

THE STANDARD

Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIV

April 15, 1948 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

NUMBER 14

MEDITATION

Divine Distinction

"That ye may know how that the Lord doth put
a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

Exodus 11:7b.

There is one thing in this history which has puzzled us no end, and that is the fact that Moses and Aaron could freely move in Egypt, appear at Pharaoh's court, tell him in no uncertain terms his sins against God, and disappear unscathed.

It must be that the fear of God had fallen upon Pharaoh and his servants, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, that Moses was a "proper" man, even as he was a proper child at his birth. There must have been something singular in the appearance of this great man of God. We know definitely that when he was 120 years old "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated".

We see him now, in the history recorded in the context, standing before the face of the great Pharaoh of Egypt, boldly telling him of the results of the last plague which Jehovah shall send upon him and his servants.

Moses minces no words: he tells him not only of the plague, but also of the terrible results. On the one hand, there shall be no harm done to the Israelites at all, while the Egyptians shall come and beg Israel to depart, laden with gold and silver and beasts in multitude.

And not only does Moses speak freely and even boldly and defiantly to the great tyrant, but he spoke this last announcement "in a great anger". He is filled with the Holy Spirit of Jehovah, and the indignation of outraged righteousness and justice thrills in his every word and action.

Marvellous courage of faith!

Listen, Pharaoh of that mighty Egypt! Here is an important message of the Most High: "that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel!"

* * * *

We listen to a message of wonderful Divine distinction!

But how is this possible?

How can there be such a terrible distinction between people and people?

Are not Egypt and Israel of one common stock? Are they not of one flesh and blood relation? Their father is Adam, and their mother is Eve, the woman who was so named by her husband "because she was the mother of all living".

Divine distinction between people and people?

But Egypt and Israel were together in the ark that was made to the saving of Noah's house! And to the house of Noah belonged both Egypt and Israel! From where then this awful distinction, so that the one people is stricken ten times with ever increasing vehebeence, while the other:

"He suffered none to do them wrong

In all their pilgrim way;

Yea, for their sake were kings reprov'd

And covered with dismay!"

Moreover, it is very evident that the awful distinction must not be sought in the extreme godlessness of the one, and the great piety of the other for both belong to the *fallen* race of Adam: they are sinners all, and therefore, they are equally guilty before a just God.

And they have proven it abundantly in their life and walk. Stay with this history and weep. You will see the people that is favored by God, but they will murmur and turn against the God that favored them. They will increase their murmuring and tempt God at Massah and Meribah. They will turn against the God-sent Moses and Aaron, and only a few chapters

hence, Moses will go a-crying to Jehovah and say to Him: "they be almost ready to stone me!" (17:4)

And if you would say to me, Yes, but Moses at least is worthy of this awful distinction, together with those of a kindred spirit with the great Man of God; then I would point you to two things. First, the 90th psalm where we read Moses' own testimony. "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For *all our days* are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told." And, second, God's testimony concerning Moses, when we read: "And the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou shalt not go in thither." You know the history: God said to Moses: "Take the rod . . . and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall bring forth his water. . . . And Moses took the rod. . . . and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock *twice*. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because *ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me* in the eyes of the children of Israel. . . ."

Oh no, neither Moses nor Aaron deserve this wondrous distinction of which the text speaks.

And all through the life and history of this distinct people they have proved it in their sinful walk and conversation.

And yet: "that ye may know that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

Strange, passing strange, Divine distinction!

* * * *

We may as well admit that if viewed from the natural, historical aspect, there is no distinction at all. Paul says as much when he advances the question: "What then, are we better than they? for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. . . . that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

No, there is no distinction in us as we are by nature, but God has nevertheless always addressed a certain people in most wonderful language, while the other people He addressed in language that makes us shudder, tremble and shake.

What may be the solution to this "problem"?

Let us look at the text once more: "how that the Lord doth put a difference. . . ."

There is the solution. The difference is "put" by the Lord.

If you would have journeyed among the Israelites at this period in this history, you would have seen something strange among them. Every father of the families "took unto him a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." And if a man's family was somewhat small, he would go to his neigh-

bour next unto his house, and they would have their little lamb together. And these lambs had to be very select stock: without blemish, a male of the first year. These lambs were prepared for their eating in the night in which they departed from the house of bondage, but they acted rather strangely with the blood: they would strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door-post of the houses in which the flesh was eaten. And the strange supper was eaten in the night. Moreover, they ate of it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staffs in their hand; and they had to be in a great hurry with this nocturnal supper. A strange proceeding indeed!

But in it, dear reader, you would have seen the difference which the Lord "put" between Egyptian and Israelite.

Let us patiently wait until midnight, and we will see and hear most marvellous things, things of Jehovah, things of a distinction that is really eternal in scope, everlasting in its fruit.

"And the Lord God spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying. . . . they shall take unto them every man a lamb. . . . and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door-post of the houses. . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. . . . And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

And when Moses, the man of God, had heard all the Word of God concerning this difference which God would put between the Egyptians and the Israelites, he proceeded to call all the elders, and gave them instructions according to all that the Lord had said.

And in their turn, the elders told the congregation, and they made ready the passover of the Lord.

Try to visualize the scene, and wonder at the wonderful distinction that the Lord had made.

The whole congregation, both the parents and the little ones, are wide awake at midnight, and they stand as if ready for a journey, their loins girt about, and shoes on their feet, and their staffs in their hands. And they eat of the slaughtered lambs in a great haste, according to the word of the Lord.

Mark you well the blood that is on the houses: it makes all the difference!

At midnight it ought to be very still: it is the time for rest and slumber.

But what means that great cry in Egypt at midnight?

Really, there was no great difference between the

run of them and the run of the Israelites: those people loved their firstborn son also! And they loved their father who happened to be the firstborn in his generations. They even loved their old grandfathers who were born first, so long ago. In some houses of the Egyptians there were three dead bodies at midnight. Perhaps there were four, if the old patriarch lived longer than the usual allotted span of the life of man.

The Lord God passes through Egypt that night, and his passing was terrible. At midnight there were many dead bodies. Neither was there any respect of persons. There was one dead in Pharaoh's house, and there were the dead in the dungeon. And there were many dead in between these extreme categories. Moreover, all the firstborn of the cattle died also.

But in the houses of the Israelites it was very still. When the Lord saw the blood on the posts of the door, He passed over them and destroyed them not.

Wonderful, Divine distinction!

* * * *

How must we explain all this?

Did we not agree among ourselves that there is no real difference between the run of them and the run of Israel?

Are they not of one common stock of evildoers? The people of Israel, in their leaders, would accentuate that and cry: All our days are passed away in Thy wrath! And the reason: Our secret sins stand in the light of Thy countenance!

First, let us return to that awful midnight, so long ago in Egypt land.

No, there is no suffering, no death in Israel.

But what of the lamb?

And note that the lamb is without blemish, a male of the first year!

Study the bleeding lambs in Israel. Their blood made all the difference as we have clearly seen. When He saw the blood, He would pass over them.

Well then, these lambs are tokens, signs, types, shadows of a wonderful Lamb of God that was to come!

No, none of the firstborn of the Jews were destroyed that night, and yet, in a sense, their firstborn *was* destroyed by God. In a sense, Jesus died that night for the children of God in Israel. And Jesus, as concerning the flesh, was among them that night.

According to the word of the Lord, many lambs died that night. And in the slaughter of the innocents there was a very pregnant promise: I will kill My firstborn for you, that you may live, and live forever!

Divine distinction!

Oh yes, and it is more than historical, more than typical, more than prefigured among the children of Israel in that early day.

It is even more than its historical fulfillment on the day of the feast just outside of tumultuous Jerusalem, anno Dominus 33. Oh yes, there we saw the passover lamb fulfilled. But it is greater than that. We agree with you: Golgotha and Golgotha's Jesus *is* the difference which God "put" between Egypt and Israel. But both the typical slaughter of the innocents and the fulfillment in the fulness of time hark back to the Divine distinction of eternity. The love of God is above and beyond our history. Golgotha is a *revelation* of that which is beyond and above time and place and history.

Eternally God has put a difference between Egypt and Israel.

Harken to His own words: I have loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore have I drawn you! It is the ground, reason and motive for the erecting of that wondrous Cross, that slaughter of the Innocent!

* * * *

What may God's purpose be in this great distinction?

That ye may know! That is the language of the text.

Ye has reference to Egypt. Yes, and to all the miserable people that are spiritually Egypt and Sodom, where also the Lord Jesus was crucified. The awful decree of reprobation is historically realized in the sins and guilt of Egypt. They are worthy of the plague of their destruction.

But that marvellous Divine distinction is also, and primarily, that Israel may know how that the Lord has "put" a difference between them and Egypt. Israel must know unto all eternity that the Lord has given the Lord Jesus to be slaughtered as the Lamb of God, so that it may pay the ransom for Israel of the ages. Israel, and that is God's church of all the ages, must know that the Lord loved them with an everlasting love, and therefore has given the blood on the doorposts of their hearts. And seeing this blood, He passes over them, and they are not destroyed.

And, finally, the Lord has "put" the difference between Egypt and Israel so that He might show to them and the world and the fallen spirits, how utterly lovely, gracious, wonderfully wise and glorious He is that dwelleth between the cherubim where the blood of Jesus is sprinkled.

Remembrance is made of that blood from generation to generation.

If our children ask: Why this wonderful distinction?

Then father speaks, and mother confirms: The Lord has put this difference, that He be praised forever and ever!

G. Vos.

The Standard Bearer

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

1463 Ardmore St., S. E.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Contributing Editors: — Rev. G. M. Ophoff, Rev. G. Vos, Rev. R. Veldman, Rev. H. Veldman, Rev. H. De Wolf, Rev. B. Kok, Rev. J. D. De Jong, Rev. A. Petter, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. L. Vermeer, Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. M. Gritters, Rev. J. A. Heys, Rev. W. Hofman.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. GERRIT VOS, Edgerton, Minnesota.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to MR. GERRIT PIPE, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

(Subscription Price \$2.50 per year)

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONTENTS

MEDITATION—

- Divine Distinction313
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS—

- The Creston Overture316
Rev. G. Vos

OUR DOCTRINE—

- Our Covenant God321
Rev. H. Veldman

THE DAY OF SHADOWS—

- The Men Of Keilah324
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

THROUGH THE AGES—

- The Papacy During the Period of the Reformation327
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

IN HIS FEAR—

- False Doctrine and the Fear of the Lord330
Rev. J. A. Heys

FROM HOLY WRIT—

- The Objective of Christian Education332
Rev. C. Hanko

CONTRIBUTION—

- Report of Classis West335
Rev. J. Blankespoor, Stated Clerk

EDITORIALS

The Creston Overture

The overture, treated at our April meeting of Classis East, is the following:

Grand Rapids, Mich.
January 6, 1948.

To the Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches
to convene in Grand Rapids, June, 1948

Esteemed Brethren:

The Consistory of the Creston Prot. Ref. Church at Grand Rapids, Mich., hereby calls the following to your attention:

1. In the "Rules of Order of the Synod", Article 4, it is stated: "No proposals of importance shall be presented to Synod that have not appeared on the agenda, so that consistories and classes may have opportunity for previous deliberation." The evident purpose of this rule is to prevent all danger of hierarchy, all ruling from the top and all boardism.

2. These same "Rules of Order" state in Article 6: "All cases that shall be treated by Synod must be sent directly by the Classes with their recommendation. To the above rule are the following exceptions: (1) Consistories or members who are in disagreement with certain classical decisions. (2) Suggestions by various standing committees". It seems to us point (2) under this article implies that the various standing committees can make any kind of recommendation they please to make, while neither the classes nor the local churches receive opportunity for previous *deliberation*. (art. 4).

3. Finally, Article 9 of the same "Rules" states: "The reports of all committees, except of the standing committees shall be published three months before Synod convenes, so that all the churches may be duly informed." Also here we notice once again on the one hand that the churches must be duly informed, on the other hand as far as the reports of the standing committees is concerned information is not deemed necessary, no matter how important the "suggestions" of these committees may be. A standing committee or a committee of pre-advice at synod, or even one delegate at synod can come with a proposal to synod which has far-reaching consequences, still, neither the classes nor the local churches receive opportunity to deliberate upon it.

Brethren, we believe that here is an element of discrepancy and inconsistency which can lead to very

unpleasant situations. On the one hand it is said that churches must be duly informed and receive the opportunity for deliberation, on the other hand there may be very important last minute suggestions by standing committees and yet the local churches are not informed and cannot deliberate upon them.

Naturally, we realize that every little detail which is to appear on the agenda of Synod cannot be discussed by the local consistories. Synod must have a certain amount of leeway and freedom of action. The Synodical agenda cannot be put into a strait-jacket. We also realize that after important matters are decided upon it is still possible for the local consistories to come to the next Synod with a protest against such decisions. However, this is usually not done, and there are many drawbacks to such a procedure.

We believe that the matters which our Synods decide upon should come from the local consistories or that our local consistories and classes are granted a voice in proposals by various standing committees or any and all important proposals that require a decision by Synod. This also seems to be the intention of the "Rules of Order", besides, to us it appears to be the proper Reformed Church Polity. As churches we should by all means avoid everything that has but a semblance of hierarchy or boardism.

It was especially in connection with the question of finances which prompted us to write this letter to your honorable body. It is no secret that a good many of our people, e.g., have made statements to the effect that the Synod of 1947 was on a spending spree and that Synods do pretty much as they please. And it is true that far-reaching decisions were made, assessments were raised without our people having any idea as to what was going on because nothing was discussed and there were no definite proposals for "deliberation". We do not imply that this never happened before, but we use 1947 as an example.

Brethren, after all, our people are interested in the things that are going on and they also must pay the bill when finances are involved (which is usually the case) and they do not like to have the feeling that Synod makes all kinds of important decisions and financial commitments about which the local churches have nothing to say, unless it would be by way of protest. On our congregational meeting several voices were raised opposing the budget for 1948 and all for the reason of the unexpectedly high assessments for some of the Synodical funds.

We believe that if future Synods do not act very carefully in these matters and keep in touch with the people and give the local consistories an opportunity to voice their opinion, our people will not back up some of the Synodical decisions but strenuously disapprove of them and accuse the Synod(s) of dictatorship. Our people will also become discouraged, to say the least,

when it comes to paying the full amount of the Synodical assessments for the various funds. Furthermore, there is also a danger that if Synod does not do its utmost to keep the assessments down to a minimum "needy churches" will stay "needy" and other churches will apply for financial support in order to meet their obligations. After all it would be very unfair to expect of the ministers in some of our smaller churches to pay indirectly a large share of the high assessments.

In connection with the foregoing we suggest the following:

1. That, if at all possible, the churches should be given an opportunity to discuss all matters that come before Synod, including financial matters like proposed assessments, salaries, etc. Under our present set-up our classes do not even have this opportunity, and at the classical gatherings we have at least representatives of the local consistories.

2. That it should be made the rule that decisions which involve a considerable outlay of money be proposed to the churches, stating the definite sum, and that such decisions do not go into effect till the next year. That would give opportunity for deliberation, suggestions, counter proposals, protest, etc.

3. That under no circumstances a standing committee has the power to raise the assessments for a particular fund during the course of the year. We had a glaring example of this in the past year when the Mission Committee raised the assessments for the Mission Fund from \$5.00 to \$12.00 per family. That this figure was subsequently lowered to \$6.00 per family is due to the consistory and congregation of Fuller Ave. But we feel that the principle of the thing is wrong. Other committees might do the same thing, and where would be the end?

4. That Synod be very sparing in making decisions to the effect that a standing committee "use its own discretion" in determining or raising the amount of salary of brethren that are paid by the churches.

Finally, brethren, this is really not a protest but it is a request of our consistory that Synod take these matters under advisement, deliberate upon them, and if at all possible make such rules which prevent even the slightest semblance of dictatorship and the like. After all, Synods should remain in touch with the people and our people must have the conviction that our Synodical decisions are in harmony with that which lives in the churches and has the approval of the churches. We believe that our people are willing to give and to sacrifice for the cause of the Kingdom, but they like to be fully informed, be convinced of the need, they like to have an opportunity to express themselves before vital decisions are made, especially when it means that they have to pay for them. And if it

should come so far that our people get the impression that the Synod is a super committee dictating to our churches from the top and assessing our people at will, or that a few men, which happen to be Synodical delegates, assume the power and the authority to decide about the purse strings of our people as they please, our Synods will have lost their prestige and eventually our people will not go along. We believe it is time for reflection and to move cautiously.

Wishing you the guidance of the Spirit of the Church, we remain,

Your brethren in the Lord,

The Consistory of the Creston
Protestant Reformed Church,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

(was signed) John D. De Jong, President
P. Vanden Engel, Clerk

Subscript:

The above overture might be styled an important overture, not so much from the point of its content, but rather because of the treatment it received; which certainly revealed that Classis East considered it important.

In a very objective way we will give our readers the history which was made anent this overture of our Creston Church of Grand Rapids.

It first appeared at the January meeting of Classis East, that is, January 1948. From there it was referred to all the consistories of Classis East for study and recommendation.

It again appeared on the recent April meeting of our Classis, together with four replies from our consistories. These four were: the Second Church of Grand Rapids, the First Church of Grand Rapids, South Holland consistory and Grand Haven consistory.

One of these consistories (Grand Haven) advised classis to send the document through to Synod without recommendation. The Second and South Holland Churches advised to send it through with the agreement of Classis, while Fuller Avenue consistory advised the adoption of suggestion No. 1. (see bottom of Creston Overture), eliminating the phrase "if at all possible", and adding: and here I have not available the phrase which Fuller Avenue consistory would see incorporated in the suggestion that is labelled No. 1. The same consistory advised the elimination of suggestion No. 2. And they advise the elimination of the phrase "except the standing committees" which appears in Article 9 of the "Rules of Order of Synod", which rule is quoted in Creston's overture, see paragraph 3 in the beginning of their document.

Practically the entire session of Classis East was spent in seeking to come to a decision which would enlighten Synod as to the sentiment with respect to the material of Creston's overture.

The first motion made on this material was to send it through to Synod without our recommendation, thus indicating disapproval.

A very lengthy discussion followed as to what is the right procedure. It was argued that Classis should voice something more specific so that Synod could receive more of a directive from our Classis. It was also pointed out that the very manner in which this overture was treated by classis implied that classis should say more than was indicated in this motion. It was maintained that even if classis did not desire to support the overture it should motivate its decision and not simply send a bare statement, since classis was bound to treat the material and therefore should furnish Synod with a decision, properly motivated, as a directive for Synod.

The support for this motion and the motion itself were finally withdrawn, and consequently were dropped.

Then a motion was made to treat the four suggestions of Creston's overture seriatim, that is, one by one. You will find these four suggestions, numbered one to four, near the bottom of the above transcript of Creston's overture. This motion was passed.

It is not possible for me to acquaint our people with all the arguments and discussions that followed. The greater part of the session of classis was spent on this motion.

A motion was made to adopt Suggestion 1. After a lengthy debate the motion was dropped.

The same action prevailed with respect to suggestions 2-4.

After this it was called to the attention of classis that we should motivate our decisions. It was also pointed out that the overture contained elements which classis could and should approve.

Thereupon a motion was made as follows: Classis East expresses that it is in favor of the suggestion of Creston that all matters pertaining to the Agendum of Synod be publicized as soon as possible in order that all our churches may be acquainted with the matters that are to be treated, but that classis deems it not wise to approve the positive suggestions of Creston. This motion was supported and after some discussion was passed.

Immediately afterwards a motion was made to reconsider the motion just passed, on the ground that there was not enough opportunity for discussion. This motion to reconsider was passed, and after a lengthy discussion, the original motion was dropped.

The status quo with respect to Creston's overture at this stage was that we disapproved of the four

Suggestions of Creston's overture, but that we had not appended our grounds for such action.

Finally, a motion was made as follows: Classis East sends the Creston's overture through to Synod with this notification, to wit, that Classis East, in its April meeting, rejected the four suggestions of Creston on the ground that they militate against our Reformed set-up with respect to the authority of Synods as reflected in Articles 30, 31, and 51 of our Church order.

After lengthy discussion and deliberation this motion was also dropped.

And that is the end of the matter, that is, as far as Classis East is concerned.

The matter of Creston's overture could rest at this point, to be resurrected at the gathering of our next Synod, were it not for a few considerations.

First, at the meeting of our recent classis, as also in the overture of Creston, mention was and is made that the matters of Synod should be publicized and discussed in the open, so that all our people might read and know what is going on.

The present editorial is an answer to that suggestion. There is truth in the suggestion anent this matter. There is a Holland proverb that says: *Onbekend maakt onbemind*, that is, the unknown is unloved. In as far as we are able we would like to take the first step to remedy this lack of publicity.

Second, even if the suggestion had not been made, we would have written on the matter of Creston's overture, and that for two reasons.

And our first reason is that according to our conviction Classis East has made a serious error in this history of Creston's overture. A precedent has been set that may have far-reaching consequences, and then, consequences of a destructive nature. I say "destructive" nature, and I have chosen the term deliberately.

Let us see.

The overture of Creston came before Classis East in its January meeting. Evidently, Classis East considered the contents of this overture of such great importance that, before it could come to its own decision regarding it, Classis wished to have the advice of all the consistories of its resort.

And when this overture, together with answers of four consistories, appeared again on its agendum, Classis spent almost its entire sessions on this overture alone, debating, arguing, deliberating, making motions, retracting or dropping them, etc. And it is an important overture, no one will deny that.

Finally, it goes on record, four times in succession, voting NO on the four suggestions made by Creston's consistory.

No one will deny that the majority of classis, voting NO on the suggestions, had grounds for their ac-

tion. But the sad part is that Classis East sends these four NO's to Synod without a shred of motivation. And that is arbitrary, and therefore, destructive to our Reformed set-up of church federation. Both Creston's consistory and the Synod of 1948 will have reason to be offended at the arbitrary action of Classis East. Here is a consistory which sincerely labored regarding a certain matter which concerns the whole church federation. They follow the correct procedure, that is, they send an instruction to Classis East with the request to deliberate on it, and, if possible, express its adherence to it, and then send it through to the broader gathering of our churches.

And here is a Synod which will receive an overture from one of our consistories regarding a matter that could not, from the very nature of the case, be finished in the minor assemblies. But it is sent to the intermediate body for previous consideration. Well, the consideration was there. There never will be any doubt of that in the minds of the constituency of Classis East in its April meeting, 1948. I think you may even put an exclamation point there. But here is the point: Synod of 1948 in particular, and the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches in general, will never know why we did as we did in this important overture. All that Synod of 1948 will receive on its agendum is this: Four great NO's as answer to the polite suggestions of Creston's consistory. Classis East should have given a directive to Synod. That is what Classes are for with respect to matters like this. Synod of 1948 will have to guess as to the grounds for our negative action on the four suggestions of Creston.

There are those who may say: Yes, but there are four ministers and four elders of Classis East that will go to that Synod of 1948, and they will be able to enlighten Synod as to the grounds for the action of Classis East in April of 1948. But that is not true. These delegates have no right to mention the grounds at all, for even Classis East was not able to come to a majority decision respecting the ground for their action. Twice, the matter of possible grounds was tested, and twice it was rejected. So if Classis East could not state the grounds for their action, how can the eight delegates to Synod be trusted to formulate and express the grounds for our action?

My second reason for writing on the overture of Creston is of an entirely different nature. It has been said that matters coming before Synod should be discussed in our church papers. Well, the present writer agrees with that sentiment, and therefore he would write something about the overture of Creston.

Several times it has been called an important overture, and that is true, not so much because of its content, but evidently, because of the treatment it received of the hand of classes and consistories.

Overagainst the above sentiment I would say and defend, that the overture of Creston is a very important overture as to its content too. The undersigned does not question the sincerity, good faith, and motives of Creston's consistory at all, but nevertheless I am convinced that if we would accept its proposals and sentiments, we would militate against our Reformed Church Political set-up with respect to the authority of synods in certain specified Kingdom activities. If Creston's overture were adopted by the next Synod, we would make a rubber stamp of that body, and that is congregationalistic heresy.

Article 30 of the Church Order of Dordrecht specifically states that "In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, *or such as pertain to the churches of the major assembly in common.*" (Italics mine, G. V.)

Moreover, a specific field of such matters that pertain to the churches in common is mentioned in Article 51 of the Church Order. There we read: "The missionary work of the churches is regulated by the general synod in a mission order."

From the above quotations of the church order under which we labor and conduct out ecclesiastical affairs it is plain that Synods have authority, delegated to them by the churches in common, to conduct some activities which no local church could take upon itself alone. A very plain matter is mentioned in Art. 51, namely, Mission endeavour. Another such activity is the training of future ministers, the study of theology.

In order to conduct the kingdom activity of mission and theology, standing committees are appointed by Synod, and they operate under an order, or constitution which is carefully drawn up, criticized and finally adopted, and then *publicized in the churches*. You find it in our church order book.

Also, these standing committees have their reports printed in the acts of synod, together with the action the various synods make respecting them. So there is ample publicity with regard to the work and endeavour of these standing committees.

And if a certain standing committee of synod, or if a certain synod would do things contrary to Holy Scripture, the Reformed Confessions, or the adopted Church Order, on which their constitutions and Rules of Order are based, there is always recourse to redress in the way of protest, according to Article 31 of the Church Order.

But if we go the way that is pointed out by Creston's consistory, our future synods will be hamstrung in all their legitimate work, at least, in as far as appointment of professors, salaries of professors, assessments, and other financial matters, are concerned.

You say: "But suppose a future Synod would build

a \$100,000 school, without asking the advice of the classes and of the consistories, what must we do?" I would say: First, I would not pay the assessment of such a silly move at this stage of our history; and, second, I would take steps to undo the foolish move of such a synod in the legitimate way, that is, by way of protest through consistory, classis, and synod.

Accepting Creston's overture by our synod of 1948 would be hamstringing the synod, for it would mean that all matters of a financial nature, and all matters depending upon the matter of finances, would have to lie over for one year, so that all the consistories and the classes could deliberate on them, and finally tell Synod what to do! How on earth could the churches through their synods ever conduct mission endeavour, and the study of theology, the training of men for the ministry?

The overture of Creston is also rather weak, in that it does not come with specific claims, convictions, and instructions. Neither does it protest against certain concrete things the synod of 1947 has done. Although it seems to condemn certain things that were done, we are left in the dark as to what they refer to. And that certainly is not the way to remedy ills.

In fine, let me say that it is the right of Creston to protest against abuses. Also, that we grant the possibility that the Synod of 1947 has made errors. But let Creston, or any other consistory, point out the errors or abuses and use the appointed and correct way to remedy the errors. But let us not change our Reformed Church Political set-up of the authority of Synod to initiate steps in its particular work that cannot be done by the churches individually.

G. Vos.

50th ANNIVERSARY

On April 21, 1948, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

MR. and MRS. DERK VANDER VENNEN

hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding anniversary.

We thank and praise the Lord with them that He has kept and provided for them through these years. It is our sincere prayer that God may continue to bless them in His great love and mercy.

Their grateful children:

Rev. and Mrs. R. J. Frens

Mr. and Mrs. John M. Faber

Esther Vander Vennen

5 grandchildren

1 great-grandchild.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

OUR DOCTRINE

Our Covenant God

God's Covenant and The Promise. (Rom. 9)

We concluded our previous article with the statement "And now we purpose to show in subsequent articles the particular and wholly unconditional character of this promise or these promises of the alone blessed God, the God of our salvation." In that article we called attention to the fact that any discussion of the Covenant must include a discussion of the promise. The two are inseparable. This, we observed, is evident from many things. Fact is, the covenant and its realization may surely be regarded as the very heart and core of the promise—a person's conception of the promise will determine his conception of the promise. As Protestant Reformed Churches we believe the promise of God to be, not an offer which He graciously extends to all men who hear the gospel (the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church), but the Divine pledge of eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, a pledge which God Himself and which God alone fulfills, and which is therefore particular and wholly unconditional. This idea of the promise is the Scriptural presentation throughout the Word of God. We purpose to call attention to this in a few subsequent articles. Let us, particularly as Protestant Reformed young people, become more fully acquainted also with this particular part of our rich heritage of the truth in the light of the Word of God. These truths are surely of the greatest significance. What can possibly be more comforting and assuring to us than to know that the work of salvation is exclusively Divine, from the beginning even unto the end, that His promises never fail, that they never fail only because of Him Who is not a man that He should lie or the son of man that He should repent but the almighty and ever faithful Jehovah Whose will none can resist and Whose promise must be fulfilled?

The Importance of Romans 9.

There is, as we all undoubtedly surmise, considerable aversion to this particular portion of Holy Writ. This is understandable in the light of the content of this chapter. One need but read this chapter hastily and superficially and very soon he will experience within his own heart and mind a definite reaction against the truth revealed in this Scripture of God. This is evident from the chapter itself. Twice the apostle, Paul, intercepts a question which is directed by the natural man against the truth that God is God alone

(verses 14 and 19). Why, it is asked, should so much significance be attached to one particular portion of the Word of God? We must have all of Scripture, not merely a part of it. The entire Word of God must speak to us, not merely an isolated text here and there.

This reasoning should not concern us too much. Firstly, if it be said that we must have all of Scripture and not merely a part of it, I agree but hasten to add that we must also have Romans 9. Did you ever hear of a person, who objects to undue emphasis upon Rom. 9, also object to other portions of Holy Writ, such as the Sermon on the Mount, which he considers more in harmony with the tone of the gospel and is probably quoted oftener by him than Romans 9 is quoted by those who have learned to bow the knee before the sovereignty of Him Who alone is the God of heaven and earth. Secondly, Scripture is not in conflict with itself. Romans 9 is therefore important. In this chapter the apostle is revealing unto us the *entire* truth of the Word of God but as applied to Israel and the promise of Jehovah. The apostle places himself in this particular Word of God before the problem of Israel and their rejection in the light of the promise of the Lord. And what are his findings? Led by the infallible Spirit of God he is enabled to regard this vexing question, this heart-rending problem in the light of the truth that God is God alone. And this truth is, we know, the teaching of Holy Writ throughout. In the third place, in our present effort to establish Scripturally that God's promise is particular and unconditional, we will not limit ourselves to Romans 9. Indeed, we will permit the Scriptures to speak. Fourthly, Romans 9 is extremely significant also for another reason which we have as yet not mentioned. Let us please bear in mind that the apostle is not treating an isolated case here. Paul is not discussing a "little" thing here, some "pet" incident which he experienced in his own life. He is, if you please, throwing the "spotlight" upon the history of the development of God's covenant throughout the ages. That, and nothing less than that, is the issue in this Scripture of the Lord. He is speaking, mind you, of the promise to Abraham, the father of all the believers, of whom we also read in Romans 4 and the epistle to the Galatians. He calls attention to the rejection of the Jews, the salvation of the Gentiles, and therefore the development of God's covenant throughout the ages. He does this in chapters 9-11 of this epistle. The apostle, therefore, throws light upon the entire Old Dispensation, and on the New Dispensation, and that in the light of the promise of Jehovah. It is clear, is it not, that Romans 9 and the two subsequent chapters call attention to the realization of God's promise of salvation. The significance of this particular part of the Word of God ought, therefore, to be well established.

*Romans 9.**Verses 6-8.*

In these verses we read: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

We should note in the first place that the apostle, Paul, is struggling here with a tremendous problem. There is, first of all, the word or promise of God. We need not doubt the identity of this word or promise of God. The words of verses 7-8 surely reminds us of the word of the Lord as it came to the father of believers according to chapter 17 of Genesis. The Lord had promised Abraham that He would establish His covenant with him and with his seed for an everlasting covenant, that He would make him the father of many nations, and that he and his seed would inherit the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Briefly expressed, God's promise to Abraham had been that he and his seed would partake of the salvation of the Lord forever. And, secondly, the apostle is confronted with the rejection of Israel. As a nation the Old Testament people of God had been cast out, and Christ's blood had indeed come upon them and upon their children. This rejection, however, also applied to thousands of individual Israelites already in the Old Dispensation. Thousands, we know, perished in that fearful wilderness journey of forty years, and of them the Scriptures tell us that the Lord had no pleasure in them. They had perished, also everlastingly. Moreover, it should be noted that this constitutes a problem for the apostle, a personal problem. O, he does not glory in the eternal damnation of these Israelites. He does not glory in reprobation as such. To the contrary, the truth is most painful to him. In verses 1-5 he declares of himself that there is great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, and also that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. This must also characterize us. God forbid that we should glory in reprobation as such, that the doctrine of the Lord's sovereign reprobation should afford us special delight and satisfaction. How could this be? Is it a matter of personal indifference or personal satisfaction for us when our children begin to reveal themselves as opposed to the things of the Lord and of His covenant? Does and should it not fill our heart with great heaviness and sorrow when they refuse to heed the commands of God and walk in the precepts of Jehovah? Yet, however true this may be, the truth must be proclaimed. The fact of Israel's rejection is indeed a fact of tremendous sorrow for

the apostle. Nevertheless, only then can he have comfort and only then can we have comfort if we regard this fact in the light of the sovereignty of God. The fact itself we cannot change or alter. Let the Lord explain His own work. He, and He alone, can fill our hearts and minds and souls with rest and peace.

We are aware, I am sure, how some would explain the phenomenon of God's promise and this rejection of Israel according to the flesh. They would have us believe that the promise of salvation is given to all, in the sense that the Lord would bestow upon all salvation, but that the actual fulfillment of this promise is dependent upon man. The question, we understand, is not whether the promise as such comes to all, whether it is announced or proclaimed to all. A general proclamation of a particular gospel is not the same, we understand, as the proclamation of a general gospel. The gospel must surely be preached to others besides the elect. The question, however, is whether the promise comes to all in the sense that whoever is born within the covenant is entitled to, has a right to all the blessedness of life eternal. God, then, has simply prescribed, willed salvation for all. Our actual receiving of this salvation is contingent upon our acceptance of it. God promises it to all, that is, He declares that He would have all men be saved, that He is ready and eager to bestow salvation upon all if only they will accept this proffered salvation.

This view, we understand, is arminianism. Arminianism is humanism, manism. Arminianism is the humanizing of salvation. Arminianism finds in man the beginning, the continuance, the end and purpose of salvation. In the arminianistic scheme of things all things revolve about man. He preaches a predestination upon foreseen faith—hence, the Lord's election of the sinner has been preceded by an act of that sinner, his faith in Christ. He preaches a Christ Who is primarily concerned, not with the glory of the everlasting Father and His righteousness, but with the salvation of men—hence, this Christ of the arminians dies for all men. And he also preaches a gospel in which man is the center figure. The success of his gospel preaching is determined by the amount of souls won for Jesus. In his preaching of the gospel he therefore offers salvation to all. This view is also Heynsianism. According to this view, the sacrament of Baptism is an undoubted seal and testimony of God to every child that is baptized that the Lord would bestow salvation upon him, but that the Lord's will to save him is contingent upon his acceptance of the proffered salvation. And this is also the official doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church as expressed in the First of the Now famous Three Points, although of late that church has "repudiated" Heyns because she would court or woo favor of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

However, if this be true, then, according to the apostle in these verses, the word of God had taken none effect, that is, the word or promise of the Lord has failed. We must notice the argumentation of the apostle here. Paul is distinguishing in these verses between a universal and a particular view of the promise of God. He writes for example: "*Not all* are Israel which are of Israel; *not all* are children although they are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh; *not all* are the children of God; *not all* are counted for the seed. The reasoning of the apostle is clear. If the promise were Divinely intended for all, then that promise did not take effect; the word of the Lord failed. True, if the promise be regarded merely as an offer, one could hardly say that it failed simply because many had not accepted it. The fact that man does not accept salvation offered him does not annul the fact that God had earnestly desired his salvation. If the promise of Jehovah be merely an offer, that offer stands and is well-meant regardless whether I accept or reject it. Besides, if this word of God whereof the apostle speaks in verse 6 be merely an offer the words that follow, "hath taken none effect" would have no sense. One cannot say of an offer that it hath or hath not taken effect. An offer is simply impotent. No power proceeds from an offer. To offer salvation implies that our receiving of it depends not upon the one who makes the offer but upon him to whom the salvation is offered. How difficult becomes the picture in Romans 9 if we bear in mind that the apostle is speaking of the *promise* of God! If it be true that the promise of Jehovah to Abraham that he and his seed would partake of the salvation of Jehovah was Divinely meant for all, than it must follow that the word of God has failed. Why? Please bear in mind that we are all by nature children of the devil, objects of wrath and children of disobedience. That some in the Old Dispensation were saved and believed is surely not to be ascribed to the fact that they accepted an offered salvation of God. This they could never do of themselves. That they believed and were saved is only because the promise of God had taken effect in them, that is, God had fulfilled in them His Word of salvation by His grace and Spirit. If, on the other hand, others were not saved (and we know that many thousands perished in the wilderness), and the Lord had given them also His promise, then their destruction can only be attributed to the fact that the Lord had failed to do what He had promised. The Lord God, then, had failed to carry out His Word. His promise had become void, worthless. Then Jehovah had ceased to be the dependable, unchangeable, everlastingly faithful God of His covenant. This is the thought implied by the apostle in the first part of vs. 6.

Now notice, if you will, that the apostle immediately declares in verse 6 that this cannot be. We read, do

we not: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." This, if you please, is the apostle's first statement when he begins to treat his difficult problem in this epistle to the Romans. He does not begin to reason and finally arrive at the conclusion that the word of the Lord hath taken none effect. He declares this at the very outset. He first makes this positive assertion and then proceeds to confirm it. "Not", he writes, "as though the word of God hath taken none effect". Whatever may be the solution of this problem, one thing is sure: it cannot be true that the word of God hath taken none effect. Why? For the simple reason that it is the word, the promise of God. And for a word of God not to take effect is simply impossible. The promises of the Lord are Yea and Amen. They never fail. They cannot fail. God never "lets His people down".

But, how must we account for the fact that thousands of Israelites perished in the wilderness, yea, that the nation itself was rejected because of their rejection of the Stone which was made the head of the corner? Why is it true that the promise of God has not failed? And the answer is simply this: the promise of God was never given to all. Let us ask the question honestly and in all simplicity. Are all Israel because they are of Israel? Are all children merely because they are the natural seed of Abraham? Are all the children of the flesh also children of God and must all be counted for the seed? What must we say to our children when they come to years of discretion? The Liberated Churches of the Netherlands declare that we must have something positive to say unto them. What must we tell them? Must we say to them that the promise of salvation is also Divinely intended for them? That is what the late Prof. Heyns would have us say to all our children.

The answer of the apostle to this question is clear. In the first place, we read that in Isaac shall Abraham's seed be called. The idea of the apostle is that Isaac only shall be called the seed, accounted for the seed. Abraham, we know, had many children. He was the father of Ishmael, born to him of Hagar. After the death of Sarah he married Keturah and several children were born to him of Keturah. The Lord had declared to the father of believers that He would establish with him and with his seed His covenant for an everlasting covenant and that He would cause him and his seed to inherit the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Did this promise of God pertain to all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh? Would all the children of Abraham, because they are the natural seed of Abraham, also be accounted as the seed whereof we read in Genesis 17:7-8? And the answer is that only Isaac would be accounted as the seed, he and *not* the others. In other words, the promise of the Lord did not apply to all the natural

descendants of Abraham, but only to Isaac, the child of the promise. And this leads us to another element in the answer of the apostle. We read, do we not, that "the children of the promise are counted for the seed". The expression, "children of the promise", is a beautiful expression. The children of the promise are not merely promised children, children that had been promised, or children to whom the promise pertains. The reason is self-evident. The apostle is treating exactly the question to whom the promise of God applied when He appeared to Abraham according to Genesis 17. What sense would it give to say that the promise of God applied to the children of the promise, that is, to those children to whom the promise applied. Wouldn't this be "begging the question"? The children of the promise are the children born of the promise. They are the children born through the power of the promise. Only to them does the promise of God apply. Hence, how can the word of God fail to take effect when the Lord Himself fulfills it, brings forth His people according to election and by irresistible grace?!

This truth is now illustrated by Paul in the history of Isaac. Isaac, we read, in distinction from the other children of Abraham, is counted for the seed. Besides, he is the child of the promise, brought forth by the power of the promise. He was the child of parents who had died as far as the bringing forth of children was concerned. To these "dead" parents had come the word of the Lord that "according to the time of life Sarah would have a son." And Abraham and Sarah had believed. And through their faith the mighty power of God as He alone fulfills His promise had operated; Sarah had conceived and had brought forth a son; Isaac was indeed the child of the promise, brought forth by God Himself through the faith of Abraham and Sarah. Their faith, we understand, was exactly this, not that they could bring forth this son, but that God could and would fulfill His own word. And thus this Isaac is a type and shadow of all the spiritual people of God throughout the ages. We cannot bring forth children of God. We can only bring forth children like unto ourselves, children of wrath and of disobedience. We can only bring forth children unto death and themselves characterized by death. It is God alone Who can bring forth children of the light and that by the irresistible grace of His promise.

The conclusion is clear. God's promise never fails, always takes effect. Why? Firstly, because it pertains only to the children of the promise, not to all the natural seed. God's promises simply are not given to, intended for all. And, secondly, God Himself realizes His own Word. He is Jehovah, the unchangeable, faithful Covenant God. He will faithfully do what He promises to do. Hence, the promise of God, according to Romans 9:6-8, is particular and wholly unconditional.

H. Veldman.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Men Of Keilah

So had Saul smitten Nob, the city of priests. All had died with the exception of Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons.

David, at the time, was in hiding in the forests of Hareth in the territory of Judah. Hither he had removed with his men in obedience to the Lord's command communicated to him by the prophet Gad, "Abide not in the hold; depart and get thee in the land of Judah." "The hold", it will be recalled, was the "mountain height" in the land of Moab, where David for a while had been entrenched after his escape from Gath. As driven by fear of Saul, he had once more departed from the "land of the living", and cast himself, his men, and his father's house upon the mercy of a heathen king. The Lord had ordered his servant to return to God's country", definitely to Judah. For here He had work for David to do. The Philistines had to be repulsed; they were making inroads into the territory of Judah and plundering God's

No sooner has David arrived with his men in the forests of Hareth than he receives tidings that the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and rob the threshing-floors. The latter are situated in the open country outside the walls of the city. David is eager to attack the adversary. Before he bestirs himself, however, he enquires of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go and smite these Philistines?" The Lord answers him, "Go and smite the Philistines and save Keilah." Keilah is a fortified city (vs. 7) in the lowland of Judah (Josh. 15:44). David's men object to the venture. They say to him, "Behold, we are afraid in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines." These men are not cowards. It is not the prospect of a clash of arms with the Philistines that makes them afraid. Their fear has another cause. Saul had just smitten the city of priests; and thereby he let it be known that any man or community of men failing to assist him in apprehending David may look forward to being destroyed on the ground of treason. As can be expected and as also the sequel reveals, the king's terrible threat has its effect. The people are afraid. Taking thought of their lives, only too many stand ready to give Saul their fullest co-operation in ridding the earth of David. Let men but catch sight of him and his band, and before long the reports will come pouring in at Saul's place of residence that David has been seen and can be captured at the place designated.

Humanly speaking, David's danger is great, and

likewise that of his men. And they are afraid. But they realize that their danger would increase a hundred fold should they leave the forests in whose thickets they are hidden and venture into the open spaces of the country. Yet, their leader requests that they do just that; he is urgent on them that they follow him to Keilah to fight the Philistines. But they demur. It is not the Philistines as such that they fear; the object of their dread is Saul. He will learn of their venture; seeing his opportunity, he will not sit still. Suddenly and without warning he will come upon them there in the lowlands of Judah perhaps just at the time when the battle with the Philistines is in full progress. Opportunity for flight there will not be; fight Saul they may not. What hope of escape will there be then to them? None whatever.

But David is insistent. The Philistines harrass his brethren in Keilah; and there is no one to help. He will come to their rescue. And the venture will succeed. David will save Keilah. The Lord had said; and therefore there need be no fear of Saul. But the men are still afraid. For their sakes, David again enquires of the Lord; and back comes the answer, "Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hand." The men are now quiet. Reassured, they follow David to the theatre of the impending conflict. They go to Keilah, and fight with the Philistines, "and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah."

(An additional word about the fear of David's men. The interpretation according to which the object of their dread was the Philistines as such cannot well be harmonized with the glowing account that the Chronicler gives of the deeds of valour of these men. As we saw, he sets them before us "mighty men, helpers of the war, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roe on the mountains." Besides, David's men do not say that they dread to clash arms with the Philistines. What they say in effect is that if they have reason to be afraid in Judah, Judah's forest of Hareth, where they are now in hiding, they have much more reason to be afraid in Keilah. Their presence there soon will be reported to one—king Saul—who seeks their lives but against whom they are not allowed to defend themselves by force of arms. How with such an adversary to cope can they risk appearing in the open spaces of the lowlands of Judah to fight Philistines? With Saul on their hands they cannot engage in wars with foreign dominations. They have all they can do to keep themselves from being trapped by Saul's troops. The complaint of the men, so construed, agrees fully with the inquiry that David directed to the Lord, "Shall I go and smite the Philistines"? That precisely was the question with all concerned. And the Lord's

promise of victory necessarily implies that He would be to them a shield against Saul.)

So did David, fugitive and outlaw, do the men of Keilah, his own tribesmen, a great service by a successful feat of arms against the hereditary enemy. He delivered them out of the hands of the Philistines. There is evidence in the text that they are keenly aware of their great indebtedness to David. After the battle they allow him and his men to retreat into their city. And they refrain from telling Saul that they have the fugitive in their midst. The text makes also this plain. Hearing that David has come to Keilah, Saul calls all the people together to war to go down to the city to besiege David and his men. Saul would have no reason to form that purpose—he purposes to besiege the city—had the men of Keilah sent the king word that David had entered their city and that they are holding him captive for their master. No such communications were sent by them to Saul. It is plain from David's prayer that they do not even order the son of Jesse to depart out of their midst. But neither are they saying that they will stand by him in a crisis. For they are agreed that they cannot very well allow themselves to be destroyed for David's sake. But they lack the courage openly to declare their intention, seeing that they are indebted to him for their very lives. But it is imperative that David learn what they purpose doing with him and his men. If their intentions are evil, he must leave at once; for there are gates and bars to their city; it is a walled town so that, should Saul arrive on the scene with him and his men still in their midst, he is trapped. So he puts the question to the Lord, "O Lord God of Israel," he prays, "thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down as thy servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up".

The prayer is formed of two distinct questions. "Will Saul come down?" is the one to which the Lord first replies. Saul will come down. But will the men of Keilah deliver him into Saul's hand? Or will they shield him, their saviour, against Saul's wrath even unto the death? That he asks the Lord to tell him would seem to imply that, if the answer would have been favorable, he would have abided in the city, to continue taking advantage of the protection of its gates and bars. It shows how he dreads being chased about by the man Saul. It is a hard and dangerous way of life in which he walks. He hopes that the men of Keilah will take him in permanently. Has he not a right to expect it? He has just saved them. But the

Lord's will is otherwise. David's training is not yet completed. The Lord has not yet done with him. There are still some lessons to be learned before he is meet for the Master's use. "They will deliver thee up", is therefore the Lord's answer to him. Then David and his men—about six hundred—arose and departed out of Keilah."

Whether David communicated his revelation to the men of Keilah is not stated. If so, they might have shown surprise at hearing what, according to the Lord's own word, they would do with David, the Lord's righteous servant and their saviour, if taking his side was to run the risk of losing their skins. They might have shown surprise at hearing that they would not run that risk, but would join hands with the wicked to destroy him. But their surprise would be feigned. For in their hearts they know themselves to be such men,—men who will do no wrong unless doing right clashes with their interests. And therefore they are glad that he has departed. His going freed them from a painful task. Indeed, how it would have hurt them to have been compelled to deliver such a man into Saul's hand. David was not deceived by these men. He took to heart what the Lord told him about them, and departed out of their city. Had he ignored that revelation, and remained in their midst, all the while prating about the good that sinners do, he would have perished at their hands.

Notice still must be taken of Saul's reaction to the tidings that David has come to Keilah. He jubilantly exclaims, "God has delivered him into my hands; for he is shut in by entering into a town that has gates and bars". Saul is certain that the men of Keilah are holding David captive for him or that the fugitive of his own accord will remain in the city until the king can get there to take him prisoner. He imagines therefore that David is as good as in his hands. For he wants to believe that David has committed and persists in committing a blunder of such amazing stupidity as to allow of but one explanation: The Lord has rejected David into Saul's hand (*rejected* is the word found in the original text). The implications of his imaginings are terrific, to wit, David is accursed of God. Samuel is a false prophet who spake words of vanity. The blessed of the Lord is Saul; his kingdom will be established, and his house will stand for aye. Such are the dreadful illusions into which Saul has fallen by blinding and self-deception.

But he soon receives new evidence of his being occupied with false images, lying imaginings. It is told him that David is escaped from Keilah. The most he can say now is that the Lord *will* deliver David into his hands in the way of his persistent endeavor to get the son of Jesse in his hands. But it is the same terrible lie with the same dreadful implications. And this lie, that Saul, as instructed by the Lord, well knows

to be a lie, Saul loves, thinks, wills and walks in with all his heart and mind and will and strength. For the Lord hardens his heart. Thus we read, "Then David and his men departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. . . . And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph." And, mark you, "Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand."

"Saul sought him every day," continually, without interruption. All his thoughts continue to be, 'Samuel is an imposter, a prophet of lying words; David is reprobated; Saul is the blessed of the Lord. God will surely deliver him into my hand'. This—David will one day perish by my hand—is Saul's prophecy, which he opposes to that of Samuel. And his whole ambition of life now is to fulfill his lying prediction and to slay the prophecy of Samuel by destroying David. But every attempt of his to capture David ends in failure. For the Lord does not deliver David into his hand; and thus the evidence of the vanity of Saul's prophecy continues to accumulate. But by this very accumulation of evidence God hardens his heart and thus, terrible to say, urges him on to his eternal doom through the lusts of his heart.

Saul then, taking him now at his word, has no quarrel with God nor God with him. It is men whom he fights and who fight him—Samuel and David and their party. With God he dwells on the best of footing; and his spiritual life flourishes. So says Saul. For, however perverse, he is a pious man. He makes mention of the name of the Lord. Says he not, "God hath delivered him into mine hand."

As to David and his man, "they went about whither they went," as circumstances dictated, without fixed plan or purpose. Learning that David escaped from Keilah, Saul abandons his march thither. He does not call the Keilites to account on account of their allowing David and his men to depart out of their midst.

Escaping from Keilah, David henceforth wanders from one sheltering height to another in the wilderness of Judah, a large tract stretching along the territory of Judah between the mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea. It was distinguished in various parts as the "wilderness of Ziph," "of Moan," etc., probably from the names of the neighboring towns. During the course of this period of his wanderings, David has his head-quarters on the "mountain-heights" (vs. 14), where he can observe the approach of the adversary. "And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand."

Now the text (vs. 15) makes mention of the first special case of persecution, "And David saw that Saul was come to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood," that is, he saw, received in-

formation of Saul's pursuit and retreated in the thick wood. The forest was his chief means of concealment.

While David is in "the wood" in the very height of these first persecutions, he is visited by Jonathan who strengthens his hand in God. David is not to fear: for the hand of Saul his father shall not find him. He shall be king over Israel and Jonathan shall be next to him. And that Saul well knows. A new covenant is made by the two men before the Lord (vss. 16-18). David remains in the wood and Jonathan goes to his house. The two friends here meet for the last time in life. It was not ambition but his love of David and his desire to be near David that made Jonathan want to be next to the throne, when his friend should have come into his kingdom. How it would have been if Jonathan had lived, cannot be said. There might have been complications all of which were avoided by his death. Jonathan's life is the picture of the undying devotion of believing men to the Hope of Israel, which is Christ Jesus. David has now to make another bitter experience. The Ziphites come to Saul to Gibeah and betray to him David's hiding place among them. And they are his own tribesmen. They are passionate adherents of Saul, and acquainted with his desires. Two things they say to him: 1) Come down to us, for all thy desire to get David in thy power may now be fulfilled; 2) We make it our affair to deliver him into thy hand. Saul is elated. "Blessed be ye of the Lord," says he to them, "Ye have compassion on me." Thus he remains true to all his wilful illusions. David is plotting to capture his throne; and, accordingly, he seeks his life. Saul imagines that he is in a dangerous situation and that the Ziphites sympathize with him. He instructs them how to go about gaining information of every retreat of David in his shifting of place. "Go, I pray you, prepare yet, that ye may learn, and that ye may see in what place his foot be," that is, where he fixes himself in his wanderings. Saul affirms the necessity of this espionage in the words, "For it is told me that he is very subtle." Saul cannot say enough to satisfy himself in exhorting them to search in every place. "Return to me unto what is certain," that is, when ye have obtained reliable information. He with confidence declares that he will then seize him "among all the thousands of Israel." The Ziphites return to their region before Saul, who, according to the agreement, is to follow.

The danger which now threatens David is greater than any previous or afterwards. Perceiving his predicament, he marches further southward to the wilderness of Moan. Having gotten information from the Ziphites, Saul and his men go to seek David. He is told and descends "the rock" in order to conceal himself in the lowland, and here he abides. Saul pursues and David has great difficulty to escape him. For

Saul attempts to surround and seize him. He has nearly succeeded, when he receives information of a new Philistine incursion. He must desist from further pursuit. So does the Lord save His servant. The Philistines had seized on the moment when Saul had with drawn his men to the south in pursuit of David.

How David cries out to the Lord in this danger, we learn from Psalm 54: "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. . . . For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. . . . He hath delivered me out of all my trouble: and mine eyes have seen my desire upon my enemies."

The place was called Selam hamahlekoth, meaning rock of smoothness or escape. As often as David would pass that rock and look up at its face, he would remember that God is "the escape" of His people.

And David went up from thence and dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi. G. M. Ophoff.

THROUGH THE AGES

The Papacy During The Period Of The Reformation

ADRIAN VI. — 1522-23

On August 31 (1522) Adrian was crowned in St. Peter's. For many years Rome had not seen such a pontiff. He was pious and sincere and of irreproachable morals. He hated luxury and dissipation with which Leo, his predecessor, filled the papal palace. When he was shown the group of Laocoon (a famous Grecian work in stone, representing a Trojan priest who distrusted the wooden horse and was destroyed by serpents sent by Athena), he expressed his disdain by saying, "They are idols of the heathen." "I would rather serve God," said he, "in my deanary of Louvain, than be pope at Rome." The Romans wondered at his habits. His household was simple. He had as cook an old Flemish woman; two pages waited on him at table. On Sept. 1 he held a consistory. He told the cardinals that the manners of Rome were sorely in need of reformation. He warned that their revenues would be reduced, and told them that they ought not to hoard their money but use it for the common needs. He bade consider that many of them were men without the benefit of learning and that they ought to employ their time in qualifying themselves for their duties. He insisted that they conform to regulations. Thus he requested them to shave their beards and prescribed their dress. His personal expenses he reduced to the simplest necessities, and dismissed from the

palace the needless crowd of officials who lost their places. "The pope leads an exemplary and devout life," wrote the Venetian envoys. "Every day he says his hours; rises from bed for early services and then returns to rest; rises at daybreak, says his mass, and then comes to give audience. He dines and sups very temperately, and it is said that he spends only a ducat a day, which he takes from his purse every evening and gives to the steward, saying, 'For tomorrow's expenses.' He is a man of good and holy life, but he is slow in his doings and proceeds with great circumspection. He speaks little and loves solitude."

Adrian's cardinals imagined that his simple life was due to greed. They held him guilty of hoarding. On his deathbed they tried to compel him to discover to them his hoard. In vain did he tell them that all he possessed was a thousand ducats. With growing anger they persisted in their examination until compelled to withdraw by the Duke of Sesse. When he died the cardinals were glad to be rid of a severe master. They rejoiced at the prospect of the return of the good old times. The Roman people were no less happy to be rid of the morose foreigner. They hung a wreath on the door of his physician in which was inscribed, "To the deliverer of his country." On his temporary tomb were graven these words, "Here lies Adrian VI., who thought nothing in his life more unfortunate than that he became pope."

As pontiff Adrian had impressive plans. First he wished to make peace between Francis I of France and emperor Charles V. When Charles was but nineteen years, he fell heir to the crowns of four dynasties. To them was added, by the vote of the Electors of Germany, the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. Thereafter he was known as Emperor Charles V, while hitherto he had borne the title of Carlos of Spain. Charles' greatness aroused the fears and jealousies of his neighboring rulers, particularly Francis I of France and Solymon, Sultan of Turkey, both of whom attacked his dominions during all the first part of his reign. Francis almost incessantly made war against Charles, whose enormous possessions now nearly surrounded his kingdom. Much of the fighting was done in Italy, the object of the rivals being to secure dominions in that peninsula. The wars between Charles and Francis proved a blessing for the Reformation. Charles had pledged all his resources to the extirpation of that movement; but by those combats his attention was drawn away from a serious consideration of church questions and the result was that in the meantime protestantism so firmly established itself in Northern Germany and other countries as to render abortive all later attempts for its destruction.

Adrian was desirous of putting an end to those wars. So he expressed to Henry VIII of England and Charles the wish that the two unite in a league for the

maintenance of the peace of Christendom that all the world and particularly France and the Turks might know that he who broke the peace would be deservedly punished. The league was formed but no peace ensued. What is more, every one tried to seduce the pope into an alliance with himself by proving that he had promoted his election to the papacy. Francis I had the first chance. He told the pope that it was not Charles but he who had made him pope, because he believed him to be a holy man. It was not true but Adrian felt flattered. He had an uneasy feeling that his election was entirely political and was due to Charles. Shortly thereafter Charles paid the pope his respects. He sent Adrian word that he esteemed him as 'his true father and protector, and would be always his obedient son, ready to share his fortune'. The interest of the rulers in the pope was purely mercenary. Each wanted his permission to tax his dominions. But Adrian refused to join either the alliance that Henry and Charles had formed or ally himself with the king of France. He wanted to be independent of both. His aim was to free the papacy from all political complications, thinking that only in this way could he make peace in Europe and unite Christendom against the Turks. To Charles he wrote, "My intention is to labor to procure peace among Christian princes that we may resist the Turks"; and accordingly he besought Charles to negotiate peace with Francis with a view to a truce of at least two years. He communicated an identical petition to Henry. Both replied that they had received such injuries from the French that they would have neither peace nor truce, but would settle the dispute with the sword. Wolsey declared that the French were the real Turks, the enemies of Christendom, and said that they must be exterminated. Charles V repeated the same advice. If the pope would join the emperor, he would most effectively prevent bloodshed among the Christian powers and enable them to combine against the Turks.

Then the Turks became very bold. They made themselves masters of the city and island of Rhodes and threatened Hungary with invasion. Adrian vainly hoped that the shock of the disaster might unite Christendom against the common foe. He issued more exhortations to peace and offered to mediate between the belligerents. Charles let the pope know that unless he adopted his political plans and permitted him to tax the clergy as he pleased, he must take the consequences and bear all the blame. Then Adrian exhorted the French king to go to Charles with overtures of peace. Francis replied that a truce was useless, as it would only give his rivals — Henry and Charles — time to make greater preparations. Adrian was overwhelmed with grief. But he refused to forsake his principle of neutrality. Then Francis threatened to invade Italy and cross the papal frontier, and Adrian

yielded. He signed a defensive league with Henry and Charles and five principalities in Italy. But he did not long survive the signing of this confederacy. He was seized with a slow fever on the day he subscribed it, which was the 4th of August, and died on the 14th of the following September.

Though Adrian failed in his attempts, to restore peace to Europe, he hoped to accomplish something in the way of reforming the church. And indeed there was need of reform of the church; for in her there existed frightful scandals in both head and members. This was recognized by all earnest and spiritually minded men. Thus Adrian had a considerable weight of opinion back of him. There was much outspokenness concerning the abuses in the church and the wicked lives of the clergy. It was pointed out to Adrian by the reform party that the only remedy was a general council and the strict enforcement of discipline. In the past all previous troubles in the church were appeased by a General Council, in which diseases were brought to light and proper remedies applied. The pope must call together grave earnest, upright, and peace-loving men to inquire into the cause of all the troubles. The time was past for exercising authority against the rebels, meaning all those who were taking part in the Lutheran revolt. 'The time is past,' wrote Allexander, 'when God will connive at faults. The age is changed, and popular opinions no longer thinks that the charges brought against us are partly false, and partly capable of better interpretation. The axe is laid at the root of the tree, unless we choose to return to wisdom. There is no need of issuing new laws, of fulminating Bulls; we have the canons and the institutes of the fathers, and if only they are observed, the evil may be arrested. Let the pope and the curia (the *curia*, the body of tribunals and offices through which the pope governs the Roman Catholic Church), do away their error by which God and man are justly offended; let them bring the clergy once more under discipline. If the Germans see this done, there will be no further talk of Luther. The root and the cure of the evil are alike in ourselves.' Erasmus advised the pope to lay aside authority and trust to reasonableness; to promise amnesty, and to allow free discussion, to minimize differences, and to leave all essentials open to free discussion. The advice was bad. Not reasonableness but the Scriptures should be made to take the place of the authority of the Pope. This was the Reformers stand. Engidius, the general of the Augustinians, submitted to the pope a memorial in which he inveighed against indulgences in language as strong as that used by Luther. Indulgences were an incentive to sin, a source of danger to souls. Nevertheless, Lutheranism must be rooted out. The very name of such a monster must be forgotten.

This, too, was Adrian's conviction. He was hearti-

ly in favor of reform; but the emperor must stamp out Lutheranism. And the authority of the pope must be maintained. He was opposed to free discussion of doctrinal differences on the basis of the Scriptures in a church council.

Something actually was attempted by Adrian in the way of reform; but he accomplished nothing worthwhile, and his reforming schemes quickly vanished away. On one thing all were agreed — Luther must be crushed. 'Heresy', said Cardinal Soderini, 'has always been put down by force, not by attempts at reformation; such attempts can only be partial, and will seem to be exhorted by terror; they will only confirm the heretics in the belief that they are right, and will not satisfy them. The princes of Germany must be taught that it is to their interest to put down the Lutheran heretics.'

There was little in Germany that could give Adrian comfort. Luther had been excommunicated by Adrian's successor, Leo X, June 16, 1520. The following year he was summoned to Worms. He decided to attend and on April 17, 1521 — the first year of Adrian's pontificate — he appeared before the emperor and that Reichstag. He was asked to recant the 41 heresies of which he had been accused but refused, and was put under the ban of the empire. On his return home he was captured by his friends and removed to the Wartburg. Here and there his books were being burned by order of the emperor, but his movement was steadily gaining in momentum; the number of his adherents were increasing by the day and practically nothing was done against them. In Wittenburg abrupt changes were made in the ritual of the Church. Infant baptism was attacked. Images were removed. The mass was abolished. War with France for the control of Italy was making it impossible for Charles V to execute the Ban on Luther. Sympathy with Luther was rapidly spreading in Germany. The Turks were again threatening the eastern frontier of Germany. A Diet held early in Nurnburg in 1522 occupied itself solely with the question of finance. It adjourned without saying and doing anything about Luther.

But if the upholders of the Old Church were standing still, not so the reformers. Great changes followed one upon another. An Augustinian brother, Gabriel Zwingli, preached against all Roman Catholic institutions and usages that did not have the sanction of the Scriptures. The gospel derives no authority from the church. Salvation is by faith alone. The mass is not a sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus. Good works are non-meritorious. The intercession of the saints is valueless. Monastic vows are not binding. Purgatory is non-existent. The church has but one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The clergy should marry.

In the meantime Luther returned to Wittenburg, and the government took no notice of it. But the pro-

testants were somewhat disturbed by Luther's violent reply to Henry VIII's defence of the seven sacraments. In his book Luther called the king of England a fool, an ass, an emptyhead, accused him of flattering the pope, whose conscience was as bad as his own. He poured scorn on all the authorities of the church, and denounced all the doing of the past as the work of the devil.

The government in Saxony did nothing about it except express its regret that the king should have been treated with so little respect.

On November 16, 1623 the diet of Nurnburg opened its sessions. The papal nuncio communicated to the assembly Adrian's willingness for reform, and dwelt on his efforts for peace and urged the princes to rescue Hungary from the Turks. He said that the pope admitted that Luther had done a good service in uncovering abuses, but that he became absurd and intolerable when he attacked the order of the church, and sacraments and the authority of the pope, the fathers and the councils. Accordingly, he demanded a vigorous execution of the ban of the emperor, issued against Luther and his followers at the Diet of Worms. In reply, the princes of Germany drew up a memorial containing a hundred grievances, which, they said, gave the Germans just reasons to complain of the court of Rome, and which they desired his Holiness would take care to remedy, since they would no longer submit to such extortions. That memorial they sent to Adrian. He admitted the necessity of a reformation and also wanted to take action, but the opposition he met with on the part of the cardinals compelled him to move so slowly that when he died shortly thereafter nothing had been accomplished. The only means of restoring the peace of the church and correcting her abuses was by a church council. What was needed was a free discussion on the basis of the Scriptures to determine the meaning and bearing of Luther's teachings. But to this Adrian was opposed. His word alone was all that was needed. He had condemned Luther's ideas; and that should be enough for men.

G. M. Ophoff.

YOUNG MEN, ATTENTION!

Young men who desire a limited Pre-Seminary course of instruction in our Theological School are requested to meet with our Committee the evening of May 14 in the Fuller Ave., Church. If because of the distance involved you are not able to attend this meeting, write our secretary before that date.

Young men who desire to attend our Seminary in September to prepare themselves for the Ministry of the Word of God are likewise requested to be present at this meeting. They should come with a statement of health from a reputed physician and a testimonial from their consistory as to their membership and walk of life.

The Theological School Comm.

Per Rev. John A. Heys

1551 Wilson Ave., S. W., R. 5 — Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN HIS FEAR

False Doctrine and The Fear Of The Lord

An Inevitable Warfare.

We live in an age that may be called one of religious tolerance. And we may surely appreciate the fact that in this age we are able without the pressure of persecution for our faith to worship our Covenant God as He has revealed Himself to us and to instruct our children even in their day schools along the lines of the truth as we know it. However we ought not to be deceived into overlooking the fact that this very age of religious tolerance is in the service of the Antichrist and will ultimately realize his final dreadful appearance as pictured to us in Rev. 13 and other passages of Scripture.

Our very Government promises us freedom of religion, and we do wrong to despise this protection. We must see in this the hand of the Lord Whom we fear whereby He makes it possible for the Church to develop the truth and to spread geographically so that all nations, tongues and tribes may receive the truth and every last elect may be brought to saving faith. However, at the same time, we must realize that this very freedom of religion, which makes it possible for the true church to develop and grow in faith and number, also favors all the false doctrines of the false church and paves the way for the false christ in his final form in the last days of this world. It affords the Arminian and the Modernist not only, but also the Communist and Atheist the opportunity to approach you and your children. It gives them equal rights with you and your church and doctrine. It gives the chief priests and elders, the Judases and Pilates of today the right to say anything about the Christ they desire. It gives them the right to condemn Him as an imposter and leader of insurrection or to extol Him as a social reformer whose body has returned to the dust as that of all men and who lives only in the lives of men and the teachings he left behind. It allows the forces of darkness to prophecy and point out a new saviour of the world in the person of the Antichrist.

And what of the fear of the Lord in this age of religious tolerance? Is it idle? Does it compromise with these false presentations of the Christ? Does it seek to uphold them and say that they too should be given freedom to spread their lie? Let us answer this in a philosophical way and present our idea of these things. That has no value. But let the Word of God speak! And then let us be silent in reverence and awe before Him. Let us answer these questions in the fear of the Lord.

No sooner had false doctrine and the beginnings of the antichrist's kingdom appeared on this earth and God declared that He in His grace will put enmity between His Church and all the seed of anti-Christ's kingdom. He not only prophesys a battle; He promises it to His Church. He tells His Church in the land of Canaan, the land of promise that she must utterly wipe out all the unbelievers. He gives His people the ability to do so, and when they have not even the weapons of warfare, He gives them the victory nevertheless. You may say that this was all typical. Let it be so, it surely does not teach even as a type that the Church recognizes the right of these false doctrines and worships to exist. And time and again in the New Testament the Church is told to fight a spiritual warfare. Jesus said once, "Think not that I am come to send peace: I come not to send peace, but a sword." Matt. 10:34. And listen to what follows in the next verse, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own house." To this is likewise added, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." This last verse reveals that the variance, the warfare, the conflict is there because of their attitude and relationship to Christ. It teaches us that we may not even allow our closest relatives according to the flesh the right to their own opinion of the truth. We must dare to differ and to defend the Word of God and His honor and glory. We must live in the fear of the Lord and not in the fear of the wrath of our father or mother. Our reverence and awe before God, our desire to uphold the honor and glory of Him, should be first and last. The fear of the Lord will inevitably fight false doctrines. Note that we say that the fear of the Lord will fight false doctrines. We do not fight the flesh. Paul declares in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 6:11-17, that we must put on the whole armour of God in order that we may withstand the wiles of the devil. This is necessary, he declares, because we wrestle *not* with flesh and blood. Here too we are told that the fear of the Lord fights. It does not simply defend the truth and fight a defensive battle. It also, according to this passage, tells us to take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and wage an offensive warfare. In his epistle to Timothy he speaks of having fought the good fight. In his first epistle to the Corinthians he speaks of having waged warfare with the beasts at Ephesus. The fear of the Lord fights false doctrines. That is inevitable just because it is the fear of the Lord. Because the believer, and in the measure that the believer, loves God, has respect for Him and His Truth, he cannot be quiet and idle. He will defend, maintain and promote the truth. And that means fighting the lie. That means making no compromise

with false doctrines at all.

Of course the battle against false doctrines which the fear of the Lord incites is and must be waged in the fear of the Lord. It must be waged in order to defend the truth and because we desire to have God receive all the glory due unto His name. And then it must be waged in such a way that we do defend the truth and not violate some other phase of it by our actions and so that we ourselves in our deeds ascribe to God the glory due to His name. It must be waged not to split denominations, not to set the father and son against each other, although this may be the result as Matthew 10 teaches. But the purpose of our defense of the truth must be to save the brother and/or the church from the lie. And it must then be waged out of that principle and not for self-advancement or because we like to argue and fight.

In this connection it may also be stated that we must wage warfare with all false doctrines in order to save our children and the future church from the lie. The lie grows as a cancer, and any doctrine which presents the truth of Scripture in a wrong light, if it is not condemned, will soon produce more foulness and presently death. It is simply an undeniable truth that if we do not fight false doctrines, we further their cause and help to establish them. It is to be regretted that churches must be split in this way, that families must be broken up and friendships be lost, but Christ reminds us that so it will be. And that this is the case is not due to our fighting the false doctrine, but it is due to the refusal of those who hold on to that false doctrine to accept the truth of God's Word in His fear. The fear of the Lord does not make these divisions and does not destroy the church. Let us bear in mind that the false doctrine and the tenacious adherence to it sets the father against his son and causes a man's foes to be those of his own house. If all those who adhere to false doctrines would live according to the fear of the Lord, they would renounce the lie, and the schisms and divisions would be healed. But the church that holds the truth may never renounce its stand to enjoy a little fleshly peace. Christ came to bring a sword, He declares it Himself. And for the sake of our children, for the sake of the church of the future as well as for the glory of God, we in the fear of His name must take up that sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and stand against the wiles of the devil as they come to us in the form of false doctrines.

It grieves us therefore when friends and advocates of Christian instruction fail to see the need of defending the truth and of fighting the lie in the daily training of God's Covenant children in the day schools. It is disappointing to hear such say that schools which propose to teach the children along reformed lines and to protect the children from false doctrines which present erroneous and *dangerous* world and life views

are not necessary. Although we have not personally ever heard the matter, it has been brought to our attention that there is a "new vacuum cleaner" and "new automobile" story circulating to defend this stand. It is pointed out that when a salesman comes to sell you a new vacuum cleaner or new automobile—that is, so we heard the story, and we hope that we could be mistakenly informed—the salesman knows better than to run down your old vacuum cleaner or automobile. He knows that he is apt to lose a sale by such tactics. By borrowing this illustration from business life the principle of not "running down" the schools which depart from the truth in their instruction is defended. Now, let it be clearly understood that we stated a moment ago that we may not fight false doctrines except for the defense of the truth, the glory of God and to protect and deliver others from the lie and its influence. Let it be clearly understood, then, that we too thoroughly condemn "running down" any school for its false doctrine. However, we do believe in condemning false doctrines and we have a few remarks to make in application of this stand of Scripture that a battle for the truth is inevitable for the fear of the Lord.

1. The truth we love and believe is denied, and though we may not "run down" the schools which deny it, we must inform our children of it and provide something better for them. Such schools are necessary. The old vacuum cleaner no longer gives satisfactory service, and we ought to look for another. 2. Repairing the old vacuum cleaner has been proven to be impossible. It is steadily becoming worse. Not only are we and will we always be so far in the minority that we can never realize a change, but it is increasingly becoming plain that we are not wanted. Witness, for example, the recent wholly unfounded and unexplainable refusal to consider our denomination worthy of having delegates at the next Reformed Ecumenical Synod while others are accepted in spite of their Arminianism. Our world and life view is not wanted in the schools either. With our men in the boards a few minor changes may be achieved, the glaringly Arminian statements may be toned down, but we will never to *any* degree get our world and life view taught by those who themselves do not believe it. 3. To defend these schools which teach false doctrines and therefore false world and life views and refusing to get behind and support proposed or already existing schools, which have for their purpose the purer instruction, is to run down these schools which seek to protect our children from the lie and to teach them so that in all things God's name receives the glory due unto it. In that case it is the one called upon to buy the vacuum cleaner who runs down the better product of the salesman, though his own is in bad shape. 4. The fear of the Lord can only move us to open the doors of our schools to *all* who are eager to have their children

taught in the truth as we know it. The fear of the Lord is never selfish, never seeks to advance the interest of a few men but seeks the welfare of the entire Church of God to the glory of His name. It is very doubtful whether many outside our denomination will send their children to be taught the doctrines we believe. They now make no attempt themselves to improve their own schools. But if there are such, we surely in the fear of the Lord would rejoice in teaching their children the truth. The fear of the Lord fights false doctrines and does so just exactly to build up and prosper the spiritual life of the brother in Christ.

J. A. Heys.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The Objective of Christian Education

The Objective.

Turning once more to the "General Course of Schools, we find that their objective is, 'a thorough indoctrination of the pupil in the fundamentals of Study' as prepared by the Lutheran Evangelical Christianity."

To this general statement the following is added, "While substituting for the public school in the sense that it provides its pupils with the same general education, the Lutheran school is *not a dual institution*, say in part like a Sunday School and in part like a public school. It is a *religious* school throughout. The whole educational program is aimed at Christian training, though the particular subject taught may be geography, history or music. This unity is often overlooked, however, or the teacher is misled by textbooks not written from a Christian viewpoint. The course in religion (Bible) lays the foundation for all other subjects and forms the center of the curriculum. Each of the other subjects is presented from the Christian viewpoint and made to serve as a course in Christian training. This is particularly true of the content subjects. At the same time, no common school branch is turned into a course of *religious training*. Its primary purpose is nowhere disturbed, but its religious significance and viewpoint set forth." (Foreword, General Course of Study of the Lutheran Schools.)

And from the "Christian teacher's philosophy of education," taken from the same book, allow me to quote the following: "This philosophy imposes on the Christian educator the duty and responsibility of preparing his pupils adequately for the common requirements of life on earth, in order that they may accom-

plish their divinely intended purposes also in secular affairs and promote the best interests of their community and human society in general. The Christian educator therefore aims to safeguard and improve the physical health of the pupils, to sharpen their intellect, to stimulate their emotional life, to direct their will, to discover and develop native skills and interests, and to enrich their minds and memories with knowledge indispensable for successful living in this world and with a deep appreciation of the culture which past ages have bequeathed to the present generation. As he prepares the child to assume duties and responsibilities in this life, his major concern is always that the child will incorporate the teacher's philosophy of education into his philosophy of life and thus go through life with eyes focused on heaven."

Although we would not agree with every statement that is made in the above quotation, the sobriety is refreshing. Our chief objection would be, of course, that the Lutheran system is parochial, assuming for itself the task that properly belongs to the Church, namely, "a thorough indoctrination of the pupil in the fundamentals of Christianity." In that respect they foster the idea of a church school.

The book given out by the National Union of Christian Schools also gives a rather extensive list of general objectives of Christian education. I quote from pages 31 and 32,

"The ultimate aim of Christian education is THE GLORY OF GOD through:

Objective I. A recognition (on the part of the pupil) of reality as a God-centered pattern:

Explanation:

1. All things are from God, through God, and unto God.
2. All creatural and providential forms of reality are the embodiment of divine ideas.
3. All forms of reality are revelatory in character. i.e., they reveal God's thoughts to man.
4. There is a unity back of these forms of reality.

"Objective II. A recognition (on the part of the pupil) of the destructive effects of sin relative this God-centered pattern.

"Explanation:

- "1. Man's ability to read God's revelation in nature has been sadly impaired.
- "2. The very forms of revelation have been disrupted.

"Objective III. A recognition (on the part of the pupil) of the need of spiritual rebirth and special revelation.

Explanation:

- "1. Only the spiritually reborn individual is able

to read God's revelation aright.

- "2. Special revelation is a light which dispels the darkness of this world occasioned by sin—"in Thy light shall we see light."

"Objective IV. A restoration of the image of God, the educator functioning as an instrument in God's hand.

"Explanation:

- "1. Man must be *intellectually God-like*.

- "a. Man must consistently think God's thoughts.
- "b. Confusion must be removed.
- "c. Man must understand the God-intended contribution of creatural and providential from reality.

- "2. Man must be *emotionally God-like*.

- "a. Man must be perfect and holy, even as God is perfect and holy.
- "b. The effects of sin must be removed.
- "c. Man must consistently cultivate sanctification.

- "3. Man must be *volitionally God-like*.

- "a. Man's will must be conformed to God's will.
- "b. Man must not be self-centered.
- "c. It must be man's desire to render service to God and man.

- "4. Man must be *efficiently God-like*.

- "a. Man's competence must be restored.
- "b. Maximum development of personal capacities must be effected.
- "c. Adjustment with man's environment must be established.
- "d. Man's dominion over creation must be established.

"Summary:

"Education is a restorative process for 'giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, release to the prisoner, recovery to the sick'."

Much of the criticism offered in our discussion of the philosophy of education could be repeated here. But also other objections must be raised.

It is not correct to say that creation is a revelation of God's *thoughts* to man. That may serve nicely as a basis for the idea that the child must be made intellectually God-like, but it is far from Scriptural. Scripture teaches that creation is God's Self-revelation, God's handwriting wherein He reveals His power and divinity. Romans 1:20. That is something entirely different.

Also the statement, "man's ability to read God's revelation in nature has been sadly impaired," is a denial of the fact that the wicked hate God and hold the truth under in unrighteousness. Romans 1:18.

But our chief objection must be, that Christian education is called a "restorative process."

In as far as this is based on the restitution theory it is a gross error. In as far as it lends itself to Arminianism and Modernism, it is to be despised. And in as far as it creates an altogether wrong objective for Christian education it is to be rejected.

The task of the school is not to become a mission station and to exert a salutary influence upon the world, attempting to save all humanity. By collecting a lot of "bad apples" that need "restoration", the bad apples are not improved by their contact with the good apples, but the spots of the bad are soon transferred to the good.

Moreover, education must not be confused with sanctification. That this is actually the error that has crept into the handbook for Christian School teachers is plain throughout. Allow me just one example from page 29, where the author speaks of education as a redemptive process. "It is clear that redemption itself is the work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is a work far too delicate to entrust to man. The Spirit Divine takes care of that. But in that redemptive process there is the element of sanctification, of growing in grace, of erasing the effects of sin. Sin's pollution stands in the way of every attempt to give the child a successful Christian education. Education is a God-ordained method of removing some of the effects of sin. Jesus was the only redeemer and yet He placed such practical emphasis upon the element of teaching that He became known as the RABBI. He was *the* Christian teacher. He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Christian education does not merely save men from ignorance, but from what is far worse than ignorance and what lies back of ignorance, namely, the evil that lurks in men's minds and hearts. If Christian educators attempt to reveal the thoughts of God back of creation and providence, they cannot but teach redemptively. This conception of education raises the dignity of Christian education from the level of man's work to the high plane of God's work."

Our objection to all this would be, that sanctification is more than an erasing of the effects of sin. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God, whereby the sinner is delivered from the pollution of sin and restored in the image of Christ. Education can never perform that work of grace.

Since we have already established that Christian education is covenant training, proceeding from the parents, who with their seed are included in God's covenant, and therefore are called to live as pilgrims and strangers in the world, fulfilling their divine calling as His covenant people by proclaiming His praises, each in his own peculiar place in life, it need not be difficult for us to establish the proper objective of Christian education.

Briefly we might reiterate, that it is the calling of the Christian school to labor in its own domain, apart from the church and the home, to furnish the child with covenant training, in order to equip the man of God with all that he needs to fulfill his calling in the midst of the world to the glory of God.

The covenant child must be enriched with knowledge necessary to live his life in this world, emotionally and morally he must be directed in the fear of the Lord. His intellect must be sharpened, his native talents and interests must be discovered and developed, his health must be safeguarded. In one word, intellectually, morally, physically he must be prepared to take his place in life according to God's purpose, that he may serve and glorify his God with his whole being, even antithetically overagainst a world that lies in wickedness.

The Application of this Objective.

From a practical aspect the question arises, how must this objective be carried out?

In the first place, we must not have a school with the Bible. Christian schools must not be distinguished from public schools merely by the fact that they are private, that they open and close with prayer, and that they have a course in Bible.

In the second place, the teacher must not attempt to make pious applications to the daily lesson, thereby attempting to add religion to an otherwise thoroughly secular training. That, to say the least, cheapens religion and only serves to add a varnish of superficial Christianity. For example, the suggestion has been offered that a subject like arithmetic can be made "Christian" by avoiding the mercenary idea and impressing something religious on the mind of the child. As for example, the problem: "John has ten cents. He earns five cents after school. How much does John have?" This might be revised to read: "John gave five cents in Sunday School. He also gave ten cents to the missions. How much did John give to God's kingdom?" Although every one will agree that great improvement can be made on the word problems given to children, and the impression it leaves on them, we must be careful that we are not creating an entirely wrong spirit in the heart of the child with wrong "Christian" principles. This matter is worthy of consideration.

Finally, we will all agree that the school is no place for a course in theology. The teacher should not sacrifice the purpose of the instruction for dogmatic discussions. Doctrine as such is no subject for a Christian School, not in any of its branches. In the first place, the teacher is generally not trained to handle this subject, and in the second place, it is not her task.

The first requirement of a Christian School teacher is that he or she is a *teacher*. She must know how to

teach, and how to teach children. The second requirement is, that she must be a sincere Christian, who professes her faith in her walk and life because it is part and parcel of her soul. She must be so completely filled with the fear of the Lord that it spontaneously governs her teaching. But, thirdly, she must also know and love the true Calvinistic conception of life, that life belongs to God in its entirety, that nothing may be excluded from the service of the living God, and that His glory is the chief end of all things. In that respect, she must also be a theologian. And finally, she must consider teaching her calling from God, to which she must devote her life. A real teacher does not use teaching as a stepping stone to some other phase of life, but makes it her life-ambition.

The result will be, that (he or) she will have very little difficulty in applying her Christian principles to every subject she teaches. She will hate and oppose every sign of evolution or atheism. She will apply the criterion of the Scriptures to every field of learning. She will maintain a thoroughly theo-centric life-view in all her discussions.

It is not difficult to see that a course in Bible in a Christian School should not be a course in doctrine at all. It must not be a re-duplication of the instruction of the catechism, nor must it replace the instruction of the church. The teacher should stress the facts of Scripture, the geography, the chronology, leaving the interpretation of the facts mainly to the church. The school should give the pupil a general knowledge of the books of the Bible, the authors, the contents, but should limit itself mainly to that.

A course in history should be given to acquaint the pupil with the significant facts of history, but should also interpret these facts solely in the light of Scripture. Stressing the rapid strides of development in civilization and culture, or creating a hero-worship for the great men of history should be condemned. History must be presented as the unfolding of the counsel of the living God and the ultimate realization of God's kingdom. Then the church becomes the pivotal point of all history.

Science should deal with God's revelation in nature, teaching the child to see God's handwriting in creation and helping him to understand the signs that God places in all the works of His hands. Geography should give the child a working knowledge of the earth and its peoples as the history of God's covenant is unfolded upon the earth. Spelling and language and arithmetic should be taught in such a way, that the child realizes that he needs these things to fulfill his task on earth. In fact, arithmetic can be made very intriguing if the teacher sees anything of the unity, the harmony, the inescapable consistency that God has put in our numerical system.

Much more should and must be said about the practical application of the true objective of Christian education. But this will suffice to stress the point we have tried to make. In one word, the fear of the Lord as the basic principle for all wisdom and knowledge, must be applied to every sphere of life in the education of the seed of the covenant. In that sense, the man of God must be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

C. Hanko.

Report Of Classis West

In Session March 3, 1948 at Hull, Iowa

The meeting was opened with the usual devotionals, conducted by Rev. J. Blankespoor, president of the previous meeting.

All the churches of Classis West were represented by two delegates except Bellflower and Redlands who represented only by their respective ministers. The delegates present for the first time signed the Formula of Subscription.

After the meeting was declared constituted, Rev. A. Cammenga took up the presidency, and Rev. J. Blankespoor officiated as clerk.

The president spoke a word of welcome to the members of Classis, especially to those present for the first time and to Rev. W. Hofman who also was in our midst.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

Rev. W. Hofman was given advisory vote.

The stated clerk reported on correspondence, stating that he had carried out his specific instructions.

A letter was read from Rev. G. Vos, who accepted a call to our congregation in Hudsonville, Michigan, stating his heartfelt gratitude for the communion he might enjoy with us and for the labors he might perform while in our midst. Later in the day Rev. C. Hanko expressed similar sentiments, since he will soon leave for his new field of labor in Fuller Ave. The president in turn spoke a few appropriate words of gratitude to the latter, both for his work as delegate and as stated clerk. The stated clerk was instructed to write Rev. Vos a letter of thanks and appreciation.

The report of the Classical Committee was read and received for information.

Reports of church visitation in Iowa and California were given. Since the matter of church visitation in Manhattan was to be taken up at this meeting, Revs. P. Vis and L. Vermeer were appointed to

do same while filling classical appointments in Manhattan.

Doon consistory requested Classis to make provisions for making another set of sermon books for reading services, in the light of the future need. Decided to table this matter until the next meeting.

Manhattan requested the appointment of a moderator. Rev. A. Petter appointed.

Manhattan and Edgerton also requested classical appointments. It was decided to grant these congregations such to the equivalent of one appointment every other Sunday, but that those going to Manhattan must preach there for two successive Sundays. Later in the day the committee, appointed to arrange these, reported, which reports were adopted with a few changes. As Classis decided they are as follows:

For Edgerton, Minn.: March 14, Rev. J. Blankespoor; March 28, Rev. A. Cammenga; April 11, Rev. J. Howerzyl; April 25, Rev. A. Petter; May 9, Rev. J. Van Weelden; May 23, Rev. L. Vermeer; June 6, Rev. P. Vis; June 20, Rev. J. Blankespoor; July 4, Rev. A. Cammenga; July 18, Rev. J. Howerzyl; August 1, Rev. A. Petter; August 15, Rev. J. Van Weelden; August 29, Rev. L. Vermeer; September 5, Rev. L. Doezeema.

For Manhattan no dates were specified since the exact time of Rev. Hanko's departure was not yet certain. The order in which the appointments were given is as follows: Rev. P. Vis; Rev. L. Vermeer; Rev. J. Van Weelden; Rev. A. Petter; Rev. J. Howerzyl; Rev. P. De Boer; Rev. L. Doezeema; Rev. A. Cammenga; Rev. J. Blankespoor.

A consistory requested Classis to grant her approval to proceed in applying further censure to two members of her congregation. After ample light had been shed on the case by the President of that Consistory, Classis decided to advise them to proceed.

Overture from Oskaloosa. The consistory requested Classis to overture Synod to authorize the Theological School Committee to employ either a full or part-time secretary to assist Rev. Hoeksema, when and in the event he is able to resume his labors, and to raise the Theological School assessments accordingly. Carried.

The consistory of Sioux Center requested Classis to overture Synod as follows:

1. That Synod reconsider a previous decision that our churches have a Theological School Building. After a rather lengthy and profitable discussion Classis decided not to comply with this request.

2. That Synod assess all of the Churches an amount which it deems proper for a Foreign Mission Fund. Classis decided not to comply with this request.

3. That Synod, which has supervision of our Theological School and E. B. P. Fund, take steps which are in adherence to Art. 19 of our Church Order, in view

of the fact that we have a definite shortage of students for the ministry in our Seminary. Classis expressed that according to its opinion all that should be done to further this cause is being done.

4. That Synod encourage the delegates, traveling by auto, to travel together as much as possible to save expenses. This overture was not adopted by the Classis for several reasons, even though it was expressed that all the delegates should continually bear this in mind.

It was decided to advise Synod regarding subsidies as follows: Manhattan, \$700; Doon, \$800; Pella, \$1300; and Orange City, \$2800.

The floor was now given to Rev. W. Hofman who gave a short resume of the mission work performed and the prospects in Byron Center, Canada, and Lynden, Washington. The president expressed a word of thanks and also of encouragement to the brother.

The following were chosen as delegates to our next Synod:

MINISTERS:

<i>Primi:</i>	<i>Secundi:</i>
J. Blankespoor	P. Vis
A. Cammenga	J. Howerzyl
L. Doezeema	A. Petter
L. Vermeer	P. De Boer

ELDERS:

<i>Primi:</i>	<i>Secundi:</i>
H. Leep	R. Brunsting
W. De Vries	W. Huiskens
G. Mesman	J. Broek
P. Hoekstra	J. Kuiper

Rev. J. Blankespoor was chosen to replace Rev. C. Hanko as Stated Clerk.

In the place of Rev. G. Vos as member of the Classical Committee. Rev. A. Petter was chosen, and as Dep ad Examina, Rev. L. Vermeer.

Classis decided to accept the invitation of Pella, Iowa, to hold our Fall meeting in their church.

The questions according to Art. 41 of the Church Order were satisfactorily answered.

The minutes of the day were adopted.

After a few words of appreciation were spoken by the president for the splendid cooperation given him during the day and the blessed spirit of love manifested. Rev. C. Hanko closed the meeting with prayer to our covenant God.

J. Blankespoor, S. C.

Subscript: This morning, April 8, the Rev. Blankespoor writes me, requesting the reason why the above report did not appear in a recent issue of the paper. The reason is that I never received it. It must be, as he suggests, that it was lost in the mails. He instructs me to print the report as it appeared in Concordia, which I do at this time.—(Ed.)