

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Covenant Youth Wants to Know

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

Ps. 119:9

Unique question!

How shall a young man cleanse his way?

In a world in which men wickedly seek and find the answer to the question, "How can we make our way as filthy as possible?" here is one who seeks and finds the answer to the very opposite question: "How shall a young man *cleanse* his way?"

And, mark you well, it is a question *from a young man and for a young man!*

Nay, the cleansing of the way is not for the young only. It is also for the old. Necessary it remains as long as we live; and the oldest gray-haired child of God will have to testify with his dying breath that for all his three score and ten or four score years his way was in need of cleansing from all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. He will needs bear witness to the fact that the moment he failed to view his way with the question on his lips and in his heart, "How shall I cleanse it?" — at that moment his way would become terribly filthy also. And he will also bear witness to the truth of the psalmist's answer to this question as a matter of his own experience: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Nay, for old as well as for young, for the child as well as the gray-head, from the cradle to the grave, the question remains ever essential: "How shall I cleanse my way?"

But for youth, *covenant* youth, the question is peculiarly important. When the "youth" is but a little child, he has a covenant father and mother to take him by the hand and lead him in the clean way. When he has grown old in grace, he has in a sense become a "veteran" in the clean way, and has learned daily both to cleanse it and to preserve it clean. But when he is a youth, when he is "on his own," when in a sense he stands at the beginning of the way, when he is a

novice . . . Ah, then the question is of utmost importance both as to its contents and its asking: "How shall a youth cleanse his way?"

And let the youth take heed unto his way also according to this very word!

For the above question is not only a question for a youth, but it was also uttered *by* a youth. Yes, it pleased the Holy Spirit evidently to use a youth, a covenant young man, to utter this question in the Scriptures, and to record all the words of this marvellous psalm, all the twenty-two sections of which are devoted to one theme: the extolling of the Word of God. O, indeed, it is enough that this psalm is the Word of God, infallibly inspired, — whether written by a young man or an old, — by the Holy Spirit of Christ. That should be enough to forbid that any covenant youth should flippantly and lightly ignore this question as one to which he can pay attention when the "evil days come, in the which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." But in His infinite wisdom the God of His covenant saw fit to use a young man, in order that through one of their own age He might teach the young to sing: "How shall the young direct their way? What light shall be their perfect guide? Thy Word, O Lord, will safely lead, if in its wisdom they confide."

Indeed, covenant youth wants to know, must learn to want to know, and also will know the answer to the question, the all-important and only-important question: "How shall a youth cleanse his way?"

* * *

A youth's way

The text uses figurative language, of course, when it speaks of a young man's way. We must not overlook this fact, even though the Scriptures so often use this figure that it is easily overlooked. And the figure is one of a pathway that stretches itself before a traveler as far as he can see, while there are many other roads, leading away from the main road and tempting the traveler to turn aside into them. The psalmist is the traveler who makes his "way" along that road, and who is earnestly desirous of keeping his way clean, free from deviation and free from the defilements that lie in those side roads. The road in which he is is the right road, the

clean road, the way whose direction is determined by the Word of God. And in that road he makes his way, and he wants his way to be in harmony with that road completely.

For the figure of the "way" is one of man's active life from the point of view of its spiritual, ethical direction.

Man is a traveler!

Always he is active! Never can he pause. Constantly, in every moment of his existence in the world, he is "walking." Even at those times when he perhaps imagines that he is not "busy," — when he seeks rest and repose in sleep, or when he seeks relaxation and recreation away from his daily toil, — even then he is walking. He is ever on the move. He can never stand still. He walks. And his nature is such that he must walk.

There is the constant activity of his inner being, first of all. With his mind and his will, in his thoughts and his desires, his contemplations and aspirations, his joys and his sorrows, his love and his hate, his longings and his aims, he is active. And never does this activity cease. There is even a certain activity of man below the surface of his conscious life, the activity of his "sub-conscious," the activity that continues even in his mind and will when he sleeps. And there is underneath all his activity the motions of his inmost heart, which is not even under his control apparently. And all these activities are so many "steps" in man's travels.

And then there is also the outward activity of his life, the activity which comes to manifestation through his body. Active man is personally and individually; and active he is with relation to those that are about him; and active he is with relation to the entire world in which he lives and moves. In his seeing and hearing, his touching and feeling, his tasting and smelling, his speaking and singing, his laughing and weeping, his laboring and toiling, — always, in every sphere and relationship of his life, man is active! He cannot cease his travels!

Moreover, there is spiritual direction in all his walking!

As he came from the hand of his Creator, man was a creature capable of bearing the image of God. In fact, he once bore that image. He was created to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him. But he was created also so that he could turn about, away from the living God into the darkness and defilement of sin, into the unclean ways of unrighteousness and corruption. The direction of his life, therefore, is either *toward* or *away from*, *in harmony with* or *in opposition to* the living God.

Furthermore, just as there is progress and direction in man's life, so there is a destination toward which he moves. The end is either life or death, eternal glory or outer darkness.

Only two possible ways there are! In none other can any man walk. And in one of the two, not both, he must walk!

The one way is the way of righteousness, holiness, purity, truth, love, life, glory!

And the other is the way of guilt, corruption, impurity, the lie, enmity, death, utter desolation!

And the two ways are mutually exclusive!

* * *

The way of a *young man*

It must be evident that it is not every young man who can and will ask this question. The question and answer of the text is not a lesson in morality, but a lesson in grace!

For observe, first of all, that this is a young man who knows his way, and understands it. Note, secondly, that this is a young man who realizes that his way is in need of cleansing. And mark, in the third place, that this is a young man who can both ask a question about his way and who can supply the proper answer. Besides, this is a young man who has sought the Lord with his whole heart, who is desirous not to wander from His commandments, who calls the Lord blessed, who has declared the Lord's judgments, who has rejoiced in the way of God's testimonies, who vows to meditate in His precepts and to have respect unto His ways.

It is a *covenant* youth who speaks here, and who is the only one who can really utter this question!

A youth this is, who not only is acquainted with God's Word, but who knows that word. A youth who, touched by the almighty power of divine grace, has had his way principally changed already from the road to death to the road to life is this young man. And because he has experienced the blessedness of the friendship of Jehovah in Christ, Jesus, he asks, must ask, must ask continually, and will ask this question!

He realizes that before he reaches his destination there are all kinds of side paths and side roads which would fain tempt him away from the way of God's statutes. Fully aware he is that he has no business on those roads that lead back to the way of darkness. And at the same time he is very much aware that because of his flesh he is nevertheless prone to walk into those ways, and sometimes, yea, often, does go aside.

And therefore he faces a constant struggle to purify that way from the defilement and filth of sin which is in those side roads and which clings to him when he goes aside into them. And he faces a daily battle to preserve his way clean.

How shall a young man cleanse his way?

That is his question!

That question expresses his awareness that he cannot possibly deliver himself. It expresses that by himself he is at a loss to cleanse his way. It expresses dependence upon divine grace!

And do not overlook the fact that it is a question!

Nay, there is no doubt in his soul: he immediately utters the answer!

But that question expresses serious and earnest-minded concern with his way. It expresses acquaintance with the

dangers of that way. It bespeaks an awareness of utter incompetence to keep that way clean and undefiled. And it is the expression of a seeking of help and instruction and guidance.

Yes, indeed, covenant youth surely wants the answer! It will insist! It cannot rest until that answer is supplied!

And it will surely ask the question, *the* all-important question! And it will ask that question in regard to every step of the way!

How shall a youth cleanse his way?

* * *

And there is but one answer to this question!

By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word!

It is the answer of grace!

For that Word is the Word of God! It is His Word in every sense too. For it is spoken by Him, and it is spoken of Him. He is its subject and its predicate.

Its chief contents is: "Behold your GOD!"

It is the gospel of the promise, the gospel of life, — with its center in the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

And to that Word also belong His statutes, the precepts of the gospel, His testimonies, the judgments of His mouth!

Knowing that Word, meditating upon it, appropriating that Word completely, one will attend to the cleansing of his way according to the standard of that Word!

For then, as he travels his way, he will betake himself by faith to the Christ of God Who is set forth in that Word. He will flee to Him for forgiveness, for cleansing, for strength to keep the only clean way.

And he will take the precepts and the statutes of that Word for his guide along the way. In them he will delight. Them he will respect. And every step of the way he will regard in their light!

And his way will surely be clean!

H.C.H.

CALL TO SYNOD

The Consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the calling church according to the decision of the last Synod, hereby notifies our churches that the 1955 Synod will hold its opening session on Wednesday, June 1, D.V., beginning at 9 A.M. in the above mentioned church.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, May 31, at 8 o'clock in the Fourth Church.

Delegates to this Synod, needing assistance for lodging arrangements, please inform the Clerk of Fourth Church: J. Veltman, 1112 Prince St., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Consistory of the
Fourth Prot. Ref. Church

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EDITORIALS

Schism in History

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

III.

Following is the last of the quotations which Candidate Harbach sent to us for the *Standard Bearer*.

They are very instructive, not so much because from them we learn to know what the heretics taught, something which, especially in regard to the Arminians, we knew already, but because of two elements in them.

In the first place, they inform us that "history repeats itself" with respect to the nature and contents of the heresy taught. It usually concentrates around the doctrine concerning God and man, and the relation between them; or concerning the doctrine of sovereign grace and the freedom of man's will.

In the second place, these quotations reveal that "history repeats itself" also in this respect that heretics always use the same tactics. While they pretend to accept and teach the official doctrines of the Church, as expressed in their Confessions, they stealthily attempt to introduce the lie. If it were not for this, there hardly ever could be a heresy trial. Heretics, before they are exposed, are hardly ever outspoken. They usually camouflage their heresies and make the common members of the church believe that they are quite in harmony with the accepted doctrine. They only express it a little different.

This is also evident from the following quotations:

"Attempts have been made to show that Arminius did, in fact, differ very little from the received doctrines of the Belgic churches . . . But it appears to me very clear that Arminius himself revolved in his own mind, and taught to his disciples, that form of religion which his followers afterwards professed; and that the latter, especially Episcopius, only perfected what their master taught them, and casting off fear explained it more clearly. I have as a witness, besides others of less authority, Arminius himself, who, in his will, drawn up a little before his death, explicitly declares that his aim was to bring all sects of Christians, with the exception of the Papists, into one community and brotherhood." (*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15) "Two and twenty sessions elapsed ere anything was done by the synod, relative to the Arminians: and yet those people complained . . . that sufficient time had not been allowed them to prepare their papers of defence. As if they had not known seven or eight years before the synod was called, that such an assembly was to be convened!" (*Works of Toplady*, 1841, p. 239-40) And how they resented "their being cited to the synod as delinquents, instead of being in-

vited . . . as judges. A wonderful hardship indeed, that criminals indicted for transgressing the laws of their country, should not be invited to take their seat on the judicial bench! (*Ibid.*)

"Let not my honored brethren of the clergy deem me their enemy, because I presume to remind them of the truth . . . Permit the obscurest of your number to submit, without offence, the foregoing particulars to your attentive consideration. May none of your venerable order be justly ranked in time to come, among those . . . who fall in with the ceremonies, but fall out with the doctrines of the Church. Halt not between God and Baal. Give no occasion to our adversaries to speak reproachfully of us. Let it not, any longer, be thrown in your teeth, that 'no set of men differ more widely from each other than the present clergy; though they all subscribe to one and the same form of doctrine.' Subscription is, in virtue and in fact, a solemn bond of engagement to God, and of security to men, that the subscriber fairly and honestly, without reserve, evasion, or disguise, absolutely and nakedly believes the things to which he sets his hand." (*Ibid.*, p. 276)

Three elements are important in this quotation.

First of all the element that, according to the quotation, some attempted to show that Arminius differed very little from the confession of the church.

Such a claim will, of course, never be made by any truly Reformed man who understands the confessions and knows anything about the teachings of Arminius. It may safely be said that the Remonstrance, which was adopted by the Arminians in Gouda in 1610, one year after the death of Arminius, in the main reflected his teachings.

Now, if one claims that this document differs but very little from the confessions of the Reformed Churches, the only thing that can be said of him is that he does not know what he is talking about. For that document maintains the error of general atonement on the condition of faith and questions the truth of the preservation and perseverance of the saints.

Reasoning in the same line, one could also claim that the Three Points of 1924 differ very little from the Reformed Confessions, and that, therefore, our separate existence as Protestant Reformed Churches cannot be justified. In fact, it is well known that several Christian Reformed theologians defended the Three Points claiming that, principally, they represent the only truly Reformed stand. Fact is, however, that they represent, not the Reformed, but the Arminian standpoint.

Again, on the same basis, one can argue that the statements made by De Wolf from the pulpit of the First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, differ "very little" from the stand of the Protestant Reformed Churches, although he deliberately and consciously attempted to corrupt our Churches, by introducing his conditional theology and by

contradicting the Declaration of Principles which was officially adopted by our churches.

The second element is the complaint that they were ill treated by the Synod of Dordrecht. Also this is a characteristic complaint of heretics, that is, they often find fault with the formal or church-political aspect of their trial in order to have an excuse to cover up their heresies. In itself, it is, of course, very well possible that a case is not treated in the correct church-political way, so that, indeed, there is reason for complaint and even for protest. But even if this is the case, it should never be used as an excuse to refuse to give account of our views when called to do so. This is what the Arminians did at the Synod of Dordt. The synod certainly did not ill treat them. They were given plenty of time. And the synod certainly could not confer with them on an equal basis for they were the accused and delinquents. But they were unwilling to give account of their real views simply because they knew that they were heretics.

Also the De Wolf group complained of their being ill treated. They, too, tried again and again to stall and postpone the case until they might have a majority. Just think of the consistory meeting of June 1, 1953. They offered a motion to adjourn before any business concerning the case had been transacted; when a motion was on the table to adopt the advice of the classis they made a motion to table; when the motion, however, was adopted they asked for time to consider their answer, though, as subsequent history plainly shows, they never even meant to consider the matter, but simply stalled for time. In the meeting of June 22, they demanded a motion that they should apologize, though this had already been decided both by classis and by the meeting of the consistory of June 1. When the consistory determined that they could not vote in the matter because they were in a state of guilt, they complained that they were ill treated. They made an excuse of the fact that I, finally, left the meeting, as they alleged "in anger." When it had become evident that the whole case was finished, that they would never apologize, so that, according to the advice of classis and according to the consistory meeting of June 1, it had been decided they were worthy of suspension and deposition, and they were not called to the consistory meeting of June 23, they again complained that they were ill treated and the action of the consistory at that meeting was not legal, although they certainly had no legal place in the consistory anymore, and although the entire case, from beginning to end, had been treated in their presence.

Ill treated?

The only weakness of the consistory was that they were far too longsuffering.

And, of course, they complain, too, that they were ill treated by the classis. Although they did not submit to the legal suspension and deposition, they still sent delegates to classis and demanded that they should be seated. When classis refused, and decided to seat the legal delegates, they were, of course, ill treated!

All this is characteristic of heretics, which they knew they were.

Those that stand for the truth do not use such tactics.

The third element to which, finally, we must briefly call your attention is contained in the last paragraph of the quotation. It concerns the official declaration that we all agree with and subscribe to the confessions of the church.

This is, indeed, a very serious business.

In our own churches, this is even emphasized by the fact that all office-bearers must subscribe to the Formula of Subscription. By that formula we solemnly pledge before God and the Church that we shall never teach anything contrary to the confessions, i.e. The Three Forms of Unity, and that we shall at all times submit to an examination if it is required of us by consistory, classis, or synod, while, if we refuse, we shall *de facto* be suspended from office.

It is characteristic of heretics that they take this oath lightly, for they want to remain in the church while propagating their false doctrines.

Also this is characteristic of the heretics that left us.

For them their subscription to the Formula of Subscription meant that they adhered to the confessions as they were understood by the Protestant Reformed Churches, not as they were interpreted by the Christian Reformed Church in 1924, nor as they were understood by Heyns and the Liberated.

All the history of the last years plainly reveals that they did not take their own subscription seriously. They violated their oath of office.

Thus, then, the quotations which candidate Harbach sent us are very instructive, indeed.

History, indeed, always repeats itself.

H.H.

Ridiculous

This is how I would characterize a report of "the six churches of our classis" which was held recently (the date, nor the name of the churches, is given), but which was signed by J. Blankespoor and, therefore, was a meeting of the schismatics. The report reads as follows:

"In the second overture First Church proposes to Synod to approach the brethren who left us regarding the dividing of the Synodical Funds and properties of our churches before the 'split.' Classis so decided."

That they call us "brethren who left us" we will pass. The first term of this clause is a bit of hypocrisy on their part, especially after they swore to their lying cross-bill; the second part is simply a lie.

But how about dividing the property?

There is nothing to divide!

The schismatics appealed to Supreme Court in regard to

(Continued on page 368)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 46

Chapter I

Addressing God as our Father

The sonship of which he speaks is a sonship of grace, a very particular sonship, that has its deepest source in eternal election. In absolutely sovereign, elective love God adopted us to be His children. In eternal, sovereign grace He bestowed upon us the right to be called the sons of God. In that sense, although in time we appear as children of the devil by nature, and children of wrath, we are indeed sons of God from before the foundation of the world. But God also realized that right in time. He laid the foundation of this sonship in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For by His perfect obedience, even unto the death of the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ obtained for us eternal righteousness, the forgiveness of sins, and the adoption unto children of God. And in the resurrection of our Lord from the dead we have God's own signature and seal to the certificate of our adoption.

Such is the legal aspect of our sonship.

And, when in the address of the Lord's Prayer we approach God as our Father, we do so only by faith, in the consciousness that we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ, Who died for us, Who became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and that therefore in His righteousness we received from God the rights of sonship and have the confidence to call Him our Father. We look at the cross and at the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and believe that in those two wonders of grace we may behold the eternal love of God to us as our Father in heaven. And therefore, although everything testifies against us in this life and in this world, and although our own conscience condemns us that we have sinned and do sin against all the commandments of God, nevertheless, on the basis of God's own revelation in the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have the confidence that we are the children of God and may call Him our Father. In the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ we have God's own signature and seal to the certificate of our adoption.

But there is more.

Human parents may adopt a strange child, but they can never make it their own flesh and blood. They may love that child and care for it as if it were their own. They may give

it a place in their home, and even bestow upon it their inheritance. But it never becomes really their own child.

But with God this is different. When He bestows upon us the grace of adoption, He also realizes this adoption in their hearts. He regenerates us, so that we are born of Him and become conformed according to the image of His Son, in true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. He quickens us unto a new life, the life that is from above, the immortal, heavenly life wherewith we shall presently dwell in God's tabernacle forever. He calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light, so that we repent of our sins and long to be restored to His favor. He sheds abroad in our hearts the love wherewith He loved us in Christ Jesus, and gives us the faith whereby we rely on the righteousness of God revealed in the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He causes the Spirit of Christ to dwell in our hearts and to abide with us forever. He assures us through the gospel that we are the sons of God. For thus He assures us Himself in His Word: "For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:15, 16. And again, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:4-6.

Hence, when in the address of the Lord's Prayer we call God our Father, this also implies that we are conscious of our real, spiritual, ethical sonship. We are conscious of this by the very fruits of our sonship, the love of God and the love of one another, the true confidence of faith, the delight in the keeping of His commandments. O, we do not forget that all this we possess only in principle. We have but a small beginning of the new obedience. Sin still dwells within us. And therefore, this consciousness of our sonship will often reveal itself in a confession of our sins before God and before one another, and a deep need of forgiveness, as well as a longing for perfection.

Nevertheless, when we address God as our Father, we thereby express a childlike confidence that God will give us what we ask of Him according to His will and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And at the same time, it is also the expression of a childlike love, that asks only for those things that are pleasing to Him.

And it is all of grace.

At the very beginning of our prayer the Lord leads us in the marvellous way of His grace and through the entrance of His sovereign election into the presence of His heavenly majesty. We may boast to man of our own free will, whereby we have accepted our sonship. But even before we utter the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, this boast has died on our lips, and we humbly confess: "Our Father Who art in heaven, it is none of self, all of Thee."

Chapter II

In the Heavenly Sanctuary

When the Lord teaches us to address God as our Father, it implies, of course, that we draw very near to God, and that God draws very near to us. He takes us into His bosom, and we nestle there. He fills us with filial love and childlike confidence, so that we do not flee away from Him at the sight of His glory and infinite majesty, but have boldness to remain in His presence and to pour out our hearts before Him.

However, this does not mean that God has now become our equal, our next-door neighbor, and that henceforth we can address Him with that familiarity that breeds contempt. There are those who appear to think that it is a token of real piety that they address the Most High very familiarly, as if He actually were their equal. I personally have heard prayers in which God was addressed as "you" and "your" instead of as "thou" and "thee" and "thy," expressing, of course, that the one who thus prayed was very familiar with God. It must be evident that as long as anyone can express himself thus, he has never entered consciously into the presence of the most high majesty. He to Whom we speak in prayer is the same Whose glory and majesty the prophet Isaiah beheld in a vision, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and whose train filled the temple. Above it stood seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." As the prophet thus beheld the glory of the great God, he cried out: "Woe is me! for I am undone!" Isa. 6:1-5. It is indeed a marvellous privilege that we may dwell in the presence of that great God, and that we may confidently draw near to His bosom, and stammer in spiritual ecstasy, "Our Father!" Let us beware that we do not destroy the wonder of it by dragging God down to the level of our own existence. Our Father is the most high majesty of heaven and earth. He dwelleth in an inaccessible light.

Lest we should forget this, the Lord teaches us to address God as our Father, but also to add immediately, "Who art in heaven."

We understand at once, of course, that this addition may not be understood as a local, or limiting qualification. And it is not designed to make us cry very loudly to a very distant God, that we may reach Him with our voice. That would indeed be characteristic of an idol, not of the living God. Such a God would be no God. He is the proper object of the mockery of Elijah against the priests who cried unto Baal from morning till evening and received no answer, and whom Elijah mocked in the well-known words: "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

God is omnipresent. He is not only in heaven, but also in the earth: "He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:27, 28. And even the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. II Chron. 6:18. He is the transcendent One, exalted above all that is called creature. Your prayer need not be a loud clamor to make Him hear you. When, if occasion demands, in shop or office, in restaurant or train, you desire to lift up your heart to Him in prayer, your whisper is quite sufficient; and He inclines His ear even unto your silent prayer.

The Catechism therefore avoids carefully all local implications when, in answer to the question, "Why is it here added, 'Which art in heaven'?" it teaches us as follows: "Lest we should form any earthly conception of God's heavenly majesty, and that we may expect from his almighty power all things necessary for soul and body."

Indeed, we may never form an earthly conception of God and of His glorious majesty.

But aside from this, there are especially two implications in the words, "Who art in heaven."

The first of these is that in your prayers you present yourself to God as He is revealed in heaven. You present yourselves before His very face, in Christ Jesus our Lord. You do not address an abstract providence; nor do you speak to a vague omnipotence, or to an undefined omnipresence, when you pray. On the contrary, you seek Himself, His face, His person. Nor can you address Him as He is revealed on the earth in what is called "nature." For indeed the invisible things of Him are manifested in the things that are seen, and reveal His eternal power and godhead. But the things in the world do not reveal His face, shining upon us in everlasting mercy and love, and drawing us into His covenant fellowship. On the contrary, in these things "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." We lie in the midst of death, and in His wrath we pine and die. But in heaven, where the holy angels see His face, where is His sanctuary, where He is revealed in the face of Christ Jesus our Lord, Who prays for us with continual intercession,—there is the revelation of the God of our salvation, the God of everlasting grace and mercy, Who in His love forgiveth all our iniquities, that He may be feared. Thither, then, to heaven, where the face of God is, you direct your longing gaze. In your prayers you turn your eyes away from the present world and all that belongs to it, its wrath and death, in order to direct them to the holy place in heaven, to the sanctuary, whither Christ has gone before. For there you may find Him as your loving Father, at Whose heart you may find rest.

And the second implication of the qualifying clause, "Who art in heaven," is that God is very highly exalted above us and above all creation, infinite in power and wisdom, glorious in the splendor of His holiness. In distinction from all idols, the Scriptures teach us: "But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Ps. 115:3. You therefore shall not think earthly of Him, neither drag Him down from His excellency, but be filled with a holy

reverence, even when you address Him as your Father. And in this holy reverence and consciousness of His infinite power and wisdom, you will, on the one hand, feel assured that He knows all your needs and that He is able to help you. And on the other hand, you will refrain from praying thoughtlessly and from presenting before His face your sinful desires and carnal petitions. For thus the Scriptures admonish us: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." Eccles. 5:2. Or, as the Lord teaches us in Matt. 6:7, 8: "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 ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

Subjectively, therefore, the addition, "Who art in heaven," presupposes that we approach our Father in heaven in true humility and assured confidence. We approach Him in humility because of His glorious majesty and our own insignificance, but also because of His glory and holiness and our sin. But on the other hand, we also approach Him in true and assured confidence. The glorious majesty of God, we are assured, is omnipotent: He always doeth whatsoever He pleaseth. And in that confidence, seeing that we approach Him as our Father in heaven, we are assured that we will receive whatsoever we ask of Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and according to His will. He is willing because He is our Father, Who loves us with an everlasting love. And He is able, because He is all-powerful and all-wise. How then shall He not with Christ freely give us all things?

I must observe once more, as I already did in another connection, that this address is introduced by the personal pronoun "our," — in the plural, therefore. The scope of this plural is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive because it cannot possibly mean that I approach our Father in heaven in the consciousness of my fellowship with all men. By nature men are children of wrath, and certainly not children of our Father Who is in heaven. And it is inclusive because it embraces all believers, no one excepted. The scope of this plural is determined by Christ Jesus our Lord. It is only in Him that God is our Father. And in Him, and for His sake, He adopted us to be His children. Only in the consciousness of that relationship, and therefore, in the consciousness of our fellowship, not with all men, but with believers in Jesus Christ our Lord, we address God as our Father Who is in heaven. And of course, it implies too that he who thus addresses God stands in the love of the brethren, and is able to approach God in the consciousness that his relationship with the brethren is unmarred, and that there is no enmity or hatred in his heart against any one of them.

Thus we have discovered that the simple address of the Lord's Prayer is very profound and very significant. O, it is indeed possible to recite the entire Lord's Prayer in half a minute. Yet, it may well require more than a half hour of

our time to utter this address alone in spirit and in truth, that through it we may really lift up our hearts to the Most High, and contemplate Him with holy reverence, filial love, and childlike confidence. But if we have succeeded in this, and feel in our hearts that thus we have obtained audience with the living God, we are ready to continue our prayer. For in that holy reverence of Him that is in heaven we will seek His glory above all, and all others things only for His name's sake. In that filial love of our Father we will be desirous to be pleasing to Him, and only ask for those things that are according to His will. In that childlike confidence we also feel assured that He will give us every good thing: for He is able to save us, being almighty God; and always willing to bless us, being our loving Father, "Who spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all." How, then, "shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32.

H.H.

RIDICULOUS

(Continued from page 365)

the property of the First Church. Suppose their appeal is granted. Then theirs is the name Protestant Reformed. And this will, in that case, be true of all the churches of their so-called classis. Suppose the case is settled in their favor also in regard to the church properties in the West, then their whole group can and will claim the name Protestant Reformed, also synodically. In that case, they can simply claim all the synodical property and they certainly cannot come with a proposition to our Synod: "Let us divide, brethren." They may decide to give us something (which we would never accept) but they could not come with such an overture.

But suppose the whole case is decided in our favor. In that case we have the name and all the properties. Who in the world proposes to the owner of a certain property: "Let us divide your property?"

The entire overture is ridiculous.

And, besides, it appears that the schismatics do not have much faith in their own appeal to the Supreme Court.

Otherwise, I am sure, they would never have come with such an overture.

H.H.

If Columbus had turned back after sixty-five days of sailing on the uncharted seas, no one could have blamed him, but no one would have remembered him. Even if you have a good excuse for giving up, remember that all the rewards go to those who stick till they get what they are after.

— Church Bulletin

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Malachi

VII. Concluding admonitions, 4-6.

4. *Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb upon all Israel with the statutes and judgments.*

5. *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of Jehovah, the great and terrible (day):*

6. *And he shall turn the heart of the fathers unto the sons and the heart of the sons unto the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

Remember the law of Moses—A concluding call to repentance. The idea is that by the mercy of Jehovah the offenders confess and forsake their sins and as returning to Jehovah order their lives according to the precepts of the law of Moses His servant. The call of the prophet (prophets of old) for a return to the law does not make him a legalist certainly. That a man merits with God was no more his view than it is ours. He understood as well as we that the law requires a perfect obedience and that therefore the holiest of men were not living in or by the law but only by the mercy of Jehovah. That was precisely his confession (iii, 6), namely, that it is only due to the fact that Jehovah does not change that the sons of Jacob are not consumed. Yet the least in Christ's Kingdom is greater than was our prophet (prophets, saints of old). For Christ's Spirit was not yet to lead him into all truth. This is also clear from his discourse, clear that he has not the crucified, risen and glorified Christ and His kingdom as the direct object of his vision. He is directly occupied in his discourse only with sin and repentance, the destruction of the impenitent wicked and the salvation of the penitent just, and thus with the crucified and risen Saviour only indirectly and by implication, but then indirectly by all means. This must be emphasized. For the body of truth contained in the Scriptures forms logically and spiritually one organic whole, the one word of God, so that to be proclaiming directly any one element of truth in it is to be proclaiming them all by implication.

The law of Moses—It comprehended the entire system of laws contained in the Pentateuch and not merely the ten commandments. *My servant*—Moses as the mediator of the covenant of Sinai. *In Horeb*—The place where Jehovah promulgated the law by Moses His organ. *Statutes and judgments*—It is rather difficult for us to distinguish between the two. According to one view *judgments* were the provisions of civil and criminal law and statutes the positive institutions or enactments, whether moral, ceremonial or civil. *Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet*—See on Chapter 3:1. *Before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord*—The day on which the exalted Christ came in

judgment over Jerusalem 70 A.D. and secondly the day on which at the end of time He shall come in judgment over the world. The prophecy implies the incarnation of the Son of God, His atonement, resurrection, exaltation at the right hand of God and His pouring of His Spirit on all flesh when the day of Pentecost was fully come. *An He shall turn the heart of the fathers unto the sons and the heart of the sons unto the fathers*—The result of apostasy is a total disregard of the responsibilities of the most intimate relationships of life. In the language of the prophet Micah, there is no unrighteousness among such men anymore. They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. The son dishonours the father, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house (Micah 7).

But the ministry of John the Baptist—Elijah—is going to bear fruit. Many will be converted. Peace and good will shall be restored. All will be the Lord's work and not man's. The Baptist will only be active as Christ's organ. And for the sake of His penitent people He will not smite the earth with a curse, that is, He will not cause them to undergo the curse of the law but for Christ's sake its blessings (Deut. 27). And eventually there will be new heavens and a new earth on which shall dwell righteousness.

(End of Malachi)

* * *

The Prophecy of Haggai

A message of rebuke for the neglect of God's House, Chap. 1:1-11.

1. *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of Jehovah by the hand of Haggai the prophet unto Zerubabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,*

2. *Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.*

3. *Then came the word of the Lord by the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying,*

4. *It is time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?*

5. *Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, set your heart upon your ways.*

6. *Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye are not satisfied; ye drink but ye drink not to the full; ye clothe you, but you are not warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag pierced through.*

7. *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Set your heart upon your ways.*

8. *Go up into the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah.*

9. *Ye looked for much and, lo, it came to little, and when ye brought it home, I blew it away. Why, saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house which is waste, and ye run every man to his own house.*

10. *Therefore over you is restrained the heaven from dew, and the earth is restrained from her produce.*

11. *And I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains and upon the corn and upon the new wine and upon the oil and upon that which the ground bringeth forth and upon men and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

I. *In the second year of Darius*—The ruler denoted is Darius Hystapes the fourth king of Persia. The dates of his reign are 581 and 486 B.C. His second year is, therefore, 520.

Babylon as a world power had been overthrown by Cyrus in 528. In the second year of his reign he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom that the Jews return to Jerusalem and build the temple. A large company of them, between forty and fifty thousand, responded. Arriving in Jerusalem they immediately set the altar on its basis and there-upon began laying the foundation of the temple. While thus engaged, the people of the land came and offered to build with them. But it was not allowed and the result was that they become bitterly hostile. The Jews were accused of them before the king of Persia by hired counselors. They wrote a letter in which Jerusalem was presented to view as a city with a bad history behind it. It was a matter of record, the letter stated, that the city is a rebellious city hurtful to kings and provinces. It urged that the Jews be prohibited from building it. The king of Persia, Artaxerses, had the records examined and he was told that the charge was true. He gave a written command that the city be not built until further notice. A copy was sent and read to the leaders of the opposition, who in haste went up to Jerusalem unto the Jews and made them to cease by force of arms. All building operations now come to a complete stand still and so remained until the second year of Darius, thus for sixteen years (Ezra 3:4). But that the work of the temple was not resumed until that time was not alone due to the hostility of the adversaries. The Jews had little heart for the work as appears from the discourse of our prophet. Of course, they were not admitting this either to themselves or to one another. They could always say that the king had commanded them to cease and that it was neither right nor safe for them to resume the work until they should receive word from him to proceed. And as the king was not letting himself be heard from, they went to working their own works, exclusively, cultivating their fields and building themselves houses to live in, while neglecting God's house. They could also point to

their crops. And perhaps many of them were discouraged by the fact that the promise of the pre-exilic prophets of a glorious restoration was not being fulfilled, as was expected. Then, too, it may be assumed that the true believers did not make up the bulk of the postexilic community. The non-believing element could have no real need of the temple. And perhaps even the faithful, with the exception of a few, did not miss it too much, seeing that during the exile they had become accustomed to doing without it. They were back in God's own city. The sacrifices by blood had been restored. God's altars again burned as of yore, Sin was again being atoned. They again had fellowship with God at His altars. But did they in their present state of mind and heart? In their neglect of the house of God they were unspiritual.

It is plain that there was need of another word of God for the rebuke of unbelief and carnality and for the revival and strengthening of faith. This word was also given, and it came by the hand of Haggai and his immediate successor Zechariah to be followed some years later by Malachi, the last of the prophets.

Darius the king—It was not necessary to add "of Persia;" for he was the only living monarch that bore this name, and at the time Persia was still in the possession of the world-power. He was, therefore, *the king*. *The sixth month*—It was called Elul and answers to the latter part of August and the first part of September. *The first day*—It was the day on which the feast of the new moon was celebrated. It was therefore a day particularly appropriate for the communication of the word of God. A large number would be present to hear the message. *Came the word of Jehovah by the hand of Haggai*—It was a word that had its origin with God. The prophet was but the medium of communication, the word passing through his hands. Zerubbabel . . . governor of Judah—As well as Sheshbazzar his predecessor (Ezra 1:8; 5:14), he must have been an appointee of the king of Persia to whom Israel was subject. He belonged to the first band of returning captives, 436 B.C. *The son of Shealtiel*—According to the Chronist (I Chron. 3:19). Zerubbabel was the son of Pedaiiah and nephew of Shealtiel. Reconciliation can be achieved by the assumption of intermarriage or adoption. *Joshua . . . the highpriest*—Also in the prophecy of Zechariah he is named as the head of the priesthood (see particularly 3:1ff.). *The son of Josedech*—The full form of this name is Jehozadak; it means *Jehovah is righteous*. *Came the word of the Lord*—It came to Zerubbabel and Joshua, to the former as the civil and to the latter as the ecclesiastical head of the postexilic community and through them to all the people.

Verses two to eleven contain the prophet's message. *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts*—The prophet is the spokesman of Jehovah, speaking a word that has been put in the opening of his mouth by his Sender. *This people say*—The Lord is pointing His finger to the large number of Jews that had collected in Jerusalem for the celebration of the festival of the new moon. *The time is not yet come, the time that the*

Lord's house should be built — To excuse their apathy they could name several reasons why the time is not yet come and doubtless they did. Who would dare to disobey the command of the great king of Persia? It is true that a new king occupies the throne of Persia from whom permission to resume building operations could perhaps be gained. But is it now time to build? Economic conditions are deplorable, worse than ever before: the crops have failed, cattle has never been so scarce, and what little there is bring no price, wine-presses are running dry, and the figtree has lied. Who would dare to build a temple in such a time?

Then came the word of the Lord by the hand of the prophet, saying (vs. 3) — It can't be denied that the reasonings of the people have a show of validity. The prophet does the only wise thing. He awaits the Word of the Lord. And it comes (vs. 4). *It is time for you* — The right, proper time. *Ceiled houses* — Houses with ceiling and walls of cedar and therefore costly. Such houses they built them, while urging the poverty of their community as an excuse for their failure to build the temple.

Set your heart upon your way (vs.) — They should consider what they have been doing and what they suffer. They should pause and ponder their experiences that were truly startling. They were being cursed in all that they possessed and undertook. Though they sowed copiously, they reaped little. They ate and drank and were hungry and thirsty still, for their was want of bread and what little they did have to eat did not nourish them. And their clothes did not warm them being insufficient. And the wages of the hireling dwindled away as though they were put in a bag full of holes (vs. 6).

Once more they are admonished to stop and consider their ways. If they do so, the prophet means to be telling them, they will not fail to discern that their miseries are the expression of Jehovah's displeasure for their sinful treatment of Him regarding His house. There can be no doubt about this. Now follows a direct command to build the house (vs. 8). *Go up into the mountain* — Not necessarily Lebanon but any mountain on which timber grew. *Bring wood* — All the building material necessary for the construction of the temple. Stone could be had from the ruins of the old temple. This part of the task having been accomplished they are to proceed with the building of the house. *And I will take pleasure in it* — Yet the Lord did not honor the temple of the postexilic community with that visible manifestation of His Presence — the Pillar of Cloud. For it is nowhere stated that He did as it is in connection with the tabernacle (Ex. 11:34-36), and with Solomon's temple (I Kings 8:10). The report of the building of Zerubbabel's temple ends with this statement, "And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel (Ezra 6:22). The ark of the covenant was also permanently lost to Israel. For we do not read of its preservation and

recovery. Zerubbabel's temple, therefore, could not have the typical significance of the first temple. It could not properly symbolize, as the first temple had done, the indwelling of the triune Jehovah in His church through Christ in His Spirit. For in its holiest place stood not the Ark of the covenant — Jehovah's throne — with the Pillar of Cloud hovering above its lid. Yet the Lord will own it as His house nevertheless. Here and here only of all the places in the earth, His saints will stand before His face as of yore and shout with joy. And He will lift up His countenance upon them also here, and His peace will be in their hearts, and they shall glorify Him. For here the blood of atonement will again be shed, His altars burn and His priests bless.

G.M.O.

PROTECT AND SAVE ME, O MY GOD

Protect and save me, O my God,
From foes that seek my life,
And set me high, secure, above
The rising tide of strife.

The workers of iniquity
Against me lie in wait;
Though I am innocent, O Lord,
They gather in their hate.

Behold their wickedness, O Lord,
To help me, O awake;
Lord God of hosts, Thou, Israel's God,
Arise, and vengeance take.

My enemies with deadly rage
Renew their fierce attack;
They think the Lord will not regard,
But Thou wilt turn them back.

O God, my strength, on Thee I wait,
To Thee for refuge flee;
My God with mercy will defend,
Triumphant I shall be.

O God, our shield, let wickedness
And pride be put to shame,
Till all shall know that Thou dost rule
And all shall fear Thy Name.

Let wickedness that raged in power
Now rage in impotence;
But I will glory in Thy strength,
My refuge and defense.

When all the night of woe is past
And morning dawns at length
Then I shall praise Thy grace, O God,
My refuge and my strength.

Psalms 59:1-8

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 10:9

This essay, which I am about to write, will be a positive exposition of Romans 10:9 against the background of the "testimony" that "Classis West" purported to give Classis East in regards to the Statements of Rev. De Wolf and Classis East's condemnation of the same.

This passage from the Word of God reads as follows: "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Romans 10:9.

Our chief concern in this essay is not what "Classis West" desired to establish in citing this text, but rather what Paul establishes here with his readers. At bottom we are interested in sound exegesis and not in refuting an erroneous or confused usage of the text. Nevertheless, even in our positive and constructive study of the text we shall reject all heresies repugnant thereto.

In this passage in Romans 10:9, Paul tells us what the *content* is of the "word of faith" which is *preached* by the Apostles and teachers of Jesus Christ. Yes, here we have that which is *preached* in Christ's Name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Literally we read in verse 8, "but what saith it? The word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith, *which we preach*." And this Word in a nutshell is, when viewed in contrast to the law of Moses, that if we confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved. That is the content of the "word of faith" briefly expressed in opposition to the righteousness by law. This latter saith: that the man that doeth the law shall live thereby.

What a blessed and beautiful content is *preached* when the "word of faith" is brought to the New Testament church!

As a preacher of this riches of the grace in Christ, Paul has a great desire of heart that Israel, his kinsmen, according to the flesh, might believe and be saved. Ah, these men were really very zealously *religious*. They were trying to bring about their own salvation. They tried to put a foundation under their own feet, a foundation of righteousness. And in so doing they clearly showed that they refused to submit to the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. They did not heed the report of the Gospel, the glad-tidings of good things. They thereby gave evidence that they had never understood the Holy Scriptures and the power of God. The great Promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had never been understood by them. God's covenant dealings, a dispensation of rich and boundless mercy they had never been able to see. The whole Bible was closed to them even though they read it every Sabbath, since they did not see that the Messiah, the Christ was the purpose, the Telos of the law for righteousness to *everyone that believeth*. In Isaiah's day they are the

Israel of which this great prophet said: "All day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Hence, there is the same desire and pain in the heart of Paul as there had been in the heart of the Prophet Isaiah. It is the lot of prophets to thus suffer; these must taste the pain of having a message beside which there is none other — and not being believed!

Nevertheless it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Romans 9:33, Isaiah 8:14.

The Promise of the Gospel is that "everyone that believeth shall be saved. And this must be *preached* promiscuously to all to whom God sends the Gospel in His good-pleasure. The Greek text has: *touto estin to reema tees pisteos o keerussomen*. Translated this is: that is the word of faith which we preach. It is of importance that we notice that Paul does not write here: that is that Word of faith which is *promised to all if they believe*. Paul says: *preached to all*. "Preaching" is a term of Scripture and the Confessions which *cannot be equated*, identified with "to promise." Paul does not say "the word of faith *which is promised*, that if thou shalt believe, etc." Nay, *preaching* and *promise* are not identical.

Preaching and *promise* are not identical here in the text in Roman 10:8, 9. Such was evidently the implied intention of Rev. B. Kok on the floor of Classis East, October 7, 1953, when he said that if he could not say: "God promises every one of you, that, if you believe, you will be saved" then he saw that the very heart of the Gospel had been denied. And he opened a copy of the Bible and read Romans 10:9 to support his contention. I remember very distinctly, that, before a church full of people, I challenged Rev. B. Kok to prove exegetically that Romans 10:8 and 9 says: God promises every one of you, that, if you believe etc., when it says: The word of faith which we *preach* that if thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord . . . thou shalt be saved. Did Rev. Kok meet that challenge? No, he remained seated. Nor has he, up till this day, taken the pains to show on good exegetical grounds that "the word of faith, which we *preach*" can be rendered "the word of faith which is *promised*!"

Our point is not to cast aspersions on Rev. B. Kok. The Lord will judge His people and He will judge a righteous judgment. We are interested in keeping confusion and every evil work out of the church and from the pulpit; also the evil work of confusion in sound exegesis and the proper dogmatic and Confessional conclusions!

It is of importance that we be preachers who rightly divide the Word of truth and be workmen that need not be ashamed. And when we are to give "testimony" to brethren, to a whole Classis that has struggled to maintain clarity and orthodoxy in our terminology, then we must do more than cast a few hasty insinuations in the face of a Classis, and also do more than quote a few texts without showing with sound exegesis the relevancy of the passages quoted to the issue at

hand. There is always a great distance yet between the "testimony of Jesus Christ" and flinging a few nasty accusations over the shoulder after having walked out of the door and after having made decent and brotherly discussion impossible!

When a "Classis" gives "testimony" one expects "testimony" in which one hears: thus saith the Lord, and not simply a little "piece of one's mind." Before the former I tremble — no matter who speaks it. And would that God's people all were *prophets*. When Rev. A. Petter writes a good and sound article in Concordia, I weep that he is not wholly consistent in the matter of "conditions," but I rejoice greatly that he defends the position that God was not reconciled to us, but that God reconciled us to Himself. Then I hear the prophetic word. And I rejoice. But I cannot rejoice in a "testimony" which is so vague and pointless that it lacks *testimony*! I have no respect for a "testimony" that begins with a false assumption and, therefore, ends with a false conclusion, to wit, which identifies "preaching" and "promise!" This is neither Scriptural nor is it Confessional.

"Classis West" also refers to Canons II, as a Confessional reference for the Statement(s?) of Rev. De Wolf. This Canon reads as follows: "Moreover the *promise* of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ, crucified, shall not perish but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be *declared* and *published* to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the Gospel."

It is rather difficult to ascertain just what "Classis West" wished to prove with this article of the Canons.

Did they wish to demonstrate that the Statement of Rev. De Wolf, called the first Statement was not a "complete and concise statement of doctrine?" Speaking of these Statements of De Wolf they write ". . . . Though we freely admit that they are not a complete and concise statement of doctrine."

Not so easy to understand is it? And this is meant to be a "testimony" to us, is it not?

These statements are not a *complete* statement of doctrine. Does this mean, in the *mind* of the Classis and that of their Committee of preadvice, that not all the dogmas of the church are contained in these statements? One can hardly believe that a "Classis" would seriously write down such a truism! A compendium of doctrine they are evidently not. Well, they are "incomplete" statements of doctrine. Of what doctrine? Of that doctrine which they "meant" to express? Rev. M. Gritters, if asked: what does Classis here have in mind, would quite likely say: "I cannot interpret for Classis. I have not that power, I have not that right." Since the same "Classis" will never again meet there is no one that can ever tell me just what "Classis" meant. That throws me back upon simple deduction of the most obvious natural sense. Rev. De Wolf's Statement in re the *promise to all* was "not a complete statement of doctrine." More should have been said. I don't know whether "Classis West" here

quotes in context, interpolates. But at least that is their "testimony," or at least it is a *willing concession*.

Now I ask: Does "Classis West" desire that Classis East shall understand from Canons II, 5 that Statement I of De Wolf is an *incomplete* statement of Doctrine? Who shall help me? Who shall tell me what pertinent elements of doctrine are not stated and which should be incorporated to make it complete? Maybe Rev. De Wolf will do this himself sometime. He is, as I understand it, going to be a guardian of the truth?

In their "testimony" the aforementioned "Classis" also told Classis East that these Statements were "not concise." In other words: What these statements express could be expressed still more briefly. For note well that "concise" means: expressing much in brief form. Hence, these statements could express more in brief form. Here I have pondered the question whether the authors did not have in mind the term "precise" when they wrote "*concise*." But who shall say? The testimony is not expressed in very clear and *precise* language. And that makes it rather valueless, me thinks! But granted that the "Classis" meant that the statements are not complete and "precise" statements of doctrine then I ask: wherein are they not *strictly accurate*? Wherein have they *failed* (these "statements," you must know) to be observant of rule, of punctillious, absolute conformity to the Reformed Standards? Or did "Classis West" after all mean "concise?" Are they then too verbose?

When I look at the Statement I of De Wolf and compare it with Canons II, then I am certain that according to the analogy of faith it must be asserted that the "Statement" is not simply not "precise," accurate, but is repugnant to Canons II, 5. That "Classis West" will not say. Nor can they say that this "Statement" is clearly taught in Canons II, 5. So they are content(?) with the assertion that there are "numerous like statements in Scripture and the confessions." This assertion itself is an unproven contention.

I ask anyone to show the following:

1. That in Romans 10:9 and John 3:14-16 as well as in Canons II, 5 we have explicitly taught what is expressed in Statement I of Rev. De Wolf. Come, Rev. De Wolf, just begin with this matter lest this present generation be deprived of seeing one more dogmatical fiasco; yea, better still, that you may see that your Statements are repugnant to the standards.

2. That it is possible and correct and "precise" to identify "preaching" and "promise" both according to Scripture and Confessions.

3. That it is not the calling of a preacher to so preach the word that it is precise and accurate, but that he may preach so that his statements are "like" the confessions, rather than what is "clearly taught" in the confessions.

In the meantime I do not find my conscience bound by this "testimony" of "Classis West" but I shall adhere to the testimony of the Scriptures and the Confessions.

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Wanted: "Fraternal Discussion?"

When these lines and this edition of the Standard Bearer appear in the mailboxes of its subscribers, it will be almost two years since Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches took steps to rid our churches of and to defend our churches against the conditional theology of the Liberated. It was in May 1953 that Classis East condemned the heretical statements of Rev. De Wolf as Liberated — which they surely are — and as heretical and demanded of him that he do likewise.

Before Classis East could deal further with the case and pass judgment upon the action of the Consistory of First Church as to whether it acted properly in its execution of this advice of Classis; and before Classis East could decide which faction in First Church should be recognized as the legal Consistory; Classis West which — even according to the testimony under oath before Judge Taylor of Rev. Gritters, who was the Stated Clerk of Classis West — had no jurisdiction at all over *anyone* or any church in Classis East dared to meddle in the case of another Classis and decide (1) that Rev. De Wolf and the "elders" that supported him were the legal Consistory and (2) that the Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Rev. C. Hanko and the elders that supported them were outside the Protestant Reformed Churches. If you please! A Classis that has no jurisdiction over anyone in the other Classis dare to make a motion to decide who belongs to that Classis over which it has no jurisdiction at all. This is rebellion and hierarchy, pure and simple! It was one Classis lording it over another Classis! It was a group of Consistories lording it over a Consistory in another Classis.

All Classis West had the right to do was to protest this action of Classis East and/or of the Consistory of First Church to the next Synod; but to take a stand in the discipline case of another Consistory that is not in its own jurisdiction was an act of schism. And it is encouraging that, in private conversation at least, some of the office bearers in that group that performed this act of schism acknowledge that what they did in September of 1953 was a violation of the Church Order.

But now in one of the last copies of Concordia a report appears of a "Classical meeting" that these same schismatic churches held in Hull, Iowa, this past March. One of the matters treated there was a letter from our Synod calling the attention to these perpetrators of hierarchy and schism to the error of their deed of September of 1953. In this report they inform us that they will not reconsider their evil deed. Instead at the very end of this decision of theirs comes this amazing statement: "Finally, we urge you to open the door for fraternal discussion, and until you open such door, we call you back from your sinful way."

Hence the title to this article.

And the question mark on the end is due to the fact that we have very, very serious doubts that they desire such fraternal discussion at all. In the light of all their past actions as well as of this very decision, these words have no meaning at all except, perhaps, to try to soothe the hearts of those in their group that are seriously disturbed by the course of events and by the strange sounds they hear in the preaching, as well as the wholly unprotestant Reformed maneuvers of reaching out all over for men from other denominations to help them in their missionary projects and to teach them in their various society meetings.

Cannot even the blind see that their very unbrotherly treatment of this communication from our Synod is a denial of the fact that they truly want brotherly, fraternal discussion with us? They are so unbrotherly even in this report that they will not even address us as Protestant Reformed Churches and place the name in quotation marks. Instead Rev. Gritters who squirmed visibly on the witness stand in Pipestone, Minnesota and deliberately pleaded ignorance to defend himself when he was pressed exactly about the matters of which we wrote above (a little more of this later) states in this report that they received a communication from Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers. Come, come, Rev. Gritters, would it not be more brotherly to concede us at least the name in quotation marks?, at least until the courts take it away from you and say that you have been using it illegally? Would it not be more fraternal to concede us at least equal right to that name with yourself seeing that Judge Taylor, after your testimony, already ruled that we and not Rev. De Wolf — and therefore not you either — have the right to that name?

But then, perhaps that is the personal sentiment of the Stated Clerk of their Classis and not the decision of the Classis to call it the communication of the Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers. And we could let it go at that except that it is quite ironical that the man who was given a department in practical Christianity in Concordia and was always set forth as one who was on the "practical" rather than on the doctrinal side should practice such unbrotherly and unchristian actions himself.

And we might add, do not let anyone deceive you into thinking that those who defend and feel the need of conditional theology and of finding an admonition in every text of the Bible have a more holy and sinless life than is to be found in our churches where we preach the fundamental principles of Holy Writ of Unconditional election, Unconditional promises, Total depravity and Perseverance of the Saints. Just look around a bit amongst those who had to adopt conditional theology, so they said, because the Protestant Reformed truth makes a man careless and profane. Look at the walk of life of the congregations of these "practical men." Yea, you might even look where the malcontents have gone who left because *we* did not admonish them enough to suit them and because we could not find an admonition in every text. And then you might ask them to ask their minister(s) how a

Christmas or New Year's Holiday ought to be spent by office bearers in the Church of Jesus Christ. Must services be dispensed with so that one may go to the Rose Bowl game? And the proper application, the practical application, the you-must-do-this and you-must-do-that application to the message of the Birth of the Saviour, the admonition to be found in that glorious truth, is it that we should go home now and be sure to watch the prize fight on television?

Surely we can expect, can we not, that in those circles that had to get rid of the Protestant Reformed truth, those who became convinced that the Gospel of salvation by grace is not enough and that the Liberated have taught us that we need conditions besides it to have a well orbed gospel, that in such circles there will be a marked show at least of outward piety. Their walk of life ought to show that we need this "practical" preaching, this doctrine that does not make a man careless and profane. If we are to find walking In His Fear, we surely ought to find it abundantly then amongst these who now say that they want fraternal discussions with us and who say that if we do not open such a door they will call us back from our sinful way.

It can in the abstract be possible, tho not probable, that their Classis is not so unbrotherly as the Stated Clerk. Yet this very decision of that Classis shows that it is not so. In a very unbrotherly way it declared outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches men over whom it had no jurisdiction; and now it refuses to give an answer to the document that is sent to it to recall its attention to its error. It will not give an answer to the *arguments* of our Synod, yet it claims to desire fraternal discussion.

Discussion of what?

Are they actually willing to discuss those statements of Rev. De Wolf with us? Do they really doubt that they are as innocent as they at first maintained. If they are convinced that those statements are such pure Protestant Reformed truth, then what profit is there in discussing the matter further with us? We gave them our answer and stand in different documents we sent to them. They repeatedly refused to go into the matter and give us an answer to our arguments. Instead they say that it is the communication of one of our men, the Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers.

Is it the Church Political matter that they wish to discuss? Then before there can be any brotherly discussion of that matter they must confess to us their sin of having closed the door.

They closed the door!

How shall we open the door that they closed?

Consider once that our Church Order exactly makes arrangement for *brotherly discussion* of difference of opinion, whether they be of doctrinal matter or matters of a church political nature. And that arrangement, or door is the right to appeal to a broader ecclesiastical assembly.

But Classis West, which in September of 1953 did not approve of the action of Classis East and of First Church's Consistory, did not want to go through that door which the

Church Order provides. Classis West did not want to meet the members of Classis East in a brotherly discussion of these matters on the floor of the Synod.

Instead Classis West said to the Rev. H. Hoeksema, the Rev. C. Hanko and their elders: We put you outside the door of the Protestant Reformed Churches. We close the door of our denomination upon you.

And now they ask US to open the door for fraternal discussion?

It all started farther back than that.

With unbrotherly malice in their hearts, three consistories, those of Bellflower, California, Oskaloosa and Pella, Iowa sent instructions to the Classis to shut that door upon these brethren instead of to go through the door to the next Synod. And let no one be deceived! Evil documents such as those from these three Consistories are not born out of a desire for fraternal discussion. They were born out of a desire to cut off all possibility of discussion of this matter with us.

And Rev. Gritters, this man of "practical christianity" even permitted his Consistory to advise the Classis to usurp the power of the Synod and to appoint new professors in the Theological School in the place of the Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Rev. G. M. Ophoff. Rev. Gritters' conditional theology has done something to you. It has *not* kept you from being careless and profane. It has hardened you in your sin.

When you appeared before Judge Taylor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, you tried to be careful and to keep from profanity. You tried hard — and we respected you for it — to be truthful; and in doing so you caused Rev. De Wolf's case much harm. But in less than one year conditional theology — which is supposed to help us know what we must do and what we must not do — left its mark upon you so that before Judge Flinn in Pipestone, Minnesota — tho you were very, very uneasy on the witness stand — you suddenly did not know what Classis West did to the Rev. H. Hoeksema and to the Rev. C. Hanko. Your Consistory advised very definite steps in regard to these men. Classis West adopted your advice. You, as the Stated Clerk sent out the information to all the churches in our group and in yours; and yet when attorney Vander Kooi asked you what Classis West did to these brethren, you said that you did not know what Classis West did to these men, at least that you did not know what happened to these men according to the decision of Classis. When Mr. Vander Kooi would not let you go but pressed you hard for the truth, you know that you had to use the subterfuge of saying that you could not change the decision of the Classis. Before God in whose name you swore, you threw away the "you must, you must, you must" of conditional theology and revealed that you still despised that door for fraternal discussion which the Church Order prescribes.

As long as that is the attitude of the "Classis West" of which Rev. Gritters is Stated Clerk, it is folly to talk of fraternal discussion.

(Continued on page 384)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

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

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Before continuing with the quotation from Reinhold Seeberg, we wish to call attention to a part of the quotation from his writings which appeared in our preceding article. Writing on the three-day conference which was held at Carthage in June, 411, between the Donatists and the Catholics, he declares: "Both the historical and the doctrinal questions were here discussed. No reader of the proceedings of this assembly can escape the impression that the Donatists here appear in the light of embittered fanatics, incompetent but vain, adept in the most trifling legal quibbles, in questions of formality and in intrigue, always seeking to impede the progress of the proceedings." One cannot help but think of our history during the last few years when reading this appraisal of the meeting held at Carthage in the year, 411. Note what Seeberg declares concerning these Donatists, that they were adept in the most trifling legal quibbles, in questions of formality and in intrigue, always seeking to impede the progress of the proceedings. Think of our synodical meetings in the year, 1951, first of June of that year and later in September of the same year. Think of the tactics of the opposition, that they, without any proof, declared our Declaration of Principles to be illegal, failed to discuss in their Classis West the doctrinal aspect of this document, and therefore forced the synod to reconvene in September of the same year. Think of the legal quibbles which also occurred in the synodical sessions in that September meeting of Synod. Think of their deliberate evasion of the doctrinal questions involved. And, last but not least, please note what Seeberg writes concerning their intrigue. It would be very interesting to know of all the sessions "behind closed doors," how they plotted and discussed, how they worked in secret rather than in the open. Indeed, history has a habit of repeating itself.

Continuing now with the rest of the quotation from Seeberg, we quote the following: "But they (the Donatists — H.V.) are not so in the full sense of the word, since they lack catholicity and are only *quasi ecclesia*. They build a "ruinous wall" (Ez. 13:10). There is no other house beside the house of God. What they build is only a wall, and that not even resting upon the corner-stone: "your part is a quasi-church, but is not Catholic" (Opt. II. 10). They array "novelty against antiquity" (ib. II. 2), and cut themselves off from the root (III. 7). Among the Catholics, on the contrary, is found the house of God and the one Catholic church. It is the latter, because, according to the promise of Christ, it spreads abroad over all nations and is not confined "to a small part of

Africa, to the corner of a little region" (Opt. II. 1. 5; III. 2, 3). But it is also the *holy* church, and this not because of the character of the men belonging to it, but because it has the "symbol of the Trinity, the chair of Peter, the faith of believers, the salutary precepts of Christ" (ib. II. 9, 10; VII 2), and, above all, the sacraments: "whose holiness is derived from the sacraments, not measured by the loftiness of persons" (ib. II. 1). When the Donatists refuse to accord holiness to the church because some bishops at the time of the Diocletian persecution became traditors, they magnify what is irrelevant, if true, and what is, moreover, historically incorrect (gest. 1. 16, 55. Aug. brev. III. 19 ff.). There are, indeed, unholy persons in the church, but we are forbidden to cast these out before the time by the parables of the tares and of the net in which are gathered good and worthless fishes (gest. I. 18, 55. Opt. VII. 2). Those passages of Scripture which speak of a state of unmixed holiness in the church are to be understood as referring to her condition of final blessedness (Aug. brev. III. 9. Opt. II. 20). The church, therefore, as a whole, is holy in the present day by virtue of the divine agency exerted within its bounds in the sacraments, and it will one day be holy in all its members. The error of the Donatists consists in seeking to realize this final state before the time. It is certain that viewed dogmatically, the Catholic position was the more correct, yet its victory was not a clear step in advance. The ancient idea, that the people of God should consist of holy children of God, was forced another step backward." — end of quote from Seeberg.

Also this quotation from the same author may be of interest: "Augustine's doctrine of the church is a complicated structure. Ideas evolved in the conflict with the Donatists, the popular conception of the church, his own doctrine of grace, and certain Donatistic tendencies are here brought into combination. Augustine was influenced especially by Tyconius' conception of the church. This Donatist maintained, indeed, that the church is composed of saints only, but he also taught that empirically the church for the present embraces evil as well as good persons, and that this is so by divine ordering. True, this mixed condition of the church is, according to his view, soon to be terminated, and to this end Donatism is a beginning. As opposed to Donatism, Augustine thus formulates the point at issue: "The question is, indeed, discussed between us, Where is the church, whether among us or among them?" With Optatus, Augustine holds that the great church is the *one Catholic* church by virtue of the distribution of the latter throughout the whole world and by virtue of its connection with the church of the apostles, whose successors the bishops are. Outside of this one Catholic church, the body of Christ, there is no truth, no salvation. Separation from it is a *sacrilegium*. Only chaff is blown off by the fan; only pride and lack of love can impel a Christian to split the unity of the church. The declaration of Augustine is not, however, inspired by hierarchal motive, but rests ultimately upon the thought that it is only in the Catholic church that the Spirit and love are bestowed upon

man. But the saints are to be found only in the Catholic church. In this connection, Augustine championed the motto, *Extra ecceliam nulla salus* (outside of the church no salvation—H.V.), no less positively than Cyprian; but, at the same time—as a result of the different character of the opposition—displayed less of hierarchical interest than the latter.”—end of quote.

Having completed our quotations from Philip Schaff and Reinhold Seeberg, we may remark that in our discussion on the doctrine of the Church during this second period of the history of the Church, we have observed that, historically, the Church developed in external power and glory in the world, especially since the time of Constantine the Great. It is his accession to the throne of emperor over the Roman Empire which marks the end of the age of persecution for the Church of Christ and which inaugurated an entirely new period for the Church in which it attained unto equality before the law with all other religions. The Church began to assume more and more the form of a kingdom of this world. This became especially true during the papacy.

Besides discussing the Church from the viewpoint of its historical manifestation in the midst of the world, we also began our discussion on the doctrine of the Church during this second period. And we called attention to the fact that, as far as the Church visible is concerned as such, this historical period was characterized by a controversy about the purity of the Church and the question of Church discipline between the Donatists and the Church Catholic whose view was represented and championed by Augustine. This learned Church Father maintained, over against the Donatists who held that the visible church must be pure, that the true distinguishing marks of the Church are: Catholicity (the true Church is spread through all the lands) and apostolic connections (connections with churches founded by the apostles). We also noted that Augustine also recognized and advocated the necessity of Christian discipline.

We are now ready to call attention to another phase of the doctrine of the Church during this second period, namely the importance of membership in this true church. In connection with this it might be well to quote Articles 27-29 of our Confession of Faith which have bearing on this question. Art. 27 reads as follows: “Of the Catholic Christian Church. We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is an holy congregation, of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost. This Church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God, against the rage of the whole world; though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men, to be reduced to nothing: as during the perilous reign of Ahab, the Lord reserved unto Him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal. Furthermore, this holy Church

is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit.” What a beautiful expression of faith! Here we confess the Catholic, or universal Christian Church, the Church of the elect, the true Christian believers, not limited or bound, but as spread over the whole world, embracing all lands and peoples.

In Art. 28 the Church confesses that every one is bound to join himself to the true Church as follows: “We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and that out of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite himself with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them. And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God hath established it, even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it, yea, though they should suffer death or any other corporal punishment. Therefore all those, who separate themselves from the same, or do not join themselves to it, act contrary to the ordinances of God.” In this article the Church confesses that it is our duty to join ourselves to the true Church. This implies, we understand, that the true Church reveals itself in the midst of the world; otherwise it would be quite impossible for anyone to join himself to it. This also implies that the true Church, as it reveals itself in the midst of the world, is not a perfect church, and that for the simple reason that no saint reveals himself as perfect in the midst of the world. And it seems to me that this article also emphasizes that, as far as the visible church is concerned, there is but one true Church, although it must be maintained that all other churches are not equally false and have not departed equally far from the truth. And, of course, neither does Art. 28 affirm that the people of God are limited only to one church and that there are no people of God in other churches.

H.V.

IN MEMORIAM

The English Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, hereby wishes to express its sympathy to its fellow member, Donald Rietema and family, in the loss of his brother,

MR. BENJAMIN RIETEMA

Psalm 87:2: “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”

G. M. Ophoff, President
R. Teitsma, Secretary

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 17 (cont.)

The three Netherlands professors, Polyander, Thysius, and Walleus, offer the following opinion over against the Arminian proposition that there is neither election nor reprobation of young children:

„Verre verscheiden is de conditie van die jonge kinderen, die geboren worden van ouders, zijnde in het verbond, en van andere jonge kinderen, die geboren worden van ouders, niet zijnde in het verbond; dewijl de Schriftuur deze laatsten verklaart onrein te zijn, en vervreemd van Christus en het verbond der genade.” Then, after quoting from Scripture I Cor. 7:14, Gal. 2:15, Eph. 2:12, Gen. 17:7, Matt. 19:14, and Acts 2:39, they conclude as follows: „Uit welke plaatsen wij besluiten, dat de kinderen der geloovigen, stervende in hunne kindsheid, onder de uitverkorenen moeten gerekend worden, dewijl zij genadiglijk van God uit dit leven verlost worden, eer zij de voorwaarden zijns verbonds verbroken hebben. Doch aangaande de kinderen der ongeloovigen, zijnde buiten de Gemeente Gods gesteld, dezelve achten wij, dat men behoore Gods oordeel bevolen te laten. Want diegenen, die buiten zijn, zal God oordeelen, I Cor. 5:13.”

Notice again that this opinion makes a sharp distinction between children of covenant parents and children of non-covenant parents. Notice, further, that while the three professors do indeed say that children of believers who die in infancy ought to *reckoned* among the elect, they do not flatly claim that such children are actually elect. And notice the ground: God has delivered them out of this life before they have broken the conditions of His covenant. And observe, finally, that they do not even make a flat statement about the children of unbelievers: the judgment of them must be left to God. The opinion is cautious, therefore, to the point of being non-committal, and is for that reason, perhaps, weak.

Sybrandus Lubbertus expressed agreement with the above opinion, but also produced his own opinion, which in turn was subscribed by the three professors. Over against the unscriptural proposition of the Arminians that “there is no election and no reprobation of small young children,” he places the proposition that there is an election and reprobation of such children. And as proof he offers the following: „Dit punt bewijst de Schriftuur, Rom. 9:7. Noch omdat zij Abrahams zaad zijn, zijn zij allen kinderen; en vs. 6. Want zij zijn niet allen Israel, die uit den vader Israel zijn. Daarenboven, tot de jonge kleine kinderen der Gemeente behoort

de belofte, Hand. 2:39. Ulieden is de belofte gedaan en uwen kinderen. Aan de anderen, die buiten de Gemeente zijn, is geene belofte gedaan.”

This opinion of Lubbertus, though it still lacks the desired conciseness, nevertheless seems to make a distinction even among children who are born of covenant parents. This at least seems to be the intent of the quotation from Romans 9. And in this respect it is an improvement over the opinion of the three professors.

That eminent supralapsarian, Franciscus Gomarus, discusses this subject in connection with both election and reprobation. In his treatment of election he presents the following unscriptural proposition: „14. Geen jonge kinderen komt de verkiezing toe, overmits zij geen voorgezien geloof hebben. Grevinch. tegen Ames. p. 150.” And his own proposition is as follows: „14. De jonge kinderen dergenen, die in het verbond Gods zijn door Christus, en dergenen, die ware geloovigen zijn, dezelve gelooven wij Godvruchtelijk, dat mede verkoren zijn, indien zij voor het gebruik der rede komen the sterven, naar uitwijzen van het formulier des verbonds: Ik ben uw God en uw zaads God; Gen. 17, en Hand. 2:39. Doch, indien ze to het gebruik der rede komen, zoo bekennen wij die alleen uitverkorenen te zijn, die in Christus gelooven, want deze alleen worden naar het Evangelie behouden.”

He emphasizes, therefore, that he speaks only of children of “true believers.” And he makes a distinction between those who die before they come to the use of their understanding, and those who do not. Evidently he wants it clearly understood also that he does not class all children of believers as elect.

Under his treatment of reprobation Gomarus presents the following: „Want om de oorspronkelijke zonde alleen wordt niemand verworpen, niemand verdoemd. En derhalve, zoo is er gansch geene verwerping der jonge kleine kinderen. Grevinch. tegen Ames. 142, 145, 150; Epis. Thes. p. 28.” Over against this unscriptural proposition he gives his own: „Want ook alleen om de oorspronkelijke zonde is de verdoemenis, dewelke de bezoldiging is van allerlei zonde, zelfs ook van die, welke geene dadelijke zonde is; Rom. 5:12, 14, 21. En derhalve zijn de kleine, jonge kinderen der ongeloovigen, die vreemd zijn van het verbond Gods, zijnde niet wedergeboren, van nature kinderen des toorns, zonder Christus, zonder hoop, zonder God; Ef. 2:3, 12; gelijk ook in den zondvloed de jonge kinderen van de godloozen der wereld, en ook in den gemeenen brand van Sodom de jonge kinderen van de godlooze Sodomieten vergaan zijn, en samen met de ouderen de gramschap Gods rechtvaardiglijk onderworpen zijn geworden; II Pet. 2:5, 6.” Cf. Proposition 7 under his treatment of reprobation.

The above, of course, speaks only of a reprobation of the children of unbelieving parents.

The delegates from the Particular Synod of South Holland, in their fourth proposition under reprobation, state their opinion as follows: „Dat alle de jonge kinderen, overmits de

erfzonde, de eeuwige verdoemenis onderworpen zijn, en dat de verwerping zelfs in de jonge kinderen der geloovigen, bij hun leven en opwassen plaats hebbe; houden zij, dat de H. Schriftuur en de bevinding klaarlijk genoeg betuigen. Maar of dezelve ook plaats hebbe in de jonge kinderen der geloovigen, stervende in hunne jonge sprakeloze kindsheid, zonder werkelijke zonden, daarvan meenen zij, dat men niet nieuwsgieriglijk hebbe te onderzoeken; maar aangezien er getuigenissen der H. Schriftuur zijn, dewelke den geloovigen ouderen alle oorzaak afsnijden van te twijfelen van de verkiezing, en zaligheid hunner jonge kinderen, zoo meenen zij, dat men darmede behoore gerust and tevreden te zijn; gelijk daar zijn, Gen. 17:7; Matth. 19:14; Hand. 2:39; I Cor. 7:14; en diergelijke.”

This is one of the most pointed opinions offered at the Synod. And it is clear from the fact that the opinion warns against curious or inquisitive prying into this question that the rest of the opinion does not by any means intend to say that there are objective grounds for believing parents to think that all their children who die in infancy (note: before the age of speech) are elect. If this were the case, then there would be an irreconcilable conflict in this opinion of the South Hollanders.

From Utrecht came the following opinion on the subject: „Aangaande het onderste punt hunner leering; gevoegd achter hunne onschriftmatige stellingen (This is the proposition that there is neither election nor reprobation of little children. H.C.H.); dat datzelve strijdig zij tegen de H. Schriftuur blijkt daaruit, overmits de Apostel zegt: Als de kinderen nog niet geboren waren, eer zij iets goeds of kwaads gedaan hadden, enz. opdat het voornemen Gods, 't welk naar de verkiezing is, vast bleve. Indien daar geene verkiezing is van de jonge kinderen, zoo is voor dezelve ook geen belofte der zaligheid noch zaligheid. Want de zaligheid, en de belofte er van, is nergens anders uit, dan uit de verkiezing ter zaligheid. Nu aan de jonge kinderen behoort de belofte. Ik ben uw God en uws zaads God. Ulieden en uwen kinderen, is de belofte gedaan, Uwe kinderen zijn heilig. En hun behoort ook de zaligheid. Laat ze tot Mij komen, want het Rijk der Hemelen behoort hun toe. Derhalve, enz.

„Indien de verkiezing behoort tot de jonge kinderen, zoo behoort ook tot de jonge kinderen de verwerping; zulks bewijst de verwerping van Ezau, zijnde een jong kind, ja nog niet geboren. Welk voorbeeld de Apostel voorbrengt, om daarmee de algemeene leer van de verwerping Gods te bewijzen, nemende zijn gevolg van een bijzonder voorbeeld tot bewijs van de waarheid derzelve in 't algemeen; gelijkterwijz hij ook de leer van de verkiezing Gods bevestigt met het voorbeeld van Jakob, mede zijnde nog een jong kind, en alsnog niet geboren.”

Here again, no distinction is mentioned between children who die in infancy and children who live to maturity. The strength of this opinion, however, is in the fact that it points to a concrete case of election and reprobation of little children, in fact of children not yet born, both of which were

children of believers. And it is very evident that the delegates from Utrecht saw that birth and age actually have no effect on election and reprobation.

The opinion of the delegates from Overijssel adds nothing to those we have already quoted. We will close our rather lengthy quotation of these opinions by citing that of the delegates from Drente:

„Het vierde lid van deze beschrijving is, dat het besluit van de verwerping niet alleen is gemeen, maar dat het voornamelijk ook bijzonder is van zekere en bijzondere personen, welker getal Gode bekend is; Rom. 9. Zoo valt dan onder den voet de voorgaande tegenleer: De verwerping is, of onbepaald enz.; Thes. 3, van de Verwerp. Alhier staan ons van de jonge kinderen (onder dewelke wij ook de volwassenden, die van het begin huns levens buiten hun verstand geweest zijn, vervatten) eenige dingen te zeggen, namelijk van die jonge kinderen, die in hunne kindsheid sterven.

„1. De jonge kinderen der ongeloovigen, stervende in hunne kindsheid, oordeelen wij verworpen te zijn; I Cor. 7; Rom. 11. Zoo valt dan daar henen die tegenleer: 1. De Heidenen zullen zalig worden, als zij gebruiken het goede licht van hunne rede; 2. Niemand wordt verdoemd om de erfzonde.

„Maar anders is de zaak gelegen met de jonge kinderen der geloovigen, stervende in hun kindsheid; van dewelke wij deze dingen zeggen:

„1. De jonge kinderen der geloovigen alhoewel zij in hunne kindsheid komen te sterven, kunnen nochtans rechtvaardiglijk van God verworpen worden, en in hunne ellende gelaten worden, indien God zijn recht wilde gebruiken. De bewijzen hiervan staan in Artikel 5. Dewijl Hij het gansche menschelijk geslacht in den val had kunnen laten, indien het Hem alzoo liefd had; Rom. 9.

„2. Ondertusschen nochtans zoo kunnen de geloovige ouderen, van de zaligheid van hunne zoodanige jonge kinderen, eene zekere hoop hebben. Want daar wordt in de Schriftuur niet gelezen, dat zoodanige ooit verworpen zijn geweest. Maar daarentegen betuigt dezelfde Schriftuur van de goede genegenheid Gods jegens zoodanige: Gen. 17:7; Matth. 19:14; Hand. 2:39. Uit dat alles, wat van deze zaak gesproken is, blijkt de valscheheid van de navolgende tegenleer:

„De jonge kinderen zijn verworpen, noch verkoren.”
Cf. Propositions 18 and 19. H.C.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The members of the Ladies' and the Men's Societies of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, express their sincere sympathy to their fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Van Kampen, and their family, in the recent home-going of Mrs. Van Kampen's mother,

MRS. PLEUNE ROOBOL

May the Word of God be a comfort to them in their present need. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 115:16).

The Ladies' Aid Society of Holland, Mich.
The Men's Society of Holland, Mich.

DECENCY and ORDER

The Schools

"The Consistories shall see to it that there are good christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant." — Art. 21.

In connection with this article of the church order and the subject of christian schools in general, a number of important questions will have to be considered. There are, for example, such matters as the following: What constitutes a good christian school? What is the aim of christian instruction? What necessitates the establishment of christian schools? Whose is the task and duty to do so? What is the relation between the church and the school? What is parental responsibility? What is meant by the demands of the covenant? These and other related matters will occupy our attention as we try to decipher the twenty-first article of our church order which, at first glance, would seem to favor the idea of parochial christian education which, for reasons which will later become apparent, we cannot approve. If this is so, we seriously question whether this article can stand in the light of Scripture and the Biblical conception of the covenant.

The Original Article 21

The present reading of Article 21 is the product of the revision of 1914 and is not materially the same as the article that appeared in the original Church Order of 1618-19. Circumstances in our country affecting the church and the schools are quite different from those of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. These differences necessitate a change as far as the subject matter of this article is concerned.

Back in the years following the Reformation, the idea of parental christian school societies and free parentally controlled christian schools was a thing unheard of. This is understandable if we bear in mind the political-ecclesiastical situation as well as the fact that in Reformed circles the doctrine of the Covenant was not yet developed and did not occupy the important place in the conception of the church which it does today. Later we will show that this conception is very fundamental to a correct understanding of christian education. Naturally then, one's covenant view determines many things and by no means the least of these is the question as to whose responsibility it is to establish and maintain good christian schools.

Following the Reformation the church and state for some time were one. The state did not, as today, assume an attitude of so-called neutrality toward religion and the matters of the church but it was very definitely committed to either the Roman Catholic Church or to the faith of Protestantism. Furthermore, the governments also sponsored and supported both religion and education. The salaries of both the minis-

ters and the school teachers were paid by the state. In the Netherlands the Reformed Churches enjoyed this favor of the government and, consequently, the day schools were also Reformed and christian because much of the operation and supervision of the schools was left to the churches by the government.

With these conditions the Reformed Churches acquiesced. They urged the state to establish and maintain good schools where the children might receive instruction in the service and fear of the Lord for they realized deeply the importance of sound training for the youth. Although, as we wrote, they did not as yet conceive of the idea of parentally controlled schools, they did, through their Synods, advise consistories in this matter and urged them to action. Consistories were advised to urge the state to provide good christian educational facilities everywhere. In 1574 the Synod ruled that consistories should see to it that there were competent teachers who were not only able to instruct in language and other things but who could also teach the doctrine of the truth. And the ministers in various places were instructed to see to it that in every place school teachers were appointed, to request the government to provide good salaries and to ask the government's cooperation in compelling the teachers to subscribe to the confession of faith and submit to the government of the church.

Later Synods followed this same pattern so that in 1618-19 the Synod of Dordrecht adopted what had already been decided by the Synod's Gravenhage in 1586 and what was originally the twenty-first article of our church order. Translated freely, it read as follows:

"Everywhere consistories shall see to it, that there are good schoolmasters who shall not only instruct the children in reading, writing, languages, and the liberal arts, but likewise in godliness and in the Catechism."

In the Holland language this is: „De Kerkeraden zullen alomme toezien, dat er goede schoolmeesters zijn, die niet alleen de kinderen leeren lezen, schrijven, spreken, en vrije kunsten, maar ook dezelve in godzaligheid en in den Catechismus onderwijzen."

Our present article is quite a change from the original reading. It is plain that the twenty-first article historically did not express nor imply that it was the duty of consistories to appoint school teachers but only that they shall exert influence upon the state to appoint teachers who could be trusted with the instruction of the children. The consistories, as also today, surely had an interest in the education of the children but they had no jurisdiction over the schools. They were then state institutions, maintained and governed by the state even though the latter often used the churches as an intermediary agency to promote the affairs of the school. Both church and state at this time were under governmental control, however right or wrong that may have been.

It is also of interest to note here that the Heidelberg Catechism was then taught in the schools. The Heidelberg Catechism was, of course, originally designed as a text book

and also used for that purpose. In the state schools the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Institution of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, Morning and Evening Prayers Before and After Meals, were also taught. Apart now from the question as to whether all of these things properly have a place in the school, we must notice the vast difference between the State Schools then and those of our own land in the present day in which all that pertains to God is banned by order of our highest court in order that the State may assume a strict neutral (??) position with respect to all matters religious. These differences are too great to pass by unnoticed and, furthermore, it is, in part at least, these differences that brought about our present system of christian schools.

If it is asked how such differences can be explained, we must point out as one thing, the fruits of the French Revolution which in effect brought about the separation of church and state. When this occurred in the Netherlands, the church lost the controlling hand which she once had in the schools and the schools then soon became the instrument through which the principles of the atheistic French Revolution were inculcated into the youth. To this, especially the parents of Reformed persuasion, objected and these protests materialized in the formation of separate schools under the parental-society system. This system has also found its way into this country so that our christian schools today are established, maintained and operated by free societies which, in distinction from the schools of former times, are free from state control and, in distinction from the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and other systems, are free from church control. Our schools are not parochial in character nor should they be. Although the church most definitely has a deep interest in and is vitally concerned about the christian school, the latter is not under the jurisdiction of the former. Of the relation between these two we must write later. Here, in light of the foregoing, it must be evident why Article 21, under the then prevailing circumstances was formulated as it was and, further, why under our present system of free-societies, the change in formulation is necessary.

Good Christian Schools

"Consistories shall see to it that there are good christian schools"

This is a duty often left unattended by consistories. Frequently the presence of "a" christian school in a community is regarded as satisfactory irrespective of the question as to whether or not that school measures up to the standard of "good." That matter is not interrogated. For many years our consistories have been weak with regard to this matter and the consequences of this have also become apparent. If this matter were more seriously investigated some very alarming revelations could be made concerning the christian schools where many of our Protestant Reformed children are still instructed five days out of the week.

What then constitutes a "good" christian school?

A school is not good simply because it gives instruction in the Bible, opens and closes its daily sessions with prayer, teaches the children a few religious songs and, in general, is characterized by a religious atmosphere. Neither is a school good simply because its physical plant measures up to certain requirements or because its enrollment puts it in the above average class or because it is able to produce a winning ball club in the field of competitive sports. Such seems to be more and more the prevailing opinion in our day. If a school does not have an attractive building, including a massive gymnasium, is not recognized for its physical education achievements, does not have a class A or B enrollment, etc., it is frowned upon. But these things do not make a school, however desirable and appealing they may be. Next time, D.V., we will continue to narrate that which is essential to a good christian school.

G.V.d.B.

50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 17th our beloved parents,

MR. and MRS. ISAAC KORHORN

hope to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We thank and praise our heavenly God and Father with them for having kept them and sustained them through the years. It is our earnest hope and prayer that the Lord may grant them His peace in their remaining years.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Veenstra
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Korhorn
Mr. and Mrs. Bert Korhorn
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Velthouse
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bloem.
Twenty-nine Grandchildren
Three Great-grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 26 our dear parents,

MR. and MRS. HENRY H. KUIPER

celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our covenant Father for having spared them for each other and for us these many years. Our prayer is that God may bless them further in the way that lies ahead, and that their remaining time together be filled with the peace which alone can be found in Him.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kuiper
Miss Elsie Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Petroelje
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Brunink
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Ploughman
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kuiper, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kuiper
and 24 grandchildren.

1534 Godfrey Ave., S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

ALL AROUND US

In A New Garb.

This is the time of the year when all creation appears in a new garb. In harmony with this people, especially of the feminine sex, choose to make their appearance in new apparel some of which may create admiration, some disgust, and some even stimulate laughter.

It is not our intention in this article to reflect on the external finery with which God has clothed His creation with efflorescent beauty, nor did we desire to comment on the pagentry of fashion as it is exemplified in the new clothing seen at this season of the year. Rather we speak of the new appearance of two religious magazines which have most recently made their debut. They are "torch and trumpet" and "the Reformed Guardian," the latter being a combination of what used to be called "Concordia" and a small pamphlet which came into existence after the split in the Protestant Reformed Churches called "the Reformed Guardian."

When "torch and trumpet" arrived we were not a little set back with its appearance. I used to receive a most impressive looking magazine wrapped in an exclusive envelope that smelled fresh with the printer's ink. Now I received a much smaller appearing magazine wrinkled and besmeared with some substance evidently contacted in the mailing process. The cover appearance, in my opinion, has lost its expensive and exclusive shine. Frankly, because I did not know this change was coming, I at first thought the latest issue of "torch and trumpet" was just another piece of advertising which I am generally inclined to throw in the waste-basket without a perusal. That was my first reaction on seeing the April, 1955, issue of this periodical.

However, much of my first reaction wore away when I opened the magazine and learned what had happened and what is expected of this paper in the future. In an opening article entitled: "Introducing . . . A new torch and trumpet" we are informed of the reason for the new appearance as well as of some rather drastic changes in its publication. One of the most drastic changes pertains to the increased number of issues that is planned for this paper. This I believe is a considerable improvement. Formerly we received only six issues per year. Now the plan is to give ten issues per annum. This should make the periodical to be more up-to-date as to contents and at the same time keep the magazine more consciously before the eye of the reading public.

As to its contents, there will be no drastic change except perhaps that there will be a little more variety both of subjects and writers. We will not take the time to comment on the contents of the present issue. We only promise, the Lord willing, to keep our readers informed as to future articles appearing in this magazine that merit comment. There is, however, a personal disappointment we could register which

is evoked by the neglect of what we believed was an original plan of the editorial staff, namely, to publicize in a series of articles what Reformed theologians of the past and present have to say on the matter of "common grace." I believe we were told at one time that such a series would be forthcoming. We have to-date seen only two or three such articles. Naturally we are wondering what has happened to the rest. Did the staff get cold feet? Did so much criticism stream in to the editor's desk that a halt was called to these future articles? Or does the article of a series begun by H. Evan Runner on "The Christian and the World" which proposes to be a reflection on Kuyper's *Gemeene Gratie* take its place? I'm sure several readers of the *Standard Bearer* were encouraged to subscribe to "torch and trumpet" on the grounds of this promise. I leave this question with the staff of "torch and trumpet": Whatever happened to the article of the Rev. H. Hoeksema your staff requested to write and which you received for publication long ago?

As was said, old "Concordia" has been combined with the Reformed Guardian and in a new garb this paper makes its first appearance under the name of the latter. We are informed that almost all of our people were sent a copy of this newly garbed magazine whether they were subscribers to Concordia or not. Some even received two copies. None was sent to my home. But a friend saw to it that I could peruse this latest edition.

"Concordia" and the little pamphlet called "The Reformed Guardian" have had their day. One wonders how long the new Reformed Guardian will continue. I predict it will last no longer than its predecessors.

One must admit that in outward appearance the new garb is much more attractive than the two papers of which it is the combination. As to contents, however, it is no improvement over the papers issued by this schismatic group in the past.

Our most serious criticism of this paper is the lying banner under which it sets out. On page 2, in the right-hand corner, at the bottom of the page appears in a little space the following:

"The Reformed Guardian
(Successor to Concordia)

Box M-931

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Published by

The Reformed Guardian Publishing Assn.

(Rev. H. De Wolf, Pres.)

This magazine is dedicated to disseminate, guard and apply the Reformed Principles of Faith as set forth in the Scriptures, summarized in the Reformed Standards, and maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches of America."

The lie, of course, is contained in the statement "main-

tained by the Protestant Reformed Churches of America." The truth is that this group that sponsors this magazine is neither "Church," nor "Protestant Reformed." All they are is a schismatic group which supports the heresy of the Rev. H. De Wolf. The only periodicals in the world that are dedicated "to disseminate, guard and apply the Reformed Principles of Faith as set forth in the Scriptures, summarized in the Reformed Standards and maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches of America" are the Standard Bearer and Beacon Lights. The group that sponsors the magazine with a new garb "The Reformed Guardian" is guilty of gross misrepresentation.

Dividing Synodical Funds and Properties.

On the last page of the newly garbed Reformed Guardian appears a report of the so-called Classis East of the schismatic group of which the Rev. J. Blankespoor is the Stated Clerk.

In this report appears three overtures this group proposes to present to what is called their forthcoming Synod. The second of which reads as follows: "In the second overture First Church proposes to Synod to approach the brethren who left us regarding the dividing of the Synodical Funds and properties of our churches before the 'split'. Classis so decided."

When I read this paragraph, immediately two questions arose in my mind: Which brethren left whom? And, Why is the word "split" in quotation marks? The word "brethren" evidently refers to us. But I am not aware that we left anybody. We are still in tact, and we are still the same churches we were from the beginning. I am aware that during the years many individuals left our Protestant Reformed Churches either to return as "a sow to her wallowing in the mire," or to disappear entirely from the church scene. I am also aware that most recently a large segment of the people that once lived with us under one ecclesiastical roof departed from us by schismatic action. But it is news to me that we left anyone. This expression surely needs some clarification.

As to that word "split" that appears in quotation marks, do these schismatic members of this group contend thereby that actually there has been no split in the ranks, and the term in quotation marks is considered by them a misnomer? Or, does the term only refer to a date in the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches when something happened that caused some to go one way and others another? I'm just a little curious to know exactly what is meant.

More important, however, is the meaning of this overture. The reader must understand that the "Synodical Funds and properties" to which this overture refers are the funds belonging to the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches which were frozen shortly after the split. These include the Mission and Theological School Funds, among others, in which there were considerable amounts. Also the properties refer to the home of the missionary now occupied by a schismatic minister who once served as our missionary, and

the mission station wagon, plus the archives and minute books of Synod which the Rev. J. Howerzyl, who once was Stated Clerk, has refused to turn over to us.

Most peculiar is the fact that this overture comes from the De Wolf group which is contesting in the State Supreme Court the decision rendered by Judge Thaddeus Taylor in favor of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids of which the Revs. H. Hoeksema and C. Hanko are the pastors. According to the honorable Judge the name and properties rightfully belong to the last named Church, and not to the De Wolf faction. In spite of this decision they have foolishly proceeded to appeal. This surely cannot be because they were convinced that the decision of Judge Taylor was in error. As I see it, it is another attempt to stall for time, and in the meantime to live for nothing on the premises that rightfully belong to the First Protestant Reformed Church of which the Revs. Hoeksema and Hanko are the pastors. Not satisfied with this mis-conduct, they now propose also to lay their hands on Synodical funds and properties that also entirely rightfully belong to the churches that remained faithful to our Protestant Reformed principles.

Of course, we shall have to admit that they are outwardly consistent. For they unlawfully confiscate the name Protestant Reformed. And if that were truly their name they should have claim not only to part but all of the funds and properties. But whether they are the Protestant Reformed Churches of America, it seems to me, will have to be determined also by the courts. It is our conviction that when this latter shall be decided the schismatic group will have nothing but a bad name and a lost cause. In the meantime we stand amazed at the gall these schismatic leaders display. They not only take over the church buildings changing their locks so as to exclude us from their use, but they confiscate also our mission home and use it for a parsonage for one of their schismatic ministers who is serving a group that has no connection whatever with our mission work. They lay claim to and use our mission station wagon. And now seek to lay their hands also on our funds. How bad can they get?

M.S.

Western Ladies Aid League

Once again we had the God-given privilege of congregating as Christian Mothers of the Protestant Reformed Churches at the Western Ladies Aid League, held at Edgerton, Minn., April 13th.

We sang some well chosen Psalter Nos. Then our president, Mrs. H. Veldman, opened with a word of prayer and welcome after which she read Ephesians 6:1-9.

The minutes of our previous meetings were read and accepted as read. The treasurer also gave the financial report. We then had our annual voting. Mrs. Heys was chosen to replace Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema as vice-president and Mrs. Clarence Klein to replace Mrs. J. Blankespoor as treasurer.

Mrs. Veldman then introduced the speaker of the day, Rev. Heys, who spoke a few very practical words on the theme, "Christian Discipline in the Christian Home." He very clearly explained what discipline is—What Christian discipline is in the home in distinction from the church. Discipline applied by a Christian as only a believer can train a child. Of course, therefore we should have *Protestant Reformed Schools*. Also the *home* must be Christian and discipline must be applied in a Christian way. Discipline must have for its purpose—Christian training—training our children to behave as "disciples of Christ."

Necessity of it is *great*. Our children are conceived and born in sin—total depravity—and have to be taught and tained the way of Christ because of sin. This fast living pace makes the necessity much greater in these days and so—they must be instructed to flee from sin and also punished and disciplined. We *must* discipline because God gives us a calling. Each time we receive a child from God, He gives us a calling to provide for its natural needs, but also to train and discipline him as a Christian child.

How shall we do it? What does scripture say about Christian discipline? We must not spare the rod for then we spoil the child. While disciplining there is room for some praise—but just a small amount of it—but consists mostly of Christian punishment. The child must understand he's being punished because he must not walk in sin but as a child of God in God's holy way—not ours. We must not be afraid to use the rod. God certainly did when His people sinned. He applied the rod in various forms such as plagues, wars, etc. The importance of Christian discipline in the home is great, for the home is a basic unity and it should be applied to the child firstly and intimately in the home. The way Christian discipline is applied is exactly the way God gives us covenant joy as parents in our child as God's seed.

Our Doon Ladies favored us with a musical trio.

We then had our "Question Hour" led by Rev. H. Veldman. He very capably answered some questions which were sent in, and then the audience had an opportunity to ask questions. The ladies took advantage of the opportunity which made it very interesting.

Our Hull ladies then rendered us a musical reading pertaining to Easter, which was very well received.

We took up a collection which was given to the Standard Bearer and to Beacon Lights.

Sang a Psalter No. and our president Mrs. H. Veldman closed with prayer.

We then enjoyed a delicious hot lunch prepared by our Edgerton ladies and a social hour, after which we again returned to our individual homes with much thankfulness in our hearts to our gracious God for another spiritually filled day of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. Clarence Klein, reporter.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 375)

Fraternal discussion is possible. Make no mistake about that.

And fraternal discussion of the doctrinal and political aspects of the matters which brought about this separation in our churches we heartily welcome. If it could be realized, we would rejoice in it.

But then, first of all, those who closed the door, "Classis West" of which Rev. Gritters is the Stated Clerk must confess the evil they committed in closing the door and of dealing so unbrotherly with Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches and with the Consistory of First Church.

That is dealing with the matter In His Fear.

If they will not do this, they do not sincerely desire fraternal discussion. There can be no other way.

Let *them* now open the door by confessing their error.

J.A.H.

PRAISE THE LORD, YE LANDS

Praise the Lord, ye lands;
Nations, clap your hands;
Shout aloud to God
Spread His fame abroad;
Praise Him loud and long
With a triumph song;
Bow as ye draw nigh,
For the Lord Most High,
Terrible is He
In His dignity;
And His kingdom's girth
Circles all the earth.

God has gone on high
With a joyful cry;
Hosts with trumpet sound
Make His praise abound;
Sing ye praise to God,
Tell His fame abroad,
Take a psalm and shout,
Let His praise ring out,
Lift your voice and sing
Glory to our King;
He is Lord of earth,
Magnify His worth.

Psalm 47:1, 2