

exhibit certain faults. It did seem at times as though certain commissioners, in their effort to be democratic and avoid centralization of power, were a little lacking in a brotherly recognition of what has actually been done. In their reaction against letting a "machine" do everything, it did seem as though they were inclined to be unwilling to let anybody do anything. One wondered how, on the principles enunciated by some commissioners, any business could ever by any possibility be carried on.

But such was not the attitude of the majority; and in general the faults of this Assembly were youthful faults. It must be remembered that most of these commissioners have been in a hopeless minority in the church to which they have hitherto belonged, and thus have had little opportunity for practice in carrying on administrative enterprises. They will unquestionably learn, and we may well hope that when they do learn the business of the church will be conducted in a manner both efficient and democratic.

### THE PRESBYTERY OF CALIFORNIA AND THE "CHRISTIAN BEACON"

IN OUR last issue we expressed the view that the actions of the Presbytery of California of The Presbyterian Church of America regarding supposed attacks upon Premillenarians by the editors of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN and others grew out of the editorial in the October 1st issue of the *Christian Beacon* criticising a paragraph in the article of Professor Kuiper which appeared in the September 12th issue of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN. The reason why we expressed that view was that both the California actions mentioned the editorial. As a matter of fact, however, we were in error. A later communication, signed by the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of California (see p. 82 below), states that the misunderstanding of Professor Kuiper's article by the Presbytery of California was entirely independent of the editorial in the *Christian Beacon*.

We are glad to point that out in justice to the *Christian Beacon*. The editorial in that paper has plainly been not the only cause, even though it has certainly been a very important cause, of the spread of this serious misunderstanding throughout the church.

At the same time, while we say that gladly, we are inclined to take a rather serious view of the widespread state of mind which this whole episode reveals. According to the latest communication from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of California, there are a very large "number of persons throughout the nation" who arrived at the same interpretation of Professor Kuiper's words as did the editor of the *Christian Beacon*. What

does that mean? It means that a great many people think that "Premillennialism" and the "Dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible" are the same thing, so that when Professor Kuiper declared that the "Dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible" is an anti-Reformed heresy he was also declaring that Premillennialism is an anti-Reformed heresy.

In view of that fact, one of the pressing needs of the hour is the sharp separation between these things that are so sadly confused. The Premillennial view of the time of our Lord's return is not an anti-Reformed heresy. A man may hold to it and be a minister in a truly Reformed or Presbyterian Church. But the Dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible is, we are convinced, just as Professor Kuiper says it is, an anti-Reformed heresy indeed. It is quite out of accord with the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

As we say that, we are afraid that many of you who are our readers will be offended. Many of you use and love the Scofield Bible, and you are grieved by even a breath of an attack upon it.

But we beg you, brethren, to look at this question calmly and clearly. Dr. Scofield's notes are not Scripture, are they? They are not sacred. They represent just the attempt of a fallible man to interpret the Word of God—no doubt a truly Christian man, but still a man who was subject to error as other men are. Well, then, if that is so, is it right to regard those notes as being above criticism? Is it right to resent every adverse opinion regarding them as though it necessarily meant an attack upon the orthodoxy of all the users of the notes? Is it not better to give patient consideration to any criticism that may be offered?

We, for our part, think the notes—though of course they contain many things that are fine and true—are in important particulars and in their underlying structure untrue to the Word of God. You, on the contrary, think they are true. Well, if that is the situation, will you not be willing at least to listen to what we have to say? If you become convinced that we are right about those notes, then you will use them—if you use them at all—with great caution. If, on the other hand, you are convinced, after careful examination of our arguments, that we are wrong, you will return to the notes with all the better conscience and with all the clearer understanding of what the notes mean. Whichever one of us is right, earnest discussion of these things can hardly be amiss. No human book should be put on a pedestal. Every human book should be ready to justify itself ever anew by a comparison of it with the one infallible Standard—namely, God's holy and unchanging Word.