BEACON LIGHTS
For Protestant Reformed Youth
THE MARCH ISSUE FOR 1952

“BEHOLD, A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW ... HE THAT RECEIVED SEED INTO THE GOOD GROUND IS HE THAT HEARETH THE WORD ... WHICH ALSO BEARETH FRUIT”
—MATTHEW 13:3 and 23
IN THIS ISSUE——

FEATURE—Page 1
“Future Missionary Labor”
“Present Missionary Endeavor”—page 6

EDITORIALS—Page 10
“Do We Have Missions?”

CHRISTIAN LIVING—Page 12
“Heralding Our Faith”

CURRENT COMMENTS—Page 14
“Europe And Communism”

TRUTH VS. ERROR—Page 15
“Pelagianism And Missions”

NATURE STUDY—Page 18
“Majestic Palm”

MILITARY MAIL BAG—Page 26
“New Editor”

BIBLE OUTLINES—Page 22
“Do You Study?”

SCHUILER—Page 29
“Television”

BOOK REVIEW —Page 31
“The Road To Bithynia”
What Future is There in Our Protestant Reformed Missionary Work?

Rev. E. Emanuel
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Since having become acquainted and affiliated with the Prot. Reformed Churches, the question of “Mission” has been a very pressing one to me. Hence, in choosing this subject: “What Future is There in Our Protestant Reformed Missionary Work?”—the intention is to simply set before you my observations, evaluation, and my reaction, i.e., as I personally have considered this missionary question—especially in light of our missionary activity in the past.

I believe a proper starting point would be that of considering a Definition of Mission Work. However, to arrive at a Definition of Mission Work, the Purpose Of and What Constitutes Mission Work must also be considered. To me, these two elements are inseparably connected and can very well be subsumed under the Definition, so that the Definition would include the Purpose and a statement of What Constitutes Mission Work.

What is Mission Work?—It is that work to which we are called, and which consists in faithfully proclaiming the whole counsel of God in Christ Jesus, with an eye single to glorify God in Christ, as the Holy Spirit causes the Word to accomplish its two-fold purpose namely—“a savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.” Mission work differs from the regular preaching and pastoral work in that it is conducted without the pale or the sphere of the established church or churches doing the work, or under whose supervision the work is being conducted.

Of course, without any further comment on the matter, we will all agree that underlying the whole question of Mission Work, the motivating factor for conducting it is—a desire to fulfill the command of our Lord Jesus Christ as He has given it to us in the words:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to ob-
serve all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Mt. 28:19-20).

Then, again, in Mark 16:15-16, and also in Luke 24:45-47 where we read:

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Hence, we are motivated by these words of our Lord and not by any one or more of the foolish notions that are so often used as a basis for doing Mission Work, such as: “Evangelize the world, and do it in haste, lest Jesus should return and find the work is not yet completed.” This is essentially the position of the Arminian and the so-called Fundamentalist of today. On the other hand, there is the position of the Modernist, believing as he does, that the so-called “principles of Jesus” contain the solution for the ills of this present world—which are basically social and economic. Then, of course, there is the other motivating factor namely, the desire to increase numerically—or, as some others express it, the desire to do “Church Extension Work.”

This term “church extension” is also used in Protestant Reformed circles in speaking of Mission Work. However, my personal feeling is to discard its use when speaking of Mission Work. And, I was very much surprised when I read the following quotation from the pen of one who, in speaking of “Our Mission Work” writes: “We might in a sense properly call it church extension since its positive purpose is the establishment of Protestant Reformed Churches wherever there are or come to be, groups of believers that are of one heart and mind with us, and wish to confess with us the truth of God’s Sovereign Grace as we are committed to it”—“for the present it is our calling to limit ourselves to the work of church extension . . . among the brethren of the Christian Reformed Churches.”

I believe I can say, without any reservations, that the positive purpose of Mission Work is not the establishment of churches. This is exactly the meaning of the term “Mission Work” everywhere else—where all church related activity is evaluated in terms of numbers and hence, motivated from the same point of view namely, “How can we grow? How can we become large?”

Now, I do not want to place a wrong construction on the use of the term “church extension” as it is used by this brother however, I cannot help but warn that it is certainly a most dangerous term—especially as it is used in our day.

As Protestant Reformed Churches, we must always find our basis for doing Mission Work in the sincere desire to proclaim the whole counsel of God in Christ Jesus, to the end that it may accomplish its purpose. This, and only this, should be our motive for engaging in Mission Work. For only then, of
course, "we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish" (II Cor. 2:15).

Of course, it stands to reason, that where there are those whom we contact and who can agree and confess with us the truth of God's Word as we are committed to it, of course, the result is going to be (in time) the establishment of a new church. But, this must not be construed as being the purpose for engaging in Mission Work. On the contrary, the establishment of a new church is the fruit of Mission Work, and not the purpose. If we do not maintain this emphasis and distinction between the purpose and the fruit of Mission Work, then we can certainly expect to find ourselves in the same camp of the Fundamentalist and the Modernist—in the ring of competition for "new churches." Then, too, this basis for doing Mission Work must be clearly understood if what I am about to say is going to have any meaning.

In the second place, I would call your attention to the fact that in the early years of its existence, the Prot. Reformed Churches did little Mission Work, that is, in the sense that it was organized and carried on a Mission Program such as came later on, and is now in operation under the Mission Committee—with missionaries in the field.

This is easily understood from the fact that the Common Grace controversy attracted the attention of many people who were of Reformed persuasion. The result was, according to the history, that many requests were received and invitations to come and lecture and to discuss the Common Grace issue. So that there was no necessity for determining new areas in which to preach the truth. They were already "mapped out" (so to speak) for those designated for this purpose. In other words, the "Macedonian call" was being heard. Furthermore, according to the records, it would have been very difficult—yea, almost impossible to carry on much of a missionary endeavour because of the lack and shortage of ministers and hence, what Mission Work was done was limited to fulfilling these requests.

The time, however, when the work was concentrated on lecturing and organizing has long since disappeared. Nevertheless, all efforts have continued to be directed to that element that, at one time, manifested interest to at least some degree, though at present and for sometime, there has been not only apparent but gross disinterest. I am speaking, of course, of the Christian Reformed Churches, in particular. These remarks, however, are not to be understood as though I am advocating complete and total disregard for the Christian Reformed Churches. This is not so. My emphasis is simply on the fact that, as a field of concentration, the Christian Reformed circles are eliminated. Of course, if there is a desire to embrace the truth as set forth by our churches, we can do no other than respond to the inquiring group—whether that group be Christian Reformed or any other group. This is certainly our calling.

Now, there have been some who have recognized this fact and have even gone
so far as to suggest other fields. However, the suggestions have always, with the exception of perhaps one or two, been limited in some way or another. For instance, there are some who say: "We should look for the fields where there is interest—doctrinally and practically, for the sound Reformed faith... A Reformed sense must be at least present." This, to my mind, would involve an endless search for there are no churches, to the best of my knowledge (outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches), who reveal a doctrinal and practical interest in the sound Reformed faith. If some such fields should be made known to us, they will be made known unto us as a result of having gone forth and simply proclaiming the truth of God's Word—and NOT as a result of diligent looking and searching.

Then, again, there are those who say: "That we look away from the field we're laboring in and turn attention to the field of churches who are apostasizing from the truth." This, we will readily admit, should not be too difficult because, thinking as we do, namely, that we are the purest manifestation of the True Church, we must conclude that all other churches fall to some degree below our level and hence, in that degree, apostasize. However, even this suggestion would somewhat limit the Mission Work—for there is sure to be disagreement as to the interpretation or understanding of an apostasizing church.

On the other hand, there are some who suggest that: "We must propagate these principles beyond the sphere of our own churches. We must seek to share this glorious truth of God’s Sovereign Grace with others and warn against those that would deny this truth... First of all it is our calling to do this over against the churches that have so cruelly cast us out." With this, I can heartily agree but sincerely believe, as was stated before, that the time has arrived when we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, have fulfilled our first calling in the matter of Mission Work to the Christian Reformed Churches.

Now, in the third place, in answer to the question: "What future is there in our Protestant Reformed Missionary Work?"—I can subscribe to the suggestion that "We go anywhere with the full and pure preaching." However, this suggestion, as far as I can determine, has not as yet been followed. For the Mission Work of our churches has always been limited by some restrictions—formal or otherwise—intentional or unintentional. In the case of the Christian Reformed Churches, it was our bounden duty to labor among them and bear effective testimony because of the great sin which they had committed.

In the case of other fields of labor, it was because of the semblance of Reformed persuasion — Reformed thinking that attracted missionary labours. In other instances, it was the question of National background. Missionary labours were exercised among groups not only because of the Reformed background, but also because of the strong Holland element. In other words, the language,
in some instances, made it comparatively easy to engage in Mission Work.

Of course, I feel that all of these considerations should be weighed in the early period of organization and Mission Work. However, they should always be weighed as Secondary considerations—always sub-servient to the prime motive and hence, little time should be spent on such basis for doing Mission Work.

The command of our Lord was to go into all the world. When the disciples first began their missionary labours, they were instructed to concentrate on a particular people namely, the Jew. Later, it was evident from the fulfillment of prophecy that the Gentiles were to be included, and thus extending the scope of missionary labour beyond the borders of Palestine.

We begin at Jerusalem, that is, in the immediate and adjacent areas; this is where we start—without discrimination. The future in our Protestant Reformed Missionary Work is the brightest for which we can ever hope. I say this on the basis of the fact that we can look Eastward, Westward, Southward, Northward and we can see nothing but clear fields of labour. I say the future is the brightest if we are motivated and called to do Mission Work simply on the basis of the desire to faithfully proclaim the whole counsel of God in Christ Jesus—which is a savour of death unto death and life unto life.

Our calling is NOT to grow in size and in number, that is numerically. Our calling is NOT to establish churches nor is it on the other hand, to have a name and place in this so-called “religious” world of our day. Our calling is simply to guard, and to guard jealously this Truth entrusted unto us by our Sovereign God. But at the same time, our calling is to proclaim this Truth to all the world. This, to my mind, is not only the way in which we fulfill our calling but also the way in which we maintain and develop the Truth of God’s Word, as well. For the development of the Truth is not the result of time spent in the study, or of the preaching of this Truth in restricted and limited circles. On the contrary, the Truth is developed as a sphere of those who have embraced it and who have been nurtured on it. In other words, the Truth of God’s Word is developed as a result of controversy—it is the fruit of controversy, and controversy results when the Truth is proclaimed without distinction—to all the world.

Our calling in respect to mission work is simply to proclaim faithfully, the Word of God to His own praise and glory. If we have such a calling, then we will never bemoan the fact that we do not establish new churches. We will never be discouraged or despondent because God does not show us the fruits of our labours, but we will always be content in the knowledge that the Word of God never returns void, but always accomplishes its two-fold purpose. On the other hand, if God is pleased to cause our labours to bear fruit before our eyes then, of course, we will still be content and rejoice in the knowledge that our

(Continued on page 11)
FROM THE PEN OF OUR MISSIONARY

Present Mission Endeavor

Rev. Andrew Cammenga
Grand Rapids, Michigan

A MAZE of circumstances has brought us a long way from home, and from the center of our Protestant Reformed Churches. But circumstances are not situations foreign to the providence of God, the kindly leading and wise direction of our Heavenly Father. Pleasantries and discomforts, joy and sorrow are the gracious leadings of the Lord, all directed toward the gathering of His Church. And so through the sad maze of circumstances surrounding the Canadian field our way was directed to this far northwest corner of our country, where it pleased the Lord to establish another of our Prot. Ref. Churches.

The Lynden-Sumas districts of the State of Washington seemed to offer a perfect field in a period when it was difficult to decide whether Canada or the States should be the object of our mission endeavors. From this vicinity we could do both, work in the States and in Canada. Lynden and Sumas are border towns, a large community of folk of the Reformed persuasion, while just over the line, in the Province of British Columbia, there are growing communities of Dutch immigrants.

Looking at the results of our labors here since December of 1950, it is rather discouraging when measured according to the standards of men. Speaking of Canada, we are all acquainted with the outcome of our labors among the “Liberated” brethren, while the thousands of other immigrants of the Reformed Faith stand solidly with the Christian Reformed Churches, barring few exceptions. Since 1948 the progress of the Chr. Ref. Churches in Canada has been amazing; they have gained no less than fifty-three congregations, an estimated increase of more than five hundred percent! However, this increase is not as amazing as it may appear when judged from the point of view of “Mission” endeavor. The work of the Chr. Ref. Churches in Canada can hardly be called “mission” work, since actually their entire gain, barring few exceptions, is the result of their “importing” a church from the Netherlands into Canada. Hundreds of Dutch families are brought into Canada by these churches through their “Field Men”, whom they employ to seek sponsors and placement for immigrants desiring to enter Canada. These immigrants are thus placed within a given area, and the Chr. Ref. missionaries organize them into congregations. It need surprise none that these families feel attached and obligated to the church.

The I.O.O.F. Hall where our Lynden people worship.
which has expended so much effort for them. It, therefore, stands to reason that our work among these immigrants is just as difficult as our work among the Chr. Ref. people in the States; they all consider our work as a “troubling of Israel” rather than that of showing them their error in love. However, we have made some fine contacts in Canada, and at the Lord’s time this labor will bear its fruits.

Reviewing our labors in the Lynden-Sumas field the results are discouraging if one is interested in numbers. But if ours is true mission zeal we can be thankful to the Lord that He has led us here. True mission zeal is, after all, witnessing for the Lord, giving testimony of the glorious Gospel of His sovereign grace in Jesus Christ. From that point of view we may say that our labor in Lynden has been blessed. For, though it be but a small congregation that has been established here, it is a witness for Christ, another out-post bearing record of the glorious truth so dear to those who by grace have learned to love the pure Reformed truth of God’s sovereignty and grace. No, we do not count many members in our Lynden church, but we have a witness here; that is all important. For that we labored and prayed, and those prayers the Lord has graciously answered.

Though small, our Lynden congregation has a fine group of young folks. Our Young People’s Catechism Class numbers eleven, and we have very interesting meetings. No doubt, before long these young folks will also organ-

Lynden Young People
Girls, l. to r.—Grace Buma, Jennie Postma, Gertrude Vander Meulen, Tillie Buma, Bertha Vander Meulen, Hilda Buma. Boys, l. to r.—Andrew Vander Meulen, John Postma, Doede Postma, Peter Vander Meulen.

ize their own Young People’s Society and join the ranks of our FPYPS. Besides these young folks, we have young folks “up-and-coming”, the Children’s Catechism class, which numbers thirteen. Only a few more years, if by God’s grace all these youthful members remain faithful, and our little congregation will enjoy a steady growth. May God bless these youthful members abundantly so that together they may grow in and remain faithful to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Possibly many of our Beacon Lights’ family do not realize what it means for young folks such as these to enter our churches. It is not as easy and pleasant as it appears from a distance. Bear in mind that these young folks have had their friends in the “other” church. In some cases it means breaking their friendship, in most cases it means a measure of ridicule, letting it be felt that this “church business” is ridiculous, silly, without due cause, pet notions of some head-strong, narrow-minded, and even self-righteous people. This is the reproach of Christ, and though in a
small measure, it is keenly felt, and it takes much prayer, an abundance of grace and real active faith to overcome these obstacles and live in the conviction: This is the Truth in Christ, for it we shall stand, by it we shall conquer. May God help them!

Undoubtedly some of our readers know a bit of this struggle, too, who, having a boy- or girl-friend in the “other” church, find it so very difficult to convince the other party (Alas, and sometimes themselves) that the question: “Which church?” is all important. If this difficulty were only due to denominational loyalty, in the good sense of that word, then the matter would be more simple, since then it would be a matter of purity of doctrine. Where doctrine is involved there one finds tangible facts to debate and consider, and the other party will lay himself open for debate since he feels the seriousness of the matter. But today we live amid denominational indifference which spells indifference in all matters related to spiritual things. Here debate and the weighing of matters is impossible. Here confessional standards or creeds are of no count; doctrinal debates and purity of doctrine is just a mania. What counts is: “church”! And ‘church’ spells “salvation” since every church makes this their business. To such the choice of a church is determined merely by a certain prominence of a given church, its social or other advantages, or tradition: Dad and mother were members there, and we were born, baptized and reared there.

How very common this condition is among our “Reformed” generations today! Added to this is the resultant ignorance of doctrine. All this makes our present mission endeavor so difficult. One is simply at a loss where to begin, what methods should be employed, how to contact them, how to get them to talk. Were there a love for and a knowledge of the truth, people would want to come and investigate and debate the issue. Then we would get somewhere! But now most denominational walls have fallen; or there is the dangerous denominational smugness, hence: no interest, no debate, no argument of any kind—we’re all in the same business, we’re all working for the same cause; while the smug denominationalist muses: “Our church has ‘arrived.’”

From these continued and persistent experiences, and from our long record of twenty-seven years of faithfully calling back the Reformed brethren from their erring ways, we conclude that it is high time that our churches consider another field. The time has arrived that we should reach out to those communities where the church has en-
tirely or nearly deteriorated because their own men have forsaken both their sheep and the Pasture of the Word. And reach out as well to the dark continents of heathendom.

This, we are convinced, is more and more becoming our calling in our mission endeavors for the present day. There is also a growing feeling for this among our people. We surmise that this feeling was also mingled with Beacon Lights’ splendid idea for devoting this issue to Missions. We hope that before long another issue of this nature shall appear, and in it an announcement by our Synod calling for a devoted young man (or men) who, at the expense of our churches, will give himself to study the language and orientate himself for the work of Missions on the foreign field chosen by our churches. Is this not a matter worth our sincerest consideration? However, let it not be forgotten that equal Mission opportunities are found among the “heathen” of Main Street and Hamlet, USA.

We have a glorious Gospel—really, the only Gospel! How wonderful if it would be to prove its power and glory in the way of Christ’s command: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!”

This is the pillar of our hope,
That bears our fainting spirits up;
We read the grace, we trust the word,
And find salvation in the Lord.
MISSIONS

THE PROTESTANT Reformed churches don't believe in missions!

We occasionally hear voices, from without, make this statement. Can it be true?

Churches that are Reformed and the purest manifestation of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth—can they—dare they—not believe in missions?

Did not Jesus Himself command that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem? Luke 24:47.

The Protestant Reformed Churches do believe in missions!

How could it be otherwise? When God commands, His people must obey. It is the sincere desire of the child of God to humbly obey the command of Christ in faith. So it is also the desire of our churches, as evidenced by their official decisions, to obey Christ's command in regard to missions.

The text we referred to states, "beginning at Jerusalem" meaning, from the center or heart of the church, outward. For years our churches have supported missionaries whose labor has, thus far, been confined to bringing the pure gospel to those whose background is Reformed and within the confines of our own country.

Have our labors, thus far, fully complied with our calling in respect to missions? Is the time now ripe and are we prepared to go forward, in faith, also in this respect?

We are dedicating this number of 'Beacon Lights' to 'Missions' in order that by prayerfully thinking, speaking and writing on these matters it may become apparent what God's will with our churches is; with regard to missions.

Have we as young people any calling in this matter? In the first place we would point out that in order to do mission work among others we must, as a church but also as individuals in that church, know the pure truth of God's Word. How can we teach and proclaim to others that of which we ourselves are not thoroughly convinced?

Secondly, and surely of no less importance, it is essential that we must, as a church, and as individual christians in it, live by that truth in order that our knowledge may not be head-knowledge but may permeate our every word and deed and that. Those who become our mission subjects must be able to see that our testimony is of the heart and the very essence of our lives.

Every individual in the church is not called to the office of missionary, but we
do nevertheless have a definite calling in regard to mission in this sense, namely, to testify, to those without, with whom we come into contact, of the word of God and of the will of God, by means of our words and deeds. For this reason also it is so essential that our words and deeds should be in harmony with the truth of God which we profess to hold dear.

May God bind these things upon your hearts and may He also by His Spirit awaken in some of you a desire and a calling to proclaim His word in the office of missionary to those who are without, whether this be in our own country or upon the foreign field.

There is, lastly, this important phase of mission endeavor in which we all can and must take part. It is to remember our missionaries with our prayers before the throne of grace and to willingly and freely give, as God has blест us financially, for the cause of missions. What a great source of strength and joy it is for our missionaries to experience that God’s people back home and they, meet before the throne of God on their behalf and that they also tangibly support the cause which they mutually love, with their gifts.

We trust that our feature articles this month and also those of our regular contributors will point the way more explicitly and give us ample food for that along these lines. My God use these means to reveal His will to us and stir up zeal among us to witness to the “truth as it is in Jesus” to all to whom He in His good pleasure will send it and us.

SDY

WHAT FUTURE IS THERE IN OUR P. R. MISSIONARY WORK?

(Continued from page 5)

God was pleased to use us as instruments in His hand to gather His Church through His Spirit and Word.

May this be our joy and comfort as we receive Grace to set our hands upon the work of Missions, and thus faithfully fulfill our great and high calling in Christ.

NOTE:— The substance of this paper was presented to the League of Men’s Societies (5-1951) and also to the Student’s Club (11-1951).

I’ll make your great commission known;
And ye shall prove My Gospel true,
By all the works that I have done,
By all the wonders ye shall do.

Teach all the nations My commands,
I’m with you till the world shall end;
All pow’r is trusted in My hand,
I can destroy, and can defend.
HERALDING OUR FAITH

WE HAVE received a request from the Beacon Light's Staff to fit in our contribution for this month with the missionary theme to which this particular issue is given. With this request we willingly comply were it not for the fact that we are now interrupted in our current series of articles on the subject of "Christian Living and our Faith". To somewhat avoid this interruption and keep our readers mindful of the subject of our series, while at the same time heeding the request of the staff, we insert this installment in which we purpose to show that our Christian Living demands that we Herald our Faith.

We must restate here what has been said before (Nov. issue) that when we speak of faith in this connection we have in mind "the content of faith" or that which we believe, which in substance is the pure Gospel. In character that faith is strictly "Reformed". It offers no compromise with any departure from the truth. We must then herald the Gospel according to our Protestant Reformed convictions and in so doing we exercise ourselves unto Christian Living.

We might profitably consider various phases of this important subject. There is the phase of the official task we have as churches to herald this faith. Often it is erroneously insinuated that we cannot heed the missionary mandate of Scripture as churches because of the fact that in 1924 we have taken the stand that the Gospel is not a well-meant offer of salvation by God to all men. Those that reason thus reveal their utter stupidity and ignorance of the Church's mission calling. They are motivated in their charges by a wrong and misplaced zeal that places the emphasis upon the concern for men's souls, all of which God earnestly desires to save, they claim. They are more anxious for men than for God. Stripping the latter of all virtue they appear as ardent zealots of the impossible. We have no affection toward that mission spirit.

Properly, we must place emphasis upon the desire and concern to hold before all men the great glory and honor of the Sovereign God as it is manifest in the mighty works He has done and will do. Our first mission objective must be to testify of our great God and witness of His matchless works. Motivated by His love we must do this by proclaiming the truth of the Gospel as it is given unto us. We must make known the objective Protestant Reformed faith.

In the light of this task we may speak

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of three groups or classes which are the objects of this mission. First, there is the church itself. Within her the Word is proclaimed so that she may always behold the greatness of God Whom she loves and worships.

Secondly, there is the sphere of the existing church or the church that once held the faith but has sacrificed it for Arminian morsels. Before her the Truth must be held. In this light the home-mission or church-extension work of our churches in the past is not only justified but is seen as a work of greatest necessity Where’er there a few may be found who will still give ear, this function must continue.

And thirdly, is the sphere of those who do not know the faith, for to them, too, we have a mandate to herald it. We call this sphere the unchurched or heathen. Our first concern here is not “how many can we save” for we can save none of them but we must “say unto the heathen that the Lord reigneth”. (Ps. 96:10) With diligence, prayer and fervent zeal we must heed this great task.

Another phase of this subject is the task or duty confronting each one of us to herald our faith. By this we do not imply that all of us must become ministers or missionaries but we have in mind the statement of our Heidelberg Catechism (L. D. 32): “By our whole conduct we must testify our gratitude to God for His blessings and that He may be praised by us; also, that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.”

In brief, “we must live our faith”.

By doing this we testify to all those with whom we come into contact. We are witnesses of the Lord and we must never forget it. Our whole life and conduct, therefore, must be in harmony with that which we believe as Protestant Reformed Youth.

Often this phase of our missionary calling is minimized or virtually ignored while we get all on fire about sending a missionary to China or Africa. Without minimizing the importance of the latter we stress the necessity of beginning these things at home. If we are negligent in our first duties the extended labors of our church cannot be fruitful.

It is then a sad omen if we, the Protestant Reformed Youth, in our practical Christian Living are no different from others who do not have the faith that has been delivered unto us. Of the latter we can hardly expect that they walk the “strait and narrow path” (Matt. 7:13) but of us it is required. In no better way can we herald our faith than by living it and when we fail in this our whole mission endeavor must collapse. According to our belief we have no “bridges” between us and the world. In our practice, then, let us not try to construct them. Only when faith and practice are in tune with each other

(Continued on page 17)
The European Situation

LAST TIME European federation occupied our attention in Current Comments. This time again an important item appeared in my daily paper which is very revealing as to the success of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. This comes from a columnist and not from a news item, which does not discredit the news but rather shows that this important news did not reach our headlines.

The matter I refer to is that Chancellor Konrad Adenauer has said he will not agree to rearm German units until the Saar issue is settled in conformity with West German demands, and except on a basis of equal membership in NATO. This shows that the efforts of General Eisenhower are meeting with difficulties which seem to indicate that it will disintegrate.

Then this significant item appears about West Germany. “West Germany is behaving exactly as any nation in her position would behave. Divided and dismembered—but nevertheless a country composed of the most numerous, industrious, and biologically vigorous people on the continent, and its key industrial center—Germany is being wooed by both the Soviets and the West. The very measures taken by her conquerors have given her the balance of power in Europe. That she exploits that power is inevitable”.

Another striking sentence appeared about France. “What France wants is impossible: a West Germany strong enough to defend her against the Soviets, but weaker than France herself; to keep Russia out of Europe with Germany halfway out.”

To my mind this is another example of the difficulties that all the nations face in the world, and another indication how the image of Nebuchadnezzar is inevitably true for the ten kings.

Communism

The Saturday Evening Post is running Whittaker Chamber’s Own Story of the Hiss Case. The first issue appears in this week’s Post.

This history is very dramatic and Chambers who formerly was a senior editor of Time writes this in a dramatic and eloquent style.

It is not my purpose to comment on the material, but there is a sentence about communism that is worthy of our attention.

Chambers writes: “The communists vision is the vision of man without God. It is the vision of man’s liberated mind, by the sole force of its rational intel-

(Continued on page 19)
Concerning Pelagianism. (conclusion)

IN THIS essay we will try to conform to the wishes of the Board to reflect on the meaning of Missions. We shall therefore not necessarily need to depart from our subject: Pelagianism. The reason? Pelagianism is an evil, which is like the leaven of the Pharisees. It leaveneth the whole lump of Gospel truth, corrupting it, and effects all the efforts to proclaim it. In a word, it corrupts the very Gospel itself, and, therefore, also the preaching of it, whether this be in the established church or in the Mission Field.

We will write this essay in the form of questions and answers. They are the following:

1. Is there a different approach in the preaching of the Gospel as this is performed by the Pelagian when compared with the preaching of the Augustinian-Reformed preacher?

Indeed there is, and that, too, all along the line. The difference is not merely one of psychological “approach”, but it is indeed also a difference of content. It is a difference between the gospel that is and “another gospel” which is not another, but which is a corruption of the same, even though it were proclaimed by an angel from heaven.

2. What is this a difference of content and of the very essence of the Gospel?

It should be observed that the Pelagian has really denied the truth, that God is the Savior of His people, who completely and efficaciously saves them from their sins. In its stead he has placed the pestilent error, that man is his own Savior. According to the Pelagian man is His own Savior; God really helps those who help themselves! According to Pelagianism Christ was not sent to pay the ransom price for our sins as the Last Adam, but rather to show us how we should save ourselves; Christ has become the Great Example!

Such, by the way, is the teaching too of all Modernism, which is nothing else but the consistent application of the erroneous principles of Pelagius to all of life, corrupting it at the very Fountainehead. (See former essay from our hand).

Over against this the Reformed teach, that God is our complete Savior, Who has sent His Son a propitiation for our sins. Legally He has saved us on the Cross in Christ’s perfect sacrifice for our sins, and spiritually He saves us by shedding forth His love in our hearts, changing them from death to life, from bondage to freedom, from weakness to strength, from unwillingness and obduracy to willingness, making us most wonderfully pliant, and desirous to serve
Him with glad hearts in true repentance. And what God has thus once begun in us He will continue even unto the day of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Such is Reformed teaching!

3. Does the erroneous content of the Pelagian teaching also affect their presentation of the Gospel, whether this be in an established “church” or on the “Mission-Field”? Indeed it does. It effects their “preaching” in such a way, that they have no preaching of the riches of the Cross, nor do they have a command to repent, and turn into the Lord as unto the Covenant God. Theirs is not the confrontation of the sinner with the God of Salvation, but it is the confrontation of man with himself to save himself with the help of God. The confrontation is wholly other in the Pelagian “preaching” than in that of Biblical-Reformed preaching.

4. Can you delineate a bit more upon this difference of “confrontation”? Yes we can. It ought to be evident, that on the Pelagian basis there really is no sinner, who must be saved from a vicious nature, a sinner who is daily in need of hearty and godly repentance, an abhorring of self in dust and ashes. He must simply learn to use his will correctly, and to give himself character. Original sin he does not confess to have, neither are his actual sins really perversity of will. They are rather the weakness of will, and very wrong habits which must be concerned. When the Pelagian preaches Christ he makes of Him simply a best man, the perfect man who by His example teaches others. But Jesus is not the Savior according to him. Hence, there is no need of repentance, neither is it preached. Such is all Modernism of today, and Arminianism of today in its confrontation of man with the “Gospel” is not a wit different. Really a Bible-Gospel preached to a Pelagian-conceived sinner is not conceivable. And what is more it is one of Satan’s horrible yet cunningly conceived lies to deceive the simple! Let us beware of this Pelagian-Arminian “confrontation” with the Gospel!

5. But does not a Pelagian - Arminian teaching “win souls for Christ” on the Mission Field? It ought to be clearly understood, as clearly as we ardently love the salvation of our own souls, that no Pelagian or Arminian can ever do what he pretends to do. No more than what a mere man standing on the grave-yard can call the dead to life, no more can any Pelagian preacher in His Pelagian-Arminian way bring one soul to Christ. A teaching, which is out of hell itself, does not win souls for heaven to glory in the Lord. All the teaching activity of the Pelagian - Arminian preaching ends in sheer Modernism. That is history. Why? Because as sure as water runs down hill, so surely Pelagianism - Arminianism is Modernism in its very core. Such preaching is not preaching of the Gospel, even though it mentions the fundamental facts of the Gospel, as does every heretic, it is not the preaching, which is the Keypower of Christ whereby the Kingdom's
portals are opened to the believers. Such preachers refuse to enter the Kingdom themselves, and they forbid those to enter the Kingdom who would. A really Pelagian convert is like the man of whom Jesus speaks, from whom the unclean spirit has gone forth. Then this unclean spirit seeketh rest and findeth none. So he returns to this man, taking seven other spirits with him worse than himself, and returneth to this man as to a house swept and cleaned. And the end of this man is worse than his beginning. So is the Pelagian convert. He simply dismissed one error for worse heresy. He has not been “won for Christ” at all, but simply was confronted with himself to save himself out of the frying pan into the fire.

5. Is there then no such reality as “winning souls for Christ”?

Indeed there is; however, we must be careful to leave this truth stand in its undiluted Scriptural meaning, which is a far cry from the Pelagian-Arminian slogan.

6. In what sense, then, can we speak of winning souls for Christ?

In the sense in which also the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of “winning others for Christ by our walk” in thankful repentance. Thus in our walk we are a book read by all who see us. The “others” who are won are not the Pelagian goody-goodies, who must save themselves, but they are the children for whom Christ died, who take courage to walk in the love of Christ when they see their companions walk in thankful-ness, glorying in the Lord their righteousness. Surely there is a testimony, a saving testimony of the Spirit in the hearts of the brethren, in the home, school, church or factory, by means of our walk. But this is the work of Christ in and through us. To Him alone be the praise, honor and glory forever. Thus all of life is a mission, and all God’s people are missionaries, walking worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. Such is also the truth on the Mission Field. Paul’s preaching was effective, but his entire conduct also befitted the Gospel, and so he saw fruits of his preaching in Christ wherever he labored in the Gospel. In this sense others are won, while Christ loves them.

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CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Continued from page 13)

does a melody of sweet music flow unto the ears of fellow christians throughout the world. That song must remain your and my missionary testimony through which the faith is heralded.

To begin our missionary calling then let us first examine our own Christian Living. Let us make the necessary adjustments and putting all things in order within the church, let us go on to “preach the Gospel unto every creature”.

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THE MAJESTIC PALM

"On the next day much people that were come to the feast when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."
—John 12:12, 13

PALM BRANCHES have become a symbol throughout Christendom of Christ’s “Royal Entry” into Jerusalem. How erroneous was the Jewish conception of Christ’s mission upon the earth—to establish a kingdom here below! However, the death and resurrection of the King soon altered their view, and palm branches as the token of peace and victory no longer had significance for many.

The Greeks and Romans considered the palm tree to be peculiar to the region of Palestine; in fact, when Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans, the conquerors issued a new coin to celebrate this event. They symbolized Jerusalem as a disconsolate woman resting under a date palm.

Many references are there in Scripture to the palm tree; but this generally has reference to the date palm. It is characterized by a central trunk, which terminates in a whorl of large feathery leaves. They are an unusually sturdy tree, attaining a height of 60-80 feet, and it is not uncommon for them to live for two centuries.

Extremely important was this tree to the Israelites. It provided them with food, and was used for shelter and clothing. The large leaves furnished material for roofs and walls, for baskets and mats. Its ornamental value is evident from the fact that Solomon incorporated it into various carvings of the temple.

There are approximately a thousand species of palm trees, of which only a few are branched or creeping. They produce either of two types of leaves—fan shaped or feather shaped. These are produced in a rosette formation at the apex of the trunk. Can you visualize a fifteen foot fan-shaped leaf or a feather leaf forty feet long? The flowers are shaped like a spathe similar to a “Jack-in-the-pulpit” or a “Calatia.” The fruit consists of a cluster of berries or nuts which range in size from a pea to that of a melon (double coconut).

The trunks of the royal palm resemble ornate columns of concrete, while the trunks of the old fan palms simulate the
base of a vaseshaped lamp.

We can scarcely conceive of the existence of certain peoples without the presence of the palm; for example: the Arabs and the date palm, the natives of southern India and the palmyra palm, also the Pacific islanders and the coconut palm.

The value of the palm tree to mankind should never be underestimated. It ranks next to grasses (including grains) in economic importance and is considered to have a thousand or more uses. The timber and leaves are used for building materials. The long durable fibers are woven into cloth, mats, wicker furniture, baskets, and rugs.

The oil of the palm is useful for food (margarine, salad oil, cooking fats), for illumination (candles), lubrication, wine, and fuels. The seeds may be made into buttons, or be ground into camel’s food, and some, as in the case of the date and the coconut, are edible. Some species produce spines which serve the natives as needles, fishhooks, and arrow tips.

A few other articles could be mentioned which are derived from this majestic plant: rope, twine, ship sails, rugs, screens, bedding, honey, hammocks, resin, brushes, brooms. Wax obtained from leaves of the carnouba palm found in Brazil is used in shoe polish, floor polish, and phonograph records.

Sago is a food starch similar to tapioca and is obtained from the pith of the sago palm. Thus, perhaps, more than is realized, we use, palm tree products also in our lives.

Once again our attention is called to the wonderful interrelation between man and the plant kingdom, as God had providentially ordained since time began.

CURRENT COMMENTS

(Continued from page 14)

ligence, redirecting man’s destiny and reorganizing man’s life and the world.”

Chambers speaks of Communism and Freedom, two irreconcilable faiths of our time. The question in our mind, however, is: what is the opposite of Communism in the present world? It is the freedom founded in faith in God, or is it also faith in man? There is the pretention often of a faith in God but actions and many words indicate the contrary.

United Nations

There is a sentence from Time about the United Nations that is very rough on the United Nations.

“From the beginning, the dreamers who created the United Nations thought of it as a place where all countries, good and bad could meet and settle their differences. It did not work out that way; each of the two big blocs blackballed the applications of any nation on the other side.”
The Military Mail Bag

Hello, fellows:

ALLOW ME to introduce myself.

My name is Ken Ezinga, and I attend Fourth Church of Grand Rapids. It so happens that I am going to be the new "Serviceman’s Voice" for your section of Beacon Lights.

Our old friend, Jane Schipper, is just too busy to handle this work any longer. I’m sure you’ll all agree with me when I say she did a wonderful job. I only hope I can do as good a job as she has done.

This is your column of course, men, so I don’t intend to do much writing. I’ll leave that up to you. Our readers are interested in you and your experiences, not mine.

But seeing we’re going to become acquainted with each other, I will brief you a little more on myself.

I spent a few days in the Army myself during the last war, 1951 to be exact. I rose rapidly thru the ranks, ending my career as a full-fledged corporal. Two full years of overseas duty, and then back to the uneventful but highly appreciated civilian status in which I hope to remain for the next fifty years or so.

Enough about myself. But I think you’ll agree that I have a general idea of what you are going through.

—Pfc. Garret Plikkema, one of our faithful contributors to this paper, sends us a letter dated the 21st of January.

"The last time I wrote to Beacon Lights readers was in August of ‘51. At that time I had just been transferred into the Dental Clinic of this camp as a dentist’s assistant. I am still serving in that position. I find the work interesting and it is one of the better positions in the Army, I think. At the same time I am anxious to get back to the farm in Montana, which is still my home, and do not plan to make dentistry my future occupation.

"By the 21st of February I will have completed a year in the Army and the Lord willing, I will be out at that same date in ‘53.

"I am enjoying the nice winter weather here in Georgia now, but I dread the summer as it really gets hot here. To my surprise while looking at a U.S. map the other day, I noticed that I am further south than the southern tip of California. It made me feel farther from home than I thought I was. The distance is approximately 2500 miles, but God was pleased in sending me here and I am very thankful I do not have to go as far as Korea or some other distant land.

"I attend the morning chapel services regularly with some of my fellow assistants. Tonight we plan to attend the service in the Baptist church in the nearby town. I try to make the best of the available, but poor, spiritual opportunities in the Army, and long to attend our own church in Manhattan again.

"The radio sermons and church papers are a great help and I wish to thank all of you who make it possible for me and others in the Service to receive them. I just received January Beacon Lights a few days ago, and it certainly helps to strengthen one spiritually and to satisfy the longings we have for the Church we love. I also have opportunities to let some of the other assistants read the material supplied me by our church, and they take quite an interest in them.
too. That in itself is a great help and I thank God that He has placed me among some very fine Christian fellows, most of whom are Baptists and Lutherans. We also have many enjoyable religious debates and discussions.

"I expect to enjoy my second furlough at home in March. It is something one can hardly wait for with patience.

"Until next time, I remain,
Yours in Christ,
Pfc. G. Flikkema, 5611290
Dental Det., 3444 A.S.U.
Camp Stewart, Georgia."

One of Jane’s last tasks was to send a questionnaire to a few of the boys. Cpl. Harold Moss, who is stationed in Mainz, Germany, and who is also from Manhattan, was the first to reply.

We’ll print the question and then Harold’s answer:

1. Do people invite you into their homes? Yes some of the people here invited some of the boys to their homes over the holidays. But I never had the opportunity to go.

2. Do you receive any spiritual benefits from the services you attend? We have a very good chaplain who seems to be very sincere in his beliefs. He does give us some very good sermons. He is one of the best chaplains I have heard since I have been in the Army. The only thing I don’t like about his sermons is that he stood and pleaded for people to accept Christ. But he does preach Christ crucified.

3. Are others interested in reading the church papers you receive? I haven’t seen one who cares to in our room. The religious spirit sure is very low on this post. On Sunday mornings out of over a thousand men only about 30 or 40 attend services and I have seen as few as 10 present.

4. Is it possible to distribute Protestant Reformed literature there? Yes, I think I could manage to distribute our literature.

Harold also tells us:

We have a fairly nice choir here and I also sing in it. I sure do like to sing. I may not be the best singer in the world but I love to sing songs of praise to God and of His love.

A small group of our boys almost every Saturday night go to town to the Youth for Christ meetings. They are near by like our services but I feel it is better to be with those who profess Christ for their own than to be always among the worldly.

I have a feeling God has placed me here for some reason. Of course this is a place of many tests and trials. I feel that this can be a place of strengthening a man’s faith in God. I can say He has surely seen me through some very tempestuous times. I have often wondered why He has placed me so far from home and loved ones. Surely we must spread His truth as much as we possibly can.

At times things look so useless and hopeless. But then I look to God and all of the things He has given me and then once more I can go forward.

Harold’s address is:

Cpl. Harold Moss, 56092759
A.P.O. 42, c/o P.M., New York, N.Y.

Thanks so much, Garrett and Harold.

Remember men, this is your section and its success depends on you.

So come on, everybody, send those letters and pictures. Those folks back home read this paper too and we’re all eager to hear about you.

P.S. from now on, please address your letters to:

Ken Ezinga
1743 Alto Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan
OUTLINE 21

6. CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING PARTISANSHIP
   (I Cor. 4:14-21)

a. The Motivation of the severe rebuke:
   In verses 14 and 16 the apostle expresses two reasons for his writing as he had. The first of these is “to admonish them in love.” It was not his aim to air their sins and to expose them to shame before others. It was in the attitude expressed in Hebrews 13:17 that he approached them in his letter and this they must know or it would be impossible for them to receive his admonition. He watched over their souls as one who must give an account. In love he reached out to spare them from the evils that were threatening their destruction. His purpose was to correct and not to destroy. To leave them go on in this wrong way without admonition would be cruelty and hatred. To correct them is love. Such is the only character of Christian admonition.

   This, in the second place, the apostle does because he is so very conscious of the relation he sustains to them as their “spiritual father who had begotten them in Christ through the gospel”. By employing this figure he emphasizes two things. First, the love he has for them is unique and must be distinguished from that of the pedagogues. It is a father’s love resulting from the fact that they were brought into being as a church of Christ through his efforts. A pedagogue or teacher was one who was employed as a guide or attendant of a child to whom was committed the care of a child. He would lead the child, instruct the child, and watch over the child’s conduct. Yet the child did not belong to the teacher and, therefore, the affection and care of the teacher would not be that of a father to whom the child belonged. Though the Corinthians had thousands of these, the concern they would have for them would not equal that of Paul, their spiritual father. And secondly, this title stresses the fact of the apostle’s authority over them. Now merely the fact that Paul had brought the church here into existence would not give him authority but that he did this “in Christ” and “through the gospel” makes the difference. His authority is then that of “Christ and the gospel.” And so they must receive the correction he administers to them as it comes to them in a father’s love and with Christ’s authority.

b. The concluding exhortation:
   In verse 16 the apostle expresses what he, as a father, expects of the Corin-
thians, his children. "Wherefore" denotes that whereas he is their father, he now with love and authority must enjoin them to be followers (imitators) of himself. We note that this counsel is given with a view to the contentions and spirit of partisanship that existed. The apostle’s advice then must not be construed to mean that he desires the whole church to unite in the “party of Paul” in contrast to the others. That would be in conflict with what he had written in ch. 3:7, and 4:6. He does not mean that they must be “followers” in that way. Rather, he uses a word that means “imitators” and his meaning is that even as he, the apostle, imitated Christ, so they must imitate him, for in doing this they also would be imitators of Christ Himself and all partisanship and contentions would be avoided. They are to walk in “the ways which are in Christ”. (1 Cor. 11:1). This exhortation is very comprehensive and includes their doctrine and the whole of their practical life. They are to follow no man except in as far as he leads them to Christ and in the way of Christ.

To facilitate them in doing this the apostle has sent to them Timothy. Paul, himself was at this time pressed with other labors which could not be left at this time so he sends to them another. Two characteristics are mentioned of Timothy. He is a beloved son. This is not understood in the physical sense but denotes that Timothy was very intimate with Paul so that if anyone knew of Paul’s ways and teachings, he did. Further, he is faithful in the Lord. The Corinthians can receive him with confidence for he will not deceive them or mislead them but will recall to them the sure way of the Lord as they had learned it from the apostle. This may also denote that Timothy was not a servant of Paul even though the latter sent him but he was one who carried out faithfully the mandates of the Lord.

c. A Final Warning to Boasters:

There would be some conceited boasters in the church who would interpret this act of the apostles sending Timothy as a cowardly gesture. They would boastfully claim that Paul was afraid of them and did not dare to face the situation himself. In this they are grossly mistaken for the apostle’s reason for refraining from coming at this time was not fear but “the will of the Lord”. He must follow that “will” in all things. (see James 4:15). Should the Lord permit he will come soon and deal with these vaunters. He will challenge not their oratory and eloquent speaking but their “power of the Spirit and wisdom of God.” He will then also deal with the church as a whole and it will be up to them as to the methods he will employ in doing so. If they continue in their way it will be necessary to use “the rod of correction” but if they heed the admonition given he will manifest a spirit of meekness and love. This does not mean the rod will not be used in love but it denotes a different manifestation of love. A father does not always use the same means although he does have the same love toward his child.
Questions for Discussion

1. How would you approach an erring brother to correct him in love?
2. Must a minister always preach the same in different congregations where local circumstances vary?
3. Are there vaunters in the church today? How can they be detected?
4. How is a minister to know the Lord’s will with respect to the place of his labor? Must he wait for an audible voice? Or are there other indications?

b. The Attitude Of The Church:

When we speak of the church in this connection we do not have in mind every member, but the church represented in the offices. The elders not only tolerated this man but they revealed no regrets at all that the thing was occurring. They gloried vainly in themselves and were puffed up with pride and conceit. They did not regard the honor of God and the sanctity of His church as they ought. Calvin states that there are especially two reasons why they should have been weeping over this matter. Quote: “First, in consequence of the communion that exists among the members of the church, it was becoming that all should feel hurt at so deadly a fall on the part of one of their number; and secondly, when such an enormity is perpetrated in a particular church, the perpetrator of it is an offender in such a way that the whole society (church) is in a manner polluted.” A certain faction sided with the guilty and justified his rascality. Unless corrected the church suffers disastrously under such circumstances. (see Joshua 7, Ques. 82 of Heid. Cat.).

c. The Apostle’s Judgment In The Case:

With apostolic authority the apostle expresses his verdict in the matter and
calls the church to execute it. Verse 5 to some means “to deliver him over to bodily or physical punishment” as Job, i.e., was afflicted by Satan. We rather explain this to mean “excommunication from the fellowship of the church” because the word “flesh” here is not the same as “body” but in contrast to “spirit” denotes “ethical nature”. Verse 11 of this chapter also favors this. Paul’s judgment is that such a one must be disciplined in order that it may serve as a means to save him as is always the purpose of Christian discipline. To this brother, too, the apostle is a “father” but this very evil child needs very strong measures of correction.

Questions for Discussion
1. How serious must a sin be before the Consistory must exercise discipline?
2. In any discipline case what must the elder remember according to verse 4? Why is this important?
3. Why is it more natural to criticize the sins of a brother than to weep over them? Can we do more than weep? If so, what?
4. What does this lesson teach us with regard to our personal responsibility to the Church? To one another?

OUTLINE 23

2. THE CASE OF PROPER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP—(Chapter 5:8-13)

a. Remarks in General:

This entire section is a continuation of the preceding and belongs with it. The apostle is discussing the matter of the incestuous person and the duty of the church with respect to him. However, when Paul speaks of purging out the old leaven, though it may be granted he had in mind primarily that fornicator, there is no reason to limit his exhortation to this. We believe that he means “purge out of the church all that is of evil”. Where this was not done the church exposed herself to another serious evil which is the subject of discussion in the present section. That evil was that the good members of the church would associate with the evil doer in an intimate and friendly way. The church became corrupted further through evil social contacts. To warn and correct them from this evil the apostle writes here about the matter of proper chris-
tian fellowship. We consider this the main idea of these verses.

b. With Whom Fellowship Is To Be Avoided.

In some previous letter the apostle had already told the Corinthians that they were to break off all fellowship with the ungodly world. This he mentions again here and makes plain that he does not mean that the Christian may have no contact of any kind with the world for that would be physically impossible. (see John 17:15) A physical antithesis and separation is not meant. But they are to avoid “fellowship”. They are to avoid keeping company with the world because they are covetous (grabbers), extortioners (robbers, grafters), idolaters (not servers of God) and these things are unbecoming to the Christian. We may not belong as one with them in their “unions, brotherhoods,” etc. Nor may our children be given “to keep company” with their children in their (public) schools. We should know better than to try to justify intimacy with the world on any ground. Scripture forbids it.

Further, the same fellowship is forbidden with respect to those who are in the church and conducts himself as the world. (Note II Thes. 3:14; Matt. 18:17; II John 10) From those who say they are Christians but who act like worldlings we must remain separate. Again, it does not imply absolute separation. We must admonish and warn them but we must not be sociable with them. We may not connive with them in their evil. We may not eat with them because eating together expresses the idea of fellowship and agreement. All social contact with evil doers is forbidden. “Be ye separate!”

c. With Whom To Have Fellowship:

Although this point is not expressly stated in the text, it is a worthy one to consider. It follows by implication that if we are forbidden to have fellowship with “railers, drunkards, etc.” whether they call themselves “brothers” or not, we must seek fellowship with those who in “sincerity and truth are adherents to the faith”. The believer is not one who has no social life but is one who confesses in word and action ‘the communion of saints’. God’s enemies are my enemies and God’s friends are my friends. The society of God’s people is not to be characterized by “revelry, debauchery, immorality, etc.” Leave that to the fornicators! But God’s people eat together in the fear of God and have fellowship in His Word and Covenant. We are to select our associates from those who not only say they are “brothers” (or sisters) but who reveal in their way of life that they are such.

d. The Salutary Purpose:

Where the faithful in the church practice this the wicked ones will soon be cast out and the communion of the church is purified. In Corinth the difficulty was that the fornicator had too many friends. He was left undisciplined and several were attracted to his
“way of the flesh” and upheld him. Then the church is only corrupted more. Where the old leaven of malice and wickedness is cast out, the feast can be among believers in the way that pleases God. It can be done “in sincerity and truth”. Various interpretations of the ‘feast’ mentioned in verse 8 are given. Some hold that Paul refers here to a Jewish Passover to be held about this time and refer to I Cor. 16:8 to sustain their claim. Others say that the apostle speaks of the Lord’s Supper. We feel inclined to agree with Meyer who writes: “they too must keep their feast in an ethical sense, that is to say, by leading a holy life, without sinful admixture, with pure and true Christian virtue... the keeping of the Passover is meant to be a figurative representation of the character of the whole of a Christian’s walk and conversation, because this is to be without moral leaven.”

Proper selection of friends and associates is wholesome to proper sanctified christian living. This must be our constant goal.

Questions for Discussion
1. What do you consider a proper norm by which to guage friends?
2. Is it wrong to be friendly to your neighbor who is not a church member?
3. Show that Anabaptism is in conflict with this passage!
4. If one of our friends turns bad, how evil must they get before we are to break off fellowship with them?
5. Must II John 10 be observed with respect to relatives too? Just what does this verse mean?

OUTLINE 24

3. THE CASE OF LAW SUITS
(Chapter 6:1-8)

a. The evil as such:

It appears from a casual reading of this passage that Paul condemns the act of going to law. Yet, this is not the case, for then it seems that the apostle’s own action of appealing to Caesar in defense of his own case would also be sin. There is a deeper and much more serious offense here. It was the Jewish position that no matter could ever be brought before Gentile courts as is evident from these words: “Whosoever goeth before them with a law suit is impious, and does the same as tho he blasphemed and cursed; and hath lifted his hand against Moses.” This, however, is not the Christian position which recognizes civil authority in its own sphere. The evil here did not consist in the fact of a law-suit but rather: (1) in that brother rose up against brother. This was no doubt a result of the contentions and party factions that existed in the church. One evil flows out of another until there is an uncontrollable stream of iniquity. (2) in that one brother would cheat and defraud another and sought the assistance of heathen judges to do so. There was no evidence of love, kindness and the Spirit of Christ among the brethren but rather their works evidenced malice, hatred and similar vices. (3) in that they chose to despise the church and her of-
fices and resorted to heathens to settle their differences. This is tantamount to despising Christ who rules in the church and ignoring His law as the norm of justice. There was a lack of moral virtue and relationship among the brethren that resulted in this grievous situation.

b. An Important Consideration of Truth

One of the fundamental troubles here lay in the fact that the brethren refused to recognize the offices and counsel of the church (of Christ). The apostle speaks here with severity directing them to the fact that there is no comparison between ‘a saint’ and a ‘worldling’ when it comes to matters of judgment. Apart from the fact that the mind of the natural man is corrupt and that man is always “unjust” (in the original ‘unrighteous’), Paul reminds us of the place which saints occupy as judges by Divine appointment. First, they will judge the world and secondly, they will even judge angels. Interpretations vary on these verses. Many explain this to mean that the saints are judging and condemning the world now in the same manner that Noah condemned the world of his time. Our works are a testimony against the world. Concerning angels some say our judging them means that if one should come and appear among us with evil things we must condemn them also. (Gal.1:8) There may be an element of truth in this but our interpretation is that this refers to the end of time when Christ will judge men and angels with finality and we, the saints, will appear with Him in that judgment expressing the final verdict with Him. Having the mind of Christ, we shall also speak with Him condemning justly all that now stands opposed to Him and His cause.

If then the saints are elevated to such a high position it is indeed a terrible thing to even think them incapable of judging in trivial matters that concern only the things of this present earthly life. I believe that Paul speaks sarcastically in verse 4 to those who were guilty of this sin of litigation when he tells them to appoint those who are least esteemed in the church to judge their matters. His meaning is that they ought to know that the lowest saint is a more competent judge than the highest heathen. It is a shame that they do not attempt to settle their differences among themselves.

But that is not all. It is unbelievable that there is not one in the entire church who is wise and capable of passing judgment upon those matters that were appearing in pagan courts. It is as unbelievable as it is untrue. The trouble lay in the fact that the brethren sinned and evaded the judgment and advice of the church. They must be brought back to understand that apart from Christ there is neither justice nor equity. To obtain these things then they must go to saints in whom Christ dwells.

c. Sound But Difficult Counsel:

Viewing this situation the apostle states that “there is utterly a fault a-

(Continued on page 30)
TELEVISION

A QUESTION that is often asked in our day is whether or not we should have Television in our homes. This question is asked from various points of view, not only by those who fear God, and seek to keep themselves unspotted from the world, but it is also asked by unbelievers who are not at all concerned about the glory of God. Even the unbeliever fears the effect which Television has upon the family, especially upon the children. They realize that it is dangerous, both psychologically and mentally to expose a child to the horrors of mystery and murder dramas which are shown on Television programs. Also Educators fear the evil effects of Television upon school children, who neglect their studies, and lose their necessary sleep because of their intense interest in Television shows.

And well may, even the unbelieving and ungodly parents, be concerned about the moral influence which Television has upon the child, and upon the teen-agers. Time and again we read in the newspapers of crimes which are committed by youth, which can be ascribed to the evil and influence of Television upon their impressionable minds. During the past few weeks we have read such news items as “Fifteen year old son shoots and kills father, because he ordered his children to turn off a sensational Tele-

vision program.” “Teen age baby-sitter strangles six year girl in her sleep, after having watched a murder story on Television”, “Seven year old shoots mother while watching a Wild West Serial.” Is it any wonder that even worldly parents are anxiously concerned about the influence which Television has upon their children. And what is true for the children, is equally true for the adults. One cannot be exposed to the repeated scenes of murder, sex, drunkenness, and immorality without searing one’s soul.

I am well aware that the Television as such is not sinful, and that there are some worthwhile broadcasts which are both constructive and educational, but these constitute but a small percentage of that which is offered on Television. This is especially true from a moral and spiritual point of view. Television, even as the Movies, Radio, Magazines and Newspapers, is largely controlled by selfish interests, interested only in financial gain. The question for them is not what is morally and spiritually constructive, but they are merely interested in catering to the mob, to the sensational, to the carnal and sensual impulses of the masses. They do not care a snap about the moral and spiritual welfare of their Television audience, but are merely interested in financial gain. Yes, they will make a few concessions to satisfy a certain moral
social consciousness, but these conces-
sions are as little as possible.

Now I ask you in all seriousness, if
even the unbeliever is greatly concerned
about the immoral and evil influence of
Television upon their families and homes,
how dare some christian parents expose
themselves and their children to this
mortal danger? It brings the godless
and wicked world right into the sanctu-
ary of our christian homes. It gives
you and your children a ring-side seat
at the movies, the cabaret, the night
club, at the boxing and wrestling mat-
ches, yea at every conceivable form of
worldly and godless entertainment. It
brings your very home, which should
be a house of prayer, a veritable strong-
hold and fortress against the evils of
this world, down to the very level of the
most degenerate dives and hell holes of
iniquity. Much that has been written by
the Rev. R. Veldman in his pamphlet on
“The Movie” is also applicable to Te-
levision. If you have read it, read it a-
gain, if not be sure and read it before
you decide to expose yourself and your
children to the dangers of Television.

Young people, do not ask your parents
to get Television in your homes. It is
especially dangerous for you, just be-
cause it is so appealing to you. We
must not seek the world, but forsake
the world, crucify our sinful nature, and
walk in a new and holy life. “Where-
withal shall a young man cleanse his
way? If he take heed thereto accord-
ing to Thy Word.”

BIBLE OUTLINES

(Continued from page 28)

among them”. The word here translated
“fault” has in it the idea of “a de-
feat”. To carry on this way meant for
the church a defeat. It meant that all
that belonged to the church in the way
of christian virtue, of love, of forgiving
one another, of bearing each others bur-
dens, etc. would be lost. The brother
who would take his case to law might
gain an acre of land by default but
what is that in comparison to the loss
of his soul. It is better to suffer the
loss of earthly things, it is better to be
cheated and lose all than to suffer spir-
Itual defeat. Of course, also this should
not be among saints. Yet, the victory
of spiritual virtue is more glorious than
a victory in a civil court. How hard a
lesson this is for our flesh to learn but
learn it we must. Until we do there is
a fault among us.

Questions for Discussions

1. Is it right for a church to go to law
under any circumstances?

2. How is it possible to love a brother
who has cheated us out of a material
possession?

3. If two brothers have difficulty con-
cerning a legal claim on property, etc.
can they appeal to the Consistory to
solve or judge their case?


5. If the “cheating brother” is not
brought to court, how will he be pro-
perly punished?
THE ROAD TO BITHYNIA

Recently I received a request from the clerk of the Beacon Lights staff that the Book Review for the month of March be a book that would be in keeping with an issue devoted to missionary work. While I found it practically impossible to find a book devoted exclusively to the idea of missionary work, I do believe that "The Road to Bithynia" is basically a novel with that type of a theme. "The Road to Bithynia" concerns itself to a great extent with the missionary journeys of Paul throughout Asia. Possibly the book may be classed as fictional biography.

The story begins with Luke and a Roman centurion, Silvanus in Jerusalem at the time of the stoning of Stephen. Luke at the time is a young man of about 18 who is about to enter medical school. Luke witnesses the stoning of Stephen and because he already has had some medical training he is called upon to pronounce Stephen dead. When he approaches the dying martyr, Stephen's last words are a charge to Luke to preserve the scroll which Stephen has in his tunic. Luke does this and finds himself in possession of the only recording of the teachings of Jesus. Luke shows the scroll to Peter and brings it to the church in Damascus. Soon after Luke is on the way to Damascus with a company of Roman soldiers when they come upon Saul right after God has blinded him. They take Saul to Damascus and deliver him to the house of Judas where Luke also turns over the scroll. Luke becomes acquainted with Ananias and his daughter Mariamne and develops a mild case of puppy love. Soon after Luke is instrumental in the escape of Paul from Damascus by way of going over the wall. The story then picks up the history of Luke after he has concluded five years of medical studies at the charlaton Temple of Asklepios in Pergamum. As soon as he finishes his training he receives a letter from his old army friend, the centurion Silvanus, asking him to accompany the Roman legion in their warfare against the rebellious Paphlaganians. This Luke does and is instrumental in the welfare of the Roman army because of aid as physician. His foster brother Apollonius is critically wounded in the battle and Luke brings him to Tarsus to the house of Ananias who now lives in that City. Ananias gathers Paul and Barnabas together and they all get together and pray for the recovery of Apollonius.
Apollonius becomes well and he and Mariamne fall in love and are married.

It is during the recovery of his brother that Luke becomes really interested in the teachings of Paul and Barnabas and decides to accompany them to Jerusalem. Again in Jerusalem, Luke meets a young convert of Paul's and falls in love with her. When he finds that she also loves him, they promise to marry each other and in so doing incur the displeasure of Paul who not only does not approve of marriage for one who has devoted his life to Christ but who also loves the beautiful Thecla. While in Jerusalem Luke and Thecla come in contact with the licentious and treacherous Herod, king of the Jews. As soon as Herod sees Thecla he must have her for his own and when she spurns him he makes plans to have her thrown to the lions because of her faith in Jesus. Luke rescues her at the last minute and takes her with him to Antioch.

In Antioch Luke is very busy assisting Paul in whatever way he can and also practicing as a physician. As a doctor and companion to Paul, he travels thru the major political cities of the biblical world. During one of their trips together, he and Paul have a dispute and Luke leaves Paul and returns to Thecla to whom he has been married.

Throughout all his travels Luke longs for the time when he may go to Bithynia, a land that Silvanus describes as a place on earth where man remains forever young. However, finally Luke comes to the decision that while in reality there is no such place, he learns that the people of Bithynia are forever happy, or so it seems, and those who are contented are always young. Until the very end of the story this dream and longing for Bithynia remains with Luke altho he more than once expresses the opinion that the peace of a Bithynia is essentially the peace of heart and mind which is the heritage of those who are the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Set against a brilliant panorama of the middle East in the years immediately following the Crucifixion, the story of Luke, biblical physician and chronicler of the life of Christ, forms a novel of human emotion interwoven with what some would call a deep religious feeling. "The Road to Bithynia" could possibly be called a fictional biography. It may be classed as a realistic adventure story, or a romantic history of the biblical age. While the author does concern himself to a great extent with personalities and historical events of the biblical age, he does not stick too closely to the interpretation of Christ's teachings as they are revealed to us in the Scriptures.

Paul is presented as a literal believer in Christ's second coming, but in the sense that he believes in an earthly reign in conjunction with the second coming. Luke is pictured as one who believes the teachings of Christ are an extremely well-developed philosophy showing the world a better way of life. Luke also is not accounted as an apostle or disciple of Christ because he has not seen or heard Christ himself in His sojourn on earth. This error is readily
apparent to anyone who has the slightest knowledge concerning Christ in His work on earth. Students of the New Testament will readily recognize that portions of this novel are dramatizations from The Acts as well as from the epistles of Paul. With the exception of actual historical personages identified as such, the characters are entirely the product of the author's imagination.

While there are many errors in the book, especially in the presentation of Luke and the understanding of the doctrine of Christ by the apostles, I do believe the book to be very worth while. Its erroneous conceptions are readily apparent, and need not be feared as a sly and cunning attempt to discredit the work in the early church. The book is exceedingly well written and moves at a pace that excites an active interest in the reader. I found the story especially interesting, and while its interpretation of Scripture is certainly not Protestant Reformed, I would desire that all of our current fictional and so-called religious novels were as stimulating as this one. Some day I hope to read it again.
Notice to all Societies!

ALL PROPOSALS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT CONVENTION, MUST BE SENT TO THE FEDERATION BOARD BEFORE MAY 31, 1952.

THIS IS TO ALLOW AMPLE TIME FOR SOCIETY DISCUSSION.

SEND ALL PROPOSALS TO:

Miss Fran Dykstra
843 Logan Street, s.e.
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

★ ★ ★

Your Attention Please!

RESERVE TUESDAY, APRIL 1, FOR A YOUNG PEOPLE'S MASS MEETING. MORE DETAILS IN THE NEXT ISSUE!