

THE STANDARD

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXI

JANUARY 1, 1955 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 7

MEDITATION

A New Creature

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17

Yet a little while (I write this, of course, in December) and a Word of God will be fulfilled again, as it has countless times. I have reference to the Word of God in Genesis 1:14, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and *years*."

That Word of God went into effect every time the year ended and another year rolled around.

And so it will be in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty four.

At the time you read this it will have taken place already.

We are entertained(?) sometimes with cartoons that are supposed to be funny. Then we see a very, very old man who is supposed to be the old year, and a very little baby which is supposed to be the new year.

That is nonsense, of course.

There is nothing new in the new year. Things go on as usual. And if we accept the style of the Word of God, things are older, that is, uglier, more wicked in 1955 than they were in 1954. Confer Rev. 21:1-5, in connection with the text I wrote above these lines. The old things of II Cor. 5:17, are the same things alluded to in Rev. 21, and called there *former* things. They are the things of tears, death, sorrow, crying and pain.

But in our world of today the things do not become new: they become older, deader, more painful, pregnant with sorrow and sighing.

Also attend to this: the old things of 1954 will return with faster tempo in 1955, for we are approaching the end. The tempo is stepped up by Almighty God. From one fourth, to one third to a total degradation, dissolution, death.

. Things, the old things, develop faster and faster, and the end will be so ugly and horrible, that man shall sit in the

temple of God, proclaiming to all that he is God and that there is no other God beside Him. That is ugly, my brother.

When you take the word "new" upon your lips, you ought to be very careful, for it partakes of the miraculous.

There really should never have been any mention of "new" in this sorry earth.

At first, things were beautiful, but they were not new. That is, if you have accepted the style of the Bible. "New" in the Bible means the new heaven and the new earth. It means the new Mediator, Jesus Christ. He is new and what He brings us is new. It means the life of God's Covenant. It means the concept of the knowledge of God, and then a knowledge which shines away and above the knowledge of God such as Adam knew.

No, there should never have been any mention of "new" since we fell to the devil and made common cause with him. If God would deal with us according to our deserts, we would be old and become older unto all eternity. And I have reference to the oldness of hell and damnation. There things will be older and become increasingly older.

But of the life of God's Covenant it is said that their life is renewed as the eagle's.

No, we have not deserved to be made anew.

But such is the miraculous of the love of God.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ!

I tremble when I write that line. Suppose I were not in Christ! Then I would be old and could look forward to old age that would never stop. I would consume away as the moth. And of my unrest there would be no end.

But God remembered His Covenant.

In that Covenant He chose me. He foreknew me in the foreknowledge of His love, and predestinated me to be like unto the image of His Son. He included me. There is music in that 'inclusion.' There is a hymn, and I know that the poet meant it different than I do when I would sing his song: When the Lord said: "Whosoever!" He included me!

When God said: "Whosoever!" He had in mind the believers, the unspeakably happy people who have faith conferred on them. For the most rabid methodist must admit that faith is a matter of the gift of God. And God gives faith only to those that are the foreknown from before the foundation of the world. You can do nothing to that. You receive faith and become new, or you do not receive faith and you stay old and get to be older unto all eternity, in the old age of damnation.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ!

Do you not tremble when reading those words?

You should. For only God's people are in Christ. They were given to Him, and according to the Father He was responsible for them and for them only. And He took that responsibility upon Him when coming in the world (and before that) and quit Himself of that responsibility, and you all know that. He came and suffered and died on the accursed tree. The Old Age of Christ! The horrors of Jesus Christ. His terrible hell and damnation because of all the ugliness, filth and crookedness of the elect which were upon Him and which were visited upon His poor head. And He bore and suffered and died so that all this ugliness might be swallowed up in victory. And He did more than that, for He earned, merited for the elect the newness of the life of God's Covenant.

And if we are not included in the number of God's elect, we die in our sins. And grow older, and older, and uglier as the ages roll by, the endless ages of an eternity in hell.

Should we not tremble?

I think of a song that comes to me from the past: „Juicht, vromen! om uw lot!" Ask someone to translate it for you.

How wonderful it is to be in Christ!

Then every morning when you awake you are newer than the day before. Things, the new things of Jesus Christ are continually added unto you. At the moment of your regeneration He made you a new creature. And the very next day you became newer. At the inception of the new life you became the possessor of the new life in Christ. But the next day things were added. No matter what happened on that second day, it worked together for your good. And that goes on from day to day and from year to year. Your days are renewed, and your years are growing more glorious as you progress to heaven. Is there not a hymn that sings: One step nearer Home today than I have been before? Oh yes, that's true. Today I am nearer the sight of the new heaven and the new earth, the perfection of all things.

All things were old in my former estate, and as I am yet by nature. Old for they are and were ugly.

But the old things are passed away.

What does that mean?

That means this: in my deepest heart there dwelled the

enmity against God. There dwelled the monster that is the natural man. There in the depth of my heart I hated God and everything that smelled of God. There I hated all goodness and virtue. There was very old. I recognize all the evil of all the ages and of all the fathers and mothers that were before me.

Then God came through Jesus Christ.

And He killed that old sinner in me principally. Note that last word. In *principle* I died. And I can prove it. And you can prove it to yourself. There in the depth of my heart I hate sin today. And there I love all that is Divine and good.

I can prove that old things are passed away, for I long for God and love the brethren.

I can prove it, for I hate my own sin the most of all. I hate my life that is still sinful.

In principle I died unto sin, but sin did not die unto me. There are the movements of sin left in me, so that I produce some very ugly things, things that make me shudder and weep unto God. O God, be merciful to me, the sinner! But it all proves that I died principally. It is my victory over sin that I hate it. It is my victory over sin and the devil that I love God and the angels.

And God deals with me in Christ. And Christ paid for my sins. And Christ has promised me that He shall thoroughly cleanse me, a fact that is very necessary for I am very sinful. But I believe His promise.

Old things are passed away.

Behold!

It must be rather evident, because the Holy Ghost says at this juncture: just open your eyes! Behold! It is right before you. You cannot escape seeing it!

Behold! all things are become new!

Nineteen hundred fifty-four was new. But nineteen hundred fifty-five will be newer.

Everything in the whole universe is new with respect to me.

All things are my friends and they all unify to help me on my path to heaven and heaven's God.

The devil and the host of hell cannot harm me, for God said, He suffered no man to do them wrong.

Proof?

The seemingly darkest hour of the world's history was when the Chief Elect Jesus Christ hung in darkness on Calvary's cross. And the devils exulted.

But it was really the most beautiful hour mankind ever saw. The whole church triumphant will look upon that Calvary unto all eternity: the little Lamb standing as if slain in the midst of the throne.

There at Calvary the foundation of the new heavens and the new earth was laid. And that foundation is the precious blood of my Jesus.

I do not have to fear man, devil or anything on the way

to heaven, for Jesus said to my new heart: All things work together for your good, my child!

And who am I to doubt His word?

Yes, I may have to groan in 1955. I may have to suffer very much. But it all will be for my eternal welfare. Where did I read: "avert all evil or turn it to our profit"?

And so we enter 1955.

Do not fear, my brother.

All things are become new. And, according to God, they will become newer. You will go to the new Jerusalem, a new country, with a new song.

Sing a new song to Jehovah for the wonders He has wrought!

Treasure that new heart and that new spirit within you!
And worship God through Jesus, the new Mediator.

G. V.

Bound Volumes

Have party who wishes to purchase complete bound set of the Standard Bearer. Anyone wishing to sell same please contact Henry Veldhouse.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the South Holland Protestant Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to two of its members, John Haak, Jr. and Barney Haak, in the loss of their sister-in-law

CARRIE HAAK

age 42. May the God of all grace sustain and comfort them in their sorrow.

Wm. Tepstra, President
G. A. Van Baren, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of South Holland Protestant Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Michael Van Baren and John Van Baren, in the sudden death of Father and Brother

FRANK VAN BAREN

age 58. May the God of grace who performs all things according to his own good pleasure but also in unchanging love to his people comfort and sustain them in their sorrow.

Wm. Tepstra, President
G. A. Van Baren, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois hereby wishes to express sympathy to our fellow members, Mrs. Frank Van Baren, his wife, and Mrs. Michael Van Baren and to our President Mr. John Van Baren in the loss of

FRANK VAN BAREN

May the Lord comfort the bereaved with the assurance in their hearts that the Lord has taken him to His eternal Home.

Mr. P. A. Poortinga, Vice-President
Mrs. J. Van Baren, Secretary

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during July and August

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. G. Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above address and will be published at a fee of \$1.00 for each notice.

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

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan

CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

"A New Creature".....145
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

"Independentism"148
Hand-Shaking149
The Opinion150
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE DAY OF SHADOWS —

Exposition of Isaiah.....157
Rev. G. M. Ophoff

IN HIS FEAR —

"The Gate is Open".....159
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments.....161
Rev. H. Veldman

OUR IMMEDIATE MISSION FIELD.....163

Rev. C. Hanko

DECENCY AND ORDER —

"Comforting the Sick".....165
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

"What Really Happened In Our Churches".....167
Rev. M. Schipper

EDITORIALS

Independentism

It is rather striking that the attorney for the opposition in Superior Court attempted to show that the church government of the Protestant Reformed Churches, under the Church Order, was more or less congregational and independentistic (as the court records will, undoubtedly, show); in 1924 he knew very well that the Christian Reformed Church, under the same Church Order, adhered to the Presbyterian form of church government.

In proof of this, I quote from the court records of our case in 1925.

Dr. Beets was in the witness chair:

"So I assume that your connection with this church and the work you have performed as a writer of these books, and your connection with synod as stated clerk has given you occasion to become well informed on your church order and your church government?"

"I trust so, yes, sir.

"Well, do you know, Rev. Beets, what the duty of the synod is, or what is synod?"

"Synod is the broadest judicatory of our denomination.

"And what is next?"

"Below it?"

"Yes.

"It is the classis.

"And then below that is what?"

"Consistory.

"As I understand it, each church has its own consistory?"

"Yes.

"Each local body?"

"Yes.

"Each congregation, so to speak, and this I assume is the Presbyterian form of government and so conceded to be, is that correct?"

"Yes, except Presbyterians speak of session where we speak of consistory.

"Just, simply different names but representing substantially the same bodies?"

"Yes, sir.

"In other words, it is a representative form of government in your church as distinguished from the congregational plan; is that right?"

"Yes, sir, we have the Presbyterian form of church government.

"There is a difference between that and the congregational form of government?"

"Indeed, yes, sir.

"Just briefly what is the difference?"

"Well, I can best illustrate the difference between the denomination of the presbyterian faith and order and the congregational one—

"I mean now just with reference to its government.

Yes, well, I would say, I will illustrate it by saying that the congregational form of government reminds of the form of the confederacy of our thirteen original colonies. The presbyterian form of government reminds of the way our present federal republic is constituted.

"Well, isn't this true that in the congregational form of government the real authority rests in the congregation itself; its real governing body is the congregation?"

"Yes, sir.

"And in the presbyterian form of government it is representative?"

"Yes, sir.

"In these various bodies that you have named.

"Yes, sir."

Thus far the quotation.

When the records are published in full, as they, undoubtedly, will, they will reveal that there is considerable difference between the attorney's conception of Reformed Church government in 1925 and in 1954.

Both attorneys wanted to prove from the Articles of Association that we did not stand on the basis of the presbyterian form of church government. From one of them I quote as follows:

"May I make one observation? They have been talking here in this case about Presbyterian form. That has been Mr. Tubbs' questions to various witnesses. That also has been announced here in various ways about Presbyterian form. Now it is very important to show what that Presbyterian form is, and how this one differs from it, and that is very, very clearly shown in those articles. I think that is very important."

The other attorney continued to question me on the question of the advisory or judicatory power of classis and synod, and tried to make me admit that, in our church government, the later bodies have no authority whatsoever, just because I insisted that no classis has direct authority over the consistory to suspend or depose them from office. This became so evident that once, in cross examination, we had the following dialogue:

"Mr. Linsey, you will never make me admit that we have the congregational form of government. You might just as well quit.

"Who is asking you to?"

"You do."

This Mr. Linsey did not deny. He simply continued with another question.

In court, also my history of the Protestant Reformed Churches was quoted rather extensively to prove that we always denied that classis or synod have any authority or jurisdiction whatsoever, and that, therefore, we really adhere to the congregational form of government. But, of course, the quotations were, as usual, partial and therefore false. What we maintained and still maintain is that synod and classis certainly do not have the same jurisdiction over

the consistory as the consistory has over the congregation, and that they can never depose local officebearers. Synod and classis has authority over all matters that are plainly denoted as such in the Church Order, and that does not include the deposition of officebearers except in some very special cases.

That, in our history of the Protestant Reformed Churches, we do not deny all jurisdiction to the broader gatherings, is very evident from the "History" itself.

When the classis (Grand Rapids East) demanded of the consistory that they place their pastor before the question whether he fully agreed with the Three Points adopted by the synod of 1924, they refused, not on the ground that classis had no authority *per se* to make such a demand but on the ground that synod had already decided finally on the matter, that this very question whether to place the pastor of Eastern Ave. before such a demand was before synod as a motion, but that this broadest gathering had rejected it; and that they even had not further moved to make such a demand after a protest had been delivered on the floor of the synod in which it was plainly stated that he did not agree with the Three Points.

In other words, the consistory of Eastern Ave. at the time recognized that the jurisdiction of the synod was above that of the classis and that, therefore, classis went beyond its proper jurisdiction.

But this was, of course, not the end.

The classis once more decided to place the consistory of Eastern Ave. virtually before the same demand.

And again, the consistory did not refuse on the ground that classis had no jurisdiction whatsoever, but on the ground that this matter was not and could not possibly be legally before classis and that classis, in order to pursue the legal way in this matter, would have to send, in the proper way, a new overture to synod and appeal to that body. It proved, in a long document, that the whole matter, including the question of discipline, was before synod, that this body had even considered the question with which classis Grand Rapids East now approached the consistory of Eastern Ave. but had never acted upon it.

Hence, again, the consistory claimed, not that the classis never had any jurisdiction, but that the jurisdiction of the synod was above that of the classis.

And now I quote literally to refute the contention of the opposition that we always claimed that synod and classis have no authority:

"Consistory does not question that Synod possesses the ultimate *authority* (Italics mine) to interpret our Confessional standards. But neither does the Consistory want Classis to assume a position which indicate a denial of the fact, that Synod also possesses ultimate *authority* (Italics mine) in matters pertaining to case of discipline. And Consistory maintains that Classis has *no authority* (Italics mine) to reopen a case against the pastor, Reverend H. Hoeksema, against whom so many attacks were launched and so

many complaints lodged and protests written, and who left Synod with the testimony of the largest assembly of our churches that he is fundamentally Reformed."

This shows very plainly that the consistory at the time, nor I (who wrote the entire document together with another member of the consistory, and which was adopted by the whole consistory), had no notion to deny the authority of classis and synod.

H.H.

Hand-Shaking

From brother Joe King I received the following communication:

"Dear Editor,

"At our Officebearers Conference we discussed the topic "The shaking of hands with the minister after the sermon." We had a very interesting discussion, though there were questions to which we did not get a satisfactory and decisive answer. And, therefore, it was decided to ask you as editor of the Standard Bearer to write an article on this topic with these three divisions; Its source; Its meaning; and Its value."

Well, that is quite an assignment!

I wish I had been present at that conference. Perhaps, I could have gained a little more light on the subject. But I was given to understand that it was a conference exclusive of the ministers. If the ministers were present, so I was given to understand, they usually do most of the talking. This I can very well understand. But now this request comes, I wish I had attended and heard the discussion.

This is true, especially since I am afraid that I most probably can offer nothing new on the subject.

I will, therefore, be very brief. And if you want more the brethren better come again and throw a little more light on the discussion they had in their conference.

As to point one, I have nothing.

This does not mean that I did not investigate. I consulted different sources, even the Acts of the early synods by Vanderveen and Reitsma. But I failed to find any material on the origin of the custom of handshaking with the minister after the sermon. There is nothing in the Church Order about it. I thought, perhaps, that I could find something on it in connection with Art. 81, in connection with "censura morum." But in this, too I was disappointed. I found nothing in Bouman or Rutgers.

But I will try again, and if I find something, I will let you know.

As to the second point, it stands to reason that here again I have to rely on my own interpretation of the custom. If I could find nothing on the origin of the custom, it is not likely that I should find anything on its meaning. The difficulty is, of course, that there is no article on it in the Church Order.

But I can say something about it.

That the elders (for it strictly belongs to them, not to the deacons, although in our churches the later also shake hands after the sermon) shake hands with the ministers after the sermon, does not mean that in every respect they agree with the sermon. They may differ in regard to some statements, as long as they are not in conflict with Reformed truth. They may differ on the interpretation of the text on which the minister preached as long as that interpretation is not in conflict with the Word of God in general.

But the meaning of this custom is, undoubtedly, that the consistory puts its stamp of approval upon the contents of the sermon:

a. From the viewpoint of its being the preaching of the Word of God.

b. From the viewpoint of its being sound Reformed truth according to the Reformed Standards.

c. From the viewpoint of its being inoffensive in the right sense of the word. The truth, of course, is always an offense to the ungodly. But sometimes a minister uses the pulpit to spit out his personal gall. In that case, the consistory should rebuke him, and if it is rather serious the minister should apologize from the pulpit.

As to its value, that should be rather evident from the foregoing.

It is a support for the minister to know that his preaching has the backing of the consistory officially. The minister needs this, for he is a sinful and weak man and prone to err. No one knows better than the minister himself how serious and difficult it is to preach the Word of God from sabbath to sabbath. Especially when wrong doctrines prevail in the congregation and the minister is called to oppose them, it is a strong support for him to know that the consistory supports his preaching.

By the same token, it is a safeguard for the congregation. If the minister is weak in doctrine and inclined to err from the Reformed truth, it is good for the congregation to know that they have a good consistory that watches over the preaching of the Word and that reveal their watchfulness by shaking hands or not shaking hands with the minister after every sermon.

But I would suggest that this shaking of hands is done by the *consistory* officially and that, therefore, they wait until they meet after the sermon in the consistory room. It is not always possible for every individual member of the consistory on the spur of the moment to make up his mind as to whether the minister preached sound doctrine or not. Besides, if one or more of the elders refuse to shake hands with the minister in the auditorium this is public and the congregation watches. For these reasons it is, to my mind better to wait with shaking of hands till the consistory has retired in the consistory room, and then, in some way (perhaps, by appointing one elder for the purpose) make the approval of the sermon official by the whole consistory.

H.H.

THE OPINION

Following is the "Opinion" in the case of the property of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., issued by Superior Court, the Hon. Judge Thaddeus B. Taylor presiding.

We give it without comment.

STATE OF MICHIGAN

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF GRAND RAPIDS,
IN CHANCERY.

THE FIRST PROTESTANT REFORMED
CHURCH, of Grand Rapids,

Michigan, a Michigan corporation, Plaintiff,

vs.

No. 13938

HUBERT DE WOLF et al,

Defendants.

OPINION

Prior to December of 1924, there arose in East Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, a controversy. At that time the Rev. Herman Hoeksema was a Minister of the Word in that church.

In December of 1924 by decision of Classis Grand Rapids East, Rev. Hoeksema was suspended as Minister. The action of Classis found its way to the civil courts which is the reported case of Holwerda vs. Hoeksema, 232 Mich. 648. Following decision in that case Rev. Hoeksema, together with others of that church, on September 13, 1926 executed Articles of Association under Section 5, Chapter 3, Part 4 of Act No. 84 of the Public Acts of 1921, thereby the First Protestant Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan became an entity.

On September 6, 1927, by amendment it became legally designated as First Protestant Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Such of the Articles that are pertinent hereto are as follows:

FOURTH — The members of said church or society shall worship and labor together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Protestant Christian Reformed Churches in the United States of America as from time to time authorized and declared by the Classis of said churches.

FIFTH — This corporation shall proceed under section five, Chapter 1, Part 1 of the above named act.

SIXTH — The said church shall be governed by and according to the Eighty-six Articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht.

SEVENTH — All matters and questions regarding the use, control and right to possession of the real property of said church, shall, at all times, be determined only by a majority vote of the members of the congregation of said church.

Following the incorporation of this church other churches in other localities and cities were organized as a Protestant Reformed Church. These churches grew in number and by

1930 they were sufficient in number to organize a Classis. Later on the Synod came into existence and thereafter Classis and Synod met and received delegates according to the Church Order. The several churches were organized throughout the nation and the Boards of Classis were known as Classis East and Classis West. By 1951 there were twelve Protestant Reformed Churches associated together and who were sending delegates to the ecclesiastical assembly known as Classis East.

Since the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids was the first Protestant Reformed Church organized, it has since the beginning been frequently referred to as the Mother Church.

A theological school was organized where those who wished to enter upon the ministry of the church received instructions according to the doctrines of the church, and this school was located and classes were conducted at the Mother Church in Grand Rapids. By 1951, First Church had a large roll of members. The church had acquired substantial holdings of real estate in the nature of a church and several parsonages. Three Ministers of the Word served the congregation — Rev. Hoeksema, Rev. Hanko and Rev. De Wolf.

In April 1951 and September 1952, protests were filed with the Consistory of First church in relation to statements made in the sermons of Rev. De Wolf. At a meeting of the Consistory held on October 22, 1952, the statements of Rev. De Wolf were condemned by the Consistory, and at the same meeting the Consistory requested Rev. De Wolf to apologize, and the form of the apology was indicated at the meeting. This motion was submitted to a vote at the meeting of the Consistory of October 27, 1952 and adopted. Rev. De Wolf stated that he would not conform. Following his statement, a motion was made to ask the Consistory of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church to meet with the Consistory of First Church, and that in the meantime Rev. De Wolf be released from the duties of his office. On October 29, 1952, at a meeting of the Consistory, Rev. De Wolf was declared to be in office again. On November 17, 1952, the Consistory again asked Rev. De Wolf to apologize. The controversy evidently continued and apparently in March of 1953, protests were filed with Classis East by Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff for at the meeting of April 13, 1953, of the Consistory of First Church, it is observed that a letter was received from Classis East requesting the Consistory of First Church to forward the contents of the action of the Consistory of March 30, 1953 — In Re-Decision on Rev. De Wolf's Sermons.

At a meeting of Classis in April of 1953, the protests were considered. Classis East meeting May 28, 1953 to advise First Church Consistory, (a) To demand Rev. De Wolf to apologize; (b) That the Consistory apologize for supporting Rev. De Wolf.

1. If Rev. De Wolf refuses to suspend.
2. If any of the elders refuse, to depose.

The Consistory of First Church met June 1, 1953 and received a Committee from Classis East carrying the above action. It was moved and carried that the Consistory accept Classis document, sustaining the protests — Re — Rev. De Wolf's sermons. It was moved to adopt advice of Classis and act according thereto. This motion was carried. It does not appear that any formal action was taken at this meeting other than stated. The Consistory again met on June 15, 1953, with apparently no formal action.

On June 22, 1953, the Consistory met with all members present. It also appears that three members of the Classis Committee met with them, and it is apparent that Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. De Wolf were present at this meeting. At this meeting Rev. De Wolf and the elders supporting him were asked to apologize. If any apology was made it must be concluded from the minutes of this meeting that the apology was not acceptable.

Article 7 of the minutes are to the effect that the Chairman asked Rev. De Wolf to apologize as advised by Classis and as adopted by the Consistory. On this motion there appeared to be eleven for and eleven against. The Chairman ruled that the motion was carried, ruling that the eleven votes against were under censure and being under censure they were deprived from functioning in their office.

Article 8 is to the effect that the Chairman asked those members of the Consistory to apologize as advised by Classis who were supporting Rev. De Wolf. The minutes record twelve for and eleven against, and the Chairman again rules that those voting against the motion were ineligible to vote because they were under censure. Whether those under censure were ineligible to vote is referred to later on in this Opinion. The other members of the Consistory presided over by Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko met on the following evening, June 23, and at this meeting neither Rev. De Wolf nor the eleven elders under censure were present, in fact they were not notified of this meeting it being the claim of the elders not under censure that they being the only members of the Consistory eligible to function in their office, that it was unnecessary to notify the other members of the Consistory or Rev. De Wolf, and at this meeting Rev. Hoeksema apparently presided. This meetings was attended by three representatives of the Classis Committee. At this meeting according to Article 5 of the minutes, the Consistory expressed that Rev. Hubert De Wolf is worthy of suspension from his office as Minister of the Word, and that the basis thereof were the two alleged heretical statements of April 15, 1951 and September 14, 1952 and his refusal to apologize as advised by Classis. At this meeting the Consistory expressed that the following elders are declared worthy of deposition from their office and the minutes named the eleven elders deposed. Following this action, the Consistory of First Church then meeting by Article 7, moved that the Consistory of Fourth Church be called in for consultation. Article 9 is to the effect that five members of the Consistory of Fourth Church are present and approved the action of

deposition and suspension. They further advised that they were not prepared to say whether the meeting was legal in view of the fact that the deposed members were not present, or had not been notified of the meeting.

On June 25th, a meeting of this Consistory presided over by Rev. Hoeksema, met with nine elders and two deacons and Rev. Hanko. At this meeting two of the deposed elders supporting Rev. De Wolf entered and delivered the following notice:

"We cannot possibly recognize your schismatic action and your illegal suspension and deposition of office-bearers and therefore cannot concede you the right to hold meeting in our midst. We therefore, notify you that we will occupy the buildings until the proper depositions of the buildings are made.

(signed)

Consistory of First Protestant
Reformed Church."

At this point therefore, each faction was claiming to be the legal Consistory of the Church and entitled to possession and control of its temporal properties.

The group adhering to Rev. De Wolf occupied the church and proceeded to change the locks upon the doors and this action must be assumed to have been taken to prevent the entrance by the opposing faction, the plaintiffs in this case. Thereafter the Consistory adhering to the Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko and a part of the church congregation adhering to their determination, found another place within which to conduct services at which location they have continued to so do until the present time. No attempt was made by them to enter the church after the communication received at the meeting of June 25th, and it is apparent had they attempted to do so it would have required a forcible entry.

The notice above referred to is Exhibit 9, and in part states —

"We must therefore insist that you do not repeat your trespass. We cannot tolerate that you or your organization or committees make ungranted use of the real properties legally in our possession.

(Signed)

Consistory First Protestant
Reformed Church
S. DeYoung, Clerk."

That thereafter a communication was sent over the signature of S. DeYoung, as Clerk of the Consistory, to the theological school committee, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Secretary, which stated —

"In re your request for our reaction to the use of our building for theological school purpose, the Consistory decided that whereas two of the faculty of our school are considered by us to be schismatic, we cannot grant the use of the said buildings so long as the said faculty members are retained."

This action was illegal as it was not for either faction

to determine as to who should be retained as members of the faculty of the theological school. Section 3 of the Constitution of the theological school of the Protestant Reformed Churches provides:

"The supervision and administration of the institution belongs to Synod itself. However, Synod shall appoint a committee consisting of no less than eight members to do the work of Synod in the interim between theological meetings."

Article 6 provides that Synod elects the professors.

Thereafter the group adhering to Rev. De Wolf refused the theological school the use of First Church as a place of holding theological instructions.

On October 6, 1953, Classis East convened in Fourth Church. Delegates were present from all twelve churches of the federation, which included contesting delegates, claiming to represent First Church. At this meeting the following action was taken:

Art. 301 — A motion is made that Classis express:

A. That the Rev. H. De Wolf and elder Sikkema cannot be seated as delegates of Classis East: Grounds:

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

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

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

B. That Classis further express that on the basis of the facts expressed under A, the brethren Rev. C. Hanko and elder Gerrit Bylsma are the rightful delegates of the First Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Art. 309 — Motion of Art. 301 is voted on and carries.

At this meeting of the Classis Committee which had been appointed at the meeting of May 23rd, filed a written report, Exhibit 22, Article 296, Classis meeting of October 6, 1953. In this report the Committee declared that the elders under censure were ineligible to function as officers and therefore ineligible to vote at the meeting of June 22nd of the Consistory. This report found that the suspension and deposition at the meeting of the Consistory on June 23rd was legal and proper, and the report further referred to the deposed brethren "have made themselves guilty of gross insubordination and have caused schism in the church in their refusal to submit to the decisions of the Consistory and in their maintenance of the heretical statements." Also at this meeting of October 6th, Rev. De Wolf delivered a protest to Classis East, protesting its action in recognizing Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko and the others as the Consistory of First Church.

Following this action on the part of Classis, the plaintiffs filed the Bill of Complaint in this cause as the legal representatives of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. The defendants, being Rev. De Wolf and the deposed elders, have answered the Bill of Complaint and in their Cross Bill of Complaint asking for affirmative relief against plaintiffs, they also alleging and claiming to be the legal representatives of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. It is therefore, apparent that so far as this proceeding is concerned, the status of both contestants is for temporal supremacy in controlling the church property, and all of this has grown out of the alleged heretical statements of the defendant, Rev. DeWolf, in his sermons of April 1951 and September 1952.

In the trial of this cause much testimony has been devoted to interpretation of the Church Order and to support the contention of the several advocates, documents and pages thereof have been submitted in great detail and at great length. In their several interpretations the contestants are in many cases agreed. First Church of Grand Rapids as have all the Protestant Reformed Churches affiliated have adopted a Church Order. The adopted form has been published and is found in Exhibit 3. In the preface of Exhibit 3, it is stated that "this Church Order was adopted in the beginning at the time of our existence as separate churches." This Church Order therefore, is the adopted constitution and by-laws of the First Church of Grand Rapids.

Under this Church Order, the office-bearers of the church are the elders and deacons elected by the congregation, called the Consistory, together with Ministers of the Word. In First Church there were three Ministers, acting in rotation. Under this Church Order the next governing body is the Classis, made up of delegates from each local church within a certain area, and next above is Synod, consisting of delegates sent from Classis. In this Church Order there are two Classes known as Classis East and Classis West, and one general Synod, to which Classis East and Classis West send delegates.

It appears there were twelve churches in the union of Classis East on October 5, 1953. It appears that since the action of Classis East on October 6, 1953 that three of the churches, together with a delegation from the Consistory, represented by the defendants, now claim that they constitute the legal Classis East. The other eight churches claim that they are Classis East.

The constitution and Church Order, therefore, adopted by First Church and the affiliated Protestant Reformed Churches is identical with the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Churches, with minor changes, which was under consideration in the cases of *BORGMAN vs. BULTEMA*, and *HOLWERDA vs. HOEKSEMA*.

Under the Articles of Association, First Church was by specific declaration in Article 4, dedicated to the discipline, rules and usages of the Protestant Christian Reformed Churches in the United States of America as from time to

time authorized and declared by the Classis of said Church. This Article definitely and without question subjects this church to discipline according to the rules laid down by the Classis of said church. It specifically further commits this church and its congregation to a government by and according to the Eighty-six Articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht. The Church Order thereby became the Constitution of the church to which every member of the congregation subjected. It is the Court's determination therefore, that Article 7, although it is claimed by both the plaintiffs and defendants to create an autonomous church insofar as it conflicts with the other Articles of Association does not have that effect. The congregation under its Constitution may only consider such matters as is submitted to it by its Consistory, and this mean the legal Consistory of the church. However, so far as the record of this case is concerned, it does not appear that the congregation representing either faction have attempted to make any disposition of the church property. First Church having adopted this Constitution, the Court is bound to recognize the fact that in such an order the local congregation is itself a member of a much larger and more important religious organization, and is under its government and control, and is bound by its orders and judgments as promulgated by the judicatory assemblies thereof. This is the interpretation of the Christian Reformed Churches, and is the interpretation of our Supreme Court. This church government is not congregational in form. It is immaterial whether the plaintiffs or defendants represent either a majority or a minority of the members of the congregation of First Church. The defendants claim that on their part there has been no departure from the doctrine and the practices of the Protestant Reformed Churches and point out that it is the plaintiffs who are schismatic and have departed. The vice in such reasoning is that the judicatory of the denominations under the authority of the Constitution of the church to which both plaintiffs and defendants are bound, have found otherwise and if it is found that the judicatory has acted within its constituted authority, This Court may not substitute its opinion in lieu of the authorized tribunals of the church.

It is the claim of the defendants that Article 7 of the Articles of Association consider First Church as a congregational form of church government. The reply of the Court is that whatever the incorporators hope to establish by the insertion of Article 7 is of no moment. What they did accomplish was the incorporation of a religious society dedicated to the discipline, rules and usages of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America in the United States as from time to time authorized and declared by the Classis of such church, and also therein adopting a Constitution, namely: the Eighty-six Articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht. To interpret otherwise it would be necessary to strike from the Articles that part which declares that the church shall abide by the rules and orders of Classis, whereby they def-

initely recognize the existence of a higher ecclesiastical assembly.

So far as the control of property is concerned, the rule is where there is a division of a congregation having a judicatory of general revisory power with the right to appeal thereto, the civil courts will give the property to those persons who are recognized by the higher ecclesiastical court as being the congregation though they constitute a minority. Is this a church wherein the property is owned by a religious congregation which by its organization is strictly independent of all other ecclesiastical associations and so far as church government is concerned owes no filiality or obligation to any higher authority and which has not declared that there shall be minor and major ecclesiastical assemblies, or is First Church one where the religious congregation or association holding the property but a subordinate member of a general church organization in which there are superior ecclesiastical tribunals with a general and ultimate power of control which may be more or less complete in certain judicatory assemblies having jurisdiction over the whole membership of the general congregation, and this means of the congregation of all of the federated churches. A church of the first class is no doubt congregational and a church of the second class is no doubt Presbyterian so far as the present government is concerned. The form of government of First Church and all of the affiliated churches of the Protestant Reformed denominations is Presbyterian. When by Article 6 of the Articles of Association the incorporators provided for a government according to the articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht they thereby incorporated and made those articles a part of the Articles of Association, and by so doing define the limits and powers of the corporation as the same may be granted or limited by the Articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht. Certainly it cannot be denied that they must have recognized that there would come into being higher ecclesiastical assemblies over and above the Consistory. Appellate bodies to which appeals from the action of the consistory could be made. When this church adopted these Articles as their Order, they proclaimed a Constitution whereby they established the structure of the church government and they provided for assemblies to carry on that government and also wherein rules and regulations were also incorporated to regulate the officers and assemblies of government. This is not a Church Order in which the congregation has the absolute right to select its own minister. This power is controlled by Articles 5 to 10 of the Church Order.

In 1946 Synod changed the word "consent" in Article 76 and 77 to be "advice." It is presently the interpretation placed upon this change that the use of the word "advice" means to offer counsel which may or may not influence the conduct of the one to whom it is offered and that given this interpretation a Consistory or an individual may accept or decline to accept the advice of Classis. The use of the word "advice" when considered and construed with the use

of this word in the other Articles of the Church Order do not warrant such construction as used. It has a different effect than to counsel. When it is stated as in Article 76 "but no one shall be excommunicated except with the advice of Classis" I interpret this to mean that the decision is primarily with the minor assembly to take any action that is called for or desirable and that except "with the advice of Classis" means that it is required that the approval or concurrence of Classis shall accompany the affirmative action of the minor assembly before it becomes effective. That is, while the minor assembly may make a determination, it does not become effective until they have the advice of Classis, namely, the affirmation or approval of Classis.

Defendants claim that by virtue of Article 31 of the Church Order they are not bound by a decision of Classis and therefore, they are not bound by the decision of Classis of October 6, 1953, whereby the plaintiffs and the Consistory named were determined to be the legal Classis of First Church. It is their contention that the provisions of Article 31 — "which the individual believes is in conflict with the Word of God, or with the article of the Church Order." leaves it with the individual to determine whether they will accommodate themselves to the determination of the Classis.

The court is cognizant of the interpretation given by the Protestant Reformed Churches in relation to Article 31 and the Christian Reformed Church as has been testified to. Rev. Kok very clearly gave his interpretation which the court accepts as the interpretation of the defendants, and specifically testified as follows:

"The fundamental difference in church polity between the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Churches is that in the Christian Reformed Church, in the singular, is one institution with a Classis and Synod as its highest bodies. The Protestant Reformed Churches, in the plural, is a group of autonomous sovereign Consistories over Classis and Synod. That is the fundamental difference. Article 31 emphasizes that we are bound by the vote of Classis, unless — and that is up to each individual church because this is the Church Order not of one institution but of twenty-four individual Protestant Reformed Churches. The Chr. Ref. Church maintains that the institution of the local church extends beyond its local boundaries in Classis and in Synod so they have one institution. The Church Order in the Christian Reformed Church is called the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in the plural. When we promise to abide by the discipline of the Protestant Reformed Churches that means we promise to abide by the other interpretation which we have given to Article 31 of the Church Order. The difference is in the plural as against the singular."

This interpretation immediately clashes with the Articles of Association of the plaintiffs. At the time of the incorporation there was no other Protestant Reformed Church or Churches, and the Articles of Association of this plaintiff adopt the articles of their own specific Church Order. This

is Article 6. If this doctrine of government can be subscribed to for what purpose does the Church Order create assemblies and provide for appeals? From the testimony in this cause by the ministers of the Word, offered on behalf of both plaintiffs and defendants, it would appear that thereon they are agreed. This question of self-determination was considered in the East Church case wherein the Court, quoting from the testimony of the Rev. Henry Beets, stated —

“If a man could during his appeal do as he pleases, that would be inviting anarchy and chaos.”

And further quoting from the testimony of Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen, stated —

“There is nothing in our Church Order that when a decision is made by Classis suspending a minister and finding that the ecclesiastical relationship is broken upon the part of the Consistory, that the Consistory and minister can continue to function as such officers in a church pending an appeal to synod. The reason for this is that they promised in signing the formula of subscription to acquiesce in the decision of the Classis and other bodies, even pending their appeal.”

The references in that case were to the identical Article 31 and the formula of subscription adopted by First Church.

Defendants have called attention to *DIX vs. PRUITT*, 194 N.C. 64; 138 S.E. 412, *WOOD vs. HUMBER*, 282 S.W. 834, *ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH vs. STEIN*, 115 Nebr. 114, 211 N.W. 611.

In the first two cases Baptist Churches were involved. Churches whose government was congregational. The St. Paul Lutheran case was one in which there was a Synod. The church had not affiliated itself with that Synod and the Court in that case distinguished its rule by referring to another of its decisions wherein the church was a member of an association of congregations.

In speaking of the authority of Classis, Rev. De Wolf testified that if Classis found a statement to be heretical and the minister is sustained by his Consistory, all that Classis can do is to declare that church outside of the federation of the Protestant Reformed Church. He further testified “Classis determined that the statements were heretical. I do not agree that they were heretical, regardless of what they found.”

In this case Classis did not attempt to declare First Church as outside of the federation, but only determined which elders constituted the legal Consistory of the church. The defendants further based their claim on recognition as the First Protestant Reformed Church on the alleged illegal action of the plaintiff faction on June 22nd and June 23rd. It is their claim that the ruling of the presiding officer at the meeting of the Consistory on June 22nd was illegal. At the meeting of June 22nd, it is apparent that the members present were equally divided, eleven to eleven. The president ruled that those voting, who were under censure, were not entitled to vote as being under censure they could not function in office. If he was correct, and if this is the law

of the church, then it was not necessary to notify members who were not qualified to function as officers of the meeting which was held June 23rd. It was for Classis to determine whether or not the action of the Consistory was according to church law.

In *BORGMAN vs. BULTEMA*, 213 Mich. 684, the court stated —

“The civil courts will not enter into a consideration of church doctrine or church discipline, nor will they inquire into the regularity of the proceedings of the church judicatories having cognizance of such matters. To assume such jurisdiction would not only be an attempt by the civil courts to deal with matters of which they have no special knowledge, but it would be inconsistent with complete religious liberty untrammelled by State authority. On this principle the action of the church authorities in the deposition of pastors and the expulsion of members is final.”

In the present case the only controversy which this Court can determine is — who has been declared by the lawfully constituted assembly of the First Protestant Reformed Church to be the individuals adhering to the faith and doctrines of the Protestant Reformed Church of America? To those who have been so declared does the civil right to occupy and control the temporal affairs of the corporation belong? Classis East in the October 6th meeting declared Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko to be the legal presidents of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids and Mr. Stadt as its stated Clerk. They then became entitled to the possession and control as the legal officers of the corporation of the physical property and assets. Whether the action of Classis was right or wrong is of no concern of this Court. Classis is a unit of government of this church, declared to be so in their adopted constitution. It has authority. As a branch of the government of the church provided by the constitution it has authority to act and its decisions are binding. There can be no government if it can be held that the decisions of the duly created assembly are only advisory rather than mandatory.

The jurisdiction of the civil courts to whom appeals have been made to review the decision of church judicatories have been discussed and stated in many cases. The courts are unanimous on the question of decisions relating to church discipline, faith, custom or law when these questions have been decided.

For a restatement, I find none more clearly expressed than in the case of *POUNDER vs. ASH*, 63 N.W. 48, page 50, 44 Nebr. 672, wherein the court stated —

“The church should be free from the interference of the court where there is nothing drawn into question but the jurisdiction of the church over one of its members or ministers or officers, and to try him, and, if need be, expell him for the violation of some church ordinance or law, so long as such action does not infringe upon his rights as a citizen, or the powers and jurisdiction of the state. In this country of ours it has been almost, if not quite universally, and is now, thought to be the best policy, and consistent with good government to let the church and state be

completely severed, or as nearly so as may be and can be with due observance of all proper laws. * * * It is said: "In this class of cases we think the rule of action which should govern the civil courts, founded in a broad and sound view of the relations of church and state under our system of laws, and supported by a preponderating weight of judicial authority, is that, whenever the question of discipline or of faith or ecclesiastical rule, custom, or law has been decided by the highest of these church judicatories to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them, in their application to the case before them. We concede at the outset that the doctrine of the English courts is otherwise. In this country the full and free right to entertain any religious belief, to practice any religious principle, and to teach any religious doctrine which does not violate the laws of morality and property, and which does not infringe personal rights, is conceded to all. The law knows no heresy, and is committed to the support of no dogma, the establishment of no sect. The right to organize voluntary religious associations to assist in the expression and dissemination of any religious doctrine, and to create tribunals for the decision of controverted questions of faith within the association, and for the ecclesiastical government of all the individual members, congregations, and officers within the general association, is unquestioned. All who unite themselves to such a body do so with the implied consent to this government, and are bound to submit to it. But it would be a vain consent, and would lend to the total subversion of such religious bodies, if any one aggrieved by one of their decisions could appeal to the secular courts and have them reversed. It is of the essence of these religious unions, and of their right to establish tribunals for the decisions of questions arising among themselves, that those decisions should be binding in all cases of ecclesiastical cognizance, subject only to such appeals as the organism itself provided for. * * * But it is a very different thing where a subject-matter of dispute strictly and purely ecclesiastical in its character — a matter over which the civil courts exercise no jurisdiction, a matter which concerns theological controversy, church discipline, ecclesiastical government, or the conformity of the members of the church to the standard of morals required of them — becomes the subject of its action. It may be said here, also, that no jurisdiction has been conferred upon the tribunal to try the particular case before it, or that, in its judgment, it exceeds the powers conferred upon it, or that the laws of the church do not authorize the particular form of proceeding adopted, and, in a sense often used in the courts, all of those may be said to be questions of jurisdiction. But it is easy to see that, if the civil courts are to inquire into all these matters, the whole subject of the doctrinal theology, the usages and customs, the written laws and fundamental organization of every religious denomination may and must be examined into with minuteness and care, for they would become in almost every case the criteria by which the validity of the ecclesiastical decree would be determined in the civil court. This principle would deprive these bodies of the right of construing their own church laws * * * and would, in effect transfer to the civil courts, where property rights were concerned, the decisions of all ecclesiastical questions."

— — — — —
 "The decisions of ecclesiastical courts, like every other judicial tribunal, are final, as they are the best judges of

what constitutes an offense against the Word of God and the discipline of the church. Any other than those courts must be competent judges of matters of faith, discipline, and doctrine, and civil courts if they should be so unwise as to attempt to supervise their judgment on matters which come within their jurisdiction, would only involve themselves in a sea of uncertainty and doubt, which would do anything but improve either religion or good morals."

It is the claim of the defendants that the plaintiffs withdrew from the church and abandoned the denomination. The plaintiffs inquired of the defendants if they would permit occupancy and the defendants replied as hereinabove stated that they would not recognize the plaintiffs. One may not be convicted of desertion upon the ground that he must first use physical force to establish his claim. The plaintiffs were not bound to attempt to incite a riot by attempting to use physical violence in order to occupy the church property. They were quite in accord with the admonition of the last sentence of the Preface of the Church Order, I Cor. 14, 40 —

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

The Consistory of plaintiffs church as constituted with Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko as presidents, and Mr. Gerrit Stadt as Clerk, are legally entitled to present possession of the physical properties of the corporation.

The relief therefore, as prayed for by the plaintiffs, will be granted and the defendants and any who may claim through or by them restrained from obstructing, or interfering with the plaintiff corporation in its use of its property, or from interfering with the government or the ordinary conduct of the affairs of said church. If defendants have collected or obtained money during the time that they have maintained physical possession of said church they will turn over to the plaintiffs all money or other assets collected during the period from June 23, 1953.

It is not the intent or the purpose of this Court to determine who are the members of this church congregation, and it is not to be considered, or interpreted as preventing any person who was a member or communicant of said church on June 23, 1953 from participating in the affairs of this church under the administration of those who have been declared by the Classis as the legal Consistory and presidents of said church.

Respectfully submitted,

Thaddeus B. Taylor,

Judge of the Superior Court of Grand Rapids.

Dated: December 23, 1954

Notice of Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Edgerton, Minnesota, March 2, 1955. The consistories are reminded that all material for Classis must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk one month before the date of Classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Prophecy of Isaiah

Before we proceed with our exposition we must take a closer look at some of the verses of the section last dealt with, xli:21 - xli:7.

xli:2a. The versions translate here: who raised up the righteous man (Cyrus) from the east, called him to his foot . . . ?

But righteousness was not an attribute of Cyrus. Though the Lord's anointed, there was no true fear of God in his heart.

Others translate: who raised *him* up from the east, with righteousness called him to his foot . . . ?

The objection to this translation is that there is no antecedent for the pronoun *him* of the clause, "who raised him up . . ."

There is also the rendering: who raised up from the east him whom right victory meets at his feet . . . ? meaning, him who meets with victory wherever he goes.

But this is not so good either, considering that the line literally reads: who raised up from the east righteousness (not, righteous man) and called him (not, meets him) to his feet . . . ?

It is best that we keep ourselves to this rendering. It can have a good meaning. Through the agency of Cyrus, the Lord overtook the nations with His righteousness, righteous judgments. Cyrus' achievement was righteous, not as his act, but as a work of the Lord. As Cyrus' act it was sin. For there is no ground in the Scriptures for the view that in his conquests he was activated by the love of God.

Then there are the lines that in the versions read: He gave them (the nations) as dust to his (Cyrus') sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

As the preposition *to* does not appear in the original text, we may also translate here: His (Cyrus') sword made them as dust and his bow as driven rubble.

It will be seen that this agrees fully as well with the context. xli:2:

Who raised up righteousness from the east,
Called him (Cyrus) to his foot,
Gave the nations before him,
And made him to trample over kings?
His (Cyrus') sword made them as dust,
And his bow as driven stubble,

3: He pursued them and passed safely:

By the way that he had not gone with his feet.

But Israel-Jacob is the servant of Jehovah chosen and called in certain victory, xli:8-13.

8: But thou Israel my servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The seed of Abraham my friend.

9: Thou whom I have seized from the ends of the earth,
And called thee from the remote parts thereof,
And said unto thee, Thou *art* My servant;
I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away,

10: Fear thou not, for I am with thee,
Do not look about with alarm, for I am thy God.
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

But thou Israel my servant . . . We must not insert here, as do the versions, the auxiliary *art* to make the line read: But thou Israel *art* my servant. The sentence is: But thou Israel my servant . . . fear thou not.

In contrast to the "nations" that the Lord in His sovereign good pleasure cast away and gave before Cyrus that they might be made dust and stubble by his sword and bow, Jacob-Israel as nation is the Lord's servant. Such is his status before the Lord in virtue of His having chosen him, the seed of Abraham the Lord's friend (Hebrew, "My lover," i. e., the one that loves me) — chosen him in Abraham, in Christ, fixed upon him his mind in everlasting and fathomless love. Accordingly the Lord also reached out and seized him or rather them, His chosen ones, from the ends of the earth and called them irresistibly to Himself from the remotest parts thereof, speaking in his heart His Gospel, unconditional promises, "Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." And therefore Jacob-Israel serves the Lord, does His will, keeps His commandments, takes the Lord's side and wars His warfare in Babylon. What a glorious consolation.

This mercy the Lord showed Jacob-Israel. Why? Because He willed. This was the supreme reason. For by nature Jacob-Israel is as ill-deserving as the "nations." This is proved by the fact of their captivity.

In Abraham all the "nations" of the earth are blessed (Gen. xii:3). But in our passage the "nations" appear as appointed and given over to destruction. It shows how necessary it is to work with election and reprobation in explaining these prophecies and all the Scriptures. There are to the "nations" an elect nucleus and a reprobated shell, so to say. The former is the "nations" blessed in Abraham, in Christ, and saved. The latter is the "nations" rejected, cast away and destroyed when the Lord has done with them.

And so "the seed of Abraham" of our passage cannot be limited to the elect among the natural descendents of Abraham. To so limit this seed is to make our passage teach that the entire gentile humanity to a man is reprobated. But contrasted here is not the Jews and the gentile nations but the chosen and spiritual seed of Abraham as comprehending the total of the elect both Jews and gentiles on the one hand, and the reprobated portion of humanity on the other hand, though it be true that in the first instance the reference is to Judah in the captivity of the exile and to the gentile nations of the Babylonian empire.

Now the nations are afraid. And they have reason to be. For the Lord comes with His judgments and they take refuge to their idols. But Israel-Jacob must not be afraid. He must not look about him with alarm — Jacob-Israel, the servant of the Lord, the chosen of the Lord, called of Him from the ends of the earth. For the Lord is with him, is his God, strengthens him, helps him, upholds him with the hand of His righteousness in all his warfare in Babylon.

We must understand this well. When we help a fellow human, we co-operate with him and he with us. For example, there is a task that is too much for him, and so we assume responsibility for a part of it, allow some of the weight of its burden to rest on our shoulders. There is no such division of labor between the Lord and His people, Jacob-Israel. In His love of them, He bears the whole burden, assumes full responsibility. The whole warfare is His work, seeing that He works in them both to will and to do. Their willing and doing are His work in them. So God helps His people. And that He strengthens them does not mean that He supplements their strength by the addition of some of His own, but it means that all their strength is His. And this help, strength and support is given them through Christ, who is the righteousness of His ill-deserving people. Hence, the hand that supports them is the hand of righteousness.

11: Behold, shall be ashamed and confounded

All they that snorted against thee.

They shall be as nothing;

And shall perish the men of thy striving.

12: Thou shalt seek them and not find them.

The men of thy contention.

And shall be as nothing and less than nothing.

The men of thy war.

13: For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand,

Saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.

"The men of thy striving," and "of thy contention," and "of thy war" are men wicked. They are the enemies of the church in Babylon. Because God's people confess the name of the Lord, keep His commandments and condemn the world by their witness, fight, in a word, the good fight of faith, these "men" in their anger snort at them, strive and contend with them, make war against them, the saints, persecute and kill them. Hence, "men of thy strife," etc. These expressions, I take it, indicate both the good fight of the saints and the enmity of the wicked.

However, because the Lord is with His people, is their God, helps, strengthens and upholds them, they cannot perish in this warfare. They are killed, but Christ will raise them up in the last day. Rightly considered therefore they do not die. They are indestructible. This is what the wicked are also going to discover when at the end of time the church appears with Christ in glory. Then the wicked are going to be ashamed and confounded. And Christ shall cast them into the abyss. Let God's people then seek them where they may,

they will not find them. For the earth will have been completely cleansed of them.

Such is the blessed prospect that is held forth to God's believing people fighting the good fight in Babylon. And it shall come to pass without fail. For the Lord will not cease to uphold the right hand of His people, to help and strengthen them by saying to them, "Fear not, I will help thee." The Lord speaks and will continue to speak His word, Gospel, in the hearts of His people, and the fruit thereof is, will be always, that they are strengthened and preserved to the end as His warriors. We should take notice how consistently all the promises of our passage are unconditional. All is the Lord's work. All depends on Him alone.

It is plain that the reach also of this prophecy extends to the end of time. But its initial fulfilment was the freeing of the church in the captivity of the exile through the fall of the Babylon of the Euphrates valley. The Scriptures make it plain that as captives of Babylon's kings the true people of God, because of their good confession, were sorely troubled by the heathen in whose midst they dwelt. In the phraseology of our passage they snorted against God's people in their bitter hatred of them; they strove and contended with them; they made war against them. But the Lord helped, strengthened and upheld His people by His admonitions and promises as sanctified to their hearts so that their faith did not cease. Eventually Babylon went the way of all earthly kingdoms. It fell and passed away. But the church abided. Cyrus, the conqueror from the east, the spoiler of nations, dealt kindly with God's people, the Jews. Not alone that he gave them permission to return to their own place, but he showed them every consideration. It astounded and confounded the enemies, many of whom had perished in the overthrow.

Jacob-Israel, the church of the elect, is imperishable indeed. But in herself she is weak and lowly. Her strength is the Lord Who gives her the victory and richly blesses her with salvation. vss. 14-20.

14: Do not fear thou worm Jacob, ye men of Israel;

I will help thee, saith the Lord,

And thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15: Behold, I will make thee for a threshing instrument,

sharp, new,

Having many teeth.

Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and grind them small,

And shalt make the hills as chaff.

16: Thou shalt spread them, and the wind will bear them away,

And the tempest shall scatter them.

And thou shalt rejoice in the Lord,

In the Holy One of Israel thou shalt exalt.

Jacob is called a worm. It is clear what the speech of this imagery is. Jacob, the men of Israel, always on account of their good confession, are rejected, despised and afflicted of men, trampled by the wicked, ground under their heel.

(Continued on page 162)

IN HIS FEAR

The Gate Is Open

(Continued)

In our closing remarks last time we raised the interesting and important question as to what moral right those who left us have to refuse the congregations of Chatham and Hamilton, Ontario to join them again as sister congregations in their denomination. They have no moral right to do so.

What is more, they are not *able* to refuse such a reunion. Instead they are obligated to contact them and seek the realization of such a reunion.

Why they are not able and why it is their solemn obligation, we will show in a later issue of the Standard Bearer.

It is now time to look back at the history through which we have gone with these things in mind.

We stand today far enough away from many of these events to be able to evaluate them properly now. And we ought to do that too.

Many of our people have been so busy looking simply at the De Wolf case and at the Schismatic Classis West case that they did not look beyond it to any great extent to see how the events of the last five or six years form one continuous line.

It must be borne in mind that although the last chapter has not yet been written, it is all one story, one event. And a relationship between the chapters and incidents in this one event can be clearly seen by anyone who will set himself honestly before them.

Every step of the way, it is now plain, the gate was being opened in our churches for the Liberated to come into these churches *with* their Arminian conception of the Covenant promises and of Baptism. That gate was being opened not simply to let individuals with these heretical conceptions of God's promise enter into our congregations, but to let groups of them organize under our name while they clung to their corrupt doctrine.

Did Rev. Kok himself not say repeatedly in his effort to have the Declaration defeated that we must not "build our denominational walls" so high?

The blustering and carnal boast made in the undersigned's home by one of Rev. Kok's colleagues is simply an overtone (undertone?) of this desire to lower the walls, or as we put it: to open the gate. The unspiritual and purely carnal boast was that they were not going to let the Rev. Hoeksema "knock in the head" this wonderful opportunity for our churches to grow in number and be something in this world by having the Declaration adopted. This all was a climax to the evil claim that when we had(?) a good opportunity to grow in number by contact with the Sovereign Grace Union in England, the Rev. Hoeksema "knocked it in the head." A little later, so the evil claim continued, another

opportunity presented itself when we had conferences with the German Reformed brethren, and then the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff "knocked that in the head."

Indeed, the Declaration would close the gate to the Liberated. It would "knock in the head" such a carnal ambition to grow merely in numbers at the expense of the truth. It would build the denominational walls too high for the Liberated to enter *with* their heretical view of the Covenant promise.

And to this you can also add Rev. Petter's attempt in the Vol. 1, No. 9 copy of the Reformed Guardian to ridicule our desire to *remain* distinct.

These are all chapters in one book. And the last chapter has not yet been written! But unless the next chapter is that these statements of Rev. De Wolf are condemned as literally heretical, it is not hard to predict with certainty what the last chapter shall reveal.

Denominational walls are too high?

Do people *inside* ever complain about that unless they want people inside who at the moment have no right to be inside?

O, they are brethren and sisters in the Lord, these Liberated. So what? Paul considered Peter to be a brother in Christ, but he rebuked him to his face. The Christian Reformed people are brothers and sisters in the Lord. Shall we lower the fence, the denominational walls, enough to let them in with their doctrine of "Common Grace?"

Why must we with the Liberated who have the heresy of a promise to every baptized child?

Do we love God when men, whom we are ready to concede are also His children, spread and defend heresies and we allowed them to come into our denomination with these things to poison the minds of our own children?

Some talk so glibly of love, love, love. (Though they write in hatred and malice to us.) But does opening the gate and lowering the walls so that our own children and our own people are endangered by these poisonous theories of men manifest *love to God*?

Let those who would doubt the veracity of our claims turn to the official documents such as the Acts of Synod 1950. On page 52 you have part of the report of the Mission Committee in regard to that which led to the adoption of the Declaration of Principles.

The Mission Committee had a problem which, because of the very nature of that problem, it could not and might not try to solve for itself. And so it properly sought the decision of the Synod.

The problem was this: what answer should the Mission Committee give to those members of the Liberated churches who desire to join one of our churches but refuse to give up their Arminian view of the Covenant promises and of Baptism, and to those groups of Liberated which desired to organize into Protestant Reformed congregations while still maintaining their heretical view of the promise and of Baptism?

We will quote from the Acts of Synod of 1950.

You have first of all a letter sent to the Mission Committee by one of these Liberated members. It is presented by the Mission Committee as "quite typical of repeated requests that we have received from various groups in Canada."

We will translate freely and quote only the last paragraph, for that contains the purpose of the letter. We read this:

"It is therefore because of what I wrote above, that I come to you and ask you for advice, information and perhaps also if possible for help in our position. Gladly, and also as one of the most important points, would I receive clarification as to whether you would insist that those aforementioned Liberated Reformed people, who are received as confessing members of a Prot. Ref. Church, hold to your view of the Covenant and of Baptism, or whether they need expect no binding by you in regard to these things."

Here is part of the letter sent to this family by the Mission Committee through its corresponding secretary: (it appears on page 53)

"...we greatly appreciate the confidence shown in our churches in the fact that you express the desire to affiliate yourself with one of our churches. We are convinced that the Prot. Ref. Churches are the historical continuation of the Reformed Churches here in America. We also realize that the Prot. Ref. Churches are not identical to the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands. There are differences of historical background, and also of dogmatical emphasis, etc.

"Secondly, in answer to your question, what is binding in our Churches, the Mission Committee answers that although *we do not feel that it lies within our jurisdiction to give answer to this question*, we do not hesitate to express that the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity, as interpreted by us overagainst the theory of 'Common Grace' and also the theory of 'General Grace', as expressed in the 'Three Points of 1924', are binding in our Churches."

That letter was composed by Rev. Kok, the corresponding Secretary. And the italics are ours.

It is plain then that those who rejected the Declaration on the excuse that it was not necessary chose to tell these people that we are not going to demand anything more of them when they join than that which this letter already tells them. We are not going to tell them what *interpretation* of the Word of God and of the Three Forms of Unity in re the Promise and Baptism they must maintain as members of one of our churches. They can come with their own conception, if they think that it is the right one, if only they will condemn "Common Grace" and "General Grace."

None of the opponents of the Declaration told the Mission Committee that it was in its jurisdiction to decide for all our churches what is binding concerning those matters. No, this same Rev. Kok said time and again, "We must not make those denominational walls so high" that we keep out brothers and sisters in Christ.

But let us go on.

The Mission Committee came to the Synod with this request (found on page 54):

"This same question as to what is "bindend" in the Prot. Ref. Churches is raised by those who seek organization. Now it is true, that our missionaries (how innocent we were at that time and free from distrust! And how evil and silly the accusation that we composed the Declaration to get rid of some of our own men. More of this later.) labor among them and instruct them in the specific doctrines God has entrusted to us as Prot. Ref. Churches, but we would appreciate having something uniform and definite to present to these groups, particularly when they request organization. Therefore, your committee requests Synod to draw up a form that may be used by those families requesting organization into a Prot. Ref. Congregation. We believe that this would serve to remove all misunderstanding and aid toward unity."

Now the undersigned is willing to reveal before all who read these lines that this request of the Mission Committee for such a form is due to his motion in one of our Mission Committee meetings to ask Synod to express itself in regard to these matters. And it all came about exactly because of letters like the one referred to above, and because we received a letter from the group at Chatham asking for organization *while* they held on to their views and conceded that discussion of these matters might be carried on after organization. The Committee refused such a request. Some months later we received another request leaving off all mention of these doctrinal differences. And we organized them.

The document they sent later to our Classis to seek the defeat of the Declaration reveals that they never intended to give up their heretical view of the promise. The letter of Prof. Holwerda likewise reveals that they were advised not to let it go but instead to disseminate this "wealth" of dogmatical truth in our churches as a fifth column. How wide they wanted the gate to be!

At that time neither the undersigned, nor any of the Mission Committee had anyone of our ministers in mind, as was so frequently claimed in order that the Declaration be condemned. We had only these requests in mind, and the desire to keep our churches pure in doctrine.

We did not at that time know that Rev. De Wolf would make plain that the Liberated heresy that the promise is for all those who hear the Gospel on the condition of faith was already inside our denominational walls. We did not know then that he would show us that we did need the Declaration for our own people.

We did not know at that time that more than half of our ministers would defend that heresy *inside* our walls rather than to work with us to cast it out. We did not realize that their opposition to the Declaration would proceed that far.

But now we can understand Rev. Kok's repeated phrase that we must not make our denomination walls so high. The corruption was inside in the hearts of these men. And therefore the Liberated belonged inside with Rev. Kok, Rev. De

(Continued on page 164)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)

THE CHURCH

Julian's attempt to destroy Christianity.

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that we would call attention to Julian's attempt to destroy Christianity.

Viewing his plan from its positive aspect, we may remark, in the first place, that he re-instated, in its ancient splendour, the worship of the gods at the public expense. He called forth hosts of priests from concealment, conferred upon them all their former privileges, and showed them every honour. He enjoyed upon the soldiers and civil officers attendance at the forsaken temples and altars, forgot no god or goddess, although he himself was especially devoted to the worship of Apollo, or the sun, and, notwithstanding his parsimony (stinginess) in other respects, caused the rarest birds and whole herds of bulls and lambs to be sacrificed until the continuance of the species became a subject of concern. He removed the cross and the monogram of Christ from the coins and standards and replaced the former pagan symbols. He surrounded the statues and portraits of the emperors with the signs of idolatry, that every one might be compelled to bow before the gods, who would pay the emperors due respect. If you love the emperor, if you love your father, he declared, you like to see his portraits; so the friend of the gods loves to look upon their image by which he is pervaded with reverence for the invisible gods who are looking down upon him.

Julian led the way himself with a concrete example. He displayed on every occasion utmost zeal for the heathen religion, and performed with the most scrupulous devotion the offices of a pontifex maximus, which had been altogether neglected, although not formerly abolished, under his two predecessors.

Continuing with Julian's attempt to destroy Christianity, as described by Philip Schaff in his History of the Christian Church, we quote the following lengthy description as set forth by this eminent church historian.

JULIAN BY PHILIP SCHAFF

"Every morning and evening he sacrificed to the rising and setting sun, or the supreme light-god; every night, to the moon and the stars; every day, to some other divinity. Says Libanius, his heathen admirer: "He received the rising sun with blood, and attended him again with blood at his setting." As he could not go abroad so often as he would, he turned his palace into a temple and erected altars in his garden, which was kept purer than most chapels. "Where-

ever there was a temple," says the same writer, "whether in the city or on the hill or the mountain top, no matter how rough, or difficult of access, he ran to it." He prostrated himself devoutly before the altars and the images, not allowing the most violent storm to prevent him. Several times in a day, surrounded by priests and dancing women, he sacrificed a hundred bulls, himself furnishing the wood and kindling the flames. He used the knife himself, and as haruspex (a soothsayer or diviner of ancient Rome who interpreted the will of the gods from inspection of the entrails of sacrificed animals — H. V.) searched with his own hand the secrets of the future in the reeking entrails.

But his zeal found no echo, and only made him ridiculous in the eyes of cultivated heathens themselves. He complained repeatedly of the indifference of his party, and accuses one of his priests of a secret league with Christian bishops. The spectators at his sacrifices came not from devotion, but from curiosity, and grieved the devout emperor by their rounds of applause, as if he were simply a theatrical actor of religion. Often there were no spectators at all. When he endeavored to restore the oracle of Apollo Daphneus in the famous cypress grove at Antioch, and arranged for a magnificent procession, with libation, dances, and incense, he found in the temple one solitary old priest, and this priest ominously offered in sacrifice — a goose.

At the same time, however, Julian sought to renovate and transform heathenism by incorporating with it the morals of Christianity; vainly thinking thus to bring it back to its original purity. In this he himself unwittingly and unwillingly bore witness to the poverty of the heathen religion, and paid the highest tribute to the Christian; and the Christians for this reason not inaptly called him an "ape of Christianity."

In the first place, he proposed to improve the irreclaimable priesthood after the model of the Christian clergy. The priests, as true mediators between the gods and men, should be constantly in the temples, should occupy themselves with holy things, should study no immoral or skeptical books of the school of Epicurus and Pyrrho, but the works of Homer, Pythagoras, Plato, Chrysippus, and Zeno; they should visit no taverns nor theatres, should pursue no dishonorable trade, should give alms, practice hospitality, live in strict chastity and temperance, wear simple clothing, but in their official functions always appear in the costliest garments and most imposing dignity. He borrowed almost every feature of the then prevalent idea of the Christian priesthood, and applied it to the polytheistic religion. Then, he borrowed from the constitution and worship of the church a hierarchical system of orders, and a sort of penitential discipline, with excommunication, absolution, and restoration, besides a fixed ritual embracing didactic and musical elements. Mitred priests in purple were to edify the people regularly with sermons; that is, with allegorical expositions and practical applications of tasteless and immoral mythological stories. Every temple was to have a well arranged choir, and the congregation its responses. And finally, Julian established in different pro-

vinces monasteries' nunneries, and hospitals for the sick, for orphans, and for foreigners without distinction of religion, appropriated to them considerable sums from the public treasury, and at the same time, though fruitlessly, invited voluntary contributions. He made the noteworthy concession, that the heathens did not help even their own brethren in faith; while the Jews never begged, and "the godless Galileans," as he malignantly styled the Christians, supplied not only their own, but even the heathen poor, and thus aided the worst of causes by a good practice.

But of course all these attempts to regenerate heathenism by foreign elements were utterly futile. They were like galvanizing a decaying corpse, or grafting fresh scions on a dead trunk, sowing good seed on a rock, or pouring new wine into old bottles, bursting the bottles and wasting the wine.

II. The negative side of Julian's plan was the suppression and final extinction of Christianity (the positive side of his plan was the restoration and reformation of heathenism — H.V.)

In this he proceeded with extraordinary sagacity. He abstained from bloody persecution, because he would not forego the credit of philosophical toleration, nor give the church the glory of a new martyrdom. A history of three centuries also had proved that violent measures were fruitless. According to Libanius it was a principle with him, that fire and sword cannot change a man's faith, and that persecution only begets hypocrites and martyrs. Finally, he doubtless perceived that the Christians were too numerous to be assailed by a general persecution without danger of a bloody civil war. Hence, he oppressed the church "gently," under show of equity and universal toleration. He persecuted not so much the Christians as Christianity, by endeavoring to draw off its confessors. He thought to gain the result of persecution without incurring the personal reproach and the public danger of persecution itself. His disappointments, however, increased his bitterness, and had he returned victorious from the Persian war, he would probably have resorted to open violence. In fact, Gregory Nazianzen and Sozomen, and some heathen writers also tell of local persecutions in the provinces, particularly at Anthusa and Alexandria, with which the emperor is, at least indirectly, to be charged. His officials acted in those cases, not under public orders indeed, but according to the secret wish of Julian, who ignored their illegal proceedings as long as he could, and then discovered his real views by lenient censure and substantial acquittal of the offending magistrates.

He first, therefore, employed against the Christians of all parties and sects the policy of toleration, in hope of their destroying each other by internal controversies. He permitted the orthodox bishops and all other clergy, who had been banished under Constantius, to return to their dioceses, and left Arians, Appollinarians, Novatians, Macedonians, Donatists, and so on, to themselves. He affected compassion for the "poor, blind, deluded Galileans, who forsook the most

glorious privilege of man, the worship of the immortal gods, and instead of them worshipped dead men and dead men's bones." He once even suffered himself to be insulted by a blind bishop, Maris of Chalcedon, who, when reminded by him, that the Galilean God could not restore his eyesight, answered: "I thank my God for my blindness, which spares me the painful sight of such an impious apostate as thou." He afterwards, however, caused the bishop to be severely punished. So in Antioch, also, he bore with philosophic equanimity the ridicule of the Christian populace, but avenged himself on the inhabitants of the city by unsparing satire in the *Misopogon*. His whole bearing towards the Christians was instinct with bitter hatred and accompanied with sarcastic mockery. This betrays itself even in the contemptuous term, *Galileans*, which he constantly applies to them after the fashion of the Jews, and which he probably also commanded to be given them by others. He considered them a sect of fanatics contemptible to men and hateful to the gods, and as atheists in open war with all that was sacred and divine in the world. He sometimes had representatives of different parties dispute in his presence, and then exclaimed: "No wild beasts are so fierce and irreconcilable as the Galilean sectarians." When he found that toleration was rather profitable than hurtful to the church, and tended to soften the vehemence of doctrinal controversies, he proceeded, for example, to banish Athanasius, who was particularly offensive to him, from Alexandria, and even from Egypt, calling this greatest man of his age an insignificant manikin, and reviling him with vulgar language, because through his influence many prominent heathens, especially heathen women, passed over to Christianity. His toleration, therefore, was neither that of genuine humanity, nor that of religious indifference, but a hypocritical mask for a fanatical love of heathenism and a bitter hatred of Christianity."

The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation from Schaff's History of the Christian Church in our following article.

H.V.

THE DAYS OF SHADOW

(Continued from page 158)

(See Ps. xxii:6 and also the description of the sufferings of Christ, Isa. liii.) Accordingly, Jacob is a people of suffering and sorrow for Christ's sake.

But Jacob, the men of Israel, must not be afraid. For the Lord will help him, the worm. There can be no doubt about that. For He is Jehovah, the I am, Jacob's redeemer, who bought him with a price, the Holy One of Israel, whose aloneness is absolute.

And that help is to consist in His making him a threshing instrument to the adversary. What may be the truth and fact signified by this imagery? To my mind it is this. He

(Continued on page 166)

OUR IMMEDIATE MISSION FIELD

"The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the Church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and the sacred privilege of said church to carry out this calling according to the measure of our Godgiven ability.

"We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. However, we are convinced that our present duty lies in the field of church extension and church reformation."

This quotation is taken from the preamble of the Constitution of the Mission Committee, as found on page 46 of our Church Order.

This preamble expresses the conviction that it is "the explicit duty and sacred privilege" of our Protestant Reformed Churches to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures.

It also adds that we believe that this missionary activity "includes the work of church extension and church reformation," as well as preaching the Gospel to the unchurched and the heathen.

These are important tenets for the church to maintain.

But the point I wish to stress in this article is, that at the time this constitution was adopted our churches were "convinced that our present duty lies in the field of *church extension* and *church reformation*." The rest of the constitution is based upon that conviction.

And that, to my mind, applies to our position today as much as it ever did.

We often have been criticized in times past for our conviction that our missionary efforts should be limited to church extension and church reformation. We have been taken to task for sending our missionaries among organized churches to oppose the error of these churches. We were accused of disrupting the church of Jesus Christ, rather than building it up; of creating disharmony, rather than seeking peace and unity. And repeatedly the accusation was lodged against us that we did not "believe" in mission work, for the simple reason that we had not reached out to the unchurched and heathen.

Now it follows from the very nature of the case, that since we are convinced before God that we represent the purest manifestation of the church of Jesus Christ, we also strongly desire to draw all true and sincere believers into that fellowship. More than that, since we greatly cherish the truth of God's sovereign grace as we have been privileged to believe it, we also consider it our explicit duty and sacred privilege to proclaim this truth to others outside of our churches, according to the measure of our God given ability. And finally, the truth never disrupts the unity or destroys the church, for the truth is of God. The error always does that, for error is from the Prince of darkness, the father of the lie. Nor can true peace be obtained through compromise,

for light and darkness never have anything in common, but always stand antithetically opposed to each other. It is only on the firm foundation of the truth of the Scriptures that the church finds her true unity and harmony, solidly knit together in the peace and fellowship of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reviewing the missionary activities of our churches during the recent years, we find that our program gradually had been expanded. Although no foreign mission work had been taken up, offerings for this purpose were being received in our churches, and the mission committee was studying the possibilities of also entering this field. In fact, the Theological School was instructed to introduce the necessary branches for those who in the future might desire to prepare for the ministry of the Word in foreign fields. Today a course on Missions is being offered to the students.

All our efforts were put forth toward home mission endeavor, particularly among those who did have some church affiliation, and more particularly among those of Reformed persuasion. It is impossible to estimate how much literature was distributed, both in the Netherlands and in our own land. The radio was also employed to propagate the truth we confess, in various parts of the United States and also in Canada.

The records show that about three years ago, in the fall of 1951, we began to speak of reaching out to the unchurched. At a meeting of the mission committee with the calling church, (that is, the First Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.), the following resolution was drawn up, "It is the sentiment of this gathering that our policy of labor is to bring the truth as we believe it to all to whom we find opportunity, either to the church or the unchurched." This action was approved by the synod of 1952.

During the winter of 1952 to 1953, we took on various radio stations, both on the East and the West Coast, and in Canada. Contacts were made in various localities, and the possibility presented itself of opening a number of fields at the same time. In fact, the synod of 1953 adopted the proposal presented by the mission committee to "endeavor to organize a definite home-missionary program along the following lines:

"a. To have one man serve as missionary-at-large, whose duties shall be:

"(1) To locate and labor in definite areas where other missionaries may be called to labor.

"(2) To labor together with the missionary called to the given field in the early stages of the field's adoption.

"b. To choose a definite area or areas to serve as specific fields of labor for the missionary about to be called at this time, where said missionary and his family shall be established for an indefinite time; however with a designated minimum of time." To carry out this plan, the mission committee was instructed to make arrangements for calling three more missionaries, besides the one that was already serving the churches.

The mission program seemed about to expand far beyond anything attempted in the past.

Then came the schism in our churches, and many departed from us to walk with us no more. We formulated our plans, but the Lord had determined that they should never materialize.

As a result, our mission endeavor was temporarily brought to a stand still, except for the radio broadcasts originating from the First Church of Grand Rapids, Mich. These were continued and even extended to include parts of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota. We have a station in Sioux Falls, and also in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

And that places us before the question as to our present field of labor.

Evidently, also in this matter we must seek the guidance of the Lord, to go where He sends us. Very often in the past a field was opened up to us where we least expected it. In fact, it came as a very pleasant surprise to all of us when three ministers from the Reformed Episcopal Church responded to our radio broadcasts, sought contact with us, and finally became students at our Seminary.

There were times when we were reminded of the experience of the apostle Paul when he went out on his second missionary journey. He had travelled from one end of Asia Minor to the other, but repeatedly was prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word, even in places that seemed to him a likely field. Thus hedged in the apostle finally came to Troas, some what perturbed, no doubt, if not despondent, constantly wondering why the Holy Spirit was hindering him from preaching the Word. The answer came through the vision of the Macedonian man, calling him to preach the Word in Europe, since there were also there those who were ordained unto eternal life.

Or, to use another figure, Ezekiel's prophecy speaks of sheep which have wandered away through the mountains and upon every high hill, and have been scattered upon all the face of the earth. (Ezekiel 34:11-16). These are sheep of Christ's pasture. The Chief Shepherd has His own rightful claim to them. He also knows them by name. And He alone gathers them. Therefore He it is who calls and sends forth His servants to gather His own unto Himself. That is true mission work.

That must always be our directive. For we can go only as the Lord sends us.

But then there are some fields that immediately come to our minds as areas which have been investigated in times past, but never thoroughly worked. A few years ago some preliminary investigations were made in the middle West, more particularly in South Dakota. Moreover, some contacts were made along the East Coast. And we have had an extensive series of broadcasts by the Rev. Vos over a station in London, Ontario, Canada. These possible fields should not be forgotten nor neglected.

But our immediate field is much closer to home. And that is among those who have been drawn away from us

through the recent schism in our churches. There are undoubtedly many who have been misinformed, or who were swept along with the leaders of their churches, and who now find themselves outside of the churches which have always been dear to them. At the same time, they find themselves removed from the truth of God's sovereign grace as they have always confessed it. At first they were told that the whole issue centered around "personalities." Then they were informed that it was a matter of "emphasis;" that while we still stress the sovereignty of God, they wish to stress man's responsibility. This new emphasis sounds very much like, and is nothing less than Arminianism in the cloak of Reformed truth. Now they have reached a point there they are ready to brand us (that of which they were formerly a part) as nothing more than a sect. For proof I need only refer you to a recent issue of Concordia.

Our immediate calling is to enlighten those who have been led astray, sheep which have been scattered and now begin to wander about. Some of them we can reach through the Standard Bearer. In some communities our own churches can be a witness to them. This might even be a possible field for a future home missionary.

In any case, the fields are white for the harvest. There is much work to be done. The truth must still be propagated, with even more zeal and determination than before.

And that as the Lord directs and opens the way.

The Lord of the harvest assures us that our labors are never vain in Him. C.H.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 160)

Wolf et al. *But not with us!* How else will you harmonize this statement of Rev. Kok about not making the walls higher with the defense of the statements of Rev. De Wolf. Those who can feel at home with Rev. De Wolf's statements and will not call them literally heretical will also feel at home with the Liberated preaching and say that it is not heretical.

And the truth is so unyielding!

If you want some interesting reading, get our your Acts of Synod, 1951. We are already far enough away from 1951 to see the folly of the whole schismatic movement. Read all the protests against the Declaration that appear in that record of the Synod of 1951. Read especially those that contend that the Declaration is unnecessary and illegal because no local congregation has wrestled with this problem and felt the need to bring it to Synod.

Rev. De Wolf, unwittingly you have done the true Protestant Reformed Churches a great deal of good. You opened our eyes before the matter had gone too far.

Indeed, the truth is so unyielding!

Read those protests now in the light of the history we have made.

They look pretty sick! But there they are printed for future generations to read and from which to profit.

J.A.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

Comforting the Sick

Among the many labors of the pastor is the important duty of visiting the sick as prescribed in the call letter. Likewise this function is not one that belongs exclusively to the office of the minister, as is sometimes thought, but is rather implied in the office of the elder in general, who is called to "serve all christians with advice and consolation." (Form of Installation) It might even be said that in a certain sense this work is also part of the office of the deacons who are called "to administer relief to the poor and indigent not only with external gifts, but also with comfortable words from Scripture." (Form of Installation) Not infrequently the poor are poor and in need of the assistance of the deacons because of sickness and other afflictions. Let them then be visited and comforted not only in their poverty but also in their sickness and such visitation does not have to be limited to a call by the dominee.

Sick visiting is more than a traditional custom. It is a spiritual practice sanctioned by Holy Writ and necessitated by the very nature of physical illness and its possible effects upon the soul and spiritual attitude of those afflicted.

In James 5:14 we read: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." This passage has more than one interpretation. Some claim that it speaks of those that are physically or mentally ill. Others hold that the apostle refers here to those that are spiritually sick. We favor the latter interpretation and that for more than one reason. Without discussing the passage in detail we may point out the following:

(1) The word here for "sick" is often used in Scripture with reference to suffering spiritual afflictions.

(2) In the preceeding verse James speaks of bodily affliction and, consequently, there is no need for this to be repeated.

(3) In the following verse he speaks of those for whom the elders pray thus: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This does not apply to physical illness but certainly indicates that the affliction of verse 14 is spiritual, necessitating resurrection and forgiveness.

(4) Finally, the fact that those thus afflicted (in distinction from vs. 13) are not able to pray for themselves but are instructed to call the elders would support this view.

It is evident then that those who are spiritually afflicted have need of the visitation of the minister and elders. The conclusion, however, is unwarranted that only those need be visited and that those who are in physical affliction do not have to be visited. There are other passages of Holy Writ

that point to the necessity and practice of visiting them. Job was visited in his afflictions by his friends and acquaintances. Frequently in His ministry Christ, upon request, went to the homes of the sick. His own words, recorded in Matthew 25:35, 36 indicate that He would have His disciples do likewise, for He said: "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came to me." And when He is asked, "But when did we this?", He replies, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction is part of the essence of true religion. Those that are physically led in ways of suffering have need to be visited as well as those that are spiritually ill.

This necessity springs from the very nature of sickness which is the potential of death. This does not mean that all sickness is fatal nor even that we immediately think of death the moment we become ill but it does express that sickness is the evidence of the working power of death in our bodies. It belongs to the breaking down of this earthly tabernacle. It reminds us that our life is but a vapor and that our breath is in our nostrils. Today we appear strong and vigorous and in good health and tomorrow we lay helpless upon our bed, clenched by the power of disease which breaks down our frame. We are like the flower of the field which today is and tomorrow it is withered and gone. All the sickness, pain and suffering of our present life points unto death. And death, let us not forget, is the manifest token of the holy wrath of God against sin for "the wages of sin is death."

This reality is frequently the occasion of serious misunderstanding on the part of the people of God when sickness and death come their way. It is not uncommon to find a child of God in sickness interpreting this experience as a visitation of God's wrath upon him personally for some sin or sins committed. Losing the conscious joy of their salvation in Christ, they become deeply disturbed over all their sins and fail to find redemption from them. They judge that their illness is the token of God's wrath upon them for their sin. Pretty soon the conclusion is drawn that they have even committed the unpardonable sin for which God visits them in their suffering. Their physical affliction becomes the occasion of deep spiritual torment. They have need of the Word of God directing them to the way of life, comforting and reassuring them of the truth that "whatever evils God sends upon His children in this valley of tears, He turns to their advantage for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father." (Heidelberg Catechism qu. 26) They need to be instructed to be "patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things which may hereafter befall them, they place their firm trust in their faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate them from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that

without His will they cannot so much as move." (Heidelberg Catechism qu. 28).

Furthermore, it is not an uncommon experience that intense suffering and prolonged illness create discouragement and incite rebellion in the hearts of the people of God so afflicted. This is only the natural tendency of the human nature. All incentive becomes lost. The soul becomes downcast within us. We fail to see the wisdom of God's ways and to understand why this had to befall us when so many others all about us apparently enjoy health and strength. It is hard to bear the burden of our afflictions with patience and the grace of resignation to God's ways with us is not always evidenced in us as it should be. Again our need is the Word of God to lift us up, encourage, comfort and lead us that we may walk humbly with our God.

In this the minister (and the elders) have a wonderful but difficult calling. It is not easy to place yourself in the position of those that are afflicted and to see all things from the viewpoint of the sufferer so that they can be dealt with as a co-sufferer with understanding. Yet this must be done if they are to be led to the true and only comfort in life and death. It is often difficult to know when one in sickness has need of a pastoral visit. There are some who think that the dominee must come for every little ailment, however minor it may be while others need to be on their death-bed before the elder or minister is informed. It is proper that those who feel the need of a pastoral visit request him to call but frequently this is not done and the minister must use wisdom and discretion lest, on the one hand he intrudes where he is not needed or, on the other hand, he neglects those who do need his instruction from the Word and prayer. It is also difficult to know how frequently the sick ought to be visited. No hard and fast rule can be made for each case and circumstance must be judged in its own light and the highest welfare of the patient sought. Various practical problems confront the pastor in the performance of this labor.

Requisite to the performance of this work are all the spiritual qualifications of the minister of the Word. He is not a doctor of medicine nor should he pretend to be. His concern is to help the suffering ones bear their afflictions in the right frame of mind and attitude toward God and to help them to see that as the beloved of the Lord, all things, afflictions and sufferings included, do indeed work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose. He must call on them to minister unto them that redemptive knowledge.

To do this He must love the sheep. He must have a deep, sincere concern for them. He must prepare himself in visiting them so that his call may be beneficial toward them. F. R. Wayne said:

"Whenever it is possible, give special study to the case of each patient. Think of the sufferer in your own chamber before you visit him in his. Settle in your mind beforehand what subject to suggest to him in conversation; not so as to

bind yourself to that and that alone, but so as not to leave the subject to chance, and so as to bring the patient according to what seems to you his requirements, through an instructive series of definite lessons to his heart and conscience."

And, the pastor must bring the Word of God. Out of the Word he points them to the realities of life and death. From the Word he directs the afflicted ones to Christ, Who took our suffering upon Himself, Who bore our griefs, Who destroyed the power of death forever and Who even now uses death as His instrument to bring us, His people, into the glory of everlasting life. In Him is our only hope in the midst of all the miseries of this life. He is our abiding consolation wherewith His people are comforted in the valley of tears and sorrows. And blessed are the feet of them that bring these tidings of peace even unto those that lie in the midst of suffering!

* * *

Other labors of the pastor are also worthy of mention. He is called to engage in family visitation, he officiates at marriages and funerals, etc. These duties we will not, however, discuss in this connection but reserve them for the present and take them up, D. V., in connection with other articles of the church order. G.v.d.B.

THE DAYS OF SHADOW

(Continued from page 162)

raises Jacob, the men of Israel, from his spiritual death, grafts him into Christ by a faith that is living and indestructible, and supplies him with grace to embrace and live by His counsel, promises, word of prophecy. And that word is to the effect that the adversary shall be destroyed at the appearing of Christ and that Jacob, the worm, shall inherit the earth. And that word Jacob holds, lives by and proclaims to the wicked and thereby he triumphs over all his enemies because the Lord brings it to pass, so that by identifying Jacob with that Word of His and thus with Christ, the Lord indeed makes him to the adversary a threshing instrument having many teeth. And as it is all the Lord's work, it is in Him that Jacob rejoices and glories — glories in the Holy One of Israel.

That Jacob the Lord's servant is still the chosen nation and not the personal servant of the Lord is plain from the expression, "Jacob the men of Israel."

It is also plain what is to be understood by the "mountains and the Hills" of vs. 15 that are to be made like chaff to be carried away by the wind and scattered by the tempest when Jacob by his threshing instrument shall have grinded them small. The reference is to the Adversaries of Jacob. They exalt themselves against the Lord and His people, and are therefore compared to hills and mountains.

G.M.O.

ALL AROUND US

"What Really Happened In Our Churches."

Such was the subject of an essay delivered by the Rev. J. Blankespoor at a ministers' conference held recently in Oskaloosa, Iowa, and published in Concordia of Dec. 2, '54.

Rev. J. Howerzyl, who has been filling the editorial space in this paper of late, introduces this essay with "a word of explanation." He tells us that "a few weeks ago a ministers' conference was held in Oskaloosa, Iowa. Present were most of our ministers, except those hindered by distance and pressing work. At this meeting several fine papers were read, dealing with the situation in our churches and our course for the future. Since this fits in very well with that which we have been writing in Concordia, and since the subjects treated were of vital interest not only to the ministers but to all our people, it was decided to ask Concordia for its Editorial space to print these papers. Herewith we present the essay by Rev. J. Blankespoor."

Why this conference was held and why this particular subject for the conference was chosen, we can only guess. One informant told me that a bulletin published in one of their churches signified that the conference was very urgent. Perhaps there are ministers and not a few laymen who went along with the schismatics who are not a little alarmed with the present situation in these churches, and they are still more alarmed about their future, and therefore demanded such a conference. At any rate, the conference was held, and if Rev. Blankespoor's essay is a sample of all the "fine" papers that were delivered there, we can also know the mind of the conference both as to their present situation as well as to their course of action for the future. They are perfectly justified in their own mind as to their past conduct. They are perfectly satisfied as to the present situation. The alarmists among them must be stilled. And as for the future, they are as free as a bird escaped from its cage, all their former denominational straight-jackets have been removed. So with their doctrine and ecumenical aspirations they are really going to go places.

The essay of Rev. Blankespoor is too long to quote in its entirety in one issue of this department. So, the Lord willing, I hope to use two or three issues of the Standard Bearer if necessary to quote and disprove his paper. The introduction to his paper is rather long, at least long enough to fill all my space for this time, allowing for a little comment of my own. He makes some remarks in it that should not go unchallenged. Here follows his introduction:

"This question, (What really happened in our churches? — M. S.) no doubt is a good one. Even though we all have, undoubtedly, asked ourselves this question many, many times, it is always good to reminisce on a matter as important as this one. And self-examination is always proper.

"Just what is the deepest meaning of our recent church

struggle? What is its real significance for us and for our future generations? This question must be answered in the light of Scripture but also in connection with our history of the past, the history for example of our churches in Canada, the history we made with the Declaration of Principles and last but not least with the discussion on the subject of conditions.

"The question becomes a still more important one in the light of a few pertinent observations. We were a small denomination, we needed each other, but why then a split? Few men exerted as much influence on a group of people as did the Rev. H. Hoeksema with his powerful personality. There was a time when all practically sat at his feet in re all the things he wrote and spoke. The Standard Bearer was virtually the last word on any given matter. For many years the machinery of our churches seemed to run very smoothly, with only a few interruptions, at least externally. Think, for example, of the time when Rev. Hoeksema was sick. How almost the entire denomination was deeply affected by it with a feeling of depression and discouragement. Besides all this the history of 1924 was still rather fresh in the minds of many. And now in so short a time another split in our small ranks? Surely there must have been a very good reason on the part of the majority of our people to be ready for such a step. True, we did not foster nor actually bring about a split. They became schismatic. But even then why did our people and we with them so maintain the principles which we defended that we chose a split instead of remaining one? In view of all these things one must come to the conclusion that there must have been in the minds of our leaders and people not only a very necessary reason for taking such a stand, but also a God-given duty to defend our principles, regardless of consequences.

"The answer to the question, What really happened in our churches? must be found only in the Scriptures. We surely might not in any sense be directed by what a small element of radicals said or thought, on either side. One can always find some malcontents in the church, with their own opinions of things. Therefore we must also be very careful lest we characterize the "other side" in the light of what a few radical individuals may say or think. But, it is a good practice to take into consideration, always, what the common people think. Since they also have the anointing of the Spirit they, too, can help us interpret history and the Scriptures. Remember that it was an old, gray-haired lady that first showed Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. the error of his way in the Hervormde Kerk. And remember above all that the multitudes gladly heard Jesus. No, they didn't know the details of the law as did the doctors of theology among the scribes. Nevertheless they were a good criterion in those days. And they still are, and also were and are such for us. Our history surely teaches us that the common people were convinced that something was wrong in our churches, and the majority of them maintained their principles and convictions even to the extent that it cost us a split in our churches. What then

really happened and why did we follow this course?" For this time, so far Blankespoor.

I wish to remark, first of all, that the entire essay and therefore also this introduction is typically Blankespoorian. Very piously and impressively and, because he is dead wrong, therefore very deceptively, he talks about proper self-examination, about solving the question of what happened in our churches "in the light of Scripture." Of course, self-examination is always proper. Of course, all our questions, also the one concerning what happened in our churches, should be solved in the light of Scripture and the Confessions. All very piously said. But does Rev. Blankespoor do this? O, no! As far as that self-examination is concerned, does Rev. Blankespoor also suggest that he might be wrong? Does he mention one sin his self-examination produced? He does not. There was not examination of self, but of the other whom he calls "schismatic." Does Rev. Blankespoor refer to any Scripture in his entire article to prove that he is walking in its light? He does not. He prates about the Standards of the church, but never once referred to them as the grounds for their schismatic action. I claim this is all pious talk, the purpose of which is to deceive the "common people," concerning whom he has much to say in this introduction, to which I call attention again presently.

In the second place, I refer the reader to paragraph two of the introduction where Blankespoor makes two very noticeable omissions as he recalls the history in the light of which the question concerning what happened in our churches must be answered. He omitted to tell us how much he and his colleagues fell in love with the Liberated and their doctrine. That is also history. Secondly, he omitted to say in connection with the discussion on conditions anything about the two statements of the Rev. De Wolf, which also happened in our churches and were the immediate cause of the so-called split. Why did he do this? Why fail to mention these important facts? I am sure that Blankespoor has now proved what we have always said was a fact, that way back in our history even before the Canadian debacle there was ill-feeling among some of their ministers and even some of their laymen. But, when our associations with the Liberated began to jell, and voices of objection to those associations began to arise, that ill-feeling also began to express itself most vehemently. Then it was that they came out of their corner, who had previously worked in the dark. I can produce witnesses that will sustain this judgment. Blankespoor should not have neglected to include this in his history. He should have admitted or denied that they were in love with the Liberated and their doctrine. This he says nothing about for specific reasons. Also he should have told his audience how he defended and still does the heretical statements of De Wolf, how "Classis West" made itself guilty of schism when it defended Rev. De Wolf and his elders. That's history in the light of which the question of what happened in our churches must be answered. Blankespoor omits

all this. Why? I say the reason is to cover up and to deceive.

In the third place, Rev. Blankespoor makes some more pious speech about how small we were denominationally, and how much we needed each other. He has much to say about Rev. Hoeksema and the Standard Bearer. And all the while, for as many as nine years before the split I dare say, they were trying to get rid of Hoeksema and the Standard Bearer. All that pious talk about Hoeksema and his being ill, bah! The biggest surprise of their life was that the Lord restored him. One of their men told me right to my face how he wished that Hoeksema had died. If only he was out of the way, they could go places. The hate Hoeksema campaign, and I may add also Ophoff, has been going on for a long time, not only in the east, but also in the west. I can prove this too. And the Standard Bearer? It makes me sick to read what he says about that when we know that openly these men were advising their people not to subscribe to it and read it. With Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, I say — All Hokum! Hum-bug. The truth is that all but three of their ministers have refused to subscribe to the Standard Bearer, and one even had the audacity to tell our Business Manager that he wouldn't have "that filthy sheet in his house." And, mind you, this all while they still read the Standard Bearer and use it as the best commentary on their shelves. And why do they hate Hoeksema, Ophoff, and the Standard Bearer so much? Is it because the latter are so heretical and unreformed? Not a Reformed man with a Reformed hair on his head would ever believe this. Even the Christian Reformed and the Liberated do not believe this. The reason is that these men have defended the truth in the Standard Bearer, the truth that has undressed them, these schismatics, and they have been shown up for what they are. That's the only reason. Hoeksema, Ophoff, and the Standard Bearer stood in their way of becoming big, of realizing their "ecumenical" desire.

In the fourth place, Rev. Blankespoor talks about "the majority of our "people" who were ready for the split. I am not going to dispute about numbers. This makes very little difference to me. A majority in respect to matters of doctrine is not always correct, and generally wrong. That's history. It may even be true that a majority of our people were ready to step out with the schismatics. That is nothing new either. And I may add that it was the secret hope of the schismatic leaders that they would take along with them the entire denomination. The Lord, however, spoiled their plans. He preserved His remnant. This He always does. No question about that. But if it is true that the majority were ready to go along with the schismatics, how is that to be explained? In this case it is fast becoming evident that many of them have been mis-led, they have been told the lie.

Our space has run out, however, and we shall have to continue our remarks in the next issue.

M. S.