Movies Go To Church

BY JEANETTE IPEMA — TINLEY PARK, ILL.

You have probably read this article in a recent issue of This Week magazine.

Have you noticed how they are trying to draw crowds into the churches? They claimed that this was one of the most effective methods of increasing church attendance. There has to be something which can serve to keep the young folks together. Hence they bring the movies into church and the Bible into the movies.

Rev. Mr. Friedrich began this movement. He said that if men did not want Bible films in the theatres he would make them for the churches. As result of this experiment, Rev. Friedrich continues to tell us, church attendance has gained so much that almost half the nation has become regular in church service. This does not include the Sunday School. He says, and in the Sunday School we find the most avid movie fans.

The most popular of his pictures has been: "Who is my Neighbor?" as well as, "The Prodigal Son". and not to forget such successful ones as. "A Voice in the Wilderness" and "A Woman to Remember".

He tells us of a certain church which complained because of its poor attendance at the Sunday night service, because the movies were drawing the crowds. The solution was: to put movies in church. And it has worked wonders. He goes on to say he would not want to mention the name of the actors or actresses, since people's feelings might be shocked somewhat to see an actor play the part of a gangster on Saturday night and the part of an Apostle on Sunday.

These movies are made right where the worldly movies are made.

As an illustration of what this new method will do for church attendance it was shown that there was an increase from three hundred to one thousand per cent. Surely that is a noticeable increase.

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Now for our criticism on this matter.

If the quality of the church service has to be improved by the
showing of pictures and the attendance has to be stepped up by means of these attractions, and if Bible pictures have to take the place of the preaching of the Gospel, things have come to a sad end.

And then, shall worldly people take the place of saints? Shall worldly people take the place of Jesus or Mary, and try to act out their part? Perhaps Hedy Lamar attempting to take the place of the Virgin Mary. Can't you see how wrong that is? After they make their picture they go out and mock the Bible, which makes it all the more sinful.

Furthermore it makes the church look like a theater. The attendance of the church is determined by the number of people who come out to see movies. In other words, they come to church, not for the preaching of the Gospel but to see the pictures.

Therefore they should keep the movies where they belong and keep the Church what it is, without attempting to mix them. Even if there should be only a few people in church and thousands in the theatre, the two must not be mixed as if they were two of a kind.

It also says in Scripture, where two or three are gathered together in my name I shall be in the midst of them. Then we do not need pictures to provide a big crowd or to teach people more about the Bible. Not these pictures, but the preaching of the Word and Catechism shall teach us the things of God.
I may presume that you are acquainted with Old Testament history.

You will recall how often we read in the series of Judah's king's that when a good king had sanctified the Cause of God by establishing His services, there came after him his son, who was wicked, and would actually un-do the good work which he had done. The son spent his time un-doing what the good father before him had done. What the good king had built up the next king would throw down to the ground.

You have this same process in the generations, especially during the days of the Judges. When one generation had re-laid the good foundation, another generation would appear which would entirely destroy that which had been laid.

What some did, others would un-do.

Miserable records in history.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Neither can a generation divided against itself stand.

To un-do the good work which those before you have done is also a very great sin.

Christ has founded His church upon the Apostles and the Prophets, Himself being the cornerstone. The church's foundation is the Truth, and many are the saints who have labored at that foundation. I mean confessing it, practicing it, and helping to come to a richer and fuller realization of this truth. Throughout the ages we see the saints doing the work of the Covenant, building Jerusalem's walls, strengthening the gates of the City of God.

But in every generation there are also those who un-do the work of the Covenant: they pound breeches in Jerusalem's walls, they unhinge the gates of the City of God. They seek to un-do what the saints have done, what perhaps even their very parents before them have done. They undermine the Truth, they speak evil of the Truth.

To that foundation belongs the confession which we as Protestant
Reformed Churches confess and hold dear. The generation before you labored to lay that foundation and many are the faithful young people who are already taking the place of the parents. . . . building upon the truth and building forth upon it.

They are DOING. God bless them.

But some are un-doing.

Some are laboring to undermine that which was done.

The foundation does not suit their fancy. They cannot build upon it what the carnal heart desires. The walls were too “air-tight” the gates too narrow. They go about to change this. The walls were intended to keep the enemies, the world, sin and Satan out, but these un-doers want the world and Satan in.

What was laid was the foundation of Christian isolation. . . . but they would rather love the world and seek their delight there. What was laid was the foundation of christian antithesis. but that did not suit them since they wanted the synthesis. What was laid was the truth that we are in this world to represent the Cause of the Son of God, but they seek a cause of their own.

Hence they tear down the foundations and undermine the structure which the former generation labored to erect. yea. that which the church built up with her sweat and blood, they simply cast down to the ground.

Busy un-doing.

What the saints have labored at for these thousands of years they seek to destroy.

What Christ has left us, they would undermine.

Or they turn away from building forth on this foundation. They forsake the vicinity where men built. They leave the Cause and go to espouse another. Or with un-christian conduct and un-christian practices they bring shame upon the Cause.

Are you an un-doer?

Of course not.

The un-doers generally do not read the Beacon Lights. They undo also that effort.

But there is the danger that we become un-doers. Let us beware lest we also become destroyers of the foundation. Lest we raise our hands to tear out one of its stones. It were better we were never born than to have torn one stone out of the foundation.

Let us be doers.

As so many of you, as most of you really are.

But to grow in doing we must realize that the former generation has not finished the work. If we imagine that they have finished all there is to do. what shall we do but sit idly down? Nay, they
have not finished the work. There is still so much to be done.

There are storms today which our fathers did not know about. We have to strengthen the walls against these storms. There are new dangers to be met.

And there are new wings to be added to the building.

Our world and life view calls for application, for clear minds to see what that world and life view is in today’s world and for steadfast hearts to apply it to today’s world.

We need Christian men and women to represent the Cause of the Triune God in the midst of this world.

Our children need specific Christian instruction.

There is so much still left to be done. And the time is short, for John says: “It is the last hour”.

Un-doer? You would not dare to be that. Or would you?

Doer? By the grace of God. Until in grace our Lord will finally say: Well done!

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South Holland Young Peoples’ Society

By Dorothy Zandstra — South Holland, Ill.

It was in the year 1932 when Rev. P. De Boer organized our Young People’s Society. Rev. De Boer was our president for six years. Then Rev. Vermeer became our president, who labored in our midst seven years. It was during these years that South Holland held the first Protestant Reformed Young People’s Convention. We also had it in the year 1945.


During the years of war 12 of our young men were called to serve in the Armed Forces. All have come home with the exception of one who is still in the Navy. We can faithfully say that the Lord has blessed us abundantly in bringing our boys home safe, and guiding them in the right path.

Rev. Schipper is the president of our society. Our meetings are held on Sunday evenings. We meet the whole year through. Our meetings start at 7:15 and end at 8:30. They are opened with fifteen minutes of singing and then prayer. This is followed by a half hour of Bible discussion led by our president or by one of our young men. At present we are studying the Book of Acts. We hope to study the outlines given in the Beacon Lights in the near future. After Bible discussion, we have a short recess of five minutes. Next a little business is discussed, and
then we are favored by a program consisting of essays, speeches, readings, recitations, debates, musical numbers, current events and round-table discussion.

The program is arranged by a committee and each member is assigned to certain numbers. The meetings are closed with the singing by the Society and prayer by one of our young men.

Our society consists of 28 members. We usually have visitors each Sunday which makes quite a large group. I must say we really have a fine group of young people. Of course there is going to be a decrease in our membership soon, for several of our young women and men are getting married. We hope there are younger ones who will take their place.

The purpose of our society is to be engaged in the study of God's Word, and the Standards of our Churches. Our society also aids in the development of our talents, and it is also a means whereby we can develop in Christian fellowship.

We as a society are very thankful to the Lord for working in our midst and for keeping us together. May it be according to His good pleasure that we continue as a society in the future.

Let us as young people "Remember our Creator in the days of our youth, and when the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say: I have no pleasure in them."

We hope, the Lord willing, that we will see you all at the Convention. We are all anticipating a good time.

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The Reformed Truth Hour

BY REV. M. SCHIPPER — SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.

Under the above named caption, the congregations of Oak Lawn and South Holland are sponsoring a radio program each Sunday evening over a local broadcasting station in Hammond, Indiana.

Because our young people constitute an integral part in this radio ministry, we deemed it necessary and proper to say something of this work in this issue of Beacon Lights.

It was on Sunday afternoon, June 30, 1946, that our program first came over the air waves. Through August of that year we used transcriptions of the Reformed Witness Hour originating in
Grand Rapids. Beginning on the evening of September 8th, our programs were aired under the name of the Reformed Truth Hour. It was then that the pastors of the two Churches of Illinois began conducting our own program, and have since then alternated making trips to the studio each Sunday evening to deliver addresses of our own distinctive Protestant Reformed character.

During the interlude of June 30th to September 8th, a Radio Chorus was organized and trained under the capable direction of Mr. Joseph Jurjaanz, a resident of Roseland. It is interesting to note that when our chorus began, there were very few that could even read a note. Today we have an aggregation of which we may be rightly proud. All of the music on our radio programs is rendered by transcription thus far, and consists of Psalter arrangements only. We do not hesitate to say, that were it not for the faithfulness of our young people in preparing the musical end of our programs, it would be quite impossible to continue as we are.

The Reformed Truth Hour is under the control of a Radio Committee chosen by the consistories of the two Churches. This committee operates under a constitution that virtually makes radio broadcasting a permanent feature in this community. Each consist-

ory assumes responsibility to see to it that there shall be a speaker at the station at the appointed time.

Thus far, the Reformed Truth Hour has received very favorable response. Not only has the mail brought us delightful comment, but we have also seen the fruits of radio broadcasting by the added attendance in our Church services.

We consider it worthy of comment that two small Churches have the courage to sponsor such a program which naturally entails great expense. It is estimated that this work involves an added budget expense of some 90 cents per family per week. Very thankfully we have received financial assistance from some of our Churches who are not particularly engaged in radio work, also from our Young People's Societies, and even from members of our radio audience.

It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to favor us with His blessing in this radio ministry, and that through it His Name may be continually glorified and His Kingdom come!
Is Divorce Possible Among Christians?

BY JAMES REGNERUS — OAK LAWN, ILL.

This question is one which is becoming more and more prominent in the Church today. Not only in the modern churches of the world but also in our Reformed Churches has the question arisen. The result of this is that we are tempted to depart from the Word of God. In the modern churches divorce is tolerated, they may be frowned upon by some in the church, but the fact remains that they are permitted. In the Christian Reformed and Reformed Churches divorces may take place, and the divorced man and wife may remain in good standing in the church. Even our own Protestant Reformed Churches do not have a uniform condemnation of this ugly thing, divorce.

We all know what marriage is. Marriage is the uniting of man and woman into a very holy state. A state so holy that God has ordained it as a holy bond whereby the unity between Christ and His Church is signified. They are of one flesh. A closer unity than marriage is not to be found among man upon this earth. A Christian man and a Christian woman who are of one mind to become united in marriage, may know and believe that it is God who has brought them together to fill that position for which the holy state of marriage is ordained.

Now let us see how great a wrong it is to break this holy bond which is ordained of God. In Matt. 19:3-9 we read, “And there came unto Him Pharisees, trying Him, saying: Is it lawful for man to put away his wife for every cause? And Jesus answered and said, Have ye not read. that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let no man put asunder. They say unto Him, why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? Jesus said unto them. Moses, for your hardness of heart, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it has not been so”. Therefore any husband and wife who seek to have their marriage vows become void, are not seeking their heritage in the Lord, but are hardening their hearts against the Lord and His commandments.

I do not doubt but that the
Christians in the church today are of one mind to condemn divorce as a tool of the devil, except for one reason, and that reason is adultery. We have the direct command of the Lord in the seventh commandment, in which He commands, "Thou shalt not commit adultery". May God graciously forbid, but if adultery should enter the home of the Christian it still does not give the husband and wife grounds which are right before the Lord to become free from their marriage vows. A man or woman is not free from the other until death do them part. God has brought them together and united them into a lasting state of marriage. They have been of one flesh and nothing can change that but death. They may have become free from one another according to the laws of the land, but before God they are one flesh and shall remain so. No man can serve two masters. We cannot serve God and mammon. Neither can man and woman be one flesh and become divorced, and be one flesh with someone else. This would be living in the sin of adultery, and one sin does not give justice or reason for another sin.

Nothing can separate Christ from His Church. Christ is the Groom, the Church is His Bride. That Church may go through all sorts of tribulations and Christ will never forsake her. That Church may even turn away from the truth for a time, but if that Church is the true Bride of Christ, He will take her back and grant forgiveness. Also in the holy state of marriage, man and wife may and never will become free from one another, before the righteous judgment of God. He has ordained it. Man may pollute it but he can never free himself before the Lord.

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Beacon Lights for this month, as you may have noticed, is composed entirely of contributions from our two Illinois churches. The Staff wishes to express its appreciation to the Rev. M. Schipper and to the Rev. M. Gritters for their willing cooperation, and for the splendid way in which they took care of this matter for us.
To Our Boys In Service

South Holland, Ill.
April 22, 1947

Dear Fellows:

You, no doubt, have noticed that Beacon Lights is an Illinois number this time. While we were preparing material for this issue, the question came to our mind: What about a letter to our Boys in Service? We were not informed that the faithful and regular contributor of a letter to our boys would contribute to this issue. So we decided that under no considerations, you should be neglected.

You understand that it is quite possible that you would be neglected. Not many of us at home are conscious of the fact that there are still some of our young men in service. Fact is, most of the boys have returned. Quite naturally, therefore, the few that remain in service might be forgotten. South Holland has only one young man in service; and, as far as I know. Oak Lawn has not any. So we trust that you would have forgiven us if we had forgotten you in this issue.

The fact that most of the boys are back from the service seems to indicate that the war is over. But is it? I can still remember a little of what transpired when World War I was concluded. I was a lad then in knee breeches selling news-papers on the street. Oh, how glad we were then when the news was flashed across the headlines that Germany had surrendered and the Bolsheviki had been subdued. I remember mothers crying with gladness that the bloodshed had ceased and their loved ones who had not died would return again. The whole atmosphere then seemed to bring you into a tranquil and complacent feeling that that was a war that would end all wars.

But I am older now, and another war, more severe than its predecessor has been fought. Again the philosophy persists that our boys have fought to end all wars. And not only because we are older, and have more sense than to believe this philosophy, but also because we have grown in the knowledge of the Scriptures and understand more perfectly its prophecies, do we understand the impossibility that wars should cease. Besides, we see development in history, the complications of new weapons and a smaller world that bring with them the concentrated urge of sinful and depraved men not only to thirst for but to usurp power and possessions.

Is the war over? Not by any means! And these are not the gloomy musings of a pessimist. This is the conclusion of many
in every walk of life. Several there are of our national leaders who make bold to say that we have already begun World War III.

Perhaps you won't like it that I write to you this time in these rather solemn tones. Perhaps you would rather that I would dismiss the subject of war entirely. Perhaps, too, you would appreciate it more if I would paint for you new vistas of hope and prosperity. But facts are facts. And we must face them sometimes whether we like them or not. We must not be like that little newspaper lad I told you about a little while ago who in a carefree manner tossed his cap in the air and followed the crowd behind the effigy of Kaiser Wilhelm which hung from the electric pole on the trolley car. Rather you and I should take our places alongside of the sages of Scripture, and read with them the signs of the times. And what will be our conclusion then?

It seems to me that there are especially two things we will consider. First of all we conclude that the philosophy of a world peace is a devilish fallacy, and an impracticable doctrine. We will rather with the Scriptures in our possession look for more wars and rumors of wars.

But this is not all! For then indeed. we might be standing in the camp of gloomy pessimists who can only cry: Death! Death!

We, therefore, in the second place, will conclude that, though wars and rumors of wars persist, all is well! We will lift up our heads, for we conclude also that when these things come to pass, that then surely our redemption draws nigh. We will begin then more earnestly than before to look for Jesus Who rides above the black clouds of war and desolation upon the white cloud that shall bring Him to us, His redeemed, with His everlasting peace.

Is that your expectation, fellows? Then, all is well!

So long. and may God be with you!

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. M. Schipper.

Something New!

BY REV. M. SCHIPPER — SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.

Yesterday was Sunday, and I began a short series of sermons. After I had finished the first sermon of this series, one of my audience came to me with the remark: "Well, dominee. I have heard sermons on this passage of Scripture before by dominee so and so and also by dominee so and so: but the thing that strikes me is that
its new again."

This remark got me to thinking. Not so much, you see, about what could possibly be new in that sermon I preached, but about the state of mind of that brother, and than of many others. I know what that brother meant by his remark. He simply wanted to tell me that the material concerning which we spoke was fresh and interesting. Perhaps, too, my approach was a little different than my predecessors. The brother meant well, and he most likely spoke the truth. It may have been too, that he heard something he didn't hear before. But that is not what troubles me.

The remark of this brother, un-wittingly perhaps, expresses a state of mind which is prevalent in our day. Always people, and we, are looking for something new. When new cars come out, we are interested. When new inventions hit the market, we want to see them. When new styles and fads make their debut, we take notice. And this is not different when a new preacher comes to town. Then we want to hear him.

This is even true when we come under the preaching of the Word. If it is something we have heard again and again, we become interested.

I wonder if this is right! Oh, I know the Lord has said: "Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old;" but is there not something wrong with us when we are always dissatisfied with the old, and are ever hankering after the new?

Indeed, there is room for progress and development in sound doctrine. The minister and the Church that is spiritually alive will strive to develop in the knowledge of the truth. And as far as this is concerned, there is much need for looking for something new. But what about those old, time-worn doctrines, those expressions of faith that have been clothed with the mantle of antiquity? Are we just going to forget about them? Are we going to lose all desire to hear and preserve them?

It seems to me that no individual or Church has the right to look for something new until first the old has been thoroughly masticated, and deeply rooted in our spiritual consciousness. Fact is, no one should be satisfied to hear only the new. Each of us should rejoice to hear the basic doctrines and time-worn expressions of truth that have been the source of comfort and light to myriads of Christians in the ages that are past.

While we look for the new, let us hold fast to the old!
Oak Lawn Y. P. Society
BY JEANETTE IPEMA — TINLEY PARK, ILL.

Although we are few in number, (our society consists of twelve members), we do heartily enjoy our meetings. We meet on Sunday evenings with Rev. Gritters as our president. We open with the singing of a few Psalter numbers after which Rev. Gritters opens with prayer. Then follows discussion of the Bible. At present we are treating the book of Mark. We generally cover about ten to fifteen verses in one evening, which makes it more interesting and also easier to understand. We study these verses for at least a half hour. Various of the members take part in the discussion so that there is usually a lively treatment of the Bible passage. This aids us in a better understanding of the meaning of the words we are treating.

At the present time members take it upon themselves to conduct the discussion of the passage which we treat for the evening. This proves rather interesting. This also gives everyone some actual practise in conducting a meeting or a discussion of the Word and this is beneficial. So far all the members have taken their part when their turn came.

After the Bible discussion the minutes of the previous meeting are read. and if there is anything that requires treatment the usual routine of business follows. Then the dues for the week are collected.

Following this a program is rendered in which at least three of the members take part. The programs consist of all different subjects such as: debates, literary criticism, current events, essays, recitations, music, round table discussion and many others, in which the entire society takes part in discussing one another’s papers, asking questions, criticising, agreeing or disagreeing which makes it very interesting. So that by the time discussion is over everybody knows what is right or wrong.

About a year ago we started a library. Among the books are: The Formative Years of Martin Luther, the Life of John Calvin, some of Hutchen’s books, commentaries, Rev. Hoeksema’s book on Whosoever Will. We are still adding to the library. Once in a while we take a collection for it. As each member has a birthday he donates two dollars toward the general library fund and thus the shelves fill up.

Twice a year we have combined meeting with the South Holland Young People’s Society.

After the program we usually sing a Psalter number and one of the young men closes with a word of prayer.

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Careful Of What We Sing

BY BERTHA BUITER — TINLEY PARK, ILL.

There are many hymns sung nowadays which are entirely unscriptural, and might well be criticized. We have especially in mind a hymn, written by Robert Herkness and entitled: "Will You Take Jesus Today?"

This hymn is very Arminian.

Take for instance the first verse. It reads: "Will you take Jesus to be your guide. His love will brighten the way. Safe in His keeping you may abide. Will you take Jesus today?" Here they are begging you to accept Jesus, and if you do, all will be well and all will be sunshine. But Scripture tells us that salvation is of God alone, and not God plus man, as if God does the offering and we do the accepting.

Or take the second verse: "For you the Lord was crucified. Accept His love while you may. The door of mercy stands open wide. Will you take Jesus today?" They do not deny that Christ was crucified, but they say that He was crucified for ALL men. Salvation is pictured to us as being a door. All you need to do is walk in and you are saved. Scripture teaches us that Christ did not die for all, but rather that He died for a definite number, called the elect. More over Scripture teaches that we are not saved of ourselves, but through faith, and this faith is a gift of the Lord.

The third verse reads like this: "He longs to enter your heart's closed door, how can you turn Him away? Throw wide the portal and let Him in. Will you take Jesus today?" Now they have Jesus pleading with man to come. They thus deny the sovereignty of God and they put man upon the foreground.

In verse four man is answering: "I will take Jesus today. His word I will gladly obey. My sins are forgiven, His praise I'll sing, I will take Jesus today". And the chorus continues by telling you that He offers pardon and peace to all, if you will take Jesus today.

Arminians will have you believe that salvation is a come-and-take-it proposition. The offer is there, come and take it while you may. You are begged to accept it. If you do not, you have over-powered God, since God cannot do anything more about it.

Such a view is definitely not right. For does not Scripture say that salvation is not something which is left to depend upon us, neither can we be saved by our own merits or our own accepting. God from all eternity has ordained
a definite number who shall be saved, and God calls them through the Gospel, giving them faith, and they do actually believe. . . . giving God the glory. Arminians deny the doctrine of sovereign election with reprobation, and instead of it they teach Free Will on the come-while-you-may basis.

These Arminian hymns are sung the world over. They sometimes seem to speak the truth. But let us not be deceived. Instead, let us sing songs which praise God as being the sovereign God, the Potter, and we the clay.

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A Reformation In South Holland

BY WILLAMETTA VAN BAREN — SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.

The beginning of our congregation was peculiar in many ways.

There were several people in the vicinity of Lansing and South Holland who were not satisfied with the "Common Grace" theory. So they wrote Rev. H. Hoeksema and he consented to come and speak for them. At this time the hall in Munster, Indiana was rented. We publicized the coming of Rev. H. Hoeksema by putting up posters etc. Of course, the interest of the people was so aroused that the hall in Munster, Indiana was refused and the only place that could be obtained was Bock's Hall. It was a place where the Ku Klux Klan used to meet. Scheduled dances were held in this hall, and some families lived in the same building often causing disturbances to the meetings.

At first large meetings were held. In fact, we had such big crowds it was unbelievable. But gradually the meetings got smaller. When finally our church was organized in August 24, 1926, there were only seven families left. We had only two in the consistory, one elder and one deacon. Yet these seven families, through the grace and help of God, decided to build a church. for certainly Bock's Hall was not the ideal place to meet. Land was secured in South Holland and it was there that the church was built.

For seven years we had no pastor. But we were helped through the efforts of the first students who served us nearly every Sunday. In all these years the Lord was with us and blessed us. We were indeed grateful and appreciated the work of these student.

In 1932, Candidate P. De Boer was granted the call to our congregation and accepted it. He labored among us six years. Our growth in number was very great and his
work was richly blessed throughout his ministry. It was during these years that our Young Peoples Society, Men's Society, and Catechism classes were organized, and led by our capable pastor, Rev. De Boer. But in June, 1938 he received a call of our congregation in Holland, Mich. and he accepted it. Thus, again, we were left as a flock without a pastor.

In September, 1938, Rev. L. Vermeer came over to help us, and his stay in our midst was about six and a half years. The Lord richly blessed him and us together thru his ministry with us. We did not increase in number but rather, lost many families. This growth was to the welfare of the congregation. By it, we can see that God's ways are not always our ways but that His ways are higher than ours. These families went out from us because they were not of us and caused much strife and difficulty. Yet this has led to the welfare of the congregation, knowing that we have learned that the church is God's and not man's. It was during his laboring in our midst that the Ladies' Society was organized and we also built a parsonage. Rev. Vermeer was, also, very faithful to the purpose in which he was called, instructing and leading us in the Reformed truth. In February, 1945, with sorrow in our hearts we bade farewell to Rev. Vermeer and his family. He left for Pella, Iowa, where he became pastor of that congregation.

In May, 1945, Rev. Schipper accepted the call to become our pastor and leader of our congregation which had had so many difficulties, yet he was not afraid but heeded the call to come over and help. Now our congregation again experiences a normal growth. We again have peace and harmony in our midst. All our services are now conducted in English. Our church and parsonage are also debt free. We have a flourishing Young Peoples' Society, a prosperous Ladies Society, and a thriving Men's Society.

I think a word is in place here for our radio broadcast, "The Reformed Truth Hour", which is on the air every Sunday evening at 9:30. Rev. Gritters and Rev. Schipper alternate every Sunday, over station WJOB, 1230 kilowatts. We also have our own radio choir with Mr. Jurjaanz as our director. We are thankful to God that we may proclaim the truth of God's Word over the network.

May the grace of God richly bless our congregation, and may we, by the grace of God, remain faithful to our high calling to show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.
As we all know, God's Word tells us about the coming of the Antichrist. It is often said that the Roman Catholic Church is the antichrist, or that the Antichrist will come from it. Already in the 10th century there were people who proclaimed this. Many of our forefathers held this to be true. We like to bring out that this is a matter of opinion, for no one knows exactly where the Antichrist shall come from and under what name he shall make his appearance.

The Roman Catholic Church from the beginning of its history has shown that it does not understand its calling as a church, but she has turned from that calling. Therefore our Fathers in the Belgic Confessions especially dared to call her a false church. She does not proclaim unto the world the Gospel, but she substitutes it with a doctrine of men, and additions of men, and calls it the Gospel, when it really is not.

Rome has always proclaimed that men are not able to read the Word of God for themselves, inasmuch as it is not written for us and unto us, but it is written for the leaders. These leaders in turn must give unto the laymen the explanation. . . . and that is the end of all debate or argument. It claims that Peter was the first Pope and that the Popes ever after have followed in Peter's office. This, of course, is nothing but unbelief. God did not bring His Word only for leaders, but for all the people and to the Church in general. The leaders then spoke and declared the Word which God had revealed unto all. They were called to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins. Men must repent unto God, not unto men. Not men, but God alone forgives sin.

The Roman Catholic Church is guilty of idolatry when it calls upon the saints. They may say that they do not pray to the saints, but in invoking the saints they do something which is contrary to Scripture and insulting to Christ. They call upon Peter and Mary and others. We are taught to call upon Christ. The Roman Catholic Church is not afraid to bend Scripture to advantage when it wants to overpower an adversary.

These things are characteristics of the Antichrist. He also will try to deceive us. We must not therefore allow ourselves to be de-
ceived by this church as if it had authority above God, or as if its central power had authority over men and the consciences of men. Antichrist also seeks to have power over men.

From whatever corner the Antichrist may arise, let us be watchful that we also be not deceived, and we must not let anything that looks like the truth blind us for what is really the truth.

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**Oak Lawn 1927 - 1947**

**By Louis Regnerus — Oak Lawn, Ill.**

You may wonder why my heading reads: Oak Lawn, 1927 and not 1924. This is a common enough question and may be explained thus. While most of us associate 1924 with the beginning of our churches, it was not until 1927 that the Lord saw fit to start a new church in Oak Lawn. And since we believe that the reader is already familiar with the events of 1924 we shall not delve too deeply into the history of that momentous year.

It is true, the temporary organization which was later to become the Protestant Reformed Churches did not take place until January 27, 1925. And the final organization under the present name did not take place until November of 1926. Still it is the memorable year of 1924 which lives in our minds as the year of our birth. For it was in this year that the Revs. Hoeksema, Ophoff and Danhof and their respective consistories were deposed from their offices because they refused to subscribe to the theory of the Three Points. However, it was not until the Fall of 1926 that two elders of the Oak Lawn Christian Reformed Church took it upon themselves to ask the Rev. Hoeksema to come and give us a lecture so that said leaders might become more acquainted with the controversy which had created such a turbulent condition in the church. The Rev. Hoeksema obliged and spoke to us on "Jerusalem Measured". It may be said that while all were not in complete agreement with the speaker, many did go home with the conviction in their hearts that they had been edified by a sound and thoroughly scriptural exposition of the Word of God.

The immediate result of this action by the two elders was that they were deposed from their of-
office upon the advice of a neighboring consistory which had been called in for that purpose.

This, however, did not settle the problem. For many the removing of these two elders from their office merely intensified the question as to whether the Christian Reformed Church did what was right in the eyes of the Lord by adopting the Three Points of the Synod of 1921. Many an evening was filled with this discussion, and again the deposed elders took it upon themselves to ask the Rev. Hoeksema for another address. Again we were obliged as were other groups in South Holland, Roseland, and other localities. After this series of lectures and after many hours of ardent study and much prayer, it became increasingly evident that the Christian Reformed Church had not only erred in its adoption of the theory of the Three Points, but that the deposing from office of the Revs. Hoeksema, Danhof and Ophoff and their respective consistories, and all others who were removed because of their opposition, was a very grave and unjustifiable deed. It became evident that if the Church of Jesus Christ were to heed its calling and its responsibility, she could not do it under the banner of the Christian Reformed Church. This separation from the parent church was necessary since we were convinced that we must here defend and preserve the sound doctrine of the Scripture in our midst.

Having made our decision we determined to act accordingly. It was upon the night of July 7, 1927, that a group of five families and two unmarried young men gathered together with the Rev. Hoeksema. He spoke on John 7:39: "But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified". This verse in connection with Acts 2:4, where we read, "And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance". Afterwards he organized us into a congregation.

Now for these few it was again possible to hear the Word of God preached in all its purity, and our hearts were gladdened.

So for a period of eight years we met from Sabbath to Sabbath but without the guiding hand of a minister. Yet from the very beginning we were privileged with having our own church building. Although we were financially weak, we managed to raise a fund which enabled us to purchase a building which for some time previously had been used as a community hall, and a place of local entertainment. The building was not in perfect
condition, but after undergoing some cleaning and repairing, it proved to be quite adaptable to our purpose. During these first years we were destined for many disappointments. It became increasingly evident that all who had proclaimed to love our truth, did not exhibit such true love. We were reminded that even though we love the true Gospel we were still an imperfect people with a sinful human nature. Although we lost some members, we also gained a few and in all this we realized that all things work together for good for them who love Christ. The Lord deemed this also for our good and we were always able to say: hitherto hath the Lord helped us. During these first eight years our pulpit was supplied by various students and ministers and reading by the consistory. Many times it seemed as if we were destined to be a church without a pastor. For several were called but the Lord deemed it wise that they should not come. However this was to change. and in the Fall of 1934 we sent a call to the Rev. C. Hanko, who at that time was shepherd of the congregation at Hull, la. A few weeks later we received the glad message from him, "I will come over and help you". At last our prayer was answered. In January of 1935 Rev. Hanko arrived and labored amongst us for nine years. It was during his pastorate that our Young Peoples' Society was organized, and English sermons were introduced. Our Young Peoples' Society originated with six charter members. This number fluctuated due to new members coming in and others dropping out. Our present membership is 12 and has been about the same over a period of the last few years. During the years that Rev. Hanko was our pastor the congregation grew from slightly more than five families to seventeen families by the Spring of 1943. It was to be seen that our pastor arrived at a very opportune time. It was at a time that the young people needed a leader, not only as far as Society life was concerned but especially as catechism classes which needed one to instruct them in the principles of the Reformed doctrine.

It was in 1943 that we experienced great happiness in that we were able to buy a parsonage for our minister. This indeed had been a great problem for us. For eight years our pastor had been forced to move from place to place. In fact, the last week before the parsonage was occupied, the pastor and his family spent more than a week in what was little more than a shack. For many years we had faced our problem without a pastor, and now suddenly we were confronted with the novel situation of having a minister and having no place to put him. It was de-
cided that although funds were low, we should buy our own parsonage. This was accomplished by the united efforts of the congregation and the collections which we received from the sister churches. We are indeed grateful to the Lord that this was made possible for us, as subsequent developments in the housing situation would have shoudered us with immense responsibilities.

The year of 1943 had also its sad moments from the point of view that we lost a few of our former members. The oldest member of our congregation was taken to her heavenly home. One family moved to California and two families returned to the Christian Reformed Church. Yet we are grateful to the Lord that in this also we had grown in unity of faith and love of the truth. As was the case in many other churches we lost practically all our young men to the armed services. This was an especially trying period for our Young Peoples' Society and senior catechism class.

It was in the Fall of 1934 that our pastor received a call from our church in Manhattan, Montana. The congregation sensed a difference in this call and the others which he had received, and their fears were confirmed when he announced that Manhattan would be his next congregation. So, after ten years we were vacant again.

Rev. Hanko left for his new charge in January of 1945. Then the congregation called the Rev. M. Gritters and was soon again blessed by having its own pastor to minister unto its needs. Rev. Gritters arrived here in March, 1945. After that, from time to time, young men began to arrive home from the service of the country. February of 1946 saw the last of our young men safely back home.

Thus for twenty years has Oak Lawn existed. Many have been our trials and the road was not always smooth. However we have become more and more firmly knit as one in the Lord. And that after all is of primary importance. Trusting in Him also for the future, we can rest assured that all earthy things will fall away. and that we shall be victorious in Him Who loved us first. May God give us more zeal for His Cause at all times, so that we shall not be found as having lost our first love. May we grow in grace and live as members of the body of Christ. so that no man may take our crown. To God be all the honor and glory for ever.
South Hollands' Onions

By Mike Van Baren — South Holland, Ill.

South Holland is located in the far northeast corner of the state of Illinois. We are about three miles west of the border of the state of Indiana. We are also about twenty miles south of the metropolis of Chicago. The first settlers in this territory arrived about 1945. These first settlers came to this territory from the province of South Holland, in the Netherlands. This is where the name of the village of South Holland originated. Whenever the local population reverts to speaking Dutch, it is with a definite "South Holland" dialect. The language is not as pure as the original, but after several generations have added to it, and subtracted from it, you can still recognize the South Holland dialect.

The first settlers were farmers, and today a good percentage of the people in South Holland are still concerned with farming. About the year 1895, it was discovered that the "onion set" was particularly adapted to the soil in this region. Since this discovery more and more farmers began raising these "onion sets". This crop became so popular that during the past few years South Holland was known as the "Onion Set Center of the World". This title is not merely a slogan but a fact. Approximately 1,000,000 bushels of sets are shipped from South Holland during a good year. During the last years the onion-sets sold at peak prices, and almost "everybody and his brother" in South Holland was raising sets.

To those of us who are unfamiliar with an "onion-set" an explanation of this commodity may be of interest. To get onions—you plant an onion "set". A "set" is in reality a small onion which has been raised from a seed. These onion-set seeds are raised largely in the states of California and Idaho. In the spring we get our "set seed" in 100 pound bags. After the soil is prepared for sowing, the seeds are sowed. Depending on the weather, about two weeks elapse from the time the set seeds are sowed, and the top of the sets appear above the ground. The sets are cultivated about four times before they are ready to harvest. Of course, much can happen between the time the set is sowed and harvested. In the spring too much rain causes maggots which can destroy large areas of sets. As with many other crops, a hot, dry summer will burn the tops off the sets, and the set automatically stops growing. Continuous weeding of the sets by hand is also necessary. When during the course
of normal growth the set-tops begin to die off and wilt, the farmer begins his process of harvesting. We say a process of harvesting because there are several steps, or operations, involved. First of all we “loosen” the sets with a cultivator with knives which cut just below the set. After these sets are loosened in the above manner, we take a side-delivery rake, which shoves the sets in one mound, in the middle of the bed. (The bed referred to here is the section of ground about 12 feet wide which contains 12 rows of sets when planted). When the sets are piled in the middle of the bed the harvester, which, incidentally, is a very recent invention, scoops up these sets and conveys them onto the sift, which is part of the harvester. This sift is a reciprocating screen which sifts the dirt and dead tops from the set. The sets are then placed in a crate—or drying tray. These crates are then stacked up to a height of 5 feet, and are then left on the set bed, until the time they are taken to a frost-proof warehouse. These sets are normally stored in this warehouse from two to three months, and in an average year are “milled” in the months of Jan. and Feb.

The milling operation consists of dumping sets on a moving screen which sifts them according to various sizes. The set sizes (determined from the diameter of the set—in inches) are from \( \tfrac{3}{4} \) to \( 1\tfrac{1}{8} \) inch and everything over an 1-\( \frac{1}{8} \) inch in diameter is known as a number 2 set. These number 2 sets are not nearly as much in demand, and therefore bring a smaller price than any other size. After the sets are graded or screened, they move to a picking belt or conveyor. This “picking belt” is a continuous belt on which the sets travel on their way to the bag. On both sides of the picking belt sits a row of “pickers”—usually women. These pickers remove any dirt or debris which remains with the sets. The sets are packaged in bags containing 32 or 64 pounds of sets, depending on the preference of the buyer. These bags of sets are then shipped by freight express or truck to all sections of the North American continent. The biggest users of onion sets can be found in the states of Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Missouri, and the Carolinas. Of course there is much more which can be said of South Holland. We have tried to show you what we thought would be of interest to you who have never had the opportunity to visit us. We are always ready to welcome visitors to this fair climate and then we can show you these wonders: and you not only can benefit from the wonderful aroma of sets, but also have an opportunity to taste the product which has made South Holland famous.
In Judges 11 we read the history of one of Israel's heroes of faith. Hebrews 11 speaks of him as belonging to that series of great men through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. And Scripture goes on to tell us of the works of this man of God.

We recall how our school teachers used to tell us what a rash man Jephthah was, and how he thoughtlessly made a vow which later he was forced to fulfill.

Perhaps something should be said of this man.

We read that he was a Gileadite and that he was a mighty man of valour. We read also that he was born of a harlot and that he was not the son of his father's later wife. He was put out of his father's house by his brothers, who refused to let him share the inheritance because he was born of a strange woman. Because of this exile Jephthah took up his abode in the land of Tob. He was an outcast in the land of Gilead. Yet it is to Jephthah that the elders of Gilead turn when they are faced with a war against Ammon. In their hour of need they turn to the very man whom they once exiled. Scripture does not acquaint us with how he gained his reputation as a man of valour. Perhaps by fighting the warlike tribes that roamed the country at that time. We do not know. We only know that Jephthah was the man whom God chose to lead Israel, and when the elders asked him to be their head, he also makes sure that he shall remain their head.

Jephthah was a man of God. He knew that the apostatizing and adulterous Israel had fallen into evil ways. He does not wish to deliver Israel and then turn his back on them and let them again be entangled in the yoke of bondage. So it is that Jephthah decided to become leader to the men of Israel.

First Jephthah sends messengers to the king of Ammon, seeking to find out the reason why they war against Israel. Later he sends still more messengers to attempt to dissuade the king of Ammon from continuing with his undertaking. In this he fails and the result is that he must fight the Ammonites.

It is in the midst of his war with Ammon that he makes the well-known vow. The contents of his vow was that if the Lord will grant him the victory in this battle then he will offer unto the Lord as a
burnt offering whatever comes forth to meet him from the doors of his house when he returns.

Ah, but he was a rash man, we are liable to say. It seems that he makes a vow on the spur of the moment. But let us examine this a bit more closely. We read that Jephthah had but one daughter and no sons either. And not even the most rash person plays with the life of his dear ones. No, dear reader, Jephthah was not a rash man. Jephthah was a man of God. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, also when he made that vow. We read this plainly in the 29th verse of chapter 11. You may be sure therefore that Jephthah knew what he was talking about when he made that particular vow. I would remind you that Jephthah had but one child, an only daughter. Jephthah knew when he made his vow that it would not be an ox, a sheep or a cow that would come to meet him. He said in his vow that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my HOUSE to meet me, that shall surely be the Lord's. He was not talking about the first fruits of his vineyard or whatever cometh forth from the cattle stalls, that shall be the Lord's. He is speaking of his house, in the strict sense of the word. His house wherein dwells his wife (perhaps) and his daughter. Someone might say that the vow was rash since he could be aware of its implications.

But let us not forget that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and presently we shall see why God caused him to make this vow.

He was indeed a man of strong faith. The vow which he made was certainly contrary to the flesh. Of himself I do not think Jephthah or any other man would have made such a vow as he had made.

Jephthah goes to battle. And the Lord delivers the children of Ammon into his hands. We read that he slew them with a great slaughter.

And what of his vow? We read that when he comes to his home his daughter runs to meet him with timbrels and with dances. She is evidently overjoyed that her father is home again. At this meeting Jephthah rent his clothes and says: Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me, for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. Jephthah is conscious of the vow he has made, and it is contrary to the flesh. But he is a man of God and he will not break the pledge he has given. Here we find that although Jephthah is a man of God, his daughter is no less a child of God, and also filled with the faith. She says: If thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which has proceeded out of thy mouth. So before she knows exactly what her father has
vowed she places herself at his disposal and submits to the consequences of the vow. She has but one request; she wishes to go into the mountains and bewail her virginity. For in those days the people regarded it as a curse if they could not reproduce their kind. How different is the world today, where the fulfilment of the ultimate purpose of marriage is disregarded. Jephthah's daughter also would have desired to become mother of the covenant seed. But he also realized that the ways of the Lord were beyond understanding and that His ways always worked for good for them that love Him.

And so, when her two months are up Jephthah does with her as he had vowed. This does not imply that he made an altar and literally sacrificed her. The implication is that he dedicated her to the Lord. She became a servant of the Lord, as it were a hermit, so that she might be a testimony against the adulterous Israel. We read that yearly the daughters of Israel went four days per year to lament the daughter of Jephthah. The word lament means literally to talk with, to comfort, to fellowship with and perhaps to sympathize. So we find that Jephthah's vow was not the work of a rash, imprudent man, but the work of one who stood ready to devote his life and all to the Cause of God. And the peculiar life which his daughter led was a constant testimony against the apostatizing and adulterous Israel, calling them to love the Lord and walk in the ways of consecration and holiness, in the path of life.

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— 26 —
You know that old hymn ent- 
etiled: Faith of our Fathers, liv- 
ing still, etc. No doubt you have sung it often. No doubt, too, we will continue to sing it often in the days that lie ahead.

But what does that faith of our fathers mean to you and me? What does it mean that it is living still? Does it mean that the deeds of faith performed by our fathers live on in the pages of history, and in our memories? Or do we mean that that same faith our fathers demonstrated is the same faith that had laid hold upon us, and fills our hearts with that certain knowledge and a hearty confidence?

I trust that you will say both. What Christian, and true believer can disrespectfully cast aside the memory of the acts of faith chiseled on the rocky road-beds over which our fathers have trod? Right now, however, I am more interested in the question whether or not that faith of our fathers is the same dynamic that moves your heart and mine to say with them: I know that my Redeemer lives and that I, too, shall stand in the latter day. I trust that in answer also to this question, you will say with me that that faith of our fathers lives on also in my heart.

But, then, how can I, how can you be assured that we possess the same assurance of faith as they?

I propose to answer this question by presenting to you several propositions that have a Scriptural basis.

First of all, this assurance of faith is not a mere sentimental feeling that grips us when we are in the right mood. Rather it is a direct testimony of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. This means that the Word of God itself is only an objective testimony of God; it is by itself a dead letter and can give me no subjective assurance. In other words, without more, I could read the Scriptures from now until the day of my death, and I would obtain no more assurance of faith than I possess now. Only when that Word of God becomes a testimony of the Spirit in my heart and mind, does it give me this assurance. But we hasten to add, that the Holy Spirit never testifies anything more than the Word of God declares. In other words, the contents of the testimony of the Holy Spirit is always only the Word of God.

This proposition is taught us in the well-known Scripture passage found in I Cor. 12:3 which reads as follows: "Wherefore I give you
to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." I can no better show you the meaning of this passage than by quoting a couple of short paragraphs from a Meditation of Rev. H. Hoeksema in the Standard Bearer on this text. He writes: "Lord Jesus! Did you, dear reader, ever learn to say that? And is it your daily confession? Does that brief exclamation so full of significance, so scintillating with spiritual joy and ecstasy, express what lives in your inmost soul, relative to Jesus, the Nazarene, the Man of Calvary, who was dead but liveth, who was crucified but raised, who humbled Himself into the lowest shame and agony of death and hell, but was exalted to the highest glory at the right hand of God? Is it your only comfort in life and death, for time and eternity, for body and soul? Are you gladly willing to live with that confession on your lips and in your heart, and presently to lay down the weary head on death's pillow, relying solely on Him and trusting that all is well?"

"Then you have learnt to speak a spiritual language, which carnal mind can never learn, carnal ear can never understand, carnal mouth can never speak. And, therefore, it is a language which mere man can never teach you. Then your Instructor was none other than the Spirit of the Lord, for no one can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

"It is clear from this that the conviction that Jesus is my Lord is definitely a testimony of the Holy Spirit in me. I also call your attention to Rom. 8:14, 16: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

It is very plain that we are not only juridically declared to be the children of God in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ accomplished in history, but we have the subjective spiritual assurance of this thru the Spirit of adoption in our hearts. Those led by the Spirit of God, know they are the sons of God. Who are the sons of God? How can I know whether I belong to the sons of God and partake of the riches of Grace? The answer is: by the Spirit. By that Spirit of God, God leads all His children and no one else. Whoever cries ABBA FATHER, gives testimony that he is conscious of the love of God in Christ. But this outcry would be vain if it had no deeper root than our own heart. But notice that the apostle teaches that this outcry is produced by the Spirit of adoption and this Spirit
witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God.

But as was said, the testimony of the Spirit coincides always only with the Word of God. The Spirit never testifies more or less than the Word of God declares. It cannot, therefore, be that somehow mystically the Spirit of God speaks to us apart from the Word. Nor must we look for a special manifestation of the Spirit apart from the Word of God. We should remember that what the Spirit has to say to the Church and the individual believer is only the Divinely inspired Word of God. This is evidently the meaning of the repeated expression in the Book of Revelation: “He that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.” Also it should not pass our notice what Jesus Himself taught us in John 16, especially in the verses 13-15: “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you”.

Again, in John 14:26: “But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost. Whom the Father will send in My name. He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Also instructive in this connection is the Confession our Fathers express in the Canons of Dordt, V, 9, 10: “Of this preservation of the elect to salvation and of their perseverance in the faith, true believers for themselves may and do obtain assurance according to the measure of their faith, whereby they arrive at the certain persuasion, that they ever will continue true and living members of the Church: and that they experience forgiveness of sins, and will at last inherit eternal life.

This assurance, however, is not produced by any peculiar revelation contrary to, or independent of the Word of God; but springs from faith in God’s promises, which he has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort; from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our Spirit, that we are children and heirs of God. Rom. 8:16; and lastly, from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience, and to perform good works. And if the elect of God were deprived of this solid comfort, that they shall finally obtain the victory, and of this infallible pledge or earnest of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.

It is true that there may be
times when this assurance is not always so sure, as our fathers declare in the next article of this same head of doctrine, but even then God provides a way of escape and by His Spirit again inspires them with the comforting assurance. (1 Cor. 10:13). But I shall have occasion to call your attention to this presently. Let us first notice our second proposition.

Secondly, the certainty of faith is obtained in the way of sanctification.

This proposition answers the question we raised at the beginning of this article, namely, Can we attain this certainty thru observing the earmarks of faith, that is, by basing our certainty upon the results of faith in our lives?

It is necessary that we correctly understand this proposition lest we draw a wrong conclusion. We should be careful not to conclude that our good works are a conclusive proof. Without the first proposition, the second is impossible. Our fathers also warn us of this in the 34th Article of our Confessions. The article begins with the words: "We believe that this true faith being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Ghost, doth regenerate (here the regeneration means sanctification or continual regeneration, M.S.) and make him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin." And the article concludes with the statement: "Moreover, though we do good works, we do not find our salvation upon them; for we do no work by what is polluted by our flesh; and also punishable: and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus then we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Saviour."

We conclude from this that apart from the certainty that Christ performed a perfect work of salvation for us we can find no absolute certainty of faith in our walk of sanctification. In other words, if we mean by our good works that they are something that merits before God, then we do better to forget about them for every one of them is polluted with sin, and sin must bring condemnation. However, if our certainty of salvation rests only in the work of Christ, and we still do good works, we may rest assured that this is also His work in us, and have certainty we are the children of God.

This is also a conclusion which the fathers of Dordt make in the article I quoted above. Notice: "This assurance... springs from faith in God's promises... from
the testimony of the Holy Spirit . . . . and lastly, 
from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience, and to perform good works."

I call your attention to the Scriptures on this point: Notice 1 John 3:14, 19-21. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. . . . My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have confidence toward God." Allow me to comment on just one more passage in II Peter 1:10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

We should note here that the apostle does not say "give diligence to make your election and calling sure," but rather, "make your calling and election sure." This is important. It shows us the order of our experience. Election and calling is the order of God's counsel. In other words, to make sure our election we must make sure of our calling. And to make sure of our calling, we must give diligence to walk in sanctification. For he who hath called us is holy, so we must be holy in all manner of conversation. When we in holy zeal strive thru the grace of God to add unto faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, then we see the fruits of our calling and thru the assurance of our calling we also make our election sure. "For whom he predestinates, them he also calls." The way of sanctification, the way of struggle and strife, of self-denial and battle, is the sole way to the assurance of our calling and election. Let me now call attention to our third proposition.

Thirdly, the certainty of faith is proved by many examples of believers in the Scriptures.

I need not here quote all the examples of those who have given expression to their certainty of faith. Only a few illustrations will suffice to make clear that the true believer can and does have this certainty. Of Abraham we read in Rom. 4:21, that he was fully persuaded that what God had promised. He was able also to perform. Of Job we read in Job 19:25-27, that he knew that his Redeemer lives and that he should stand in the latter day, and further, that though he die he yet should see God. David in Psalm 23 knew that the Lord was his shepherd and that
He would lead him even in the valley of the shadow of death. In Ps. 32, he asserts the confidence that God had pardoned all his sin. In Isa. 38:17, Hezekiah could say: "For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Paul, in Rom. 8:39, declares that he is persuaded that neither death nor life, nor anything shall be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ. In II Cor. 5:1, he knew that he had a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens when his earthly house was dissolved. In II Tim. 4:8, he knows of the crown of righteousness which the Lord will give him at the end of his earthly course.

Now let me call your attention, finally, to our fourth proposition.

Fourthly, the certainty of faith is something we are obliged to ascertain.

Not only does the true child of God desire to come to a more perfect assurance of faith, but the Word of God exhorts him repeatedly to strive for this certainty.

A good example of the desire of the child of God for certainty of faith is that David in Ps. 51:7-13: "Purge me with hyssop. . . .wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy. . . . Hide thy face from my sins. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God. . . . Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. . . . Then will I teach transgressors thy way; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." The apostle Paul in 11 Cor. 13:5 writes: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

The fact that we are exhorted to give diligence to make sure is proof enough that there are times when the child of God does not possess this certainty as strongly as at others. Then, too. I think it must be said that all the children of God do not possess this certainty in like measure. But without fear of contradiction. I believe it may be said that each one possesses this certainty in proportion to the faith he possesses. No one can have more certainty than the faith he possesses, and according to his faith, so also is the assurance.

Faith of our fathers living still? Oh yes, it lives on in the pages of history, and in the recollections of the Church. But is it living on in your heart and mine? Do you and I possess this living faith, and are we assured that we possess it?

This is something which you and I must make sure. And when it is made sure, then surely as faithfully they fought the battle of faith unto a crown of victory, so shall we also preserve and confess the faith not only, but also be assured in our hearts that we have the victory thru Him that loved us and gave Himself for us.