

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVII

February 1, 1951 — Grand Rapids, Mich.

NUMBER 9

## MEDITATION

### Ridiculous Halting

"And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

I Kings 18:21.

Times were evil in the days of Elijah, the prophet of the Lord.

There was a very wicked king on the throne, and he had ruled Israel for twenty-two years at the time of this speech of the prophet. And when Elijah speaks of two opinions, causing the people of God to halt ridiculously, you can imagine where they received their incentive, their example.

This wicked king had married a heathen princess, named Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. And ever since her appearance on the stage of history, her name has been synonymous with the brazen harlot. She was a very wicked woman, indeed.

Israel numbered four hundred and fifty Baal-priests. And they were a sorry lot. Priests of that which is not. What vanity.

The Holy Bible tells us that the people of God walked in vanities. There was Baal-worship and the adoration of the Ashtaroth on every side.

No, there was no *historical* incentive to follow these detestable deities. The history of Israel is comprised in the NAME! That was all. It was all Jehovah. They were a people of miracles. Every man woman and child was the offspring of Abraham, after he was dead, and after his wife, Sarah, was dead. They were a people that were born through the miracle of Jehovah. They were miraculously called too. And they went to the land of miracles. If you please: God

dwelled there. The Holy God, before whose countenance the angels cover their faces.

Were they not a miraculous people? And did they not dwell in a miraculous land? Go to Jerusalem and you will marvel. There is a place where Jehovah dwells. It is called the Holy of Holies. God feels at home with man, elect man.

And now they will serve Baal, and adore Ashtaroth? For shame!

Yes, but wait: they are not done with Jehovah. Oh no, they have Baal and they have Ashtaroth, but they also have Jehovah on their lips. They serve both.

Jereboam had given expression to it: he pointed to the two golden calves, and said: Behold the God that brought you up from Egypt.

And the result?

It is this: they halted.

And to halt is a ridiculous situation.



To halt is ridiculous. It is laughable.

Try to walk with one foot on the sidewalk, and with the other in the gutter.

To halt, literally, is to have different planes for your feet.

Figuratively, it is to be double-minded.

Spiritually, it is to be more abominable than the out and out wicked.

Let us see. Who was Baal? Baal was the sun-god of the Syro-phenecian nations. Literally it meant Lord or Master. It signified the productive power and fertility of the sun. In a word: it was expressive of power, might.

But it was all a dream. It did not exist. It was literally nothing and vanity. When Israel worshipped Baal, they worshipped the nothing, the nihil.

But on the other hand, there was Jehovah. Ah me, how shall I circumscribe Jehovah. What shall I say of Him?

He is the God of whom Moses sang. He had gone

back through all the generations and had arrived at that moment when God created the worlds. And looking still further he saw Jehovah who is from everlasting to everlasting. Read the ninetieth psalm, and worship.

And He is truly the adorable God. He had revealed Himself to Israel. And that revelation found its climax in the Holy of Holies. That place spoke of the eternal Mystery: God and Man united into one. He had taken Israel from out of Ur of Chaldees, and He had labored with Israel until he dwelled in the land of God, in the Wonderland. And in that Wonderland He told them of still greater beauties to come. Read the psalm of Asaph (73).

And all His footsteps were grace, love and loving-kindness.

Certainly, Jehovah had revealed Himself to Israel, and all such revelation should tend to praise, honor and worship. In a word: the revelation of Jehovah should find among Israel just one reaction: they should serve Him.

But they did not. That is, they served Him alright, but they also served the great NOTHING. And that is Baal.

And so they made themselves ridiculous.  
In their foolish halting between two opinions.  
*Mirabile visu!*



Israel was halting between two opinions, and made themselves detestable in the eyes of God and man.

And God remembered His covenant, and He sent the man of God to speak to this foolish people. And the name of that man of God was Elijah. What an appropriate name! It means: Jehovah is God! His very introduction was a message in itself. What do I say. It was the only message he was about to bring.

What little child among us does not know of that wonderful man of God?

His main characteristic was this: he stood before God. He always fought for God. And through the Holy Spirit he prayed to God that it might not rain, and it rained not for three years and six months. And why? Because of this wicked halting between two opinions. Remember that Ahab had been on the throne for 22 years. Conditions were terrible in the land of miracles.

And at the conclusion of this three year period, Elijah called all Israel together at Mount Carmel.

There they come! I see thousands and thousands. And among them is the host of Baal priests. They are there at Elijah's bidding.

And when the scene is set, Elijah preached his introductory sermon.

And what a sermon!

He goes at once to the very heart of the abomination: How long halt ye between two opinions? He is a rather ruthless preacher.

Imagine yourself to be a wise man. You are going to reprove a friend. And you prepare many pretty speeches. You are going to captivate him with many subtleties.

Not so Elijah. The man has no tact at all. His introduction comes to this: Why be a fool, o Israel!

Yes, and they were fools. On the one hand they hang on to the great NOTHING. And that is Baal. They prostrate themselves before the NOTHING.

And on the other hand, they say that they serve Jehovah.

They made spiritual fools of themselves.

The picture of any man who endeavours to hang on to Baal and to Jehovah.

Ridiculous halting between two opinions.  
Ludicrous behaviour.



Why halt ye between two opinions?  
If Jehovah be God . . . follow Him!  
But if Baal, then follow him!

By the way: note that there are but two possibilities. You either serve Jehovah or you serve Baal, or anything Baal stands for.

What awful injunction! Jehovah or Baal!

Much later we hear something that is somewhat of an echo to this injunction of Elijah: Christ or Bar-abbas!

Awful injunction: Jehovah or Baal.

Jehovah is all that is lovely, just and good.

Baal is all that is vain, idle, empty and corrupt.

Dear reader, do you know what makes me shudder at this point? It is this: how marvellous is God's patience. He suffers long and is kind. He is even willing to stand on a duo with the devil himself. And standing before Israel, He asks the question: Whom do you want? After all is said and done, the voice of Elijah was really the voice of God.

What is Israel going to do?

To ask the question seems sinful. What else but to choose God! Who will be fool enough to choose the devil, Baal, the murderer Bar-abbas?

Ah, but do not be too hasty: these people are halting. They try to keep from choosing. They walk on two planes. They say that they serve both Jehovah and Baal. And of that kind of people you can expect anything.

And so the choice is set before the face of God's people.

They are bidden to choose.

They may not halt between two opinions.  
 They must cease their ridiculous halting.  
 Later, much later, Jesus asks of His church in  
 Laodicea: Oh that you were either cold or hot!  
 The lukewarm is abominable.  
 And ludicrous.



And what is the result?  
 The people answered him not a word.  
 Tell me, would you not expect to see the columns  
 of fire descending from a wrathful God? Here is God  
 standing on a duo: Jehovah contra Lucifer! Here  
 stands beauty such as will make heaven musical for-  
 ever, overagainst ugliness such as will make hell abom-  
 inable for all eternity.  
 And the people utter not a word.  
 Well, let us see. . . .  
 O God, forgive! We are so wicked and perverse.  
 Wonder what the angels were thinking at this  
 juncture.

The people just stand there. There is no reaction.  
 What do I say? No reaction? It is the abominable  
 indifference of the apostate. It is the striking of the  
 beauteous Face of God. It is the insult against heaven  
 and heaven's God.

Does this not remind you of our very day? Is it  
 any different now?

Who does not call himself a Christian? We all  
 serve God, do we not? Everyone knows the Almighty,  
 and everyone calls himself after His name. Try to  
 call a man a heathen, a pagan, and you will have  
 trouble on your hands.

Such it is in the church universal, be they orthodox  
 or liberal.

Such it is in the world of the so-called Christian  
 nations.

Yes, they know God and call themselves after His  
 name. They are said to serve Him.

But they also serve Baal. No, I do not mean the  
 old sun-god of the Syro-phenecians. People are too  
 modern, they are too wise for that nonsense.

But they serve Baal nevertheless.

That is, they serve the great NOTHING.

There is a great hurrying, a great pondering, a  
 great philosophizing of the vain, the empty, the idle,  
 the deceptive, the lying. In short, there is a great  
 service of the devil. And it were well if we do not look  
 too far from home. Let us enter into the recesses of  
 our hearts, and we will be surprised at the abomina-  
 tions we will find.

I would like to make this very clear: there is much  
 halting between two opinions in anno Domini 1951.

There is much folly, much ludicrous behaviour  
 among us today.

It is good sense today to read I Kings 18, and to  
 apply it to ourselves.

Ridiculous halting.



And still, the choice is so easy. Of course, Jehovah  
 is God, and He ought and He must be served.

Serve Baal and try at the same time to serve Je-  
 hovah, and you become a fool, and your end is hell.

Serve Baal? Yes, if you do, you become a fool.

Did you read that chapter in First Kings? Do,  
 and you will be inclined to laugh.

It is one of the places of Holy Writ that uses irony  
 in order to portray the fool in his folly. I receive the  
 impression that Elijah stood near the altar with a  
 perpetual smile on his face.

At least he can hold himself no longer. He steps  
 forth and politely addresses the priests of Baal. These  
 poor deluded people are in a dither about their pre-  
 cious god. But Elijah intervenes and says: Just a  
 minute! Baal is a god: perhaps he is talking, or he is  
 pursuing, or he is on a journey, yes, he may even be  
 asleep. Cry a little louder!

Holy irony of God!

And the priests jump against the altar: they cut  
 themselves with knives, but the fire from heaven is  
 absent. The sum of all their work is exactly zero.

And what would you expect. Baal is not. He is  
 the NOTHING.

And the ridiculousness of halting between two opin-  
 ions is manifested.



But Elijah is going to assure us that Jehovah is  
 God.

And that He should be served.

You know the story. It is surpassingly beautiful.  
 Do not forget that water. Water is the very enemy  
 of fire. Elijah will prevent the invention of the  
 sinner. Everything is soaking wet.

And then comes the prayer of faith to Him who is.  
 Baal is the NOTHING. But do you know that the  
 root meaning of Jehovah is the I AM? And He will  
 prove it today.

The prayer: Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and  
 Israel, let it be known today that Thou art God in  
 Israel. . . .

Beautiful prayer of faith!

And the fire fell and consumed, and consumed. . . .

Of course, God is God. And salvation is of the  
 Lord. And that is Jesus.

And so let us not halt. Let us stand firm on the  
 Rock.

And the Rock is Christ.

G. Vos.

## *The Standard Bearer*

Semi-Monthly, except Monthly in July and August

Published By

The Reformed Free Publishing Association

Box 124, Sta. C., Grand Rapids, Mich.

EDITOR: — Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to REV. H. HOEKSEMA, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Communications relative to subscription should be addressed to Mr. J. BOUWMAN, 1350 Giddings S.E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

**Renewals:**—Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes his subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## CONTENTS

### MEDITATION—

- Ridiculous Halting .....193  
Rev. Gerrit Vos

### EDITORIALS—

- Another Reason .....196  
The Rev. H. Veldman Suspended From Office .....198  
Rev. H. Hoeksema  
A Letter .....200  
An Explanation .....202  
Rev. Gerrit Vos  
Ingezonden .....202  
A. van Dischoven

### OUR DOCTRINE—

- The Creation of the Spirit World .....203  
Rev. H. Veldman  
Rev. Petter's 6th and 7th Instalments .....206  
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

### FROM HOLY WRIT—

- Exposition of Hebrews 10:19-25 .....211  
Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers

### IN HIS FEAR—

- Church Membership in His Fear .....213  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

### PERISCOPE—

- Keeping Our Balance .....215  
Rev. J. Howerzyl

## EDITORIALS

### Another Reason

On another page of the present issue of the *Standard Bearer* the reader will find a contribution in the Holland language from Mr. A. van Dischoven. In that contribution Mr. van Dischoven writes about the Declaration of Principles, which he mistakenly calls "Verklaring van Gevoelen".

I will not take the trouble to translate the entire article, but only that part of it on which I must reflect. It furnishes our churches with an added reason why they should adopt the Declaration of Principles without delay.

Writes he (I translate):

"The two well-known missionary ministers labored hard in Canada among the immigrants (Reformed, Art. 31). Neither labor nor expenses were spared. For a long time they talked and debated with them, so that it may safely be assumed that we became mutually acquainted with each other's standpoint. The Protestant Reformed churches, therefore, also *knew* that the Reformed immigrants from the Netherlands had no intention to repudiate (let go) their covenant conception here in Canada. And that not only because in the Netherlands they had to fight for it to the death, but also and especially because it is their conviction that these things stand on the basis of Scripture and the Confession. The organization of the church of Chatham, however, took place with the assurance that 'Freedom of Prophecy' existed, and because there was a mutual conviction that both views could be tolerated in one church connection. And also and especially because it was the desire to walk in the royal way of the church, which condemns and calls sin all unnecessary crumbling and schism, and not to turn in the way of the sect."

First of all, I want to state that this is a reflection on the work of our missionaries. Mr. van Dischoven writes that according to them, that is, our missionaries, there is room in our churches both for the Heynsian or the Liberated view of the covenant and the Protestant Reformed view, and that they, our missionaries, permitted the people of Chatham to organize into a Protestant Reformed Church with the assurance that there was plenty of room in our churches for both views, or, as Mr. van Dischoven calls it, "Freedom of Prophecy". I do not as yet believe that Mr. van Dischoven writes the truth in this respect, especially in view of the fact that they were well aware that the Mission Committee had refused a request for organization of Chatham for the reason that they

wanted to remain Liberated. And therefore I cannot believe the word of Mr. van Dischoven. Nevertheless, the above paragraph of Mr. van Dischoven is a reflection on the work of the missionaries; and it is up to them to contradict him. The churches surely have a right to know the truth in this regard.

At the same time the article by Mr. van Dischoven also demands a statement from the Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham. Let them clearly state whether Mr. van Dischoven writes the truth in the above quotation. Let them tell us in clear and unambiguous language whether they too understand that the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham was organized on the basis indicated by Mr. van Dischoven, implying the so-called "Liberty of Prophecy" and the right to maintain their own Liberated covenant conception. As churches we certainly have the right to know this and to act accordingly.

The contribution of Mr. van Dischoven also raises the question whether the Consistory of Chatham faithfully functions to maintain the Protestant Reformed truth. This is the second voice from Chatham that is not Protestant Reformed. First Mr. IJtsma in *Concordia* openly expressed that he certainly does not intend to accept the Protestant Reformed conception of the covenant. And now Mr. van Dischoven claims the right to adhere in the Protestant Reformed church to the Heynsian view of the covenant and declares that he will never repudiate it. Who knows how many more there are in Chatham that are of the same conviction? Is the Consistory faithful, and does it do its duty in regard to the maintenance of Protestant Reformed truth? The Consistory knows that the Classis insisted that the prospective members of the church in Hamilton must promise that they will be instructed in the Protestant Reformed truth and that they will not agitate against that truth before they can become members. This certainly was a very mild and reasonable decision. But the contribution of Mr. van Dischoven leaves the impression that the Consistory of Chatham entirely disregards this decision. And therefore, that contribution certainly requires an answer from the Consistory and a clear statement whether or not they maintain the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Church.

As to the statements by Mr. van Dischoven in the above quoted paragraph, I would make the following remarks.

1. It is not true, as Mr. van Dischoven alleges, that at the time of the organization of the Protestant Reformed Church at Chatham the churches knew that the people that were to be organized there did not intend to repudiate or to let go their Liberated view of the covenant. If they had known that, I am sure that the church in Chatham would never have been

instituted. It has always been the custom of our churches, and it is the rule of our Mission Committee, through our missionaries first to instruct the people in the Prot. Ref. truth, and only after they have been instructed, understand our truth; and express agreement with it, to organize them into a Prot. Ref. Church. To labor in this direction is the calling of our missionaries. And in spite of what Mr. van Dischoven alleges in the above paragraph, I still believe that they have done so in Chatham. But it certainly is not true that our Protestant Reformed Churches could know or even expect that when the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham was organized the people there did not intend to repudiate or to let go their Heynsian view of the covenant.

2. Mr. van Dischoven may know that some time before the actual organization of the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham our Mission Committee received a request from a group of people there that they might be instituted and received as a church in the Protestant Reformed communion on their own, that is, on the Liberated basis. And that request was refused by the Mission Committee. What else, then, could the churches expect than that when the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham was actually instituted the people that asked for organization had repudiated their Heynsian view of the covenant?

3. Mr. van Dischoven evidently was present at the occasion of the organization of the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham. And if so, he also will remember the very definite sermon I preached on that occasion. That sermon certainly did not emit an ambiguous sound, as Mr. van Dischoven will remember, I preached on II Cor. 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." I clearly and definitely expounded our Protestant Reformed conception of the promises and of having these promises. And I explained to all that could understand what it meant for the people in Chatham to be organized into a Protestant Reformed Church. In my sermon I emphasized as many as three times that they must never organize unless in a Protestant Reformed Church and with a view to Protestant Reformed truth they could answer the second question of the Baptism Form, whether they believed "the doctrine taught in this Christian church", and that this Christian church means nothing else than the Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham. I claim that after they listened to that sermon, they were organized on false pretences if they did not intend to repudiate or let go the Liberated view of the promises and of the covenant.

Let us above all be honest before God.

Concerning the rest of the contribution of Mr. van Dischoven I wish to make only two brief remarks.



In the first place, Mr. van Dischoven quotes us as if we had asked for proof that the Declaration of principles is in conflict with Holy Writ. That is an error on his part. What we did ask is that if any one could prove that the Declaration of Principles is not in harmony with the Confession, in fact, is not the Confession itself, that then he must show it. As Reformed people we do not question that the Confession is in harmony with Scripture. If that question is to be raised, it must come in the form of a *gravamen* and must be presented in the official way to consistory, classis, and synod. And therefore, the sole question is whether or not the Declaration of Principles is in harmony with the Confession.

Secondly, at the close of his contribution Mr. van Dischoven suggests that we are guilty of persecuting true members of the church that want to live holily according to the Word of God. But such an accusation is entirely false. We do not want to persecute the Liberated. But we want to keep our own church pure. If the Liberated people want to maintain their own view of the covenant and are convinced that that view is based on Scripture and the Confession, we have no quarrel with them, provided they do not try to sail under a Protestant Reformed flag. Why, if such is their conviction, do they try to enter into the communion of Protestant Reformed Churches? Why do they not organize their own churches in Canada? Why do they want to create schism in our Protestant Reformed Churches? I have no doubt that if they organized churches on their own basis we could still have correspondence with them. Nor do I doubt that if such churches were poor, the Protestant Reformed Churches would be willing to help them. But what we do not want is to open our churches for the Heynsian view of the covenant which once, in 1924, we have repudiated. And therefore, I certainly deny that we are guilty of persecuting those that walk according to the Word of God.

Once more I want to emphasize that we must be honest before God.

H. H.

## CONSISTORIES

### *of Classis East*

Classis East decided: "In view of the present international situation to have a special day of prayer in accordance with Art. 66 of the Church Order."

For this special prayer service Classis East has set aside the evening service of Sunday, February 4, 1951.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

## The Rev. H. Veldman Suspended From Office

The Consistory that still sails under the flag of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hamilton has had the audacity to suspend the Rev. H. Veldman from the office of the ministry of the Word!

I just received here in Doon a letter from the Rev. H. Veldman, dated Jan. 13, 1951, which begins as follows: "Well, here it is Saturday morning, and all I have to do is write you and others a letter. This is quite a novel experience, something new in my lifetime. I have been denied the pulpit here. This also includes teaching catechism."

Already the Consistory of Hamilton have called in the Consistory of Chatham to advise them about proper steps to the Rev. Veldman's ultimate deposition from office.

Amazing! Amazing this is, because of the shameless effrontery of a few Liberated immigrants to attempt to depose a Protestant Reformed minister from office, that always has been and still is faithful to his ministry, and against whose walk and life no one can or ever has lodged an accusation. This I call nothing short of brazen impudence.

Amazing this is, too, because of the utter lack of moral responsibility these immigrants evince in making the attempt to depose the Rev. Veldman.

Well may I ask: Are they Liberated, or are they Libertines?

Here is the situation of a would-be Protestant Reformed Consistory who plot to depose a minister of the Word of God who has done nothing than be very faithful to his ministry.

The Rev. Veldman sacrificed himself completely, himself and his family, to accept a call which the Lord had bound upon his conscience. He left a nice and flourishing congregation, that had been built up by his labors through the grace of God, and that had recently built a beautiful church edifice. He sacrificed himself and his family by leaving the U. S. and sojourning in a strange country. He sacrificed himself and his family, because his children had to leave the Christian School and attend the public school in Hamilton. Nor could his children properly and fruitfully partake in the divine worship, for Hamilton's congregation worshipped in the Holland language, which the children cannot understand. And now, after less than a year of faithful labor, and without ever having received the smallest token of appreciation for his faithful ministry, they evince such a lack of moral responsibility that they cruelly cast him out.

Are they Liberated, or Libertines?

Before the Rev. Veldman accepted the call to Ham-

ilton, he discussed the situation first with the Consistory and thereupon with the whole congregation, told them exactly how he intended to labor among them and what they would expect of him as a Protestant Reformed minister. And they all pledged their support, Consistory and congregation alike. If it had not been for this, it is at least possible that he would have declined the call. And now, behold, the word of these faithless people meant so little to them that they are not ashamed, after less than a year, to cast him out, and as far as they are concerned to put him on the street.

#### Liberated or Libertines?

But you ask: what may be the cause of this action on the part of the Consistory? Did the Rev. Veldman, perhaps, commit a gross sin, worthy of deposition according to Art. 79 and 80 of the Church Order?

On the contrary, he was faithful to all his work, the Consistory themselves being witnesses. Nor could they allege anything at all to blame his life and walk in the midst of the congregation and in the midst of the world.

They suspended the Rev. Veldman on the ground of (O, shades of 1924!) insubordination.

Let me briefly review the facts in the case.

The Consistory refused to abide by its own decision of June 5, 1951, namely: to ask of prospective members that they should promise (1) to submit themselves to Protestant Reformed preaching and instruction; and (2) not to agitate against the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed churches. The matter was brought to the attention of the classis by the Consistory themselves. And the classis decided that they certainly must maintain their decision of June 5. However, the Consistory decided to refuse, and to receive all kinds of members without asking them any questions whatsoever. And the Consistory also decided that the minister must submit to this decision, so that he too must leave the church doors wide open. The Classical Committee was called in, made their report, and delivered it to the Classis of Jan. 3. In the meantime the Consistory had decided to request the Classis to sever the tie of the Rev. H. Veldman and loosen him from the congregation of Hamilton. The Classis refused their request, completely justified the Rev. Veldman, condemned the Consistory in all their actions, and decided that the Rev. Veldman should return to his congregation and continue to labor in Hamilton.

Such is in brief the story, without any embellishments.

And now I will let the Rev. Veldman speak for himself, and quote from the letter to which I already referred above. The Rev. Veldman writes (I have his consent to publish from this letter as much as I desire):

"We had two consistory meetings already this week,

having arrived home last Wednesday. Our first meeting was held Thursday evening. At this meeting there were several letters of people who wished to withdraw from our church. . . . 6 of these letters express disagreement with our doctrine—the only one who did not express disagreement with our doctrine was Mr. D. who simply announced his withdrawal from the congregation. One wrote that our doctrine was a 'verderfelijke' doctrine. Another wrote that they discovered of late that they were really Liberated at heart. Another expressed that the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed truth could not exist side by side. The consistory granted them all their request.

"At this same consistory meeting last Thursday evening, they were interested in the report of the classis in re the Hamilton case. Jonker had given me a copy of the matter as it was treated and decided at the classis. This I read to them. They were surprised. They had actually expected the classis to loose me from the congregation. And I told them that I was their minister and intended to remain their minister as long as there was a Protestant Reformed Church in Hamilton. But, things could not go on as they were. Of this the consistory was convinced (all except Reitsma, of course). But now they did not know what to do. We met until about 11 p.m. Then Van Huizen said that we should adjourn. I thought that he meant that we should adjourn until our next regularly scheduled consistory meeting. But the brother did not mean this. He wanted to meet again before Sunday. John Lion said that he wanted a little more time to consider the answer of the Classis. So they decided to meet again on Friday evening. Then I knew that evil had been decided. Then I knew that they did not want me any longer on this pulpit. Why otherwise the haste? And so we adjourned.

"Last night we met again. Immediately they said that they had come to a decision. (Mark you well, that this decision evidently had been reached by the Consistory in the absence of the minister. H.H.) That decision was that the pulpit must be denied me. I told them that they had no right to do that, inasmuch as that was suspension from office, and this may not occur without the advice of a neighboring consistory (Chatham). Thereupon they took the stand that they could deny me the pulpit until their meeting with the consistory of Chatham when my suspension would be discussed. They simply insisted that I be denied the pulpit, did not want me to preach again. What could I say? And so they decided to deny me the pulpit and then they decided to have a meeting with the consistory of Chatham as soon as possible.

"Here follows literally what they decided in re my temporary suspension: 'De kerkeraad, overwegende de uitspraak der classis aangaande het losmaken van Ds. Veldman, en kennis genomen hebbende van de afwij-

zing der aanvraag op grond dat de schuld geheel bij den kerkeraad ligt, en tevens dat zij het rapport der classicale commissie aanvaardt; komt tot de volgende conclusie: dat zoo lang Ds. Veldman weigert zijn ambtelijken arbeid te verrichten op eene basis door den kerkeraad gewild het onmogelijk is Ds. Veldman langer voorgaat in den dienst des Woords. Zoolang in deze situatie geen verandering komt moet hij hem den kansel ontzeggen.' There it is.

"I asked the consistory last night what evil I had done, and read to them Articles 79 and 80 of our Church Order. I asked them which sin I had committed. Thereupon they replied that I was guilty of insubordination, simply did not want to do what the consistory demanded of me. I asked them: what do you want? Their answer: Submit to us."

From all this it is very evident that the real underlying cause is that the church in Hamilton and its Consistory do not intend to be or to become a Protestant Reformed Church.

It is also evident that the Consistory has no regard for law and order, that they have very little respect for the divine ministry of the Word of God, and that they manifest an utter lack of responsibility to their minister.

And now the question is: What will Chatham do?

Will they simply evade their responsibility by refusing to meet with the Consistory of Hamilton? Or will they agree with the decision concerning his suspension and ultimate deposition?

We do not know as yet, but we will inform the reader as soon as possible.

H. H.



## A Letter

The following letter came to me recently, and although I do not like to publish same, the postscript leaves me no choice, so here goes:

Jan. 9, 1951, Oskaloosa, Ia.

Rev. G. Vos  
Hudsonville, Michigan

Dear Rev. Vos:

This letter is being written to you because your Meditation of January 1, 1951, increased immeasurably my grief over much that has been written in the Standard Bearer of late.

Do I understand correctly that in this Meditation you are personally praying for, and as Meditation-author imploring our people to pray for, a split in our churches? If this is correct and I can read it in no other way, than I assure you that I and many others

with me are praying that your prayer may not be heard!

In order that I be not misunderstood I would like to make plain that I do not deny that there are sins in our Protestant Reformed Churches, nor that the call to repentance is out of place. Rather I object to the implication of your meditation that our churches are filled with and about to be, or in the process of being, destroyed by Heynsianism. This I emphatically deny and insist that, in as far as I am acquainted with our ministers and our people the truth is upheld and defended and taught that God loves only His people and that according to His intention He desires to and does save them only. And I personally, defending and believing this, intend also to oppose the Declaration at the proper time and place.

May I humbly suggest that you write another Meditation, stressing once again the need of the restoring mercy of the Lord, but bemoaning the, in my opinion, far more prevalent sin of a loveless orthodoxy and a heresy-hunting dictatorial spirit of which I am definitely afraid. And will you join with me in the prayer that God will preserve us from a dead orthodoxy out of which every emphasis upon sanctification as the fruit of justification has been legislated.

Yours for speaking the truth *in love*,

James Howerzyl.

P.S. Because there are many that feel as I do will you please answer this in the Standard Bearer?

### Remarks:

1. What nonsense is this, that I would pray for a split in our churches? Anyone knowing me at all would never believe it. And it is, of course, not true. I will say no more about that; will not entertain that thought for one minute. God knows how I would rejoice if once more we would all be united, and unitedly take our strong stand against all heresies.

2. I, nor anyone else denies that: "*the truth is upheld and defended and taught that God loves only His people and that according to His intention He desires to and does save them only.*" This sentence which I place in italics is a literal quotation from the writer of this letter. And the point I wish to make in this connection I consider important. It may remove all manner of misunderstanding. It is this: I believe with all my heart that every one of our ministers teaches what brother Howerzyl quotes in this sentence. That, my dear brother, is not the question which is disturbing our churches. That which you outline is the positive side of our preaching. What divides us, according to the way I see it is this: we do not all condemn, as vigorously as we ought, the heresy of Heynsianism. I would like to point out that such negative confession, the condemnation of all errors repugnant



to the above quoted confession, belongs to, is an integral part of our duty. The Heynsian conception of the covenant, the heirs of the promise, and of baptism militates against brother Howerzyl's confession, as we quoted same. And we come in direct contact with that error of Heyns in our intercourse with the Liberated immigrants. And they will not confess with you the positive confession which you made in your letter to me. They even had the effrontery to suspend one of our Protestant Reformed ministers, in Hamilton. And they suspended him because he preached and taught your confession. In his suspension, all our Protestant Reformed ministers were suspended, principally. Let us not forget that. And here is the latest. Whether they became afraid of their own blatantly wicked action or not, I do not know, but they, first, recalled this suspension; second, announced (with the three of them) to the Rev. Herman Veldman and Elder Reitsma that they did no longer recognize them as their office bearers; and, third, they announced that they loosed themselves from the Protestant Reformed Federation of Churches; and, fourth, that they would seek contact with the 5 other Free Reformed Churches in Canada. Now I ask you, what else must happen before our people's eyes are open to the danger of the Liberated theology?

3. Your next observation I cannot understand; no, not with the best of intention. You say, referring to the confession you make and which appears above in italics, that "*defending and believing this, (you) intend also to oppose the Declaration (of Protestant Reformed Principles) at the proper time and place.*" I cannot understand this, first, because your confession is embodied in this Declaration. Second, the Declaration comprises absolutely nothing but that which we as Protestant Reformed Churches have held dear and have preached for these twenty-six years. The error of the Liberated is so much alike to the error of Heynsianism that the Mission Committee, knowing this, reprinted the "Geloovigen en hun Zaad" in great numbers, and sent them to the Netherlands churches, with the intent to combat this Heynsian error. And if we saw it our duty to combat Heyns and his error twenty-six years ago, why not make the same determined front against the Liberated Churches now, seeing they harbor the same error? Third, I cannot understand, for the above-cited reasons, how you can *oppose* the Declaration. To *oppose* is a very pregnant word. It means to set something over against something else. Now, if the Declaration is the embodiment of Protestant Reformed Truth, and no one has proven the contrary, neither do I believe that they are able to, then I ask you in all seriousness: what in the world are you going to set overagainst it? There is one thing you might do, and I would kindly but urgently plead with you not to do it, because I consider you my brother in

the Protestant Reformed ministry, and that one thing is: to vote against it. And I fear that this will be the outcome: there will be no one who can *oppose* it, but it may be *voted down*. And that would be tragic. For we would be voting down the very embodiment of Protestant Reformed Truth. Tragic, I called it, for the whole Christian Reformed Church would rejoice. I assure you that they have studied the Declaration, and they know that it is the embodiment of all that we have stood for these twenty-six years; they know that we were thrown out for that which is embodied in the Declaration; they know that the theology of Heyns is at stake in this Declaration, among other things. Voting it down would simply make our Churches the laughingstock of the Christian Reformed brethren who threw us out for *it*. But that is not the worst. The most tragic thing is that if we vote the Declaration down, we renounce the wonderful way in which God has led us. If we vote it down, I feel like apologizing to every Christian Reformed minister I may chance to meet. But what shall I say to God? It would be a repudiation of so great riches He gave us!

4. I must be silent with respect to your last paragraph. Silent, because the terrible accusations of dead orthodoxy, heresy-hunting, and of a dictatorial spirit bear no label.

5. Closing, I would say that I have great sorrow of heart because of the prevailing disturbance, especially, since I am co-guilty. I made that clear in the meditation you dislike. And I cannot do anything else but simply tell you that I wrote that meditation in the spirit of love, even as I have written this answer in the same spirit of love. There is just one ray of light in the dark picture, and it is this: whether we remain true to the truth or not, whether we adopt the Declaration of Protestant Reformed Principles or not, the Truth of God will continue its victorious pathway of shining light. "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." II Cor. 13:8.

Your brother,  
Gerit Vos.

---

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church at South Holland, Ill., hereby wishes to express its sincere and Christian sympathy to Mrs. John Holleman, in the recent death of her son,

Mr. William Holleman

and to the other members of the family as well. May the God of all grace comfort and sustain the bereaved in their sorrow.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.  
Mrs. E. Bruisma, Sec'y.

## An Explanation

First, the Rev. Walter Hofman; second, the Rev. John D. de Jong; third, the Rev. Bernard Kok; and now also the Rev. L. Vermeer have quoted from my past writings in connection with the controversy that is at present disturbing our churches. And they used my past writings against those who attacked the Liberated views, showing that "our own Rev. Vos" said nice things about Schilder or the Liberated Churches. (Allow me to state in parenthesis that I like that style of "our own Rev. Vos". There is something warm in it, and I appreciate it. I hope and pray that the spirit which prompted that style may remain with us).

Against this use of my name and my writings I have several objections.

First, it is anachronistic. Leave my writings in their proper chronological setting, and you have no trouble with it. Suppose you would go today to the grocery store with an advertisement dated January, 1931, and demand a bill of groceries at the prices that prevailed at that time? Remember that at the time these writings of mine appeared in print, we were beginning to evaluate one another. I do not think that any one of us writes today about the leaders in the Liberated churches as we did then.

Second, the above mentioned brethren know that since I wrote in the past something has been added. I could mention much, but I will mention something which will brook no adverse criticism: Appél. If anything, that little brochure showed clearly what the Liberated teach. And, remember, no one in the Liberated churches ever disowned that writing, or did ever oppose its errors. Allow me to quote: "For when God gives His baptism to a man, He gives him a very particular proof of His love!" And therefore I would not think of writing the things I did at the time the quotations in question appear.

Third, I wrote the quotations pedagogically, that is, I minimized the difference between their churches and our own with the purpose of winning them.

Fourth, especially with regard to one of the quotations, I wrote in defense of the Liberated against Ds. Toornvliet who is one of the Synodicals that evilly helped to throw out the Liberated, thereby trampling underfoot the very foundations of sound Reformed Church Polity. And that consideration influenced my friendly approach.

Fifth, I object to the use of my quotations for they are now being used against those with whom I agree, and the brethren know that.

And, finally, I object to their use for they do not represent a true appraisal of the Liberated or their theology. I erred, even though I erred in ignorance.

What my quotations and my past conduct over-against the Liberated brethren does prove is that I leaned over backwards to be nice to them.

G. Vos.



## Ingezonden

### DE VERKLARING VAN GEVOELLEN

Zoo is dus op de laatstgehouden Synode opgesteld een "Verklaring van Gevoelen", welke is gepubliceerd in The Standard Bearer van 1 Augustus, 1950. Zooals ons later duidelijk werd, werd dit noodig geacht ter verduidelijking van onze belijdenisschriften, m.n., wat betreft het Genade Verbond en den Heiligen Doop, en met de bedoeling om te weren de importatie van meeningen, z.g.n., in strijd met Schrift en belijdenis wat betreft deze zaken.

Sindsdien zijn ook geregeld over deze aangelegenheid artikelen verschenen in de kerkelijke bladen. Nu is het niet de bedoeling om onze "Kerkrechtelijke" en "Dogmatische" bezwaren tegen deze "Verklaring van Gevoelen" in dit artikeltje naar voren te brengen. Deze bezwaren werden *daar* kenbaar gemaakt waar ze thuis hooren, n.l., op de kerkelijke vergaderingen.

Maar wel willen we op sommige dingen even wijzen en met name de aandacht vestigen op de zonderlijke gang van zaken en van handelen door de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken waarbij de kerk van Chatham direct bij betrokken is.

De twee bekende Zendings Predikanten toch hebben in Canada hard gewerkt onder de emigranten (Gereformeerden, onderhoudende art. 31). Men heeft daarbij moeite noch kosten gespaard. Men heeft met hen gesproken en gedebatteerd een zeer langen tijd. Zoodat gerust mag worden aangenomen dat men wederzijdsch met elkanders standpunt op de hoogte was. Ook *wist* men dus in de Protestantsche Gereformeerde Kerken dat de uit Nederland geëmigreerde Gereformeerden niet van plan waren hun Verbondsopvatting hier in Canada te laten varen. En dat niet alleen omdat ze er in Nederland ten bloede toe voor hebben moeten strijden, maar ook en vooral omdat het hun overtuiging is dat ze in deze dingen staan op den bodem van Schrift en Belijdenis.

De institueering van de Kerk van Chatham is echter geschied onder de verzekering dat er was "Vrijheid van Profetie", en omdat men wederzijdsch van oordeel was dat beide meeningen in één kerkverband konden worden geduld. En ook en vooral omdat men wilde bewandelen den Koninklijken weg der Kerk, welke weg veroordeeld en zonde noemt elke onnoodige verbroekeling en scheuring, en men niet opwilde den weg der secte.

Nu wordt ook telkens gezegd: Wanneer de "Verklaring van Gevoelen" in strijd is met de Schrift, bewijs het dan, en ongetwijfeld gebeurt dit ook. Maar we willen toch hierop wijzen dat we vooral deze dingen zuiver moeten zien. Het is wel heel eenvoudig om op zeker moment een "Verklaring van Gevoelen" als het ware uit de lucht te doen vallen, en dan heel bedaard te zeggen: "bewijs jij nu maar eens dat het is in strijd met de Heilige Schrift." Wanneer we echter Prof. Hoeksema mogen gelooven (en dat doen we, althans op dat punt) dan is de "Verklaring van Gevoelen" gericht tegen de "Vrijgemaakten". Deze toch hangen volgens hem aan de "Heynsiaansche leer", zijn Remonstrantsch, in één woord, niet Gereformeerd. Zware beschuldigingen dus. Hij ziet in ons een zeer acuut gevaar voor de Prot. Ref. Church. Maar, wanneer men het zoo ziet rust dan niet op een Synode de taak, ja, de bewijslast om deze beschuldigingen ook te bewijzen? Wanneer men leest de Vijf Artikelen tegen de Remonstranten dan wordt eerst de zuiver Schriftuurlijke leer uiteengezet, en vervolgens leest men achter elk hoofdstuk: "verwerping der dwalingen". Terwijl ook getracht was met de Remonstranten samen te spreken, wat enkel op den onwil van deze laatsten afstuitte. In de Prot. Ref. Church vindt men echter niets van dat alles. Is dan de Kerk des Heeren een andere geworden dan in de jaren 1618-19? Mag men tegenwoordig wel onverhoord oordeelen en veroordelen? Het schijnt zoo, want in plaats van aldus te handelen worden vage gebaren gemaakt in de richting van Reformatie-artikelen, geschreven vlak na den oolog. Maar waarom blijft men tot nu toe in gebreke om artikelen in dezelfde Reformatie van Prof. Schilder, betreffende de "Verklaring van Gevoelen" met de Schrift in de hand te weerleggen?

We kunnen voor dergelijke methoden weinig bewondering gevoelen. Plotseling zijn we gevaarlijke ketters geworden waar men voor op zijn hoede moet zijn. Het heeft wel gelijkenis op het sprookje "de wolf en de zeven geitjes".

Ten slotte willen we Prof. Hoeksema nog herinneren aan zijn woorden gesproken in Chatham toen hij sprak over zijn strijd met de Christian Ref. Church, n.l., deze: "Wanneer een kerk begint te vervolgen die 'heiliglijk leven naar het Woord Gods' (Art. 29, N.G.B.) dit een der eerste kenteekenen is van de valsche kerk."

En hij voegde er aan toe: "Vergeet dat niet."

Inderdaad, Prof. Hoeksema, en Prot. Ref. Church: *vergeet dat niet.*

A. van Dischoven.

Noot van den redacteur: Attentie kerkeraad van Chatham! Leest s.v.p. mijn redactie artikel in dit nummer en geef ons een duidelijk antwoord.

H. H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### The Creation Of The Spirit World

(4)

#### THEIR SERVICE AND ACTIVITY

*We can distinguish between an ordinary and an extraordinary service of the angels.*

There are, first of all, the extraordinary services and activities of the angels. This activity begins after the fall of man in Paradise and constitutes an important element in the Divine revelation of salvation. This activity of these heavenly spirits occurs often and at a time which one would denote a turning point, an important stage in the development and revelation of God's sovereignly ordained salvation and redemption for His own.

Thus we see the angels for the first time when they guard the entrance to the garden of Eden. Even as we read it in Genesis 3:24: "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." And throughout the Old Dispensation they appear and reveal things of the Divine economy of salvation. In Genesis 18 they appear to Abraham upon the plains of Mamre, yea, the Lord Himself appears to Abraham accompanied by two angels. At that time the Lord reveals to the father of believers that he and Sarah would receive a son, and He also acquaints Abraham with the impending doom upon the godless cities of the plain. In the following chapter, Gen. 9, two angels visit Lot in wicked Sodom, to reveal unto that righteous man whose righteous soul, according to the apostle, Peter, had been vexed with the filth and iniquity of that doomed city, that the Lord was about to destroy the city ripe for extinction, and who had also come to Lot to extricate him and his daughters, by force, out of the doomed city. In Genesis 28:12 and 32:1 angels appear to Jacob. We read in these passages: "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. . . . And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." It is well, in connection with that ladder which reached heaven in that dream which Jacob dreamed while fleeing from his brother, Esau, that the top of it reached to heaven, and that the angels descended and ascended on it. The fellowship and communion between the Lord and His people is surely a line which runs from the top to the bottom, is not to be viewed as synergistic in any sense of the word, as something which is the result of the combined efforts

of God and man, or as something which proceeds from the living God but then as dependent upon a work of man, such as our faith, but as a work which proceeds from the living God alone, from the beginning to the very end.

Moreover, angels serve at the lawgiving at Sinai. This we read in Heb. 2:2, Gal. 3:19, and Acts 7:53, and we quote: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward. . . . Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. . . . Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Also, they take part in the struggle of Israel, according to II Kings 19:35 and Daniel 10:13, 20, and we quote: And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. . . . But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." And, finally, as far as the Old Dispensation is concerned, to quote no more, the angels announce the counsel of the living God to Elijah and Elisha, to Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.

In the New Testament this special, extraordinary service of angels continues unabated. This fact, that this special service of these heavenly spirits continues unabated also in the New Testament certainly confirms the truth that these appearances of angels must not be considered as merely a part of the Old Testament mythology. We read of angels at the birth of Jesus, according to Luke 1:13, 20 and 2:10: "But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. . . . And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. . . . And the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." They are also present at Christ's temptation, Matt. 4:11: "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels

came and ministered unto Him," accompany Him throughout His earthly life, John 1:51: "And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," and appear especially at His suffering, Luke 22:43: "And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him," His resurrection, Matt. 28, and His ascension, Acts 1:10.

Thereupon they appear a few times in the history of the apostles, as in Acts 5:19: "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,"—Acts 12:7, 10: "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. . . . When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out and passed on thru one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him,"—8:26; "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaze, which is desert,"—27:22-24: "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and Whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." And in Revelation 1:1 we read: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

Then the angels do not appear again in Holy Writ until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the clouds of heaven, Matt. 16:27, 25:31: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to His works. . . . When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory"; Mark 8:38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels"; Luke 9:26: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels"; 2 Thess. 1:7: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels"; Judas 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints"; Rev. 5:2: "And I

saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

And at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the angels shall wage war against the enemies of God, Rev. 12:7: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels (which occurred at the time of Christ's exaltation),"—1 Thess. 4:16: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first," they shall gather the elect; Matt. 24:31: "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," and cast the wicked into everlasting fire, Matt. 13:41, 49: "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. . . . So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."

The extraordinary services of the angels of God, therefore, accompany important stages in the revelation of God's sovereignly ordained salvation. These angels do not effect salvation, never impose upon the sovereignty or work of the living God, but they do take part in the history of the realization and manifestation of that salvation. They are heavenly spirits in the service of the Church of God, and serve the Lord in the sphere of His salvation and grace. Consequently, when Christ Himself comes and His Word has been fully revealed unto us, this special activity of the angels reaches an end. What could the angels give us, after the Lord gave us His Son and the full revelation of His Word and salvation?

We can also speak, in the light of the Holy Scriptures, of the ordinary services or activities of the angels of the Lord. They praise God, we read, day and night. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?", Job 38:7; Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word", Ps. 103:20; "Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts." Ps. 148:2; "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The Scriptures surely give us the idea that this occurs audibly although we are not in the position to understand this praise of the heavenly spirits.

They rejoice when one sinner repents, Luke 15:10: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." They watch over the believers, Ps. 34:7, 91:10-11:

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. . . . There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." They protect the little ones, Matt. 18:10: "Take heed that we despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." They are present in the church and follow her in her course through history, 1 Cor. 4:9, 1 Tim. 5:21, and Eph. 3:10: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. . . . To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." They permit themselves to be instructed by this history of the church, Eph. 3:10, 1 Pet. 1:12, and carry the believers into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. . . And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried."

Holy Writ does not enter into a detailed discussion of these various activities of the angels; however, as we may readily surmise, many efforts and attempts have been made to probe into these various activities of the heavenly spirits. This is particularly applicable to the idea of their being guardians over the people of God; we often hear them mentioned as guardian angels. Some have assigned two angels to each person, whereas others have declared that a good angel and an evil angel accompany each person thru life. Others declared that only Christians have a guardian angel and that they receive a guardian angel of greater or higher glory and significance in the measure of their personal services and activities in the midst of the church of God. And so it was also claimed that churches, lands, peoples, plants and animals, arts and sciences all have their own guardian angel. Moreover, the ordinary services of the angels were also described as consisting of intercessory prayers which they prayed unto God in heaven in behalf of the people of God. The Roman Catholics generally believe in these guardian angels and also in their intercessory prayers. The Lutherans in their confessions speak of these intercessory prayers by the angels, although the Lutheran theologians were most careful in



their views in re a guardian angel. The idea of a guardian angel and their intercessory prayers were unanimously rejected by Reformed theologians.

(To be continued)

H. Veldman.



## Rev. Petter's 6th and 7th Instalments

Rev. Petter still has a fifth fault to find with Synod, 1950, a fault growing out of the fourth. It is this: Synod hierarchically imposed the "Declaration" upon the churches. Here are his words, "The Declaration is a hierarchical imposition upon the churches" (Concordia, for Dec. 21). But of course Rev. Petter's contention raises this question: What then is synod's hierarchy in the matter of the "Declaration"? Wherein does it consist?

To understand Rev. Petter's answer we must know what he means by the expression "constructive process" appearing in his reasonings. This is clear from the following lines. He writes, "For it is understood that such a product (doctrinal deliverance of synod like the "Declaration—O.) is (first—O.) proposed by a member who brings forward the best he can as to form and content. With this he goes to the consistory, here it is again seriously considered, controlled, corrected, improved. This improving developing process is again repeated in classis. It then finally comes to synod, where the ablest, most experienced, once more carefully weigh, consider, improve, perfect the projected deliverance or decision."

It is plain what Rev. Petter means by the expression "constructive process", namely, the correction, improvement, development that a doctrinal deliverance undergoes in consistory, classis and synod after it has left the hands of the layman with whom it originated and with whom all such documents, doctrinal deliverances, should originate, Rev. Petter means to say.

To understand Rev. Petter's answer we must also know that, as Rev. Petter sees it, the burden, obligation, duty, to appraise, evaluate synod's doctrinal deliverances, and if need be prove them unworthy, is always from the nature of matters a burden, obligation, awfully heavy, a burden therefore that the membership can bear only with great effort, an obligation the meeting of which requires great exertion and is fraught with danger. And why? Because, says Rev. Petter, it is so very inconvenient, so embarrassing, so dangerous for an aggrieved layman to protest decisions and doctrinal deliverances of synod,—danger-

ous because on account of some technical error his protest may never reach synod. Here are Rev. Petter's own words, "That is the burden with all its inconveniences, its embarrassments, its dangers that by technical error the inexperienced layman fail to carry his protest through and thus be, by the following synod, bound under this deliverance in spite of his grievance."

Now we are ready to have Rev. Petter tell us why it is that synod involved itself in the sin of hierarchy, that is, the sin of lording it over the churches, in advising the churches to evaluate and appraise the "Declaration." He tells us in the following lines. I quote:

"Did it (the Declaration) go through the various steps of this constructive process? (It did not, Rev. Petter wants us to reply). Can the synod (consequently—O.) truthfully say, that here the churches have the best that her spiritual gifts and talents can produce (the churches cannot truthfully say this, Rev. Petter wants us to reply) and therefore may be considered very probably beyond and above challenge?"

"The Acts of Synod show plainly that this is not the case.

"As we have seen (so Rev. Petter continues) this Declaration originated in the Committee of pre-advice (elsewhere he gives his readers to understand that the "Declaration" originated in the Mission Committee—O.) to whom the question was re-submitted on Friday afternoon. And on Monday evening when synod reconvened after the week-end recess, the proposed Declaration was read and adopted.

"When now the readers consider that this material is involved, argumentative matter, that it covers about thirteen typewritten pages (I will return to this statement in the sequel and expose it for what it is—thoroughly untrue—O.); that this was read on the floor of the synod and then adopted the same evening, then the readers can judge how well all the members of the gathering were able to digest, evaluate, judge and approve this material. (Indeed, we shall see about this in the sequel—O.).

"Then the readers can judge whether the Synod could truthfully say, 'this is the best that your trusted servants to whom, as to the oldest and most experienced, you have intrusted the formulation of your faith, are able to do. . . . It is therefore binding on you. And should anyone doubt the worthiness of this product, the burden of proof lies wholly with you.'

"Can the Synod honestly lay this burden of proof upon the membership?" It cannot, Rev. Petter means to say.

Here we have the brother's answer to our question why it is that, in advising the churches to appropriate the "Declaration" Synod involved itself in the sin of hierarchy, that is, in the sin of lording it over the churches. His answer is this:

I. For the laity the burden, obligation of evaluating and approbating and if necessary, protesting the decisions and doctrinal deliverances of synod is always from the nature of matters heavy.

II. The burden of evaluating and approbating the "Declaration" and, if need be, proving it unworthy, is a heavy task for the laity.

III. Synod's laying this heavy burden on the laity in the churches is unfair, unjust, and dishonest and on this account hierarchical, for,

- A. It was not the best that the churches assembled in Synod could produce, for,
  - 1. The Declaration had not passed through the various steps of that "constructive process", that is, it had not first undergone the correction, improvement, and development that a doctrinal deliverance should always undergo in the consistory, classis, and synod after leaving the hands of the laymen with whom it originates or should originate, for,
    - a. It was at best but two days in process of production.
    - b. Synod read the "Declaration" and immediately thereupon adopted it. This must be considered amazing, for,
      - x. The material of the "Declaration" is involved, argumentative matter.
      - y. It covers about thirteen typewritten pages.

Therefore Synod's laying upon the laity (this is the term that Rev. Petter uses) the heavy burden of approbating the Declaration was unfair, unjust and dishonest and on this account hierarchical.

Apparently, Rev. Petter has succeeded in building up a powerful case against the "Declaration". His argument is bound to make an impression. Yet, it is a not-good argument. First, its underlying basis is thoroughly hierarchical. Second, it is a false argument *as such* and therefore does not even prove the hierarchical proposition reposing on this basis. I have need of making this plain.

1. The underlying basis of Rev. Petter's argument is thoroughly hierarchical. What is this basis? It is this: *that synod lays burdens on the churches*. That this is Rev. Petter's view is clear from the question he puts. He asks, "Can the synod thus honestly lay this burden (the burden of proof—O.) on the churches?"

The idea that *synod* lays burdens on the churches, even such a burden as that of approbating synodical (classical) decisions and doctrinal deliverances, is a thoroughly hierarchical conception. Synod does not lay burdens on the churches, not even the burden of approbating its decisions. And for two reasons:

1. Synod, being the servant of the churches and not their lord, has not the power to lay burdens on the churches. 2. The burden of approbating synodical (classical) decisions *is*—mark you, I say *is*—the churches' and therefore cannot possibly be laid upon them by synod.

This burden, obligation, responsibility *is* the churches' for two reasons: 1) This burden is prescribed, laid down, in article 31 of the Church Order of Dort, definitely in the following italicized clause of Art. 31, "and whatever may be agreed upon by majority vote, *shall be considered settled and binding* unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God. . . .that is, such is the meaning of the clause in italics, every consistory, officebearer, common member, shall receive the synodical (classical) decision, deliverances, approve it and unless Scripture and conscience forbids, consider itself (himself) bound by it. It is the Church Order speaking here, not Synod, laying upon the churches this burden, commanding them as their lord to shoulder it. 2) The Protestant Reformed Churches constitute a communion of congregations federally united on the basis of the Church Order and thus also on the basis of Art. 31. It means that all the churches—consistories, officebearers, common members—of their own volition shoulder all the burdens, assume all the obligations, prescribed by the Church Order. And therefore, I repeat, the burden of approbating the "Declaration" is the Churches, and cannot be laid upon them by synod.

This brings us to the question: Does Rev. Petter have the moral right to accuse synod (1950) of hierarchy, of the sin of lording it over the churches?

Let us see. First, did synod, as assuming the role of lord of the churches, *command* them to approve the "Declaration"? On the contrary, it merely advised, petitioned, the churches to shoulder the burden of approbating the "Declaration", to address themselves to this task—a task that is theirs by virtue of what they are, to wit, a communion of congregations organized on the basis of the Church Order.

Second, was synod occupying the position that if the "Declaration" cannot *be proved unworthy to the satisfaction of synod*, it must be considered binding? On the contrary, synod's position was that *if the churches* are satisfied that the "Declaration" is in conflict with the Scriptures, they shall not consider themselves bound by it.

Finally, did Synod issue a warning that the consistory rejecting the "Declaration" would be penalized with deposition? On the contrary, the position of synod was that as far as synod's power to penalize a consistory with deposition is concerned, the churches may do with the "Declaration" what they please: adopt it or reject it, or take no notice of it at all.

Does Rev. Petter have the moral right to lodge

against synod the charge of hierarchy? He does not. This is plain as can be.

Let it be 1) that the "Declaration" previously had not passed through that "constructive process; 2) that as to its subject matter it is involved and argumentative (a thing that is not true, as I shall make plain); 3) that it was but a day and a half in process of production in the committee; 4) that it is thirteen pages long;—how on this account can it possibly be right to brand it a "hierarchical imposition," if: 1) Synod did not command the churches, but simply advised, petitioned them to approbate it; 2) if, as Rev. Petter himself tells his readers (Concordia, for Dec. 21) "Synod did not adopt the Declaration but merely proposed it to the churches in order that by way of consistory and classis it could come to synod," and thus pass through these "constructive processes" in all the consistories, both classes and finally in Synod; 3) if, as far as synod's power to penalize a consistory with deposition for rejecting the "Declaration" is concerned, any consistory may do with the "Declaration" what it pleases; adopt or reject it, or take no notice of it at all; 4) and if, finally, any consistory, officebearer, common member is freed from the obligation of considering himself bound by the "Declaration", if he is satisfied in his mind and heart that as to its subject matter, it militates against the Scriptures?

If all this is true, and it is true, then it is utterly impossible for the "Declaration" to be a hierarchical imposition.

We therefore must not let our hearts be troubled by what Rev. Petter writes in connection with this matter in his latest article ("Concordia" for Jan. 4). I quote,

"In the preceding article I emphasized that the Declaration was according to its origination, hierarchical. Since I wrote these words this truth (!??) has been underscored. For an announcement has appeared by the Stated Clerk of Classis East reminding that all matters for Synod must be brought to Classis of Jan. 3, including reports of the consistories on the Brief Declaration.

"If now we remember that the Acts in which we get the full picture of the origin (and how revealing that picture—O.) did not appear until October, then we have about two months to prepare an evaluation and criticism of the work of the last Synod.

"When we consider how difficult it often is for laymen to formulate an opinion and steer it through the technicalities to a synod, we realize how little it means to just say, that the synod can safely propose a Declaration, and leave it to be discussed by consistory and classis and so to come to the synod of 1951. This so-called year of deliberation boils down to about two months. That underscores the hierarchical nature

of this Declaration that is to be considered binding unless. . . . Church Order, Art. 31."

Rev. Petter, it seems, must have felt that the charge of hierarchy which he lodges against synod is without foundation. For in these paragraphs he supplies his accusation with new grounds, as is evident from his terminology. That *underscores*—mark you: *underscores*—the hierarchical nature of the Declaration.

Let us pause for a moment to consider these new grounds. It is not true that the churches have but two months (from October, the month in which appeared the Acts of Synod, to Jan. 10) to evaluate the "Declaration" and form an opinion. The document was printed in the Standard Bearer for July 1 as headed by the notice, "The following was adopted by our last synod." And further, "A Brief Declaration of the Principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches". It concludes with the announcement to the effect that "Synod subjects the entire document to the approval of the churches for adoption in the next synod, if no objections are offered". And as translated in Holland it was again printed in the Standard Bearer for Aug. 1. Form July 1 to Jan. 10 is five months, not two. Does Rev. Petter discount these three months? If so, on what grounds? Besides, the churches of Classis East will discuss the "Declaration" in a special classis to convene in the month of February. And if need be, the "Declaration" may again be taken up for discussion on the April Classis. That would make in all nine months, a number that Rev. Petter reduces to two. Verily, this new ground on which Rev. Petter founds his charge against synod is as fictitious as the ground that Synod lays burdens on the churches. It means that Rev. Petter's charge is still without grounds.

That of all men, Rev. Petter should be lodging the charge of hierarchy against synod!

\* \* \* \*

#### THE REST OF REV. PETTER'S REASONING

Rev. Petter lays the hierarchical construction on Art. 31 of the Church Order. He thus construes this article as do the Synodicals in the Netherlands and the Christian Reformed here in the States. According to this construction, Synod is lord of the churches empowered to lay upon them burdens. That this is Rev. Petter's view is plain from the following lines. He writes, "Thus the reader can judge whether synod could truthfully appeal to the underlying principle of Art. 31 and say, *This is the best that your worthy servant (the Synod) are able to do. . . . It is therefore binding upon you* (italics—O.) And should anyone doubt the worthiness of this product, the burden of proof lies wholly with you.' This is the burden with all its inconveniences. . . . Can the synod thus honestly lay this burden of proof upon the membership?"

If words have meaning, then the point that Rev. Petter here argues is that synod must see to it that it does not lay upon the membership the burden of proof unjustly, implying certainly that synod is empowered *justly* so to do.

Further, according to this hierarchical construction, the synodical (classical) decision is binding *because synod has said*. Rev. Petter's way of saying this is that the decision is binding because it is the product of the best brains in the church collected in synod, as if we have a hierarchy of brains in our communion.

Third, according to the hierarchical construction, the synodical decision is settled and binding unless and until it is proved to conflict with the Word of God *to the satisfaction of synod*. Such is Rev. Petter's conception of the matter, as is evident from his reasoning cited above and from the following statement from his pen, "That is the burden with all its inconvenience . . . and its dangers that by technical error the inexperienced layman fail to carry his protest through and thus be, by following synod, bound under this deliverance in spite of his grievance." Here we have the idea expressed that the layman is *bound by synod*—the following—even despite his grievance.

Let us get before us the right interpretation of the article. The article reads,

"If any one complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, *and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a general synod*.

In this article we have not to do with the truism that Synod is in duty bound to pronounce the decision void, if it be made to see that its deliverance is in conflict with the Scriptures. That certainly is a self-evident obligation. And for articles laying down self-evident obligations the churches have no need. Nor is the ruling of the article that the decision is binding unless and until someone proves it anti-scriptural *to the satisfaction of Synod*. Nothing could be more hierarchical than such a ruling.

"Shall be considered settled and binding," is the clause to which we first must have regard. It means that, for reasons already stated, all the churches (consistories, officebearers, common members), if they are satisfied in their hearts that the decision does not militate against the Scriptures (and the articles of the Church Order), consider themselves bound by it. And on the assumption that the churches will approve its decisions, Synod also makes provision for their immediate execution, as for example it did two years ago, when it extended to one of our ministers a call to teach in our school. The synod immediately made

provision for his support. And if the brother would have accepted the call, he would have begun teaching in our school the following September. The churches, (consistories, office-bearers, common members) do not and may not postpone considering themselves bound by the decision until they have learned one another's reactions regarding it. Unless conscience forbids, the decision binds a member (consistory, officebearer, common member) immediately and persistently, regardless of how many members in the church may be opposed to the decision and may be wanting to protest it. If he is satisfied in his own heart that the decision does not militate against the Scriptures, he must consider it binding upon him until the churches assembled in synod nullify it.

The article 31 makes provision for the conscientious objector to synodical (classical) decisions by declaring that "whatsoever be agreed upon by majority of vote shall be considered binding, *unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God. . . .*" The meaning is that if the offended member (consistory, officebearer, common member) is satisfied in his own heart that (thus the meaning is not; has proved to the satisfaction of synod) the decision is in conflict with God's Word, he may not consider himself bound by it. And then his self-evident duty is to protest the decision in the synod via consistory and classis. If synod cannot be convinced, and if the protestant cannot for conscience sake change his attitude, the churches are tolerant, if possible. If a consistory must be excluded from the fellowship of the churches, it may not be penalized with deposition either by classis or synod.

In the light of these observations I have need of examining a few more paragraphs from the article of Rev. Petter with which I am now occupied. He writes,

"Rev. Hoeksema says that to avoid the semblance of hierarchy the synod did not *adopt* but merely *proposed* it to the churches in order that by way of consistory and classis it could come to the next synod. Observe that thus the Mission Committee still *has nothing*. For from this document which of course has no authority, and will first have to be evaluated by the churches, the committee of course can distill no form of guidance. Thus the calling church and committee which had the perfect authority to make their own Form, now still have to distill a form out of something that has no authority even, instead of drawing it out of our Confessions in the light of 1924, which they were able to do." (Concordia, for Dec. 21)

First, in this paragraph Rev. Petter refers to the "Declaration" as a document without authority on the ground that it must still be evaluated by the churches and adopted by the (coming) synod. But is it true that the "Declaration" though it must still be

adopted by synod, is without authority, and that, accordingly, the Mission Committee and our missionaries in the field still have nothing? No, it is not true. As Rev. Petter himself knows—he tells his readers about it in his next paragraph—the last synod decided to adopt the “Declaration” as a working hypothesis” for “the Mission Committee and the missionaries in the organization of churches,” to quote Rev. Petter’s own words. Mark you well, the “Declaration” as a working hypothesis” (“working basis” in the language of Rev. Petter) reposes upon a synodical decision. And according to Art. 31 of the Church Order, the churches, every officebearer and common member by virtue of their voluntary inclusion in our communion (a communion of churches organized on the basis of the Church Order) are in duty bound to consider themselves bound by the decision, to consider themselves bound therefore by the “Declaration” as a working hypothesis for the Mission Committee and the missionaries in the organization of churches, unless they can prove the decision to be in conflict with the word of God for a reason which would have to be that it is heretical, that the Gospel it sets forth is not the Gospel of the Confession and the Scriptures.

And fact is, as yet no one has proved that the decision runs contrary to the word of God, no one, either Rev. Petter, or the Mission Committee or the Missionaries. How then can Rev. Petter be telling his readers, definitely be telling our Missionaries that they have nothing? Are not our missionaries of their own volition included in our communion?—a communion of congregations organized on the basis of the Church Order of Dort? Does this not mean that they have pledged themselves and are continually pledging themselves to honor the articles of our Church Order including art. 31? How, I repeat, can Rev. Petter be telling them that they have nothing, and telling not only them but also himself and all the rest of us?

Our Missionaries still have nothing? The calling church and the Mission Comm. now still have to distil a form out of something (the Declaration) that has no authority even, instead of drawing it out of our Confession? Let them try it and see if they can draw out of our Confessions a different gospel of God than that which the “Declaration” sets forth. And if our missionaries still have nothing, pray, what kind of gospel may they have been proclaiming in the field if not the Gospel of the “Declaration”? I believe we all have need of knowing. And to say, as Rev. Petter is telling his readers, that the “Declaration” is so involved and argumentative that it takes months and months and perhaps years to evaluate it is so untrue as to be thoroughly ridiculous.

Rev. Hoeksema says—writes Rev. Petter—that to avoid the semblance of hierarchy the synod did not adopt but merely proposed it to the churches in order

that by way of consistory and classis it could come to the next synod. I believe Rev. Hoeksema did make some such statement. But be this as it may, I am making it my own and assuming full responsibility for it. The implication of this statement is that the last synod could have adopted the “Declaration” without involving itself in the sin of hierarchy. And why not? Does not Art. 31 of the Church Order safe-guard the conscientious objectors to Synodical (classical) decisions? Isn’t it true that Synod can only advise and petition and not command? Isn’t it true that our consistories, as far as synod is concerned, can do as they please with the “Declaration” without being penalized by synod or classis with deposition? But to avoid the *semblance* of hierarchy the (last) Synod did not adopt the “Declaration” but merely proposed it to the churches in order that it could come to the next—mark you *next* Synod by way of consistory and classis. Yet, though by this decision synod did actually avoid even the semblance of hierarchy, Rev. Petter, nevertheless, lodges against Synod (last) the heavy charge of hierarchy. This to my mind is as ridiculous as it is untrue.

There is still one more opinion of Rev. Petter for me to examine. Rev. Petter writes:

“But here we must also add that no one who has serious objections to the Declarations needs to go the way of Consistory and Classis. The layman might easily be side-tracked and discouraged by the familiar expression of Consistory, Classis, and Synod. But certainly any member has the right and privilege to go directly to Synod without asking the support of any other body or gathering for his serious complaint to Synod (Van Dellen-Monsma, *The Church Order Commentary*, p. 203; Joh. Jansen, *Korte Verkl. K.O.* p. 206).

“If this is not remembered there will be many persons who will be side-tracked and discouraged from bringing their objections and the result will be that they are counted as acquiescing, agreeing, approving. Thus a wholly false picture of the reception of this Declaration will be given. And this because of the hierarchical nature of its origination.” Indeed!!

These lines from the brother’s pen again raise a few questions.

1. Side-tracking the layman by the familiar expression of Consistory, Classis, to Synod? Mark you, side-tracking the layman, alluring, seducing, deceitfully leading him from the right way. And what is that right way according to the position that Rev. Petter occupies in these particular paragraphs? Its beginning is the house of the layman and as by-passing the consistory and classis it terminates in Synod. But isn’t Rev. Petter in his previous article (*Concordia*, for Dec. 21) wholly and exclusively devoted to the defence of the proposition that a synodical deliverance reaching synod without first having gone through the



various steps of corrective, improving, constructive, and developing processes in consistory and classis must be branded hierarchical impositions and that therefore the consistory and the classis may never be by-passed?

The layman might easily be side-tracked by the familiar expression of Consistory, Classis and Synod. To Rev. Petter the expression is not only a familiar one but in his previous article it appears as indicative of the only right way to synod.

G. M. Ophoff.



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition Of Hebrews 10:19-25

#### X.

We have now come to the last two verses of this very rich portion of the Word of God as recorded in Hebrews 10:24, 25. It is, indeed, a passage full of doctrine, reproof, admonition and correction, that the *man of God* be thoroughly equipped unto every good work.

The passage that we will comment on in this essay reads as follows: "*And let us give heed unto one another unto the sharpening of love and good works, not neglecting the gathering together of ourselves as is the custom of some, but rather exhorting, and that by so much more as we see the day approaching.*"

This is the third admonition of a series of three. The first admonition we read in verse 22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in the fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." The second admonition we read in verse 23: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not, for He is faithful that promised." And now we come to study the third admonition, as written above.

In these three admonitions we find what we may briefly express as follows: faith-hope-love. These three. And the greatest of these three is love, says Paul in I Cor. 13. The reason no doubt being that without love the faith is as dead as the body of man without the soul. And without love it is impossible to have a living hope. It is by faith that works by love that we *expect* the hope of righteousness. And it is this love that must be exercised and activated, according to the words of the writer to the Hebrews in our text.

Of this exercise of love in hope and faith we would study in this article. We would see that the writer *admonishes, exhorts* unto such a walk in love of faith and hope.

Only in the exercise of this love in the midst of the brethren shall we walk in the full assurance of faith, and shall we indeed hold fast the confession of the hope in Christ. We must be exercised in the love for the brethren and the good works of all the saints. And, let us not forget, that there is, thus understood, a very close inner and spiritual relationship between these three admonitions here in the text, namely, "to draw near in faith", "to hold fast the confession of the hope" and "to excite each other unto love and good works." For we cannot with impunity sever what God has joined together. Let us beware, lest we tempt God, as did Israel at Meriba and Massa!

Someone may ask: but are these admonitions then really important? Is it not sufficient that we preach that God infallibly works His great work in Christ our Lord; yea, that we preach it with great fervency and enthusiasm? Does God not work His salvation by His almighty grace in Jesus our Lord. And is this not infallibly wrought in the hearts of all the elect to bring them to the glory of God's tabernacle with man? Are these admonitions necessary?

And I answer: We must not be wiser than God who has judged it right and good to employ *admonitions* in the *ministry of reconciliation* to realize His immutable decree respecting the elect in Christ and also respecting the hardening of the reprobate, in their wilful determination that Christ shall not reign over them.

For thus to be wiser than God, is simply the foolishness of little man.

"Tempting God" do you ask? Is that not too strong language in this connection of speaking of admonitions? Do those, who feel that admonitions are not necessary for the elect and in consequence of this "pull their punches" on this score, tempt God in so doing?

Our fathers of Dort dared to employ such strong language. We shall quote them in III, IV, 17, where we read: "As the almighty operation of God, whereby He prolongs and supports this our natural life, does not exclude, but requires the use of means, by which God of His infinite mercy and goodness hath chosen to exert His influence, so also the beforementioned supernatural operation of God, by which we are regenerated, in no wise excludes, or subverts the *use of the gospel*, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration, and *food of the soul*. Wherefore, as the apostles, and teachers who exceeded them, piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory, and the abasement of all pride, and *in the meantime*, however, *neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel* in the exercise of the Word, sacraments, and discipline; even so to this day, be it far from instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the church by *separating what he of his good-pleasure hath most intimately*

joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all glory *both of the means, and of their saving fruit and efficacy* is forever due. Amen." (The underscoring in this quotation from the Canons of Dort is of us).

We notice that we do not say too much when we assert, that to deny the need of admonitions to the elect to bring them to glory is a separation of what God has most intimately joined together and, therefore, is a tempting of God; it is a tempting of God in the church.

Let us beware on this score. God is not mocked. Evil communications corrupt good manners also on this point. For the truth of the matter is that *the elect* need these admonitions, *for grace is conferred through admonitions!*

With a view to this *conferring of grace to the hearers*, the writer to the Hebrews admonishes the believers among the Hebrews to give heed to one another unto the sharpening of love to be revealed in good works. However, this grace is not conferred by these admonitions to all who hear the Gospel proclaimed to them. It is thus only for *the elect*, for the elect as they are thus efficaciously quickened to life and glory, to faith and hope. But admonitions are a part of the preaching, and these admonitions are *the means* of grace, which God in His wisdom has joined together.

Again someone may become just a bit impatient in the other erroneous direction and ask: but since we do not know who the elect are and since these admonitions come to all, to whom God in His good pleasure sends the Gospel, is it not true that the promises also come to all? I ask what do you mean: come to all? Do you mean that the promise of the gospel is *preached to all* who hear the Gospel: that all hear this glad tid- ing of good things: that every one that believes in Christ crucified is saved? Do you mean that it comes to all in this form in the *preaching* together with the *command to faith and repentance*? No, you say, I mean that the promise *pertains* to all. But then you are certainly confused and do not speak the clear language of the Fathers at Dort. For they say: "this promise of the gospel" must be "*preached to all*". The preaching "*pertains*" to all; not the promise, that is alone for the "*one believing*" (*credentes*). And to those who believe and come to God the Lord promises life and peace. Hence, the promises which are preached in the hearing of all, are only for the believers. They are very *particular*. It is the general preaching of a particular promise of life and peace of heart. It is rather important to notice, that in the positive part of the Canons of Dort, our fathers do not say: God promises salvation *upon condition of faith and repent-*

*ance*. I challenge any man to point this out. If he says it, it is simply his erroneous conclusion. Our fathers were dealing with the Remonstrants. And they keep the concreteness of the gospel promise in mind without employing language that even an Arminian cannot improve upon! They do not say: *upon condition of faith!* They say: *for the one believing and coming*. They use the present active participle in Latin, just as the Greek does in the New Testament. It designates the elect as they are made alive in Christ by the gospel through the Holy Spirit. The promises (yes, plural in the Canons) are for those who God con- fers grace upon, the grace of believing also through admonitions!

Is there here something that I cannot understand, cannot comprehend? Yes! And here is something that no believer in this life can fully comprehend! The love that passeth understanding also passes our under- standing in the manner of its operation in quickening us from the dead in its Divinely efficacious manner. Again I quote the Canons: "The manner of this opera- tion cannot be fully understood by believers in this life. Notwithstanding which, they rest satisfied with know- ing and experiencing, that by this grace of God they are enabled to believe with the heart and to love their Saviour." (III, IV, 13).

But the tempting of God in severing in His work of grace what He has most intimately joined we know must be wholly rejected. And the attempt to rob God of His glory as do the Remonstrants, or even to use their language, we must equally reject and detest with all of our souls.

What a marvellous love of God that it energizes me through admonitions, that is, through the new com- mandment, the "*precepts of the Gospel*".

Forsooth, this new commandment must not be made the law of Moses, the righteousness of law, which says: "that the man that *doeth these things* shall live thereby". Romans 10:5. These are not the precepts of our text. Nay the precepts of our text are of those who possess the right to enter into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus. Since we have an High-Priest with God. It is thus not the precepts of which we would be *under law*, but the obedience that is required of us since we are *under grace*. Let us walk in love since we are not under law but under grace! Let us call together upon the Name of the Lord in Jesus. And thus let us give heed to one another unto love and good works, which proceed out of a true faith in Jesus, are performed thus according to the new command- ment of those who are delivered from sin's bondage and are thus performed in thankfulness unto God.

We should notice that this admonition is more than an explanation. Just as preaching of the gospel is more than an explanation of what the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. The preaching is the means em-

ployed by the Holy Spirit to *work faith* in our hearts. And thus it has two elements: teaching of the riches in Christ and admonitions to believe and repent. And these admonitions are more than explanations of what a child of God will certainly do. They are admonitions, they are commands of the King of righteousness to us His people. And by these the grace of faith and obedience is *conferred upon the elect*. And the rest are hardened!

With this all in mind we shall turn our attention next week to the content of these so sorely needed admonitions of the Gospel!

G. Lubbers.

---

## IN HIS FEAR

---

### Church Membership In His Fear

7.

Not Forsaking the Assembling of  
Yourselves Together.

Last time we told the sad, sad story of the oncer, depicting the historical and logical end of himself and of the church which is the victim of him and his kind. And we tried to bring the story closer home by emphasizing that the story whose end is so pathetic has its beginning in the sometimes apparently innocent and oft unheeded error of *oncerism*, which is a manifestation not absent in our own circles.

This time let us investigate *oncerism* a little more closely, that we may know what it really is and what is the attitude behind it, and what must be judged of it in the light of the Fear of the Lord, whether it is in harmony or not with church membership in the fear of the Lord.

---

#### What is a Oncer?

I think we may safely define a oncer as a church member who sins by absenting himself except for one service per Sunday from divine worship without a proper reason.

A oncer is a church member. That stands to reason, of course. But it is also important that we remember that fact. That implies too that he is a member of a particular congregation. He is therefore, in the first place, *obligated* because of his connection with the congregation. He is not a mere individual, who may do as he pleases; but he is obligated to function with the congregation and as a member of the congregation. And he is obligated to meet with the

congregation when it gathers for divine worship. It implies more, however. It implies that his own profession is that as member of that congregation he is a member of the body of Christ, believes in Him, loves Him, desires to be fed and nourished by Him, because he has the new life of Christ in him. That is his admitted position as a member of the church.

This church member absents himself from divine worship except for one service per Sunday. This implies, of course, in the first place, that it is a custom among us to hold at least two services per Sunday. It also raises the oft asked question: how often must I go to church? Supposing that the congregation of which I am a member holds 3 or 4 services per Sunday. Am I to be expected to attend all of them? Or to make the matter a little more concrete, supposing a congregation has two English and one Holland service, and supposing that I can understand both languages. Am I obligated before God to attend all three?

In this latter connection let us point out the following:

1. We must be careful how we ask the question. It is easy to ask the question as though it is a chore to go to church, to ask it from the viewpoint of what is the external compulsion under which I stand. From that point of view I think the answer should simply be given: You don't *have to* attend church at all! However, the question may also be asked honestly and in a sincere desire to know what is good for us, and what from that viewpoint we ought to do. And then it deserves an answer, to be sure.

2. There are limits to our church-going capacity. There are, in the first place, all kinds of physical limits. If that were not the case, we could always be in church. We can only attend church on Sunday, for example, because there are six days in which we must labor. As long as you are on earth you cannot get away from that fact; and God doesn't want you to get away from it. Even on Sunday there are certain physical limits. We understand very well at a glance that we could not sit in church all day. We have to eat, we may have to rest, we have certain necessary labors to perform, as, for example, the farmer his chores. Besides, there are certain mental limits with which we deal. Our mental capacity is not such that we can profitably spend the whole day in church, for example. Anyone can understand that too. If we make work of going to church, put forth effort to understand the Word, exert ourselves to be fed through the ministry of the Word, then there is certainly a limit. One can assimilate and absorb only so much. After a certain point we become mentally dull and tired and cannot profitably listen anymore. For that reason also we set time limits on our service even. We mentally reach the point of diminishing returns. And thus it is also with our spiritual capacity. All

this, however, does not give us any license to be loose in this respect. On the contrary, it implies that we should make it our purpose to be as physically, mentally, and spiritually fit for attending divine worship as possible, and should bend every effort to spend as much time as practically and reasonably possible under the ministry of the Word.

3. With a view to that the congregation determines certain definite times when it shall gather for worship. Generally the rule is followed of having two services per Sunday of approximately an hour and a half in length, with the second service either in the afternoon or the evening. Such a custom is established with a view to the average ability of the members to attend and profit by the ministry of the Word. It is the rule. That does not mean that everyone is able to follow that rule, that everyone is physically able, for example, to attend two services. Nor does it mean that there are not those who can profitably attend church three times, perhaps, on Sunday. But the general rule is, adapted to the capabilities, mental, spiritual, and physical, of the members, that we hold services twice per Sunday. There are also variations of that rule, made because of circumstances. In a certain congregation there may be a sizable element that requires the Dutch; then a Dutch service is added, perhaps. I have the privilege of attending also the Dutch service, if I can understand that language; but I am not necessarily obligated to attend. In fact, it may not even be good for a given person to attend three services. That is at least conceivable. In this connection we do well to remember once more that the question is spiritual. Your church attendance as such means nothing. The Christian is not interested in amassing a large number of good behavior marks. Nor should a consistory that faces the problem of the oncer fall into the error of simply seeking outwardly to enforce a 100% attendance at both services. That means absolutely nothing in itself. But the matter must always be approached from a spiritual viewpoint by ourselves and by the consistory that has the duty of disciplining. The question is: what is my inner obligation and need? Why does my church hold two services? Is that for me, and is it good for me, or not?

You may have noticed that in our definition of a oncer we did not add the qualification *habitually*. That was done intentionally.

You deal with a more advanced form of *oncerism* when you deal with the habitual oncer. But principally there is no difference between the occasional oncer and the habitual oncer. Every time I absent myself without proper reason from the services except one I am a oncer. It is true, of course, those who are habitually absent are the ones who are or should be labored with by the consistory. It is not the duty of the elders to run all over the country finding out why

so and so wasn't in church twice on a certain Sunday. For the most part they would find out anyway that there was a good reason. But that is after all not the question here. We are not interested primarily in when the consistory should or should not act. We are interested in ourselves and our own attitude toward divine worship. And then it is important that we understand that there is habitual and non-habitual oncerism. Important it is, exactly because there is no principal difference between the two, and because for that very reason it is easy for the occasional oncer to become an habitual oncer. If I take the principal position that I may absent myself from the services as I please and without any plausible reason, I have made the fundamental error already. And then it is very easy to establish a bad habit. A habit, you know, begins with the first indulgence. And especially when we deal with a problem like this, which concerns the contrast between flesh and spirit, it is extremely easy to fall into the bad habit of oncerism. I deceive myself into thinking once or twice that I can stay home from church just because "I don't feel like going", and it is not long (unless I am enlightened) before I succumb to the same deceit every Sunday.

Hence, it is much better for ourselves if we simply omit the word *habitual*, and determinedly assume the position that we are oncers every time we fit under the definition given in the first part of our article.

#### *The Proper Reason.*

It would not be fair or edifying, of course, simply to brand everyone a oncer who comes to church only once on Sunday. Nor is that our intention. There may very well be good reasons why a person *can not* come to church. The essential error of the oncer is, however, not a lack of ability to attend the services, but a lack of desire. And with that in mind we may treat this matter of a proper reason.

First of all, however, we want to emphasize again that this is to a large extent a personal, spiritual matter. We do not intend to pass judgment on all the reasons that are passed off as proper excuses for failure to be in church when the saints assemble. Each one must answer for himself before God. The consistory that deals with the problem will soon realize this too. Sometimes you can run into a situation where the reason given is so foolproof that you can't lay a finger on it, and yet you have a question in your soul, and you after all are not convinced. All you can do in a case like that is to point a person to his spiritual obligation and responsibility, and leave him to answer before God.

We may nevertheless ask the question: what is a proper reason? And: what reasons, if any, are principally and *per se* to be judged improper? And we may point out too, that our starting-point may never be:

can I find a foolproof reason for staying away from church this morning? We very easily do that. But such an attitude does not spring from a living faith at all. On the contrary, we intend to speak of these possible reasons only in order that we may honestly and in faith examine ourselves in the light of the fear of the Lord, may see if there be any evil way in us, and may thus be led in the way everlasting.

Hence, before we enter upon this phase of the subject, we do well to say with the Psalmist: "Search me, o God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ps. 139:23, 24.

And we do well to see to it that it is our sincere and inmost desire and intention to heed the admonition of Heb. 10:25, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.

H. C. Hoeksema.

---

## PERISCOPE

---

### *Keeping Our Balance.*

In connection with all that has been written recently regarding especially "conditions" and the "Brief Declaration" I would sound a note of warning against over-simplification and in favor of keeping our balance.

In the first place there is the danger of over-simplification on the part of those who are opposed to the declaration. It is easy to say, there is no love there and so the thing produced is no good. Or the attempt is being made to 'get' Rev. Petter and so we must oppose it. Or, Rev. Hoeksema is simply trying to make a creed of his own (and our) view of the covenant and baptism and that motive is evil. Or, they simply oppose mission work in Canada, afraid of having our churches grow lest their influence be lost, etc. Now some, or all, or none of these things may be true but my point is that we must not over-simplify by simply leaping to these conclusions and viewing all things in their shadow without factual well-grounded proof.

On the other hand the danger is no less great as far as those who are in favor of the declarations are concerned. It is so simple. Rev. Petter and perhaps Rev. Doezeema and Rev. Cammenga etc. and all those who do not condemn them simply love Heynsianism, they are Arminian and are attempting to open our churches to all the errors of 1924. The threat may be added that then we are in duty bound to apologize to the Christian Reformed Churches for 1924. The

declaration is simply the confession, so once again whoever opposes it, regardless of what his grounds may be is simply anti-confessional, unreformed, certainly not Protestant Reformed and it is really so simple. And then the Declaration which is submitted to the consistories for their approval and discussion becomes already the test of soundness and of being Protestant Reformed rather than itself being the object of investigation to determine whether it is completely and satisfactorily (Protestant) Reformed.

But keeping our balance means then that we frankly and truly weigh and evaluate and with the best possible respect and love for one another judge the arguments which are advanced pro and con. But it also means that we frankly and truly and fairly evaluate what the Liberated, against whom the Declaration was formulated, have to say. That we hear them and weigh their arguments and their position, especially in as far as they repudiate the charges openly made against them. And this means also that their position and their arguments be made available. Especially in this connection the contribution of the Reformatie must not be ignored and while I personally believe that it lies in the domain of the editorial department, to make known and to weigh and if necessary refute the position taken, if it is neglected by that department I shall attempt even with my own imperfect knowledge of the Holland language to translate what is written in order that all may fairly and objectively judge as to whether the charge of Heynsianism so recklessly thrown about lately is true or no.

In this connection may I commend Rev. Blankespoor on his recent article and may I suggest further that each of us personally do some Periscoping in the older issues of the Standard Bearer. There is much worthwhile material there upon these subjects. Maybe your Periscope editor will do some of this for you in the future.

### *Chinese Mission Activity.*

In connection with our article some time ago regarding the continuation of Mission Activity in China it may be well to point out some of the darker sides of this picture.

From an article on "The future of Missions in Red China" appearing in the "Moody Monthly" we glean the following:

Since the Communist victory in 1949 there has been no new mission arrivals in China. In fact they are not allowed to enter. During the past several years there has been a general exodus of mission workers from China and even now it is continuing at the rate of 50 to 100 missionaries a month who are leaving the field because their work has either become impossible or because their remaining would work harm to the Chinese Christians. "If this one-way traffic con-



tinues, it will be only a matter of time until the Protestant missionary body is reduced to a handful of veterans who intend to live and die in the land of their adoption."

"It is difficult to give an accurate picture of the over-all situation in a country as large as China. Conditions in Manchuria and North China are quite different from those in south and west China. In the whole of Manchuria for example, with a population as large as France, only three stations are still manned by foreign personnel.

"In Hopeh province there are only two missionaries outside of Peking and Tientsin.

"A similar situation exists in the province of Shantung, where churches were once numerous and prosperous. Apart from Tsinan and Tsingtao, where there are some thirty-six missionaries, mostly in institutional work, there is only one other foreign missionary—a woman living in the small town of Pingyin.

"In Shansi there are ten missionaries in three centers. In Honan there are only four missionaries, one man and three women, located in four different places. Thus fewer than 10 percent of the missionaries now on the field are located in north China. So far all attempts to get back into the north have been blocked by the authorities.

The author then goes on to sum up the harrassment to which the missionary in China is submitted: "No amount of window dressing can conceal the fact that the new régime, following the Marxist line, regards religion as the 'opiate of the people'. Its leaders consider the church to be an 'unhealthy organism' which will die of its own accord when outside support is withdrawn. . . . Naturally they want to get rid of us as quickly as possible. How to achieve their purpose, and at the same time save their face, is the problem now confronting them.

". . . One means they are using is anti-foreign propaganda. . . . Another means Communists *are* using with telling effect is restriction of travel. Ever since 'liberation', that much abused word, missionaries have not been permitted to travel except on rare occasions for 'essential' business. Needless to say, preaching is not regarded as essential business. . . . Another factor is a new law calling for the separation of church and state. . . . Religion now must not be mixed up with politics, education, social service, or daily life. It must be strictly confined to the sacred precincts of the church. In large areas of China, principally in the north, churches are permitted to hold only one service a week. Weekday meetings are forbidden on the grounds that they 'interfere with production.' . . . The big church in the city which used to draw a regular congregation of 800 is only a shadow of its former self. Whereas we used to have more than twenty

services a week, now they have only one, and quite frequently even that meets with interference.

". . . Still another obstacle to missionary work is the land and property tax now collected by the People's Government. For the first time in a hundred years, church property in China is subject to taxation. If these taxes were reasonable, no one would complain; but they are both unreasonable and exorbitant."

Beautifully the article concludes with, "If and when the door (in China—J.H.) is closed it will be closed not by Mao Tze-tung, or Chow En-lai, or Wu Yao-tsung, or any earthly power, but by the One Who said, 'I am he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.'"

J. Howerzyl.

### CLASSIS EAST

will meet in special session Wednesday, February 28, at 9:00 A.M. This meeting will be a continuation of the January meeting for the purpose of treating the Declaration of Principles.

D. Jonker, (S. C.)

### ATTENTION!

### CLASSIST WEST

meets in Hull, Iowa, Wednesday, March 7, 1951

### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Ill., hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. John Holleman in the death of his son,

**William Holleman**

who passed away at the age of 25 years.

May our heavenly Father comfort the bereaved and may we at all times put our trust in Him.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.

Gysbert A. Van Baren, Sec'y.

### IN MEMORIAM

On December 6, 1950, it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved father, and grandfather,

**Mr. W. Vander Woude**

at the age of 72 years.

That he is now rejoicing in "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens", is our comfort in this hour of sorrow.

Mrs. W. Vander Woude

Mr. and Mrs. John Faber

Mr. Peter Vander Woude

three grandchildren.

# Report of Classis East

IN SESSION JANUARY 3, 1951 AT FIRST CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

The January session of Classis was held at Fuller Ave. The opening exercises were conducted by Rev. J. A. Heys. The credentials were read and accepted. All the churches were represented by two delegates. According to rotation Rev. E. Knott was called upon to preside and Rev. J. A. Heys acted as clerk.

The Committee, appointed at the last Classis to investigate the status of the stated clerk, reports; and in its report brings out that preferably the stated clerk should be an office bearer. Classis did not adopt the advice of the Committee in this matter.

The other matter the Committee had under consideration was the question as to who shall be entitled to an advisory vote at Classis. The Committee advises that Classis should limit this privilege to those mentioned in Art. 42 of our Church Order, which article they interpreted to mean that it included our Missionaries and emeritus ministers. But Classis does not agree with this interpretation of Art. 42 of the Church Order, as given by this Committee.

A report was given by the Committee appointed at the last Classis to study the protests of two brethren, that protested against their Consistory for sanctioning the giving away of children for adoption.

In their report the Committee advises the Consistory to retract their stand in regard to the question of the rightness of the giving away of children for adoption. This advice was adopted by Classis.

One of the protestants in addition, protested against his Consistory for denying him the right to exercise the office of believers; and protested against the hierarchical dealings of his Consistory.

The Committee advises Classis to express that the brother failed to prove these charges. Classis adopts the advice of the Committee in this matter.

In re Classical appointments: Oak Lawn requests that their pastor, who cannot conduct services in the Holland language, not be sent to Chatham, where the Holland language is used exclusively. This request was granted.

The Classical appointments were regulated as follows:

## RANDOLPH:

Jan. 14	Rev. G. Lubbers
Jan. 21	Rev. J. A. Heys
Feb. 4	Rev. M. Schipper
Feb. 11	Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Feb. 18	Rev. J. Blankespoor
Feb. 25	Rev. R. Veldman
Mar. 4	Rev. G. Vos
Mar. 11	Rev. E. Knott
Mar. 18	Rev. H. De Wolf
Apr. 1	Rev. B. Kok
Apr. 8	Rev. E. Knott

## GRAND HAVEN:

Jan. 21	Rev. E. Knott
Jan. 28	Rev. R. Veldman
Feb. 4	Rev. C. Hanko
Feb. 18	Rev. B. Kok
Feb. 25	Rev. H. Veldman
Mar. 4	Rev. G. Lubbers
Mar. 11	Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Mar. 18	Rev. J. Blankespoor
Apr. 1	Rev. M. Schipper
Apr. 8	Rev. J. Blankespoor

## CHATHAM:

Jan. 14	Rev. J. Blankespoor
Jan. 21	Rev. B. Kok
Feb. 4	Rev. G. Lubbers
Feb. 11	Rev. H. De Wolf
Feb. 18	Rev. J. A. Heys
Mar. 4	Rev. M. Schippers
Mar. 11	Rev. C. Hanko
Mar. 18	Rev. H. Veldman
Apr. 1	Rev. G. Vos
Apr. 8	Rev. R. Veldman

An instruction from Oak Lawn, that all matters for the Classis be in the hands of the stated clerk two weeks before the time of meeting, so that the stated clerk can supply the consistories with a brief agenda, is tabled so that the stated clerk can look up previous decisions of Classis on this matter.

Another Overture of Oak Lawn, requesting this Classis to reconsider a decision of a previous Classis is ruled out of order.

Classis decided to overture Synod to grant the following subsidies:

Grand Haven—without pastor \$300.; with pastor \$2800.00
Chatham .....\$2800.00
Randolph—without pastor \$500.00; with pastor \$2000.00
Oak Lawn .....\$2000.00

A protest of a brother against his consistory, for spending money without being authorized thereto by the congregation and his questioning the wisdom of inviting Rev. Petter to its pulpit, is not sustained by Classis.

The instruction of Grand Haven, to increase the number of delegates to Synod from each Classis to six ministers and six elders, is not supported by Classis.

A letter of Rev. J. C. De Korne in regard to an International Reformed Mission Counsel is referred to Synod.

In connection with the instruction of the Second Church of Grand Rapids: "In view of the present international situation the Consistory proposes to Classis to have a special day of prayer in accordance with Art. 66 of the Church Order," Classis East decided to hold such a day of prayer.

For this special prayer service Classis East decided to set aside the evening service of Sunday, Feb. 4.

Rev. A. Cammenga protests the decision of the last Classis in re his protest against Synod dealing with the candidacy of H. H. Kuiper. Classis decided that the previous Classis was correct in judging that the protest of brother Kuiper vs. Fuller Ave. be treated by Fuller Ave. before the protest of Rev. Cammenga be read and treated at Classis. Classis decided to send this protest through to Synod together with the minutes pertaining to this matter.

In re Rev. Cammenga's protest against Synod, Classis decided: That Rev. Cammenga has not shown conclusively that this sin confessed in Doon, should have been confessed in Orange City and that this lack of confession in Orange City is not a reason why the candidacy, as decided by the Synod, shall not stand; and further, that the minutes of Classis West bear out that there is no "faithless desertion of office".

In regard to the Brief Declaration of Principles, Classis decides to treat this matter in a special meeting of Classis to be held Feb. 28 at Fuller Ave., and that the stated clerk shall send all the related material to the consistories as soon as possible.

Brother H. H. Kuiper protests the action of the last Classis, re Holland's protest to Synod. Classis expresses in this matter that the October Classis erred in supporting Holland's protest.

Rev. J. Blankespoor also protests against Synod in re the candidacy of H. H. Kuiper. Classis answers: that point one of his protest has already been treated and that there are no grounds in point two to object to the candidacy of H. H. Kuiper.

The grievance of a brother, that Classis was remiss in regard to Art. 43 of our Church Order, was declared out of order on the grounds that only the last Classis could exercise censure in this matter.

Classis decides that in case brother Kuiper shall accept the call from Randolph he shall be examined by Classis East in Dogmatics, practical Homiletics and Practica.

Chatham asks permission for collections from all the churches of Classis East to defray the moving expenses of Rev. Petter from Orange City to Chatham. Classis grants this request.

Holland requests that a supplement to its protest to Synod also be sent thru to Synod. This request is granted.

In re the Hamilton matter, Classis decided to approve the stand taken by the Classical Committee. To show what this is I will quote part of the report of the Class. Comm.

"The Classical Committee on its meeting of Nov. 15 decided to present you the following:

A. The facts: The consistory of the Hamilton Prot. Ref. Church:

1. Refused to maintain its own decision of June 5 to receive only such members as would:
  - a. Express willingness to become acquainted with and be instructed in the Prot. Ref. truth.
  - b. Promise not to militate against that truth.
2. Refused to abide by the decision of Classis East, Art. 4, regarding this matter.

3. Refuses to accept any binding to the truth of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

4. Wants to accept any and all Liberated emigrants only on the basis of their attestation, whether or not they agree with the "doctrine taught here in this Christian church".

B. 1. That the Committee is of the opinion that the Consistory of Hamilton does not properly perform its duties:

Grounds:

a. They have violated their oath of office in which they promised "to take oversight of the church which is committed to them and to diligently look, whether every one departs himself properly in his confession and conversation", etc. Also: "It is the duty particularly to have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the word" etc.

b. They have violated their promise in re the Formula of Subscription which reads as follows: "We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend, etc." And also: "We declare moreover, that we not only reject all errors, etc."

That in the Prot. Ref. Churches this refers to all errors that militate against the truth as held in the Prot. Ref. Churches is evident from:

1) The second question in the Form for Baptism.  
2) The first question asked of those who make confession of faith.

2. That the Consistory of Hamilton naturally has the right and the calling to appeal to our broader gatherings. And it is the desire and advice of the Classical Committee that the Consistory do so.

3. That the Consistory will further let the matter remain in status quo until these broader gatherings have expressed themselves."

In answer to the protest of Hamilton, Classis expresses to Hamilton's Consistory: (1) that it has approved the advice of the Classical Committee; (2) that the protest of Hamilton is unfounded, and, (3) that Classis holds Hamilton's Consistory in duty bound to enforce their decision of June 5, 1950.

Hamilton's request for the release of Rev. H. Veldman, was answered by the Classis as follows: "That inasmuch as the grievous circumstances prevalent at Hamilton are the result of the sinful acts of the Consistory of Hamilton in not abiding by their own decision nor abiding by the advice of Classis in re the two questions to be asked aspirants to membership, Classis expresses that she cannot and may not assent to Hamilton's request to release Rev. Veldman from his charge unto which God has called him and which charge he has faithfully performed."

Classis decided to meet in Fuller Ave. Feb. 28 and to consider this meeting a continuation of the Jan. meeting. The minutes are read and approved.

A motion to adjourn till Feb. 28 carried.

Rev. R. Veldman led in the closing prayer.

D. JONKER (Stated Clerk).