

Both Chambers of Parliament adopted the Kuyper elementary education bill. As a significant, progressive revision of the elementary school laws, Kuyper's law did a number of things. It so measurably increased the subsidies that it stands as a legislative landmark. It also provided for automatic subsidy increases in succeeding years. While the non-state schools' financial struggle was not, about 1901, a harsh struggle for survival, those schools still had a hard time of it financially. The law of 1905 considerably eased this burden. Moreover, the new law brought the non-public school teachers into the pension system which existed for their colleagues in the state schools and gave them the same legal status.
Their widows and orphans, too, were now entitled to survivors’ benefits. Now those teachers, too, many of whom had sacrificed much in order to engage in their chosen and loved profession, could look forward to the years of retirement without having the grim specter of possible poverty stand at the end of the professional road to mock them.

The Pierson government had secured the enactment of the compulsory school attendance law.

Would Kuyper now carry out this law of a Liberal regime? He would. He was not opposed to compulsory school attendance under all conditions. Under certain conditions it was ethically mandatory, under others entirely out of reason. Kuyper did not deny that the law had thus far remedied the evil of school absenteeism in both the absolute and the relative sense. Convinced that the law needed revision, such revision was nevertheless not on his current program. He first wanted more precise data on how the law was operating. When and how he would work toward revision he would determine later. Meanwhile, Kuyper would carry out the provisions of the law, not in a helter-skelter or radical way but in a gradual manner as circumstances demanded and made possible.

There devolved on the Kuyper cabinet some unfinished business of the Pierson government, namely the revision, required by statute, of the liquor law — an inescapable assignment.

When Kuyper introduced his bill, all sorts of vested interests and historically grown conditions showed that the problem was a complex one. The deliberations ran through 25 sessions and consumed three months. Now, an able minority can sometimes slow up legislation to a snail’s pace. That’s just what happened. The opposition’s dilatory practices, interminable speech-making, and obstructionist tactics, together with the presentation of addresses and memorials from holders of capital invested in the liquor business, spun out the debates endlessly.

In its course through Parliament, Kuyper’s bill suffered not a few alterations and amendments. I imagine that Kuyper hardly recognized his own brain child when it finally emerged as a law.

The law must have been a fairly good one, for even before it went into effect, its enemies made a concerted effort to discredit it. Two facts are clear. The law’s provisions showed that the government was in dead earnest in its concern for the moral interests of
the nation. And further, Kuyper’s liquor law was a salutary law. Its effect, combined with the efforts of total abstinence and temperance groups, appreciably reduced the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Holland.

Seen from a different angle, the long spun-out debate on the bill did not displease the Liberals. The more of the cabinet’s time they could consume or fritter away, the less the government would be able to achieve in the way of distinctive Christian coalition legislation.

Up to this time, governments and Parliaments had done something toward the solution of the socio-economic question. Nevertheless, what had been accomplished remained wholly inadequate from the broad humanitarian point of view.

Kuyper and his cabinet wanted to forge ahead on the path of social reform. Because the problem resided in his department (Internal Affairs), the chief burden fell on him. Kuyper drew the great lines with a firm hand. He possessed the courage to tackle the complex problems involved. He recognized the international character of the social question. On the almost untrod terrain of socio-economic reform, he charted the course for his party and his government.

Kuyper built his program on the substructure of his basic principles. Because he saw the organic character of society, the social question was to him far broader than the financial interests of the laboring class. In his view it also included the small businessmen, the professional groups, and all other social classes. Avoiding the Scylla of laissez faire on the one hand and the Charybdis of statism on the other, he wanted a minimum of government interference with a maximum of worker initiative and participation. Kuyper deemed labor organizations not only desirable but necessary. But they must, to his mind, possess ample self-control and self-limitation to exclude all politics from their meetings. The Socialists and Anarchists who infiltrate the trade unions and infect them with their politics will do those unions no good but will hinder their success and progress. They make it impossible for all the members of a trade or a craft in the same locality to unite into one organization which could exert real strength. And the turbulences of 1903 showed clearly what can happen if labor unions permit themselves to develop not only into a power in the state but into a pretender state. In the economic struggle between employers and employees,
the right to strike takes the first place for the workers. However, a
strike may not violate a contract or be accompanied by the com-
mission of crimes.

Those were Kuyper’s views in briefest outline.

The Kuyper cabinet was a coalition government. Each of its
parties had its own slant on the issues. Their platforms had not
been identical. For that reason, the parties represented in the
cabinet consulted together and reached an agreement (naturally a
compromise) as to what they would attempt to secure in the way of
legislation. Further, all bills first had to be submitted to the Council
of State, which gave the Crown prior advice before the bills were
sent to Parliament. And, though familiar with general social
legislation in other lands, Kuyper did not want merely to copy laws
from the statute books of other countries. Nor did he work by rule-
of-thumb. He wanted a thorough investigation and study of the
subjects on which he would ask Parliament to legislate. So, by
questionnaires and other methods he had volumes of relevant data
assembled. Organizations and institutions were consulted and their
counsels evaluated. All this, to be sure, required time, but it made
for sound and acceptable legislation.

While the cabinet had had its hands full with other matters up
to 1905, in that year Kuyper had a number of socio-economic bills
before Parliament or nearly ready for submission. Among the
highly significant factors in the problem which these proposals
covered were: widening of the coverage of the Workmen’s Com-
pensation Law so as to include agriculture and fisheries (certainly
two ultra-important industries in Holland); provisions for the labor
contract and the creation of Chambers of Labor; the increasing
protection of women and young persons in industry; the erection of
an insurance system covering sickness, disability, and old age, with
widows included. Kuyper personally favored survivors’ benefits for
widows and orphans. All these far-reaching proposals and more
Kuyper advanced as indispensable factors to bring about elemental
social justice.

What did Kuyper construe the government’s part in the
operation of these functions to be, assuming that the bills were
enacted into law? The insurance system must include all Netherlan-
ders. Only a system which covers all can offer the solution. The
government alone can include all and must decree this by law. And
whereas united risk-bearing is the sine qua non for such insurance,
and only the government can call this into being, the government must
introduce social insurance, while employers and employees must promote and further such insurance measures. Whether each individual business or groups of related businesses or industrial insurance companies or the government is to collect the premiums and pay the benefits is an important but rather subsidiary question. In a word, the government must legislate, direct, regulate, inspect, and compel compliance.

Although Kuyper introduced his bills into Parliament at the earliest possible moment and pushed them with maximum power, little reached the statute books. Time ran out before the 1905 election.

This is, however, not the whole story. In that same year, 1905, Kuyper published his social reform proposals in three thick volumes. They reveal an astonishing amount of original labor.

Kuyper and his cabinet had not accepted the free trade dogma, because with many others it had seen clearly that the dogma was untenable. Nor did Kuyper try to rush into the protective tariff system. Not at all. He and his associates felt that the subject required serious study. What is best for Holland, all things considered, such as times, trends, and events in Holland and in other lands? What will serve best for the present and for the future? The answers had to come from thorough investigation.

Yet, the cabinet would propose tariff increases, but these would be of a fiscal nature, that is, a tariff for revenue only. It planned to strengthen the national treasury materially and at the same time, far from injuring the national prosperity, promote it vigorously. That goal the bill in course of preparation envisaged. The government's social insurance program, to mention only one factor, would entail heavy expenditures. Kuyper deemed any tariff increases whose purpose is the strengthening of the national treasury justified only if and when present and future laws demonstrated the imperative need. He further declared that disbursements may not legally be voted unless provision is made as to how (from which sources) the disbursements are to be met. In other words: pay as you go.

Kuyper had declared in the Second Chamber, "I have always been a democrat and I hope to die a Christian democrat." Yet, he did not introduce a suffrage bill into Parliament while he was Prime Minister. While Kuyper was in principle committed to the system of head-of-household voting, he nevertheless favored a
widening of the suffrage base, as he had done before, knowing that his ideal was unattainable.

But as Prime Minister, he himself had distinctly said that the cabinet would not make the question an order of business for Parliament. Every attempt from the floor of the Chamber to make the government change its mind definitely failed.

Kuyper was no blind fanatic. He had been in politics long enough to know what he was about. Only a few years previously, in 1894, Mr. Lohman and his following had left the Antirevolutionary party over the suffrage question. Among the parties of the Right there was no full unanimity on the problem. Kuyper clearly foresaw what could happen if he pressed the electoral question. The Free Antirevolutionaries might have voted against the bill, the coalition would have broken, the cabinet would have fallen, and Christian government received a major setback.

At the same time, there were among the Antirevolutionary representatives an A. P. Staalman and a few others who wanted by all means and regardless of all else the solution of the electoral question. Staalman the political maverick and his fellow insurgents, all super-democrats, militated against the cabinet. They wanted to undertake at once revision of the constitution. Utterly unrealistic and entirely oblivious of the obvious, they didn’t seem to realize that they were endangering the cabinet’s program. In their quasi-independent attitude they virtually fomented rebellion and defied the party leadership. But the incessant cries and the unreasonable demands of the chronic rebel Staalman and his few followers produced no legislative effect. No bill came through.

By this time the colonial question, specifically the Dutch East Indies problem, was approaching its solution. Kuyper’s goal and that of the Antirevolutionary party had always been Christianization and training for eventual independence. By about 1904, pacification of the archipelago, without which there could be no further progress, had been practically achieved.

General Van Heutz, appointed civil and military governor of Achin, a great area in the western part of Sumatra, on March 26, 1898, was now appointed Governor-General of the entire Dutch East Indies in July of 1904. He served to 1909.

Mr. A. W. F. Idenburg, who had had a distinguished East Indies career and who in 1902 entered the Kuyper cabinet as Colonial Secretary, made an energetic beginning toward the introduction of
reforms. For example, the law of July 23, 1903 brought the considerable decentralization of the administration of the islands and instituted local and regional councils.

While General Van Heutz was in Holland, he had with him his adjutant since 1901, Captain Hendrik Colyn, a man of 35, with already a brilliant military and civil career in the Indies. During Colyn’s six-week stay in Holland in 1904, Kuyper talked much with him. Colyn was a man after Kuyper’s own heart — a Christian who did not hide his light under a bushel, of the Reformed faith and Antirevolutionary convictions, able, energetic, of practical idealism, cosmopolitan, successful. Both men were impressed. Although Colyn did not agree with certain details in Kuyper’s exposition of the party’s 1878 Declaration of Principles on the colonial problem, he declared later: “Kuyper’s genius is revealed in the fact that the East Indies work is being carried forward along the major lines he laid down.”

When we consider how Keuchenius, Idenburg, Kuyper, Colyn, Van Heutz, and many more spent vast efforts and accomplished much for the millions of the magnificent East Indies archipelago, we wonder how they would react if they could return to earth and see what has taken place there in recent years.

We also note Kuyper’s action in the matter of appointments in general. One must know that in Holland mayors, for example, were not elected by the voters of their political units but were appointed by the Crown on recommendation of the cabinet. Now, about 1900, of the 180 mayors in the province of South Holland 11 were Antirevolutionaries, 3 Christian Historicals, 3 Catholics, and 163 Liberals. Of the 124 school inspectors and supervisors no fewer than 94 were Liberals. Everywhere the situation was the same. Even appointments to university professorates were no exception. It looked for all the world as if the Liberals had followed the policy of “To the victors belong the spoils.”

While Kuyper preferred that the political units appoint or elect their own mayors, he could only follow the existing method. Kuyper introduced a bold new policy in the making of appointments. One no longer had to be a political Liberal to be considered for an appointive post. He appointed as mayors men who possessed the required executive ability and, when possible, whose general outlook and political affiliation coincided with those of the majority of the political unit which they would serve. Kuyper was fair. When vacancies arose, he appointed able men without con-
fining himself to men of a single group or a few affiliated groups.

The Liberal legend has long tried to minimize and depreciate the achievements of the Kuyper government. To admit that Kuyper and his fellow ministers of the Crown actually accomplished things eminently worthwhile surpassed the ability of the Liberals and the Socialists. It would have been so much better if the Liberals had tried hard to accommodate themselves to the actual situation, namely, that men of Christian political convictions were now not only members of Parliament but even ministers of the Crown. Besides, the Left could have practiced a measure of bipartisanship on certain bills that came to Parliament. Further, the charge that Kuyper didn’t accomplish a great deal during the four years of his premiership came with poor grace from the Liberals and the Socialists, who flexed their muscles in order to block him at almost every step.

If one says by reference to the record that Kuyper did not obtain an outstanding number of laws, the statement as such is correct. But that is not the ultimate judgment. Thorbecke, the great Liberal leader of his day, said on February 28, 1871, “One usually expects to achieve more than one actually accomplishes.” How many Dutch prime ministers and American presidents and governors have had that same experience!

But the estimate of the Liberals and Socialists is unjust. Examining the evaluation of discerning contemporaries, one rejects the biased opinion of his enemies. Kuyper’s was not a sterile government. The Kuyper regime was more than anticipation, more than a preface, more than an introduction to large Christian government. It was Christian government on the national level. Like the Mackay ministry of earlier years (1888-1891), the Kuyper cabinet had convincingly demonstrated that it possessed the genius for government.

In appraising a government’s production, one must take the broad view. One must allow for all the extraordinary, wearing, time-consuming difficulties with which the cabinet had to contend, the always slow grinding of legislative machinery, the long drawn-out deliberations, as on the liquor bill, and the time consumed by the dissolution of the First Chamber, to name only these. Kuyper had a long-range program and a short-range program. The latter program, immediate and urgent, called for the removal of the inequities and injustices under which many thousands of
Netherlanders had labored for years, notably in the area of elementary, secondary, and higher education. On that score the legislative harvest was far from negligible; indeed, it was exceptionally rich.

On the whole, the box score for the exciting, stormy four-year period was in fact so good that the Liberals and the Social Democrats wanted no more of it.

The years of the Kuyper government were a time of political awakening as no other period had been. It aroused an active, unprecedented, continuous interest in the work of Parliament. More than ever before, the people gave themselves an account of the problems of the day. People read the press reports of the doings in both Chambers. Many subscribed to Parliament’s *Journal of Proceedings*, which corresponds to the American *Congressional Record*. They discussed and debated. They learned to know where they themselves stood on the issues. Said an intelligent sailor, “We take the *Proceedings* to sea with us.” In those years, 1901-1905, the people were so interested in the doings of Parliament that long before an important session, they formed a long queue in order to get a seat in the gallery. Cases are known where persons spent the entire night beside the government buildings so as to be the first ones in the gallery when Kuyper was to deliver a major speech.

During his 1901-1905 premiership, Kuyper naturally depended heavily on the cooperation of all the representatives of the coalition parties. While an occasional discordant but conscientious note was heard, the cooperation of the Right proved a fruitful collaboration.

The Left knew, of course, that the parties of the Right would work together, but what they couldn’t fathom was Lohman’s attitude. They knew of the split between Kuyper and Lohman in 1894, also of Lohman’s separate party organization. Yet Lohman loyally and royally supported the Kuyper government. That astonished, indeed, disillusioned the Left. Kuyper, knowing how much he owed to Lohman’s effective support, cordially thanked him by letter, to which Lohman replied in his own cordial way.

The coalition held for four years. That was a masterpiece of achievement in itself.

When Dr. Kuyper became Prime Minister, he did not at once resign his party leadership and relinquish his editorship of *De Staandeard*, both for the duration.

While during the four years of his premiership there appeared
in *De Standaard* an occasional article or editorial which betrayed Kuyper's style, he could not during that period give regular political guidance through the medium of his newspaper. But when the national quadrennial elections of 1905, in which the National Committee would have to act, approached, Kuyper did resign the chairmanship. At the same time, all understood that the new leader would be in reality chairman pro tem, that is, till such time as Kuyper should choose to reassume the leadership.

At the April 13, 1905 Antirevolutionary national convention, Dr. H. Bavinck presided and delivered the keynote speech.

That convention faced an unusual problem. Within the party there had arisen a splinter group headed by A. P. Staalman, member of the Second Chamber for the Den Helder district. Staalman, a chronic rebel, had refused to join the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club. Since 1902 he had carried on a sharp opposition to the cabinet. While his obsession was the suffrage question, he had other criticisms as well. Staalman and a T. De Vries traveled through the country for the purpose of organizing a Christian Democratic party, while they at the same time considered themselves, and wanted to be considered, members of the Antirevolutionary party. Even a novice in politics knows that such quasi-independence is nothing less than mutiny.

The Antirevolutionary national convention handed Staalman and his associates a courteous but firm ultimatum. It unanimously adopted a resolution to the effect that the Antirevolutionary party could not deal with the Staalman group, either as regular party members or as an independent group, as long as that (Staalman) group did not end their equivocal position and definitely clarified their attitude toward the regular Antirevolutionary party. When Staalman saw that the Antirevolutionary party was not going to put up with his dubious ways, he and his band on April 24 formally left the Antirevolutionary party and organized their own. Outside the Den Helder district it developed little strength.

The 1905 political campaign began early.

Now, what is a political campaign without issues? In this 1905 campaign, the important, the paramount, the only issue was Kuyper. The opposition organized a crusade against the Kuyper cabinet, more especially, the Prime Minister himself. "Out with Kuyper!" was the unwritten plank in all their platforms. The Left pointed their enraged campaign exclusively against Kuyper. They
had determined on the Kuyper cabinet’s downfall at all costs. To
them Kuyper was anathema, the archenemy. In their campaign of
desperation, their attack assumed gigantic proportions. It verily
seemed as if a literally demonic power had broken out against him.

But why this bitter fanaticism? The Left knew that they had no
party leader, campaign manager, journalist, and Parliamentary
debater of Kuyper’s stature. He had successfully headed the govern-
ment during four critical, drama-packed years. The entire Left
viewed Kuyper as the incarnation of the antithesis: God or man the
Absolute Sovereign, the Christian versus the humanistic life
philosophy. What Kuyper’s enemies especially held against him
was that he made this antithesis the basis for his political action. He
had mercilessly terminated the Liberal regime. He had broken the
back of political Liberalism. For many years the Liberals had had a
Monroe Doctrine of their own: Holland for the Liberals. That doc-
trine Kuyper cavalierly threw out the window, or, if you prefer, he
unceremoniously tossed it over the dike. Moreover, during his
premiership Kuyper did not treat the Liberals with that preferential
defere which they deemed their decades-old due. While his
manner toward them was courteous and courtly enough, he not in-
frequently served them with haughty replies. For the Liberals to eat
humble pie, especially in public, was very difficult. The Free
University, to the public mind Kuyper’s creation, gave no sign of
expiring. Rather, it was indeed growing. And the new higher
education law would prove a decided boon to the school. By that
law Kuyper at the same time in one stroke broke the Liberals’
monopoly on higher education.

There were still more reasons. Kuyper’s political party was
growing soundly and quickly. The parties of the Right had won the
1901 election — in Leftist eyes a crimen nefandum. Kuyper was
going from strength to strength. No one could stop him. At times
he had to detour, but even detours carried him forward. Try as they
might, the Left could not drive a wedge between Kuyper and his
following. All their ill-advised attempts only welded the bond more
closely. Meanwhile, the Liberals sensed quite clearly that they were
a decadent party. They were slipping toward what seemed ultimate
political oblivion. Since 1888, their majorities in both Chambers of
Parliament had shrunk to minorities. Nor did the thought that they
had won recent elections with the help of the Socialists inspire
them. Nor did the parties of the Left exactly constitute a rapturous
partnership. And who, they felt, was to blame for all this if not
Kuyper? The dissolution of the First Chamber and its metamorphosis into a Chamber with a Right majority was another sore spot with the Liberals. That Chamber had always been a citadel of Liberalism. When Kuyper captured that citadel, he broke the Liberals’ stranglehold on Parliament and legislation. The Socialists, Radicals, and Anarchists never forgave Kuyper the mailed fist that crushed their revolutionary foray nor the three famous bills that he carried through Parliament to the statute books. After 1903 Kuyper was to them the hated man. He had earned their undying, irreconcilable hatred.

To sum it all up: the Liberals, Socialists, and Radicals had now experienced four years of Kuyper government; to their impassioned minds another four years of the same would be the catastrophe to end all catastrophes. The parties of the Left adopted their platforms — catch-all masterpieces that agreed in every matter of consequence. While the old political labels still rendered yeoman service, the Leftist parties operated in thrilling harmony. The most dignified Liberal fraternized with the most passionate Socialist. The Socialists, of course, did not expect to win a majority in the Second Chamber. But they could help the Liberals so that the Right couldn’t win either. They could thus force the retirement of the Kuyper cabinet. That was to them “the wave of the future.”

Anti-Kuyper speakers traveled through the country with feverish activity. They worked themselves into a peculiar frenzy. Their voices became hoarse and foggy as they orated in misty, sepulchral tones. Others, in unparalleled bitterness, villified and flayed Kuyper mercilessly. Half-truths, manifest distortion and twisting of the truth, inflammatory denunciations, pure demagoguery, harsh epithets, savage attacks were their stock in trade. All their pent-up wrath exploded against him. The scurrilous campaign conducted by the Left still stands as an unexampled prostitution of political morality.

Even self-respecting Liberals exclaimed of certain anti-Kuyper campaigners, “How low can they get?” One of them, a university professor, wrote a brochure entitled Can We Not Become Different?

Although the primary election, held June 16, while inconclusive, already indicated a trend against the Right, the men of the Right, even though plagued by a sense of misgiving, fought out the electoral battle to the hour the polls closed.

At the June 29 election, the Right won 48 seats and the Left 52. Neither the Liberals nor the combination of Liberals and
Socialists could defeat Kuyper by pooling their resources. And it was neither the Cabinet’s administrative and legislative record nor its tariff proposals nor the campaign conducted by the Left which brought defeat to the Right but disloyalty and mutiny in the Antirevolutionary ranks. The Left had won with the gratuitous help of two groups that were really Antirevolutionary in basic political principles. Staalman and his band, together with the Rev. L. H. Wagenaar and his Frisian Christian Historical party, casting Christian solidarity and chances of victory to the winds, went on their own instead of cooperating with the parties of Kuyper and Lohman and the Catholics. Their action cost the Coalition five seats in the Second Chamber. Had they cooperated, the result of the election would have been: Right 53, Left 47. Those dissidents and insurgents with their followings took away enough votes to make the Right lose a crucial election.

As to Kuyper, the 1905 election result was another of the great disappointments of his life. When one realizes Kuyper’s vast efforts during the four years of his premiership, one understands why he wanted so urgently to complete his legislative program. But in the lonely shadow of defeat, faith in the providential ordering of events in his life and work gave him courage to live and work on.

The Queen invited Mr. Goeman Borgesius, a leading Liberal, who had taken a chief, if not the foremost, part in the campaign, to form the new cabinet. Borgesius consented. He might, if he chose, now be prime minister. If he preferred an ordinary cabinet post, he could have had that. But he wanted neither the one nor the other. He did agree to form a cabinet, but with the understanding that he himself would not take a portfolio — always a questionable procedure. Did he fear that Lohman and other men of the Right would make his cabinet tenure a nightmare by calling him to task for his scandalous conduct in the campaign? Borgesius dredged about among the Liberal politicos and came up with a cabinet headed by Mr. T. De Meester.

On August 16 the Kuyper cabinet retired.

In 1898 Queen Wilhelmina had “inherited” the Pierson cabinet from her mother, Queen-Regent Emma. Kuyper was her first prime minister. So in 1905 she saw her first prime minister go. In all the remaining 43 years of her long 50 year reign (in 1948 she abdicated in favor of her daughter, the present Queen Juliana), she would not see his like again.
22: At Home And Abroad

When Kuyper’s cabinet retired, he was a man of near 68 and once again a private citizen.

He now held no office or position which required his presence in Holland. So he seized an opportunity such as had not come his way in 40 years: he set out on a long journey to the Levant. That trip, little more than an airplane jaunt today, was a considerable journey in 1905. Why this particular tour? Kuyper wanted to satisfy a dream of his youth, namely, to visit the holy land. And he wanted to make an on-the-scene study of religious, social, and political conditions in the countries that bordered on the Mediterranean Sea.

Kuyper’s journey extended over somewhat more than a year. The long tour gave him intense personal satisfaction and a maximum of enjoyment. It was, besides, a sort of triumphal journey. Through the years, Kuyper’s name had become known beyond Holland. To whatever country he came, the Dutch ambassadors and other representatives received him with the ultimate in goodwill and presented him at foreign courts.

From copious notes, Kuyper wrote his two-volume work of eleven chapters and about a thousand pages, to which he gave the title Around the Ancient World Sea (i.e. the Mediterranean). These volumes are not a travelog in the usual sense except to a quite limited degree. Rather, they constitute a report on conditions as he found them, together with a Kuyperesque discussion of the Asiatic
danger, Russia, the Jewish problem, the holy land, and the riddle of Islam (to mention only five topics).

Kuyper took time out from his tour just once.

1906 was the 150th anniversary of the birth of Willem Bilderdyk (1756-1831). Perhaps best known as a poet, Bilderdyk also wrote on linguistic, literary, historical, religious, ethical, and philosophical themes. A Bilderdyk Commission sponsored and planned a mass meeting for October 1 in the Concertgebouw at Amsterdam, with Dr. Kuyper as the orator for the occasion.

As Kuyper walked to the lectern, the vast audience broke out in an indescribably enthusiastic ovation. Kuyper spoke continuously for two solid hours on "Bilderdyk in His National Significance." Though already a man of nearly 69, his distinguished thoughts, his magnificent literary style, and his every speaking manner showed plainly that senility had not begun to creep up on him. As he spoke in all the strength of his national life-ideal, Kuyper portrayed Bilderdyk as a versatile, mighty genius, as a truly great national figure, as one who had held aloft the banner of the name of the Lord.

Dr. Herman Bavinck, the distinguished Reformed theologian who may be mentioned as such in one breath with Kuyper, now since 1902 held Kuyper's chair in the divinity school. In 1895 he had published the first volume of his four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics.* The other volumes appeared in the next few years. The University's senate invited Kuyper to serve on a part-time basis by lecturing in at least one course, say, one day each week. But Kuyper, having decided to maintain his The Hague residence, declined the invitation. He felt that such an arrangement with the school would reduce his work week from six days to five days. He couldn't have that. So he declined, though not without a measure of regret.

In October, 1906, Dr. Kuyper requested and received extension of his leave of absence from the Free University to October 29, 1907, when he would reach the age of 70. The school then gave him honorable discharge and sent him a letter of fine appreciation. On January 1, 1908, Kuyper's formal connection with the Free University ceased.

On October 29, 1907, Dr. Kuyper reached the Psalmist's three score years and ten. Cards, letters, and telegrams poured into the Kuyper home in a flood. A large public reception was held. Kuyper
accepted all the congratulations, well wishes, honors, and overflowing evidences of esteem and affection in a spirit of grateful humility. They made the day one of genuine joy.

To mark the occasion, friends and co-workers saw to the publication of the second Kuyper memorial volume, perhaps better called “Book of Remembrance.” Like its predecessor of 1897, the volume was not a biography but a retrospective survey of his career in various fields. It was again a book of explanation, evaluation, and appreciation.

Naturally, no one who knew Kuyper expected that he would now call it a day, transfer his entire load to able younger men, sit before a front window of his home, watch the world go by, and grow old gracefully. But he did not surrender even a part of his work. Still physically robust and mentally vigorous as always, Kuyper had much work planned that he wanted to accomplish. He gave no thought to withdrawing from the active scene. He wanted only to prosecute his lifework as vigorously as he had done through the many past years.

No, Kuyper did not retire. He was constitutionally unable to retire.

For De Heraut Dr. Kuyper had written only the meditations during his premiership. Others had written the leaders and the articles on intra-church and inter-church affairs. Soon after his return to Holland, Kuyper resumed the writing of the leaders. In January of 1907 he began a series on “Pro Rege” (For Christ Our King), which would run for several years. This series appeared in 1911 and 1912 as a reprint in three large volumes, which average about 575 pages each.

While the meditations were independent units, Kuyper virtually wrote them in series. Many were later published in book form and even today stand on the bookshelves of numberless homes. Since 1901 there appeared Asleep in Jesus, Keep Thy Solemn Feasts (for Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, New Year’s Eve, and New Year’s Day), and To Be Near Unto God. The two volumes on To Be Near Unto God, published in 1908, are the last of Kuyper’s meditations to come to us in book form, although he continued to write them in De Heraut.

The speeches which Kuyper delivered in the Second Chamber of Parliament in 1874 and 1875 appeared in book form in 1890. (He represented the Gouda district from 1874 to 1877.)
During the years 1908-10, four large volumes of his speeches were published. The first volume contains the speeches that he delivered from 1894 to 1901, when he represented the Sliedrecht district. The other three include all those that he delivered in both Chambers while Prime Minister.

When Kuyper returned to Holland in 1906 from his journey to the Levant, he did not take a house in Amsterdam but maintained his The Hague residence. In The Hague he would be at the heart of things governmental. Although De Heraut and De Standaard were printed in Amsterdam, Kuyper the editor could live elsewhere, but he would have to use the mail service heavily. Again, since his residence was only a seven-minute walk from the Parliament buildings, Kuyper could easily confer at any time with the Antirevolutionary representatives and with his allies of the other parties. And if he should decide to return to the Second Chamber of Parliament, any district of the country could elect him, even though he lived in The Hague.

Kuyper at the same time decided that for the time being, he would not seek a seat in Parliament. That resolve, one need not hesitate to say, was a most peculiar one. Let it be said again that according to the fitness of things in Netherlands politics, a party leader should hold membership in Parliament. Further, astute generalship dictated that Kuyper do so. There he would head the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club and be the party floor leader in the Second Chamber. Then, in case the De Meester cabinet fell before the 1909 election, he, Kuyper, would be directly in line, if not first in line, for the invitation to cabinet formation. Moreover, his party certainly had a right to expect of him that he go to Parliament. And he could have obtained a seat in the Second Chamber without the slightest difficulty. Kuyper’s resolve to remain out of Parliament is all the more mystifying for another reason. Didn’t he recall all the friction and disagreements during the years from about 1882 to 1894, when, though the party leader, he was too much taken up with other affairs to serve in Parliament?

What is the explanation? Kuyper had in his own mind set up a political timetable on this order: the De Meester ministry is a weak cabinet. Let it remain in office the full four years, unless it proposes some measure or bill which too severely violates the Antirevolutionary principles. Let its weakness be thoroughly demonstrated to the country. Then the quadrennial elections of 1909 will
return the Right to power. The Right already commands a majority in the First Chamber. In 1909, then, the Right will take over for another four, perhaps eight, years and virtually complete its legislative program. Some time before or at the 1909 elections, he, Kuyper, would obtain a seat in the Second Chamber. After the elections he would again form a cabinet and head the government as Prime Minister. He would reintroduce his social legislation proposals and carry them through Parliament. He would thus realize the coalition’s legislative program.

That seems to have been his program. Now, there is no denying that on the face of it, Kuyper’s timetable was a well-laid plan. Perhaps things would work out that way. If they did, good and well. But, especially in the Parliamentary system of government, politics are peculiarly plagued by imponderables. Suppose, for example, that for some reason the De Meester cabinet should fall while Kuyper did not hold a seat in Parliament. In that case he would hardly be asked to form the new cabinet. Or suppose that the De Meester cabinet should continue beyond the four-year term.

We return to 1905.

Even though they had barely squeaked through to victory, how the Liberals and the Socialists licked their Leftist chops! But when the tumult and the shouting had died down, the Liberals faced an uncomfortable situation. In the Second Chamber they held 45 seats (not a majority), the Socialists 7, and the Christian coalition 48. Besides, the Right (the Christian coalition) dominated in the First Chamber. For the cabinet and the Liberals, the prospect was anything but exhilarating. All things considered, it was more than ordinarily obscure what the De Meester cabinet hoped to accomplish.

The cabinet withdrew the Kuyper social reform bills, then reintroduced some of them with minor changes. For example, the Kuyper cabinet had submitted the labor contract bill to the Second Chamber. Van Raalte, of the De Meester cabinet, withdrew it, then re-submitted it essentially unchanged. During the debate, men repeated what had already been said and they said again what had already been repeated. On June 29, 1906, the Second Chamber adopted the bill by a vote of 79 to 8. Toward the end of the year it reached the First Chamber, where debate commenced in May of 1907. It was adopted by this Chamber, too.

In his Standaard Kuyper raised no objections to the bill. Of
course not. It was his cabinet’s, perhaps his own, brain child.

At the special Antirevolutionary national convention of October 17, 1907, Dr. H. Bavinck resigned the chairmanship of the party’s National Committee. The convention again chose Kuyper by a virtually unanimous vote. Bavinck gladly transferred the gavel to Kuyper. He realized perfectly that his position had been temporary — call it an interim service. He did not have the least inclination to supplant Kuyper.

The De Meester ministry made a serious mistake: it placed the military question in the foreground, and that in a not very practical manner.

On December 21, 1906, the Second Chamber adopted Minister o’ Defense Staal’s drastically economical army budget. But the First Chamber rejected it, so precipitating a cabinet crisis. With the help of the Right the cabinet survived the crisis and withdrew their collective resignations. It let General Staal go and took General W. R. Van Rappard in his place.

Minister Van Rappard now came to the Second Chamber with his budget, which also struck the economy note but not so drastically as Staal’s. Now, in some circles men considered war only a remote possibility. Others, on the contrary, not so optimistic and witnessing the increasing international tension, argued that in case of war, Holland must remain neutral but must at the same time be militarily able to defend her neutrality.

Meanwhile, with Kuyper not a member of the Second Chamber, the chairmanship of the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club and the place of floor leader had gone to Mr. Theodore Heemskerk, son of a former prime minister but not, like his father, a Conservative. Heemskerk led the attack on the budget bill. On December 21, 1907, the Second Chamber rejected the Van Rappard army budget by a vote of 53 to 38. All the Antirevolutionary representatives, with enough from other parties, voted against. That action definitely meant the demise of the De Meester government, after only two and a half years in office.

Kuyper was one of the statemen whom the Queen consulted. From his statement to her we easily gather his position and his reasons: stave off cabinet formation, if possible, till after the 1909 election, only a year and a half away. The Liberals should now attempt an improved cabinet formation. Only if the Left declared it-
self unable to do that must the Right form a cabinet. In that case
Heemskerk is the logical man. This must then be a caretaker
cabinet, which will dissolve the Second Chamber promptly on
taking office or at the first conflict. Then, if the Right wins the
1909 election, a Right cabinet, the product of the election results,
will be in a strong position. That was Kuyper's slant.

When it became clear to Heemskerk that new cabinet for-
motion could hardly be demanded of the Left and when the Queen
invited him to form the new government, he tried to avoid the task
and have Kuyper do it, but did not succeed. So Heemskerk formed
the new cabinet, a Right government. It took office on February
11, 1908.

Because this political evolution drastically changed the politi-
cal picture, it at the same time rudely upset Kuyper's time-
table. Besides, at the 1909 election Heemskerk and his government
would be on trial. If the Right won, Heemskerk would undoubtedly
continue. When affairs did not take the turn that he had en-
visioned, how Kuyper must have felt disillusioned!

Heemskerk's action of late 1907 and his accession to the
premiership in early 1908 caused serious friction between Kuyper
on the one hand and Heemskerk, with some other leading An-
tirevolutionaries, on the other.

One may not say that Heemskerk and his fellow represen-
tatives with malice aforethought pulled the rug out from under the
De Meester government. Nor may we believe, as some did, that
Heemskerk had an ulterior motive, namely, to sidetrack Kuyper,
take the premiership himself, probably obtain the party leadership
himself, and thus relegate Kuyper to the sidelines. We have no
ground whatever for such suspicions. On the contrary, we have
every reason to believe Heemskerk's statement to the effect that he
acted in good conscience, that when he and the others voted down
the Van Rappard army budget, they were actuated by a justifiable
concern for the national defense.

But Kuyper found it difficult, if not impossible, to accept this.
He seems to have suspected a different motivation. He could not
reconcile himself to the situation. Heemskerk and other men high
in the party councils corresponded and conferred with Kuyper in
order to remove the friction. While they achieved a partial success
in their attempt to heal the breach, years elapsed before Kuyper was
fully satisfied.
23: Elder Statesman

On the occasion of Queen Wilhelmina’s birthday, August 31, 1908, Dr. Kuyper was, on presentation by the Heemskerk cabinet, appointed Minister of State. This was a place of both real usefulness and distinct honor, for the Council of State advised the Crown on bills prepared by cabinets before such bills were sent to Parliament. The Leftist press, however, told its readers that the Cabinet was trying to shelve Kuyper by giving him a broad hint that it was now time for him to retire from active politics. In fact the Liberals played up *ad nauseam* the friction between Kuyper and some other foremost men in the party.

In October of 1908, the Ommen district (in Gelderland province) elected Kuyper to a seat in the Second Chamber to fill a vacancy. He accepted the mandate. To the newspapers of the country, Kuyper’s return to Parliament was important news. As a matter of fact, over a period of many years Kuyper had been news. In 1908 he was still news. In December he again resumed his former place as chairman of the Antirevolutionary Chamber Club.

From February of 1908, when it came to power, to the June, 1909 quadrennial elections, a period of a year and four months, the Heemskerk cabinet marked time, so far as the public could see. That was practically inevitable. For one thing, a ministry needs time to prepare legislative bills. For another, the cabinet did not have a majority in the Second Chamber. So, men throughout the country seemed to live in expectation of what the 1909 election would bring.
On April 22, 1909, the Antirevolutionary party met in national convention in Utrecht. Because 1909 was the 400th anniversary year of the birth of John Calvin, Kuyper chose to deliver his keynote speech on “We Calvinists.”

Those Antirevolutionaries who had left the party under Lohman in 1894 had organized as the Free Antirevolutionary party. In 1903 they united with the Christian Historical Voters League, founded by Dr. Bronsveld. In 1908 the combined group united with the Frisian Christian Historical party of the Rev. L. H. Wagenaar and Dr. J. H. Schokking, founded by these men in 1898. The entire group continued under Mr. Lohman’s leadership as the Christian Historical Union.

In the 1909 election, the Right won 60 Second Chamber seats, the Left 40. Of the 60 Right representatives elected, 23 were Antirevolutionaries, 12 Christian Historicals, and 25 Catholics. Was it the touch of the old master’s hand which had brought this landslide victory? At any rate, the Left ascribed the sweeping triumph to Kuyper’s superb campaign management.

The Ommen district re-elected Kuyper.

Would Kuyper now have a place in the cabinet? On July 29, a cabinet member and personal friend of Kuyper authoritatively informed him that the Heemskerk ministry would continue without change and, further, that he, Kuyper, could hardly hold a portfolio in a cabinet which he had not formed and of which he was not minister-president (prime minister of the country). To Kuyper, now already 71, that political evolution was a painful experience. It cast a heavy shadow on his life. His position grew increasingly difficult. It began to look as if he might not ever again head the government or hold a cabinet place and thus realize the legislative program which he had mapped out.

In 1909 Kuyper brought into Dutch politics Hendrik Colyn, near 40, a graduate of the Kampen Military Academy, a man of sixteen years’ experiences in the Dutch East Indies service, presently adjutant, that is, chief military and administrative assistant, to Governor-General Van Heutz. Kuyper had at least two reasons. During his premiership he had had a number of enlightening talks with Colyn and learned to know him as a man of Antirevolutionary convictions and of high caliber. Besides, Kuyper felt that the party and the country needed a colonial expert in addition to Mr. Idenburg.
In a *Standaard* editorial Kuyper suggested that the party in one or more districts nominate Colyn for a seat in the Second Chamber. The party in the Sneek District (Friesland province), did so, conducted an enthusiastic campaign, and elected him. Word of his election reached Colyn while he was on government business among the headhunters of Dutch Borneo. He accepted the mandate and returned to Holland to engage in other government business among the political headhunters of the day.

Once again, as the future would reveal, Kuyper in 1909 built remarkably better than he then knew.

It is perfectly safe to say that no man in Netherlands politics has been so steadily, so often, sometimes so jovially, then again so bitterly caricatured and lampooned as Kuyper. Without him Holland’s cartoonists for the opposition would have starved. They began this pictorial diversion in 1874, when Kuyper first entered Parliament. And in 1909 the end was not yet.

When the thought of issuing a book of selected Kuyper cartoons occurred to a Dutch publisher and when this publisher asked Kuyper whether he possibly entertained objections, Kuyper replied, “Certainly not!” in a genial letter. This letter, a literary-philosophical-political gem, served as the preface to the thin volume.

The book appeared in 1909. About twelve years later the publisher issued a second volume of Kuyper cartoons, which contains only three sketches from the 1909 book, all the others (nearly 300) being from the years 1901 to 1920. In this second collection two of Holland’s leading cartoonists are most amply represented: Johannes Braakensiek and Albert Hahn, with forty-one drawings each. But what a difference! Braakensiek’s cartoons are jovial, detached, and artistic. Hahn’s on the other hand, are hard, bitter, combative. Significantly, Hahn’s cartoon “Abraham the Great” became very popular and was reprinted in many a book on Kuyper. When Albert Hahn drew that cartoon, he certainly did not have the faintest notion that Kuyper’s followers would one day hail it as the outstanding Kuyper cartoon.

To Kuyper’s implacable enemies among the Liberals, Socialists, and Radicals, he was anathema — Political Enemy Number One.

After the 1909 election they believed — indeed, feared — that Kuyper would dominate the government, perhaps enter the cabinet,
or might at some future time even hold the premiership again. So they laid awake nights devising plans and plots to prevent his return to power, to discredit him, in a word, to assassinate him politically. That was a rather large order. And with Kuyper already a man of 71, it was pretty late in the day for such a project.

During Kuyper’s premiership, the Queen had, on the cabinet’s presentation, appointed a Rudolph Lehman, a wealthy Amsterdam merchant and consul-general of Greece, as officer in the Order of Orange Nassau. Shortly before or after receiving this decoration, Lehman contributed 11,000 guilders to the Antirevolutionary treasury for the 1905 campaign. Though not a party member but a Liberal in his views, he had supported the government during the 1903 strike crisis and felt that he should strengthen the Antirevolutionary party financially. For his decoration there existed sound reasons. Lehman had actually rendered national service. Decorations have been awarded on less solid grounds.

R. Lehman’s brother (E. A. Lehman) was also being considered for a decoration, but the cabinet’s retirement prevented the possible award. He had also made a sizable contribution to the Antirevolutionary party treasury. Kuyper had also informed him in some way as to how he could render national service in order to make himself eligible for a decoration.

By a devious route, knowledge of these transactions reached a certain P. Tideman, a lawyer at Haarlem and a bitter-end enemy of Kuyper, although he did not know Kuyper personally and although Kuyper had never crossed him in any way. Tideman published an article in a Rotterdam newspaper of November, 1909. He and other of Kuyper’s enemies raised the cry of “Corruption” and “Graft.”

What a windfall for the vengeful, vindictive Kuyper foes! Troelstra, the Socialist leader, raised the question in the Second Chamber and delivered a sharp, violent speech in the November 19 session. He had barely concluded when Dr. Kuyper entered the Chamber. It was a dramatic moment. He read a prepared statement in which he declared on his word of honor that he had received no money for his party in order to give or promise a decoration. While he adduced sufficient ground for the decoration, he at the same time conceded that he had failed to exercise the required circumspection. The Chamber rejected Troelstra’s demand for a committee investigation.
Lohman now submitted to Kuyper the thought of a Court of Honor. After serious consideration, Kuyper requested the President of the Chamber to appoint such a Court. The majority of the three men appointed were of the Left. In its report of July 20, 1910, this committee stated its conclusions: that in the case of R. Lehman, who had received a decoration, Kuyper had certainly done nothing dishonorable; that in the case of E. A. Lehman, Kuyper had let him know through one channel or another which national services would make one eligible for a decoration; that his name had been apparently placed on a tentative list, although the possible services were still to be rendered. The Court of Honor declared, after serious investigation, that the facts themselves did not warrant the acceptance of the charge of graft. It said that it had seen no close inner connection between the contribution to the Antirevolutionary party treasury and the giving of information as to which deeds in the national interest would justify a decoration. This ended the official aspect of the matter.

Although the affair was serious enough — no one denied this — and although appearances were evidently against Kuyper, Kuyper’s implacable enemies blew it up out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. For years they had fed themselves on Kuyper-hatred. Yet their merciless and relentless persecution had always failed. Even this ill-begotten attempt at political assassination failed to bring them the self-promised Kuyperless political millennium.

Some years later it was fully admitted that in this case, too, men fought Kuyper in an unworthy manner. Troelstra himself admitted later that he had taken hold of this case in order to make Kuyper forever politically impossible and to avenge Kuyper’s strike action and strike laws of 1903. Even Troelstra, a lawyer, did not deem a connection between the contribution and the decoration proved. The facile charge of corruption and the attempt to expose Kuyper as a grafter fell flat. The effect was practically zero.

A major purpose of Kuyper’s accusers was to weaken, if possible, to destroy, the confidence of the Antirevolutionary party in their leader. In that direction they accomplished nothing. The bond between Kuyper and his followers was so close and strong that death alone could dissolve it. The party remained loyal to its leader.

In this severe ordeal of the “decoration affair,” or, as it is sometimes called, the “ribbons question,” Kuyper certainly regretted his involvement. One easily agrees with Kuyper, who conceded
that he had neglected to exercise the necessary prudence. One may also advance the well-founded proposition that individual psychology was not his strong forte. But when all is said, this affair regarding decorations remains a regrettable series of transactions. And we may finally be sure that Kuyper himself regretted it most of all.

April 1, 1912, was the fortieth anniversary of the first issue of De Standaard, which Dr. Kuyper had edited these many years.

On April 8 the anniversary was celebrated at a great enthusiastic mass meeting in an Utrecht auditorium. The Grand Old Man, already 74, still stood in his full strength. The confidence of the Antirevolutionaries in their leader still endured, in full measure.

The spirit of that immense gathering, the ovation it gave him, and the commemoration addresses demonstrated beyond all doubt that, whatever his enemies might say or do, Kuyper was still the power and the glory of the Antirevolutionary party.

During the year 1912, Kuyper delivered two characteristic major addresses of a largely historical but also practical nature.

On July 4, 1912, Kuyper addressed the 32nd annual convention of the Society which maintained the Free University, in session in Haarlem. He sketched the school’s founding and its maintenance, now over a period of 32 years, as a single, comprehensive, unified act of faith to which their God had inspired them. The Dutch title was “Een Geloofsstuk.”

While Kuyper looked into the past, he also had his eyes to the future. He urged more dedicated effort, greater liberality, more efficient exertions, and impressed on the school’s constituency the imperative need for expansion — faculty, student body, colleges, plant, and equipment.

Two characteristic sentences tell a part of Kuyper’s thought on the philosophy of the university. “A science (German: Wissenschaft; Dutch: wetenschap) subservient to a state, subservient to a church, subservient to a sect cannot fulfill its divinely given calling.” “Beside the state and the church, the school is entitled to an entirely independent position of honor.”

About this time Kuyper delivered at Leeuwarden, Groningen, and Rotterdam a Kuyperesque semi-political address on “Brought out of the House of Bondage.” The Biblical reference was, of course, to Israel’s departure out of Egypt (Ex. 20:2 and Deut. 5:6).
In this historical-political address, Kuyper treated the country’s deliverance from some 60 years of Liberalistic domination.

As Kuyper looked back across the strenuous decades, his mind was also on the present. He strongly defended and praised the Heemskerk ministry. And he had already begun to lay general plans for the next year’s general elections.

In August, 1912, Kuyper’s physician at Weisser Hirsch, a sanatorium at Dresden, Germany, told Kuyper that for reasons of health he would do well to resign his seat in Parliament. This medical advice plus his hearing difficulty, which prevented him from taking part in the deliberations as he judged the national interest demanded, led him to resign his seat for Ommen on September 14. Fellow representatives of the Right sent him a cordial message of adieu. Kuyper was now again a private citizen.

During its tenure of office, a period of five and a half years, the Heemskerk cabinet efficiently administered the country’s domestic and foreign affairs — an accomplishment in itself. Indeed, as Kuyper said in De Standaard, the Heemskerk ministry was a strong cabinet. Four members are perhaps best known. Theodore Heemskerk, son of the former prime minister Heemskerk but Antirevolutionary, not Conservative, a lawyer by profession, for many years a member of the Second Chamber, and a very able man, headed the government as Prime Minister. A. W. F. Idenburg, Colonial Secretary, had had a military career in the Dutch East Indies and had on Kuyper’s suggestion been nominated and elected to the Second Chamber. H. Colyn, Minister of Defense, had returned to Holland in 1909 after sixteen years of service in the Dutch East Indies. The Rev. S. Talma, State Church clergyman, held the portfolio of Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce; in the political area, socio-economic reform was his special field.

The elementary education laws and the poor laws were improved. Colyn was highly successful with his bills that aimed to strengthen the national defense. That proved its value toward the troop mobilization when World War I broke out in 1914. While Talma did much for agriculture, industry, and commerce, he also achieved valuable social legislation. Colonial Secretary Idenburg served till 1909, when he was appointed Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, where he performed notable administrative and reform work.
Kuyper’s attitude toward the Heemskerk cabinet was all along critical, to say the least, also to a degree oppositional, but not obstructionist. At the same time, though not always pleased with the cabinet’s action, Kuyper in the main supported it. He wanted the cabinet to display greater aggressiveness. He believed that with its splendid majority in the Second Chamber and its working majority in the First, it should have accomplished more than it actually did. Many party members agreed with Kuyper. For example, Talma, instead of taking the bills which the Kuyper cabinet had prepared a few years previously and reintroducing them with or without lesser alterations, made a restudy of the entire, broad, complicated social legislation problem, partly because he wanted a different type of organization than Kuyper’s bills envisioned. In consequence, a good part of his legislation just got under the wire. The balance would fall by the wayside — unless the cabinet continued in office. And there was no time before the election to put the new laws into effect. Fundamentally there was no difference between the Kuyper and the Talma bills: both embodied social reform, not social reconstruction, proposals. At the same time, although they differed in certain of their views, Kuyper repeatedly defended Talma.

In 1913 the Heemskerk government again had to go before the country.

At the April 24 Antirevolutionary national convention, Kuyper, as so often before, inspired and electrified the 2,500 delegates from 640 Voters Clubs. In this keynote speech, in the campaign, and in his Standaard, Kuyper loyally and royally supported the Heemskerk ministry. For his Standaard, which fought in the campaign with fine spirit, he wrote more than 200 articles and editorials.

The Left won the 1913 election. They captured 55, the Right 45 Second Chamber seats. Of the 55 Left, 37 were Liberals of three wings, and 18 were Socialists. Meanwhile, the Right still dominated in the First Chamber.

One wonders who was now to form a cabinet in this wonderfully strange political constellation. Queen Wilhelmina, after conferring with her advisers, invited Dr. Bos, a Liberal Democrat, to form a cabinet from the entire Left. He agreed, provided the Socialists were taken into the government. He asked the Socialists to cooperate and offered them three cabinet portfolios. For the first time, the Socialists faced the question whether they would constitute a government with members of another party or other par-
ties. But they declined to take a place in responsible government.

Bos now surrendered his mandate. The Queen asked Mr. P. W. A. Cort van der Linden, a Liberal, to form an extra-parliamentary cabinet, so called because its members were not closely affiliated with any party in Parliament and because it did not command a majority in the Second Chamber. Van der Linden consented and succeeded.

Kuyper was now a man of 75. Suppose the Van der Linden Cabinet maintained itself in office the full four years, that is, to the 1917 quadrennial elections. Kuyper would then be a man of 79, a quite advanced, though not definitely impossible, age for a premier or cabinet member. While, politically speaking, almost anything could happen, it certainly seemed in 1913 as if, unless a “miracle” took place, Kuyper could not expect to head the government again as prime minister or to hold a cabinet place. If that was Kuyper's estimate of the situation, the realization must have come to him as a shock. On July 8, 1913, the provincial legislature of South Holland elected Dr. Kuyper to the First Chamber. He took his seat on September 21.

During the first year of the Van der Linden government, Parliament engaged in long, wordy discussions on subjects relevant and irrelevant. The deliberations sounded for all the world like a grand Parliamentary koffie-klets.

Prime Minister Cort van der Linden, Minister of Internal Affairs in his own cabinet, was an able statesman. Although he was a Liberal and his cabinet bore the Liberal stamp, he stood entirely free over against the program of the Liberal concentration and that of the Socialists.

The Prime Minister wanted to solve once and for all two problems which had stood out for many years as major issues — one is inclined to say that they had plagued Dutch politics for decades: the problem regarding grade schools and that regarding suffrage. By royal decree of late 1913, two commissions were appointed, each to submit its proposals for the final solutions. A revision of the relevant articles of the Constitution would be involved. One would think that Kuyper, who had worked for the solution of the elementary education question for many, many years, would have had a place in the commission which had received the mandate to present plans to arrive at that happy stage. But no. The commission was composed of members of the Second
Chamber and Kuyper was not at the time a member. In 1916 both commissions submitted their reports. Of these in their place.

In his keynote speech of April 24, 1913, Kuyper had declared, "Over Europe there is gathering a storm whose destruction will be terrific." And Kuyper was by no means the only European statesman who saw the continent hurtling itself into war.

Before the Van der Linden cabinet had been in office much more than a year, World War 1 broke out with thunderous force and fury. Holland promptly adopted the policy of neutrality and mobilized the country's resources to make the policy effective. With the support of the public, the government took the necessary military, economic and financial measures to cope with the situation.

Although Holland remained neutral, the years of the war were harrowing days for the nation. In a world of desperate uncertainties, a dark, forbidding sky hung over the spirit of a nation anxious for its future. Men lived in a world afire. It seemed as if the lamp of civilization had gone out in Europe and the world.

At the war's outbreak, the political parties declared a Parliamentary truce. "Politics as usual" went out the window. The truce came spontaneously as the result of the voluntary self-discipline of a self-directing people. The parties of both the Right and the Left expressed their confidence in the government and pledged their support.

Neutrality, yes. But all the government's action and all their arrangements did not make Holland's citizenry neutral in thought or paralyze the pens of the publicists. Kuyper, a foremost national figure, the leader of a political party and the editor of an influential newspaper, had to take a position. In his younger years Kuyper had been an admirer of England. But that was the England of Gladstone, not the England of Joseph Chamberlain. The Boer War ended Kuyper's sympathy for England. He was convinced that "in England international politics are always governed by economic interests and considerations."

At the outbreak of the war, the old statesman Kuyper, now nearly 77, bowed his head to the insanity of war and chose for Germany. Kuyper's love for Germany was by no means a "boundless" love. He saw the dangers of the German currents. He deplored the state absolutism and caesarism that flourished in Germany. During the war he warned the German nation often
enough against itself. The entire development in the land of Luther was wholly contrary to his Calvinistic ideal. While one may believe that Kuyper committed an error of judgment and that his attitude toward Germany was one of misplaced affection, it would at all events seem that his pro-Germany position ought rather to be construed as an anti-England attitude. Nor must one forget that the war, however tragic, was after all a passing phenomenon. For practical purposes, arguments about it would cease soon after the day of peace.

During the year 1915, there took place in the Antirevolutionary party a chain of painful intra-party events. These did not involve the party rank and file but the men in the higher party echelons. The friction did not threaten to produce a split in the party. The overwhelming majority of the party membership were solidly with Kuyper. Nor was the entire affair a palace revolt. No one attempted to ease or oust Kuyper from the party leadership. The "trouble" was between Kuyper and some men who stood high in the party councils. It had been building up for some years.

Although the party had been effectively organized since 1878, now, for nearly 40 years, Kuyper was in effect the personal leader, as Groen van Prinsterer had been before him. More especially, during the early years, if not decades, he was precisely the type of leader that the party needed. Throughout the party's history, when annual conventions were still in vogue, those conventions always re-elected him chairman of the National Committee and so each time re-entrusted the party leadership to him.

For a number of years prior to 1915, the party met in national convention once in four years, except when the National Committee called a special convention. The National Committee also met once in four years, some time before the convention. During the long interims, Kuyper "ran" the party, largely through his newspaper *De Standaard*. His place at the head of the party was so secure that if at a convention he had asked for a vote of confidence, he would have received it with rousing applause.

The difficulty between Kuyper and some other men high in the party councils went back to late 1907, when the action headed by Heemskerk and the adverse vote against the Van Rappard army budget unseated the De Meester government and led to Heemskerk's assumption of the premiership in early 1908. Although Kuyper was not now at 77 a crusty, difficult old man, he did seem
to harbor the suspicion that men were possibly setting up a counter-leadership in the party.

In the spring and early summer of 1915, Kuyper wrote in his *Standaard* a series of not less than 53 triple-starred editorials on the party situation. These contained a nostalgic thumbnail sketch of party, political, and legislative history; a defense of his party leadership and premiership; the assertion that men were attempting counter-leadership; a sharp condemnation of Heemskerk’s 1907 and 1908 action; a repetition of the criticism which he had all along directed against the Heemskerk regime. Kuyper stated that he was prepared to surrender the party leadership by resigning as the chairman of the National Committee if that course alone would restore the party peace, unity and fraternal cooperation. And more of the same general tenor.

Shortly after the appearance of Kuyper’s editorials, Heemskerk, who otherwise never wrote for publication, issued a 26-page brochure in which he again denied, as he had done in 1908 directly after assuming office, the charge of Parliamentary maneuvering. He further declared that he did not then have the least desire to cause a cabinet crisis which would give him the premiership and relegate Kuyper to the sidelines, but that the adverse vote was on an important military question.

The appearance of this brochure led Kuyper to have his editorials, with some unimportant elisions, alterations, and additions, published as a 100-page brochure, dated October 4, 1915. In the brochure Kuyper retracted his charge that Heemskerk had desired the premiership in late 1907 in the debate on the army budget and wished that Kuyper no longer be the party leader.

Thereupon five men prominent in the party published a 56-page brochure which appeared in the latter part of 1915: *Leader and Leadership in the Antirevolutionary Party*. They pointed to the manner in which Kuyper at times conducted the party leadership in his treatment of persons and of political issues; his occasional personal, independent, sometimes highhanded, dictatorial way; his all-too-rosy history of the party, as if all had always been sweetness and light; his failure to employ to the full the talents of educated, able party members; and other more or less just, but explainable, grievances of the same general character.

There really seemed to be valid criticisms on that score. There was an occasional unnecessary display of authority. Kuyper sometimes appeared systematically to ignore criticism. At times in-
individuals felt offended. On occasion, he to all appearances walked roughshod over others. Although the party was much richer in men of education and ability than during its earlier years, there was little opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas. So one could add more.

Through a conference between Kuyper and the five authors of the brochure, the painful series of episodes was, at least formally, officially closed.

We finally have the authoritative word of Mr. Idenburg, who was not one of the authors of the brochure. A few years later Kuyper told him that he, Kuyper, then not only accepted but also believed that in late 1907 Heemskerk was not motivated by the desire to unseat the De Meester cabinet or to engage in high political maneuvering but by his insight into the demands of the national defense.

Without a doubt it would have been just as well, if not vastly better, if the editorials and the brochures had never been written. It would seem correct to write across the entire set of transactions: "Mostly futility."

While the national convention of 1916, not a pre-election convention, did not alter the fundamental basis of principles as contained in Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the 1878 Platform, it did revise particularly the articles on suffrage, education, national defense, the colonial problem, and the social question. It also introduced certain changes in the party's organizational structure.

In 1916 Kuyper wasn't still living in 1878. He knew that knowledge had increased, that in 40 years the times had changed, that new problems had arisen, and that old problems had persisted. He realized that there must come a better opportunity for the exchange of ideas within the party. So he conceived the thought of a smaller representative gathering for discussion purposes. At the same time he rightly wanted to retain the magnificent national conventions and wanted final decisions to remain the convention's prerogative.

Moreover, Kuyper was already at work on his re-exposition of the party's 1878 Platform. His 1879 exposition had gone through five printings. Kuyper had sensed that it was about time to bring his original exposition up to date in the light of increased knowledge, altered conditions, and new problems. But he didn't intend to spin the new exposition out of his head. In fact, he purchased enough books for the purpose to constitute a small library. Completed at
the end of 1916, it was a two-volume work (a total of 1,400 pages) which he gave the title *Antirevolutionary Political Science*. The first volume appeared in 1916; the second, the writing completed in 1916, appeared in 1917. Although decades have passed since then, that re-exposition is eminently worth careful, serious study. In its day the work formed a valuable addition to political literature. It remains valuable today.

During Kuyper’s active ministry in the State Church, (1863-74), 21 of his sermons had appeared in print, nine of them individually and twelve in two thin volumes of six each. In 1913 these had, naturally, long since been sold out.

Nevertheless, Kuyper’s then publisher, J. H. Kok of Kampen, frequently received inquiries about them, even orders. So he conceived the thought of reissuing all of them in a single volume. Kuyper consented. His preface is dated The Hague, March, 1913.

Kuyper had never released any of his Beesd sermons for publication. Now, however, he included the discourse with which he had closed his ministry in Beesd, because, as he tells us, “biographically it is not without significance.” But he did not include any sermons not previously published, since their inclusion “would rob the now-appearing volume of its unique character.”

In 1913 Kuyper was not so proud of those sermons of between 40 and 50 years ago. They do not meet the high standard that he set for Reformed preaching during the late 1870’s and thereafter. Yet he did not edit or revise those old sermons for the 1913 reissue. He had begun his Utrecht ministry in 1867 in a time of spiritual-religious struggle in the State Church. He now judged it best that those who so desired could learn from the sermons how he had himself taken part in the struggle.

Through this 468-page volume, Kuyper and his publisher rendered a peculiarly valuable service to those who would read or study those pulpit discourses for biographical study, for edification, or for both.

In 1911 Kuyper began a series of *Heraut* leaders on *The Consummation*, which he concluded in 1918. This series, ably edited by his oldest son, Dr. H. H. Kuyper, appeared posthumously in four volumes in 1929.

About May 21, 1916, the 2000th issue of *De Heraut* appeared. For this religious weekly Kuyper had written at least 2,000 meditations.
In 1911 Kuyper published a book that has the title *Our Public Worship* and in 1914 a volume on *Woman's Place of Honor.*

All of his religious writing since about 1901 was of the popular type; that is, he wrote for the rank and file of the Reformed people.

Much can be said about Kuyper the writer and about his writings of a lifetime.

For a complete study of all Kuyper's writings, one cannot do better, if he can read Dutch, than to use Dr. J. C. Rullmann's three-volume *Kuyper-Bibliografie* as a guide. Rullmann's background sketches and his quotations, comments, and excerpts from evaluations of contemporaries make his work an invaluable survey of all that Kuyper wrote during his long career. While Rullmann lists 223 writings by Kuyper, a certain percentage are admittedly of minor worth to us today. All the others constitute a legacy of exceptional value.

One must bear in mind, too, that besides all that has come down to us in permanent form, Kuyper wrote a vast amount for *De Heraut* and *De Standaard* which lies buried in the files of those papers and will probably always remain there but which served its time richly.

Dr. Kuyper wrote almost exclusively in Dutch. Only a few of his books have been translated into English but these are important and valuable. And virtually everything that has been written about Kuyper is also in Dutch. To the general reader, therefore, everything written by Kuyper (except what has been translated) and everything written about him is a closed book, the more so because it was all published originally in the Netherlands and is only meagerly available to us. The inclusion in this biography of a bibliography and a list of Kuyper's writings would thus serve no useful purpose. I have followed a selective policy by noting what I judged to be his major books and other writings. As the case might be, I have mentioned them in the recital of the events to which they were related or have enumerated them at summary points in the story.

I venture the thought that a volume, perhaps two or three, of readings from Dr. Kuyper's many books, brochures, and published speeches and addresses would prove a valuable addition to the existing literature of those areas in which he spoke and wrote.
Dr. Kuyper was a Calvinist. He has been called — rightly, one may safely say — “Holland’s greatest Calvinist” and “the greatest Calvinist since Calvin.” He knew that Calvinism is not only a religion but a comprehensive, all-inclusive Weltanschauung (life-and-world-view): the Scriptures serve not only to find justification by faith and to shed the light of the Word on the path to eternity but also to point out the foundation for all of human life, the sacred ordinances which must govern the life of man in every sector and in all human relations if that life is to be sound and vigorous.

Kuyper stands as the foremost man among all those who brought to pass in Holland a strong, beneficent revival of Calvinism and of the national Calvinistic spirit.

Said Kuyper: “In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch of which the Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, ‘That is mine!’ ”

Because Kuyper always had the national outlook and a profound concern for the spiritual foundations of the national life, he ceaselessly appealed to the nation’s moral and intellectual convictions. The battling and building of the years altered the face of Dutch politics and to a significant degree the life of his nation. The impact of his career is still discernible everywhere. In Holland’s Parthenon he has his own unique, secure niche. Eliminate Kuyper and you cannot understand Dutch history of about the last 80 years.

But, so one is inclined to ask, didn’t Dr. Kuyper have any faults and shortcomings? Yes, he had human failings, weaknesses, and imperfections. That is true of every man, even the greatest. However, Kuyper’s merits for the cause of positive Christianity far outweigh his defects and demerits, which adversely affected his life effectiveness to only an insignificant degree. And for the task which he was destined to execute he had to be a forceful, masterful, driving personality.

Among the honors that came to Kuyper in his lifetime were the honorary degrees that came to him. In 1898 Princeton University had awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. On January 8, 1908, the Delft Technological University conferred on Dr. Kuyper the Doctor of Technical Sciences degree, honoris
Not because his service had been in the cultivation of some specific branch of technical science, for it had not, but because of what Kuyper had done as Minister of the Crown for the Delft School and similar institutions through the reorganization, re-formation, and elevation of technical education. On May 10, 1909, the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, conferred on Dr. Kuyper the Doctor of Political and Social Sciences degree, honoris causa.

Not one of Holland's three national universities or the Amsterdam municipal university honored Kuyper in this manner. Nor did the Royal Academy of the Arts and Sciences invite him to membership. We merely take note of the fact as such. And Kuyper was by no means the only eminent Netherlander whom those institutions by-passed.

The Kuyper story has now reached the end of 1916.

It was now apparently clear that when his cabinet retired in 1905, Kuyper passed the zenith of his political career. The years that followed, especially after 1907, were not the happiest of his life.

In practical political affairs, men of the next generation were coming to the fore, in fact, some had already come. At the Free University, too, the second generation now held chairs. In the Reformed Churches, Kuyper's place became that of a man of authority — but standing in the background. Yet, to his followers, what Kuyper spoke and wrote was to the very end of his life the sovereign word. As editor of De Heraut and De Standaard, as leader of his party, and as a member of the First Chamber, he still wielded an influence and a power such as are given to few men of his age.

In 1916 Kuyper reached the age of 79 years. On that birthday, October 29, he still enjoyed excellent health and mental vigor. But as one thinks of him at that advanced age, one wonders how much longer, though he is still master of himself and his way of life, he will be able to carry on his lifework till the evening shadows close about him.
24: Eventide

We have now walked with Dr. Kuyper through 79 years. We have followed him during the formative years. We have seen him at the zeniths of his careers in major fields during a glory era of four decades. We have followed him through the recent few years of hope deferred and unrealized plans. We now accompany Holland's Grand Old Man as he descends step by painful step over a four-year period from the lofty heights.

In fact, Dr. Kuyper's eventide had set in. This is not to say that he was now confined to his home, that he could do no work of any kind, that he could not travel. Not at all. Many who knew Kuyper did not suspect at the time that he had entered life's twilight years.

During those years Dr. Kuyper was in the habit of leaving Holland directly after New Year's Day for a week of complete rest in Cologne, Germany. But in early January of 1917 Kuyper did not go. A light illness led him, because of his advanced age and the rigors of winter, to postpone his vacation. And when his indisposition developed into pneumonia, he had to cancel it altogether.

What troubled him especially during those weeks of sickness was his inability to work. "I still have so much to do. I haven't yet by any means finished what I have contemplated doing," he used to say during those days of sickness. In early spring, Kuyper, sufficiently recovered, resumed his work. But what others did not
notice his family observed clearly: he was no longer the "old," the one-time Kuyper. He sensed the change himself. Repeatedly he expressed his astonishment over the fact that he could no longer work so much as formerly. Yet, how active and alert, how full of life and zest and ambitious work plans he still was!

During those days a heavy shadow fell on Dr. Kuyper's way — the death of Dr. F. L. Rutgers, on March 19, at the age of 80. How Kuyper had wanted to visit his old friend during his last illness! But his own condition had made this impossible. What memories welled up in Kuyper's mind when he reflected on this close personal friend and fellow worker of the great days, a co-founder of the Free University, colleague in the University's divinity school for two decades, and brother-in-arms during the church reform movement of the 1880's.

Dr. Kuyper spent his summer vacation of about two months, July and August, as he had now done in recent years, at the Sanatorium Weisser Hirsch, at Dresden, Germany. Notwithstanding his age, nearly 80, his physical condition — he had only recently recovered from a serious illness — and general critical conditions in Germany — the war was still raging — Kuyper went, as he had now done for some years, to take the cure at the Sanatorium Weisser Hirsch. At his own insistence he traveled alone. He stayed there the full time. But the result could understandably not be, and it was not, what it had formerly been.

When he returned to The Hague, his family saw that he did not look well at all. The doctor, however, saw no special reason for concern but surmised undernourishment in Germany and fatigue after the long trip. Once at home, he again "picked up."

On July 27, Dr. J. Woltjer, another of Kuyper's loyal friends and colleagues, a professor of classical languages and literatures at the Free University for 36 years, died in his sixty-ninth year. The death of Woltjer, as it spoke to all others, spoke to Kuyper, too, of the transitoriness of life.

On October 29, 1917, Dr. Kuyper reached the age of 80. Now, as so often before, messages of congratulation and best wishes poured into the Kuyper home. At the reception, now held in his home, men and women from every station in life came to felicitate him in person. By following his doctor's instructions, Kuyper
stood the day's exertions well.

Would Kuyper, now 80, decide to withdraw from the active scene to enjoy the leisure to which he was so well entitled? It seems perfectly safe to say that he gave no thought whatever to retiring. His work, which he had so much at heart, remained uppermost in his mind. His work was his life and his life was his work. Instead of sitting out life's closing years, he only wanted to carry on as strenuously as he was able. Kuyper remained constitutionally unable to retire.

The revision of the constitution, of which we have perhaps somewhat lost sight, was completed in 1916 and 1917. In that year the royal commissions for the school problem and the suffrage question reported. The former commission proposed the equality of all schools, public and non-public, financially and otherwise. The second commission proposed: (1) universal manhood suffrage, (2) the possibility of woman suffrage, (3) the eligibility of women for elective public office, (4) proportional representation, and (5) the possibility of compulsory voting.

In late 1916, the Second Chamber approved the proposals, and in May of 1917 the First Chamber.

Because these proposals involved alterations in the constitution, dissolution of both Chambers and a general election were mandatory.

An election meant, of course, an Antirevolutionary national convention. This was scheduled for November 23. So Kuyper set to work energetically to write his keynote speech. Although this writing was more difficult and took longer than formerly, he completed it. At the scheduled time he traveled to the convention, read his speech, and presided as always.

The newly elected Parliament ratified the action of its predecessor. Public proclamation of the constitution as revised took place December 12, 1917.

So ended essentially the crusading battle of decades over the schools and suffrage. The final solution would come when the constitutional provisions were implemented by legislation. That would be within two years. To mention only the grade schools, the DeVisser elementary education law then accorded to the non-public grade schools the same rights and privileges and financial aid which the public schools enjoyed. The solution to neither problem was Kuyper's ideal. But, the complete liberation of education and
the system of head-of-household suffrage were unattainable at the
time. So, then, politics being an intensely practical business and
these solutions being the only realizable ones, Kuyper accepted
them for what they were, that is, a genuine and substantial gain.

Illness from January of 1918 to early May not only denied
Kuyper his customary brief winter vacation but confined him to his
home, even for a time to his room.

While the milder spring weather brought recovery and Kuyper
could again pursue his self-determined way of life, the bronchitis
attacks of the winter and early spring, thrice repeated, had once
more taken their toll.

With 1918 again an election year, the Antirevolutionary
national convention was scheduled for May 2.

At the 1916 and the 1917 convention it was already apparent
that, although Kuyper seemed strong and robust, his strength was
nevertheless declining. He really could no longer preside at such a
great gathering — partly, too, because of increasing deafness. Dead
tired at adjournment, he would have to rest in his hotel room, for
he also presided at the evening banquet — not, by the way, a 100-
guilders-a-plate dinner — which formed a fitting close to an always
great day.

Notwithstanding his indifferent health and weakened con-
dition, Kuyper again wrote his keynote speech in the hope that he
would be able to preside as usual and deliver his speech as usual. In
addition, he planned and laid the groundwork for the campaign.
His family, and friends as well, knowing that the exertions at the
convention and the management of the campaign would overtax his
strength, tried to dissuade him. But that work, he felt, was not only
his responsibility but his joy as well. No one could dissuade him.

How the veteran leader longed to go to the convention to
preside and speak. But because of a throat condition, Kuyper’s
doctor forbade the trip and the delivery of his speech. This speech
Idenburg read to the convention. And we may be sure that the 80-
year-old Kuyper spent a difficult day in his home in The Hague.
Knowing that his time was running out, he certainly asked: Shall I
ever again? The convention sent Kuyper a telegraphic message of
cordial greeting, of gratitude for all his achievements, and of
prayer for his early recovery. From Kuyper’s advanced age, his
illnesses, and his declining strength the party realized that they
would soon lose their old, tried, trusted leader.

During the campaign Kuyper completely overworked himself.

The election under the new law produced some bizarre results. The major parties, small parties, splinter parties, and certain small groups that were not parties at all succeeded in electing representatives. (Within a short time some of these excrescences disappeared.)

The Right won a majority of the 100 Second Chamber seats. The Ruys de Beerenbrouck cabinet, a coalition ministry, with the prime minister a Catholic, again a parliamentary cabinet, not a caretaker government, took office September 9, 1918.

The Van der Linden government, in power five years, had steered the country safely through perilous waters during World War I, whose end was now in sight. For that success and for its legislative achievements, this ministry has a place in that not-so-long category of cabinets that since 1848 deserve more than ordinary appreciation.

Dr. Kuyper once again spent his two-month summer vacation at Weisser Hirsch, in Germany. The result was the same as the previous year: fatigue and apparently undernourishment. Once at home again, however, he soon “picked up.”

How had Dr. Kuyper “taken” the great war? In his stride? No.

Germany’s defeat did not to his mind constitute an all-overpowering tragedy. Yet the war was one of the deep, dark, anxious shadows of his eventide years. As for all other old and aged men and women, so for Kuyper, too, the war was too much. He could not “grasp,” “understand,” “see through,” or “reason out” the war with all its barbarisms and terrors. They oppressed and burdened and alarmed him. He saw in the war no satisfying conclusion, no commensurate solution. Now, too, he could write, converse, and reflect on the war but he was unable to lend a helping hand to alleviate the vast misery.

At tea one evening he said to his family, “You will likely live to see the solution. I shall probably pass away in the midst of the chaos.” Kuyper lived beyond the war’s end. But today, 40 years later, the chaos is still with us — a chaos multiplied by World War II, the years of cold war, and the constant threat of World War III.
November of 1918 has a place all its own in Netherlands history, for the Ruys de Beerenbrouck government had been in power only slightly more than two months when it faced the threat of a political revolution.

On November 11 the armistice was signed. The month of Germany's defeat was also the month of Germany's revolution. Would that revolution stalk across Holland's eastern boundary and engulf Holland, too?

The Dutch Socialists, incited by certain of their leaders and abetted by radicals and communists, imagined that the day had dawned when they would take over the government and the country. The prime mover, chief actor, and foremost spokesman was Pieter Jelles Troelstra, the leader of the Social Democratic Labor party. In and out of Parliament, Troelstra spoke unadulterated revolutionary language. He warned and threatened Parliament and the government. On the floor of the Second Chamber he openly boasted that the government could not depend on the army and the police force because these consisted of workingmen. And much more of the same.

As to Kuyper during those days, one must bear in mind that the old hatred against Kuyper, if it had perhaps smoldered, had never died. Now suppose Troelstra and his fellow revolutionists succeeded in their nefarious plan. Does anyone imagine that Kuyper would have escaped their psychopathic, if not insane, rage? Would his fate have been imprisonment? Or banishment? Or liquidation? Could not a furious, rioting street mob have attacked and murdered him on any of his daily walks, which he refused to discontinue? At all events, the police offered him protection. Besides, many friends offered him asylum in some castle in Gelderland province or some other hide-out that he might prefer. But no one could persuade Kuyper to leave The Hague. "I will not leave my post," he declared, "I am in God's hand." Strangely, even on the streets of The Hague he was not molested in the least on his daily walks.

But the revolution did not materialize. Troelstra soon discovered that he had the majority in Parliament against him. Nor did his harangues light a fire in the country. The nation did not respond to his declamatory foray into revolution. And the government took a firm but balanced stand.

Meanwhile, without any fanfare, word was quietly passed to soldiers who were being demobilized from their war-time service
and to other men with military training. That word enjoyed a magnificent voluntary response. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 14, 15, and 16, trainload after trainload of soldiers entered The Hague. Marching through the city's streets, those soldiers served as an effective warning to the revolutionaries. The Social Democratic Labor Party Congress, planned for Sunday, the seventeenth, was indeed held. But Troelstra and his associates had evidently seen and heard enough. At the Congress the leaders warned against any and every ill-advised step. And Troelstra, who had entertained the delusion that he had a rendezvous with destiny, found his hoped-for utopia to be only a mirage.

To Holland's citizenry, exclusive of the frustrated revolutionaries, Monday the eighteenth was a day of glad and grateful rejoicing. To mention a national event, that Monday witnessed the spontaneous, unforgettable ovation to Queen Wilhelmina, Prince Hendrik, and Princess Juliana in the Malieveld by The Hague Forest.

That evening the Frisian soldiers, Antirevolutionaries and Kuyperians all, their Frisian banner raised high, marched to the Kuyper home. Permission granted, those soldiers stood in the street before the house and sang religious, Frisian, and national songs.

In the doorway of his home that chill November night, his head bared, stood the 81 year-old Kuyper. When the last tones had died away, he addressed the men briefly in his own felicitous, stirring manner. I quote two sentences. "My time is past; in your hands lies the future." "But this I have felt, and I thank you for it, your coming to this city and your singing before my home are to me a sign from my God that, when He will have called me out of this life, the principles which are precious to me above all else will live on in the younger generation, also in you."

Kuyper then asked them to sing two familiar stanzas, his favorites, namely, 7 and 8 of the 89th Psalm. Each has 6 lines. The first lines read:

"How blessed, Lord, are they who know the joyful sound," and "Thou art, O God, our boast, the glory of our power." Loud, clear, and strong the stately Psalm melody resounded through the dark street as the impressively solemn singing by this unusual "male choir" filled the entire gathering darkness with the mighty chorale music.

The winter of 1918-19 was again one of drawn-out, wearing,
wearying bronchial difficulties. As these became more severe, Kuyper's power of resistance lessened. Although he once more recovered as the milder spring weather brought healing, and that for the third time, the battle against illness and the victory had cost him more than before in physical strength.

For some years now, men both in and outside the party had asked: Who will be Kuyper's successor? Kuyper, when he was once asked the question, replied, “When that time arrives, God will provide a man.” In his lifetime Kuyper did not appoint a successor. He seemed to have assumed that Idenburg and Colyn would jointly direct the party.

In early 1919, the conviction came to Kuyper that whether he desired to or not, he must surrender the party leadership. So, in a letter of March 31, 1919 to the secretary of the party's National Committee, Kuyper resigned the chairmanship of that Committee. That was resigning the leadership of the Antirevolutionary party. One easily surmises his reasons. There was his age — 81. There was the state of his health — very indifferent, to say the least. There was the new type of preparatory measures and campaign management which the system of proportional representation made necessary. How easy it is to record the fact that Kuyper laid down the leadership of his party. But no one could then know, or will ever know, the pain and heartache which this act of resignation cost Kuyper.

Because the convention elected the chairman of the National Committee, this Committee chose Colyn chairman pro tem.

Kuyper again wanted to spend his summer vacation of July and August at Weisser Hirsch, in Germany. However, his advanced age, the long trip to this sanatorium, and the troubled conditions in Germany simply forbade it. He wisely but regretfully bowed to adverse circumstances which he could neither alter nor control and stayed instead at the Netherlands Sanatorium at Laag-Soeren. This stay proved a genuine boon. Both he and his family were well pleased.

On his return from Laag-Soeren Kuyper, whose health seemed particularly good, resumed his regular work, wrote for De Heraut and De Standaard, and took his customary walks.

Dr. Kuyper's 82nd birthday, October 29, 1919, was again a
Eventide

festive occasion with its avalanche of congratulatory messages, the afternoon reception at his home, and the traditional family dinner of Kuyper, his children, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. While Kuyper still seemed to be enjoying full health and strength, he, especially, but also his family, knew better. At the dinner he told his children and grandchildren frankly that of late he was not gaining but losing in strength. This and more that he said gave them the feeling that he was speaking a word of farewell.

Shortly after his 82nd birthday, Kuyper again suffered a serious illness. Although — miracle of miracles — he again recovered, that attack had left him in an extremely serious plight. During those months Kuyper was already for some time living in a state of chronic overwork, chiefly because he persisted in editing, as editorial writer, both De Heraut and De Standaard.

To keep abreast of developments both at home and abroad; promptly to record his judgment on events, measures, trends; to educate his readers, through his leaders, in principles and policies; to write scores and scores of editorials, more particularly during political campaigns; always to have copy ready on time; to return printer’s proofs without delay — all this had become too heavy a load.

Although Kuyper’s family tried to persuade him to discontinue, he couldn’t persuade himself to do that. When, however, his doctor definitely forbade him to continue and when Kuyper himself at length realized that he could not go on, he gave serious thought to resigning the editorship. But how could he surrender his Standaard? Had this daily newspaper not been founded in 1872 on his initiative? Had he not in its columns for nearly 50 years explained, defended, and applied the Antirevolutionary principles? Had he not through his paper educated, inspired, and directed the party? Although the Standaard never had more than 5,000 subscribers during Kuyper’s lifetime, its circle of readers was very much larger, for copies passed from family to family. Had Kuyper with his Standaard not performed political campaign miracles? And did he not in 1919 by means of his paper still wield a strong influence?

Nevertheless, after a severe soul struggle, Kuyper made the ultra-difficult decision. With profound reluctance he relinquished the editorship of De Standaard. Once again, one can write about his resignation but one cannot understand the pain and heartache that he suffered. The surrender of his Standaard work stands out as
one of the deepest shadows of his eventide. And as to the future, Kuyper knew that with the editorship of *De Standaard* now in other hands, there would enter his life a void which nothing else could fill. His last leader appeared in the December 11 issue, his last editorial in that of December 18. An editorial committee took over and functioned till 1922, when Colyn became the new editor-in-chief.

The decrease in work and consequent increase of rest brought improvement in Kuyper's condition. With double devotion he now continued his *Heraut* writing. While this weekly religious journalism naturally also had its time schedules and its deadlines, there was a difference. His leaders and his meditations he could write weeks, and in certain cases months, in advance of publication.

On May 29, 1919, Mr. A. F. De Savornin Lohman reached the age of 82. Kuyper reached that age on October 29.

Over a period of many years they had been co-workers and brothers-in-arms. Dutch history has joined and immortalized the names of these two truly great national figures. While Kuyper and Lohman were agreed on the basic Christian principles, differences in personality, background, mentality, and outlook frequently created friction. In their long careers they had clashed repeatedly. A modest volume could be written on the zigzag line.

In the closing days of 1919, a mutual friend wrote to Lohman that Kuyper was very unwell, if not failing. On December 26 Lohman wrote to Kuyper. On December 28 Kuyper replied. In their minds the old associates reviewed their old relationship and their friendship of long standing, while bygone differences appeared in a new perspective.

Those two letters constitute the documents of their final and complete reconciliation. Thus, in life's late evening, they neared each other fully as they approached their end. Indeed a fitting climax to two heroic careers. One looks on in respectful deference as these two venerable brothers-in-arms and co-workers make their final peace. No shadows of earth would separate them after death, which was for both not far away.

December 31, 1919.

Dr. Kuyper always attached a high significance to a dedicatory celebration of the passing of the old year and the arrival of the new. So the family spent those last hours of 1919, as they had done so often before, according to long custom, in a deeply religious
frame of mind and manner. Toward eleven o’clock, Kuyper, his children, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and the household personnel gathered in the large living room. Kuyper always followed a self-set program. Exactly on time — his heavy gold watch lay before him on the table — Kuyper read to them his last-day-of-the-year *Heraut* article. The group then gathered about the organ and sang some stanzas from the rhymed version of the 102nd Psalm. Thereupon Kuyper read to them in his own distinctive, interpretative manner that mighty 90th Psalm: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations….So teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom….Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it…."

All then knelt in prayer. Kuyper led. During this prayer — so Kuyper always timed it — the old year silently glided into history and the new year silently came to them.

Rising, all first wished Kuyper, then each other, a Happy and Blessed New Year.

Just as two months earlier, on his 82nd birthday, Dr. Kuyper, realizing that his years were already many, that his health was gravely impaired and his strength seriously broken, seemed to harbor the presentiment that he would not live to see another New Year’s Eve.
25: The Last Year

When the year 1920 came to Dr. Kuyper, three years of his life's eventide had already passed.

His eventide was a difficult time. But it was not his constantly recurring sicknesses, each of which left him weaker and less able to cope with the next, that made those years so hard and difficult. It was rather his awareness of his failing physical stamina and of his waning mental vigor, his persistent but futile attempts to carry on his lifework as he desired to do, and the painful experience of having perforce to surrender one section of his cherished work after another that constituted the acute suffering of the closing years of his life.

Through Kuyper's eventide there runs a note of growing sadness. It was a time of "lasts." At the end of 1916 he completed his two-volume Antirevolutionary Political Science. After that he did not write any more books. In 1917 he presided for the last time at an Antirevolutionary national convention and delivered his keynote speech. In 1918 he could not come to the convention and Idenburg read Kuyper's speech. In 1919 he resigned the chairmanship of the party's leadership. In that same year he relinquished the editorship of De Standaard. And the end was not yet.

Yet, at his Lord's behest, Kuyper willingly surrendered both trowel and sword — all those splendid talents and powers with which his Lord had endowed him for his mighty lifework.
But Kuyper still had the editorship of *De Heraut*, for which he wrote leaders and meditations. While he also still held a seat in the First Chamber of Parliament, he could understandably not fill the place at all as he had done in former years. He did not resign his seat, however. He perhaps hoped against hope that he would soon be again able to serve as before.

Although Kuyper’s early January vacation of a week or ten days at Cologne could no longer be thought of, the year 1920 may be said to have begun rather auspiciously. During January the state of his health gave no special reason for concern. In fact, he improved noticeably. But the late winter and early spring were again a time of sicknesses. Yet, he once more recovered. In the later spring and early summer Dr. Kuyper enjoyed reasonably good health, all things considered. As always, he worked ahead for *De Heraut*. Repeatedly he said, “If I can only write enough material to run till November.” In that he succeeded.

On a spring day as Dr. Kuyper sat in his study, his thoughts were elsewhere, that is, at the Antirevolutionary national convention.

That gathering took significant action. We note two items.

(1) When Idenburg, for reasons of health, declined to be considered for the chairmanship of the National Committee, the convention elected Colyn, who had been chairman pro tem since Kuyper’s resignation, to the position and Idenburg as vice-chairman. Was Colyn able to draw Ulysses’ bow? That is, would he from all indications prove an able and worthy successor to Kuyper? Colyn’s age, which was 50, his personality, training, prestige, station in life, and independent income made him a political leader able to cope with the new post-war problems, indeed, the man of the hour and a man after Kuyper’s own heart. Kuyper was eminently pleased. He knew that with Colyn chairman and Idenburg vice-chairman of the National Committee, the Antirevolutionary party was in safe hands.

(2) To the convention Colyn submitted a bold, breathtaking proposal, a more comprehensive plan than Kuyper had urged for many years: to establish a million-guilder foundation, the interest to be used for a number of closely related purposes. These were, in brief: to secure, furnish, equip, and staff a party national headquarters; to conduct scholarly and practical research aimed at issuing publications for the promotion of the Anti-
revolutionary principles in both the party and the nation; to establish at the Free University the Kuyper chair in Anti-revolutionary political science. The convention enthusiastically adopted the million-guilder plan.

When Kuyper learned about the convention’s action in elevating Colyn to the party leadership, with Idenburg at his side, and in cordially adopting Colyn’s far-flung plan, and when he read Colyn’s keynote speech on “Tarrying Dawn,” his stout old heart sang for joy.

Dr. Kuyper spent his two-month summer vacation at the Van Deth estate, at Velp, a small city a few miles east of Arnhem, Holland, about 70 miles east of The Hague.

First reports from both Mrs. Van Deth and Kuyper to his family were favorable. It seemed at first as if he would return to his home at the usual time with renewed strength to resume his work. Yet, in spite of the most excellent care and attention that he received in the friendly atmosphere and congenial surroundings of his vacation home, his condition grew more and more unfavorable. Instead of progress there had come a recession.

Still, Kuyper accomplished something during those weeks. On Sunday morning, August 29, for example, he wrote a meditation entitled “If There Be One,” based on Jeremiah 5:1. Its closing sentence reads: “The Lord reigns, and He alone loosens the bonds that unite us to ourselves and to the world.” That was the last mediation he wrote.

On September 2, Kuyper and one of his daughters who had come for him took a through train from Arnhem to The Hague, arriving after a two-hour trip. How different a return to his home after the long summer vacation than in the many past years! Instead of beginning directly to realize his work plans for the new season (“plunging into his work,” we would perhaps say) Kuyper took his accustomed chair by a window of his study. There, resting in his easy chair or on the divan and simply unable to do any work, he spent the long September daytime hours. Meanwhile, the Heraut leaders he had written earlier in the year were still running. Once and again on a Sunday morning he set himself to write a meditation but simply could not. Nor was it strictly necessary, for he had also written some meditations ahead.

How Kuyper clung to his religious weekly with devoted attachment! But as the days went by, his strength did not return.
Must he also relinquish his *Heraut*? He felt that he would not survive its surrender. Kuyper indeed never resigned from *De Heraut*. He never voluntarily laid his pen down. That pen soon dropped from his dying hand.

In September of 1920, the Dr. Kuyper who sat before a window or rested on the divan in his study was an old man of nearly 83, broken by illnesses and the weight of years. What went on in his mind during the long hours of those September days? We do not, of course, know for a certainty, but we can easily surmise. He thought of his wife and young son, of his father and mother, and all the other loved ones who had already left this life. Faces long since vanished still stood bright and clear in his memory. He thought of his three daughters at home, of his four sons, his daughters-in-law, and his grandchildren. Of his circle of relatives and friends. Of co-workers of the strenuous years, many of whom had already died, a few of whom of his own age had survived the years with him.

As Kuyper reflected on his career of more than 50 years, his thoughts reverted to the building and the battling of half a century, with their wealth of drama, their victories and defeats, their exultations and heartaches. How, we wonder, did it all seem to him in retrospect?

Kuyper's thoughts also turned to the future. He thought about the future of the Reformed Churches, of the Free University, of the Antirevolutionary party, of the nation, of Europe, of the world. And so much more. He knew that the unending battle would surge into the future.

But Kuyper's reflections also went ahead to the day and the hour which, he knew, were not far distant when he, too, must leave these earthly scenes to encounter the eternal world. He saw his life's pilgrimage nearly ended, his lifework almost finished, his warfare all but accomplished. Serene in spirit in the possession of the peace that passeth knowledge, he looked beyond life's horizon and up the wondrous, shining path that leads from earth's strife and toil to heaven's victory and peace.

In the future years Kuyper would not be forgotten. There would come honors and recognition of which he could surmise little, if anything, in September of 1920. The municipal council of The Hague changed the name of the street, De Kanaalstraat, to Dr. Kuyperstraat, to honor the statesman who had lived on it nearly 20
years. In 1921 the third Kuyper memorial volume appeared. In 1922 the *Standaard* golden anniversary was enthusiastically celebrated. In 1929 Kuyper’s *Heraut* leaders on “The Consummation,” competently edited by his oldest son, were published in four volumes. The year 1932 saw the publication of a 320-page volume of 400 triplestarred *Standaard* editorials by Kuyper, carefully selected from a total of about 16,800. In 1937 the Groen van Prinsterer-Kuyper correspondence was published. In that same year, too, Calvinists the world over devotedly celebrated the centenary of Kuyper’s birth. The 266-page fourth Kuyper memorial volume, with its twelve monographs on Kuyper’s careers in major fields, possesses exceptional value. In 1951, all the keynote speeches delivered at Antirevolutionary national conventions up to that time appeared in book form. Of the 32 speeches, 19 are by Kuyper. Through the years, a remarkable number of monographs on one phase or another of Kuyper’s work has come from the presses. Today the Free University has an instructional staff of more than 200 and a student body of more than 2,000. It holds an honored place among Holland’s universities. The home in The Hague in which Kuyper lived nearly two decades is now known as Kuyper House. For thirty-some years it has already housed the Kuyper Institute and been the national headquarters of the Antirevolutionary party. The Rev. W. F. A. Winckel’s *Life and Work of Dr. A. Kuyper* had already appeared in The Netherlands in 1919. Three Kuyper biographies have been published there since 1920. Each of these four volumes possesses its own unique value. Meanwhile, the definitive biography of Dr. Abraham Kuyper must still appear, as it undoubtedly will eventually.

So one can go on. But in September of 1920, Kuyper could foresee only little of all this — very little, I believe.

Was Kuyper anxious about his place in history? About what his reputation would be tomorrow? About whether he would receive lasting fame and the acclaim of posterity? All this was not his concern. Kuyper never wrote his autobiography. Nor did he write a book in defense of his career. Assured in his soul that he had spent his life in his Lord’s service, Kuyper felt that by the grace of God the divine approval rested like a benediction on his life’s efforts. For him that was enough. And so, too, unlike many a crusader-reformer, Kuyper did not spend his closing years a disappointed man, nor would he die a disappointed man.
On September 21 there would take place the impressive opening of Parliament. As Kuyper was Minister of State and a member of the First Chamber, a copy of the program was sent him on the 16th.

Kuyper understood perfectly that he would be unable to be present. On the 17th he said to a daughter, “I must resign my seat in the first Chamber. I am no longer able to serve.” At his home on the evening of September 21, Kuyper signed the letter of resignation.

Again, how easy it is to record this fact. But who will tell us what thoughts flooded his soul when he decided on this complete and final retirement from Parliament, in which he had played such a prominent role so many years? So, then, Kuyper cut the last tie that bound him to public life. He had walked into Parliament for the last time. He felt the regret with which all great figures lay down power beyond recall and pass from the scene of action.

To Kuyper’s intense joy, the South Holland provincial legislature elected his friend Idenburg to his seat.

On Friday evening, September 24, Dr. Kuyper corrected *Heraut* printer’s proofs for the last time. Even that work, not the most strenuous labor, had become progressively so exhausting that he now completed it only with the uttermost exertion and was dead tired.

Dr. Kuyper’s bedroom was on the second floor, at the front of the house. Seen from the hall, it was the room at the right.

At the foot of his bed stood a table; on it were photographs of his parents, his wife, and his children. When he sat before this table and looked up, he saw the picture “Christ Crucified,” purchased during his Leiden student days, which graced the wall at the head of his bed.

Each night before retiring, Kuyper engaged in personal devotions, a custom of many years. So it was on Saturday evening, September 25. When Kuyper had taken his place, a daughter opened the large Bible at Revelation 15. “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire . . . . And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb . . . .” When he had read the chapter, she handed him the Psalter. He read the 32nd Psalm.

That chapter and that Psalm were not random or even specially selected choices. Without deviating from the order of the Scriptures and of the Psalter, he always, as at the family altar, read
the chapter and the Psalm that "came next." Significantly, that fifteenth chapter of Revelation and that 32nd Psalm were the last that Kuyper read for himself. From that evening forward others read to him.

Sunday morning, the 26th, Kuyper remained abed. He lingered six weeks and two days.

On October 16, Colyn called to take final leave, but briefly, because of Kuyper's weakened condition. The letter that Kuyper received from Colyn two days later refreshed his heart and gladdened the day.

During those days, other co-workers and friends also called to take final leave of Kuyper, but their calls had necessarily to be very brief. After some days, even such short calls could not be permitted.

On October 20, the fortieth anniversary of the Free University's founding, Kuyper received a most welcome telegram from the school that was still so dear to him. By a unique coincidence, Dr. H. H. Kuyper, Kuyper's oldest son, divinity school professor and rector the preceding academic year, delivered the rectorial oration that year.

On an October day, Kuyper also received a telegram from the Society of Netherlands Journalists, whose incomparable master he had so long been.

On October 29, Kuyper's 83rd birthday, unable himself to read or even to have anyone read to him the many, many letters, cards, and telegrams, he could only listen as his family told him of their great number, of the widespread, loyal interest, of the many prayers in his behalf. He responded with a glad smile. After his 83rd birthday, Kuyper lingered another ten days. He could still speak, but only with great difficulty. Within a few days that magnificent voice, which had thrilled and electrified many thousands, dropped to a whisper, then sank into silence. Three days before his death he could no longer so much as even whisper.

During Kuyper's entire four-year eventide, especially in times of sickness and now more particularly in the closing months, weeks, and days of his life, Mr. Idenburg, his loyal friend, who possessed the gift of visiting the sick as few men do, called on Kuyper faithfully. To Kuyper he was a tower of spiritual strength and a fountain of spiritual consolation.

During all his illnesses and so, too, in his last sickness, Kuyper
contemplated the future beyond death with buoyant conviction and assurance of faith. In his soul there was no doubt, no struggle, no complaint. Always there were tones of praise and gratitude for all God’s grace. In the words of Paul’s letter to the Philippians (1:23), he had “the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is far better.”

So day followed night and night followed day. News bulletins from the Kuyper home appeared in the newspapers. Thus the family informed the many thousands who read eagerly, for all Netherlanders realized that a major light was going out in Holland.

On Sunday evening, November 7, in an upsurge of strength, Dr. Kuyper took final leave of his sons and daughters, his daughters-in-law, his grandchildren, two co-workers of many years and a member of the household personnel who had served the family a quarter of a century. Though unable to speak, he took leave with tenderness and recognition.

Monday dawned. The hours crept past. The afternoon shadows lengthened. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, life ebbed away. About six o’clock in the evening, with Kuyper’s children and Mr. Idenburg standing about his sickbed, release came. In that hour Dr. Kuyper died in the Lord.

His body was placed in a plain oak casket with silver handles and a silver nameplate on which were engraved his name and the dates of his birth and death. His body lay in state in the family living room. On a stand in the same room appropriately lay the family Bible.

The newspapers carried tributes and evaluations of Kuyper’s life and work. On November 9, the Prime Minister and the President of the Second Chamber paid tribute to Kuyper in Parliament in memorial addresses.

The executive committee of the Antirevolutionary National Committee suggested that memorial mass meetings be held. The thought enjoyed a loyal response. In cities, towns, and villages, more than 120 such meetings were held. Prominent speakers addressed them. While they spoke of Kuyper, the governing thought was this: God alone is great; to Him be the praise for what He gave us in Dr. Kuyper and permitted us to have over such a long span of years.

Friday, November 12, was the day of the funeral.
At the family's request, all external pomp was absent. Not even a wreath or a palm branch graced the casket.

At twelve o'clock a great memorial service was held in the Nieuwe Zuiderkerk. When the closing prayer had been spoken and the closing song had been sung, many of the throng of 3,000 walked to the cemetery.

Shortly after twelve o'clock noon, the funeral service was held at the Kuyper home for the family, the most special friends, official representatives, a number of dignitaries, some with their wives, and the household personnel.

Then followed the solemn, dramatic moment when Dr. Kuyper was carried from the house that had been his home for nearly 20 years but would know his presence no more.

Many thousands lined the streets as the long cortege of horse-drawn hearse and carriages, accompanied by mounted police, proceeded from the Kuyper home to the cemetery Oud Eik en Duinen. Of these many followed on foot to the cemetery.

When the funeral procession reached the cemetery, an estimated 10,000 had already taken places assigned to them and stood in exemplary respect, order, and silence. They were only a part of the many thousands who had followed Kuyper in life. They would now pay him the last sad honors.

The cortege arrived. The pallbearers, Free University students, carried the casket and set it on the frame over the grave. The family and other participants took their places.

Mr. Th. Heemskerk, cabinet member, spoke for the government; Mr. H. Colyn, party leader, for the Antirevolutionary party and for De Standaard; Dr. R. H. Woltjer, rector, for the Free University; the Rev. Dr. K. Dyk for the Reformed Churches. Mr. A. W. F. Idenburg then spoke as Dr. Kuyper's intimate personal friend. When, for the family, he requested the vast audience to sing Dr. Kuyper's favorite stanzas, 7 and 8 of the Dutch rhymed version of the 89th Psalm, the great chorale swelled like a mighty chorus over a thousand graves and far beyond.

Slowly and reverently, while all stood in deep silence, the casket was lowered into the grave.

Then, as Dr. Kuyper had done in 1882 at the grave of his own father, so now Dr. H. H. Kuyper, his oldest son, conveyed the family's gratitude to all who had honored them and their father by their presence.
On the tombstone, which covers the grave, the family had chiseled, as Dr. Kuyper had instructed in his will:

DR. A. KUYPER
BORN OCTOBER 29, 1837
AND FALLEN ASLEEP IN HIS SAVIOR
NOVEMBER 8, 1920
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