

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

Fruits of Deliverance

"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the umble shall hear thereof, and be glad." etc. —Psalm 32

The superscription of this psalm tells us at what occasion it was composed. It was when David changed his behaviour before the face of Abimelech, the king of Gath. The record of this history you will find in I Sam. 21.

Well, when David found refuge in Gath, he could not remain there for any length of time before they recognized him as the dangerous warrior and enemy of the Philistines. The people said: Is not this the man of whom the maidens sang: Saul hath slain his thousands but David his ten thousands? And David became sore afraid. He lost sight of God and saw only Achish, the wicked king of Gath.

Psalm 34 reflects this misgiving on the part of David. He speaks of troubles and fears. We can well imagine that David was sore afraid.

But he found a way out. He acted as if he were insane. He began to scratch at the walls of the city and let his spittle drip into his beard. And he achieved the desired results. Achish asked grumblingly of his servants: Do we lack mad men in this city? Let him be gone at once. And David fled to the cave of Adullam. There his kinsfolk and a veritable host of stragglers came to him and he became their captain.

Such is the history. David was in trouble and cried unto the Lord who heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles.

The first part of the psalm, up to verse 10 is a song of praise and the remainder of the psalm is as

it were a sermon. The experience at Gath he will use as a means to teach his companions the way of God's deliverance.

He begins his hymn by stating that the praises of Jehovah shall be forever in his mouth. Wherever he is, he will speak a good word about and to his God. Such is the literal meaning of *to bless*. To bless means that you speak good words, comfortable words about a person or to a person. It means that you utter beautiful words. Our English word Eulogy is derived from the Greek word for *to bless*.

Such endeavour is exactly what we need in order to answer to the purpose for which we were created. That's all we will do unto all eternity in heaven. That will make us happy too. That is the only occupation which makes for happiness. Bless God, praise His name and let your soul boast in the Lord and I assure you that you will be a happy person.

And that is not all.

You do that before the face of men and your song of praise will breed emulation. The humble will hear your song and be glad. I am reminded of a phrase in the New Testament which is used several times: And the people seeing this or hearing this gave praise to God. Indeed, when you do the right thing, and that is to praise Jehovah, you will cause gladness for others.

Henceforth we see David in the cave of Adullam. It is a motley throng that surrounds him. Some are in debt and are hunted as a partridge upon the mountains; some are discontented, in bitterness of soul, some were in distress. But David stands in their midst and calls them to the only endeavour that is worth while. Listen: O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.

From the beginning of time the people of God have liked to praise God in unison. In the time of Enos men began to call upon the name of the Lord. And in our time we still like to go to church so that

we may praise His name together. The older I become the more I like to go to church. Slowly on I begin to understand that our Church-life is a little bit of heaven.

Listen, David is going to tell the dwellers in the cave of his narrow escape in Gath. I was in terrible fear, I was sore troubled: death itself stared me in the face. But this poor man cried unto God and he was heard. David further describes that ascent unto the throne of God. He likens it to the rushing stream of water. (See the Dutch translation of verse 6). And God heard: He delivered, He heard his pitiful cry and his burden was taken away. He was lightened and his face was not ashamed.

Ah, David knows the solution. The Angel of the Lord is round about those that fear the Lord. There was no danger. It was not necessary for David to act as though he was insane. God was for him and therefore there could not be anything or anybody really against him. What wondrous safety. The literal meaning of the word that is translated by *deliver* really means to snatch away as from the brink of a precipice. That is what happened at Gath.

And the experience of such wonderful deliverance awakens the desire to share it with all God's people. Hence we find David full of exhortations. He says: O taste and see that the Lord is good; O fear Him! And by implication we may read in the following verse: O seek Him!

O what fools men are! Millions will seek the earth and sin, but they will never ask, seek for the living God.

And there is nothing that pays such wonderful dividends as the service of God. Taste God and you will see that He is God! Trust Him and you will be blessed! Fear Him and you will have no want! Seek Him and you will not want any good thing. God in His blessed revelation (and that is Jesus) is the only thing you really need without which you will have nothing but hell.

But David knows. He has experienced all this and more. And love is not narrow. He will share it with the children of God. From verse 10 on he will preach to them; he will teach them the fear of the Lord.

In the first lesson he tells us the way to real and abiding happiness. If you desire life, if you love to live that life eternally, if you want to see God, you must pursue a definite course.

Negatively you must hate evil and positively you must love goodness.

You must hate evil to such an extent that you keep your lips and tongue from the works of the devil, which is the making of the lie.

Oh no, it does not mean that you always and ever speak the pure truth of God. It does not mean that you live a sinless existence. No, but it means that you are turned against the original root-sin of all sin: the lie of the devil. You know that lie: ye shall be as gods! It means that you hate the lie and fight against it every day. And that you cling to the truth of God and that is Jesus.

If you desire life and if you desire it for all eternity, you must do good. You must seek peace and pursue it. The very phraseology suggests that this course is not easy. It is the fight of faith which every Christian is privileged to fight in the power of God. Peace is not our natural sphere. Very rebellion is our atmosphere by nature. Rebels against God and rebels against all authority. But through the regenerating influence of God's Spirit we are able to fight against the indwelling rebellion, killing it, mortifying it and thus growing in gracious obedience which is the atmosphere of real peace, of real tranquility and harmony with the heart of our God.

Such people are really happy and blessed.

Listen to David: he will describe such happiness.

God's eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. Remember here what the occasion was for this psalm and it speaks the more strongly. Righteous David was in real danger of his life. His cry arose, interpreting all his fears. But he found out that even in the city of Gath God is the only Sovereign. He heard the cry of David and hastened to his help.

How different is the experience of the wicked. God's face is against them. That is awful. Even if a man's face is against you, you feel embarrassed, ill at ease, miserable. Let a man frown at you, raise his voice, glare his contempt or anger at you, and your cheeks are blanched, your breath is shortened, your heart is pounding within you.

But this is God!

His Face is against the wicked. And while we can do nothing more than afflict the bodies of men, God can cut off our remembrance from the earth.

And history bears witness. Where are Cain and Esau and Judas, the unholy triumvirate? Where is their remembrance? Even their names shall be annihilated.

How glorious is the comfort for the sorrowing saint on earth. They have the light of God's Spirit. By the light of that Spirit they see their sins and guilt. And slowly their hearts are breaking. They love God and they have sinned against Him. True remorse and sorrow is born of the love of God. They

become contrite in spirit. And the night hears their oft-repeated cry: Oh my God, be merciful to me, the sinner!

Even though it seems as though the Lord could have no communion with such sinners as we are, the very fact that you are contrite in spirit and broken-hearted is proof that He is very near you. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such that be of a contrite spirit. Such nearness was experienced by many when Jesus walked upon the earth. He would say: Be of good courage, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee! Methinks there is no sweeter music!

Oh then we are able to bear the cross. Our afflictions may be many; they *are* many. But if I may know that my God is near me, that my sins are forgiven and my guilt removed: then I can sing my song of praise and thanksgiving. Then it is heaven in my soul.

This God is very careful over His saints: He keepeth all the bones of the righteous, not one of them is broken. That is true of all the righteous, but it was fulfilled in Jesus. John tells us in his Gospel that this Scripture was fulfilled after Jesus' death when the soldiers came with hammers to crush the last spark of life out of our Lord: but finding Him already dead, they did not break His bones. Indeed, the fight was finished; Christ had paid all the debt of God's righteousness; therefore His bones might not be broken.

So the Lord has a special care for His own. No pain or suffering will He allow to come nigh unto them, unless it must be for their eternal and spiritual welfare. And in such case their suffering and tears are blessings in disguise.

How different with the wicked. Evil shall slay them. Do you not note that the punishment is already in the transgression? If you hate the righteous and their righteous Father in heaven; if you do evil all the day long, you will never be a happy man. The more you sin, the more miserable you become. Evil slays the wicked already here below. But in the revelation of the just judgment of God he will be declared guilty.

But when God's people arrive before the great white throne in the revelation of that same judgment God will show within them the glory of His own work. Take courage, ye righteous! In that day the Lord will turn your hearts inside out and the whole universe will see that Jesus dwelled in you, that you trusted in your God, that you sought Him and found Him and that your deepest hunger and thirst was to see the glorious Face of God!

—G. Vos

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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EDITORIALS

What Happened at Classis East

Here follows a complete report of the documents that were presented to Classis East *in re* the case of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids Mich. against the Rev. De Wolf and his deposed elders when the Classis reconvened on Oct. 6, 1953.

In substance, the Classis granted the request which is found at the end of the report by the First Prot. Ref. Church and declared that De Wolf and his deposed elders had severed connection with the Protestant Reformed Churches.

To the Classis East of the
Protestant Reformed Churches
convening October 6, 1953 at Grand Rapids, Michigan
Esteemed brethren:

Your Committee which has been given the mandate to convey to the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church the decisions and advice of Classis *in re* the "Hoeksema, Op-hoff—Fuller Ave. Case" and which was further mandated "to spare no efforts under the blessings of our Covenant God to save the dear brethren involved" presents to you the following report of their activities.

I. On June 1, 1953 your Committee met and appointed as spokesman the Rev. G. Vos. We also decided to make a tape-recording of all that would be said by your committee before the Consistory so that our report to Classis might be accurate and **complete**. Later on the same evening we met with the Consistory and delivered our message which you will find literally in Document I attached. Concerning this report we would have you notice:

1. that we emphatically stressed that it was not the purpose of Classis by its decision to call the Rev. De Wolf a heretic. pg. 3.
2. that Classis would of necessity be compelled to do so if the Rev. De Wolf refuses to cast aside the statements literally condemned by the Classis. pg. 3
3. that we explained in detail before the Consistory the evil of these statements in question. pg. 4-6
4. that we pleaded with the brethren to throw away the heretical statements and continue with us in unity. pg. 8

II. On the same meeting of June 1st it already became evident to your Committee that the brethren involved did not desire to enter into the treatment of this matter. This followed for:

1. Not one of the brethren involved made an attempt to show that the decision of the Classis was wrong although they were not in agreement with it.
2. One of them moved to adjourn the meeting of consistory almost as soon as your Committee had delivered its message. Another of them supported the motion but it was defeated when called to a vote.
3. When then it was moved "to adopt the advice of the Classis and to act accordingly", one of them moved to "table this

matter." Another of them also supported this but it too was defeated when called to a vote.

(Note:—this was the only meeting that Elder N. J. Yonker, one of our Committee members, was able to attend due to his illness.)

III. After some discussion of the matter during which one of the involved brethren threatened to leave the meeting, the above motion "to adopt the advice of the Classis and to act accordingly" was adopted by a majority vote of the Consistory. Only the Rev. De Wolf registered his protest and negative vote to this decision.

IV. At this point it may be noted that the Consistory of First Church, misunderstanding our missive, erred when on June 1 she failed to take the necessary steps to "act according to the decision which she had made." Instead of doing so the Consistory erroneously:

1. left the impression with the guilty brethren that they had lots of time in which to decide whether or not they would comply with this decision.
2. permitted them to meet separately as a body and thus sanctioned group action in the church.
3. allowed them to function in their respective offices while in a state of guilt and condemned by the decision of the Consistory.

Your Committee, aware of these errors, and desirous to "spare no efforts to save the dear brethren involved", returned to the Consistory on June 15 and pointed out to them these errors. You may find this in Document II attached which is the transcript of the address delivered by our spokesman at that meeting.

V. On June 15, therefore, the Consistory decided to carry out its decision of June 1st. The brethren involved were given until June 22 to reply to an apology submitted to them by the Consistory.

VI. On June 22 the Rev. De Wolf submitted the following would-be apology to the Consistory:

"As far as those statements are concerned I am ready to say that I am sorry that they were not clear and, therefore, left room for a wrong interpretation. I would like to explain that by the first statement I had no intention at all to teach that God promises salvation to all men and that it depends on man's own will whether or not he will be saved. I have never taught this and could not have intended to teach this by that statement. By the second statement I did not mean to teach that a natural man must convert himself while he is in the power of darkness outside of the Kingdom of God. Also this is contrary to anything that I have ever preached. If, therefore, I have offended anyone by not stating clearly what I meant and thus giving occasion of misinterpretation, I am sorry."

This the Consistory could not accept for it did not comply with the decision of the Consistory as advised by the Classis. In the latter the statements and any interpretation of them is declared heretical while in the would-be apology of the Rev. De Wolf it is merely stated that they are not clear. The Consistory's decision requested an apology (retraction) while in the above quotation it is evident that Rev. De Wolf still maintains the statements according to his own interpretation (which was also condemned by the decision and advice of Classis which the Consistory adopted.)

In this connection it may be stated that your Committee pleaded with Rev. De Wolf to accede to a minimum apology which would then consist of the following three elements:

1. Acknowledge that the statements in their literal form are wrong.

2. Inform the congregation that you did not mean them as they literally are nor did you intend to teach the heresies they express. It may be added that neither the Consistory nor Classis regards that you intended to teach what the statements express.

3. Promise that in the future you will refrain, by the grace of God, from making such or similar statements.

This the Rev. De Wolf refused to do but when placed before the question: "Will you now apologize as requested by the Consistory and as advised by the Classis", his reply was: "You have my apology".

VII. Further, it was also evident at this meeting of June 22 that the elders involved had no intentions of complying with the decision of the Consistory requesting them to apologize for their having supported Rev. De Wolf in this matter. For:

1. they voted (illegally) against the motion requesting them to do so.

2. when the first elder was asked, he stated that he had nothing to apologize for.

VIII. To complete our report we may add that your committee, upon the request of the Consistory, was also present at the meeting of June 23 where the suspension and deposition proceedings occurred. We have witnessed all that took place at this meeting and can give testimony that in our judgment the entire proceedings were legitimate.

The Consistory at that time merely took formal action to execute its own decision of June 1 for it had now become evident that the brethren involved would not comply therewith. It was also at this meeting that the Consistory of our Fourth Church was consulted. This was necessitated by the fact that Rev. De Wolf had tendered a would-be apology. Had the Fourth Consistory judged this apology valid, suspension proceedings by the Consistory as advised by the Classis would have been abated. But, the Consistory of Fourth Church judged as follows:

"It is clear to our Fourth Consistory:

1. That neither Rev. De Wolf nor the Elders involved have made the apology demanded by the Consistory as advised by Classis.

2. That Classis advised the Consistory to proceed with suspension in case Rev. De Wolf and the Elders involved should refuse to apologize.

3. That in so far the Consistory has the right to proceed with suspension on the basis of the Classical decision.

However, we are not prepared to say:

a. That a consistory meeting can be called legal when half of its members were not notified that it would be held.

b. That a suspension can be called in order when the involved were not notified of the fact that the double Consistory would be held and the suspension decided on."

Thereupon it was evident that the insubordinate brethren had not complied with the decision of the Consistory and were, therefore, as advised by the Classis, to be suspended and deposed. This the Consistory properly and legally proceeded to do on June 23.

IX. To your Committee therefore, it was and now is evident that these brethren have made themselves guilty of gross **insubordination** and have caused **schism** in the church in their refusal to submit to the decisions of the Consistory and in their maintenance of the heretical statements.

In conclusion, our hearts are grieved to submit this report to your body. We prayed that the brethren might repent. We

labored to spare them. But they persisted and we are, therefore, compelled to relate to you as your Committee these disheartening but truthful facts.

Respectfully submitted

Your Committee

(w.s.) G. Vos

(w.s.) M. Schipper

(w.s.) G. Vanden Berg

(w.s.) N. J. Yonker

(w.s.) D. A. Langeland

Oct 5, 1953

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

In session October 6, 1953

c/o Rev. George Lubbers, Stated Clerk

Esteemed Brethren:

Following is a report of what happened in the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, since the last meeting of Classis East in re the Rev. H. De Wolf and his apostate elders. Much of what is reported here will, no doubt, also be found in the report of your committee that was appointed to make the case pending with our consistory and which we asked to be present at all our meetings in which the case was treated.

Our first meeting after the sessions of Classis East, was held on June 1, 1953. At that meeting your committee through their spokesman, the Rev. G. Vos, presented the decisions of Classis East in re the De Wolf case at the same time making a strong and spiritually earnest plea to the brethren to follow up those decisions and thus preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Faith. Immediately after the reading of this report and the plea by the Rev. G. Vos, serious doubts were raised in the hearts and minds of the consistory and the committee, whether the deviating brethren would even seriously consider the case before the face of God. For it became very evident that they simply stalled for time and played politics. Time, they considered, was in their favor for in time, they thought they would still gain a majority, or, at least, a tie, in the consistory.

That this is true is evident from the following facts:

1. Immediately after your committee had spoken a motion was made by one of the erring elders to adjourn, although the hour was still early and the business for which the meeting was called had not even been treated. This motion was supported but defeated.

2. A motion was then made and supported that the consistory "adopt the advice of Classis East and act accordingly." Immediately one of the erring elders made a motion to table the motion. This motion was supported but defeated.

The motion that the consistory "adopt the advice of Classis East and act accordingly" was then carried. And because of the fundamental and decisive character of this motion we will say a few words about it.

1. The motion itself is plain. It implied that the consistory put the erring brethren officially in a state of guilt. It certainly implies that in that state of guilt they could not serve as officebearers in the First Protestant Reformed Church. By this decision they were declared guilty of heresy and of supporting heresy. Their state was such that only by their own apology and the acceptance of such an apology by the consistory would they again be received as minister and elders in good standing. This ought to be plain to anyone that reads this motion in the light of the decisions of Classis East.

2. The erring brethren asked for time. And they also asked that they might be permitted to meet by themselves to consider the matter. Your committee considers this a mistake. We agree with your committee. Nevertheless, consider the following:

a. The consistory wished to avoid every appearance of desiring to rush the matter.

b. By the above mentioned decision of the consistory the whole matter was decided. All the erring brethren could do was to consider whether or not they would offer the definite apology demanded by the consistory on the advice of Classis East, and inform the consistory. They could do nothing else.

c. The consistory felt that there could be no harm in giving the erring brethren time to consider the matter prayerfully both individually and as a group.

Who, however, could possibly imagine that the erring brethren would never even consider the matter of an apology as they were supposed to do, but that they merely stalled for time? They were awaiting for the time when their opposition would be strengthened by the installation of a new elder, Mr. A. Vermeer.

This became evident when, at the request of your committee, the consistory met two weeks later, June 15 1953. At that meeting it became evident that the erring and guilty brethren had not even considered the matter of apology. They were not ready! When the remark was made that the installation of the new elder should be postponed because officially he knew nothing about the case of Rev. DeWolf, the erring brethren were strongly apposed to this. We let it go. This was another mistake the consistory made. We should and could have decided to postpone this installation, seeing that the accused and guilty brethren had no longer the right to vote. But also this mistake, we wish the classis to know is only to our credit. It merely shows that we did in no wise wish to force the matter in spite of the fact that it became more and more evident to the consistory and to your committee that the guilty brethren were insincere and were playing politics. Let your committee speak!

Next was the meeting of June 22, 1953. This meeting too, was held in the presence of your committee. About this meeting we report the following.

1. The Rev. Hoeksema asked the chair to inquire of the erring and guilty brethren whether or not they were ready to apologize.

2. Immediately one of the guilty brethren demanded that we must first make a motion to this effect. This, let the Classis understand, was entirely out of order, seeing that this had already been decided by the consistory in its meeting of June 1, 1953.

3. Nevertheless, the motion was made, first to ask the Rev. DeWolf whether he was ready to apologize, with the remark that the guilty brethren could not vote in the matter. This motion was supported and carried unanimously, i.e. by 11 votes, one brother not voting. At the same time the guilty brethren also expressed their vote, although it was illegal. And, by this illegal attempt to vote they definitely expressed that they did not want the Rev. De Wolf to apologize. By this, they had, according to the decision of the consistory of June 1, 1953 and according to the advice of Classis East, definitely declared that they already were deposed from office, and that it needed only an official decision of the consistory with the advice of a neighboring consistory, to declare them deposed.

4. The chair then asked the Rev. De Wolf whether he was

willing to apologize. He offered the following would-be apology.

"As far as those statements are concerned I am ready to say that I am sorry that they were not clear, and, therefore, left room for a wrong interpretation. I would like to explain that by the first statement I had no intention at all to teach that God promises salvation to all men and that it depends on man's own will whether or not he will be saved. I have never taught this and could not have intended to teach this by this statement. By the second statement I did not mean to teach that a natural man must convert himself while he is in the power of darkness, outside of the kingdom of God. Also this is contrary to anything that I have ever preached. If, therefore, I have offended anyone by not stating clearly what I meant and thus giving occasion to misinterpretation, I am sorry."

About this would-be apology, the consistory wishes to make the following remarks.

a. The consistory asked whether this was supposed to be the same apology the Rev. De Wolf had made from the pulpit the previous evening. He said it was. The Rev. Ophoff denied this. The sermon having been recorded, and the Rev. De Wolf himself possessing the record, the consistory asked him to produce it in evidence. At this the Rev. De Wolf became indignant and asked whether the consistory wanted him to swear with his hand on the Bible. Yet in a speech in the Middle West he said that "it was essentially the same," which is something quite different.

b. The consistory could not and did not accept the apology simply because it is no apology. The Rev. De Wolf states that the statements were not clear. But they were very clear. He says that he could never have taught what, according to our interpretation of the statements, he did teach. But fact is that he did exactly that. In fact, he did not apologize for the statements, but for our interpretation of them. Besides, the consistory on the advice of the Classis had declared that the statements were literally heretical regardless how one might interpret them. For this the Rev. De Wolf was asked to apologize.

c. This he refused to do. When he was placed once more before the question he said: "You have my apology." This meant that, according to the decision of the consistory of June 1, 1953, the Rev. DeWolf was declared guilty of suspension and that it needed only the advice of a neighboring consistory to seal the suspension.

5. After this a motion was made and supported to ask the guilty elders whether or not they were ready to apologize. The motion was again carried unanimously this time by a vote of 12. Again, the guilty elders voiced their vote against this motion. Again, though this was illegal, they nevertheless expressed that they would not apologize. Hence, again, according to the decision of the consistory of June 1, 1953, they were already declared to be deposed from office.

At this point it may be well to offer a word of explanation about the question of this illegal voting. When is a member, when he is an office bearer deprived of his right to vote? The answer is: The **accused** can never have the right to vote in his own case. And, as soon as he is found guilty he has lost all his right to vote, whether as a member in a congregational meeting, or as an office bearer in the meeting of the consistory. This is not only according to all usage in the Reformed Churches, but is also the clear implication of Art. 33 of the Church Order. Now, the Rev. De Wolf and his guilty elders maintain that the same rule applies also to the accusers. Hence, in the consistory, the Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff, according to

them, also had to refrain from voting. But how absurd this would be. Suppose that several elders had accused the Rev. De Wolf of heresy. Suppose that even the majority had become his accusers, as finally they did. Must, in that case, all refrain from voting? You feel how absurd this is. No, the rule is that any officebearer may vote as long as he is an officebearer in good standing, but, that as soon as he is no longer in good standing, either as the accused, or as guilty, he loses his right to vote.

After this the Rev. Hoeksema left the meeting. He felt that the case was finished, and, besides, through all this illegal attempt to vote, the meeting became chaos. When the Rev. Hoeksema had left, the Rev. De Wolf had a speech chiefly against the Rev. Hoeksema and the deceased Mr. D. Jonker, and the Rev. Ophoff answered him. But nothing was accomplished. The case was finished.

6. The last meeting of the consistory, again in the presence of your committee, and also in the presence of the consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church of Gr. Rapids, Mich. was held on June 23, 1953.

It is alleged that this meeting was illegal, because the guilty brethren were not present and were not even notified of the meeting. But the meeting was perfectly legal. Consider:

- a. That the guilty brethren had been present at every meeting in which their case was treated.
- b. That they had plainly proved that they were worthy of suspension and deposition.
- c. That they had no longer any place in the consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church.
- d. That their case was completely finished.
- e. That their presence would only have resulted in more illegal voting and chaos.
- f. That the Church Order does not require that officebearers that are to be suspended or deposed, must be present at their own suspension and deposition.

And it will be evident that the indictment that the meeting of June 23, 1953, was illegal, cannot stand for one moment.

The consistory of the Fourth Prot. Ref. Church advised as follows:

It is clear to our Fourth Consistory:

1. That neither the Rev. DeWolf nor the elders involved have made the apology demanded by the consistory of First Church as advised by Classis.
2. That Classis advised the consistory of First Church to proceed with suspension in case the Rev. De Wolf and his elders should refuse to apologize.
3. That in so far the consistory has the right to proceed with suspension on the basis of the Classical decision.

However we are not prepared to say:

1. That a consistory meeting can be called legal when half of its members were not notified that it would be held.
2. That a suspension can be called in order when the involved were not notified of the fact that the double consistory meeting would be held and the suspension decided on."

Although the consistory of First Church would have liked to have had more wholehearted and positive advice from our neighboring consistory, and although our consistory could do nothing with the last part of the advice, seeing that it is negative and merely states that the consistory of 4th church is not prepared to say something, yet, the advice of that consistory is nevertheless that we had the right to proceed.

This the consistory of First Church did, and the Rev. DeWolf and his deposed elders were duly notified of this action.

However, they refused to submit to their suspension and deposition. Thus they became schismatic, and lost all right of appeal by continuing to function as the legal officebearers of First Prot. Ref. Church.

We therefore request Classis East, in session Oct. 6, 1953, to declare:

1. That the Rev. DeWolf and his deposed elders have separated themselves from the communion of the Prot. Ref. Churches.
2. That therefore they lost all right to send delegates to Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches.
3. That they have lost all right of appeal, whether to Classis or to Synod by their schismatic action.
4. That Classis East declare that the consistory of which the Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Rev. C. Hanko are presidents, and of which Mr. G. Stadt is clerk, is the legal consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Gr. Rapids, Mich, and the Classis receive and seat the delegates appointed by them.

Your brethren in the Lord

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church

by C. Hanko, President

by G. Stadt, Clerk

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches
Met in session, October 6, 1953.

Esteemed Brethren:

We regret that we must inform you that a number of brethren, who were members of our consistory, have arbitrarily and sinfully separated themselves from our communion, established themselves as a separate church and illegally assume the name of the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church. These brethren include the Revs. H. Hoeksema and C. Hanko.

By their act of separation they have broken with the legally instituted consistory and congregation of First Church and, therefore, with the denomination of Protestant Reformed Churches.

Besides separating themselves, these brethren have illegally assumed the power to suspend and depose us. This action was taken by them in a secret meeting, held June 23, 1953, of which meeting the members of undersigned consistory were not even notified. That same week they sent a communication to all the members of the congregation calling upon them to follow them in their schismatic act of meeting separately in the auditorium of the Christian High School.

Since these brethren have separated themselves from us and are therefore, no longer members of our congregation and of our Churches, it has become impossible for us to discipline them. For the same reason it is impossible for us now to protest against them. However, since it is common knowledge that they intend to send delegates to this classis to represent themselves as the legal consistory of First Church, we feel constrained to warn the classis against acknowledging them as such. As long as they do not repent and confess their sin of rebellion and schism but continue to perpetuate it, they may not be recognized by this classis.

We are well aware of the fact that they accuse us of creating schism, (and they will undoubtedly attempt to convince the Classis of this as appears from the fact that the Rev.

Hoeksema has repeatedly publically predicted that this Classis will justify them) but this they can not prove because it is not true. We did not separate from them. They separated from us. The Rev. Hoeksema walked out of the meeting. Moreover, before he left he advised the elders that stood with him and the committee from Classis to walk out with him and meet separately, which they started to do. It was only upon the plea of one of our elders, that they stay and talk about the matter in question, that they consented to stay for a while. However before the meeting adjourned they informed us through Rev. Hanko that if we did not do what they demanded, they would separate from us. Hence, we did not refuse to work together, to discuss the matter involved and seek for a solution. They refused to do so. Surely nothing that we did could justify their act of walking away, meeting illegally to suspend and depose us and establishing themselves as a separate church. These brethren certainly understand that the only legal way open to them was that of protest and in the meantime maintaining the status quo. But this they refused to do. They took the law into their own hands, created a schism in the congregation and thus became guilty of gross sin.

And by this action they have forfeited every right to recognition and a voice in this Classis.

The fact that Classis had advised suspension and deposition does not alter the matter as far as their action is concerned because:

1. An apology was tendered and ignored;
2. An advice of Classis may never be executed in a revolutionary and illegal manner;
3. We were not suspended and deposed on a legal consistory meeting.

It will undoubtedly be contended that we were suspended and deposed when the consistory adopted (under intimidation on the part of the two protestants, against which Rev. De Wolf registered his protest as the minutes will show) the advice of the Classis. But fact is that we continued to function in our office and were still functioning in our office when the consistory adjourned on the evening of June 22. This means that a meeting of which we were not notified can never be called a legal consistory meeting. Moreover, apart from the question whether a minority can depose a majority, we were legally in office until such a time as, on a legally constituted consistory meeting, it were decided, with the advice of a neighboring consistory, that we be suspended and deposed.

But the opposition chose to ignore all these facts. It acted as though we were suspended and deposed and then met secretly without us, to suspend and depose us. Rather than to continue the matter any longer and seek for a solution in a legal, christian and brotherly way, it chose to dictatorially execute its wishes. By this action these brethren have wilfully separated themselves from our congregation and from the communion of our Churches. Should Classis, therefore, recognize them as the consistory of the First Church, it would thereby condone their schismatic action and itself become guilty of their sin.

May the Lord give you wisdom and grace to judge righteously in these difficult matters.

The Consistory of the First Protestant
Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.

H. De Wolf, Pres.
S. De Young, Sec'y.

Done in Consistory

Copy of Speech by the Rev. G. Vos
Delivered at the meeting of the consistory of the First
Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.
June 1, 1953.

Well brethren, I am very, very, very glad that the president of the Classis appointed me not only on the committee, but that the committee appointed me as their spokesman: and there are more than one reason why I really rejoice that the Lord so guided and directed us that I may sit here before you.

First of all because you are my brethren who are called to be elders, either ruling or teaching elders, in the church of Christ but much more, elders, the consistory of the mother church, that for many, many years has given directives to the activities of the whole denomination. You men always have a very large place in my heart, and I have watched you, and I can tell you in honesty that I was awed by you always. I was always afraid to be in your midst. I feared it. And I think you all have realized it too who have seen me. I used to quake with fear. I am a simple man. I am easily embarrassed and I am easily scared. Those that know me well know that that is true. And now you are in such a very, very miserable condition. I've watched this thing grow and come to a head. Now you are in such a miserable condition that you not only no longer give directives but you have lost your voice. You have no more voice. That cut me to the quick when I came to classis and I inquired, for I wanted to know. I missed about a half hour and then the truth was told me that you had lost your voice. Eight for and eight against. You didn't speak any more. That hurt me more than you will ever realize on this side of the grave, because you know how I have lived in this movement from the very beginning, the very inception, before the inception of our churches. I saw the clouds gathering years and years before that while in Calvin and that's why I say again that I am glad that possibly I may help you as one of the committee and as the spokesman. But that is not the only reason.

And that makes it very easy for me. I said to my wife that this is the most difficult night of my whole career. I never had anything like this, that I, of all persons must come here. And I struggled with you. The truth must be told. You will hear it in the judgment day anyhow. I have lain on my knees night after night, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night struggling with you and have asked the Lord, "Lord give me those men... give them to me. Give me grace in the sight of these men and that they may listen to me as I plead with them." Maybe you know and maybe you don't know but I asked Classis "Will you limit my mandate? Then tell me now because I am going to plead if you don't." And they didn't give me a single limit to the mandate. And the mandate itself is, of course, broad as you will hear when I read the first document.

What makes it so easy for me to sit here and talk after all these prayers is this. That's really beautiful. It's all decided. It is decided. Whether you hear or whether you forbear. Whether the Lord will move your hearts so that you will hear and unity will come and evil will be eradicated. It makes no difference for it is decided. And it is decided by the great Arbiter up there in heaven. And all I am is a puppet moving as a means in His hand, a mere tool. That makes it easy for me. That is my strength. All that I am doing is walking by His hand; He leads me.

I have a broad mandate, I said. I have to acquaint you with the decision of the Classis and advice. But see ground a: I'm going to read pretty soon that final document. See ground a: "Almost all the elders of the First Church are absent from Classis Meeting and thus are not aware of the five days of deliberation which preceeded the above motion." And that five days . . . it was five days when I wrote that motion. And a day and a half . . . a day and three quarters were added to it. Six days and three fourths we looked at your problem, prayed over your problem and deliberated and debated. See ground "a" I say: "All the elders were absent," and therefore my mandate is broad. I want to give you the full thrust of the Classis. And then especially the last ground, ground "d" of the Classis. I told the Classis that there you find my heart more than anywhere else. "We should spare no efforts on our behalf, under the blessing of our Covenant God, to save the dear brethren involved." That's you!

And now I shall first read the decision:

Decision re the Hoeksema, Ophoff—Fuller Case

"In our opinion both the statements which the protestants condemn are literally heretical regardless of what the Rev. De Wolf meant by them, regardless of how he explains them because:

the first teaches a general promise of God unto salvation to all that externally hear the preaching of the gospel head for head and soul for soul, limited by a condition which man must fulfill, while Scripture and our confessions plainly teach:

1. That, indeed, the proclamation of the gospel comes to all to whom God in His good pleasure sends it.

2. That, however, in our proclamation of the gospel, we may never say that God promises salvation to everyone of the hearers, on condition of faith, for the promise itself is particular, unconditional, and only for the elect: for it is an oath of God which He, in His everlasting mercy and grace, swears by Himself to His beloved elect; which He, by sovereign grace, fulfills only to and in them, without any condition or prerequisite to be fulfilled by them; and which promise implies that, by His Holy Spirit, He causes them to receive and appropriate salvation by a true and living faith.

The second teaches that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of God, which means that we convert and humble ourselves before we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, while Scripture and Confessions plainly teach:

1. That the whole work of our conversion, regeneration in its narrower as well as in its wider sense, in virtue of which we humble ourselves, is sovereignly wrought by God, by His Spirit and Word, through the preaching of the gospel in His elect.

2. That this entire work of conversion is our translation and entering into the kingdom of God. Hence, it is not, cannot be **before** but **THROUGH** our conversion that we enter the kingdom. We humble ourselves **IN** the light, never **IN** darkness; we humble ourselves, whether initially or repeatedly, **IN** the kingdom never **OUTSIDE** of it. Hence, our **ACT** of conversion is never antecedent to our entering in, but always is performed **IN** the kingdom of God, and there are no prerequisites.

Grounds:

a. the protestants have clearly shown from Scripture and the confessions that the literal statements are heretical.

b. we believe this is necessary for us to state in the light of our past experiences and history with the Liberated churches who use these arminian expressions.

2. Classis advises the Consistory of First Church:

a. to demand that the Rev. De Wolf make a public apology for having made the two statements in question.

b. that the Consistory also publicly apologize for having supported the Rev. De Wolf with respect to the two statements in question.

Grounds in re the first statement:

a. Scripture: Heb. 6:16-18, Rom. 9:6-8, 16, 18, Acts 13:48 John 6:36 and 37, John 10:26-30.

b. Confessions: Heid. Cat. 20, 65, 66; Confession 22, 33-35, Canons I A 6 7 10; I B 2 3 5; II A 5.8.

Grounds in re the second statement:

a. Scripture: Col. 1:13, Eph. 2:1-3, John 3:3-5, Phil. 2:12-13.

b. Confession: Heid. Cat. 8, Canons III-IV, 1-3, 10-12; V, 6-8.

3. Classis further advises the Consistory of First Church:

a. that in case the Rev. De Wolf should refuse to apologize, which our God graciously forbid, the Consistory proceed to suspend him from the office of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, according to the pertinent articles of the D. K. O.

b. that in case any elder or elders should refuse to submit to the proposed action as stipulated under No. 2, b, which God graciously forbid, such elder or elders be disciplined according to the articles of the D. K. O. pertaining thereto.

4. That Classis appoint a delegation of three ministers and two elders to personally acquaint the Consistory with the above decisions and advice at the earliest consistory meeting:

Grounds:

a. Almost all the elders of the First Church are absent from Classis Meeting and thus are not aware of the five days of deliberation which preceeded the above advice.

b. The matter is one of great magnitude and importance.

c. We owe the mother church of our entire denomination such courtesy and respect.

d. We should spare no efforts on our behalf, under the blessings of our Covenant God, to save the dear brethren involved.

Brethren, this document was adopted by our Classis with almost unanimous vote. The reports vary as to how many votes were against it. Some say two, others say three. I thought four voices.

Now I come to the process of the case at Classis. And before I do, it may be well that I say very emphatically, in the name of the Classis, that the Classis very emphatically does not consider the Rev. De Wolf a heretic, not at any time; but at the same time very emphatically the Classis will consider him a heretic if he keeps those two statements to his bosom and refuses to throw them away. There is no doubt about that either. That will become plain as I go on. Your documents . . . all the documents in question . . . they were placed in the hands of a broad committee. That committee met and met again to study that material; and the result was that we had both a majority and minority report. And the majority report was signed by the three ministers in question and the minority report was signed by two elders, that were part of the committee. And without any contradiction I can say here that the report of the majority committee was an attempt . . . a long document . . . 12 or 13 pages . . . the majority report was a document of 13 pages wherein an attempt was made to prove to Classis that the two statements were not necessarily heretical . . . that both of these statements could be explained in a Reformed sense. And that majority report when it came under the hammer and when it was discussed . . . carefully discussed by the whole classis days on end, became a miserable failure. Now whether the composers of the majority report were con-

verted by their own nonsense or by the arguments that were alleged against them, that I don't know but they were converted. One of them told me, "did you hear my resounding NO when the first statement came under the hammer?" And the question came up "that it need not be heretical." But they voted it down.

The first motion pertaining to the first statement was taken unanimously with the exception of one person and that person who voted contrary to the whole classis, later, on a later day came back from his stand so it is unanimous. The first statement...the motion that it is not necessarily heretical... was rejected.

And so we come to the statements as such. And I like to give you the background of them. I'll write them down. We looked at those statements, studied them, debated them. And I assure you that the best debater that we have at Classis tried to defend them. There is no better debater than Rev. Veldman, Rev. Richard Veldman. I know the man for 27, 28 years. He is by far the best debater that we have. "God promises everyone of you that..." I'll tell you something about the debate.... "if you believe He will save you." I don't know how many steps he used but some of you were present. Whether it was three or four steps but he talked and talked and talked until promises became "declares." But the Classis looked at that statement and came to the unanimous decision that the statement as such cannot stand in our churches... that it is certainly heretical... and I like to prove it to you too. The moment you put "promises" next to "God" and make God the subject of "promises", then all you can add here is "elect, elect, elect...." and never anything else. That's the plain teaching of Scripture. Because the promise of God according to Heb. 6 is an oath which God swears by Himself; and because of the weakness of our faith as it was seen in Abraham, He swore by Himself that by two immutable things that promise might stand, the promise namely, that He will surely save His elect people, irrespective of what we are and how we appear in history. Some of us, millions of us, never come to consciousness. But whether you come to consciousness and live to be an hundred years old and break all the commandments of God as you do to the last moment of your life, "God swears I am going to save you" and the moment you use the word promises all you can add is all the blessings of election. And that is beautifully shown in II Cor. 1:20 "For all the promises of God are in Christ Jesus yea and Amen, unto the glory of God by us." So all you have here, is a general promise, a general promise, mind you, that is also conditional because there is a condition attached: "if you believe". A general conditional promise a thing unheard of in Reformed circles. It is really not saying too much that if Rev. Veenhof were here, he wouldn't take this. I know because I have read all his writings, whatever came across in De Reformatie and Unica Catholica; and he would say, "No sir, not this." He would say, "God promises all the covenant children, the covenant people that he will save you on the condition of faith." But he wouldn't take the phrase as it stands there. Really, brethren, I am not making it worse than it is. I was accused of that twice on the Classis and once in private. I don't make it worse than it is. I made it less evil than it is. I pulled my punches. I didn't pull out all the stops. I'll say much more about it now because it is in that mandate. It is of great magnitude. All that should be said especially now when I am before the consistory who is directly involved, I like to add to this, but before I do, I want to change this to the first point as to its essence and then you make it less evil. God offers

to all of you salvation if you believe. There you have the essence of the first point. That's why I said to the Classis the moment I looked at that thing as it stood on the blackboard, as I stood here, I said that if the two members of the committee of 1924 were here in this room, the third one cannot be—he is insane—Dr. Bouma—I said those two men would laugh their heads off, and say "You go us one better." But, you see, this statement has had a tremendous influence... is a terribly evil thing... and we see signs of the terrible influence that it has had... that's the bitterness of it, the sorry part of it. You know, in the first place, that statement in the mouth of one of our ministers. I know... I believe him when he says, I don't mean it that way. I believe that alright. That's not the question. I take it with all my heart that he didn't mean that. It would be evil of me to think that he meant that. Of course not. But he made the statement and the statement in his mouth corrupts him if he hangs on to it.

In the second place, and that was also made plain on the classis, there was a group of elders, and I think if I am well informed and I think you can show it by the minutes; I think there was a group of elders, and then you have the concentric circles just as when you throw a stone in the water and it gets wider and wider and wider, and misery is added to misery, and elders, Prot. Reformed elders, mind you, they took this statement upon their lips too when they defended it and that is worse of course, but it is not by far the worst. Then slowly on it comes to the congregation and now they tell me, and whether it is true or not I don't know, I hope it is not true, they tell me that the majority of people in Fuller Ave., beloved Prot. Ref. people, take this to their bosom. They walk on the streets of Jerusalem. They say "what's wrong with that". That's the misery of it, brethren. But that's not the worst. That's nothing really yet. The worst of it is this that we befoul the living God with it. Mind you, it is not an innocent thing. If only I put down here "De Wolf" then it wasn't so bad but it is my "God". What must God think of that statement in the mouth of your minister, in the mouth of your elders, in the mouth of your congregation? And it is spreading in other churches. You know the condition of our churches at present. It is almost a hopeless condition. You understand now why I am so glad that I may come here and talk to you and testify to you?

The same is true of the other statement. "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of heaven." That is the second statement he made in his sermon. Again we don't believe, I don't believe I don't think that any of us believe, knowing Hubert, that He believes the heresy in that. I can't believe it. Because a heresy it is. We looked at that too and how your committee of the majority report tried their utmost to make this thing reformed. And the Rev. Veldman tried his best to make the Classis see that this was reformed, according to the Reformed confessions and Scripture. And the Rev. Lubbers did. They wrote thirteen pages, and they ably defended their propositions. And the Classis looked at it and they studied it and here is the wickedness... PRE... Pre means this: I heard about lines. That you cannot put things on lines. Of course you can put things on lines. Here is darkness and here is light. And there is a gate between. And that is the question of that outfit there. Our conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven. That "pre". All the wickedness is in that "pre". And it became so clear to the whole Classis that every last one of the Classis, Rev. Kok included, condemned the statements as per se heretical.

Rev. Kok... we didn't know what we heard. You know, we tried to say for the longest time not to say it but there are factions in the church. There are two factions and they became more and more clearly defined. Rev. Kok got up and said "the two statements are heretical;" then honestly I did not know what I heard. But he said it. It all became clear to us. Also in light of Scripture and the confessions. I almost think it would be an insult if I read these things to you. You must have heard these things time and time again. They sounded in your ears as your ministers and some of your elders... as you debated these things together. Must I explain that? That the Lord places us in the light? Every Scriptural reference and every confessional reference, and brother De Wolf knows that too... the one speaks of "illumination"... that the Lord illumines us before we ever think of converting ourselves. Of course we are active. And now look at Art. 10-11-12, especially 12. After our fathers plainly speak of what God does and how he takes us and how he translates us by regeneration, then you read WHEREUPON... Which certainly is not PRE. Whereupon... the Lord regenerating us and giving us all that light and all that grace, we act... of course we do. And mind you, the brother kept that to his bosom. I could weep and I did weep on account of it in his own study. Not because of that but about the factions that were forming in 1949. And I talked and pleaded with him, but that has nothing to do with this. And I did weep on account of that because he kept it to his bosom, months and months and months. And it is through him that some of the elders took it to their bosom. They defended that. The church... 12 churches in Classical session, looked at it, listened to all the defense and unanimously said... It's heretical.

And so we came to the end of the majority report. It was thrown aside. One of the composers stood in front of the Classis and said, "Now that we are rid of the nonsense of the majority report." He said that and he had for four days tried to defend it. Then we were through with that. Then the Rev. Kok arose. After I made motion, No. 8. Maybe you have it and maybe you don't. I made the motion because I saw that we would have the minority report before us and I did not like that report as it was, because it was not according to the truth. Those men meant well and so I made this motion.

Relative the minority report, Classis expresses what it found under 1, a and b, with the following amendments:

1. Elide the 1st sentence under 1, and 2nd half of the 2nd sentence, starting with "and regardless of however much etc."
2. Elide all of 2, a, b, and c.
3. Classis advises the Consistory of the First Church:
 - a. To demand that the Rev. De Wolf make a public apology for having made the two statements in question.
 - b. that the Consistory also publicly apologize for having supported the Rev. De Wolf with respect to the two statements in question:

Grounds:

- a. Scripture: Heb. 6:16-18; Rom. 9:6-8, 16, 18; Acts 13:48; John 6:36, 37; John 10:26-30.
- b. Confessions: Heid. Cat. 20; 65; 66; Confession 22; 33-35; Canons I A 6 7 10; I, B 2 3 5; II, A 5 8.
4. Classis further advises the Consistory of the First Church:
 - a. that in case the Rev. De Wolf should refuse to apologize, which our God graciously forbid, the Consistory proceed to suspend him from the office of the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, according to the pertinent articles of D.K.O.
 - b. that in case any elder or elders should refuse to submit to the proposed action as stipulated under 3, b, which God

graciously forbid, such elders or elders be disciplined according to the articles of the D.K.O. pertaining thereto.

Grounds: Art. 79, 80 D. K. O.

5. That Classis appoint a delegation of three ministers and two elders to personally acquaint the Consistory with the above decisions and advice at the earliest consistory meeting.

Grounds:

- a. Almost all the elders of the First Church are absent from Classis Meeting and thus are not aware of the five days deliberation which preceded the above advice.
- b. The matter is one of great magnitude and importance.
- c. We owe the mother church of our entire denomination such courtesy and respect.
- d. We should spare no efforts on our behalf, under the blessings of our Covenant God, to save the dear brethren involved.

That "4" came under the hammer because some of them didn't want that in there. And I and others in the Classis held that it should be in there because the matter of suspension was on your table more than once. The minutes were on the table and there it shows that the matter of suspension was on the table. And, therefore, that was voted on. The majority decided to keep it in. And after we had decided that, the Rev. Kok arose and then he made the statement: "I agree, the two statements are heretical but I like to have two statements in there to show why it is heretical. I have need of that Mr. President." And he read something and the Classis didn't like that, especially, our professors in dogmatics and exegesis, they said it was not right to make a dogmatical statement on the spur of the moment. That's dangerous. And, therefore, one of our professors, Rev. Hoeksema, offered to study it carefully and put down what Rev. Kok wanted in sound words, carefully thought out words. That is document number 9 and here it is. That came next morning.

The statement is heretical....

Amendment ad 1-um:

Because it teaches a general promise of God unto salvation, to all that externally hear the preaching of the gospel, head for head and soul for soul, limited by a condition which man must fulfill, while Scripture and our Confessions plainly teach:

1. That, indeed, the proclamation of the gospel comes to all whom God in His good pleasure sends it.
2. That, however, in our proclamation of the gospel, we may never say that God promises salvation to everyone of the hearers, on condition of faith, for the promise itself is particular, unconditional, and only for the elect; for it is an oath of God which He, in His everlasting mercy and grace, swears by Himself to His beloved elect; which He, by sovereign grace, fulfills only to and in them, without any condition or prerequisite to be fulfilled by them; and which promise implies that, by His Holy Spirit, He causes them to receive and appropriate salvation by a true and living faith.

Amendment ad 2-um:

Because it teaches that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of God, which means that we convert and humble ourselves before we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, while Scripture and the Confessions plainly teach:

1. That the whole work of our conversion, regeneration in its narrower as well as in its wider sense, in virtue of which we humble ourselves, is sovereignly wrought by God, by His Spirit and Word, through the preaching of the gospel, in His elect.
2. That this entire work of conversion is our translation and

entering into the kingdom of God. Hence, it is not, cannot be BEFORE but THROUGH our conversion that we enter the kingdom. We humble ourselves IN the light, never IN darkness; we humble ourselves, whether initially or repeatedly, IN the kingdom, never OUTSIDE of it. Hence, our ACT of conversion is never antecedent to our entering in, but always is performed IN the kingdom of God, and there are no pre-requisites.

That whole statement was brought the next morning under the hammer and the Classis after debating this issue adopted it unanimously and it became part of the decision that is given to you as an answer to your case. And then, after that was done the final decision came under the hammer and was adopted with all the votes except 2, 3, or 4. We probably never know how many. Nobody registered his negative vote. Not a one. One told me in private, "maybe I will register my negative vote", but he never did.

And so, brethren, we came to the end of our work as far as you are concerned. And now, brethren, make no mistake. There are two things I didn't mention. I would say, brethren, in all seriousness and I ought to be known to your body by my personal contact with you and by my writings that I certainly am not a vindictive man. That's why I am so glad that they chose me for spokesman. If I err I usually err on the side of love. I think that each one in your heart says right away, "that's correct" I'm not vindictive. But I must give you the full impact of the classis. I include myself there too. I would say, "make no mistake". As far as the classis is concerned this is a fundamental matter for us and we will never go back on this stand; and therefore it may be the end of the road. There are two things that I didn't tell you. A document was read that advised separation. That the matter is beyond help. It is very well possible that all my work and the work of the committee is to no avail, that you will harden yourself against it and go on. But we are unshaken in our position and our conviction based on the word of God and three forms of unity and our Prot. Ref. Truth that is so dear to our hearts. We are not going to go back on this, I can tell you that. Because in the second place there was a motion...which was church politically wrong...but there was a motion to stop and that was because of that miserable majority report. We thought it was hopeless. We thought it impossible to go on. But we took the way of more patience...more patience to explain things. That motion was withdrawn. What are the alternatives? You ought to know. Would the Rev. De Wolf and the consistory, that part that is with him and defended him and who hugged those statements to their bosom, would they rally around those two statements? You can't get rid of them. They stick with you. You either throw them away or they are going to stick with you. Are you ready to break with those statements hanging around your neck? Would you rally around them? Then the end of course is disaster. No doubt about that. On the other hand, if you listen to the wisdom of God's Word and the confessions and if you repent and if you apologize it shall be written down in the heavens unto all eternity to your glory. By God's grace, of course. But then it will be a manifestation and proof that God does not let you go. If you say, we will have nothing of it and will throw those statements away, God only knows how many you will save in your church. The whole movement...the back of the movement, will be broken if Hubert (and I say that word Hubert and not Rev. as a token of tenderness because I love the boy, if he will throw that thing away and if you elders are wise enough to throw

that thing away, you will save the congregation, and the back will be broken of that whole movement and we can go on and we will go on. We can thank God. I can give it to you, and that is outside the Classis now, but I know and perhaps he said it on the Classis, I don't know, but I know that if Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff, that if they just hear that you take those statements and throw them away, throw them away for God's sake, they are going to embrace you and we're going on in unity. I have come to the end and I thank you very much for your patience that you have listened to me.

The above is an address delivered by the spokesman of a delegation, appointed by Classis East, in session May 28, 1953, at a special consistory meeting of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., Monday evening, June 1, 1953.

Rev. Gerrit Vos Spokesman
Rev. Marinus Schipper
Rev. Gerald VandenBerg
Elder Nick Yonker
Elder Dennis Langeland

H.H.



Further Report on Classis East

On Wednesday afternoon, October 7, the Classis, after lengthy discussion came to the following decision concerning the "Fuller Avenue Case".

A. Classis expresses that the Rev. H. De Wolf and Elder Sikkema cannot be seated as delegates of Classis East.

Grounds:

1. It appears from the Report of the Committee delegated to the Consistory of First Church that these brethren are under censure and censured officebearers cannot function in their office.

2. It appears from the same document that these brethren, together with several other elders, did not submit to the censure of their consistory, but on the contrary, rebelled against their consistory.

3. These brethren, therefore, and all who follow them in this sinful way have by the same token become schismatic, and severed themselves from the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

B. Classis further expresses that on the basis of the facts as expressed under decision A, the brethren Rev. C. Hanko and Elder Gerrit Bylsma are the rightful delegates of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan."

In close connection with the above, Classis also took the following decision:

Moved that on the basis of our previous decision under Art. 310 (the decision just quoted above, H.C.H.) Classis East declares that the Consistory of which the Revs. H. Hoeksema and C. Hanko are presidents and of which Mr. G. Stadt is clerk is the legal consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

As was generally expected, there was a negative reaction by some of the delegates to the decision unseating De Wolf and his elder and seating the Rev. C. Hanko and Elder G. Bylsma, and thereby recognizing the rightful Consistory of First Church.

This reaction came, first of all, from the Rev. B. Kok and the Consistory of Holland in the form of a letter presented to the Classis *after* the decision was taken. This decision of Holland's Consistory (a decision to which one of the elders, Mr. J. Kortering, did not agree) was taken long before the Classis met, on September 24. And yet the delegates from Holland saw fit to withhold this document until Classis had actually decided the case. We quote this letter in full:

To the Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches,
To reconvene on the 6th day of October, 1953

Esteemed Brethren:

After having carefully, and prayerfully considered the documentary evidence, on the one hand from a section of the Fuller Ave. congregation headed by the Rev. H. Hoeksema, which announced that they had suspended the Rev. De Wolf as minister of the Gospel, together with eleven of his Elders, and on the other from a section of Fuller Ave. congregation headed by the Rev. De Wolf which announced that this was a schismatic action on the part of the Rev. H. Hoeksema and his group, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan has come to the following decision, and humbly begs Classis East to also express itself as follows:

1. That on the basis of the information received they cannot recognize the suspension of the Rev. De Wolf, and
2. That they consider the Rev. Hoeksema and his group to be guilty of schismatic action and mutiny.

Grounds:

1. Under no circumstances did the Rev. H. Hoeksema, and the Elders that supported him, have the right to walk out of the Consistory of Fuller Ave. and meet separately. This was not a walking in the legal way of Consistory, Classis and Synod, but in the way of schism and mutiny. The Rev. H. Hoeksema here followed the same evil tactics which he several times threatened at Classis East. D.K.O. Art. 31.

2. A minority is not the Consistory and cannot suspend from office, neither can it deprive of a vote.

3. The Consistory of the Fourth Church erred by giving the minority even a semblance of recognition by meeting with them, and giving them advice, and the schismatic consistory had no right to proceed with the suspension of the Rev. De Wolf, and the deposition of a majority of the Elders, especially in view of the fact that the Fourth Consistory questioned the legality of the meeting. D.K.O. Art. 79.

It is our earnest hope and prayer that the schismatic group of the Rev. H. Hoeksema will repent of its evil way, and that the breach which has been made may graciously be healed in the way of truth and justice, and in the spirit of brotherly love.

Respectfully Submitted,

B. Kok, Pres.

B. Stegink, Secr.

The second negative reaction came from the Rev. J. Blankespoor, minister-delegate of the Second Church

of Grand Rapids. He asked to have his negative vote recorded against the decision of Classis, and presented the following written grounds:

Oct. 7, 1953

Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Brethren:

I herewith forward my grounds for not being able to agree with the decision of unseating Rev. H. De Wolf and elder Sikkema. There cannot be two First Prot. Ref. Churches. Actually and officially there is only one and the other simply does not exist. To me the Rev. De Wolf and his consistory are the legal Consistory and therefore the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids. This implies that I cannot recognize the Rev. Hanko and elder Bylsma as legal delegates.

Grounds:

1. Rev. H. H. and his men have by walking out of that last Consistory meeting severed themselves from our churches and have become schismatic. Since they did not have a majority there was only one way left, that of appeal. On the contrary they met secretly as a minority. This is illegal.

2. The suspension and deposition of officebearers by the minority group cannot be recognized as legal. A minority is not the consistory and cannot suspend from office, nor can it deprive of a vote.

3. Rev. H. H. and his followers failed to walk in the way of Art. 79 of the Church Order. Art. 79 states that officebearers can be suspended or expelled only by the sentence of the consistory involved and of the nearest church. This means that the nearest church not only advises, but also actually passes sentence on the matter. This Fourth church never did. Therefore the brethren have never officially been suspended or deposed.

Yours respectfully,

J. Blankespoor

The third negative reaction came from Rev. E. Knott, minister-delegate of the Kalamazoo Church. Whether he did so on the spur of the moment or whether he had had previous opportunity to study the grounds offered by the Rev. J. Blankespoor, he did not say. However, he took as his grounds the three offered in the letter of the Rev. J. Blankespoor.

Classis appointed a committee to study and advise on these matters. Said committee reported at the Thursday morning session. And, again after a lengthy discussion, the Classis came on Thursday afternoon to the following decision in the first case, that of the Rev. Kok:

1. That we ask Rev. B. Kok to declare that the action of Classis East whereby they seated the Rev. C. Hanko and Elder G. Bylsma as the legal delegates from the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., was not schismatic.

2. That he will consider the above mentioned action of Classis settled and binding, and, therefore, will consider the above mentioned delegates from the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand

Rapids, Mich. the legal delegates, so that he can work with them at the sessions of classis, until he, at the next meeting of classis has proved from the Word of God and Church Order that they are not the legal delegates.

3. That in case he refuses thus to declare himself he has violated the Church Order, and forfeited, by his own action, the right to be seated as delegate from the Consistory of Holland, Mich. to Classis East.

Ground for 1 and 2: Art. 31 of the Church Order.

The Rev. Kok, agreeably to him, was granted an hour in which to consider this question, and then he gave the following answer:

My answer to numbers 1 and 2 is no, on the grounds I have submitted and Art. 31 of our Church Order, hence I disagree with the conclusion expressed in the 3rd point and reserve the right to appeal this action of Classis to the Synod of our Prot. Reformed Churches."

Thus, the Rev. B. Kok forfeited by his own answer the right to be seated as delegate from the Consistory of Holland, Mich.

In regard to the negative votes of Revs. Knott and Blankespoor, the Classis decided to place them before the same question presented to Rev. Kok.

Without delay they informed the Classis that their answer was the same as that of the Rev. Kok. They too, therefore, forfeited the right to be seated as delegates to Classis East.

The document presented by the Rev. Kok, however, was officially the document of his consistory. The Classis therefore decided as follows:

In re the document of Holland Consistory it is moved that whereas it is very plain from the document submitted that the delegates from Holland should have presented said document **before** we took our decision, we notify the Consistory of the decision we have taken with its grounds, and call the consistory's attention to this action of her delegates in withholding this document until **after** the decision had been taken. Carried.

Classis further decided to notify the three Consistories involved of the action of Classis with respect to their ministers. And at the end of the afternoon's session the Chairman, Rev. J. Heys, instructed the elder delegates from Holland, Second, and Kalamazoo to have alternates present in the places of their ministers at the Friday morning session.

Thus, in three days' time, after lengthy and careful consideration, the Classis at least finished the matter of the roll-call.

O yes. To remove all false impressions concerning the make-up of Classis East, it must certainly be noted that the Revs. H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff were not at all present at the Classis while the De Wolf Case was being treated. The Rev. Ophoff was

incapacitated by illness, and although he is well on the way to recovery (for which we are thankful to our God), he was forbidden by his physician to attend Classis. The Rev. H. Hoeksema did not arrive home from Redlands, California until the evening of the first day of Classis; and even thereafter he did not make his appearance at Classis until the De Wolf Case was finished. The false impression to be removed? Well, sometimes it is slanderously reported that all the rest of the delegates to Classis East are mice, instead of men, and that they are dominated in their actions by the Rev. Hoeksema (who some say is a man broken in mind and body) and the Rev. Ophoff (whom some call a bull-dog). This time, surely, that could not possibly be the case. Unless, of course, such domination took place through the means of remote control, hypnotism, or telepathy.

—H. C. Hoeksema

Reply to the Rev. Hofman

During the week of September 21 the undersigned sent his personal reply to the slanderous charges lodged against him personally and against the Committee for Protestant Reformed Action. With this reply went a letter, in which I requested that my defense be placed in *Concordia*, if necessary in two installments. In this letter I emphasized that the word-limit on contributions could not rightfully be imposed against my article, seeing it was only just that *Concordia* should allow me full opportunity to defend myself against the evil charges lodged. I further requested that I receive an answer to this request on or before October 2, in order that I might know when my article would be placed.

To all this I received the following reply:

September 28, 1953

The Rev. H. C. Hoeksema,
Doon, Iowa.

Dear Rev. Hoeksema:

We received your note with the enclosure requesting that the enclosed material-copy be published in our next *Concordia*. Having met and discussed the matter we have decided to express great reluctance to publish your material since we feel that it can hardly serve for the edification and true instruction of our readers. We feel strongly for what one brother wrote that "the last issue of the *Standard Bearer* evinced a spirit from which we must completely escape or God cannot use us for the furtherance of the church-ingathering." Since

your proposed article is in the same spirit we prefer not to publish it and would strongly advise you to retract it.

If, however, you still feel that you must answer, above and beyond what has already appeared, we will have to remind you that your article far exceeds the 300 word limit for contributions; which limit was specifically noted just a few issues back. Hence your present article is much too long. Nor do we expect to prolong this matter and publish it over a series of numbers.

But again, to give you all the benefit of the doubt, we are willing to relax this rule for this time and offer you as much space as was taken by the Editor in his original writing on this matter. That was about 1200 words or the equivalent of 4 typewritten pages, double spaced. We feel that this is a very gracious concession on our part and affords you ample space for an answer. That means, of course, that your present article would have to be revised and cut down to about half its present length if we shall place it.

Finally, we must inform you that we could not place it before our issue of October 22, since our available space is taken until then. You should also understand that our Editor will have opportunity to add his comment and correction, if he so desires, and that will close discussion on this matter as far as *Concordia* is concerned.

Sincerely yours,

For *Concordia*,

(w.s.) W. Hofman,

I will not comment at length about this reply. Only the following remarks I want to make:

1. From this it is evident once more that *Concordia* is principally a closed paper. It refuses to allow anyone who is attacked viciously in its editorial columns free and full opportunity for defense. In cases like this it certainly is not up to the accuser to say whether the accused needs 1200 or 2400 words to defend himself. That is a matter for the accused to decide. Besides, *Concordia* wants to close all discussion on the matter after this one article and after Hofman can nicely make his own comments and corrections without fear of reply.

2. It is further evident that *Concordia*,—and I have an idea that this motivates them in closing their paper,—is *afraid of the facts*, due to the fact that what was presented in its editorial columns was so very far from the truth.

3. In the third place, *Concordia's* enmity against the *Standard Bearer* is plainly evinced in the opening paragraph of Hofman's letter, when he expresses agreement with what "one brother wrote".

4. In the fourth place, this same letter evidences a new slant of the new-found "conditional theology", when in the same quotation of "what one brother wrote" the staff of *Concordia* adopts the position *they* must do something in order to become fit for God's work of the church-ingathering.

5. Finally, it is to be noted that all this is not

merely the Rev. Hofman's personal position, but that of the entire staff of *Concordia*.

* * * *

In the light of all the above, I wish to say the following:

1) There is only one course left open for me, namely, to place my reply in the *Standard Bearer*, in the hope that not all minds are closed to truth and justice (not the brand of *Concordia* and the *Reformed Guardian*).

2) Let our people be warned that *Concordia* is an anti-Protestant Reformed paper. By all means, read it, in order to keep posted on the views of the opposition. But do not support it. And do not believe it. It is not to be trusted.

3) I personally will have nothing to do with that paper any more, except to call upon its staff to repent of their evil way. They are plainly not devoted to the cause of the truth, either in doctrine or in ethics.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Here follows the original article in reply to Hofman. *Concordia* did not have the courtesy to return it, but I fortunately had the foresight to keep a carbon copy.

Rev. W. Hofman,
Editor of *Concordia*,
Orange City, Iowa

Dear Mr. Editor:

I had never intended to ask for space in *Concordia* after, through the unjust closing of its columns some time ago to the "condition debate", it became principally a closed paper. But now, by your recent slanderous attack both against me personally and against the organization of which I am temporary chairman, you have made it necessary for me to seek space in your paper. And ethically you cannot now deny me as much space as is necessary to defend myself and the good name of the Committee for Protestant Reformed Action before *Concordia's* readers. I have, therefore, every reason to expect that you will allow ample and prominent space in your columns for this answer, and to expect also that when I have made my defense you will retract your evil charges completely and humbly confess your heinous sin of lying and slander. For of such you are guilty.

By this time you are aware that your editorial has been attacked from other quarters, namely, by the Editor of the *Standard Bearer*. I have known for some

time of the writing of that editorial, and for that reason I also refrained until this time from answering your vile charges, lest there should be unnecessary repetition. And because you should in all honesty take over said editorial of the *Standard Bearer* (Sept. 15) in full, I shall briefly cover those aspects of your article upon which the Editor of the *Standard Bearer* did not reflect at length.

And then I want to call attention, in the first place, to the ethical aspect of your article, and to some facts on this score of which your readers could not be aware. Your editorial constitutes a breach of ethics so horrible that even a worldly daily newspaper would scarcely become guilty of such a thing. You have publicly made charges and insinuations against a fellow-minister (At that time he was your fellow-minister, at least; by this time you have schismatically followed the Rev. H. De Wolf, and you are no more Protestant Reformed.) and against brethren in the church without ever approaching either that minister or those brethren personally. Never did you admonish me. Never did you say one word to me about anything connected with the organization of our committee. Never did you approach my consistory even, about this so-called "inkruiperij". Never did you bother to ascertain whether you had the bare facts about our committee and its organization. All of a sudden, without warning, you break out into print with the most horrible charges and slander.

This I call absolutely unethical. It must be classed as belonging to "the proper works of the devil."

Would it not have been proper on your part, if indeed I was actually guilty of interfering in another minister's congregation unlawfully, to call my attention to this sin? Should you not have made plain to me my sin, and admonished me? And, in case I would not confess the sin with which you charge me, should you not have made the case pending with my Consistory? My Consistory, I am sure, would not have turned you away; they are honorable men, and upright officebearers, who will not tolerate any error in doctrine or in walk on the part of their minister. And if you had convinced them that their minister was walking in a sinful way, they would certainly have "taken their minister in hand."

But all this you refused to do. Instead you gossiped with others, as is plain from your opening paragraph. It makes no difference to me who were in that "group" of you who were discussing these matters. You gossiped! And after you had gossiped, you published your old wives' tales in a public paper, and that too in the name of harmony, *concordia*. Even if all your charges were true (and I shall show that they are false!),—but even if they

were all true, you would still be guilty of back-biting, which is really as evil as slander. Did you never learn that if your brother has sinned against you, you must tell him his sin between thee and him alone?

What makes your doings all the more astounding is that you belong to those who have become known in our churches by their pleading for brotherly love and tolerance. *Concordia's* very name speaks of such. And I recall distinctly that last spring at the home of the Rev. J. D. de Jong you personally spoke great boasting words about tolerating me and about the need of tolerance in Classis East. I contradicted you then. And now you have by your infamous editorial contradicted yourself. I have often been suspicious about this brand of brotherly love in recent years, for I have more than once experienced its activity. Now I am no more suspicious: I am convinced! To you, therefore, I say: Repent! To *Concordia's* staff I say: It would have been better had *Concordia* never been born! And to all our people I sound the warning: Do not support such a slander sheet!

In the second place, your whole editorial is false. Many of the things which you state are down-right lies. And when occasionally you mention a fact,—and you have very few of them straight,—you twist and contort even the facts by all kinds of innuendo and insinuations, until even those few facts are slanderously turned against us. Let me prove this:

1. You speak in your second paragraph of our name, The Committee for Protestant Reformed Action. And then you wickedly compare our committee to those "subversive organizations that are always being investigated by Congress for un-American activities." Surprisingly you quote our name correctly. But that is as far as the facts go in this paragraph. The rest is all insinuations, without basis. You should have been honorable enough to quote our own explanation of our name and purpose. Then you might have, if such were indeed the case, tried to prove that our committee did not live up to its avowed name and purpose. Let me refresh your memory on this score by quoting from the very first letter sent out by our committee:

"As our name implies, we are and mean to be Protestant Reformed, first of all. We love our Protestant Reformed truth, and we want to maintain and preserve it, under God's blessing."

"Our name also implies that we mean to be active in this respect. And our activities will be directed toward:

"1. Bringing before our Protestant Reformed people the *facts* and the *truth* in the present church situa-

tion. We are doing this in the proposed mass meeting. We shall do this in the future by means of more meetings and by means of literature.

"2. Rallying all lovers of the Protestant Reformed truth behind our *Standard Bearer*. This cause seems to be languishing especially in this vicinity, and does not have the support it should have. But the *Standard Bearer* is still *the bearer* of our Protestant Reformed standard. And we would like to see more readers, more subscribers, and more financial support of it.

"We believe, however, that we do not stand alone, but that there are still many of our people who love the truth of God's sovereign, unconditional grace, and who are willing to rally to its defense, and to the preservation of our Protestant Reformed cause. *And we would like you to join us, and work along with us as a permanent organization.*"

All this you ignored. If you saw fit to attack our committee as subversive, you should have proved that we did not live up to our name and our avowed purpose. You should have proved, for example, that we did not bring before our people the facts and the truth in the present church situation. There are some of your friends, the Rev. A. Cammenga and the Rev. H. De Wolf, who have a tape recording of that mass meeting in Hull. You can undoubtedly gain access to it from them; and if not from them, from me. I would like to have you prove black on white, with full opportunity for debate and cross-examination, that at that mass meeting the Rev. H. Hoeksema did not present the facts and the truth in the present church situation. Furthermore, I would like to have you show what is subversive about rallying our people to the support of the *Standard Bearer*, and that too, publicly. In the third place, I would like to have you prove what is subversive about inviting people to join us and to work along with us as a permanent organization and to rally to the defense of the truth of God's sovereign, unconditional grace and the preservation of our Protestant Reformed cause. These things you cannot prove. Nor can you point to a single instance in which we did not act in accord with that purpose. But you have ignored all this wilfully.

Instead you have slandered us without a cause. Is it because we differ as to what is Protestant Reformed and who is Protestant Reformed? Is it because you did not want the facts and the truth to be published, lest the eyes of many here in the West should be opened? Is it because you hate and oppose the *Standard Bearer* without a cause? I fear you must be numbered among such, Rev. Hofman. And I say once again: Repent, before God and His church! Repent!

2. In your third and fourth paragraphs you do not present a single fact, when you write concerning the origin and the first meeting of our committee. Let me expose your falsehoods and insinuations on this score:

a) It is not true, as you would make men believe, that this committee was conceived of by me and organized through my efforts. The very first sentence of our letter states otherwise: "The idea of the mass meeting and the beginning of this committee arose in the minds of some of our men just recently . . ." I am very glad that I was one of those men. And I am happy to this day that I could aid them in the organization of this committee. But anyone who knows me and is acquainted with my labors will testify that I am not one who believes in one-man rule or in domination of the organic life of the church by the "dominie". Furthermore, I did not even have a vote in the organization of the committee, for as chairman I refrained from voting, and allowed the majority to decide things freely, after full discussion.

b) You cannot even present my name correctly. I suppose you will claim that you wanted to distinguish me from "the old Rev. Hoeksema." But the fact is that names themselves are for the purpose of distinguishing. And neither the names, nor the initials, nor the place of residence (I live in Doon, Iowa, not Grand Rapids, Michigan) are the same in this case. You might very well, of course, have used my first name, especially in the light of the fact that for years we were neighbors in Grand Rapids, and knew each other as "Homer" and "Wally". But that's all right, Reverend: I have never yet been ashamed that my name is Hoeksema; and in good conscience I can say that I strive to heed Paul's admonition to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." I Tim. 4:12.

c) You speak of our insinuations and of our sowing seeds of distrust and suspicion. Again, you offer absolutely no proof. Indeed, we recognized the fact that there were some with whom we could not agree concerning affairs ecclesiastical. We realized too that we constituted a minority in the churches of this area. We realized long ago that we could not any more expect righteousness and truth from Classis West and from most of its constituent consistories. We expected, in the light of past history, that the people would not be given the bare facts of the church situation and be allowed to decide for themselves. And so, as was our perfect right, and because you and others had given occasion for distrust and suspicion long ago, we organized a free committee and are organizing a free society to further our purposes an-

nounced above. I would still say, after you apologize for all this slander: If you are Protestant Reformed; if you agree with our announced aims; join our society!

d) You speak of the delegates being gathered through "various and devious means." Let me tell you something. They were gathered through one means. We *asked men pointblank* if they were willing to come. And we asked men to bring one or two others along with them if possible. Anyone was free to decline. And some did decline to come. Nothing devious about it. I believe in going straight to the point.

e) You speak of the fact that no ministers were invited or even informed of this meeting, except myself. You add that no consistories were informed or notified. You know very well, of course, that ours is a free organization, not under the jurisdiction of the church institute. You know too why no other ministers were invited, and you yourself have recently proved this by your schismatic action at Classis West and in your own Consistory. Did you think we were blind? Did you think we were going to allow the enemy to infiltrate our society just as he has infiltrated many of our churches?

f) But you are amiss once more when you say that we acted secretly or slyly. All our doings were published, by bulletin announcement and by letter, both concerning the mass meeting and concerning our organization. We had absolutely nothing to hide. In fact, we did not want to hide it, but rather to publish it far and wide. If you were in doubt about the bulletin announcement (your own elder, Mr. Hoekstra, was not), you could consult your consistory, as some did. If you are in doubt about our committee, you may still at this late date have a copy of all our minutes. But I will not ask you for any "minutes" of your meetings (plural) with other ministers from East and West, meetings to which I was not invited. I expect, of course, that all your discussions were honorable. For even as editor of a public paper you try to be "fair and honest."

g) Your fourth paragraph reveals the untrustworthy character of gossip. You refer, of course, to Edgerton in these lines. But let me set you straight. The Rev. H. C. Hoeksema did not make a few personal calls upon certain sheep in that flock, as you write. The story is this. The Reverend and Mrs. (my wife likes to go visiting with me) H. C. Hoeksema visited Mr. and Mrs. Henry Huisken, upon the latter's invitation, not as sheep in Edgerton's flock, but as respected personal friends. That is far from *onderkruiperij*, is it not? I performed no pastoral labors. In fact, I was not even present in any official cap-

acity. And I was under no obligation to inform Edgerton's minister of our visit, any more that you were when you visited members of my flock last May after you had preached in Doon. Let me warn you, Reverend Hofman: it is fatal to give heed to old wives' tales!

3. A few explanatory remarks concerning your fifth paragraph, wherein you make mention of the thought being suggested at our meeting that this action was mutinous and schismatic. Again, you don't have your facts straight. Indeed, the suggestion was brought up, but not seriously. It was suggested because we knew the workings of the minds of the opposition. We expected that you and others would try mightily to besmear us. We knew the hierarchy and the "dominocratie" here in northwest Iowa from experience. And we expected that some would foolishly try to call our actions mutinous, because we were throwing off the yoke of "dominocratie" and thinking and acting for ourselves. And as far as that "stock answer" is concerned, (it was part of my answer; I also explained why at the meeting), I meant it and I still mean it. I would like to have anyone show conclusively that the gathering and organization of our free committee and free society is in any way schismatic or mutinous. It cannot be done! And we have no uneasy conscience about it at all to this day. It was no *scheurmakerij*; it was no *muiterij*; it was no *inkruiperij* (whatever that may be; Van Dalen doesn't give the word, you know); and it was no *onderkruiperij*.

Sometime, Rev. Hofman, I would like to have you meet a group of consecrated, faithful, and militant Protestant Reformed men! I would like to have you meet the members of our committee and our society for Protestant Reformed Action. Well might you wish you were among them.

But before you can join them, you must repent and confess! May God give you grace to do it, is my prayer.

Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

— : — : —

God's people are travellers. Sometimes they are in dark lanes and deep valleys; sometimes on the hills of joy, where all is light and cheerful. —Toplady

The Word of God will not avail to salvation without the Spirit of God. A compass is of no use to a mariner, unless he has light to see it by. —Toplady

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 37

2.

The Oath in the World

It is evident that no Christian can possibly take such an oath, in which he swears that fidelity to the union shall be held sacred above all other allegiance in society, church, or state. Nor is it possible blindly to swear obedience to the commands of the union, whether they concern strikes or boycotts or any other activity, to which the Christian would pledge himself by taking this oath. It is for these reasons that no conscientious believer in Jesus Christ can allow himself to be oath-bound to any worldly society. The Christian as he swears consciously stands before the fact of his covenant God, and certainly will not swear or pledge himself to anything that is contrary to His Word.

We need not elaborate upon the second question and answer of this Lord's Day. There the Heidelberg asks: "May we also swear by saints or any other creatures?" And our answer is, of course, that this is quite impossible. For an oath is calling upon the name of Him Who knows the hearts, and Who as such will witness to the truth of our statement or pledge. This honor is due to God alone, not only, but He also is the only One that is omniscient and that knows the hearts of men.

In conclusion, let me call attention once more to the threat that is added to the Third Commandment: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." This does not mean that even cursing and fearing, no matter how heinous and terrible a sin this may be, is unpardonable. For if this were the case, we might well ask the question: "Who then can stand?" No one of us goes free, even in respect to this sin against the Third Commandment. Even if we are not guilty of direct cursing and swearing, which God forbid that we should ever commit, it is nevertheless true that everyone of us is guilty of profaning the name of God. How often do we take the name of God upon our lips thoughtlessly and without being conscious through the use of that name of standing before the face of the living God. And therefore,

if the threat of the Third Commandment is strictly applied to anyone of us, we are certainly lost. But let us remember that we are not under the law, but under grace. The law can no longer curse us. The guilt of transgressing the law even of the Third Commandment is no longer imputed to us. Christ bore our sins upon the accursed tree, and in His blood there is forgiveness for all our transgressions, and everlasting righteousness. And therefore, how ever true it may be that the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain for one that is outside of Christ and that never repents of his sin, to the penitent sinner there is complete forgiveness and righteousness in the blood of his Redeemer. And being redeemed by the blood of Christ, the penitent sinner is also delivered from the dominion and power and corruption of sin, so that in principle he has the love of God and the love of His law in his heart. And he longs for that perfection where he shall be completely delivered from the body of this death and forevermore consciously stand in the presence of the living God, to glorify Him forever.

—H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

On Thursday, September 3, 1953, the Lord took unto Himself our wife, mother and grandmother

MRS. JENNIE ZANDSTRA

at the age of 55 years.

The assurance that all the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory she now shares before the Throne of God comforts us in our bereavement.

Mr. John Zandstra, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zandstra

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Zandstra

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Zandstra

Mr. and Mrs. John Zandstra Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. John Mesman

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Schipper

Mr. and Mrs. Bartel Zandstra

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Docter

Sadie Zandstra

Elizabeth Zandstra

Bernard Zandstra

and 27 Grandchildren

Nothing but the lancet of God's law, in the hand of the Spirit, can let out the proud of a Pharisee, and reduce the swellings of self-righteousness. —Toplady

IN HIS FEAR

Afraid of the Gospel

(4)

In the article just preceding this one we stated that the seeds of conditional theology were planted into our churches from foreign soil.

That conditional theology was not here even during those days when our leaders used the word "condition" without having fully before their consciousness the implication of that word. Today, however, fully conscious of the use of that word among members of the Liberated Churches of the Netherlands who desire to become members of our congregation while still holding on to their conditional theology, fully conscious of its implications because of thorough and exhaustive discussions on the floor of Synod and Classis, there are those who still want that which manifestly they did not want and *did not know* only a few years ago.

There was a time when there was none in our churches who was afraid to preach the gospel. We like to show that at this time. We quote again from the work of the Rev. M. Gritters, "The Testimony of Dordt."

We find no personal joy or pleasure in revealing these things of the brother's past writings, for we always had great respect for him. He is a hard worker, and produced more in the line of such works than any other of our ministers with the exception of our leaders, the Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Rev. G. M. Ophoff. We always considered the brother also to be a very conscientious worker and in our student days we respected and appreciated his advice, which he will no doubt remember. Added to this is that, as we wrote him, we enjoyed this work of his, especially because of its real Protestant Reformed emphasis. We had always hoped that the brother would see his own departure from his earlier teachings, that he would be persuaded to go back to it by all the argumentation in ecclesiastical gatherings and in our church papers. And since he never assumed the role of leading a battle against his former teachings, that is, not before Classis West met in September, with the exception of the document he and his consistory sent to Classis West and to Synod in order to seek the defeat of The Declaration of Principles, we never intended to bring out of the past these writings of his, even though we knew for the last three years or more

that the statements we quoted last time were in his writings as well as those we quote in this present article.

But now, since he is ready apparently to defend the two statements which Classis East declared to be literally heretical, now that he and his consistory went on record and even lead in the movement to recognize as the legal consistory of First Church that group of men which refuses to abide by the decision of its Classis, we felt that the good of our Protestant Reformed Churches demanded that we show very plainly from the writings of the brother that this conditional theology has been imported, that it was not here ten years ago, and that those who now embrace and defend it wrote things which the *opponents* of conditional theology would be rebuked for, were they to say them today. That we have to refer to the writings of one whom we always respected so highly before, as we wrote above, is painful and we do not relish it, but our people must see that something has happened in our churches and that to *deny* conditions is to continue in the Protestant Reformed way.

Naturally we are interested to know what the brother had to say about the much-quoted passage of the Canons which was presented to defend conditional promises when the Declaration was treated at Synod. We have reference to Canons II, 5. We quote his entire statement on this art. and underscore that last sentence. "Art. V... You will notice that the Fathers bring in the mention of the Gospel as being THE MEANS whereby God applies the merits of Christ's redemption to the Elect. That is noteworthy. Especially if one bears in mind that the majority of people today view the Gospel and its preaching as merely a well-meant offer, or as a means to improve the world or as a means to try to bring 'some sinners' etc. The Reformed fathers have rightly grasped that Word of Paul which says that the Gospel is the Power of God unto salvation, it is thus the POWER whereby God brings to salvation them for whom He has prepared salvation. The Gospel comes with the assurance that whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved. This Gospel, although it is intended to gather and to save only the elect, must however be preached throughout the whole world. God commands this, for ALL must be called to repent (and demanded to repent) and believe in Christ. Although therefore the preaching is general, the message is particular... *it promises eternal life only to them that believe.*"

That last sentence, surely, is quite different from a promise to all who hear on the condition of faith. When the brother wrote these lines ten years ago, it is plain that he had not yet heard of the conditional theology imported from the Netherlands. He surely

would have written the above paragraph in quite different language. His paragraph above gives not the faintest notion that believing is the condition to that eternal life or even to the conscious enjoyment of the promise of eternal life. Would he today write that last sentence thus, "... it promises eternal life conditionally? It promises eternal life to all who hear on the condition of faith"? Would he today end up this paragraph with the statement? "God promises every one of you (those who hear the Gospel) that if you believe you will be saved".

But then note what he writes on the same page, page 17, about Art. 7. "As the Gospel is preached in the world there are those who believe and are saved. Now, how did this come? To what is this to be ascribed? Notice how carefully our Fathers answer this question. If people go lost it is because they rejected Christ: if they are saved, is it because they accepted Christ? We would say, Yes. But notice that they do not say that. So afraid are they to ascribe any honor or power to man, that even in this case they refuse to use the word 'accept'. Faith and salvation is due to the grace given them of Christ and not due to any merits of their own. The words, 'accepting Jesus', although very popular today ought to lead us to consider its dangerous implications. *Not WE but God does the accepting.* (The italics are ours. J.A.H.) Behind the so-called accepting (believing) lies the decree of election. And who cannot see that also behind the rejecting (disbelieving) lies the decree of reprobation. In faith and unbelief both God realizes His eternal decrees, and the Gospel is His Handmaid to that end." That, brother, is beautiful language, would to God you would return to it.

While copying the above lines we could not help but wonder whether the Fathers mentioned in this article ever used the word "accept" in their writings. Those addicted to conditional theology, as you know, like to insist that the word "condition" is good reformed language even though the Confessions do not use it. And they base their assumption on the fact that outside of the Confessions these fathers did use the word. Could it be that they also do use the word "accept". It would be interesting if anyone can show this from their writings.

But the point we want to make is that the brother said ten years ago that "*God does the accepting*". The italics are ours, not his. Wonder what some of the disciples of conditional theology would say, if that statement would be made from the pulpit in their church by one who cannot believe in conditions. What would the reaction be, if we were to say that "God does the believing"? for note how the brother uses the words interchangeably when he says, "Behind the so-

called accepting (believing) lies the decree of election." But even apart from that observation, God does the accepting. In the light of that statement the brother, surely could not mean by the last line of the preceding quotation that the promise of eternal life is only to them that believe because believing is the condition that God requires of man. For God does the accepting. Shall we be as careful as our fathers were and though many of us are saying that faith is the condition of salvation, shall we cast the word and the concept far away and say that in the way of causing us to believe through regeneration and the preaching of the Gospel, God brings us to the consciousness that the promise of eternal life is ours?

We have other passages we like to quote of the brother to show, that he, not only ten years ago but as short as two years ago knew nothing of prerequisites unto even the conscious enjoyment of our salvation, though now he and his consistory desire to encourage that group of suspended and deposed office bearers which stands behind the heretical statement that "our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom."

And the brother, of course, may feel free to use our space in this rubric to show us that he has returned to the Protestant Reformed truth and that he maintains all these things which he wrote ten years ago.

But, as little space remains, we like to quote just one short passage to show that some of our people have been trained to lately listen to something which is different from that which has always been taught in our circles and was taught by the brother.

Undersigned would expect quite a reaction, were he to preach on some of our pulpits and say what is found on page 28, where the brother, in the days when he was not afraid to preach the Gospel wrote, "Thirdly... But behind and beneath this all lies that almighty work of grace called Regeneration, whereby both the heart and the will are touched by divine grace, *and the person so touched actually believes, and with the Philippian jailer cries out, 'What must I do to be saved?' And forthwith comes the answer, 'I have saved you.'* Let therefore the Gospel be preached from a thousand pulpits and in all countries, but let the preacher tell every soul that salvation is only of God." (The underscoring is ours. J.A.H.)

Can you visualize people coming up to one who preached that which we have underscored above and telling him, "Domine, you make man a stock and a block!?" That is passive preaching and denies man's responsibility."

"Tell us what WE must DO!"

—J. A. Heys

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS OF THE CHURCH (Cont'd)

Bishops and Bishop of Rome.

When discussing the organization of the Church of God during the first centuries of the New Dispensation (we discuss, of course, the organization of the Church when we call attention to the bishops and the bishop of Rome), we realize that the presbyterian form of church government is the only conception of church government which is in harmony with the Scriptures. And this is also the Reformed conception. According to this conception of the organization of the Church, the elders, deacons, and ministers of the gospel are all of equal rank, and the presbytery or college of elders (the consistory) is under Christ the only and the highest judicial power in the Church of God. This means that each local congregation is autonymous. According to Rome, however, the Church of God is constituted of several churches or congregations under the pope of Rome, Christ's vicar or representative upon earth, and everybody is subject to him. The pope is supreme in the Romish Church. He is the supreme judicial power and the culminating point in that church. He is the supreme deacon, the supreme elder, the supreme minister of the Word of God. All the dignitaries of the Romish Church are subject to him. Rome maintains that the pope is the successor of the apostle, Peter, and that to him have been transferred the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven which had been bestowed upon that apostle. The pope is the supreme head of the Church of God upon earth. This is papacy.

Incidentally, when discussing the organization of the Church, we do well to distinguish between the episcopate and the papacy or popery. Both have in common that the office of the bishop is of a higher rank than that of elder or deacon. We have already noted the historical development of the episcopate in the early history of the Church since the days of the apostles. However, the two are also different in one very important respect. Popery refers to the rule of one supreme bishop over the entire church. In the episcopate the bishops are all of equal rank. In the Romish church the pope is supreme and all the dignitaries of that church are subject unto him. The episcopate knows of no such head, except it be the chief lay ruler in the land, as in England and in the Netherlands in the present day. We are all aware, e.g., that

the King of England bears the title: The Chief Defender of the Faith. We understand of course, that the episcopate is historically first. The papacy is simply the development of the episcopate when drawn to its inevitable conclusion.

The offices, especially that of the bishop, were held in very high esteem. Submission to the bishops was generally emphasized as the duty of the members. One need not question the high esteem in which the office of the bishop was held from the following quotations in the letters supposed to have been written by Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers and bishop of the church at Antioch in Asia Minor: "Wherefore it is fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore, in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And do ye, man by man, become a choir, that being harmonious in love and taking up the song of God in unison, ye may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you and perceive by your works that ye are indeed the members of His Son. It is profitable, therefore, that you should live in an unblameable unity, that thus ye may always enjoy communion with God.... Now the more any one sees the bishop keeping silence (showing forbearance), the more ought he to revere him. For we ought to receive every one whom the Master of the house sends to be over His household, as we do Him that sent him. It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself.... It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but to be so in reality: as some indeed give one the title of bishop, but to do all things without him. Now such persons seem to me to be not possessed of a good conscience, seeing they are not stedfastly gathered together according to the commandment.... Since, therefore, I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are interested with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time, and in the end was revealed. Do ye all then, imitating the same divine conduct, pay respect to one another, and let no one look upon his neighbour after the flesh, but do ye continually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let nothing exist among you that may divide you; but be ye united with your bishop, and those that preside over you, as a type and evidence of

your immortality As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor by the apostles, so neither do ye anything without the bishop and presbyters." Judging from this quotation, one need not doubt the tremendously high esteem in which the office of the bishop was held during the early New Testament Church.

Continuing with Ignatius we would also quote the following from this eminent church father: "For, since ye are subject to the bishops as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order, by believing in His death, ye may escape from death. It is, therefore, necessary that, as ye indeed do, so without the bishop ye should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery as to the apostle of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall (at last) be found Wherefore, as children of light and truth, flee from division and wicked doctrines; but where the shepherd is there do ye as sheep follow. For there are many wolves that appear worthy of credit, who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, carry captive those that are running towards God; but in unity they shall have no place See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop Moreover, it is in accordance with reason that we should return to soberness (of conduct), and, while yet we have opportunity, exercise repentance towards God. It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honors the bishop has been honored by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does (in reality) serve the devil. . . . Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you . . . My soul be for their's that are submissive to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons, and may my portion be along with them in God! Labour together with one another, strive in company together; run together, suffer together; sleep together, and awake together, as the stewards, and associates, and servants of God."

From these quotations of the church father, Ignatius, we may safely conclude the following. We have quoted this eminent church leader of the era immediately following upon the apostles and have quoted him at length in order that our readers may have indisputable evidence of the high esteem in which he held the office of bishop. This can surely not be doubted. In these letters which he is supposed to have written, the author emphasizes that the members owe submission to the bishops as unto God. This vein of thought runs throughout all these quotations. We must

look upon the bishop as upon God Himself; the bishop presides in the place of God, and the presbyters or elders in the place of the assembly of the apostles. Besides, these quotations can easily be multiplied. The unity of the Church of God was inseparably linked up with the bishops. He who does anything without the knowledge of the bishops simply in reality serves the devil. The service of the Lord and the office of the bishop were simply considered inseparable. This office was certainly held in high esteem.

There is, however, another thought in these quotations of Ignatius which we consider very important and to which we would call attention. This Apostolic Father certainly did not develop the episcopate as extremely as it was developed later, particularly in the Romish Church. We must remember that Ignatius, bishop at Antioch, and who is believed to have died in the year, 115, lived immediately after the age of the apostles. Later this emphasis upon the office of bishop reached far greater heights. The thought in his writings to which we now refer is his reference to the office of the presbyter or elder. It certainly cannot escape our attention that the office of elder is also held in high esteem. More than once he speaks of the bishops and elders in the same connection. Striking is surely this statement: "It is, therefore, necessary that, as ye indeed do, so without the bishop ye should do nothing, but should also subject to the presbytery, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall at last be found." There is nothing in the writings of Ignatius which suggests the supremacy of one bishop over another (this, we understand, is characteristic of the papacy), and the members of the church are exhorted to hold the elders in esteem as well as the bishops. The fact, however, remains that one cannot doubt the fact that the office of bishop is held in tremendously high esteem during the early centuries of the Church of God in the New Dispensation. And this, we can readily surmise, had its invariable and bitter results.

—H. Veldman

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota, wishes to express sympathy to their fellow consistory member, J. Van Nieuwenhuizen, in the loss of his daughter. May the Lord sustain him and grant him His grace which is always sufficient.

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton,

J. Docter, vice president

J. Verhey, clerk.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Editor of the Concordia:

Just this morning I received the September 10 issue of your paper. It occurred to me that I may conclude from the editorials of the past two issues of Concordia that the editorial policy has been changed. Once your paper closed its columns to the "controversy" in our churches on the question of "Conditions". But now the matter is once more discussed in your columns. At least matters which have their roots deeply bedded in the questions of conditions, prerequisites, etc. And that is no doubt due to the fact that as long as we are in this world we are forced to face, being called hereto of God, the realities of the life of God's people in this world.

In your editorial reference is made to the Committee of pre-advice of Classis East, the Majority report. It is stated that "*only one* of these ministers changed his mind about his own work and exegesis." This "only one" whom you have in mind in said editorial is the undersigned. I do not care to reflect on this just now. That I shall do possibly in the form of a brochure. I have in mind at this time to merely point out to you what I consider very essential to good leadership in God's church. Certainly one who is desirous of giving the best in leadership in God's church, cannot object to good advice.

I have in mind Mr. Editor the advice of Paul, which you appended to your editorial. That word of Paul has often come to my mind of late. And I thought it rather note-worthy that it came to your mind after you had written your editorial.

It seems to me that you yourself did not take this word of Paul sufficiently to heart. You quote it Mr. Editor, but you did not exegete it. And you simply imply that it is applicable to the whole situation you are discussing. That passage did not have in mind the fact that matters of sound words and pure doctrine are "foolish questions", nor that the truth and facts of ecclesiastical gatherings are simply foolish questions, and are to no profit. It is true, that some of our striving about doctrine may be such that it cannot be placed on the altar of God. But doctrinal matters are not foolish questions, but they belong to the very foundations as they are anchored in the Chief Corner-Stone, Christ Jesus. All questions that do not pertain to this are indeed foolish. They are the hay and the stubble that shall be burned in that day when the work of preachers is tried! Then when the work of preachers is tried the "heretics" will not be saved.

They are the hypocrites who know that they are not truly shepherds of the flock. For the passage you quote from Titus 3:9 continues as follows: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself".

In the light of this quotation, Mr. Editor, the matter is very serious to which Paul refers, when he speaks of "foolish questions".

The questions placed by the "Action Committee" should have been squarely faced by you and answered. If you could not answer them because of lack of evidence, then refrain from judgment. If the questions were such that the implied answers were wrong, point it out and show this by motivated grounds. That is the "style" in God's church. Discussions in God's church must remain on the lofty plain of truth and righteousness. Thunder if need be, but in the Name of the Lord. If you could not gainsay the implied answers of the questions with the facts then walk in the requisites of true faith that bows before God and say: I put my hand on my mouth. For God is the Lord, and He judges righteously. Naive, do I hear someone say. Humble trust, I answer!

Mr. Editor, I submit that by not facing the truth of the "Statements" referred to in your Editorial, and also as reported in the report of Classis West, the "moral issues" are simply created and multiplied and perpetuated till there is no end in sight. That is folly crowned!

I write you this, Mr. Editor, as one who has vowed to seek the good of God's sheep here in Creston. Your editorials are read. I welcome your editorials provided they give sound leadership, show vision and perspective worthy of any man assuming the responsibility of being an editor. But then we must be careful in our analysis of a given situation and the application of the Word of God!

G. Lubbers

The Lord be praised, for ever near
The helpless poor He stands,
Protecting them with wondrous power
From their oppressors' hands.