

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

Not Yet Ascended

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

John 20:17

Risen indeed!

But not to be touched

For He is not yet ascended to His Father!

But He does ascend! To His Father and our Father!
To His God and our God!

Mary Magdalene, she out of whom the Savior had cast seven devils, was witness to these words. And she "came and told the disciples that he had spoken these things unto her."

And John, the profound, who with the impulsive Peter had run that memorable foot-race to the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea on resurrection-morn, has recorded this aspect of the resurrection of the Crucified One, being inspired inerrantly by the Spirit of the Risen Lord.

For do these words not belong to, do they not express, the deeper, the more profound aspect of that blessed and unspeakable mysterious wonder of the resurrection? Do they not point to its "otherness?" Do they not indicate that besides the blessedness of the simple fact that "the Lord is risen indeed," — a fact which Mary of Magdala joyously apprehended, though she did not comprehend it, — there is a more profound, abiding, saving significance attached to His resurrection?

Touch Me not

For I am not yet ascended

Say unto My brethren: "I do ascend"

* * *

"Touch Me not!"

How strange, how apparently cruel even, those words sound at first!

And how strange a reason the Savior supplies for His

prohibition! "For I am not yet ascended to My Father?"

Could the Magdalene understand such language from the lips of her beloved "Rabboni?"

Why, Rabboni, may I not touch Thee? I love Thee! For well-nigh three years ever since Thou didst break the bonds of the power of darkness that held me captive and didst set me free from the seven-fold chain of the Evil One, whose cruel torments I suffered, I might touch Thee. When Thou castedst out of me the seven devils, I was transformed into a loving and devoted disciple. Never could I express enough my gratitude to Thee for that wonderful deliverance. And as I contemplated its wonder, as who would not when she was so graphically set free from the awful torments of one who is literally possessed of seven devils, my devotion to Thee ever grew. I wanted to follow Thee whithersoever Thy wonderful mission of preaching and healing took Thee, — throughout Galilee and Judea. To express in some small way my undying devotion and thankfulness I sought to minister to Thy physical wants while Thou wast yet amongst us, before that awful cross. And never then didst Thou forbid my attentions. Why, Rabboni, may I not touch Thee *now*?

Besides, is there not more reason than ever before why now I should touch Thee, why now I should fall down before Thee and embrace Thy feet? For my sorrow has turned into gladness. My grief has been transformed into unspeakable joy. All this time, ever since Thou didst commend Thy spirit into the Father's hands, since I saw Joseph and Nicodemus lovingly remove Thy dead form from that accursed tree and bear Thy body to Joseph's garden, my heart has been stricken with unutterable grief. My Master, He Who had all the love and devotion of my delivered heart, was dead gone never to be ministered unto again in the land of the living never again to be followed never again to be listened to never again to go up and down through the land teaching the wonderful words of life and working those miracles which no man could do except God were with him. And my heart was bleeding with grief! And the wound in my heart was torn afresh in the early hours of this morning when, with the other women, I came to do a last service of love upon Thy physical remains and

to pour out my tears over Thy grave, and when I mistakenly concluded at the sight of the stone that was rolled away that Thy body,—all that was left of my beloved Master,—was stolen, probably by the same bitter enemies who nailed Thee to the cross and who would not let Thee rest even in the grave. Must even that be taken away from me, I mourned. And now I had returned to the sepulchre to find out, if possible, where Thy body had been taken. And I did not know Thee, though Thou wast standing right there. I supposed Thee to be the gardener; and I was beside myself with grief. And suddenly Thou didst with that one word, "Mary," change my sorrow and grief of heart into unspeakable joy!

And now: may I not touch Thee?

O, to be sure, I will heed Thy command. I will not touch Thee, if Thou sayest so.

But why, Rabboni? I long to touch Thee! I would embrace Thee! For my heart is now as overflowing with joy as a moment ago it was filled with grief!

Thou art not yet ascended?

Dost Thou then ascend? Why? What does it mean? Is it, perhaps, so, that Thou art going to leave me, that though Thou hast returned from the grave, Thou wilt not remain with us? Can it be that Thou art going away, and that I shall not see Thee any more?

And how can that be a reason why I may not touch Thee *now*? Surely, if Thou dost ascend, then I shall not be able to minister unto Thee. Then that source of unspeakable joy, just to bask in Thy presence, to be near Thee, Rabboni, will be gone. But then, surely, there would seem to be all the more reason to touch Thee, and no reason at all not to touch Thee.

I will heed Thy word, Rabboni:

But I profess: I do not understand.

* * *

Ah, how those mysterious words must have become plain to Mary after her Lord had ascended, and after her exalted Savior had poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost! Then she understood, just as we, who still have the fuller light of revelation that began to shine when the Spirit was poured out. Then she advanced from the apprehension of the simple fact of the resurrection of Jesus to the deeper and more profound knowledge of it and its significance for His people.

Touch Me not

That prohibition conveyed the thought that the former fellowship, the earthly fellowship, the fellowship that involved physical, bodily presence, the fellowship in which Mary could embrace the Savior, follow Him about on earth, minister to His needs,—that fellowship was gone, never to return. O yes, He would appear to them in earthly form, in the form which they who were of the earth, earthy, could touch Him,—so that He could invite Thomas to "reach hither thy finger . . . and reach hither thy hand;"—He

would appear to them in that fashion occasionally for forty days. And then He would ascend. And Mary and all others who are of the earth, earthy, will then nevermore be able to see Him until they themselves are translated from the earthy to the heavenly through the wonder of the resurrection of the body. But even then that former fellowship will not be re-established. For it will be the higher, more glorious, perfect, purely spiritual fellowship of life eternal.

Therefore He says: "Touch Me not."

He is risen . . . but not yet ascended.

And that He is risen means, to be sure, that the very same Lord Jesus Who had fellowship with Mary for three years on earth, Who had died on Golgotha's tree, and Who had been laid in Joseph's tomb, was now alive, and not lying dead in the grave. But it means more. While He is alive, and that too, according to body and soul, His resurrection means not that He has returned from death and the grave, but that He has gone through death and on into the sphere of immortality, the sphere of the heavenly, the sphere of eternal life. His resurrection is the victory over death! And therefore, while at the moment Mary can see Him and would be able to touch Him, she must understand that her Lord is different. That He stands before her near Joseph's tomb has its purpose: the fact of the resurrection must be established and thoroughly attested. And Mary must be one of the witnesses thereof. But it does not mean that He has returned. That He stands before her is due to the fact that He *appears*, He Who in His heavenly resurrection-body could not ordinarily be seen by earthly eyes, nor touched by earthly hands.

He is risen . . . but not yet ascended!

He could be touched, because He is not yet ascended. But He must not be the object of the touch of that former earthly fellowship, because He is risen indeed!

* * *

And He does ascend to His Father!

That must follow inevitably. Heaven is His proper sphere now that He has risen from the dead. And the right hand of the Father Almighty is His rightful place. He could not possibly remain below. It is essentially impossible now that that former fellowship should ever be re-established. The resurrection is but one step, the first step, in the exaltation of the Son of God in the flesh. It is the first of a series of steps.

And the next stage is the ascension. I ascend to my Father . . .

And that ascension holds promise. The blessedness of the resurrection does not lie in any possible return to the old life. It lies exactly in the Savior's advance into the glory of His exaltation.

For, first of all, when He ascends, He will receive the promised Spirit as His very own. And that Spirit He will

pour out into the church, Mary Magdalene included. And through the outpouring of the Spirit a new and altogether higher and glorious and more blessed fellowship will be established, the fellowship of our heavenly citizenship, the fellowship of the Word of Him Who is the resurrection and the life, — a fellowship so blessed that none of the disciples will ever again long for the time when the Savior sojourned on earth.

And secondly, when He ascends to His Father, He enters into that which is within the veil. And there He appears as our forerunner and our intercessor, the Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. And He prays: "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, where I am."

And His prayer is heard: for He prays to His Father and ours.

And presently we shall be with Him

That will be glory!

* * *

And the guarantee?

He ascends to His Father and our Father. And that Father is God.

His Father and ours He is, by eternal election.

Our Father, because Christ is our Head and Elder Brother!

And His Father, because He is the only begotten Son in the flesh, in Whom is all God's good pleasure.

He died, . . . and we died in Him.

He arose, . . . and we are alive with Him.

He ascended, . . . and He shall come again . . . to take us to Himself!

The glory be to God alone!

H.C.H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 10, 1955, our beloved parents

MR. and MRS. GERRIT B. LUBBERS

celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Covenant God both for the gift of these our parents, as also that we might have, cherish and love them for all these years.

And now we ask the Lord to spare them for us for many more years, in subservience to His holy will. May we all follow their footsteps on our journey to everlasting perfection.

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lubbers

Mr. and Mrs. Jay Lubbers

Carolyn Ann

Glenn

Gloria Jean

Marcia Fay

3 grandchildren

Byron Center, Michigan

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EDITORIALS

Schism in History

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Under the above quoted title, I received several quotations from candidate Robert C. Harbach which are very interesting, indeed, in view of our recent history.

At first, I considered the possibility of handing them down to our readers in the form of a contribution, but for this they are too long. Then I thought that I could possibly use them to fill open spaces in our *Standard Bearer*, but this I concluded would more or less destroy the total effect of these quotations the purpose of which is expressed in the above title, viz. that history repeats itself, also in our recent schism.

Hence, I considered it most profitable for our readers to cast them into the form of an editorial and add my comments to them.

The first set of quotations concerns the history of the rather recent schism in the Presbyterian Church which, under the leadership of Dr. Gresham Machen, gave to rise to the present Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

They are the following:

"In the midst of Machen's (Dr. J. Gresham Machen) year as preacher at First Church in Princeton there emerged a new development of overwhelming proportions and scope. This was the publication on the 9th of January, 1924, of a statement of 150 Presbyterian clergymen entitled, 'An Affirmation Designed to Safeguard the Unity and Liberty of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.' Because of its origin at Auburn Seminary it came generally to be known as the Auburn Affirmation . . . (From J. GRESHAM MACHEN, *A Biographical Memoir*, by Ned B. Stonehouse, p. 364, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1955)

"The radical significance of the Affirmation is not immediately apparent for it states at the outset that the signers are loyal to their ordination vows and the doctrines of evangelical Christianity. Moreover, it takes the form, to a large extent, of pleading for the maintenance of constitutional liberties in the face of 'persistent attempts to divide the Church and to abridge its freedom.' In support of its plea it enjoyed a measure of plausibility from . . . finding allowance for diverse interpretations in the terms of the formula of subscription . . . (*Ibid.*)

"Further analysis discloses, however, that the Affirmation contains a bold and thoroughgoing attack upon the doctrines of the Confession. It was most forthright in opposing the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures . . . Thus, the Virgin Birth of Christ, for example, is viewed as a theory of the Incarnation and

the bodily resurrection of Christ as a theory of the Resurrection. And liberty is claimed for other theories." (*Ibid.*, pp. 364-65)

Of course, in our recent controversy, such serious errors as are mentioned above had no place at all. No one denied the infallibility of Holy Writ, the Virgin Birth or the bodily resurrection of Christ.

It is interesting to note, however, that heresy in the Presbyterian Church did not begin here. Already in 1829 the Cumberland Confession was adopted which was a gross corruption of the Westminster Confession of 1647. In this Cumberland Confession the doctrine of election (and especially of reprobation) is denied. It is a striking fact that, once the church leaves the basis of absolute predestination, soon all related doctrines, such as total depravity, vicarious atonement, sovereign grace, faith, the church, etc. must follow in its wake. This is inevitable. Viewed in this light, it is not exactly surprising that in 1924 the Auburn Affirmation was adopted and that it claims liberty to teach whatever one pleases concerning the infallibility of Scripture, the Incarnation and the bodily resurrection of Christ.

That our recent controversy concerns exactly the heart of the truth, the doctrine of unconditional election, there can be no doubt. Those that departed from us stand on the basis of a general promise for all that hear the gospel on condition of faith and of the act of man's conversion as a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God. They certainly deliberately left the basis of the Protestant Reformed position. What will become of them is a question. But they certainly have no basis for a distinct and separate existence as a church. And who can say how far they will ultimately depart from the truth. The path of schism and heresy is very slippery, indeed!

We continue the quotation from the same source:

"It was clear to all, following the publication of the Affirmation . . . that the Assembly (Synod) of 1924 would be a critical one. During those tense months before the Assembly was to convene in Grand Rapids, (ital., RCH) Machen contributed no fewer than three articles to *The Presbyterian*, one being a two-part article on 'The Parting of the Ways' which appeared in April. In this article he analyzed at length the situation with which the church was confronted as the result of the revelations of the unwillingness of large elements of the Church to submit to the last Assembly's decision. 'The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,' he declared, 'has apparently come to the parting of the ways. It may stand for Christ, or it may stand against him, but it can hardly halt between two opinions.' In the course of the article he also corrected certain misapprehensions as to the aims of the conservatives. 'We do not wish to split the church; on the contrary we are working for the unity of the church with all our might. But in order that there should be

unity within the church, it is necessary above all that there should be sharp separation of the church from the world. The carrying out of that separation is a prime duty of the hour." (*Ibid.*, p. 368)

I still consider it deplorable that this "parting of the ways" in the Presbyterian Church came so late. I think it was on the occasion of Dr. Machen's delivering a lecture in Grand Rapids (about 1918?) that he was asked the question whether there would be a split in the Presbyterian Church and that his answer was: "No; you cannot split rotten wood." The choice of being for or against Christ, though principally correct, is, nevertheless, hardly definite enough as a basis for the "parting of the ways" in any church. It is too broad.

In one of our classical meetings, I, too, spoke of the parting of our ways. This was after it had become very evident, not that some were for and others were against Christ, though principally this is always the case, but that many were opposed to the Protestant Reformed truth, and secretly as well as openly, attempted already for some time in the past to corrupt our churches. And I consider it a blessing of our God that the split came when it did, and not later. Though a split in the church of Christ in the world is always deplorable, and though we, too, aim at unity, yet it is to be far preferred to a false and outward unity which is not based on the truth of the Word of God and our Confessions. If such a false unity is maintained it is not long before the condition is reached of which one must say: "You cannot split rotten wood."

For this reason I am glad that the split in our churches did not come later than it did.

The recent schism was the best thing that could ever have happened to our Protestant Reformed Churches!

The quotations from the same source continue to state that, according to many in the Presbyterian Church, the controversy was largely a matter of personalities and that the good name of Dr. Machen was defamed:

"... As we have observed, however, such unity had been lacking for many years... To persons who analyze history in terms of persons rather than principles, the Princeton (Seminary and Church—RCH) conflict seemed to be largely a matter of personalities—the personalities of Erdman or Stevenson on the one hand and that of Machen on the other. Such elements were no doubt involved but they were actually subsidiary and superficial aspects of the struggle. The issue turned about the larger questions of the nature of Christianity and the meaning of the modern religious situation. And so far as Princeton was concerned, it is plain that the defense of orthodoxy was far from being identified simply with Machen's activity. Throughout most of the struggle, if not all of it, the traditional orthodox position was supported vigorously by the overwhelming majority both of the Board of Directors and of the Faculty.

So far as Machen's own desires were concerned, he had no zeal for leadership. Frequently even against better judgment he held back when older men in the Directors seemed to be taking the reigns of leadership. In the last analysis, however, he was as prominent as he was because he was the most effective spokesman for this position and was willing to labor in season and out of season regardless of personal cost. He was bound therefore to be identified prominently with that cause, and to be attacked by those who were attacking it. But there were also several times when he became the victim of false charges and rumors that were widely circulated, and so his good name was besmirched." (*Ibid.*, pp. 371-72)

Machen "is reported to have said: 'Defenders of the Bible are called extreme and bitter men; their opponents usually are called kind and tolerant...'" (*Ibid.*, p. 372) "Erdman... in... a blistering repudiation... stated that 'the only division I have observed is as to spirit, methods or policies. This division would be of no consequence were it not for the unkindness, suspicion, bitterness and intolerance of those members of the faculty who are also editors of The Presbyterian.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 375) Consequently there were "widely publicized and misrepresented" charges "given widespread circulation in the Church and before the general public that Machen was engaging in a personal campaign against Erdman." And this "to undermine confidence in Dr. Erdman." (*Ibid.*, p. 377) Moreover, Machen "was charged with 'temperamental idiosyncrasies,' though no particulars were given." "And... Dr. Erdman said that 'what is questioned is whether Dr. Machen's temper and methods of defense are such as to qualify him for a chair in which his whole time will be devoted to defending the faith...'" (*Ibid.*, p. 389) But: "The issue was not fundamentally personal but doctrinal, and was a revealing aspect of the struggle between the upholders of constitutional orthodoxy and a coalition of modernists and others who above all wanted tolerance." (*Ibid.*, p. 390) "It has indeed been a sordid piece of business that, in the name of religion, men have resorted to the spread of false rumors in order to weaken Machen's testimony and to belittle the cause for which he suffered and toiled." (*Ibid.*, p. 393)

Is it necessary for me to point out that also in this respect history repeats itself?

Must I call attention to all the slanderous remarks and misquotations that are addressed to the Rev. Ophoff and the undersigned? Or must I quote from the "Cross Bill" in which DeWolf c.s. literally besmirched my name and became guilty of perjury?

I will refrain from quoting. The Lord will judge the evil slanderers!

I still have more quotations from candidate Harbach. These must wait till our next issue.

H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible, Vol. XI, Matthew, by Charles Simeon; published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.95.

This book is part of a set of twenty-one volumes that, judging by this one volume, appear to be exactly what the title expresses: "Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible." It is not a regular commentary for the simple reason that it is not a consecutive interpretation of the Gospel according to Matthew, verse by verse, but it treats a part of each chapter and the exposition of the portions treated are usually quite sound. The chief value of the book, however, lies in the fact that the expositions of the various passages are offered in the form of sermon outlines. This ought to be quite a help to many a preacher.

Having perused this volume, I subscribe to the opinion of Bishop Moule quoted in the introduction: "it was a literary achievement of his life, and no unworthy one. These volumes, now long out of print, contain many discourses fully written, among them the several sets of University Sermons; but the large majority of the more than two thousand compositions are *precis* of parochial sermons, well ordered outlines of exposition, arranged according to the books of the Holy Scriptures. The reader will seldom fail to gather excellent suggestions on how to explain and arrange, and how to carry messages home from the Word of God to the life of man. They were bone systems of sermons which he himself made to live, and speak, and work; and he did his utmost to teach his young men how to do the same." If I may judge the whole set by this one volume, I would subscribe this opinion.

The author, Charles Simeon, lived in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth century. The set was long out of print. The Zondervan Publishing House rendered a very valuable service by re-publishing this set of outlines.

I would recommend it to every student of Holy Writ.

H.H.

De Boodschap der Genezing (The Message of Healing), by Prof. Dr. J. L. Koole. Published by J. H. Kok, N. V., Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 4.90.

In a foreword, Dr. Koole writes: "The danger even threatens very definitely that a calm study of the facts (an attempt to which is risked in the following pages) will immediately be characterized as an unfair criticism by those who favor the "Message of Healing," while from the opposite side immediately such criticism will be considered as far from decisive."

To the latter class I wish to belong.

The book of Dr. Koole, no doubt, contains much that is good, but personally I would have been much more severe in my criticism of the "Message of Healing" than he. I have

seen too much of this healing upon the prayer of faith, for instance, of the late Aimee McPherson in Los Angeles, Calif., than that I could ever believe in it, or even in the sincerity of those who practice it. And, therefore, Dr. Koole compromises too much, according to my judgment, when he writes on p. 99: "By this we do not mean to express any doubt concerning these healers themselves. Let us establish emphatically that men like Herman Zaiss want to give glory to themselves which belongs only to God. We are only concerned with this that the honor which our age has for the physician may not at any price be transferred to any other healer, and that, also over against the "healer by prayer," one can only say: God must do it, the Lord is the strength of my life, and, perhaps, you may be the means." Besides, the "Message of Healing" is also based on what I consider an erroneous interpretation of Jas. 5:14, 15.

By this I do not wish to detract from the good there is in this book. Let the reader judge for himself.

H.H.

De Dienst der Prediking (The Ministry of Preaching) by Dr. K. Dijk. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 13.50.

This book is a homiletical work, or, better still, a textbook on homiletics especially designed for students. As such I recommend it to our students. It ought to have a place in our theological school library.

I am somewhat surprised that the book bears the title "The Ministry of Preaching" while in the body of the book Prof. Dijk emphasizes that he prefers the name "ministry of the Word" which I would also prefer, but which is not the same.

After a general introduction, the author treats the preaching of the Word according to Scripture and according to the testimony of history. In this connection he also briefly treats Barth's conception of the Word of God. Further, he speaks of the preaching as ministry of the Church and of preaching in various connections, as, for instance, in connection with exegesis, with the Confession, etc. In chapter VI he discusses the sermon as such, the preparation for it, its form and contents.

What interested me most, however, is the treatment of the various materials Scripture presents for the sermon, especially because Dr. Dijk offers various propositions, themes and divisions for sermons. It is interesting to know how, in the old country, they form their propositions, especially because in our own school we, of course, also teach homiletics. In this connection, I would say that, if ever we should treat some of Dr. Dijk's propositions in class, we would criticise many of them as being too long, especially as far as the themes are concerned, and that the divisions are often too analytical and also fail to follow the logical order.

However, the book is very sound and thorough, as we would expect it of Dr. Dijk. And I highly recommend it to students and preachers.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 45

Chapter 3

The Perfection of the Lord's Prayer

In conclusion, let us notice that in this prayer the Lord teaches us throughout to use the plural, and not the singular. *Our Father, we pray* that Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done. *We pray* for *our* daily bread. *We pray* that Thou wilt forgive *our* debts, as *we* forgive *our* debtors; and that Thou wilt not lead *us* into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil. And this does not mean that we may only pray in unison with all the people of God. For indeed we are admonished that we shall enter into our inner chamber, shut the door, and pray to our Father Who seeth in secret. Nor does it mean that we cannot have very urgent and pressing personal needs that impel us to cry to Jehovah very emphatically in the singular. The prayer of the publican must needs be in the singular, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But it certainly signifies that true prayer presupposes love to the brethren and fellowship with all the people of God. Your prayer must needs die on your lips if you should appear in the sanctuary of God with hatred against the brethren, or even against one brother, in your heart. What the Lord Jesus once said with reference to offering one's gift on the altar applies with double force to the holy art of prayer, so that we may surely paraphrase His words thus: "If therefore thou art drawing near unto God in the sanctuary, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy prayer unuttered, first go and reconcile with thy brother, and then return to offer thy prayer." Matt. 5:23, 24. May the Spirit of prayer and supplication give us grace to obey the injunction of our Lord, "After this manner therefore pray ye."

LORD'S DAY 46

Q. 120. Why hath Christ commanded us to address God thus: "Our Father"?

A. That immediately, in the very beginning of our prayer, he might excite in us a childlike reverence for, and confidence in God, which are the foundation of our prayer: namely, that God is become our Father in Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of him in true faith, than our parents will refuse us earthly things.

Q. 121. Why is it here added, "Which art in heaven"?

A. Lest we should form any earthly conceptions of God's heavenly majesty, and that we may expect from his almighty power all things necessary for soul and body.

Chapter I

Addressing God as our Father

The Lord's Prayer, as it occurs in Matthew 6, appears in a very beautiful and significant context, a context that enunciates several important principles of prayer. First of all, it is emphasized that prayer must not be a mere outward show, but must be from the heart. Thus we read in vss. 5 and 6: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." In this connection we may also apply the words of John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." These words of our Lord must always be applied in our prayers. It means that we cannot please the living God, Who is a Spirit, by mere outward form, and that our prayer must be a matter of the heart, not an outward show. As we pray, there must live in our inmost mind and heart that which we express by the words of our mouth. We may flatter a man by vain words, while our heart is far from him; but this is impossible with God. He looks at the heart.

In vss. 7 and 8 of Matthew 6 the principle is announced that in our prayers we must not act as if it is necessary for us to persuade God to give us what we ask of Him. We need not use vain repetitions, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." You therefore are not heard because you pray, but fundamentally you pray because you want to worship God, and acknowledge Him only as the giver of all good things.

Further, it is emphasized that in your prayer you must take your brethren along, and that too, without exception. Love of the brethren and the spirit of forgiveness must be in your hearts. This is the principle announced in vss. 14 and 15 of the same chapter: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." And, it stands to reason that if our heavenly Father does not hear our prayer for the forgiveness of sins, no other petition can possibly be acceptable to Him.

Finally, in the same chapter it is emphasized that we certainly shall not be motivated by anxiety for earthly things

in our prayer, but that we shall chiefly be concerned with God's cause and His kingdom. This is emphasized in that beautiful last part of Matthew 6, from vs. 25 to the end. The question what we shall eat or what we shall drink certainly need not be an object of our anxiety and care in our prayers. For these things we shall take no thought. Life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. The fowls of the air neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; but our heavenly Father never forgets them. The lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin; yet our heavenly Father clothes them with the most beautiful garments, more beautiful than those with which Solomon in all his glory was adorned. Therefore, we shall surely take no thought for the things after which the Gentiles seek, eating and drinking and clothing. But "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

These principles are certainly embodied in that most perfect prayer which the Lord taught us to pray. This prayer is certainly not a vain repetition of words. It is so brief that we could not possibly eliminate one word without marring the whole. It places at once not before men, but before the face of our Father Which is in heaven. And the plural that is used throughout this prayer, as well as the fifth petition, for the forgiveness of sins, presupposes that we pray in the communion of saints, in the fellowship of all our brethren, without exception. The fourth petition leaves no room for anxiety for the morrow. And the whole prayer certainly emphasizes that the kingdom of God is first, and that all other things shall be added unto us.

In our discussion of the contents of the Lord's Prayer we are constantly confronted by and must attempt to answer two questions. The first of these is, of course: what is the meaning of each petition and of each part of this prayer? For we must pray intelligently, understanding what we say, and must not utter mere words, that have no meaning for us. And the second question we must seek to answer is: what is the spiritual attitude or disposition of the heart that is required in order to utter each petition in spirit and in truth? For if our spiritual disposition is not in harmony with the meaning of our petitions, we become hypocrites, abominable in the sight of God.

With these two questions in mind we now, first of all, approach the address, or allocution, of this model prayer of the Lord: "Our Father Who art in heaven." Let us take note, first of all, that these introductory words form no petition, but are the address of the whole prayer. Before we bring our requests to the throne of grace, we are taught to address, to speak to God directly, and, as it were, face to face. What is the meaning of this? What is the significance of addressing God in our prayers? Is this address intended as a mere form of politeness? Or does it serve some such purpose as the superscription of a letter? It will be evident at once that it must have a much richer and deeper significance, especially if we remember that we must pray intelli-

gently and that the spiritual condition of our heart must be such that we can utter this address in spirit and in truth. Then it will be clear that in this address we approach the true God. We come to stand before His face in the sanctuary. Then this address is not the thoughtless expression of what we have learned by heart, but the conscious effort to conceive of Him as He is, as He revealed Himself to us in His Word, and of His relation to us. It is the spiritual exercise of faith, whereby we seek and find Him, or rather, whereby we sought and found Him, that is expressed in this address. It is the expression of that spiritual activity of the mind and heart and soul whereby we are absorbed in profound contemplation of the living God, and try to penetrate the darkness that envelops us, until we gaze with adoration and wonder upon His face and all our attention is concentrated upon His glorious majesty. And thus this act of addressing God determines our whole attitude through our entire prayer. It is because He is what we declare Him to be in this address that we direct our prayer to Him, that we dare to approach Him, that we are confident that He will hear us. And it is because we gaze upon Him and keep the spiritual eyes of our faith fixed upon Him throughout our prayer that we pray as we do, and ask for the things which are briefly enumerated in the Lord's Prayer. The address, therefore, represents the indispensable preliminary of all true prayer. Expressed in spirit and in truth, it signifies that we have entered into the sanctuary of God and that we have found Him for Whom our soul is yearning.

Simple, yet very profound; brief, yet all-comprehensive, is the address of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father Who art in heaven." Of course, the purpose of this allocution is not to impress upon our minds that we may never employ other words and other names of God than those of this particular address in our approach to the throne of grace. The saints on earth in the past, as well as the saints in heaven, employ various names to address the Lord God. When King Solomon stood before the Lord at the occasion of the dedication of the temple, he addressed God as follows: "Lord God of Israel, there is no god like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servant that walk before Thee with all their heart: Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day." In this address the sovereignty and glory and power of God, as well as His faithfulness in keeping His covenant, are emphasized. I Kings 8:23, 24. Thus also in the prayer which Hezekiah uttered over against the blasphemous words of Rabshakeh the power and sovereignty of God is emphasized in these words: "Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only." II Kings 19:19.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Malachi

III. Condemnation of mixed marriages and Divorce, 2:10-16.

10. *Is there not one father to us all? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*

11. *Hath dealt treacherously Judah, and an abomination was committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for hath profaned Judah the holy place of Jehovah which He loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

12. *Will cut off Jehovah the man that doeth this, root and branch, from the tabernacle of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.*

13. *And secondly this ye have done covering with tears the altar of Jehovah, with weeping and lamenting in so much that He regardeth not the offering anymore or receiveth it with pleasure from your hand.*

14. *Yet ye say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been a witness between thee and the wife of thy youth against whom thou hast dealt treacherously. Yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

15. *And did He not make one? Yet had He the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to thy spirit, and against the wife of his youth let none deal treacherously.*

16. *For Jehovah God of Israel said that He hateth putting away: for one covereth with violence his garment; therefore take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously.*

The questions of verse 10 are put by the prophet as representing the spiritual Israel. The prophet is not personally guilty of the sins at which he strikes. Yet as appears from his using the pronoun "we" he holds himself responsible for them. For they are sins committed by the post-exilic community to which he belongs. Besides he wants the sinners whom he must admonish to know that he is not assuming to them a holier-than-thou attitude.

Have we not one father? — it is God of whom the prophet speaks. This is evident from his next question, *Hath not one God created us?* The prologue tells us that the prophet has in mind the fatherhood of God with respect to Jacob-Israel whom He loved. One God brought them into being a family of saints in Christ. This makes them brothers and sisters in the Lord obligated to love each other and so to order their lives that the one be a blessing to the other. But they do not meet their obligations. They deal treacherously every man against his brother by profaning the covenant of their

fathers. Indicated is the covenant of life and peace with Levi. The "fathers" are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their ancestors at Sinai.

This verse (10) repeats the general accusation of verse 8. Vss. 11, 12 name the offense to which it is next applied. *Judah* — the freed exiles that settled in the territory formerly occupied by the tribe of Judah. *Hath dealt treacherously* — repeated from vs. 10 to accentuate the charge that is about to be made. *An abomination is committed* — any doing that contradicts the covenant with Levi, its life and peace, is an abomination in the eyes of Jehovah. *In Israel* — Israel is not any longer the northern tribes in distinction from Judah; Israel is Judah. The prophet uses the names interchangeably. *Profaned the holiness of Jehovah* — the personal holiness of Jehovah as reflected in the true Israel. Denoted further is the temple of Jehovah and the symbolical typical worship connected with the temple, in a word, the true religion of Jehovah. *That He loved* — It showed forth His glory. How the holiness of Jehovah is being profaned is stated in the last clause. *Hath married the daughter of a strange god* — the offenders marry women who are worshippers of heathen deities. Thereby they introduce pagan ideas into the holy nation. Besides by its mixing itself with the seed of the land, Israel is losing its identity.

The abomination is committed particularly in Jerusalem. Here is located the temple, Jehovah's habitation. Here burned God's altars. The majority of offenders is comprised of priests and Levites, rulers and princes. On the prevalence of mixed marriage among these classes see Ezra 9:1ff; 10, 1ff; Neh. 13, 23ff.

Jehovah must destroy all such desecrators of His covenant and temple. And that He shall. He will cut off the man that doeth this root and branch, the offender himself and his seed. *He that offereth an offering* — either him that offers the blind, lame and sick or the priest that makes atonement for any of the offenders of vss. 11, 12.

And secondly this have ye done — These words point to the next charge. *Covering* — they continually cover. *Tears, weeping, lamenting* — the crying of the treacherous persons. Though their hearts condemn them, they shed copious tears over the altar because the Lord takes no delight in their offering (vs. 13). *Wherefore* — Why does not Jehovah regard our offerings? So they lament. It gives the prophet an opening for stating his accusation. *Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth* — the wife had been sent away, divorced. The Lord saw the marriage and the putting away, and as righteous judge He will avenge the wrong. *Dealt treacherously* — in sending her away. He should have cleaved to her until death parted them. *Thy companion* — in joy and sorrow. This companionship should have strengthened the bond between them. *The wife of thy covenant* — the covenant of Jehovah with the fathers under which the offender and his wife were born. In contrast to the daughter of the strange god, she was a

member of the community of God's believing people. In sending her away he profaned the covenant (vss. 13, 14).

And did He, Jehovah, not make one?—He did make one—Adam and out of him one woman, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. So did Jehovah. And therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh in communion of nature, life and love. God could have done otherwise. For He yet had the remainder of the spirit—the breath of life by which man became a living soul. This He possessed in infinite abundance. This being so, He could have made one man and from him many women, or many men and from each a woman. But the Lord chose the other way. He made one, the one woman from the one, the twain to be one, the one human family from the one as its root. Why did He make one? Because it was His purpose to seek from the one a godly seed, to gather out of the whole human race from the one a church chosen to everlasting life. If so, how a man profanes the covenant, who, as driven by sinful lust, sends away the wife of his youth, a daughter of the covenant. What greatly aggravated the sin was that doubtless in most cases the wife was put away because marriage with a heathen woman was being contemplated. How indifferent the offenders shew themselves to be to the purpose of God to seek a godly seed. For Christ does not gather His church from the offspring of remarried divorced persons, corrupters of Jehovah's holiness, and women who are worshippers of strange gods. But He cuts off the man that doeth this root and branch, meaning that He visits the sins of the fathers unto the children.

There are several other interpretations and explanations of our passage (vs. 15), but to my mind the one here given is closest to the text and is best suited to the context.

Take heed to thy spirit—and admonition to the hearers that each and every one of them had better see to it that he does not deal tracherously with the wife of his youth. Verse 16 states the reason why the admonition had better be taken to heart. 1) Jehovah God of Israel hates their doing. 2) They cover their garments with violence. By putting away their wives and marrying woman who worship idols they commit a heinous sin. In conclusion the prophet warns them once more not to put away the wife of their youth.

IV. Jehovah's coming in judgment, 2:17, 3:1-7.

17. *Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet ye say, whercin have we belabored Him? In your saying, Every one that doeth evil is good in the eyes of the Lord, and in them He delights; or, Where is the God of judgment?*

Chapter 3

1. *Behold, I am sending my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; suddenly he shall come to his temple, the Lord whom ye are seeking, and the angel of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, said Jehovah Sebaoth.*

2. *But who will endure the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like the fire of a refiner, and as the soap of a fuller.*

3. *And He shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver, and they shall be unto the Lord sacrificers of offering in righteousness.*

4. *And pleasant to Jehovah shall be the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem as in the days of old and as in former years.*

5. *And I will draw near to you for judgment, and will be a witness swift against sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against the oppressors of the wages of the hireling, the widow and the orphan, and he that leads astray the stranger and fears me not, said Jehovah Sebaoth.*

6. *For I am the Lord, Not do I change; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

7. *From the days of your fathers ye have turned away from my statutes, and not have ye kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you, said Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherin shall we turn?*

Ye (vs. 17)—the sceptics in the postexilic community to whose reckless and impious reasonings the prophet next gives attention, have wearied Jehovah with your words—The accusation is general and causes the hearers to reply, wherein have we wearied Him? The prophet promptly gives answer. Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah—So it seemed to them. It can be explained. A class of nobles had sprung up in the postexilic community that had grown rich by oppressing their brethren, the hirelings, orphans and widows of vs. 5. (See also Neh. 5). Doubtless the complainers of our verse belonged to the victimized. They saw the prosperity of the unscrupulous nobles, and, being addicted to the thought that prosperity is a sign of Jehovah's favor, they concluded that He must love evil-doers. Or, where is the God of judgment?—if wicked men are not good in His sight, why does He not come in judgment over them? But no, He sends them prosperity. And thy, hirelings, widows and orphans that put their trust in Him, are poor and oppressed.

The same complaint was expressed by the otherwise Godfearing Aseph (Ps. 73), Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.

The prophet is quick to meet the challenge of the complainers of our verse. He will appear suddenly in terrible judgment that will result in the destruction of all that is of sin. But first He will send a messenger to prepare the way.

Behold, I am sending—such is the Hebrew construction,

for the event is imminent. My messenger — Elijah of whom mention is made in 4, 5. As in Isa. 11:3 the name of Elijah is here used as a designation of John the Baptist. This is plain from the fact that Christ, speaking of John, declares, "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before my face, which shall prepare the way before thee" (Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27), and that Mark cites this prophecy as reaching its fulfilment in the Baptist, Mark 1:2. The messenger of the covenant — That the messenger is Christ follows from the fact that the prophecy of Mal. 4, 5 was fulfilled in John and in none other besides him. Prepare the way — Preaching repentance, John instrumentally "turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," that is Christ. Many were converted by John's preaching, so that when Christ entered upon His public ministry there was a people prepared to receive Him. And the Lord . . . even the messenger of the covenant — The messenger is identical with the Lord and the latter with Jehovah. This places us before the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. Shall come to his temple — the church of the elect to which the resurrected and glorified Christ came in His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Here in the church in heaven, typified by the earthly Zion, is God's throne so that from the temple all activities will proceed. Whom ye seek . . . who ye delight in — This is not irony. God's bitter and ill-deserving people, the true Israel — had expressed a genuine desire for the appearance of Jehovah. They were in need of Him to rebuke, admonish, instruct and comfort them by His Word and Gospel. Behold, He shall come — the triune Jehovah through the messenger of the covenant, Christ the Lord. The pronoun *he* looks back to the messenger of the covenant. But who can endure the day of His coming (vs. 2)? — The sequel reveals that this calls for a negative answer. No one can endure His coming. This applies with equal force to God's believing people, should He mark their transgressions. Therefore He sends before them His messenger. They weary Jehovah with their vile words for one thing. They must repent and thereby make sure their calling and election, be assured of Christ's Spirit that, however ill-deserving, they nevertheless are pure gold as to the heart of their dispositions and not reprobate. Refiner's fire . . . fuller's soap — The fire of the refiner is a fierce heat. It will consume them utterly, if they are sheer dross. The process of fulling consisted in washing the material with lye, beating it, and exposing it to the rays of the sun.

He shall sit — This looks to the activity of the exalted Christ through the centuries of the Gospel period (vs. 3). The sons of Levi — The elect in every nation of the earth. He brings them into being as saints of God by His own Word; He efficaciously calls them by His Gospel; He refines and purifies them in the fires of persecution and the sufferings of his present time. Having burnt the dross out of them. He gives them eternal life in glory. Sacrifices of offering in righteousness — They shall serve Him in a perfect state of

mind and heart and life. As in the days of old — When God-fearing priests served Jehovah's altars. ,

And I will draw near to you — Israel, all that is called church. For judgment — for acquittal or sentence and punishment. The purged sons of Levi will be absolved in Christ but all the evil-doers that repent not of their sins shall be sentenced and swept away. Will be swift witness — He is both judge and witness. And the witness will be swift because He knows all the facts and therefore needs no time for securing the evidence. Adulterers — All such that put away the wife of their youth, and they who marry woman that worship strange gods whether or not they divorced the wife of their youth. Sorcerers — all persons who claimed to possess power over evil spirits or to consult the dead (Exod. 22:18). False swearers — they that swear by the name of Jehovah falsely (Lev. 19:12). The oppressor of the hireling (compare Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14, 15). Widow and fatherless — If they were godfearing, they were abject of Jehovah's special care (Exod. 22:22-24). Lead astray the stranger — Better sojourner. Denoted is a foreigner that settled temporarily in Israel. And fears me not — It was the lack of this fear in which all other transgressions rooted.

For I am Jehovah (vs. 6) — He is Israel's ever faithful God who keepeth covenant trust. Not do I change — For He cannot deny Himself. Sons of Jacob — Identical with the purged sons of Levi, His elect. Are not consumed — That they are not swept away with the others is only due to His unchanging mercy. For apart from His grace they are as ill-deserving as the others.

From the days of your fathers (vs. 7) — From the time of their inception as a people. Ye have turned — The indictment must not be limited to the carnal Israel. The believers are by nature no better. Besides they have but a small beginning of true obedience. As chained to the body of this death they pollute their way before God in word, deed and thought continually. Return unto me and I will return unto you — God is always first. The point to this statement is that without exception the Lord is gracious to the penitent. But ye say. Wherein shall we return — This continues to be the reply of the impenitent who perish in their sins.

G.M.O.

Announcements

The Eastern Ladies League Meeting will be held at the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church, Wednesday, May 11, at 8 P. M.

Mr. Herman Hanko will be the speaker. A timely subject, beneficial to all, has been prepared.

Ladies, take note of this date that plans may be made to attend this meeting.

Mrs. G. Pipe
Vice Secretary

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of John 3:14-16

It is the purpose of the undersigned to write a few articles of an exegetical nature on some passages quoted by "Classis West" in their missive to Classis East, which must serve as a basis and proof of their "testimony" that the Statements condemned by Classis East are not per se heretical. These passages are "like statements in Scripture" which prove that, although these "statements" are not a concise statement of doctrine, they are not what Classis East said they were, to wit, per se heretical!

There is a challenge in this enunciation of "Classis West."

This challenge we will meet here in these articles. It is far from the writer of this rubric to have delight in engaging in and prolonging a debate. Our purpose, however, is not simply to be polemical, but rather to continue to build up the church in the most holy faith. But shall this be done then our calling is to "reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned Synod (National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19) but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert ourselves in keeping the Church free from such errors." And this we are to do since "we promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either *directly* or *indirectly* contradicting the same, by our public preaching or writing." (italics of us) Formula of Subscription. Compare Articles 53, 54 and 55 of the Church Order. In the latter Article we read, "to ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the ministers and elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, or warning, and of admonition, as well in the ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and family-visiting."

Such is our God-appointed mandate!

Thus we have vowed before the face of God we would conduct ourselves in this holy ministry of the Word.

We are called upon to diligently and accurately preach the Word of God. Woe to the preacher, writer, be he minister or elder, who is derelict in this sacred matter of preaching the Holy Gospel.

Meeting the challenge of the "enunciation" of "Classis West" can, therefore, be very simply stated. It is: *obedience* of an ambassador to his Sender! One takes the shoes from his feet here. Here the faithful witnesses say: Here I stand, I cannot do ought else, so help me God!

That makes an obedient preacher breathe easily.

Here is the strength of meekness; in this strength the undersigned stands running the race with patience. Looking neither to the right or to the left we begin this study. We will rather give heed unto the more sure Word of God, which shines as a light in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in our hearts. For is not the Word of

God: to the law and the prophets else there will be no dawn? Is. 8:20.

* * * *

Since I daily come into contact with those, who subscribe to the "testimony" of "Classis West," as issued on their March 1954 gathering, I am constrained by the love of Christ, which knows no one after the flesh, to know it my duty to be a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion to warn God's children of the untenable and unscriptural and unconfessional position chosen in this "testimony" of "Classis West." I ask of no one to bow before me, neither do I desire "to push this down a brother's throat." But I do demand in the Name of the King, who called me to this holy office, that everyone submit his every thought to Christ. This means that he crucify his flesh and all evil sins of false prejudice, and be as the "noble" Bereans, who searched the Scriptures whether these things were true.

Merely saying, "I have made up my mind" is no virtue. That the wicked in hell will also have to say, to their regret and everlasting consternation and anguish of heart, where the worm does not die. I am fully aware that this is a two-edged statement of God's justice. And I bow before it. It makes no difference whether the undersigned has made up his puny mind when God speaks, does it. Come, then, and let us bow together before the Scriptures. Then we will not be "victims" of our own stubborn disobedience, our clinging to doctrinally positions that bring us to Church Political impasses! On the contrary we will dare to speak with conviction. We will then not speak in the veiled language of those who mutter and peep, but we will show from the Scriptures things which "are most surely believed amongst us!" We then don't speak of "*like* statements" but we shall have the courage to say: as is clearly and uncontradictably *taught* in the following passages!

Unless I can say the latter the ink will dry in my pen and my preaching will not emit a clear sound and I shall have to stand on the pulpit and tell the congregation rather apologetically what *I* do *not* believe. When we say clearly what we believe and interpret the Scriptures according to sound rules of exegesis, which is void of all human philosophy and interpolation, we will not need to defend ourselves and try to convince our flock that "are not so bad after all."

I once stood at those cross-roads. That was when I defended Statement II. The Lord was merciful to me that I did not fall head-long into the pitfall of having to speak the language of those, who must convince their congregation that they are "not so bad," that they really mean and intend their instruction in the right sense. The Lord counted me worthy; he was merciful to me. I take no credit for my present happy position of being able to breathe freely in the "strait-jacket" of Reformed truth as based upon sound and correct exegesis of Scripture. He has caused the lines to fall unto me in pleasant places and has set me in a broad place.

I am fully aware that this is a digression from my subject. I shall come to it presently. But may all those, who

read these lines, know that I am happy that I am not in need of that imaginary defense of "well-meaning" brethren, who benignly (?) say: he means it in a good sense. I desire neither their sympathy nor their support. What will it profit me in that day when the Lord shall judge me to find me a faithful servant, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, if mere men have judged me faithful. Rather will I give all diligence to rightly divide the Word. Then I know that I wield the sword of the Spirit, standing in the ministry which is not one of cowardly weakness, seeking the approval of man, but in such a ministry which is one of power and real sobriety!

* * * *

"Classis West" cited various passages of Scripture, which they alleged supported their contention that the "Statements" condemned by Classis East were not per se heretical. We now make a beginning of studying these Scripture passages.

We call attention John 3:14-16.

This passage, which is well-known, reads as follows: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life."*

We will notice the various exegetical considerations here in the text and in the contexts and try to ascertain the exact teaching of Christ here. If such a study of this text leads us to the conclusion of "Classis West" then I shall not only concede the point, but will insist that they are wholly vindicated by the Word of God. God does not desire small peevishness that simply continues to maintain a position because it has once been taken. I will not deny that a position is wrong because "Classis West" took it. That would be fatal to real sobriety in studying the Word of God as the rule of faith and life; that would be moral and doctrinal suicide. Here Balaam's ass would be our instructor. And I desire to be no Balaam. Nor is a position right because "Classis West" took it. And what we have said here of "Classis West" is also true of Classis East, as it is of any mortal under the sun! Wherefore, should this Word of Christ vindicate "Classis West?" I will walk at liberty and insist in Classis East through my Consistory that the decisions taken be reversed or altered.

Hence, we will needs have to do more than merely "quote" the text here together with other passages and simply presuppose that our position is thus established by Holy Writ. This is such a rudimentary fact that it scarcely needs reiteration. But since it is the indispensable requisite of good Bible study, that will yield proper and valid conclusions in dogmatics and confessions, we call attention to it nonetheless. And, what is here to the point, "Classis West" offers no exegesis whatsoever of the texts quoted. Fact is, that from a formal viewpoint, these passages are quoted so

haphazardly, that one, who is not acquainted with the "Statements," will have to venture a guess as to which quotations are to prove which point. It smacks of haste and lack of citation.

We must do more than merely quote, we said!

Hence, we call attention to the following elements in the text in John 3:14-16.

1. That for the correct understanding of this Scripture-passage, we must bear in mind the *time element* in the history of salvation. (Heils-geschiedenis) This is here of exegetical moment. We do not have in mind the "time" of a certain day in history of twenty four hours, limited by morning and evening. We have in mind the time, the seasons of history as they are in the Father's hand. In the plan and purpose of God all things are wrought according to His eternal good-pleasure. Eph. 1:11. And in this good-pleasure God has appointed a certain "time" for everything. There was a "time" for everything. There was a "time" for Abraham to live as a pilgrim in a strange land. And, again, there was a "time" set for Moses to deliver Israel out of the land of Egypt. Thus also there is a "time" for the Son of God to be born, to labor, suffer and die for His people, and to be raised the third day and to ascend up on high. This "time" element is definitely underscored by John, the Evangelist.

a. It was the "time" when the Word, the Son of God, was made flesh and dwelt among us, so that we might see His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

b. It was the "time" when the Son of God came unto His own things in Israel, His own types and shadows, and the law-giving, as they all testified of Him, even as the shadow speaks of the body and reality. Hence, he came to the temple and cleansed it from evil-doers, giving them the "sign" of the breaking down of the temple of His flesh, and the rending of the veil, and of His building the same in three days. John 2:13-22. And in so doing He gives them a sign of the great Passover Lamb, of the liberation of His people from sin and shame into the glory of heaven.

c. It was the "time" when there would be a "sign" that is contradicted and when the thoughts of many hearts are being revealed, for a falling and rising again of many in Israel. Men would believe in Him because of the signs which He was doing, but cease believing when they saw no more "signs." John 2:23-25.

d. It was a "time" when the remnant according to election would come to Jesus, believe upon Him, even though they were "teachers in Israel," as was Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, because he had sensed in Him the Prophet which was foretold already by Moses. Deut. 18:15. It is the "time" when the "Chief prophet" who reveals unto His church the "secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption will teach a "leader in Israel."

Well may we, therefore, put the shoes from our feet as did Moses, and come near and say: speak Lord, Jesus, for Thy servant heareth!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

The Gate Is Open

(Continued)

"Solely a church political issue."

So Rev. Blankespoor once maintained.

Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that such is the case in the struggle of our churches to remain Protestant Reformed.

Actually this cannot be the case. And the very slogan of the pamphlet wherein Rev. Blankespoor published this falsification of the facts shows that his colleagues do not agree with him. The slogan is: "Defending truth and justice." So *truth*, doctrine, was also in danger and is very really an issue in this struggle.

But we are willing for the sake of argument to assume for a few moments that the issue is solely a church political one to show that then, by all means, the gate is open. And then the gate is not open simply to Arminianism but to every possible kind of false doctrine.

Strong language?

You have the witnesses who tried to defend Rev. De Wolf in the Superior Court of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to thank (blame?) for that fact. Under oath — and notably Rev. Kok — they testified that they believed in a church polity that must leave the gate open to every single false doctrine that is conceivable.

Did Rev. Kok not testify under oath — and others with him, which the published court records will show — that if his consistory sustained him, he could preach Roman Catholic doctrine in his church and still retain the name Protestant Reformed? He maintained that he could stay in the denomination and that no one could take away from his local, autonomous church the name Protestant Reformed if his consistory sustained him in preaching Roman Catholic doctrine.

So loose, so disorganized, so utterly useless is the church order of Rev. Kok that a denomination that adopts it — and he claims to belong to such a denomination — is helpless to expel from it any false doctrine that might be introduced by a local, autonomous consistory. If only the majority of a local, autonomous consistory upholds its minister in heresy, the rest of the churches can do nothing to take the name of that denomination away from it.

In this Kokistic form of church government — which is far more hybrid than a crossbreed of the Presbyterian and the Congregational forms of church government — the *majority* of the churches in a given denomination are helpless when one consistory drags the name of that denomination in the mud, defames it and under it propagates a doctrine that is directly and clearly opposed to its teachings.

The Church Order, so Rev. Kok et al maintain, teaches

that Classis and Synod have no power whatsoever of any kind. (That they have no key power we never denied. And let Rev. Kok in honesty before God, Who sees all his deliberate and sinful maneuvers of misquoting and slander, show ONE sentence of one speech or writings since 1924 wherein we deny that.) But who appoints the professors of the denomination's theological school, who decides for the denomination what is false doctrine, who determines the forms for Baptism, Lord's Supper, installation of office bearers and the like, Rev. Kok does not dare to try to explain.

And Rev. Kok was not in Pipestone, Minnesota, the afternoon of March 1, when the court case of Edgerton was being tried before Judge Flinn. He did not hear the testimony of Rev. Gritters that the decisions of the Classis are *binding* on the local consistory.

Have these men no conscience anymore before God?

When they appear in the Superior Court of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to try to defend the hopeless case of Rev. De Wolf, they must maintain that the decisions of the broader assembly are only advisory, that Classis and Synod have no power and no authority whatsoever. And Classis East — whose case it was — they accuse unjustly and very sinfully, for they know better, of "initiating discipline."

But when the evil work of Classis West, perpetrated in September of 1953, comes under the scrutiny of an unbiased judge of a civil court, the decisions of that Classis all of a sudden become *binding* upon local consistories; so that those truly Protestant Reformed people who came to their consistories to urge them to repudiate this evil stand of the Classis are presented as going way beyond their bounds.

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, they rush to the defense of Rev. De Wolf, maintaining that he did not, on their perversion of the Church Order, need to abide by the decisions of the Classis since it has only advisory power.

In Pipestone, Minnesota, they rush to the defense of those who were formerly consistory members of the church where Rev. De Boer once was minister, by maintaining that this same Church Order teaches that the decisions of Classis West taken in September of 1953 in re Rev. De Wolf are binding upon all the consistories and that therefore all the members must also abide by what the Classis said. And those who would not go along with that evil decision are considered to be outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Have these men no principle left at all?

And this Rev. De Boer who wrote about a "moral issue," nothing but a moral issue, how could he who is so concerned(?) with the moral aspect of the struggle in our churches sit there coaching his former consistory's lawyer about doing the immoral thing of corrupting the plain teaching of the Church Order?

And when it was pointed out that Classis West had made another decision in the past concerning what should appear on the agenda and what the local, autonomous consistories had to do in order to get matters on the agenda, Rev. Gritters

could freely testify that these decisions were very "flexible."

Indeed, they were flexible enough to let him, who was the Stated Clerk and who of all the members of that Classis ought to know the rules, might break this one to get this evil instruction — which was so plainly contrary to the Church Order of one Classis lording it over another — on the agenda.

But these decisions about Rev. De Wolf, were they not also flexible, Rev. Gritters? You fell free before God about your testimony? And about your reversal of testimony in Grand Rapids and in Pipestone? Before HIM you can explain your *change* to defend the one and the same case of schism in our denomination? How do you square it before Him that you could violate the law that deals with matters appearing upon the agenda, and then insists that the decision of your Classis on that thing brought up by a violation of the law was binding upon all the members in all the churches in Classis West? Why was that decision not just as "flexible" as the decision you violated?

But why go into those things? As we wrote before the evil and sinfulness of this whole movement is evident from the fact that they are constantly changing their tactics with each new emergency. There is always something wrong with people who have to do that.

What we want to point out now is that there is absolutely no reason from a church political viewpoint why those who left us should not and cannot link up with any group of churches regardless of their heresies and doctrinal standards.

Rev. Blankespoor is very "ecumenically minded." He sees much more than their little denomination. Rev. Kok concocts and propogates a church polity that allows any and every teaching under one name.

Why should they then not link up with Hamilton and Chatham again. If Roman Catholic doctrine can be taught in a Protestant Reformed Church, as Rev. Kok testified under oath, when the local consistory upholds it, why cannot the Liberated doctrine be taught in the congregation of Chatham and Hamilton and their sister churches under the name Protestant Reformed? It just does not make sense to bar them from the Protestant Reformed denomination, if you concede that there is room in that denomination for Roman Catholic doctrine.

The gate is open!

It is open to whatever heresy, false doctrine, evil practice, Union membership, Lodge membership, divorce or any other thing now frowned upon by the truly Protestant Reformed consistories, Classis and Synod, that any one local schismatic, apostate consistory might in the future or at present want to maintain and defend.

The church polity of Rev. Kok opens the gate of the denomination of all who adhere to this Kokistic church confusion to anything that any one consistory(?) might get into its head to defend.

How foolish can a man get to defend such nonsense?

How can Reformed people ever be deceived so utterly

that they think that Rev. Kok's confusion is what the Spirit-guided Fathers adopted at the Synod of Dordrecht? The men who adopted the Canons of Dordrecht, did they mean such nonsense by the Church Order?

As a postscript we want to add just one more thought in regard to that trial in Pipestone, Minnesota. The main argument, in fact the whole case of what was formerly the consistory of Rev. De Boer, was that in June of 1953 the Synod decided to meet March 10 in First Church. Since they did meet there, Rev. Howerzyl testified — as though he was making a very wonderful and stupendous revelation — they were the legal Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And, if you please, he followed on the stand so shortly upon the testimony of his colleague and right hand man from Marion County, Rev. Gritters, that rules were "flexible" and that if you tried to keep them all you could not live.

First church's property was taken away from it by a suspended minister and eleven deposed elders and its doors were locked to First church between June of 1953 and March 10, 1954. But now, of course, so radical a change in the picture of the calling church did not warrant "flexible" laws. O, no! The schismatics may stretch laws, distort them, bend them back and forth, discard them for convenience sake and then when such a law cannot be kept by us because they stole the church property at Grand Rapids and lorded it over Classis East and First Church in their meeting of Classis West of September 1953, those laws become as firm as concrete, as rigid as steel. Then it becomes a matter of tremendous principle that the Synod HAS to meet in one definite locality.

It is far more important that Synod meet in certain seats, in a certain room and in a certain building. THAT is what makes it a Synod. Sitting in a room of a certain building at a certain time makes it a PROTESTANT REFORMED SYNOD.

Heeding the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Synod which forbids one Classis to meddle in the affairs of another, forbids one Classis to reverse a decision in a discipline case in a consistory of another Classis is a minor matter and pertains to "flexible" rules. Rev. Howerzyl had a BIG point. He and Rev. Gritters had to be shipped in to put across such a wonderful contribution to the Kokistic form of church government.

They are developing this new form a church government with leaps and bounds.

The gate is open?

Listen! They have rushed through it *already* so that their church political stand is already liberated.

Together with the Liberated they have liberated themselves from the Presbyterian form of church government and from the Church Order of Dordrecht.

They want freedom to move about as they please.

They *are* liberated.

Why hesitate in joining the Liberated?

J.A.H.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

We noted toward the end of our preceding article that Augustine surely advocated church discipline but was not in sympathy with the Donatist movement. He lamented the fact that the Donatists had separated themselves, not only from those who had been justly accused of being traitors to their faith during the persecutions, but also from those who had been unjustly accused and that they had therefore separated themselves from the good and faithful in all the nations of the world.

Continuing with our discussion of the Donatist controversy and the conception of the church visible as entertained by Augustine over against the Donatists controversy and the conception of the church visible as entertained by Augustine over against the Donatists we wish to quote at length from two recognized authorities. We do well to bear in mind that, according to this great Church Father of the fourth and fifth centuries, the true distinguishing marks of the Church are: Catholicity (the true Church is spread through all lands) and apostolic connections (connections with churches founded by the apostles).

Internal History of the Donatist Schism by Philip Schaff.

The Donatist controversy was a conflict between complete separatism and catholicism; between ecclesiastical purism and ecclesiastical eclecticism; between the idea of the church as an exclusive community of regenerate saints and the idea of the church as the general Christendom of state and people. It revolved around the doctrine of the essence of the Christian church, and, in particular, of the predicate of holiness. It resulted in the completion by Augustine of the catholic dogma of the church, which had been partly developed by Cyprian in his conflict with a similar schism.

The Donatists, like Tertullian in his Montanistic writings, started from an ideal and spiritualistic conception of the church as a fellowship of saints, which in a sinful world could only be imperfectly realized. They laid chief stress on the predicate of the subjective holiness or personal worthiness of the several members, and made the catholicity of the church and the efficacy of the sacraments dependent upon that. The true church, therefore, is not so much a school of holiness, as a society of those who are already holy; or at least of those who appear so; for that there are hypocrites not even the Donatists could deny, and as little could they in earnest claim infallibility in their own discernment of men. By the toleration of those who are openly sinful, the church loses

her holiness, and ceases to be church. Unholy priests are incapable of administering sacraments; for how can regeneration proceed from the unregenerate, holiness from the unholy? No one can give what he does not himself possess. He who would receive faith from a faithless man, receives not faith, but guilt. It was on this ground, in fact, that they rejected the election of Caecilian: that he had been ordained bishop by an unworthy person. On this ground they refused to recognize the Catholic baptism as baptism at all. On this point they had some support in Cyprian, who likewise rejected the validity of heretical baptism, though not from the separatist, but from the catholic point of view, and who came into collision, upon this question, with a man like Stephen of Rome.

Hence, like the Montanists and Novatians (they insisted on vigorous church discipline, and demanded the excommunication of all unworthy members, especially as such as had denied their faith or given up the Holy Scriptures under persecution. They resisted, moreover, all interference of the civil power in church affairs; though they themselves at first had solicited the help of Constantine. In the great imperial church, embracing the people in a mass, they saw a secularized Babylon, against which they set themselves off, in separatistic arrogance, as the only true and pure church. In support their views, they appealed to the passages of the Old Testament, which speak of the external holiness of the people of God, and to the procedure of Paul with respect to the fornicator at Corinth.

In opposition to this subjective and spiritualistic theory of the church, Augustine, as champion of the Catholics, developed the objective, realistic theory, which has since been repeatedly asserted, though with various modifications, not only in the Roman church, but also in the Protestant against separatistic and schismatic sects. He lays chief stress on the catholicity of the church, and derives the holiness of individual members and the validity of ecclesiastical functions from it. He finds the essence of the church, not in the personal characteristics of several Christians, but in the union of the whole church with Christ. Taking the historical point of view, he goes back to the founding of the church, which may be seen in the New Testament, which has spread over all the world, and which is connected through the unbroken succession of bishops with the apostles and with Christ. This alone can be the true church. It is impossible that she should all at once disappear from the earth, or should exist only in the African sect of the Donatists. What is all that they may say of their little heap, in comparison with the great catholic Christendom of all lands (reading this particular statement of the great Church Father it is not difficult to understand why the Roman Catholic Church of today would seize upon a passage of this nature in support of themselves as the true church in distinction from all the Protestant churches which lie as so many broken remnants throughout the world. We know that the Romish church of today proudly points to its oneness, which we know to exist merely in the outward and

external sense of the world, but to which that church points with pride as a mark of the true church. And it is surely not difficult to understand why that church should point to a passage such as this from the eminent Church Father in support of their claim—H.V.)? Thus even numerical preponderance here enters as an argument; though under other circumstances it may prove too much, and would place the primitive church at a clear disadvantage in comparison with the prevailing Jewish and heathen masses, and the Evangelical church in its controversy with the Roman Catholic (how true this is!—H.V.).

From the objective character of the church as a divine institution flows, according to the catholic view, the efficacy of all her functions, the sacraments in particular. When Petilian once said: "He who receives the faith from a faithless priest, receives not faith, but guilt," Augustine answered. "But Christ is not unfaithful, from Whom I receive faith, not guilt. Christ, therefore, is properly the functionary and the priest is simply His organ." "My origin," said Augustine on the same occasion, "is Christ, my root is Christ, my head is Christ. The seed, of which I was born, is the Word of God, which I must obey even though the preacher himself practise not what he preaches. I believe not in the minister by whom I am baptized, but in Christ, Who alone justifies the sinner and can forgive guilt."

Lastly, in regard to church discipline, the opponents of the Donatists agreed with them in considering it wholesome and necessary, but would keep it within the limits fixed for it by the circumstances of the time and the fallibility of men (the reader will recall that, in our preceding article, we quoted from Augustine to show that the Church Father certainly advocated church discipline—H.V.). A perfect separation of sinners from saints is impracticable before the final judgment (however, it should be impracticable only from the viewpoint that we cannot make separation between the wheat and the chaff, and not from the viewpoint that we do not exercise Christian discipline—H.V.). Many things must be patiently borne, that greater evil may be averted, and that those still capable of improvement may be improved, especially where the offender has too many adherents. "Man," says Augustine, "should punish in the spirit of love, until either the discipline and correction come from above, or the tares are pulled up in the universal harvest." In support of this view appeal was made to the Lord's parables of the tares among the wheat, and of the net which gathered together of every kind (Matt. 13). These two parables were the chief exegetical battle ground of the two parties. The Donatists understood by the field, not the church, but the world, according to the Saviour's own exposition of the parable of the tares; the Catholics replied that it was the kingdom of heaven or the church to which the parable referred as a whole, and pressed especially the warning of the Saviour not to gather up the tares before the final harvest, lest they root up also the wheat with them. The Donatists, moreover, made a distinction between unknown offenders, to whom alone the

parable of the net referred, and notorious sinners. But this did not gain them much; for if the church compromises her character, her holiness by contact with unworthy persons at all, it matters not whether they be openly unworthy before men or not, and no church whatever would be left on earth.

On the other hand, however, Augustine, who, no more than the Donatists, could relinquish the predicate of holiness for the church, found himself compelled to distinguish between a *true* and a *mixed*, or merely apparent *body of Christ*; forasmuch as hypocrites, even in this world, are not in and with Christ, but only appear to be. And yet he repelled the Donatist charge of making two churches. In his view it is one and the same church, which is now mixed with the ungodly, and will hereafter be pure, as it is the same Christ who once died, and now lives forever, and the same believers, who are now mortal and will one day put on immortality.

With some modification we may find here the germ of the subsequent Protestant distinction of the visible and invisible church; which regards the invisible, not as another church, but as the smaller communion of true believers among professors, and thus as the true substance of the visible church, and as contained within its limits, like the soul in the body, or the kernel in the shell. Here the moderate Donatist and scholarly theologian, Tychonius, approached Augustine, calling the church a *twofold body of Christ*, of which the one part embraces the true Christians, and the other the apparent. In this, as also in acknowledgment of the validity of the Catholic baptism, Tychonius departed from the Donatists, while he adhered to their views on discipline and opposed the Catholic mixture of the church and the world. But neither he nor Augustine pursued this distinction to any clearer development. Both were involved, at bottom, in the confusion of Christianity with the church, and of the church with a particular outward organization. This concludes our quotation from the History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff. H.V.

Unto me, O Lord Jehovah,
Show Thy ways and teach Thou me;
So that, by Thy Spirit guided,
Clearly I Thy paths may see.
In Thy truth wilt Thou me guide
Teach me God of my salvation;
All the day for Thee I bide,
Lord, with eager expectation.

Call to mind, O Lord Jehovah,
Tender mercies manifold,
And Thy store of lovingkindness
Which has ever been of old.
Sins of youth remember not,
Nor recall my hid' transgression;
For Thy goodness' sake, O God,
Think of me in Thy compassion.

Psalm 25:2, 3

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 16 (cont.)

The second class of Christians which the article mentions may be called the class of the "imperfect believers." They are characterized by the following: 1) They seriously desire to be turned to God, and to please Him only. The Dutch has here: "They earnestly desire to convert themselves to God." It makes no essential difference, however. 2) They earnestly desire to be delivered from the body of death. And, 3) They cannot yet reach that measure of holiness and faith to which they aspire. These characteristics are summed up by the fathers in the figurative terms "smoking flax" and "bruised reed," terms that are borrowed from Isaiah 42:1-3 and Matthew 12:18-20.

The language of Article 16 implies undoubtedly that there are Christians with the above characteristics who are terrified by the doctrine of reprobation. For the fathers are emphatic in asserting that they need not be so terrified: "Much less cause have they to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation" This implies that these Christians are at least inclined to be terrified by the preaching of reprobation. We may, therefore, add a fourth characteristic, namely: they lack an assured confidence of soul, especially the assurance of their own election. They are indeed elect, but they have not the assurance, or at least the degree of assurance to which they aspire.

Now let us note, first of all, that the boundaries of this classification are not rigid, but flexible. It is not necessarily so that every confirmed child of God can be put either in this class or in the class of those that do have the assurance of election. Rather is the situation thus, that one and the same Christian may at various times fall into either of these two classifications. There may be times when he has the assurance of election, and other times when it is necessary that he be pointed to this second sentence of Article 16, *Canons I*.

And the reason why this is true will become clear if only we stop to consider the three characteristics which the fathers mention here. The trouble does not lie in the fact that those who are here mentioned are not actually children of God. That might conceivably be the case with those who are mentioned in the first part of this 16th Article. They do not yet experience a lively faith, assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, and earnest endeavor after filial obedience, and glorying in God through Christ. There would

seem to be reason for them to doubt, therefore. But here the situation is entirely different. These people have all the essential marks of a true Christian: conversion, longing to be delivered from the body of this death (which is the same as the longing for the heavenly home, the hope of life eternal) and godliness and faith. Now, we must be careful to note that these are the marks of the normal Christian, and that too, the most fundamental marks. If you look for a normal child of God in this world, he will be characterized exactly by these elements. In regard to the first element, that of conversion, consider how thoroughly in harmony with Lord's Day 33 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* such a person is. Conversion, according to the *Catechism* does not consist in mighty good works in the outward sense, but exactly in that "desire to be converted to God." For the *Catechism* speaks in Question 89 of "a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins," and in Question 90 of "a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." In this respect, therefore, the Christian of Article 16 is one hundred percent normal. Also in regard to that longing to be delivered from the body of death he is normal. In fact, if he did not have that longing, he would be an abnormal Christian. For who could be a more normal Christian than the apostle Paul? And that apostle is heard to cry out, Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And in II Cor. 5:2, ff., he writes: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. . . . Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Also on this score, therefore, the Christian described here is one hundred percent normal. And in the third place, it is plain that the Christian here described is possessed of the virtues of holiness, or godliness, and saving faith, even though it be that he does not have the *measure* of holiness and faith to which he aspires. In fact, even the fact that he does not have the desired measure of faith and holiness is not to be construed as something abnormal, but, on the contrary, as being entirely normal. The normal Christian is certainly one who recognizes the fact that his faith and holiness are not what they should be. In fact, he will realize and confess that he has only a small beginning of the new obedience, and that the small beginning never becomes in this life any more than a beginning. All this is entirely normal of a Christian.

And the *Canons* are entirely correct, therefore, when they make here the emphatic statement that such Christians have "much less cause to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation." For if it be true that the class first mentioned in this article ought not to be alarmed at the mention of

reprobation, it is certainly true of these normal Christians that are mentioned here.

And yet one will discover such children of God.

What is their trouble? It consists not in the fact that they lack the marks of a Christian. It consists not in the objective fact of their present imperfection. In both these respects they are normal. But the trouble lies in the fact that they make the wrong judgment of their imperfection. When they hear of reprobation and then stare themselves blind at their own imperfection, and forget that the normal Christian in this life is an imperfectly perfect Christian, then they become terrified. They do not live out of their faith, even though it is an imperfect faith. And not living out of faith in regard to this question, that is, looking away from Christ, in Whom is all their salvation, they lack assurance. They fail to see that that serious desire for conversion, earnest longing to be delivered, and that measure of faith and godliness which they do have is already the work of the God of election operating through the Spirit of Christ and the Word.

And the cure, therefore, of their fright is very simple. It is essentially the same cure as that mentioned before: the means of grace. They must be pointed to the promise of God. And they must be pointed to the fact that those promises of God are for the elect, and that the elect in this present life are exactly characterized as smoking flax and bruised reeds. Such smoking flax and bruised reeds may rest assured of their election, and of the fact that God will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed, but will finish the good work which He has begun in us until the day of Jesus Christ.

And when that promise they hear, they will be able to say, in the language of our Form for the Lord's Supper: "Therefore, notwithstanding we feel many infirmities and miseries in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and that we do not give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound, but have daily to strive with the weakness of our faith, and the evil lusts of our flesh; yet, since we are (by the grace of the Holy Spirit) sorry for these weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God: therefore we rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will, in us, can hinder us from being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly meat and drink."

The third classification made by the fathers in this article is the only one which ought to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation: "... this doctrine is justly terrible to those ..." This class has the following characteristics: 1) They come into contact with God and the Saviour Jesus Christ. 2) They disregard God and the Saviour. 3) They wholly give themselves up to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh. They are a class of people, therefore, who not only are godless, but who are godless under the preaching of the gospel.

Notice, however, that concerning them the fathers do not make the flat statement that they are reprobate. This is impossible. Rather do they make a statement which establishes the connection between their godless life and their being terrified by the doctrine of reprobation. As long as they are not seriously converted to God, — a possibility which is always present, — they cannot possibly have the real, spiritual, living assurance of the favor of God. That is possible only in the way of sanctification. The preaching of the gospel, therefore, holds no comfort for them. It leaves them cold, and has the effect of hardening them. They walk in the world. They have their part in the world and in the things of this present time. And they therefore can only have their comfort in this world also, not in Christ. That is according to the justice of God. Terrible indeed is the doctrine of reprobation for them. But it is *justly* terrible. For reprobation is the sovereign decree of God whereby He ordains some to everlasting destruction in the way of their own sin. And in the way of sin and unbelief, therefore, one can have no other consciousness than that he is on the way to destruction.

H.C.H.

Hull Christian School will be in need of *two teachers*, one for one half of grades four and five; and one for grades six and seven. Some college training required. Send references. Write Fred Van Engen or N. Vander Ark, Principal, Hull, Iowa.

I LOVE THE LORD, FOR MY REQUEST

I love the Lord, for my request
And humble plea He makes His care;
In Him through life my faith shall rest,
For He both hears and answers prayer.

Brought nigh to death and full of grief,
The Lord's salvation I besought;
He heard my cry, He sent relief,
My soul from depths of woe He brought.

Most kind and righteous is the Lord,
Our God is merciful indeed,
Delighting ever to afford
His help to me in time of need.

Return unto thy rest, my soul,
The Lord has richly dealt with thee,
Delivered thee from death's control,
From sin and sorrow set thee free.

Since He has freed my eyes from tears
And kept my feet from evil ways,
Redeemed from life's distressing fears,
With Him I walk, and Him I praise.

Psalms 116

DECENCY and ORDER

Student-Predching

(Continued)

An Established Practice

We have seen that during the past four hundred years various Synods of Reformed Churches in the Netherlands both favored and disfavored the practice of student preaching. These alternating positions of the Synods were frequently determined by circumstances peculiar to the times and influenced more by practical considerations than by principle. The question as to whether or not a student has the right to preach according to Scripture was not faced. In 1914 this matter was conveniently camouflaged by the insertion in Article 20 of the Church Order of that ambiguous expression, "Students shall be allowed to *speak a word of edification* in the meetings for public worship." We shall come back to that later but since this revision has been adopted, this has been an uncontested established practice in the Christian Reformed Church, and also in our Churches, so that students are permitted to occupy the pulpits.

Since 1914 various Synods of the Christian Reformed Church have spoken anent this matter in order to define further the limitations of this permission to speak in the churches. We will not weary the reader with the quotations of all of these decisions. They may be found in "The Christian Reformed Church Order" written by J. L. Schaver. From them we learn that licensure is granted by the Board of Trustees and not by the Faculty as in our churches although the regulation of the preaching of students is the task of the rector and the frequency of student preaching is to be determined by the faculty. Upon the request of the Board of Trustees, the Synod in 1924, emphatically called the attention of the Consistories to the fact that they should not permit students who have not been licensed to preach to speak in public worship and then, at the same time the Synod ruled, "Although the Classes have the right to license persons to speak within their respective confines, it should be observed that it is in the interest of good order for Classes not to license such as are not studying at our Seminary." It appears from this that both the Board of Trustees and the Classes grant this licensure in the Christian Reformed Church.

In 1936, it was further ruled by that Synod, "The Board of Trustees may grant licensure to conduct religious services only to such as: (1) Are enrolled as regular students in our Seminary; (2) Have successfully passed the final examinations of the Junior year in the Seminary."

It would seem equitable that if the Classes would grant a person licensure to speak, they would be bound by these same rules or limitations. The same year the Synod decided that, "The Board is obligated to revoke the licensure, (1) Of

those who have completed their theological studies but have failed to take steps to enter into the sacred ministry of the Word; (2) Of those undergraduate students who either discontinue their studies or fail to enroll again at the Seminary." Also at this Synod the following decision was made: "The Board shall not grant licensure to such students till it has made sure of the following with respect to each applicant: (1) That he is a member in good standing in our churches; (2) That he has the spiritual qualifications necessary for the ministry, and that he considers himself called of God to prepare himself for the office of ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ; (3) That he intends to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church; (4) That he has sufficient knowledge of the Bible, and especially of our Reformed principles to act as a guide to others; (5) That he can speak acceptably and to the edification of the churches. It is left to the discretion of the Board, however, whether it will obtain this information by consulting the Seminary Faculty or by examining the applicants."

One wonders somewhat what was the occasion that necessitated these Synodical decisions. It is not that these decisions are in themselves objectionable but they seem to be entirely redundant. They are insulting to the judgment of the Board. Could it be that the Synod had no confidence in the ability of the Board of Trustees to judge who should be licensed? Does Synod, perhaps, suspicion that the Board will license those who are not members in good standing in the churches or who lack spiritual qualities, etc.? It appears quite inane to tell a group of intelligent men that they are not to license men to preach in the churches who do not have sufficient knowledge of the Bible and Reformed principles to guide others.

Or, then again, were there perhaps other dangers the Synod feared? Was the decision of 1924 made because Synod feared the possibility of some of the churches admitting into their pulpits those who were not studying at Calvin Seminary? We wonder! Rules are generally made with a view to concrete cases or circumstances. We wonder, therefore, what was the occasion for some of these decisions. The Church Order we consulted does not inform us of this. Perhaps the Acts of Synod would, but these we do not have in our possession. At any rate, it appears safe to draw one conclusion and this is that there is evidence here of a lack of clarity or something inadequate in Article 20 of the Church Order. Otherwise an appendage of so many rules would hardly seem necessary.

In our churches we have but one rule governing this matter. That rule is found in the 14th Article of the Constitution of the Theological School. It reads:

"The Faculty shall license a student to preach a word of edification in the meetings for public worship, when it deems him ready."

The matter of spiritual qualifications, ability, and other requirements on the part of the student is left to the judgment of the faculty who are best able to judge, having these

students before them in school each day. This is a good rule. It treats each student by himself. His own ability and readiness determines when he shall begin to speak in the churches. Some students are ready for this before others. This, therefore, together with Art. 20 which states that only those who have received permission according to the rule in this matter shall be allowed to speak is quite adequate. It is not necessary to inform the churches by Synodical decision that they are to admit none others to their pulpits.

Of significance in this connection is the fact that this rule of our churches speaks of "*preaching* and edifying word" whereas Article 20 of the Church Order states, "*speaking* an edifying word." This is interesting because if this rule is understood in its literal meaning, we could surely not subscribe to a decision made by the Christian Reformed Church in 1926 which reads as follows:

"With respect to the privilege granted to students to speak in our churches, it is declared that there is no principle at stake, inasmuch as students are not granted license to *preach* but to *speak* in our churches, and that this privilege is beneficial as well for the student as for the churches, especially for our smaller churches."

However, in actual practice we do observe the distinction between "preaching" and "speaking" in the worship services of the churches even though the rule states plainly that students may "*preach* an edifying word" and not "*speak* it." Students in our churches do not pronounce the benediction, do not administer the sacraments, do not ordain office bearers, etc. In practice they are limited to "speaking an edifying word." Why? Is the formulation of the rule a slip or is "preaching" intended and, if so, why isn't practice brought into conformity with the rule? Is there a principle involved here or not?

The Principle Involved

In discussing this matter we must, first of all, define the terms with which we are concerned. What is "speaking an edifying word?" An edifying word is a word that is instrumental in building one up in faith and providing spiritual nourishment. To speak such a word means that one declares things pertaining to God and His Truth in the presence of others and that in such a way that the hearers of that word are spiritually benefited. Every believer can and must always do this although not in the meetings of public worship. Our speech should be seasoned with grace and never ought we to engage in foolish talking. In the societies of the church, for example, where each member takes part in discussing the Word of God and related things, an excellent opportunity is afforded to speak to one another edifying words. If the societies of the church do not realize this objective, they do not deserve to exist. In social visits the members of the church talk over the things of God's Kingdom for each others edification and when, for various reasons, this can no longer be done, the point of social visiting is lost for the people of God. For them all things must be done for edify-

ing and when we can no longer speak of things edifying we rather not speak at all. (I Cor. 14:26) When this cannot be accomplished there is no more incentive for social visiting.

As we use this expression in connection with this article, however, it refers to the unofficial expression by the student in the church and through which the saints are instructed and built up in the knowledge of God. It is meant to be distinguished from the "official preaching."

The latter means that one speaks of the things of God upon the authority of Christ Himself. The preacher is an official ambassador. He is called and appointed by Christ to proclaim glad tidings of salvation. Externally, as far as the content of the message is concerned, there may be no difference between that which the "preacher" and the "student" proclaim. Yet, there is a vast difference as far as the distinction between "preaching" and "speaking and edifying word" is concerned.

This we will have to consider next time, D.V., as our space for this issue is filled. G.V.d.B.

NOTICE

The following volumes are missing from the library of the Theological School. Since many sets are broken and many valuable books are missing we urgently request all who might have books to check their libraries and return them as soon as possible.

- Vol. I, Reformed Dogmatics, Louis Berkhof.
- Vol. I, Institutes, John Calvin.
- Vol. I, Creeds of Christendom, Philip Schaff.
- Vol. II, Commentary on John, Codet.
- Cm 16, 17, Commentary on Matthew, Mark Luke and John, Codet(?)
- Vol. I, Commentary on I Corinthians, Codet.
- Vol. IV, Jeremiah, Calvin.
- Vol. I, John, Calvin.
- Romans, Calvin.
- Vol. II, Corinthians, Calvin.
- Galatians, Ephesians, Calvin.
- Cm 74, Calvin.
- Cm 85, 86, 87, Introduction I and II, Pentateuch I and II, Keil.
- Cm 90, Samuel, Keil.
- Cm 101, Vol. I, Isaiah, Keil.
- Cm 104, Vol. I, Jeremiah, Keil.
- Cm 111, 112 (Not known).
- Cm 117, Expositor's Bible, Vol. V, Luke through Galatians, Robertson, Nicoll.
- Rf. 3, Standard Bearer, Vol. 3.
- Rf. 28, Standard Bearer, Vol. 28.
- Misc. 3, 6, Vol. I, III, Uit het Woord, Abraham Kuiper, Sr.
- Ch. 11, 12, Ante Nicene Fathers(?)
- Ch. 38, Vol. IV, Post Nicene Fathers, First Series.
- Ch. 49, 50, 57, Vol. I, II, IX, Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series.

The Seminary

ALL AROUND US

Criticism.

The editor of *The Presbyterian Guardian*, the Rev. Leslie W. Sloat, in the March 15th issue of this periodical, writes a brief editorial on the above named subject which is both interesting and thought-provoking.

With the general tenor of his editorial we can agree. However, due no doubt to its thought-provoking nature, we could wish he had been a little more explicit and not quite so general.

The editor notes a recent change in policy in religious circles according to which churches and religious leaders are shying away from that erstwhile tolerant attitude that sought "peaceful coexistence in the religious field," and are becoming more bold to offer criticisms, thus creating an atmosphere in which public criticism of others is possible not only but even salutary. Writes he:

"For some years we have been experiencing a condition of peaceful coexistence in the religious field. Whatever may have been true in private, it has not been proper to come out publicly and criticize the religious views and predilections of others. Those who engaged in such a practice, notably the 'Fundamentalists,' were roundly condemned for holding 'un-Christian' attitudes. We must have respect for every man's religious position, regardless of what we privately think of it.

"Recently, however, there is some evidence that this condition of deadening and deadly inclusivism and tolerance may have reached an end. Not too long ago a subcommittee of the Church of England came out with a report denouncing the Moral Rearmament Movement of Frank Buchman. Although attempts were made to return the report to Committee, these efforts were not successful, though the report was not officially adopted by the larger body to which it was submitted.

"In this country we reported earlier that Dr. Payne of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had publicly criticized the 'positive thinking' of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. More recently Dean Pope of Yale Divinity School has criticized not only Peale but many of the religious radio and television programs of the present time. Those which hold to the traditional presentation of the gospel are unable to teach the people, he said, while those which adopt modern techniques to reach the people falsify or ignore the gospel.

"Not long back Vice-President Nixon had some words of praise for Roman Catholicism as a bulwark against Communism. But then President John Mackay of Princeton Seminary came out and bluntly declared the Vice-President to be completely wrong. Communism, he declared, has found a far easier road to power in Catholic countries than in lands where Protestantism is dominant. He expressed several reasons for this historical fact, but the significant point

was that he was willing to come out publicly with a statement which was a frontal assault on basic elements of Romanism.

"When we say that we find this general development to be a hopeful sign of a more healthy religious environment, we would not be misunderstood. We do not believe, for example, that the criticisms of MRA or of Norman Vincent Peale or of Roman Catholicism to which we have referred come forth from a position of solid commitment to historic Christianity. Though the positions criticized are certainly vulnerable, the criticisms are likewise not necessarily valid in their own right.

"It is not the specific criticism which we find encouraging, but the general atmosphere in which public criticism can be made. It would be a wonderful thing for the whole of Christendom were we to return once again to that state of things in which every man who dared to raise his voice in expression of religious views would be compelled to give answer to those who asked of him the basis for the position he expounds.

"So 'tolerant' has religion become in recent years, that the view is more widespread than we like to admit that one religion is as satisfactory as another, and that we have no real reason for engaging in mission work, since one person's belief is as good as another's, and all we accomplish through missionary endeavor is to get people disturbed and upset. So *Life* magazine can present its pictorial series on 'great religions' and hope that we will all benefit through a wider knowledge and appreciation of the great ideas of all religions.

"But in religion, as in other areas, there is truth and there is falsehood. And the truth is not vague and inclusive — it is specific and exclusive. There is only one true religion, and that is historic Christianity as set forth in Holy Scripture. Moreover, there are not many religions set forth in Scripture, but only one. And that one religion set forth in Scripture is not modernism, nor secularism, nor Catholicism, nor Barthianism, nor any other 'ism.' It is the religion of historic redemption in Christ Jesus the Son of God and Saviour of sinners.

"If the new critical spirit that is abroad leads men to re-examine their own religious foundations, it may prove an opening wedge for a really effective proclamation of the truth." So far the editorial.

Of course "the general atmosphere in which public criticism can be made" to which Rev. Sloat refers is so far removed from his own churches (*The Orthodox Presbyterian*) that it appears he is talking about something that is happening on another planet. It is true that he also says "it would be a wonderful thing for the whole of Christendom were we to return once again to that state of things in which every man who dared to raise his voice in expression of religious views would be compelled to give answer to those who asked of him the basis for the position he expounds." But is this not a little bit of wishful thinking? Is Rev. Sloat also advocating that his church leaders become more

outspoken in their criticisms of the errors in doctrine and practise in his own churches, or in the churches closest to them, say, the Christian Reformed or Reformed, or even Protestant Reformed? If that is the implication of his editorial, then I am all for it. We welcome criticism. And we would welcome the opportunity to reciprocate, so that they would allow us to tell them what is wrong with them. That would be a healthy atmosphere indeed!

We agree that in the last quarter of a century or more there has been a studied attempt to avoid criticisms publicly. With very few exceptions in our relation with the Christian Reformed Churches the latter have scrupulously held to the rule to keep still. Almost all of the criticism we have offered on their doctrinal stand on the "common grace" issue have been almost wholly ignored by them. Why? The answer, as I see it, is that they were afraid to stir up their people. Only of late there have been a few voices raised relative to their doctrinal errors but they have been only feeble attempts, and none of them who are convinced of the error of "common grace" has the courage to publicly condemn his churches' stand. If any of their men take notice of our criticism of their doctrine and reply, it is not with a view to actually debating the issues involved with the hope of coming to a Scriptural or Confessional solution, but generally it turns out to be a blunt accusation of us that we are one-sided, Anabaptistic, or unlearned, and that without a grain of proof.

Within the last two years we have had the privilege of coming into various widespread sectors of the Christian Reformed Church and have had opportunity to talk with various members of that church also about this doctrine of "common grace" as well as other doctrines. The ignorance of the majority of these people on these matters is astounding. And our observation has been that the clergy has purposely kept their people in the dark. Was it for fear that if their people should investigate or listen to us, they might be converted and turn to us?

But we need not go outside of our own churches to criticize. There has been and perhaps is even now among us some who have the attitude of "peace at any cost." Some of our leaders have been severely condemned because they had the courage to publicly debate certain issues among us. For instance, when the matter of a Declaration of Principles was before our churches there were many who had no criticism of its contents but they did not like its intention. It was intended to be as a wall that would bar entrance into our churches of those who advocated "conditions" in the matter of salvation. The opponents of the Declaration said we must not have it because we will chase people away from us instead of winning them. We should let down the bars a bit and not be so narrow at the doctrinal gate of entrance. We have even heard of some of these schismatic leaders who said that if we had not been so stiff-headed in 1924 we might easily have won over the majority of the Christian Reformed Churches or at least the split might probably never have occurred. These same men have purposely striven to silence

the Standard Bearer because of its boldness in showing up the errors. They did this by advising their willing listeners not to read this "slander sheet."

Always this attempt to squelch criticism and establish a false peace has a corrupt motive. It is the dishonest attempt to avoid difficulty, strife, and an attempt to establish the peace of the cemetery.

We believe that so long as the Church is in the world she is militant. And a militant Church always assumes a critical attitude over against false doctrine and practice first of all within her own borders and then outside her borders, beginning with those who are closest to her.

We agree with Rev. Sloat that "the truth is not vague and inclusive—it is specific and exclusive." And, "there is only one true religion . . . set forth in Holy Scriptures." If he thinks his church comes closest to this standard, let him show it. This is what we believe with respect to our church as we have always declared, and are still doing.

M.S

HOW BLESSED ARE THE PERFECT IN THE WAY

How blessed are the perfect in the way
Who, walking in Jehovah's law with pleasure,
Preserve their piety from day to day.
How blest are they who make His Word their treasure,
Who keep His testimonies and display
Their love for Him whose goodness none can measure.

O let Thy Spirit be my constant aid,
That all my ways may ever be directed
To keep Thy statutes, so to be obeyed,
That from all error I may be protected.
I shall not be ashamed then or afraid,
When Thy commandments I have e'er respected.

O Lord, how shall a youth preserve his way,
At every turn by vanity surrounded?
In truth, if he Thy statutes will obey,
If on Thy Word his attitudes are founded.
Thou whom I've sought, O let me never stray
From Thy commandments, lest I be confounded.

Thy precepts have I hid within my heart,
Lest I should stray and fall into transgression;
O teach Thou me and unto me impart
Thy statutes for a permanent possession.
In all Thy judgments Thou most righteous art;
Thy truth I praise in rapturous confession.

Grant life unto my soul, O Lord, I pray;
Shed still the brightness of Thy presence o'er me;
Then shall I praise Thee in a perfect way,
Yea, let Thy judgments quicken and restore me.
Thy servant like a sheep has gone astray,
Yet Thy commandments I will keep before me.

Psalm 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 10

CONTRIBUTIONS

Regurgitation

A very small dose of copper sulphate, which although in itself is poisonous, serves as a powerful emetic.

Such a dose appeared in the March 25th issue of The Church Herald in a short bold-faced type article entitled, "Are You?" by Rev. Wm. R. Buitendorp. Repeatedly we tried to digest it and just as often, we regurgitated.

Finally, we wrote the editor of said publication. For those who do not read The Church Herald, we will quote the nauseating portion of the article together with our letter to the editor:

"ARE YOU?"

"The most subtle doubt that comes into our minds is to question the truth about ourselves. Twice in the wilderness temptations, and it lingered with Him even to the cross, this doubt haunted Jesus. 'If thou be the Son of God . . . ' Jesus presumed that He was. At the time of His baptism He was assured that He was. But was He?"

Our response to this dose of copper sulphate was as follows:

"Dear Editor:

With amazement we read the short article in bold type by Wm. R. Buitendorp entitled 'Are You?' — pg. 3 of the March 25th issue of The Church Herald.

And, unless we completely misunderstand the writer, we conclude that he teaches that Jesus doubted if He were the Son of God. And, I say it regretfully, that is blasphemy!

Jesus doubted? He, who at the tender age of twelve could rhetorically ask His mother if she did not know that 'I must be about My Father's business?' Space would prohibit the quotation of text upon text as proof.

And, is it not accepted among all nominal Christians that 'He was like unto us in all things — sin excepted?' And is not doubt a sin?

To whom can we cling? To whom can we look? Who shall be our Deliverer? A doubter? One who 'presumed' he was the Son of God?

Had the article in question been a contribution by an individual, we might not have attached as much significance to it. Also, had it been signed by one 'Buitenkerk' rather than 'Buitendorp.' But, we note that Wm. R. Buitendorp is a member of your editorial council and is a regular contributor and the article was accepted for publication.

Perhaps the writer will be so kind as to explain and clarify and give positive Scriptural proof before he brings our Lord down to the level of you and me who may sometimes doubt and question when our faith grows dim.

Personally we are not much impressed with a denominational claim to being either the oldest or the largest if such

material can be printed without protest. We sincerely hope that such a Christ is not preached on your foreign mission fields nor much less in your home pulpits.

Sincerely, George Ten Elshof."

In conclusion, we wonder how many rows of blocks the schismatics would have to knock off their "too-high ecclesiastical walls" before this type of copper sulphate could be admitted and mixed with "in the Reformed sense" nonsense be made palatable to their followers.

Already we find them "hob-nobbing" with the Christian Reformed clergy and using the Christian Reformed Sunday school papers; and in turn the Christian "hob-nob" with the Reformed and permit their clergy to preach in their pulpits and, whom the Reformed fraternize with is, well, you name them! Or are they going to piously tell us that they are associating to lay down their distinct testimony. If they do, and I don't believe it, they will as surely be ousted as we were in 1924.

Rather, I think this is the case: They're lonesome and afraid to be alone in the ecclesiastical darkness which they themselves have created. Not adult enough to stand alone and furtively clinging to apron strings of their former mother.

George Ten Elshof

LET ALL EXALT JEHOVAH'S GOODNESS

The stone the builders had rejected,
And in contempt refused to own,
To their dismay has been selected
To be the foremost cornerstone.
This thing is from the Lord Almighty,
It is a marvel in our eyes;
Man cannot understand it rightly
Nor fathom it any wise.

This is the day of full salvation
That God has made and sanctified;
Come, let us voice our jubilation,
And triumph in the grace supplied.
Save, O Jehovah, we implore Thee,
Save now Thy people, e'en today;
Prosperity send Thou in mercy,
And favor us upon our way.

Thou art my God, I will extol Thee,
And magnify Thy majesty;
My God, in glory none excel Thee,
Thy praise be to eternity.
Let all exalt Jehovah's goodness,
For most compassionate is He;
His mercy, excellent in fulness,
Endureth to eternity.

Psalms 118:5, 6 8