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MEDITATION

Mary Rabboni

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni." John 20:16

Easter's metamorphosis!

Not here, but risen!

The gloom and darkness and despair of Good Friday changed into the brightness and light and joyful hope of Easter!

Out of the womb of death breaks forth into the glory of everlasting life the Firstborn, God's Firstborn, the Firstborn according to the election of grace, as the First Begotten from the dead! And He prepares the way for the elect multitude to follow! And thus the hope of the resurrection from the dead is ours!

The Lord is risen indeed! He is not here, for He is risen!

Such is the single note of triumph sounded on that glorious first day of the week by angels, by the mutely speaking evidence of the "place where the Lord lay, and, in turn, by the witnessing disciples. And what was the fundamental note of all that took place on that resurrection-morn remains to this day the central theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Or what is it, pray, that renders that gospel good tidings indeed?

And always in that singular Word of the resurrection there is a twofold testimony. On the one hand, there is the indubitable fact of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is not here, for He is risen! That it is the very same Jesus Who was crucified and Whose mortal body was laid away in Joseph's tomb, and that now that same Jesus is no longer in the grave, but is alive, — that, all the lying and ingeniously foolish attempts of the enemy to contradict it, and all the persecuting efforts to silence the testimony thereof, then and now, to the contrary notwithstanding, is an unquestionable fact! The Lord is risen indeed! And on the other hand, there is the mysteriously charming testimony of the "otherness" of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He

is the same, but He is not the same. His identity has not changed: it is our Lord Jesus Christ Who has risen. Nevertheless He is different: His form, His mode of life, indeed, has undergone a glorious change. He is risen, but He has not returned. He has gone through death and the grave. He is beyond. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. *Not here* is He, for He is risen!

And how marvelous is the beautiful and intricately woven pattern of the resurrection testimony. No eye-witness of the resurrection as such was there. It belonged to the things which eye cannot see. But the silent testimony of the place where the Lord lay in the empty tomb, together with the vision of angels with their resurrection sermon, and finally, the appearances of the risen Lord, ten of which are recorded in the Scriptures, — these all form one strong testimony of the resurrection, incontrovertible and indubitable. Nevertheless, even as the resurrection itself is an unfathomable mystery, so, while the basic note of the resurrection-testimony is ever the same, it is like a prism, many-sided in its glorious light. Especially is this clear in the various appearances of the risen Lord. Essentially they were all the same. But they differed as to form and detail, and also as to their specific meaning, so that each different appearance reveals a certain aspect of our Lord's resurrection and carries in it a specific revelation of the gospel. To Thomas, on the eighth day, it was: Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side! But to Mary of Magdala it was: Touch me not!

And while one hesitates to choose from all the appearances, one might venture to say that of them all, the most charming and simple, and yet one of the deepest and unfathomably richest appearances was that first manifestation to the loyal and grieving Mary Magdalene, whom the Lord had during His earthly sojourn liberated from a seven-fold bond of the Evil One. First was this appearance in order of time, because it had to be thus. But first it was, we may safely say, also from the point of view of its meaning. And striking it is that the deep and thoughtful apostle John looks at all that took place from the viewpoint of Mary's actions.

How marvelous is the glimpse of the resurrected Lord

we obtain in that appearance and the brief conversation that took place!

Mary Rabboni!

Touch me not for I have not yet ascended.

But I do ascend to my Father, and your Father.

Go, tell my brethren.

* * * *

Grief-stricken Mary

Little do the Scriptures tell us of her, except that she was from the village of Magdala, that out of her the Lord had cast seven devils, and that ever after she had followed Him with the company of faithful women, who ministered to His earthly, physical needs during His ministry.

The evangelist John, whose personal contact with the risen Lord had been closely connected with Mary's activities on that early Sunday morning, relates the whole narrative solely from the viewpoint of the Magdalene. But when we take his record in connection with that of the other evangelists, we get the following picture of just how things took place on that blessed morning. Early, while it was yet dark, the women, Mary among them, had together started for Joseph's garden. They all had witnessed the crucifixion. Together they had observed the burial process. And of the opinion that their beloved Master could not possibly have been properly buried in so short a time, they were determined to finish the work of Joseph and Nicodemus, as is evident from the parcels of spices which they now carry, but which soon will be made to appear so utterly foolish and useless. And so we find them on the way, anxiously wondering who would move the large stone away from the sepulchre's mouth for them to enter and bestow their loving care upon the dead body of their Master. Coming in sight of the tomb, however, they find their anxiety was vain: for the stone was already rolled aside by heavenly hands. The company of women continue toward the grave.

All, except Mary! Impulsive, in her grief ready to imagine the worst, she had concluded that the grave was empty, that somehow the body of the Lord had been taken away (perhaps by those who crucified Him?). And not proceeding any further, nor for a moment doubting that her suspicions are correct, — and for that reason not seeing the angels nor hearing their wonderful message concerning the risen Lord, — she hastens back to the city and conveys her erroneous report to Peter and John. This is something for the disciples to investigate. If the body is stolen, then it will require more than the strength of women to trace the robbers of the grave and get back all that is left of the Master.

Then the events follow as John records them. He and Peter run to investigate. The false report of Mary must be the means to bring them to the sepulchre, in order that they may realize that the report is indeed not correct, and behold the wonder of the linen clothes, and see, and believe. More slowly Mary Magdalene follows. Grief-stricken, she is irresistibly drawn to the tomb of her Master. Perhaps there

is some clue. Perhaps someone, unbeknownst to the grave-robbers, witnessed their foul deed. At any rate, that tomb is all that she has left now. At least the body of her Master had been there. And so she arrives in the garden shortly after Peter and John had inspected the grave and departed. The women had, of course, long since left the garden, and were on their way to the city with their unbelievable tidings. They are destined to see the risen Lord next.

Thus Mary is alone at the sepulchre, her soul filled with sorrow and inconsolable grief, her troubles increased by the anxious question concerning the body of her Master.

Grief-stricken Mary!

If it was true of the other women that they had all been attached to the Lord in His earthly appearance, and that they had come to the grave with every intention of performing a last service of love upon the dead body of their Master, and thus were totally unprepared for the resurrection, so that in their overwhelming grief and earthly attachment to the Lord Jesus they certainly entertained no thought of a resurrection, — and thus are witnesses of unimpeachable reliability, — then this was especially true of the Magdalene. In a condition of extreme misery the Lord had found her, and had powerfully delivered her from the dominion of seven demons. And ever since she had been a living witness of the power of His calling, had loved him with all the power of her soul, following Him faithfully to the very last.

But do not divorce Mary from her times. The Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified. And so while Jesus was the light of her life indeed, and while at bottom she was vitally interested in the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and no doubt drank in every word uttered by Him, yet her knowledge and understanding were simple, and certainly incomplete. To be sure, liberated from the power of the devil in the most literal sense of the word, her soul had been filled with the power of the love of Jesus. His love had kindled in her heart a warm love in response. But it was a love that ran at that time only in the channels of ministering devotion. She clung to the earthly appearance of Jesus. If only she might be with Him, then nothing else mattered. It was a love, therefore, which was in sore need of the object of Jesus' earthly form.

And now that object of her love was gone. Bad enough it was that her Beloved was dead. But now, when His body was all she had left, — and certainly, she could have that body to bestow her loving care upon it only for a little while at best, — they had deprived her even of that. Filled with grief, well-nigh frantic in her anxiety, she is. In her speech is the tacit assumption that it is the Lord Himself, not merely His body, that they have taken away. For she says, "They have taken away my Lord . . ." The appearance of the angels draws her attention so little that she readily turns about to speak with the "gardener." The wonder of the linen clothes never attracted her wondering notice. Even the gardener she assumes to be well-acquainted with her troubles. And she never stops to think how foolish and

improper it sounded that *she* would take that body back to the tomb.

Grief-stricken Mary

* * * *

Mary Rabboni!

How real is the risen Lord, when you listen to that conversation against the background of Mary's grief and the fiction of a stolen body!

O, she did not know Him. She could not know Him. She did not recognize her living Lord when she met Him face to face. No, it was not her sorrow which caused this failure: she would have surely recognized Him at once if He had appeared as He always had before His death. But the Lord was risen: He was "other." In the likeness of sinful flesh she had known Him, and now He was changed into His resurrection glory. But even this does not explain all. Evidently the Lord did not even appear in His resurrection glory, for no eyes did Mary have for that glory. She could not have seen Him. But purposely He appeared as the gardener, that she might not recognize Him at once. She must know Him, but must learn from the outset that He has changed.

And then: Mary!

Already she had turned away from Him to give her attention to the tomb. Her recognition must not be by sight, but by hearing. Formerly indeed her fellowship with Him was by sight. But henceforth it will be the higher, more glorious fellowship of the Spirit, through the Word!

Mary!

O, you can attempt to explain it. He knew her name. Besides, the thrill of His voice, her Master's voice, went through her. But Mary needed no explanation.

Mary! Words of gentle rebuke because she had sought Him Who had power over the devil's power in a tomb. But words, nay, one word, that conveyed instantaneously to her heart the glad gospel of the resurrection!

Rabboni My Master! O, there is no question of it. There is the unmistakeable ring of truth in the whole heart-warming meeting. She knows Him at once. In a flash she turns about, ready to embrace Him. Her dead Master has spoken her name. And she would never mistake that unique "Mary!" He is indeed the Lord. But He is risen!

She found Him, not because she expected and looked for Him, but because He, the Risen Lord, had reached out for her and made Himself known.

Mary Rabboni!

The Lord is risen indeed!

Hallelujah!

H.C.H.

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EDITORIALS

Heresy and Heretics

In a very ably written article, Mr. Willis Kooienga writes an article in *Concordia* in which he attempts to prove: 1. That those who condemn conditional theology, and who condemn the term "condition" as, recently, the attempt was made to introduce it in our Protestant Reformed Churches, must regard Ursinus, one of the "Reformed fathers" and co-author with Olevianus of the Heidelberg Catechism, as a heretic. 2. That the condemnation of the Rev. De Wolf and his suspension from the ministry of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches was unjust and even an ungodly act.

We congratulate Mr. Kooienga for his able attempt. Both his style and argumentation reveals that he is an able writer. Moreover, he reveals that he is a man of study. At least, from a certain viewpoint and with a certain purpose in mind he studied rather thoroughly the commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism written by Ursinus. These things are commendable. I could wish that Mr. Kooienga had used his God-given talents for a better purpose than to combat the Protestant Reformed truth.

But because Mr. Kooienga is, evidently, such an able writer, and because his argumentation may probably deceive many readers, therefore, I will try to expose the fundamental fallacy of his entire article.

I can put the reasoning of Mr. Kooienga in the form of syllogism as follows:

1. Ursinus speaks rather freely of conditions.
- 2 The Protestant Reformed Churches condemn conditional theology.
3. The Protestant Reformed Churches regard Ursinus, as a heretic.

This appears, on the face of it, very logical. Yet, it is not at all. Though the major and minor premise of this syllogism are both true, the conclusion does not follow at all. It reminds me of another syllogism of the sophists which ran as follows:

1. This is your dog.
2. This dog is a mother.
3. This dog is your mother.

Instead I propose another syllogism as follows:

1. A heretic is one who opposes one or more fundamental tenets authorized by a particular church of which he is a member or minister.
2. Ursinus was never a member of the Protestant Reformed Church which officially declared that the promise of God is unconditional and that faith is not a condition.
3. Hence, although Ursinus was in error when he spoke so freely of conditions, he was not a heretic.

Let me explain.

It is true, of course, that in his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, Ursinus speaks rather freely of conditions. He speaks of a conditional covenant, of a conditional promise, of faith as a condition. Today, we regard this as erroneous in the Protestant Reformed Churches and rightly so.

However, although this is true of his commentary, there is not one trace of that conditional theology in the Heidelberg Catechism of which he is one of the authors. There he does not speak of a conditional covenant. The Catechism does not speak of faith as a condition, but on the contrary, always refers to it as a means whereby we are ingrafted into Christ which the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. In the Catechism Ursinus knows very well that the promise is unconditional, for otherwise he could not have taught that redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to little infants, who certainly cannot accept any conditions, as well as to the adults. Qu. 74. And in his commentary on this question and answer, Ursinus shows that he knows very well that faith is not a condition but a means whereby they are ingrafted into Christ for, according to him, even little infants actually possess all the benefits of Christ by a living faith which, in them, certainly cannot be a condition. And this Reformed line, and not his conditional theology, runs through the whole of his work. And this certainly is true of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Now, would we call Ursinus, who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century, who was a Reformed man that erroneously spoke of conditions, a heretic?

We would not!

Why not? And why do we call those that created schism in our churches with their conditional theology heretics nevertheless?

The reason is plain. A heretic is always one who opposes one of the fundamental tenets authorized by the church of which he is a member. In other words, he is one that opposes the official confessions of his church.

That could never be said of Ursinus in the sixteenth century. In fact, in those days, although there certainly was Reformed faith and doctrine, this had never been officially expressed and adopted in a confession of the Church. It is true that certain articles like the Sixty Seven Articles of Zwingli, the Ten Conclusions of Berne, and the First Helvetic Confession had been composed, but they had, at best, a mere local authority. Ursinus was not bound by it. Hence, the worst that can be said of Ursinus commentary is that it erred in the matter of conditions. But he was not a heretic.

Different this is for a person that subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity, and is bound by it. Different this becomes more specifically for a person that is member of the Protestant Reformed Church that, in 1924 rejected the errors of the "Three Points" and in 1950 and 1951 adopted the Declaration of Principles.

One that teaches conditional theology opposes the Confessions authorized by the Protestant Reformed Churches

and, if he is a member or minister of those churches, is a heretic.

This is the case with the Rev. De Wolf. Deliberately he opposed from the pulpit the Three Forms of Unity and the Declaration of Principles, and supported the Three Points of 1924.

This I will make plain.

As to the Three Forms of Unity did it never strike you that, although even at that time many of the Reformed fathers spoke of conditions, the term never occurs in the Confessions and, when they came face to face with the Arminians they strongly condemned it?

That is simply a fact.

The positive part of the Canons of Dordrecht never speak of conditions, not even in II,5 as those that want to maintain their conditional theology allege. On the contrary, they emphasize that the application of our salvation in time flows from and is wrought in harmony with the election of God, which leaves no room for conditions.

But the negative part of the same Canons very definitely condemn conditions and prerequisites unto salvation. Of this I can furnish many proofs by direct quotations.

Thus in Canons I B2 we read of the subterfuge of the Arminians according to which they like to distinguish election into "incomplete, revocable, non-decisive and *conditional* or complete, irrevocable, decisive and absolute." By this distinction they mean, of course, that God's election becomes complete as soon as the condition: faith, obedience, and perseverance is fulfilled. O, the lovers of conditions say, we believe in unconditional election, we only believe in conditions as far as the application of salvation in time is concerned! But this is also a mere subterfuge for the simple reason that the latter is exactly according to the former: God has chosen us in Christ, and according to that election He blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. If faith and obedience and perseverance are conditions in time they do appear as such in God's election. But all this is literally condemned in the Canons. Election is unconditional and therefore the application of election is unconditional.

Again in I B 3 we read of the error of the Remonstrants that God did not choose certain persons but rather "out of all possible conditions . . . the act of faith . . . as a condition unto salvation." If faith is not a mere means but a condition unto salvation in time it also occurs as such in the eternal election of God. This our fathers condemned.

In I B 4 the Arminians teach that "in the election unto faith this condition is beforehand demanded that man should use the light of nature aright." Of course, one error leads to another. If in the election of God man occurs as one that must fulfill the condition of faith, he cannot, in the same order of election, occur as totally depraved. It is for that reason that the lovers of conditions have invented the subterfuge that God alone fulfills all the conditions. They not only know that this is nonsense but in their actual preaching they present conditions as prerequisites which man must fulfill. It

is exactly because they love to preach this that they are so fond of conditions. Only then they can maintain the responsibility of man!

Again in I B 5 the Remonstrants teach "faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election unto glory, but are conditions, which, being required beforehand (prerequisites! H.H.) were foreseen as being met by those who will be fully elected." As De Wolf had it, and all that support him teach: "Our act of conversion is a condition or prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Hence, as far as assurance of election is concerned, the Arminians teach "that there is in this life no fruit and consciousness of the unchangeable election unto glory, nor any certainty, except that which depends on a changeable and uncertain condition." And the lovers of conditions believe and teach the same thing. All comfort for the people of God is gone. I B, 7.

According to the Arminians, perseverance is not a fruit of election or a gift of God, but a condition which man must fulfill to attain to decisive election. V, B, 1. And in this connection it is noteworthy that the Arminians voice the same objections against perseverance as a fruit of God's election as the conditional theologians that attempted to lead the Protestant Reformed Churches astray always bring against us. For in V, B, 6 they claim "that the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance and of salvation from its own character is a cause of indolence and is injurious to godliness, good morals, prayers and other holy exercises." This note is forevermore heard in the camp of our opponents. Ex ungue leonem, from the claw you recognize the lion.

Hence, I maintain that De Wolf c.s. and all that wilfully follow Him, also Mr. Willis Kooienga, are heretics because they oppose the truth that was officially adopted by our churches.

But there is more.

You may probably remark that other churches that call themselves Reformed subscribe to the same Three Forms of Unity and yet they believe in conditions.

But do not forget that the Lord God Himself, in the past, so directed our way that we are Protestant Reformed. We are not Christian Reformed, still less are we Liberated. We cannot be. We do not want to be. Before God, we may not be.

The reason is our history. Many, perhaps also Willis Kooienga, do not know that history anymore and do not care about it. But it is very important, nevertheless, to be thoroughly acquainted with it. Why are we Protestant Reformed? Because the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 cast us out because we refused to subscribe to the "Three Points." This is not the place to discuss these Three Points in detail. I advise Willis Kooienga to make a thorough study of them. Then he will discover that the Rev. De Wolf in the first of his heretical sermons which he preached from the pulpit of First Church supported the First Point

of 1924 in its worst form. That First Point, taken in connection with its proof, teaches that the preaching of the gospel is grace for all that hear because it is a wellmeant offer of salvation, on the part of God, to all the hearers.

The Rev. De Wolf made it worse. He did not speak of a well-meant offer, nor of the preaching of the gospel, but he preached "God promises every one of you salvation, if you believe." In 1924 we repeatedly published the question to all the Reformed world: "What grace does the reprobate receive in the preaching of the gospel?" Now we must ask the very pointed question: "Does God seriously promise salvation to the reprobate?"

Our churches condemned this doctrine in 1924. Now De Wolf c.s. proclaim it again. Therefore, they are heretics.

Finally, our churches officially adopted the Declaration of Principles. In that Declaration they emphatically declare that the Reformed Confessions maintain that the promise of God is unconditional and for the elect alone; and that faith is not a condition but a means of God unto salvation.

Very deliberately, I am convinced, the Rev. De Wolf contradicted this Declaration when he preached in two different sermons which were bad throughout:

"God promises to every one of you that, if you believe, you shall be saved."

And "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The conclusion, therefore, is:

1. That Ursinus is not regarded by us as a heretic for the simple reason that he did not oppose any particular doctrine authorized by the church of which he was a member. If Ursinus lived in our day and was a member of the Protestant Reformed Church, he would be taken to task for his erroneous expressions and if he refused to retract them, would be considered a heretic.

2. That De Wolf c.s. are heretics because:

a. They oppose the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches as contained in the Three Forms of Unity.

b. They support the Three Points of 1924 condemned by our churches.

c. They contradict the Declaration of Principles, officially adopted by the Protestant Reformed Churches.

And if Willis Kooienga still calls the suspension of De Wolf an ungodly act, this can only be because he himself does not understand and love the Protestant Reformed truth.

H.H.

Another assault

The above caption has reference to the writing of P. De Boer that he had printed in "The Reformed Guardian" for March 10, 1954. The purpose also of this writing is to destroy Rev. H. Hoeksema. This is proved by the thesis of the author, which is that Hoeksema is broken in body and mind and must therefore be repudiated (p. 6 of "The Guardian"). It is proved by the fact that all that the author produces to substantiate this atrocious and ridiculous

lie is slander and more slander, misrepresentation and always more misrepresentation. Just a few examples.

On page 7 of the "Guardian" one may read and I quote: "*That brings me to the letter the late Prof. Holwerda wrote to an immigrant in Canada.* It is in connection with what the Rev. Hoeksema chose to do with that letter, then and ever since, that I speak and write. *The letter was private, never intended for publication.*" (Italics supplied).

The statements in Italics are sheer lies. For although the letter was naturally enough addressed to one individual — "an immigrant" — it was intended for the entire group of Liberated that this individual represented and in behalf of which he had sought the advice communicated to him in that letter. Allow me to prove this by quoting from Holwerda's letter. He writes: "En laat men dan *als vrijgemaakten* vooral 't contact met onze kerken in Holland bewaren . . ." And further: "*Onze vrijgemaakten* zouden zeer vruchtbaar werk doen, als ze in de Prot. Ref. Church werkten aan wegneming van misverstand en aan verdieping van inzicht." In translation this reads: "And let them then *as Liberated* by all means preserve their contact with our churches in Holland," and: "*Our Liberated* could do fruitful work, if they worked for the removal of misunderstanding and deepening of insight."

This proves, certainly, that the letter was written with the intention that its content be published to all the Liberated in the vicinity of Chatham. It is "our Libearted" that Holwerda was advising and not simply a lone immigrant. That this is so, follows also from the very nature of the advice. Certainly the letter of Holwerda was public and not private, personal as to its character. Now this must have been just as discernable to DeBoer.

Besides, the letter contains also these lines, and I quote, „Als er binding aan Hoeksema's opvatting bestond, zou ik zeggen: nooit aansluiten. Nu geloof ik echter dat aansluiting roeping is." Let me translate this: "If Hoeksema's conception is binding, I would say; never join. But now I believe, however, that joining is calling." And also this statement, „En ook onze leatuur daar doorgeven," that is, "distribute our literature there." In other words, if Hoeksema's conception is not binding, join them, doing so with the aim to propagate our literature there. But that must be done under cover. Don't tell them by all means what you're up to. Tell them that you're Protestant Reformed, but in the quiet make converts for our views. And when you present your children for baptism, you will be asked if you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the Articles of our Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation." Answer yes, though your heart says no. (The expression, "this Christian church" has reference to the local congregation).

This is what Holwerda's advice amounted to, seeing that it was also his stand that his letter was private, personal, which can only mean, judging from the content of the letter.

that he did not mean it for the Protestant Reformed but only for the Liberated, yes, and from the nature of matters. for all the Liberated in Canada and the United States. (The letter was certainly public).

What then must we think of Holwerda's advice in the point of view of Christian ethics? It is not good. It is terrible. For supposing that it had been true that our distinctively Protestant Reformed truth (Hoeksema's doctrine) was not binding, this would not have meant that it might not be preached certainly. It might still be preached and was actually being preached in every congregation whose minister was truly Protestant Reformed.

Yet DeBoer silently passed by Holwerda's corruption to assail Hoeksema by a language that reads, and I quote, "What right please does anyone have on the basis of a privately written letter to rush into print with implied charges against men in regular and good standing, without even seeing the men themselves first, without any attempt to hear the men involved? By publishing that letter the Rev. Hoeksema as editor-in-chief made himself guilty of a serious breach of Christian ethics."

But let us consider the facts.

First. Holwerda's letter was not private but public. We need say no more about *this*.

Second. It was not Hoeksema but it was I (Ophoff) who rushed into print with Holwerda's letter (see *Standard Bearer* Vol. 25, p. 469). With this Hoeksema had absolutely nothing to do. Not only that, but he had previously advised against it, telling me to wait with publishing the letter until the Revs. De Jong and Kok had returned and had been asked to accompany the publication of it by a statement of their own. But I went ahead and published the letter anyway, solely on my own hook without telling Hoeksema. The first he knew about it as when he saw the letter as published by me in the *Standard Bearer*.

DeBoer knew this. He read it in the *Standard Bearer*, where all is recorded. Why then did he not rail at me? Why blame Hoeksema?

Third. Rev. Hoeksema did hear Kok on the matter of Holwerda's letter, if I am not mistaken the day after he had returned home from the Netherlands. And it was not until four weeks thereafter, and to prevent all further casting of suspicion upon the accuracy of the letter, that Rev. Hoeksema placed a photostatic copy of it in the *Standard Bearer*. (Vol. 25, p. 515). But this did not make him guilty of publishing the letter. That had been done by me four weeks previous.

Fourth. Hoeksema's comment in the *Standard Bearer* contained no charges either direct or implied. But we do find in it this statement, "I can hardly believe that they actually said these things." This from Hoeksema. See *Standard Bearer*, vol. 25, p. 518. Nor did I charge or accuse them. See *Standard Bearer* Vol. 25, p. 469-473, and especially p. 522.

Now these are the facts, well known to DeBoer from

the *Standard Bearer*. How then could he write as he did? What did he hope to achieve?

Though Rev. Hoeksema did not accuse Kok and DeJong, he did ask them to say whether they had made the statements ascribed to them by Holwerda in his letter, or whether he had put these statements in their mouth. Both Kok and DeJong refused to make reply, giving as their reason that a man is innocent until proved guilty, as if anyone was accusing them and exhonoring Holwerda. Such, of course, was not the case.

But though they refused to say whether they had made the statements attributed to them by Holwerda in his letter, DeJong nevertheless went trotting to the consistory of Fuller Ave. (it had extended to him a call to become our missionary minister) with a mass of telegrams and letters from the Liberated in the Netherlands testifying how well Kok and DeJong had performed in their midst as *Protestant Reformed* ministers. In their sermonizing they had hewn to the line of Protestant Reformed doctrine. Statements to that effect, I was told. But it stands to reason that as far as the matter of Holwerda's letter was concerned, the worth of this mass of testimony was precisely zero. For it was not of a kind that was needed to clear up the matter of *Holwerda's letter*. That required an answer to Hoeksema's question, and then an answer, of course, from the only three persons — Kok, DeJong, Holwerda — qualified from the nature of matters to give answer. But that answer was not given. It was not given by DeJong on that consistory meeting.

Consequently, the matter of Holwerda's letter was not cleared up on that meeting. It was still a question (and is still a question today) whether Kok and DeJong made the statements attributed to them by Holwerda — sold our churches down the river — or whether Holwerda had put those statements in their mouth, and was thus the guilty party in this case.

Kok and De Jong deny that they sold our churches down the river, but they refuse to say that they did not make the statements attributed to them by Holwerda. It means that they put themselves in the clear but without incriminating Holwerda, that thus they cover up either his guilt or by a lie of their own.

Now these are the facts known to DeBoer as well as to anyone. How can anyone knowing the facts — knowing how the matter of Holwerda's letter was handled by Kok and DeJong, by the Liberated in the Netherlands, by Holwerda, by the consistory of Fuller Ave., and knowing the worthlessness of that mass of testimony, and knowing, too, the content of Holwerda's letter — help but have the strongest suspicion that Kok and DeJong are indeed guilty of having sold our churches down the river there in the Netherlands? Of course not. If DeBoer would engage in some earnest self-examination, he would discover that there is as much suspicion present in his own heart, as there is in the heart of any of us.

Yet to De Boer it is "amazing," to use his own language, "that any one can believe that the Revs. DeJong and Kok

'sold our churches down the river' on their trip to the Netherlands, when the brethren deny the charges." "Were there not," he asks, "a host of letters and telegrams from competent witnesses in the Netherlands refuting the accusation?" "Does Rev. Hoeksema," he goes on to say, "believe that I will take his word for it over against all that overwhelming testimony?" (Hoeksema is not asking him to take his word for anything)

Overwhelming testimony indeed! i.e., testimony overwhelmingly worthless. Yet, however worthless, DeBoer believes Kok and DeJong to be innocent in the face of it. (A miraculous faith, I would say). In DeBoer's eyes not Kok and De Jong are the culprits but Hoeksema is the culprit. And he hurls many charges against Hoeksema, also in connection with the case of Holwerda's letter (Guardian p. 6-8), none of which he can support with as much as an atom of proof. (Let him try it). For example the charge that Hoeksema at the time was accusing Kok and DeJong, slandering them, employing the methods of Hitler and Stalin against them etc. Let him try to prove these charges. He cannot. For all that Hoeksema did was to ask Kok and DeJong to walk with the matter of the letter in the light. But they chose to walk with it in darkness. For they had a sinful end in view, which was to conceal somebody's guilt — somebody's, either theirs or Holwerda's. And though DeBoer knows all this, he passes it silently by to rail at Hoeksema, whose only fault(?) was that he wanted the matter cleared up in the only way in which it could possibly be cleared up, the only way that was honest and right, the way of answering Hoeksema's question, — a question that was in everybody's heart, but that many did not want answered, in that they wanted Kok and DeJong innocent however guilty they might be.

DeBoer remarks in passing (Guardian p. 7) that, to use his own words, "the accusers never made a legal case of it against either of the men Kok and DeJong." I remark, of course not. But what this proves and proves conclusively is that nobody was accusing them. How could anybody accuse them, if neither Kok nor DeJong nor Holwerda consented to shed the needed light on Holwerda's letter, say who was the guilty party in this case, they or Holwerda? All that anybody could do is to give expression to his strong suspicions.

I would like to expose all of DeBoer's lies. But this would take up all the room in the Standard Bearer.

I shall deal with just one more of DeBoers' atrocious lies to show how he operates in his attempt to assassinate Hoeksema's character (for what reason he knows best). He writes and I quote, "Did he (Hoeksema) not talk and write and preach split, when he ought to have called for unity, understanding, and calm discussion?" (Guardian p. 6). In a word, according to De Boer, Hoeksema wanted a split and so he talked, wrote and preached split until he finally got his way.

It is hard to conceive of a slander that is worse than

this. I have need of dealing with it in the next issue of our Paper
G.M.O.

AS TO BOOKS

Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah by Joseph Addison Alexander; published by the Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$8.95.

This is a commentary after my own heart. Zondervan is to be congratulated for reprinting and offering to the public books of this nature dating from the preceding century. They certainly are to be preferred to much that is published today.

As to this commentary on Isaiah I just want to make a few remarks to recommend it to our readers. In the first place, it is thoroughly scholarly and throughout based on the Hebrew text, which nevertheless does not mean that I cannot recommend it to the general public, for the language is very clear. In the second place, it is, on the whole, both doctrinally and exetically sound. Exetically it is characterized by honest dealing with the text. In the third place, the author consistently maintains the unity of the whole of the book of Isaiah as well as the unity of the second part, chs. 40-66. This over against much of modern criticism. And finally, the author finds much less reference to the return from Babylon in the second part of these prophecies than is commonly alleged. In this I am inclined to agree with him.

A very beautiful and thorough commentary. Heartily recommended.
H.H.

WHEN IN THE NIGHT I MEDITATE

When in the night I meditate
On mercies multiplied,
My grateful heart inspires my tongue
To bless the Lord, my Guide.

Forever in my thought the Lord
Before my face shall stand;
Secure, unmoved, I shall remain,
With Him at my right hand.

My inmost being thrills with joy
And gladness fills my breast;
Because on Him my trust is stayed,
My flesh in hope shall rest.

I know that I shall not be left
Forgotten in the grave,
And from corruption, Thou, O Lord,
Thy Holy One wilt save.

The path of life Thou showest me;
Of joy a boundless store
Is ever found at Thy right hand,
And pleasures evermore.

Psalm 16

OUR DOCTRINE

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 41

Chapter 1

The Covenant of Marriage (cont.)

This is evidently the meaning in I Corinthians 7:2: "To avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." The Hebrew word that is translated by "fornication" or "to fornicate" seems to denote chiefly "to play the whore or the harlot," and it refers therefore usually to a female, whether married (in which case it is the same as adultery) or unmarried. In the New Testament, however, the word *fornication* is also used for the sin of adultery committed by one or both of the persons that are united in wedlock. Thus it is in Matt. 5:32: "Whoso ever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." It is even used in Scripture for the sin of incest, I Cor. 5:1: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." That both terms, *adultery* and *fornication*, are employed figuratively for the sin of idolatry is well-known.

The Catechism, therefore, is quite correct when in treating the seventh commandment it does not take its standpoint on the basis of the marriage relation, but immediately broadens out and emphasizes that this commandment forbids all uncleanness as accursed of God and that it demands that we must detest this uncleanness and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock or in single life. Nevertheless, as the term *adultery* refers to the sin of sexual intercourse by one or both parties that live in holy wedlock with a third party or parties, it literally refers to the marriage bond. And of that marriage bond we must speak first of all, when treating the seventh commandment.

When we consult Scripture concerning the significance and the character of the marriage relation, we naturally first of all turn to the institution of marriage as related in Gen. 2:18-25. This passage is introduced by the statement of the Lord God Himself: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." This is followed by an account of Adam's naming the animals, which the Lord Himself brought to him, "to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." And Adam gave names to all the cattle, the fowl, and the beasts on the field. This, of course, presupposes that he had immediate and intuitive knowledge of their nature. And while Adam thus contemplated the living creature, he became conscious of a lack in

his own nature, because "for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." The animals the Lord God had created male and female, individually. But in distinction from the animal, God created the man alone. And it is evident that from the contemplation of the animals which he named, Adam became conscious of a longing for a help that would be meet for him. Thereupon we read: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." The woman, therefore, was created out of the very substance of Adam's nature. And this fact is immediately interpreted by Adam in the state of righteousness, still standing in the light of the true knowledge of God, and therefore being able to understand the works of God, in the words: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." The name "woman," in the Hebrew *'issah*, means fe-male, she-man, the female complement of the man. And Moses himself interprets this creation of the woman as meaning: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Because man and woman are not two, but one in their origin, therefore the marriage relationship supercedes every other relationship among men. The fact that the woman was taken out of man indicates that there is a union and communion of being between the one man and the one woman that is entirely unique, and that is far more intimate even than the relation of parents and children or the relation of brothers and sisters. Thus, the marriage relation was instituted by God in the state of righteousness in the first paradise. And therefore it is certainly not Scriptural to maintain that the state of celibacy must be preferred to that of matrimony. This too is plainly indicated in the close of the passage which we quoted: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." No evil lusts of the flesh corrupted the original relation between Adam and Eve.

Secondly, to understand the Scriptural significance of the marriage relation, we must also note that according to the Bible marriage is a reflection, and earthly picture, of the covenant of God with His people. That this is true is evident from many passages of Holy Writ. The Old Testament speaks everywhere of the relation between Jehovah and Israel as being a marriage relation. And the violation of the covenant on the part of Israel is characterized as adultery. When Israel departs from Jehovah, and turns to serve other gods, her sin is characterized as a whoring after a third party, where there is no third party possible. Thus we read in Jeremiah 3:1: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." Of the same violation of the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel and of the

spiritual adultery on the part of the latter we read in Ezek. 16:15: "But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was." The whole chapter is based upon the idea that the relation between Jehovah and Israel is the relation of a covenant of marriage, and that therefore the departure from Jehovah's ways is fornication and adultery. To quote just one more passage from this same chapter: "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God: Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness." Consider also the allegory of Aholah and Aholibah in chapter 23 of this same prophecy, based upon the same fundamental conception that the relation between Jehovah and Israel is the relation of a covenant of marriage. Or consider the first two chapters of the prophecy of Hosea, based upon the same fundamental conception, which are concluded by the beautiful promise: "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." These passages could be multiplied, but they are sufficient to prove that the marriage relation between man and wife was instituted by God to be a reflection of the covenant relation between God and His people. It is not so that the real marriage is between man and wife here on earth, and that Scripture speaks figuratively of the relation between God and His people as a marriage relation, but just the other way. The real marriage is between God and His people, and of that the marriage between man and wife upon earth is simply a creative picture, an earthly image, of a heavenly reality.

Thirdly, and in close connection with the immediately preceding, we must call attention to the truth that also the relation between Christ and His church is pictured in the Scriptures as a marriage relation. We must remember that the covenant relation between God and His people is realized in and through Jesus Christ, the incarnated Word, Immanuel. In Christ the covenant is established forever. And for that reason, the relation between Christ and the church is that of the bridegroom and the bride. The apostle Paul calls special attention to that fact in Eph. 5:28-32. In this passage he speaks, as it were, in one breath of the marriage relation between man and wife and of the relation between Christ and the church. He enjoins husbands to love their own wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present,

it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Hence, men ought to love their own wives even as they love their own bodies, and even as the Lord loved the church: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And it is in connection with this admonition to husbands to love their own wives as Christ loved His church that the apostle quotes from Gen. 2:24: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Nevertheless, all this instruction of the apostle concerning the relation of marriage between man and wife, and the admonition that men should love their own wives even as they love their own bodies, and even as Christ loved the church, is essentially applicable only to the relation of Christ and His church. For the apostle concludes in verse 32: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." In other words, the original creation of the woman from the man and the subsequent marriage relation between man and his wife is essentially realized in the relation of Christ to His bride. In the church, therefore, the marriage relation is and ought to be a reflection of the relation between the true bridegroom and His bride, Christ and the church.

We may, therefore, define the earthly marriage relation as the union between one man and one woman for life, a union that is based on a communion of nature, on a communion of life, and a communion of love, which is a reflection of the covenant relation between God and His people and of the relation between Christ and His church; a union moreover, that has its chief purpose in bringing forth the seed of the covenant.

Marriage is an indissoluble bond, we say, between two individuals, a man and a woman, that is based upon a communion of nature, of life, and of love. This may be deduced from the first institution of marriage, and from the creation of the woman out of the man. Man and wife are not two equal parties, but they constitute one whole. The woman complements the man: without the woman the man is not complete. Nor is the woman without the man complete. It is a mistake to maintain that the man and the woman are equal. On the contrary, they are entirely unequal physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Yet, on the other hand, they are not so unequal that they can never be brought together. But on the contrary, their inequality is such that the one demands the other, so that when they are joined together in the marriage bond, they completely fill and complement each other. The marriage bond is a union that is based upon a communion of nature. Hence, it is also a communion of life. In the marriage bond husband and wife live together in the closest imaginable communion, not only physically and sexually, but also mentally and spiritually. They live one life together, and on the basis of that communion of life the marriage bond functions in the communion of love.

H.H.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

God's people sanctified and saved. Chapter XXX:20-26

And though the Lord will give the bread of adversity and water of oppression, yet their teachers shall not be removed and set in a corner, be repudiated and set aside as in the past. But they shall be before their very eyes (vs. 20). And when they turn to the right or to the left, deliberate as to the direction in which the path of rectitude leads in life's transactions, there shall be a voice behind them saying, This is the way, walk therein. And they shall hear with their ears, take to heart the instruction of the voice (vs. 21). They shall defile the draperies of the images of their silver, hitherto held sacred, and all the vestments of their images of gold. They shall cast them away as menstruous cloth in their loathing of them. Away with you, they shall say (vs. 22).

In token of His delight in them, the Lord will give rain in the season of sowing and an abundance of bread of the finest quality, and their cattle shall feed in spacious pastures, and their oxen and young asses that till the ground shall eat fodder salted and winnowed and therefore clean (vss. 23, 24). Springs of water shall gush forth in the mountains in that day of the great slaughter and the falling of the towers (vs. 25).

This is a description of the ideal state that will prevail in the heavenly kingdom of the glorified Christ, reigning in the Jerusalem that is above, when every violence that exalts itself against God and His people shall have been destroyed. The description is under earthly images supplied by the circumstances of this present time. As the sequel reveals, the prophecy of the *falling of the towers* (vs. 25) looks to the overthrow of Assyria as the possessor of the worldpower at that time and to the passing away of the world at the appearing of Christ at the end of time. In that day, when the Lord will mend the breach of His people — reconcile them to Himself through Christ's cross — the moon will shine with the brilliancy of the sun and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold (vs. 26).

It is plain again from this verse that also the reach of this prophecy extends to the end of time, and that its final fulfilment is the appearance of Christ at the end of time.

The judgments of God over the nations and over Assyria as the type and representative of the whole. Chapter XXX: 27-33.

In his vision the prophet beholds the name of the Lord — *name*, i.e., the manifestation of His attributes here in judgment over the nations — coming from afar off, i.e., from Jerusalem, Heaven. The same idea receives expression in Amos 2:1, where it is stated that "The Lord will roar from

Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem." His face (name) burns with indignation, and its burden is heavy, laden, as it is, with calamity. His lips are full of anger, replete with words of wrath, that as uttered, devour His enemies. For He is the living God; to the power of His word there is no limit. And so His tongue consumes like a fire, and His breath, like an overflowing brook, divides the man — the total of nations engulfed — into two unequal halves, only the smaller portion — the neck and the head — appearing above the stream (vss. 27, 28). This revelation of wrath through calamity sifts the nations like a seive, called "seive of emptiness" in the text, because all fall through it. But the nations do not repent. But this is of the Lord. For a bridle is put in the jaw of the people, i.e., what is known of God through His visitations — His power and divinity — is manifest in them; the plagues are laid upon their heart, and His command that they turn from their abominations and desist from assailing His people is in them. But sin, on this account, is not restrained in them. On the contrary, the bridle causes them to err. They rebel more and more as Pharaoh of old. For the Lord hardens their heart. For it is His purpose to destroy them. (vs. 28b).

Seeing the salvation of the Lord, His redeemed people shall have a song in the night and a holy assembly as in the night of Israel's departure from the land of Egypt when the pascal lamb was eaten amid sacred songs as the destroying angel smote Israel's firstborn. With gladness of heart they shall come to the mountain of the Lord — Zion — come they shall to the rock of Israel (vs. 29).

And the Lord shall cause the glory of His voice to be heard and reveal the letting down of His arm — the stretching forth of it, i.e., manifest the indignation of His anger — His arm — through flame of devouring fire, scattering, storm and hailstones (vs. 30).

The source of these means of judgment — of the hail, storm, fire, pestilence etc. — is the Lord, His creative will, and accordingly His tongue, lips, breath, arm, anger, wrath etc. so that the text can speak of the fire of His tongue and of His breath as an overflowing brook of calamity.

Through the Lord's voice the Assyrian — the type of the world-power of all the ages that were still to come — shall be confounded. He shall be smitten with the rod of the Lord (vs. 31). And in every place where this rod of doom shall pass as made to rest upon the Assyrian it will be with tabrets and harps, i.e., amidst the song and music of instruments of music on the part of the Lord's people. And in battles of shaking (of the Lord's outstretched arm) will He fight against the enemies of His church until they be destroyed (vs. 32).

For Hell — *Trophet* in the text — has been ordained of old and prepared for the king (of Assyria); it is deep and large. A great pile of wood is afire there. And the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindled it (vs. 33).

G.M.O.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of John 10:27, 28

In our former essay on John 10 we have noticed that Jesus is indeed the good Shepherd, Who lays down His life for the sheep. He is not an hireling, whose own the sheep are not and who careth not for the sheep, but He is the Shepherd who has received these sheep from the hand of His Father in electing love and tender mercy; God gave Him these Sheep, in order that He might save them to the uttermost, and raise them up in the last day!

We also noticed that Jesus receives the "sanction" of the Father, His approval upon the Shepherds labors. Says Jesus: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." God loves the Son because this Son will die on the Cross, and powerfully reveal Himself to be the Son of God in His resurrection through the Spirit of Sanctification. Christ must merit the Father's love as the Mediator both for Himself and for all His own. He is under the law of works, that rule which says: the man that doeth the same shall live thereby! Therefore He is so certain that the Father heareth Him always, because always He is so perfectly fulfilling the will of God in saving His sheep by fulfilling the just demands of the law. He became a curse, a malediction, in order that we might be blessed forever.

That is the glad-tidings of the Gospel.

Thus we saw in our essay on this tenth Chapter of the Gospel of John.

In this article we would call your attention to this same work of Christ on the Cross and in the resurrection and ascension, as Christ perfects that Work in us, so that we will not perish unto eternity. No one can pluck us out of the hand and power of the Shepherd, Christ, in Whom we are in the hand of the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace! For Christ says: I and the Father are one.

These verses 27 and 28 of John 10 read as follows: "*My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.*"

To understand these words of Jesus we must keep in mind that fact, that Jesus is here addressing the unbelieving "Jews," who opposed Him, contradicted Him always, legislating policies against Him, and casting His sheep out of their Synagogues. And even though He told them ever so clearly that He was the Christ, the Son of God, and even though all His mighty works attested that he was approved of God, having a Divine commission to fulfill, they still accuse Jesus of holding their soul in suspense and of not telling them clearly who He is.

Why don't these "Jews," Scribes and Sadducees know who Jesus is?

The answer: *they believe not!* Let this truth be written

boldly in every church paper, and resound from every pulpit in every land. Let it be proclaimed with great boldness, and may all the saints implore the Lord that the true preachers of the Word speak this truth boldly as they ought to speak. Let it be the seasoning salt that gives grace to the hearers, and the word that tells the unbelievers that the Mysteries of the Kingdom are not understood by them.

But let every one also understand that when he has said, that the "Jews" feel that their soul is kept in suspense, that this is due to their unbelief that he has not yet spoken the whole truth. If the preacher says nothing more than that it is due to unbelief, he has said nothing more than, and has tacitly agreed with the Remonstrant, who alleges "that the will of God to save those who would believe and would persevere in faith and in the obedience of faith, is the whole and entire decree of election unto salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decree has been revealed in God's word." And such a preacher is guilty of "deceiving the simple and plainly contradicting the Scriptures, which declare that God will not only save those who will believe, but that He has also from eternity chosen certain particular persons to whom above others he in time will grant both faith in Christ and perseverance, as it is written: I manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" Rejection of Errors, Canons I, B. 1.

The deeper and more determining questions is: *why* did not these "Jews" believe? Jesus gives the answer here in our text: But ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep! Verse 26. We must never say that these men were not God's sheep because they believed not. That is a plain contradicting of the Scriptures, it is a refusing to bow before the Word of Jesus. It is hostile rebellion. This is the imagination of man that must be cast down, it is a stronghold of Satan that must be overthrown in the Name and might of God, and thus all thoughts must be subjected to this word of Christ.

In the childlike obedience to Christ, and the hearing of faith we say: 1. One who does not "hear the voice of the Shepherd" does not hear this because he is deaf. 2. And everyone that is deaf to the Shepherd's voice is such because he is not one of His sheep, given to Him by the Father in electing love.

This truth gives us as believers additional matter for daily humiliation, for adoring the depths of His mercies, for cleansing ourselves, and rendering grateful returns of ardent love to him, who first manifested so great love towards us. This teaching does not make men remiss in observing the divine commands, or from sinking them into carnal security. Such remissness is the part of evil men, who do not hear nor heed the voice of the Shepherd, but walk in rash presumption or in wanton and idle trifling with the grace of election, and refuse to walk in the ways of the elect. Compare: Canons I, A, 13.

Let these "Canons" be guide-posts to our thinking, also in interpreting the Scriptures!

Christ's sheep hear *His voice*! Says Jesus: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow Me."

What is this "voice" of Jesus?

I wish to underscore the truth that, both according to the Scriptures and the confessions, this "voice" is not a "voice" that can be "heard" apart from the *preaching of the Gospel*. This *preaching* of the Gospel is the "voice" of the Shepherd; the Word of God as this is proclaimed clearly and purely to the church. Oh, it is true, this voice is not only in the external preaching of the Word, but it is never such that it is *heard* apart from the preaching of the Word. Such is the contention of the Anabaptists of the days of the Reformation fathers, as this led to Quakerism and all forms of false mysticism and rationalism. For when one has separated the content of the Word of the Gospel from the Holy Spirit (that is in vain imagination) then one puts his own content back in it, and one has rationalism!

No, this "voice," of Jesus is the same as the voice of all the prophets who rose up early and late. This is the "Voice" that, although it is not heard by unbelievers, nevertheless went out to them; their sound went out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. Psalm 19:4; Romans 10:18. In the sense that all "heard" the preaching with their natural hearing and their psychological response, which was ethically qualified as either believing or unbelieving, Isaiah writes "all day long did I stretch forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Under the imagery of "outstretched hands" we have the same truth as when the "voice" of Christ in the prophets is sounded, calling promiscuously to faith and repentance.

The objective "voice" is there.

As many as are "called" by the "voice" of the Shepherd are unfeigned called; all are called unto faith's repentance, with the "external calling." None will ever be able to say that the Gospel, as it was externally *preached*, was feigned.

But only the "sheep" heard his voice with spiritual hearing. They respond to this "voice" of the Shepherd as He proclaims Himself as their peace, as he promises life and peace to all who come and believe. And why? Because it is given them to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, and, therefore, "beware how they hear!" God gives the sheep regeneration, working powerfully in their hearts, effecting this in no wise merely by the external preaching of the gospel, moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed His part, it still remains in the power of man to be converted or to continue unconverted, but it is, evidently, a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead!

By virtue of this power the sheep "hear my voice!"

It is true: the manner of this operation we shall never fully comprehend. It is the Mystery of faith. It is the work of God that is deeper than hell and higher than heaven. God is great and we do not comprehend Him. Also here

His paths are past tracing out! We here too touch but the hem of His garment.

Yet, we must maintain that the "voice" of the Shepherd is "heard" by the sheep. And that the sheep hear something "objective," they hear the voice of Jesus in the Scriptures. These are the means of grace, as they are proclaimed and preached! It is the gospel proclaimed in Mystery; Mystery it is, which must not be confused with contradiction, but which is grasped by those who have the mind of Christ. It is the Mystery, that we call faith, which lays hold on all that is promised in the Gospel to the elect-believers.

The sheep hear *in faith*; they recognize that it is Christ Himself speaking to them in this Gospel preaching. Themselves then they do not know fully how it is that this message is so sweet. It is past finding out. But we believe with our hearts that God gave us to Christ in electing love, sent His Son to save us, powerfully called us by the Holy Spirit of sanctification in regeneration, calling, faith, justification and sanctification and the hope of final glory! And we love our Savior. So much has been forgiven us, and so sure is His salvation. And all this certainty we have and this power of God we experience in faith.

In no little part does God give new strength and power in our life by telling us through the "voice," of all the Scriptures, as these are preached to us and applied to our hearts through His Holy Spirit, that as the coming ones and as the believing ones (*venientibus et credentibus*) we have and shall forever have life and peace. Such is the concrete Gospel message which works as a power of God in the hearts of the sheep. Thus we know that no one shall ever take our crown.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes never had this faith, this hearing ear for the "voice" of the shepherd. They were none of Christ's sheep given to Him by the Father. They are not glad, but are still in the "suspense of unbelief and complain that they cannot understand His preaching, even when it is ever so clear and lucid. But this clear gospel, spoken in Mystery, is only hid to those who, by unbelief, the god of this age hath blinded. To these Christ never says in the preaching, not even in its concrete addressableness, you are my beloved sheep. Be *assured* of life and peace. In their hearts He never speaks of peace through the preaching as applied by the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, they are convicted of sin, judgment and the righteousness of Jesus' cause, without following Him!

But the sheep hear His voice. And "blindly" they follow, for they know that where He leadeth all is well.

No one can tempt them to depart from the Gospel truth.

They know not the "voice" of strangers. The truth in Jesus is exceedingly precious to the sheep. They love the "Everyone that believeth" Gospel, for it bespeaks the Gospel as a power of God unto salvation!

And: it gives all the glory to the Shepherd, Who saith: I and the Father are one. And no one can pluck the sheep out of Our hand!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Walking in Error

(4)

The Rev. H. Hoeksema and the Rev. G. M. Ophoff protested to Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches against an action of their consistory.

Classis East sustained them in their protest and advised that Consistory to demand apologies from Rev. De Wolf and from that element in the consistory that had defended him in his heretical statements.

By majority vote of eleven to nothing the consistory adopted this advice of Classis East on June 1, 1953 and gave those involved a period of time to decide whether they would apologize or not.

On the evening of June 22 these consistory members together with Rev. De Wolf presented a statement, which — even by the judgment of the neighbouring consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church — was not what Classis had advised the consistory of First Church to demand. By majority vote of eleven to nothing at that meeting it was then decided that Rev. De Wolf must apologize according to Classical decision. Being under discipline and being personally involved the eleven elders that supported Rev. De Wolf had no right, according to art. 33 of the Church Order, to vote. The vote therefore was eleven to nothing and not eleven to eleven.

Rev. De Wolf refused.

Then by the majority vote of twelve to nothing — for the eleven votes of the elders supporting Rev. De Wolf did not count here either — it was decided that these elders must apologize according to Classical decision.

The elders refused to do so.

* * * *

It may not, therefore, be either overlooked or be denied that these eleven elders were legally deposed when on the evening of June 23 such a decision was taken by that element of the consistory that still had the right to vote in the matter.

Let us for argument's sake assume — which actually is not at all true — that these eleven elders did have a right to vote on June 22 even though they were personally involved. Then, even then, the motion that they apologize according to Classical decision still carried by the majority of twelve to eleven. You might, on that same assumption, say that since the other motion, counting the eleven votes of those that might not vote, was a tie vote of eleven to eleven, the motion failed that Rev. De Wolf must apologize according to Classical decision. But you cannot get away with that kind of reasoning in regard to the eleven elders. By majority vote, which ever way you look at it, they were demanded to apologize according to Classical decision. And they re-

fused to do so. Do they now under oath before God and man on the witness stand, dare to deny that by majority vote they were placed under this demand and that they refused to do so? Undersigned sincerely pities Rev. De Wolf and these eleven elders when they will have to submit to cross examination under oath on the witness stand for facts that are so evident. Philosophy and hiding of facts will not do when there is documentary evidence to sustain and reveal the real facts.

Whether the Rev. Hoeksema is a domineering character or not will not to any degree change the facts in the case and the documentary evidence. What the undersigned or Rev. De Wolf or Rev. Hoeksema or Rev. Ophoff wrote here or there or anywhere in the recent past or decades ago likewise will not change these facts or cause the ink of the documentary evidence to fade away. The question is, what did the consistory decide? What did Classis decide? What did the consistory do with the advice of Classis? What was the reaction of Rev. De Wolf and his elders to that decision of the consistory concerning the advice of the Classis? Even if it could be shown from the writings of the Rev. Hoeksema or of the Rev. Ophoff that they somewhere in the past wrote statements that were literally identical to those two statements of Rev. De Wolf, that would not change the documentary evidence. It would not change the decision of the Classis one whit. These men also would then have to be placed by the consistory before the question as to whether they also would apologize for such statements, but it would not to any degree change the decision of the Classis or of the consistory. The records are there for all to see.

But the big question is, what did Rev. De Wolf and his elders do with that decision which passed by majority vote? Did they walk the church political way of our Church Order? Did they use legal means to seek justice and rectification of injustice? Or did they break all order and decency and walk in the error of schism?

Such is the sad case.

They cast the Church Order aside, notably article 31, and said that regardless of what order the Church Order prescribed for them, they would go in a different direction. Let us make that very plain.

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

Now, who is it that complains long and loud in speech and writing that they were "wronged by the decision of a minor assembly?" Surely not the Rev. Hoeksema, the Rev. Hanko and their faithful elders. They were never put under discipline or even protested against by anyone. It is Rev. De Wolf and his elders who complain that they were wrong-

ed by the decision of Classis, by the decisions of the June 22 and of the June 23 consistory meetings. There is documentary evidence, black-on-white records against which they complain.

Their complaints are loud and many. They say that it was a minority that tried to depose the majority. They complain that when they did present an apology that it was not accepted. They complain that they were not notified of the meeting to be held June 23. They even complain that the Rev. Hoeksema walked out of the meeting while it was still deliberating on the case.

What does the Church Order say to them? It says, Rev. De Wolf and your supporting elders, you should take your grievances to Classis and Synod. It tells them that the Classis and the Synod are there exactly to decide whether the things of which they complain were done decently and in order or not. Especially since the committee sent by Classis was there and was obliged to report the doings of that meeting to Classis, they should at least have waited for Classis' reaction to this report and should not have taken things in their own hands.

That is what they did!

Rev. De Wolf and his elders said, we are going to decide these things for ourselves. We are not going to take it to Classis and to Synod. We are going to express right here that we are the legal consistory. We are going to say that the Rev. Hoeksema and his elders are not the Consistory. We will not appeal to a major ecclesiastical body. We are going to decide right now, tonight! And we—twelve men—are going to decide this for all of Classis East!

And so they separated themselves from the apparatus that the Protestant Reformed Churches have for the solution of the difficulties of which its members complain. Thus they separated themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Had they said, we will not recognize the suspension and deposition and will still consider ourselves members of the consistory *together with you who want to suspend and depose us*, you would have had a different situation. They would have been doing wrong. But they would not have committed the schism, the separation they now made.

The Church Order gives them no right to decide any of these things of which they complained. They say that the eleven elders were not personally involved and might vote? Yes, but then they are complaining, are they not? that this right was taken from them illegally. And article 31 does not say that, in such cases, they may decide that matter for themselves. Do you not see how their argument even returns to their own heads? A minority, they say suspended and deposed them and therefore it is not legal, and they need not recognize it. And so, they say, the last part of article 31 does not hold. Nothing, they say, was decided by majority vote and therefore their suspension and deposition is not

settled and binding, and they need no appeal to Classis or Synod for a decision which really is not a decision since it did not pass by majority vote. But is it not equally true, then, that they are no majority over against those whom they have declared to be schismatic? Did they not have no more than twelve votes—if you also count the vote of Rev. De Wolf—to decide that the other twelve members of the consistory were no longer the legal consistory? Consistency, thou art a jewel!

Is it not plain that since they themselves have no clear majority and at best again have only a tie vote—twelve consistory members against twelve consistory members—that article 31 surely says that these, complaining that their vote was illegally taken away, should appeal to Synod and try to show to Synod that office bearers who are demanded by majority vote of 11 to 0 on June 1 to apologize according to Classical decision have a right to vote and decide whether their apology is acceptable or not? Does article 31 or any other article in the Church Order give them the right, as only half of the consistory to decide that it need not go to Synod? Should they not also appeal to Synod about what they call an illegal consistory meeting because they were not notified about it? Of course Article 31 is plain to anyone who wants to walk in the Church political way of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Then, too, much is said about that “unless.” We agree with the Rev. Ophoff that no decision of either and minor or major assembly may bind the conscience of any man. Nor do we ever want to insist that Rev. De Wolf and his followers sin against their own conscience. If, then, they refuse for conscience sake to make use of the “right” of which the article speaks, then let them leave our denomination and form their own, where they can teach and preach as their conscience dictates.

But do you not see what they did? Do you not see what they still do? Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches said that such Liberated statements as those of Rev. De Wolf may not be preached on a Protestant Reformed pulpit. Hence it demanded their condemnation. Rev. De Wolf and his followers not only refused to condemn these statements but by their illegal setting of themselves up as a Protestant Reformed consistory, even though the eleven elders were legally by majority vote deposed, they—twelve men, mind you who talk about a minority deciding things for the majority—they decided for the whole Classis that such statements may stand in their literal form and claimed their right to be a consistory in the Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches *with those statements*. Under the name Protestant Reformed they—though a Protestant Reformed Classis condemned the statements—will yet preach such Liberated and heretical statements.

In that error they continue to walk today.

J.A.H.

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

EARLY VIEWS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

(Continued)

We had concluded our previous article with the objection voiced by heretics against any form of baptism that Abraham was justified by faith only. The reader will excuse the undersigned when he went off on a tangent when commenting on Rom. 4:16. We could not resist the urge to make the comments which we did make in connection with the "conditions" controversy in our churches during the last few years, a controversy, by the way, which does not trouble our Protestant Reformed Churches any longer. In replying to this objection against any form of baptism by the heretics, we may say, in the first place, that, notwithstanding the Lord's commandment that the sacrament of baptism be administered, the truth that we are justified by faith verily remains intact. The sacraments do not justify us. We are justified only through the blood of Christ and receive it through faith. That we are justified by faith is only because it is through faith that the righteousness of Christ is bestowed upon us. Secondly, this objection overthrows itself. We know that Abraham was justified by faith only and this occurred several years before he received the sign of circumcision. But, if he were justified by faith only (and this is true), why did the Lord command the administration of the sign of circumcision to all the male children of the covenant?

Thirdly, the objection was raised that the apostles were not baptized. It must be granted that the Scriptures mention only one apostle who was baptized, namely Paul. He was baptized by a disciple of the Lord, Ananias, at Damascus, according to Acts 9:18. Replying to this objection against the sacrament of Baptism, Tertullian answers as follows, and we quote: "And now, as far as I shall be able, I will reply to those who affirm 'That the apostles were unbaptized.' For if they had undergone the human baptism of John and were longing for that of the Lord, *then* since the Lord Himself had defined baptism to be *one*; (saying to Peter, who was desirous of being thoroughly bathed, 'He who hath once bathed hath no necessity to wash a second time; 'which, of course, He would not have said at all to one *not* baptized;) even here we have a conspicuous proof against those, who, in order to destroy the sacrament of water, deprive the apostles even of John's baptism. Can it seem credible that 'the way of the Lord,' that is, the baptism of John, had not then been 'prepared' in those persons who were being destined to *open* the way of the Lord throughout the whole world? The Lord Himself, though no 'repentance' was due from Him,

was baptized: was baptism not necessary for *sinners*? As for the fact, then, that 'others were not baptized' — they, however, were not companions of Christ, but enemies of the faith, doctors of the law and Pharisees. From which fact is gathered an additional suggestion, that, since the *opposers* of the Lord *refused* to be baptized, they who *followed* the Lord were baptized, and were not like-minded with their own rivals: especially when, if there were any one to whom they clave, the Lord had exalted John above him (by the testimony) saying, 'Among them who are born of women *there* is none greater than John the Baptist.' — end of quote. To this we merely wish to add that the disciples of the Lord themselves baptized. — see John 3:22, 4:1-2.

Finally, a fourth objection against the sacrament of Baptism is based on I Cor. 1:14-17, and we quote: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." It must be plain that one cannot quote this particular passage as a proof against the practice of baptism. Paul here does not minimize the sacrament of Baptism as such, but merely emphasizes his calling to preach the gospel and thanks God that he baptized only a very few so that none would be able to say that he had baptized in his name, and that he therefore used the sacrament of Baptism as a means to advance his own honour and glory. He is thankful that no one has the opportunity to say that the apostle ever sought himself and even availed himself of the sacrament of Baptism unto that end.

This concludes our discussion on: Early Views of the Sacrament of Baptism. We have noticed that this sacrament was held in very high esteem. It was not merely considered a rite or ceremony but as a sacrament it was considered efficacious. Tremendous significance was attached to the sacrament of Baptism. With respect to the baptism of infants we may say that, although many of the references in the writings of the early Church Fathers are admittedly vague on this subject, we may certainly say that the practice of baptizing infants must have been general in those early days. Tertullian's strong opposition to infant baptism must surely be considered strong evidence in support of the assertion that the administration of this sacrament to infants must have been common in his day. Origin, definitely states that infant baptism is a usage derived from the apostles. And Cyprian maintained that infants must be baptized as early as possible. In our series of articles on this subject we also noted that practically all the various questions that are usually raised, even today, in connection with the sacrament of Baptism were already under discussion in that early period. And we concluded our series by calling attention to the heretics who opposed any form of baptism even as some do today.

EARLY VIEWS ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

A brief resume of its Old Testament symbol, the Passover.

The Old Testament Passover, to be rightly understood in its true relation to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as observed in the New Dispensation, must be viewed, not only as a feast which was annually observed in the land of Canaan, but as it was Divinely instituted in the land of Egypt. The relation between the Lord's Supper and the cross of Calvary is the same as that which existed between the Passover as observed in the land Canaan and the feast as instituted of God through Moses at the time of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt.

The historical occasion for the institution of the Passover in Egypt is well-known. Israel had been sorely afflicted in that house of bondage. There the people of the Lord had become a mighty people. The king of Egypt (the mighty world power at that time) resolved upon a policy of oppression and affliction to curb this growth of the nation and reduce its threat to him and his mighty kingdom. That oppression had been long and grievous. However, Israel's deliverance was now at hand. Until now the Lord had poured out the vials of His wrath upon wicked Egypt which had held His people captive unlawfully (Israel had been invited to Egypt to sojourn there as a guest, and had been treated as a slave). Terribly the Lord had plagued the nation with nine mighty strokes in three waves of three waves each. The last plague is now about to be inflicted. God shall smite all the firstborn of the land, of man and beast. That plague, destroying Egypt's firstborn, will be Israel's deliverance, for Pharaoh will drive them out of the land, that all may know that the Lord is God and He alone. However, before the angel of the Lord goes forth upon his mission of death and destruction, Moses receives of the Lord the institution of the Old Testament Passover, according to Exodus 12:1-14. Israel alone receives this revelation from Jehovah concerning the smiting of the firstborn and the institution of the Passover. This information is withheld from Egypt. The destruction of the firstborn is visited upon the house of bondage without warning. Egypt, the mighty and wicked worldpower, is not given a "chance."

With respect to the Passover as instituted in the land of Egypt we may say that it consisted chiefly of two elements. The first element or feature of this feast was that it consisted of an offer of atonement. The lamb, of course, constituted the heart of the Old Testament feast. This lamb, taken either from the sheep or the goats, must be without spot, might be eight days younger than one year but not one day older. Each family of Israel must procure such a lamb, slay it in the evening of the fourteenth day of the seventh month (the month, Abib, which would henceforth be the first month in Israel's "holy year"), and strike its blood upon the two sideposts and the upper doorpost of the house wherein it should

be eaten. The angel of the Lord, seeing the blood upon the doorposts, would pass on or over (hence the name: Passover) the houses where the Israelites were because of the blood of the lamb. The second element or feature of this feast was the eating of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. We need not, of course, discuss this now in detail. The flesh of the lamb must be roasted with fire, without coming into contact with the fire, his head with his legs, and with the inwards — hence, the entire lamb. It might not be eaten raw, neither sodden with water. This must be accompanied with the eating of unleavened bread and bitter herbs; nothing may remain until the morning; whatever is left must be burned. Finally, the Israelites must eat of the lamb with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, staves in their hands, and in all haste. Such is the feast of the Passover as instituted in the land of Egypt. It was the feast of Israel's deliverance. We have already observed that it consisted chiefly of two parts or elements. In that night the Lord would smite all the firstborn of the land of Egypt and pour out the vials of His wrath and judgment upon that sorely stricken and utterly wicked land. Israel, however, would escape this wrath of the living God, not, of course, because it was in any sense of the word better than the Egyptians, but only because of the blood of the lamb upon their doorposts. This, we understand, was a mighty type of the deliverance of the elect Church of God from the wrath of the Lord through and only because of the blood of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. However, this Egyptian Passover was also a feast. Israel was not merely delivered from the wrath of God because of the blood of the lamb; they also ate of the lamb. Israel's deliverance does not merely consist of escaping the judgment of God but it consists, positively, also in this that we eat and drink of the same Lamb of God. Christ becomes our food and drink, our life eternal in covenant fellowship and communion with the Lord God of our salvation. We are not merely saved from sin and darkness and death but also translated into the blessed Kingdom of God's dear Son and everlasting life. The deliverance of the Church of God is not merely negative but also and emphatically positive. Of our deliverance from sin and judgment and our entrance into living fellowship and communion with the Lord the Old Testament Passover in the land of Egypt is a mighty type and symbol.

H.V.



The Hope Protestant Reformed School Society is in need of a fourth teacher for the 1954-'55 school year. Please write Mr. John Kalsbeek, 4132 Hall St., S. W., R. 5, Grand Rapids, Mich. or call AR 6-7586 to arrange for an interview.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 7 (continued)

Most beautifully do the *Canons* make mention of the Christ in this connection. He is "from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation." And God has chosen His people unto "redemption in Christ." And hence, "this elect number . . . God hath decreed to give to Christ." Our election is therefore not to be separated from the election of Christ. He has been from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect. The relation of Christ and the elect is that of Head and body, both in the legal and in the organic sense of the term. Appointed He is to represent them before the bar of God's justice, so that legally they stand or fall with Him. Their righteousness can be only in Him. And appointed He is also to be their Head in the organic sense of the word, so that they are members of one body, all deriving their life and glory from their Head. He is the Head; they are the members who can have no life in separation from the Head. He is the vine; they are the branches. As their Head, He is the Mediator, Who must redeem and deliver them out of sin and death, accomplishing our reconciliation to God. And therefore He is also called "the foundation of salvation." Notice, that the *Canons* refer here to salvation, not to election itself. The ground of our *election* is God's good pleasure. But the sole foundation of our *salvation* is Christ Jesus our Lord. God did not choose us because of Christ and His redeeming work. But God chose us to be redeemed on the basis of Christ's work.

In passing we may make two remarks. In the first place, it is indeed difficult, even in view of the terminology which the *Canons* employ, to harmonize the infralapsarian conception of the position of Christ in the decree of God with the presentation of the Scriptures. The *Canons* themselves do not very clearly delineate this position of Christ at this point. But the traditional infralapsarian view places the election of Christ as Mediator, in order to realize the redemption of the elect, after the decree of election and reprobation. And while the *Canons* place the decree of election after the decree of the fall, the language of Article 7 does not necessarily depict the election of the Mediator as following the election of the saints. Now certainly, it is difficult to conceive of the election of the Head as logically following the election of the body. And it is also difficult to conceive of God decreeing to give the elect to Christ logically before the election of Christ as Head and Mediator. And especially if we view the question of the order of God's

decrees as not merely a question of logic, — which is after all rather academic, — but as a question of what is means, and what is purpose in the counsel of God, it becomes more difficult to conceive of the election of Christ as following the election of the church. And especially from this latter point of view, it can scarcely be denied, in the light of Scripture, that Christ, as the Head of the elect, stands not last, but first, in God's decrees.

A second remark which must be made in connection with the election of Christ is that it is at this point that the traditional view of the covenant of redemption, or the counsel of peace, (*raad des vredes*), is introduced by many Reformed theologians, a view which, happily, has not found its way into the official literature of our Reformed churches. This so-called covenant of redemption is supposed to be an agreement, or pact, or covenant, between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity (sometimes the Third Person is also introduced), with mutual stipulations and conditions, according to which the Father demanded of the Son all that which was necessary to acquire eternal salvation for the elect, promised Him the reward of His Mediator's glory, and in which the Son agreed to comply with the Father's demand, in turn demanding the fulfillment of the promises made, for the benefit of both parties. Now it is not our intention to enter into a detailed criticism of this view. We merely wish to point out the fact that while theologians may present the idea, and undoubtedly introduce a goodly element of philosophy when they do so, their presentation is not at all confessionally binding in the Reformed churches. And in the second place, we venture the suggestion that if in the light of Scripture we are to speak of a "counsel of peace," it would be much more correct to conceive of it as the eternal decree of God to reveal His own Triune covenant life in the highest possible sense of the word in the establishment and realization of a covenant outside of Himself with the creature, in the way of sin and grace, of death and redemption, to the glory of His holy name. This of course, places the counsel of peace in a much different light, and presents it as the all-dominating element in God's eternal good pleasure.

The foregoing in passing.

Returning now to the presentation of Article 7, we must now notice that the fathers do not at all conceive of election as a thing by itself, nor as including merely the final salvation; but they emphasize that the decree of election includes the whole of our salvation. For the article states: "This elect number . . . God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally, to glorify them . . ." It is not necessary at this point to discuss each one of the elements mentioned here, since they will arise in a different connection in the following chapters of the *Canons*. Besides, it would possibly becloud the main

point to discuss them here. Now let us briefly notice that the *Canons* here teach: 1) That God's election includes all of our salvation. We are given for the purpose of being saved by Him, which in this connection refers to the work of Christ for us. We are given to Christ to be called into His fellowship effectually. Further, this election includes the gift of faith, justification, sanctification. Significantly, it includes the powerful preservation of the elect. And finally, it includes our glorification. 2) That the various elements here mentioned are part of *one process*. In relation to the last element mentioned, our glorification, therefore, they stand in the position of *means and end*. All this is of the utmost significance. In fact, this may be called the crucial point of the *Canons* in opposition to the Arminians. For if it be maintained that the whole of our salvation is included, and therefore in reality finished, in the counsel of God, then all Arminianism is forever destroyed. Then there is no possibility of introducing a doubtful, conditional element in the salvation of the elect anywhere along the line.

It is undoubtedly for that reason that when the fathers came to quoting proof texts for this article, they chose two passages which emphasize that very thought. To be sure, these passages also provide Scriptural proof for other thoughts in this article. But on the foreground in both the passage from Ephesians 1 and that from Romans 8 is the pertinent fact that God did not choose His people merely unto the end of glory, in order then to suspend both the election and the glory on the condition of faith and repentance. On the contrary, both these passages teach that the decree of eternal election includes the means and the way as well as the end. God has chosen us "in order that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." And in Romans 8:30 the whole process is literally included in the decree of predestination. For the text certainly does not teach that whom God chose in eternity He calls, justifies, and glorifies in time. But it places the calling, justification, and glorification of His people in as complete a state of realization as the predestination. Otherwise the language of the text would have to be changed completely. But now it teaches that just as God did predestinate, so He also *did* call, *did* justify, and *did* glorify. The latter, therefore, are as eternal, as sovereign, as complete, and as certain as the former.

One more element there remains in this article, which we have reserved to the end, even though it appears in the very first part. We refer to the teaching of the *Canons* that God chose "a certain number of persons." In the original this is even stronger, and might well be translated: "a certain definite number of persons." Election is therefore definite. It concerns *persons*. And the persons and the number of persons are both eternally fixed. This does not mean, of course, that our fathers conceived of the elect as a mere multitude, a crowd of saints. This is very evident from the Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 54, where they speak of an elect *church*. The elect, therefore, form one organic whole, the one church,

the one body of Christ, in which body each elect saint occupies his own appointed position as a member. But over against the Arminians, who by their corrupt conditional view made the election of God indefinite, and made it possible that the number of the elect could be increased or diminished, according as the condition of faith was fulfilled or not fulfilled, it was necessary to emphasize this other point, that election is personal, and that the number of the elect is fixed eternally and sovereignly.

Lastly, we may briefly notice that the fathers are thoroughly theocentric in their view: all centers around the glory of God. Not the salvation of the elect is ultimately the purpose of God. But the demonstration of His mercy, and the praise of the riches of His glorious grace is the purpose of the sovereign God of our salvation. And indeed, beholding the marvellous works of our God, how fitting it is that the redeemed elect should forever praise the riches of such a grace. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord! H.C.H.



Dear Editor of the Standard Bearer:

In the March 15, 1954 issue of the *Standard Bearer* I read a paragraph, which is hardly factual and to the point. It reads as follows: "After I read this document to the Classis, it became plain that I was not guilty of anything worthy of Classical censure. And the motion to censure the Rev. Ophoff and myself was put to a vote and failed to carry."

It is especially to the last sentence that I take exception. The reason?

In the first place because you do not clearly state here Classis' own interpretation and explanation of the "censure" of you and Rev. Ophoff. You understood Classis to mean censure in the sense of, to quote Classis, "the accepted sense of the word as outlined in the Art. 71-80 of the D. K. O." This is also evidently the meaning of "censure" in the paragraph I here refer to in your Article in the *Standard Bearer*. However, Classis in their "censure" had in mind and so expressed in clear and unmistakable language that "Classis knows and hereby expresses that the decision meant no more than to express that the pertinent remarks were premature and therefore out of order", Art. 140, Acts of Classis East, April 16, 1953.

The second inaccuracy is that it is stated, that a motion to censure you and the Rev. Ophoff was put to a vote and failed to carry. The truth of the matter is that you received Classis' Committee, and that in the light of Classis' explanation, as given above, you could again take your place and function in your advisory capacity. For completeness it must be added, that, even so, you insisted that you had said nothing prematurely or out of order. Be this as it may, Classis did not vote on this matter again. No vote was taken on the matter of "censure in the accepted sense."

I feel that the record ought to be kept straight. I therefore kindly request that you publish this correction in the *Standard Bearer*.

Your brother in the Lord,

Geo. G. Lubbers.

DECENCY and ORDER

Dismissal of Ministers

We are still busy with the eleventh article of the church order. Beside speaking of the obligation of the consistory to properly support the minister of the congregation so that "he may be free from all worldly cares and avocations while dispensing spiritual blessings," this article also speaks of dismissing ministers from the service of the church. Concerning this matter the article states: "And shall not dismiss them from service without the knowledge and approbation of the classis and of the delegates of the (particular) synod."

There are four distinct ways in which the tie between a pastor and the congregation he serves can be severed. The first of these is by the acceptance of a call to another field of labor. This is treated in the tenth article of the church order. The next is by emeritation which is to be considered in connection with the thirteenth article of the church order. Thirdly, under Articles 79 and 80 of the same order of the churches, a minister can be suspended and deposed from his office. The fourth way by which this bond can be broken is by dismissal from office which we are to treat in this present connection. Thus, positively expressed, the eleventh article may be said to teach: "The consistory shall dismiss the minister from the service of the church only with the knowledge and approbation of the classis and of the delegates of the (particular) synod."

The correlative part of this rule which is found in the preceeding article ought to be remembered in order to understand the thrust of this matter. There it was stated that a minister may not leave his congregation without the consent of the consistory. As we wrote before, this ruling grew out of a situation where ministers, growing tired of their labors in a particular place, would sometimes abandon the congregation without the consent of the consistory or without notifying the classis. This was not good decorum. To prevent this indecency the rule was formulated.

There is, however, also another side to this. It is equally wrong and indecent for the consistory or the congregation to abandon its minister. Sometimes this too was done. The congregation would simply refuse to be shepherded and go elsewhere. Consequently his support was not provided either and the minister so treated was left in a lurch. This is unbecoming to christian conduct and even as a minister is obliged to remain with a congregation until the bond of union is severed in the proper ecclesiastical way, so the congregation is bound to maintain and support the minister also. And that support includes not only providing material necessities but also supporting him in his labors and ministry until he has, if that becomes necessary, been dismissed in the proper way.

We must now clearly distinguish between "dismissing a minister" and "suspending or deposing one." These are by

no means identical. The dismissed minister may and frequently does remain in good standing in the churches and is eligible to receive a call from another congregation. This is not so with one who is suspended from office under Art. 79. Such a one is guilty of a gross sin. He is to be disciplined and, unless there are evidences of repentance, will ultimately be excommunicated . . . (unless he severs himself from the church making this impossible). When this difference is understood it will be clearly seen that certain recent happenings in several of our churches have not been violations of the rule of Article 11. Ministers were not dismissed (nor suspended and deposed) but rather several of them forsook the Protestant Reformed Church which they once served. This will become evident to anyone who will review the matter in the light of the entire history. We wish to cite here only a few pertinent facts in connection with this history as we know that there are still some who are rather confused and these may still be helped to see things right. The fact is that when Rev. De Wolf was suspended by his consistory (Art. 79) upon the advice of the classis, he refused to submit to that suspension as he had promised upon his ordination. This insubordinate action caused schism. By it he separated himself from the First Protestant Reformed Church. And this action of his cannot be justified, as has been attempted, by claiming that the decisions were illegally made or enforced under intimidation, etc. which is, of course, not at all true. But had Rev. De Wolf submitted and properly made his appeal these matters could have been decided later in their proper place. This, however, he did not do but by his act of separation he made future appeal impossible. Not recognizing the authority of the church, he separated himself from her and precluded further treatment of his case. Now when later other ministers and groups recognize this schismatic faction and ally themselves with it, it ought to be clear that they too, by such action, separate themselves from the Protestant Reformed Churches. They, too, have gone out from us. In several places the Protestant Reformed Church refused to be destroyed by the action and conduct of these separatists. Instead, it continues, reduced in numerical strength, but strong in the faith. In such instances, it is not necessary that the church either dismisses or suspends the minister for they, the latter, by their separatistic action, make such a course impossible.

To make the point still more clear let us use an illustration. I am an American citizen. Suppose that I defy the laws of this nation and, consequently, am found guilty by the courts which decide that I am to be deported to Russia and also am to be deprived of my citizenship in this land. At the same time let us suppose that there are fifty others who refuse to recognize this decision of the court and decide to go to Russia with me. Isn't it crystal clear that those who thus hold their government in contempt and recognize me to the extent of supporting and going along with me in my deportation will likewise be deprived of their American citizenship? They cut themselves off from this country by such action.

The parallel between this hypothetical case and the history of our churches in the past year ought to be obvious to all.

To come back once more to the matter of dismissing a minister we must add that this must be done only when there is sound and valid reason. Just because a congregation may grow tired of a certain minister is no justifiable reason for dismissal. Nor may this article be used as an easy exodus for certain troubles or difficulties which may arise in a congregation and in which the minister unhappily becomes involved. We ought rather to consider the provision which this article makes for dismissing ministers as one that fits and must be applied to certain unusual, extra-ordinary and abnormal cases. It belongs to the exception. Such cases can easily be visualized. For instance, we might think of a situation where a minister's character and mode of working simply does not fit a particular congregation whereas in another place he might be able to labor with much fruit. Or, we might think of a situation where a consistory does not co-operate with the minister so that all his labors become virtually impossible. Then again, think of the possible situation where a minister, for reasons of health, finds it impossible to labor in a certain place but if removed to another climate might be able to perform ministerial labor most efficiently. In such instances and in the interests of the church it might be better that one is dismissed and made free to be called elsewhere.

Such dismissal cannot be made without the "knowledge and approbation of the classis and of the delegates of the (particular) synod." Originally this article contained a clause which read: "Classis decides whether or no the minister shall be removed." This was later elided because it was felt that it ascribed a power to the classis which it did not rightly possess. Nevertheless, the approbation of such dismissals must be procured from the classis. It is readily understood why this is necessary. When a situation arises where action of this nature is deemed necessary, the feelings of those directly involved are often such that it becomes practically impossible for them to judge objectively and fairly. There are often prejudices which become the occasion of misjudgment and abuse. In the interests of justice and fair play, therefore, it is best to procure the advice of a neutral party. Perhaps there is no need for dismissal at all and the classis then can serve as an intermediary to find a suitable solution to the difficulties. Furthermore, if it is a case that requires dismissal, the classis also certainly has an interest in the matter for even as no minister is permitted to enter upon the office without having been examined and approved by the classis, even so he should not be dismissed from the office without their approbation. Indirectly the matter concerns all the churches as he is a potential minister for any one of them.

What then is the status of the minister that has been dismissed from service. He is not deposed for then he would be barred from the possibility of serving another church. Neither is he made emeritus for then he would receive his

support from the churches for the remainder of his days. Neither case applies. Both are quite different from the case of dismissal. The dismissed is made eligible to receive a call in any of the churches and for a certain reasonable period of time he is to be supported by the church that dismisses him. If, after that time, he does not receive a call he is bound to return to some other pursuit of life and retains henceforth no official ministerial status in the churches at all. The cases where this has occurred are comparatively few and we cite again that the provisions of this part of the article cover circumstances that are quite out of the ordinary and may well be classified as abnormal. And this the congregation may well bear in mind that she may never think that Art. 11 is designed as an easy way to oust her minister! G.v.d.B.

ALL AROUND US

Reply to Rev. Hofman and Mr. Byker.

My remarks under this caption are a continuation of what I wrote in the last issue of the Standard Bearer relative to an editorial of the Rev. W. Hofman in Concordia of March 11th, and an article appearing in the same issue by a Mr. Byker of Hudsonville. These brethren consumed most of the space in that issue criticizing the under-signed for what he wrote in the Standard Bearer of February 15th concerning Dr. Daane's "hitting the nail on the head" when he wrote in the Reformed Journal of January that "not Hoeksema, but Kok changed."

Since many readers of the Standard Bearer no longer read Concordia, I will quote the rest of Hofman's editorial, and then offer my comment. Mr. Byker will consider my comment also an answer to him, since he wrote virtually the same thing as Hofman; and, as I suggested last time, it is my judgment that Hofman took his cue from Byker and should have given him the "honor" when he wrote his editorial. At any rate, Rev. Hofman continues as follows:

"Now, if all this is true, (namely, that Schipper is correct when he says — Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head — and has correctly evaluated Rev. Kok's position — M.S.) then Dr. Daane must also be a good judge of what the Rev. H. Hoeksema and his followers believe and teach. Schipper should also maintain that Dr. Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head in his judgment of Rev. Hoeksema. And Schipper should have honored and quoted Dr. Daane in that too. This is what Dr. Daane wrote, in that same article, about the Rev. H. Hoeksema and his position:

'But the difficulty is even more troublesome. Since the preacher cannot discriminate between the elect and the reprobate, what can the preacher of the gospel say to any individual man? Moreover, since he does not know whether the individual hearer is elect or reprobate, he cannot say anything at all. The gospel loses its addressability to the

individual man. On Hoeksema's basis the Gospel cannot be preached.'

"Although Dr. Daane tries to maintain that Rev. Hoeksema has not changed he must admit change in Rev. Hoeksema. This is evident in several instances: (here Hofman quotes Daane again — M.S.) 'The manner in which Hoeksema once upon a time (Notice implication of change. W.H.) tried to solve this problem was indicated by the Rev. B. Kok in his letter to the Reformed Journal (Nov. issue). Rev. Kok quoted the following from Hoeksema's Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper, 'He (Calvin) affirms here, what we have always taught, as we have written often in the past, that, in as far as the message is general and comes to all, it is *conditional*. The offer is eternal life. The condition limiting this offer is: turn from your wicked ways. This condition makes the contents of the general message particular. (p. 32)' (Daane continues — M.S.) 'Here we see that Hoeksema uses the *conditional* to pare down and limit the general to the particular. Is this a solution to Hoeksema's problem? Obviously it is not. It is a mere verbalism.'

"A bit later Dr. Daane states: 'Hoeksema's employment of the idea of the conditional does not solve his problem.' And again: 'To be sure he (Hoeksema) does not deny that the term *condition* can be properly used.' In all these instances there is implied change since Rev. Hoeksema would no longer admit this.

"But Dr. Daane's main criticism and characterization of Hoeksema's position is found at the close of his article where Daane writes as follows:

'But if Rev. Kok and his group would return to Hoeksema, then they must accept the great weakness of Hoeksema's position, namely, his conception of the gospel Hoeksema's gospel cannot be preached. It has lost its addressability. It has nothing to say to the *particular* man. At best it can be merely announced to a generality of men. Hoeksema must know the *identity* of the particular man, and the particular man must be identified as elect before the gospel can be addressed to him. Hoeksema's gospel can only be addressed to the Church, and within the Church. This accounts on the one hand for the less than enthusiastic mission impulse in the Protestant Reformed Churches. His theology also accounts for and supports the kind of Ethics which contends that God is not for the world, that the Church is not for the world, a kind of Ethics which demands that the neighbor be identified as regenerate or non-regenerate, Christian brother or non-Christian brother before the Christian dispenses his love — a matter which I shall treat in a following issue of this Journal.'

"And finally Dr. Daane writes: 'By his denial of Point I, he (Hoeksema) has separated the general message from the particular hearer, and is unable to establish a connection between them. In earlier years, as Rev. Kok points out, he attempted to do so by means of the term *conditional*! Today he sees that Protestant Reformed theology cannot accept such a solution. This leaves his problem unsolved, and

makes it clear that Hoeksema's conception of the gospel is a gospel deprived of its addressability to the particular man — and every man is a particular man! And what ever else the gospel may be, we know from the command of Jesus that it is something that can be addressed to every creature. Where this addressability to every man is lost, the gospel of Jesus has been lost.'

"Now if Dr. Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head in the one instance, doesn't it follow that he has also done so in the other? Or if he is incorrect in his judgment in the one case, isn't it just possible that this is also so in the other? How about it Rev. Schipper?"

I offer the following comment and reply:

1. I repeat what I wrote the last time, namely, "that my critics should have noted the first two paragraphs of my article, then they would have understood why I did not comment on Dr. Daane's criticism of our Protestant Reformed position, and also why I used Daane's article to reflect on the position of Rev. Kok." I had no intention in that article of saying anything about Daane's misconception of the Protestant Reformed position, nor would I do this in any future article until Dr. Daane had first talked himself out. My only intention was to show agreement with Daane that those who hold to the conditional doctrine, if they are consistent, should move back to the Christian Reformed Church, and that Rev. Kok has changed, not Rev. Hoeksema. Daane was finished with his answer to Rev. Kok, and I agreed with Daane. I say again, "he hit the nail squarely on the head."

2. It is most interesting to observe how Rev. Hofman, and others with him, will quote another. When I read his editorial, I referred to the Reformed Journal from which he quoted the Rev. Daane. I put squares around Hofman's quotes and they really made quite a picture. I realize, of course, that when one refers to an article of another, and especially one as long as Daane's, he cannot quote everything the writer says, nor does he need to. But it seems to me that there are certain laws of ethics one ought to stick to when he quotes another, and the fundamental law is not to elide from the quotation what one feels will hurt his own cause. Hofman puts three dots in his quotation to show that he elided something, but notice what he left out. I refer to his quotation of Daane above which begins with "But if Rev. Kok and his group would return to Hoeksema, then they must accept the great weakness of Hoeksema's position, namely, his conception of the gospel." Then follows the three dots showing the elision. Hofman left the following out: "a weakness which Kok's conditional theology is trying to overcome." Now I know Rev. Hofman you didn't like what Daane wrote here, and you no doubt would like to have many believe that you disagree with it, but why not be ethical about it and let Daane say what he actually said. You surely cannot plead over-sight, for you indicated elision. Our readers would be very much interested to know why you omitted these few very telling words of Dr. Daane.

Again, Rev. Hofman, while you were quoting anyway,

and so sorely needed material to fill your editorial space, why didn't you also quote the following from Daane's pen? "Rev. Kok believes that Hoeksema's rejection of conditions is a departure from Protestant Reformed theology as Hoeksema himself taught it formerly. Consequently Rev. Kok thinks I am mistaken when I declare that those in the Protestant Reformed Churches who now believe in conditional theology have taken a step toward the Christian Reformed Church.

"In both instances I think Rev. Kok mistaken. *Hoeksema has not changed his theology, except in the sense that he has purified it.* (I underscore.—M.S.) Consistency demands that Protestant Reformed theology repudiate conditions. This theology can retain conditions in the abstract, but it cannot retain the conditional as a means of interpreting and determining gospel address. Protestant Reformed theology has always denied that gospel preaching is of the nature of an "offer." It must therefore deny that gospel preaching is of a conditional nature. *It is not Hoeksema, but Kok who has departed from the genius of Protestant Reformed theology.*" (Italics — M.S.)

Rev. Hofman, you say Hoeksema has changed, and even Dr. Daane implies that he did? I ask you to show from the above quotation that Daane thinks Hoeksema changed his theology. And even if Daane thought he did, you know better that he did not, if you ever seriously studied Hoeksema's dogmatics. It is pure nonsense that Hoeksema changed, and you know it. Why then do you continue to try to camouflage the business with your readers?

3. Finally, I wish to reply to the last paragraph of Hofman's editorial. He writes: "Now if Dr. Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head in the one instance, doesn't it follow that he has also done so in the other? Or if he is incorrect in his judgment in the one case, isn't it just possible that this is also so in the other? How about it Rev. Schipper?

I consider this a cute piece of sophistry. In brief, that's my answer. Hofman isn't interested really in my answer at all. He is bent on warping the minds of his readers, trying to make them believe what Mr. Byker literally says: that Schipper doesn't have the intelligence of a fifth grader.

What a jam that Rev. Schipper got himself into anyway! He simply writes without thinking. And, lo, he talked himself into saying something he will now have to retract. Surely Schipper will have to admit that Dr. Daane doesn't know much about Protestant Reformed theology. He certainly cannot go along with Daane when the latter writes that the Protestant Reformed Churches cannot preach the gospel to every man. Schipper will surely never admit that there are weaknesses in the Protestant Reformed theology. And if he will admit that Daane is all wrong here, won't Schipper also have to admit that Daane may be wrong when he agrees with Daane that the latter has correctly understood the conditional doctrine of Rev. Kok, et al, as being on a par with the common grace theology of the Christian Reformed Churches?

I call this fallacious logic, plain sophistry. Of course, I

do not believe that Daane understands, nor does he present correctly our Protestant Reformed position. I will try to show this in another article. But does this mean that Daane is therefore unable to know what conditional theology is, and that those who hold to this conditional theology, being consistent, should also embrace the doctrine of the Three Points of 1924? I think not. I claim that Daane understands perfectly his own doctrines as well as the conception of those who hold to the conditional doctrine, and that these two agree perfectly. In respect to the latter, I maintain that Daane has hit the nail squarely on the head when he told the conditional advocates to return to the Christian Reformed Church. And if Hofman and Mr. Byker think that I do not understand Dr. Daane, let them ask Daane to explain his own writing. M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Editor of the Standard Bearer:—

May I have a little space in the S. B., the paper which is still the leading magazine in the Reformed Church world, although Rev. De Boer is of the opinion that it is not worthwhile to read this magazine anymore, and it is no longer worthy of publication. That is what De Boer tells his readers in the Reformed Guardian of March 10 in his "A Moral Issue."

It is De Boer's deep conviction and considered opinion that the trouble we have in our churches is the fault of Rev. H. Hoeksema. This type of leadership is domineering and hierarchical, and as such contrary to the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Proof please!

Let me put you at ease Reverend: In our Protestant Reformed Churches at present is peace and harmony among its members, and we fully agree with the leadership of the Rev. H. Hoeksema and I can inform you that in his speech and writing he is Reformed, and not selfwilled and schismatic, as you put it.

By implication De Boer puts Rev. Hoeksema in the class with Solomon who builded idol temples for his heathen wives in his old age. That means in this case that Rev. Hoeksema in his old age, after his sickness, when he became more or less feeble, he aims to lead the people of God in the wrong direction, away from God and His precepts. How dare you, De Boer, slander a minister of the gospel in a manner so hateful. Shame on you!

I surmise you don't know anymore what slander is. Slander, Reverend, is a false or malicious report, and false is untrue, dishonest, disloyal; and malicious is bearing ill-will or spite prompted by hatred.

Now, this you do not find in any of Rev. Hoeksema's writings. He never has any evil intention to hurt others, but always speaks the truth based on Scriptures or the Confessions and this is more than can be said of your writing, De Boer. It is full of slander from beginning to the end.

The Reverend notifies his readers that the present difficulty is not a question of serious doctrinal differences. The Rev. Hoeksema lies when he claims it is. Proof please!

The Rev. Hoeksema did point out time and again how serious it is, this error of a conditional gospel, but you and your supporters want to keep this adulterous baby, and it grows nicely and ere long it will be full grown. Beware!

O yes, De Boer still believes as he always did. He still believes in election, and also that God must work faith from beginning to the end, and that man can do nothing. He still believes in unconditional election, but he also believes in conditional election, for this is also in accordance with Scripture. So, De Boer has unconditional, conditional election, whatever this may be.

Now, Rev. De Boer, on the road to heaven through the midst of this world there are no conditions, for we must be saved by grace, and by grace only, and we can do nothing, nothing to inherit eternal life, and as soon as you put something between God and the cross, God will curse you for He is a jealous God. De Boer believes all this, every bit of it, but he also believes the statements of De Wolf in his sermons that: "God promises every one of you that if you believe, you shall be saved," and "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Now, De Boer, to my knowledge you can not believe both. The one excludes the other.

This was explained to you and your supporters again and again by H. Hoeksema in the S. B., but to no avail. You will not listen, for you made up your mind that Rev. Hoeksema is not trustworthy, and you do not listen to the co-editors in the S. B. either, for all of you are not Prot. Ref. anymore, and you hate that paper, and therefore you must repent of your evil way De Boer and not slander your former professor H. Hoeksema who still taught and preached the unconditional truth of God's sovereign mercy for His elect people, and I should know it, for all these years I was a member of Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Church, and of the present Prot. Ref. Church whose members meet in Christian High, and of which Rev. H. Hoeksema, and Rev. C. Hanko are pastors in good standing; and don't forget Rev. De Boer, you are not anymore a preacher of the gospel in any church, for in Edgerton Rev. Veldman is the God ordained servant in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

De Boer also finds fault with Rev. Hoeksema's leadership that a few years ago he made plain in the S. B. that Rev. Kok and Rev. De Jong misrepresented our Prot. Ref. truths in the Netherlands. How come De Boer, that at that time you didn't find fault? Shall I tell you Rev., you have changed?

Who told you De Boer that Rev. Hoeksema in the conditional debate led many of the lesser spirits in the wrong direction, because of his specious reasonings. I can inform you that those who serve with Rev. Hoeksema as pastors in the Prot. Ref. denomination always give a good account of

themselves, and we as common members have not as yet lost our thinking cap, and are not blinded by your unethical and slanderous reasoning in the Reformed Guardian.

And how dare you De Boer slander Rev. Hoeksema and the brethren, (who always aim at the well being of the Churches) that they trample under foot the Church Order, while you and your supporters have never done anything but that, also when you were suspended, and that in the legal way. Shame on you!

Who told you the lie that Rev. Hoeksema walked out in the final meeting of the Fuller Ave. Consistory prior to the split? The Consistory told you different through the S. B. Who gives you right, Reverend, to write that Rev. Hoeksema sowed the seeds of doubt and suspicion in your midst? Have you proof for it? You have not! Nothing but slander.

Who informed you that Rev. Hoeksema preached split when he ought to have called for unity? and that all happened after his illness that broke him in body and soul. I assure you, De Boer, that he is not broken in body and soul, but preached the full counsel of God with more power and vigor than even before, honor and praise to our covenant God. Yes, De Boer you should read and re-read the exposition of our Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 43, and take it to heart, for then you desire no more to falsify a man's word nor be a backbiter or slanderer which are the proper works of the devil.

Well, De Boer, will you be so kind if you write in the Reformed Guardian the next time, to tell your readers that De Wolf did not confess his sin, and that the consistory found him guilty of the heresies charged; and the Rev. Hoeksema does not claim that his opinion is the one and only one.

It also is De Boer's considered opinion that those who have forced the split, have done it to gain power for themselves. They do it not for the glory of God. Such leadership has not in mind the preservation of the truth, is the opinion of De Boer. It is impossible for him to believe it. This I believe Reverend, for in all of your writing in the Reformed Guardian you have not the mind of Christ, no love for the church it seems, but seek self and condemn others without proof.

Now, De Boer, you may see the marks of the false church coming to the fore, in the Prot. Ref. Churches, but that also is nothing but slander, the very works of the Father of Lies.

You know very well, Reverend that the Prot. Ref. truth, which is the truth of Scripture, is preached in Christian High every Sunday. Repent, and take heed to Paul's warning, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14).

I thank you, esteemed Editor, for the space granted me. May God spare you many years yet as Editor of the Standard Bearer, and as preacher of the full counsel of God. S.D.V.

OUR MEETING OF CLASSIS WEST

April 7, 1954

Classis West again met in Doon, Iowa. Again only four churches were represented at our gathering, Lynden informing us that it was impossible for them to attend.

After Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, president of the former classical meeting, opened the meeting in the proper manner, Rev. H. H. Kuiper functioned as chairman for the day. The undersigned served as clerk.

Sundry matters were treated, including subsidy requests, overtures to Synod, the election of the undersigned as stated clerk, the appointment of A. Haan as our classical treasurer, the election of synodical delegates, the approval of two letters to be sent to the consistories of Manhattan and Sioux Center, and the granting of classical appointments to Hull and Lynden provided that they do not receive supply from the East.

The reason why letters were drawn up to be sent to the churches of Manhattan and Sioux Center was because these consistories had not, to our knowledge, made a definite decision in the schismatic group of the Rev. De Wolf. The consistory of Doon had therefore invited also these churches to attend our classis last Jan. 21. Upon receipt of their answers to this invitation Classis appointed the Revs. H. Hoeksema and H. Veldman to compose an answer. These letters were adopted at our April meeting and will be sent to these churches respectively.

The classis adopted three instructions from Doon to be sent through to Synod. First, we decided to overture Synod to take necessary steps to change the classical boundaries so that the churches of Illinois and Wisconsin will be included in Classis West. Secondly, we will overture Synod to change Art. 2 in the constitutions of the Mission and Theological School Committees so that the membership of these committees can be chosen from the churches at large instead of only from the eastern segment of our denomination. Thirdly, Synod will be requested to re-edit our Church Order, to make it "up-to-date," and report to Synod of 1955.

Classis also decided to appoint a committee to draw up a constitution for the classical committee and ask Classis East to appoint a similar committee to work with us.

A decision was also made at our classical meeting to request Synod to compose a letter of admonition to all the erring churches who have recently left us and that Synod publish this letter in the form of a printed testimony.

Lynden requested permission to ask for a collection in our churches of Classis West toward the acquisition of their own church property, and that Classis West forward their petition to Synod to be sent to Classis East in order that they may address the same petition to the churches of Classis East. This request was granted.

We also decided that the classical committee be authorized to instruct the stated clerk to convoke a special meeting of Classis West, in case the need arise, provided that two consistories make this request.

The following delegates were elected to represent Classis West at Synod:

Ministers: H. C. Hoeksema, H. H. Kuiper, H. Veldman; Primi Elders: J. Blankespoor, J. Docter, E. Van Egdom, E. Van Maanen; Secundi Elders: T. Feenstra, H. Huisken, P. Jansma, N. Kooiker.

Although we were few in number and felt that this handicaps us greatly, we enjoyed this meeting of Classis West. And after we decided to meet in Doon, Sept. 8, 1954, the undersigned closed the gathering with prayer.

H.V.



BRIEF REPORT OF THE MEETING OF CLASSIS EAST

of April 7, 1954 at Grand Haven, Michigan

Classis was called to order by the chairman of the January Classis, Rev. J. Heys. After reading a passage from Scripture and the Classis sings a number from the Psalter, Rev. Heys leads in prayer.

The credentials show that all the churches of Classis East have sent delegates. All sent two except Randolph, which only sent one. There were thus twenty one delegates present. Those present at Classis for the first time sign the Formula of Subscription. Classis is declared constituted and Rev. G. Lanting presides according to alphabetical order. Rev. J. Heys takes the Minutes.

The Stated Clerk reads the Minutes of the January meeting of Classis, and the agenda for the meeting of Classis. He also reports on the correspondence which he has taken care of in name of Classis.

Three churches request Classical appointments for the next three months. They are Randolph, Holland and Second Church. The appointments suggested by the committee and decided by Classis are as follows:

Second Church: April 25—G. Lanting, May 2—G. Vos, May 9—C. Hanko, May 16 ———, May 23—J. Heys, May 30—H. Hoeksema, June 6 ———, June 13—R. Veldman, June 20—M. Schipper, June 27—G. Lubbers, July 4 ———, July 11—G. Vanden Berg.

Holland: April 25—J. Heys, May 2—H. Hoeksema, May 9—G. Lubbers, May 16 ———, May 23—M. Schipper, May 30—R. Veldman, June 6 ———, June 13—G. Vanden Berg, June 20—G. Lanting, June 27—H. Hoeksema, July 4—R. Veldman, July 11 ———.

Randolph: April 25—R. Veldman, May 2, M. Schipper, May 9—G. vanden Berg, May 16—G. Lanting, May 23 ———, May 30—G. Lubbers, June 6 ———, June 13—C. Hanko, June 20—J. Heys, June 27—G. Vos, July 4 ———, July 11—C. Hanko.

The Committee appointed on the last Classis to formulate a reply to the letters of the Revs. J. Blankespoor and B. Kok reports. These letters were approved without change and it was decided to send them to these brethren. Their sin was pointed out to them, all their arguments answered and refuted, and they were called to repentance in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Consistory asking advice in regard to the increase of censure for a brother and sister is advised to proceed with censure on the basis of the grounds offered.

The matter of protest of a Consistory in regard to the singing of Hymns on the radio program is tabled till the next Classis meeting since some of the Consistories were not yet ready with their reply and advice.

A letter is received from brother J. H. Kortering in which he advises classis as to his desire in regard to his protest against the "Consistory of Holland" as of January 1953. A similar letter was received from brother H. A. Van Putten. Having heard their desire Classis expresses the following:

1. That inasmuch as the Rev. B. Kok has become schismatic and has subsequently (to the launching of said protest) left the communion of the Protestant Reformed Churches, it serves no purpose to entertain any further action against him.

2. That Classis cannot accede to the request of the protestants for a "Memorie" in re the Kok heresy since:

- a. This is an overture which was not in the original protest.
- b. This new instruction was not brought to Classis through the Consistory of these brethren.

Two Consistories request financial subsidy. These requests were judged of in their respective merits and accordingly forwarded to Synod.

A missive from the former the Schismatic and, therefore, former Classis West, is received. A study Committee is appointed to draw up a concept answer and to submit the same to the July Classis for approval. The Committee is: Revs. M. Schipper, B. Vanden Berg and W. Terpstra.

Since Mr. Fred La Grange too has become schismatic Classis decides that he cannot any longer function as Classical Treasurer and so expresses in the Minutes, instructing the Stated Clerk to notify brother La Grange. Classis proceeds to vote a new Classical Treasurer. Mr. Arthur H. Haan, 3240 Breton Road, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, is chosen.

Church-visitors are voted. The Rev. G. Vos and J. Heys are chosen as visitors, while Rev. C. Hanko is voted general secundus.

Classis instructs the Stated Clerk to search the past Minutes for the decision anent the maximum amount to be paid as traveling expenses to Classis and also the amount to be paid elder delegates in need of their wages lost while at Classis.

It is decided to have the next meeting of Classis at Creston Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., and that the Stated Clerk thank the Grand Haven ladies for their catering services.

After singing Psalter No. 381, Classes closes with offering prayer, being led by Rev. G. Vos.

G. LUBBERS, Stated Clerk