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MEDITATION

Absolute Sovereignty

"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

—Rom. 9:18-20

There is more and more religion in this world, but less of the fear of God.

There are more and more churches built and congregations organized, but less true calling on the Name of Jehovah.

God is becoming more and more the Great Stranger among men.

Millions of Bibles are printed and distributed, but few of them are read.

Many read the Bible, but few believe.

Many believe the Bible, but a very few believe all of Scripture. They conveniently omit parts, because they hate them.

My text is one of those parts of Holy Scripture that is hated, hated very cordially.

There are some in this God-forsaken age that know how no man can be saved except he believe the whole Bible, and so they set themselves to corrupt portions such as this one. And they believe their corruptions, thinking they believe the Bible.

But it is not true.

As a child I heard men say: Ministers should preach the whole counsel of God! Well, portions such as this belong to the whole counsel of God. Men should believe them, and worship. Portions such as these teach a God that is God indeed. There could be no other God. It belongs to the Godhead to be this terrible.

Elihu sensed this, and cried out: With Him is a terrible majesty.

Yes, it is so: with Him is a terrible majesty. He is the only One who is majestic. He is the only Sovereign. He doeth all His goodpleasure.

God give that we do not choose pretty speeches when talking about this terrible text. In short my Maker would destroy me.

We must, we shall let God be God.

The absolute Sovereign.

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Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy!

How beautifully simple is the matter of election! It is so simple that even a child can grasp it. It is the diamond of God's love and lovingkindness that is eternal.

I may put it this way too: God has mercy on the elect.

Yes, there are elect, and there shall be elect always on this sorry earth.

What is election? Election is this: God loves some men, and He loved them before they were born. He loved them before the world was made. He loved them from all eternity. As old as God is, so old is the election of some certain men.

And in the quiet wakes of eternity, before the world was, God said within Himself: I love you, My elect, and will love you unto all eternity. I will reveal all My glory unto you and unto you alone. I will make you vessels that shall be filled with all My glory, and you shall be glorious yourselves unto all eternity. And since I will show my glory in your salvation from eternal death, I shall be very merciful to you. For my mercy is love for the object in misery.

Oh yes, the elect are elected to be strangers on the earth. And when they shall be strangers and pilgrims they shall be in great pain and misery, and

then the love of God shall turn to them. And love turned to the miserable is mercy.

And the number of those elect that will be recipients of the mercy of God are numbered. Their number cannot be increased; not decreased. God knows them that are His. He said from all eternity: You are My child! And you shall be My child unto all eternity! And I will have mercy on you! And you shall be deliriously happy in the gift of My mercy.

Oh yes, blessed be God: He is absolute in His willing! He is the Absolute Sovereign in His election.

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And He is also absolute in His reprobation.

"And whom He will He hardeneth!"

Did the foolish men corrupt election? Yes, that is awful. But wait. Wait, until you see what they have done to His reprobation. They have so smoothed over His reprobation, they have so polished away all the harsh lines and sharp corners, that we cannot anymore recognize the Biblical truth of reprobation. When these men are through, man has reprobated himself. God did never reject man; man rejected himself.

I have heard it often: It is his own fault that wicked man is reprobated. Which is utter nonsense. For that man ought to say: God works out His reprobation of man through the wickedness of man. That is correct. But man ought never to say: it is man's own fault that he is reprobated. How could that ever be? Reprobation took place before man was born, or had done either good or evil. Men, a certain number of men, are reprobated before they were born. Men, a certain number of men, are reprobated before the world was made. From all eternity God who is the absolute Sovereign said within Himself: For this cause shall I raise you up, for to show in you My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth! And thus reprobates are born. Attend to this: ages before Judas was born, the Holy Scriptures said of him: "Let his habitation be desolate . . ." Baby Judas was not yet born, but the Holy Scriptures in the home of the mother and father of Judas said: "and his bishoprick let another take. . ."

Let us not mock, but rather worship with fear and trembling. For, indeed, with Him is a terrible majesty.

And so, I would beg of you: let it stand: "And whom He will He hardeneth." I know, I know, that it really makes no difference whether you let this word stand or not; that He will do His goodpleasure just the same! But I would beg it of you for your own sake. It does not pay to mock the Almighty.

Oh yes, God hardeneth. How, you ask? I do not know. And I am persuaded that no one knows. In II Cor. 2, we read of the same thing. The beauteous strains of the Word of the Almighty is for some a savour of death unto death. They enter the House of God; they listen to the sermon; and when they leave the House of God, they are deader than when they entered. God hardened their hearts while they were in church. We read the simple story in Exodus. God assured Moses that He, that is, God, would harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the people go. And it happened according to God's word. It happened ten times.

The reprobates are hardened by God all through the ages; all of them are hardened.

Yes, I know that they harden themselves too. But only after God has hardened them. Even as with Pharaoh, so also with all reprobates: they are hardened by God first, and then they harden themselves.

Terrible truth, you say? Yes, but it is the truth nevertheless. It is the same truth that is trampled under foot by the church of our day. Where do you find a church to-day that dares to confess the hardening by God of the reprobate? And all through the ages the Lord had it written down, and, later, printed in a million Bibles.

And still God is the absolute Sovereign.

He sovereignly loves, and the objects of His love receive His mercy.

He sovereignly hates, and the objects of His hatred receive His hardening.

But He is Sovereign: with Him is a terrible majesty!

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"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?"

That is an objection, a wicked objection to God's absolute sovereignty with respect to His decree of reprobation. It shows that I have explained it correctly. The way other men explain it, would never evoke such an objection as we have to treat here. The way reprobation is explained (!) you have no reprobation left. And the audience bows the head politely, and says: Thank you, so very much! It sounded barbarous to me at first, but now that you have so ably explained it, Reverend, now it does not offend me anymore.

But that is not the way the Apostle Paul explained it. The Apostle Paul so explains reprobation that the wicked objections must come, do come, and he even anticipates them. Paul anticipates the wicked rejoinder of natural man. Natural man has listened to the explanation of reprobation especially, and it has

aroused his ire. He saw himself used unto the glory of God. And according to Paul he could do nothing about it. In other words, wicked, proud man was dethroned by the Word of God. And he hated it. But he will try to catch the Lord in His own truth of reprobation. If God willed my reprobation, why does He cry out about my wickedness? Why does He find fault with me when I live out my reprobation? Is there a man that can resist the will of God unto reprobation? Well then, why does He then upbraid me for the fruits of His own reprobation? Such is the argument.

And what is the answer?

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou formed me thus?"

In other words: God is Sovereign.

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God is sovereign.

And He is so absolutely.

He is so absolutely sovereign, that He really does not answer the objection. God really does not enter into the argument. You believe, don't you, that this answer is God's answer, even though it came from Paul's pen? It is the answer of the Triune God through the Holy Spirit of the exalted Christ which dwelled faultlessly in Paul, so that he wrote the Word of God infallibly.

Oh yes, here is God's answer to the reprobate who criticized Him.

Isn't it terrible? To criticize God.

I said once to a young man: Do not find fault with God: you lose before you start.

And so it is here. God does not even deign to enter into the arguments. He says to us: I will love My elect, and I will hate the reprobate. Because that is the meaning of the first part of my text: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and whom I will I harden! God's love comes to the elect in the adornment of mercy; and the hatred of God comes to the reprobate in their hardening.

God said that. And man, proud man, reprobate man does not like it. He hates this absolutism. (Where did I hear this, long ago?) And so he dared to start an argument with God.

But God is God. And He shall give the fitting answer to this arrogancy. Nay but, O man, who art thou?

O man! That is really the answer.

O man! That is: a handful of clay. And a soul or spirit that is like a mist. It is seen for a few hours, and it vanishes.

What is man?

Man is nothing. No, he is less than nothing, and vanity. All the nations together are nothing and less than nothing and vanity. What is then one dissenter?

Is my brain capable of following all the works of God?

Attend to this: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever, Amen.

And so the Lord says really to the offended reprobate: Be still! Remember to WHOM you are talking. You are replying to the great God who made the heaven and the earth. You are finding fault with Him who shall be the song of perfect angels and of righteous men unto all eternity.

I am the Sovereign of the Universe.

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God is sovereign, absolutely sovereign.

And what is man? A speck of dust And a filthy speck at that. It is his filth that makes him take God to task. We shudder when we say it. For God is God.

And yet there is argument in the phrase: Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?

There is a beautiful argument in it. It is this: God is above all reproach. God is above all evil. God is wholly, and exclusively beautiful and lovely, attractive and comely. He cannot do anything that is wrong!

Do you not see that the question of the reprobate cast a slur on the beautiful Godhead? Do you not see that if it were true what this man said, there would not be a God?

Attend to this: it is the most important sentence in this whole meditation: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO BE ANYTHING BUT GOOD: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO DO ANYTHING BUT GOOD!

And what has the wicked rejoinder proven?

This: the reprobate has shown in his wicked question that he has a reprobate mind.

If holy angels in heaven cover their faces because of so much beauty in the Godhead, what shall we then do?

Let us worship; o let us worship!

G. Vos.

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EDITORIALS

Classis, January 9, 1952

IMPRESSIONS

This editorial is not meant to be a report. It surely is no official report.

The official report will, D. V., appear in the *Standard Bearer*. The trouble, however, with such an official report is that it usually is so very official. It confines itself to bare facts and decisions. It does not publish the discussions, nor the reports of the various committees, or the letters that were presented to Classis. It presents a mere skeleton, without flesh and blood.

This article does not mean to be such a report. It only wants to relate a few of the main happenings and transactions of Classis East and my personal impressions of them.

I do not even have notes. I write from memory on the evening of the same day that Classis met, the ninth of January, 1952.

One of the first thoughts that entered my mind as I attended Classis, not as a delegate, but as an onlooker, though with advisory vote, was of Classis West.

You think this strange?

Let me explain then.

In a way I was envious of Classis West in the quiet and peaceful prairies of Iowa and Minnesota, in the beautiful plateau of Manhattan, Montana, with its grand scenery of snow-capped mountains round about, and in sunny California, with its orange and walnut groves, its partly snow-covered mountains and beautifully-hued desert. The people in Classis West seem to be so far from the madding crowd! They know nothing of the troubles the churches have in the east and of all the unhappy, yea, miserable experiences they have with the Canadian Liberated immigrants. O, it is true, they read a few reports and articles in the papers, and perhaps shrug their shoulders. But by experience they evidently know nothing of our troubles in the east. In that respect I dare say they are blissfully ignorant. And as I sat as an onlooker-with-advisory-vote at the last sessions of Classis East and meditated on this mentality of blissful ignorance in Classis West, I began to understand, I thought, in part at least, why many in that Classis took the attitude that the Declaration of Principles was not necessary. They did not know, they did not understand, they had not the experiences we in the east had and still have. They live in blissful ignorance. . . .

Another impression I received at the Classis today was that if the Declaration of Principles had been up for discussion today, Classis East would again undoubtedly have adopted it with overwhelming majority, virtually without opposition.

But it was hardly mentioned, in fact, not at all except by Chatham and in connection with its case.

Chatham, you say? Did they not leave the fellowship of our churches?

They did.

And yet, the case of Chatham, and partly also that of Hamilton, occupied nearly all the time and attention of Classis this ninth of January, 1952.

The case of Hamilton was disposed of rather easily and quickly.

A group of brethren there of our former congregation in that city, that still call themselves Protestant Reformed, had addressed a letter to Classis, a reply to a letter from Classis East addressed to them, I believe, in April, 1951. Also on the Classis in April the same brethren from Hamilton had a letter in which they claimed that they were still Protestant Reformed, but in which at the same time they directed certain charges against Classis East. At that time, if my memory does not fail me, the Classis repudiated their charges, and urged them to repent and return from their evil way. And since the letter that appeared on the table of the present Classis by the same brethren virtually was of the same contents as their former letter, Classis made short work of it. It replied in the same vein as to their former letter. There were a few voices heard at Classis that favored sending a committee to these brethren to speak to them face to face, but they found no support. And the decision to send them the proposed letter was without a dissenting vote.

The case of Chatham required more time.

This was not because there was a single delegate of Classis that attempted to defend the erring and revolutionary brethren in the Chatham group. No one defended them, because it was very evident to all that this would be a hopeless case. But their case involved the treatment of several documents. And this, of course, took time.

These documents were the following: 1) A letter from Chatham to Classis, which also all the consistories received, not only in Classis East, but also in Classis West. 2) A report by the Classical Committee, that met with the Consistory of Chatham shortly after they had already separated themselves from our churches. 3) A report from the Rev. Petter, who had been summoned from Lynden to explain his part in the history of Chatham. 4) A letter from Mr. Scheele, formerly clerk of the former congregation in Chatham, the only true and faithful member of our church there, who moved to the far northwest and now belongs to our congregation in Lynden, Washington.

Let me remind you again that I do not write a report. I am only meditating and give you my impressions.

And then I must say, in the first place, that those people in Chatham represent the cause of the Liberated in The Netherlands most poorly and most miserably.

They not only impress me as revolutionary and without any sense of responsibility, but also as very untrustworthy.

You ask how I received those impressions?

I will relate a few facts that caused them.

The first impression I received of their deceitfulness and falsity was from the letter of Mr. Scheele mentioned above. In that letter he related the experience which he had with them concerning the books and archives of the church in Chatham. As I said, he was clerk of that congregation and of the consistory. And at the time when they had declared themselves "liberated" they demanded that he would hand over those books and archives to them, the newly appointed consistory. This Mr. Scheele refused to do, on the basis that not they, but the Rev. Petter and himself represented the original Protestant Ref. Church of Chatham. The justice of this refusal is, of course, very evident. Besides, at the time he asked advice of the Classical Committee, and they corroborated his stand and position. As I mentioned, he left Chatham, and moved to the far northwest, to become a member of our congregation in Lynden. He made this move in order to be in the neighborhood of a Prot. Ref. Church, and became member there. There, however, he received a letter from the Consistory of Chatham in which they asked that he would send to them the books and archives of the former congregation in Chatham as a temporary loan to them. They promised that they would copy those books and return them, I believe, in two weeks. But when Mr. Scheele did not hear from them, he wrote them a letter in which he requested that they return the books and archives before the meeting of Classis, January, 1952, because he had to deliver them to this body. Then Mr. Scheele, according to his own report at the Classis, received a very ugly letter, in which the Consistory of Chatham accused him of being a thief, and in which they insisted that the books were not his, but theirs, and that they would never return them. Do you wonder that I received the impression that the men of the former consistory in Chatham were very deceitful and untrustworthy? They had only asked Mr. Scheele to loan them the books, and they faithfully promised

him to return them to him. But this evidently was only a deceitful trick, to gain possession of the books and archives.

Another item that gave me the impression that they were untrustworthy was found in the report by the Classical Committee to Classis. It concerned a financial matter. The former Consistory of our church in Chatham had asked Classis for permission to ask for a collection in all our churches for the purpose of acquiring a parsonage for their minister. That request was granted them. Several churches had already collected for them. And in all they had received approximately $1,500. Remember that the purpose of this money was definitely to buy or build a parsonage for the Rev. Petter. But they never did anything with that money. At least, they made no attempt to acquire a parsonage for their pastor. I understand that they had an opportunity to rent a parsonage for $60 a month, which, of course, was very cheap, considering the times. But they considered that this rent was too high, and they would not pay so high a sum for a parsonage for their minister. They rather let their minister and his family live in a small, two-room apartment, in which they slept on a mattress on the floor in the same room where during the day the Rev. Petter had his study. But let that be. When the Classical Committee met the newly appointed consistory in Chatham, they called their attention to the fact that they had collected $1,500 from our churches, and that they had never used it for the purpose for which it was given. And they, the Committee, demanded that that money should be returned to the churches. They could have easily given the Committee a check for that money at the same meeting, because it was still in the bank. But they did not. I do not remember whether at that meeting they promised to return the money. But at any rate, to date they never did. And the Classis today had to make a decision to demand of them that they return this money to our treasurer. If they ever comply with that request, I will inform the reader faithfully. But at any rate, that item in the report of the Classical Committee was another cause of the impression I received, of those people, that they cannot be trusted.

One more fact I must mention to explain to you the source of my impressions.

In the letter they addressed to Classis, the same that was addressed to all the Consistories in our churches, they leave the impression that the passing of the Declaration at our last Synod was really the cause and the reason of their separating from us. Now, this may have been the occasion, although, of course, even if this were true, their act of schism was very revolutionary. The Classical Committee pointed out to them that they could have protested the decision of Synod at our next Synod, if they so desired; and if, after that, they were not satisfied, they could always separate and refuse to abide by the decision of our churches. But more than a pretext this certainly was not. For in the letter by Mr. Scheele that was read at the Classis quite a different story was told. And also from the report by the Rev. Petter I received a different impression. They simply did not like the Rev. Petter and his preaching, although before he accepted the call he informed them that they must expect Prot. Ref. preaching. But it was very evident that the Rev. Petter, when he preached in the Prot. Ref. way, was not wanted. They did not want the Prot. Ref. truth. That, and not the passing of the Declaration as such, was the cause why they "liberated", separated themselves from our churches. All this in spite of the fact that in my sermon at the organization of the church in Chatham I definitely and emphatically warned them that they must never organize if they could not affirmatively answer the second question in baptism concerning the doctrine that is taught *here* in this Christian church. Also this explains my impression that those people in Chatham are very untrustworthy.

(to be continued)

H. H.

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Conditional Theology

In *Concordia* of Jan. 17, 1952, the Rev. B. Kok begins to launch an attack upon the Declaration of Principles adopted by our last synod, defends the proposition that the promise is conditional, and makes an attempt to introduce into our churches, principally, the whole liberated theology.

All this I hope to prove in future articles.

The Rev. Kok does not do all this personally, but hides behind the name of Dr. K. Schilder.

But this cannot make principal difference.

He translates with full approval, with strong recommendation, without one word of criticism, what Dr. Schilder writes. He even states that one who would translate all the articles of Dr. Schilder in which he attacks the Declaration of Principles would do our churches a great service.

He is, therefore, fully responsible.

When, therefore, in future articles, I attack Dr. Schilder, the reader must understand that the Rev. Kok compels me to hide behind the name of that liberated theologian to attack the theologian of Holland, Mich.

H. H.

By all means: let's keep the record straight

It is rather striking, I think, that both the Revs. Kok and De Jong raise objections against my recent editorial in *The Standard Bearer* "The Stocking is Finished." It is striking, too, that their objections do not concern what is, to me, the more important part of the article. For this more significant part of the article is contained in the following sentences:

"And the whole thing became one entangled mass when, in the meantime, in August 1949, the letter written by Prof. Holwerda to the immigrants in Canada was brought to our attention.

"That letter revealed: 1) That instead of transacting ecclesiastical business in an ecclesiastical way, and, therefore, instead of contacting officially our Committee of Correspondence, the Committee of Foreign Correspondence in the Netherlands decided to transact the business of the churches unofficially by meeting behind the back of the Committee for Correspondence of our churches with the Revs. De Jong and Kok. 2) That the fears of those that had objections against correspondence with our churches, such as van Dijk, van Raalte, Holwerda and others, were mysteriously allayed. 3) That the impression was created that no definite interpretation of the Confessions was maintained and binding in the Prot. Ref. Churches. 4.) That the impression was made that there was ample room for the covenant views of the Liberated in our churches. 5) That only on that basis the immigrants were advised to join the Protestant Reformed Churches but, at the same time, that, if the conception of such men as the Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff were maintained in the Prot. Ref. Churches, they should never join."

Let the brethren De Jong and Kok raise objections against the above paragraphs rather than call attention to some matters of minor significance.

The matter mentioned in the above paragraphs has never been explained.

Yet to clear the murky air in our churches, and to restore confidence in the brethren, I and many others with me, have very much need of such an explanation.

I for one will never rest, but will repeatedly refer to this matter publicly as long as a proper explanation is not forthcoming.

In the meantime, I am glad for the little side-glancing criticism the brethren offer to my editorial: "The Stocking is Finished."

That gives me, at least, an opportunity to answer them.

The matter to which the Rev. De Jong refers is the same as that to which the Rev. Kok objected in *The Standard Bearer*. The latter wrote under the title: *Correction, Please,* the former, in *Concordia* under the caption: *Let's keep the record straight.*

The matter has reference to the first letter written to The Netherlands by the Committee for Correspondence, the letter that was condemned by our synod of 1948, and for which that body substituted another letter.

Both the brethren refer to this letter, and object that the synod of 1948 never condemned it.

Only, in addition, the Rev. De Jong also refers to my reply to a letter I received from him, while I was convalescing in California, and leaves the impression that I fully agreed with the letter he had composed and proposed to send to The Netherlands.

To this I reply:

1. Let the Rev. De Jong produce the letter I wrote him from California at the time. I not only give him permission, but now I demand of him to do so. If he wants to keep the records straight, let him produce the records, and not draw inference from the letter I wrote to him. He *concludes* from the mere negative fact that I did not criticize his letter that I agreed with it. Let him, therefore, keep the records straight, and produce my letter is full. Then let the reader judge whether I agreed with the contents of the letter.

2. That I did not write extensively on the contents of the letter proposed by the Rev. De Jong was due to the fact I could neither write nor type. My hand was very stiff, and it was painful labor for me to write even the shortest letter. It took me a long time. This is still the case, although my hand has since improved. This, and not the fact that I agreed with the contents of the Rev. De Jong's letter, is the reason why I did not go into the contents of the letter.

3. I did agree, and I still do, with that part of the letter that asked for correspondence with the Reformed Churches (Art. 31) of the Netherlands. But correspondence is something quite different from organic union, and whether our correspondence would lead to the relation of sister churches, so that we would open our pulpits to Liberated ministers, and receive attestations from them, was still to be seen. And, therefore, although I did not agree with the sentiments expressed in the Rev. De Jong's letter, I considered it harmless to sign the letter *conditionally.* That it is not true, what the Rev. De Jong writes, that what was the contents of his letter was living in our churches, is proved by the facts: 1. That the synod of 1948 condemned the letter; 2. That the synod of 1950 refused to enter into immediate relation of sister churches with the Liberated churches,

as was proposed by their deputies for correspondence, although it had no objection to correspondence.

4. I signed the letter *conditionally*. And a condition, you know, is a prerequisite. And the prequisite was that the Rev. Ophoff also sign the letter. This means: 1. That my signing of the letter implied that I would not stand in the way of expediting the matter of correspondence, though I confess it had been better had I never signed it; 2. That my signature would be nul and void if the Rev. Ophoff should refuse to sign it, just as the covenant and promise of God are necessarily nul and void if they depend on any condition on the part of man.

Now let the Rev. De Jong produce my letter written to him from California, and not give the readers a wrong impression by drawing his own conclusions.

I promise him my apology if I expressed myself in favor of the contents of the letter, except as far as the matter of correspondence is concerned.

But produce it he must.

The record must, by all means, be kept straight.

The second element of criticism in the article of Rev. De Jong I already answered in my reply to Rev. Kok. It concerns my statement that the synod of 1948 condemned the letter sent by the committee of correspondence.

I do no have to repeat what I wrote in that reply.

Only, I now want to emphasize that, in order to keep the records straight, we certainly must maintain that the synod of 1948 condemned that letter.

Grounds:

1. That synod substituted an entirely different letter, not in as far as the correspondence was concerned, but in as far as the sentiments expressed by its committee were concerned. Synod did not want to express sentiments as uttered in the following sentences: "But we also believe that the origin of your churches was a Reformation and a return to the old and tried Reformed paths." You see, it certainly had to appear from our correspondence together whether this were true or not. In fact, there was, at the time, strong doubt in the synod about the truth of this statement. At any rate synod considered it rash to make such statements, before any correspondence had taken place. We certainly did not want to characterize Heynsian theology as a return to tried Reformed paths.

Another objection synod had to the letter of our committee is contained in the following sentences: "Finally, the fact that at present many Reformed immigrants are moving to America and Canada, is all the more reason why we, if at all possible, would like to have correspondence with your Churches. We do not know where the liberated families are to be found, because we do not have their addresses. If at all possible we would like to do something for the members of your Churches. *We would also like to receive them in our Churches, or to organize them into congregations wherever possible.* (I underscore, H.H.)." I am sure that also this last sentence was one of the reasons why the synod did not want to subscribe to this letter of the committee. For, it surely would leave the impression upon the churches in The Netherlands that we were ready simply to receive members from the liberated churches into our churches merely upon their showing their attestations, and to organize churches from their membership into Protestant Reformed Churches, without first examining or instructing them into our truth. And this we were not prepared to do, as subsequent history clearly has shown.

It was for these reasons that synod condemned the letter of the committee and substituted quite a different letter.

And why, pray, should synod have done this, if it had approved of the letter of the committee?

There was a motion before synod to approve of the committee's letter, but synod did not adopt that motion. Instead, it adopted an entirely different letter.

Is it not true that when a substitute motion is adopted the original motion is rejected and, thereby, condemned?

Will the Rev. De Jong, or, for that matter, the Rev. Kok, answer this question?

By all means, let us keep the record straight!

And the above, and not what the Rev. De Jong writes, is the record.

2. To this I wish to add that anyone who was present at the sessions of synod 1948 knows that the above is correct. The discussions concerning the letter in question brought this out very plainly. In fact, I do not express myself too strongly when I say that synod was dumbfounded that such a letter was ever written by the commmittee. Those that were present will well remember that I was called on the carpet for it, and that I explained how the letter came into existence. They will also remember that the Rev. Ophoff had to explain that he did not want to sign the letter, but that only under repeated pressure by the Rev. De Jong he finally signed it. For all this I can produce plenty testimony of witnesses that were present at the discussions.

I do not wish to excuse myself for signing that letter. I know that I was responsible. The only possible excuse I can offer is that, at the time, I still was not well. But once more, though I agreed on the matter of correspondence, I certainly did not agree with the entire contents of the letter.

And I was very much relieved when the synod was wise enough to condemn that letter of the committee and to adopt quite a different one.

But, by all means, let us not muddle up the records, but keep them straight.

And let the Rev. De Jong, for the sake of the record, produce my letter to him from California.

Then I can, at least, apologize if there is any reason for it.

This I have the right to demand of him.

H. H.

The Article of Rev. J. D. De Jong

I have reference to the same article from Rev. de Jong's pen with which Rev. H. Hoeksema is occupied in this issue of The Standard Bearer. I (undersigned) have real need of giving this article some additional treatment.

Rev. de Jong writes: "It is also a fact that I sent said letter to Rev. Hoeksema who was at that time in California. It is furthermore a matter of record, in his communication to me, that Rev. Hoeksema did not favor sending my proposed letter to the brethren in Holland *at that time* . . . But this was not at all for the reason that the Reverend objected to the content of the letter. If he did he certainly did not tell me."

Remark. But this is an argument from silence and therefore not valid. Though Rev. Hoeksema failed to reveal to Rev. de Jong that he objected to the contents of the letter, he still may have had objections to the content of the letter. A short time later, when he had returned to Grand Rapids, he called me on the phone to express to me his deep sorrow at his having learned that I had signed the letter.

But that Rev. Hoeksema objected to both the form and the content of the letter is also reasonably clear from his communication to Rev. de Jong. Doesn't Rev. de Jong tell us that in his communication Rev. Hoeksema stated that he favored waiting with sending the letter until the next synod? How to explain this advice except on the ground that Rev. Hoeksema objected to the content of the letter? Why should he be opposed to sending the letter at that time if he was agreed with the content? I also recall that in his communication Rev. Hoeksema stated that we should not want to beg but should allow the Liberated to take the next step implying that the letter as to its character was a begging missive and therefore as to its content objectionable.

In *Rev. de Jong's* letter to Rev. Hoeksema convalescing in California I come upon these lines: "I wrote this letter (the one that was sent to the deputies for correspondence in the Netherlands—O) in the first place at the suggestion of Rev. Ophoff."

Comment. I can't recall having made such a suggestion. And to me it seems too unlikely. Rev. de Jong must recall that I told him in no uncertain language how bitterly opposed I was to the Liberated churches and our churches becoming sister churches. He also must remember certainly that when he first said to me in a phone call that Rev. Hoeksema had signed the letter and would I also now sign it, my reply was that I never would. Is it likely then that *I* should have been the one to suggest that the "letter" be written?

Rev. de Jong. No, but knowing that Rev. Hoeksema had not voiced his objection either against the *contents* or the *form* of the letter, Rev. Ophoff had really little argument left why he should *not* sign the letter. (Italics—D).

Remark. I stand rather amazed at what Rev. de Jong here writes.

Is this true— true *that I had little argument left* on that account (on account of Rev. Hoeksema not having voiced any objections either to the *form* or *contents* of the letter) and that I therefore signed the letter? Let us see, if this is true. What was that argument of mine? (I have a witness that what I am now going to say is the truth. And that witness is my wife. For the conversation took place in my own home. And my wife was present and heard all). Now then, what was that argument of mine? It was this, namely that I had principle objections to the signing of the letter—objections rising from the doctrinal differences between the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed and that therefore I would not sign the letter for the weighty reason that I could not for conscience sake.

This was my argument of which Rev. de Jong says that it was so nearly destroyed that little remained of it. But this contention of Rev. de Jong raises two questions: 1) By what counter argument was that argument of mine so nearly destroyed that little remained of it? 2) Who is that one who claims to have destroyed it? That one, of course, is Rev. de Jong. And what *was* his argument by which he now claims to have destroyed my argument, that is practically so? That argument, as he himself tells us, was precisely this: that Rev. Hoeksema had voiced no objections either to the *form* or the *contents* of the letter.

This was Rev. de Jong's argument by which he now claims to have destroyed my argument. But did he? Certainly, he did not. And this for the very

obvious reason that from the fact that Rev. Hoeksema had voiced no objections either to the *form* or the content of the letter it certainly does not follow that there are no doctrinal differences between the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed. So the fact is that Rev. de Jong *had not* practically destroyed my argument by his argument. On the contrary, when Rev. de Jong left my presence, my argument was still standing very much erect and with head uplifted. How else could it be? It's simply a matter of cold logic.

How then, I would like to know, could Rev. de Jong write in the Concordia for all to read that by his argument he had so nearly destroyed my argument that practically nothing remained of it, so that standing speechless, so to say, I in my helplessness and confusion signed the letter as not knowing what else that I could well do?

What had Rev. de Jong to do to give him the right to say that he had practically destroyed my argument? This is obvious. He had to prove with the scriptures and the Confessions that the doctrine of the Liberated is sound doctrine and that therefore, as our doctrine, too, is sound, no doctrinal or dogmatical differences can exist between us and the Liberated, and that, such being the case, I could certainly sign the letter with a good conscience. But, of course, Rev. de Jong did not even make the attempt. He did not even as much as take notice of my argument, to say nothing of combating it with proper argument. That nevertheless he could write in effect that very little of *my* argument remained when he had done bearing down on it with *his argument*—the argument, namely, that Rev. Hoeksema had not voiced any objections either to the form or the content of the letter—this, to me, is a connumdrum.

But perhaps Rev. de Jong will say that the point to his article—that particular section of it with which we are occupied—is not at all that he had practically destroyed *my argument* with *his argument*.

But if this is not the point to the reasoning of that section of his article with which we are now occupied, will Rev. de Jong then state in plain English just what is the point to the reasoning of that section of his article with which we are occupied? Is it perhaps this: that, though I did not favor the letter, I nevertheless signed the letter, *just because* Rev. Hoeksema had not voiced any objections either to its form or contents? But how could Rev. Hoeksema's failure to voice his objections to the letter be the reason for my signing the letter, seeing that Rev. Hoeksema at the same time was in favor of waiting with writing to the brethren in The Netherlands until next synod, and seeing that I on my part (and Rev. de Jong knew this) was even so strongly in favor of waiting with writing to the brethren in The Netherlands that I did not want to write to them at all with a view to their churches and our churches becoming sister churches? This is not well possible, is it? So there must be *another* reason for my signing the letter, and Rev. de Jong knew that reason, for it had come to me from him.

So again I turn to Rev. de Jong with the question, what really is *the* point to the reasoning of the passage of his article in question. Let him tell us. He should. He is under solemn obligation. For the way the passage in question reads it can easily be taken to mean that, though I did not favor the letter, I nevertheless signed it, *just because* Rev. Hoeksema voiced no objections to it. And this cannot be true, as I have just shown.

And is it true that, as Rev. de Jong states, I read from Rev. Hoeksema's *own hand* that the letter was *perfectly alright* for the purpose. I can't recall reading any such thing from Rev. Hoeksema's own hand. And therefore I request that Rev. de Jong publish Rev. Hoeksema's letter to him in order that it may appear whether or not he wrote such a thing.

But there is this question remaining. If for principle reasons I was so bitterly opposed to signing that letter, why then did I nevertheless sign it? Why? Because in my weakness and folly I allowed Rev. de Jong to wear me down with this argument of his: You see for yourself that you are the only one opposing the movement toward the Liberated churches and our churches becoming sister churches. Rev. Hoeksema is not really opposed. For he raises no principle objections. Our people are for it. You are the only one that stands in the way.

This was Rev. de Jong's new argument, and it proved potent indeed.

For the result was that I began to debate with myself whether I all alone should assume that responsibility, whether it wasn't the height of conceit for me to imagine that I alone was right and all the rest of us wrong. Could the Spirit be dwelling in me alone? Preposterous, I said to myself. And in that mood I signed the letter.

Having obtained my signature, Rev. de Jong immediately left. He was barely gone, when I began to accuse myself. I felt that in signing that letter I had done one of the worst things I had ever done in all my life. And that is still my conviction. I can't understand to this day why I allowed myself to act under the impulse of that mood.

For certainly there was no reason for me to allow myself to be brought into this mood. For it was not true that I was the only one opposed. I soon

learned that Rev. Hoeksema was just as much opposed as I and for the same reasons. And there were several others among our ministers just as much opposed as also many of our people as has become evident. And certainly the matter of signing or not signing that letter could have waited until Rev. Hoeksema had returned. Then we could have met as committee. There was no reason for haste. Besides, the letter contains statements that should certainly have caused me to recoil from signing it. There is this statement: "But we believe that the origin of your churches (Liberated) was a Reformation and a return to the old and tried Reformed paths," mark you well, to the old and tried Reformed paths. Do we believe that? I for one do not believe it. In fact I know from a study of source material that during the past three years has come into my possession that it is not true. Here is another statement: "Dogmatical differences, which possibly may exist between you and us, are no confessional differences." But dogmatical differences between us and the liberated do actually exist. And though we do have the same Forms of Unity, we do not certainly interpret them alike, And then finally this statement: "If at all possible we would like to do something for the members of your churches. *We would like to receive them in our churches, or to organize them into congregations wherever possible.*" This is what Rev. de Jong would have us do but not what I would have us do.

Reading these statements, I stand amazed at my having signed that letter. Whether I neglected at the time to take proper notice of the content of the letter? I do not know. It is true that at the time of my signing the letter I hadn't yet made a study of the theology of the Liberated. For I had not in my possession the necessary source material, books and pamphlets of Liberated authorship. Hence my acquaintance with Liberated theology was rather slight. But the little I did know of it had turned me against it. For to me it smacked of Arminianism and thus left in my mouth a very bad taste. And therefore already then and especially because of my having listened to Dr. Schilder's expositions of doctrine on the meetings of our conference with him, I strongly objected to our churches having correspondance with the Liberated churches. That is, what I objected to was that we be sister churches.

As to Rev. Hoeksema, he feels the same as I do about our having signed that letter. Also his stand is, of course, that it should not have been done. He signed it because if the majority of the committee were in favor of sending the letter, he did not want to withhold his signature. But he felt certain at the time that the majority of the committee would not be in favor of sending the letter and therefore he attached his signature to the letter. Besides, all that the letter proposes to the deputies in the Netherlands is that preparatory work be done that would lead to correspondence. And correspondence as Rev. Hoeksema saw and still sees it, does not necessarily mean that two communion of churches be sister churches.

In fine, my purpose in replying to the writing of Rev. de Jong is not, certainly, to bring in excuses for my doing. Nor do I mean to be blaming Rev. de Jong for what I have done—sign the letter. That was my deed for which I must and am also willing to bear the blame. However, Rev. de Jong is not without sin. Having learned from my own mouth that I was unable to sign the "letter" with a good conscience, he should by all means have desisted from attempting to induce me to give him my signature. He did, certainly, have the right to make it possible for me to sign the letter with a good conscience by attempting to remove my objections. But fact is that he made no attempt at all to remove my objections, made no attempt to prove to me that I was taking a wrong attitude toward the theology of the Liberated. As he himself admits, the substance of his whole argument was that whereas I was the only one in the whole denomination opposed to sending the letter, I had better sign it. And that is not argument. It is simply a statement, and a false statement at that, one therefor which he might not even make. And certainly I did very wrong in allowing myself to be influenced by it.

I noticed that in his article Rev. de Jong takes the stand that his doing was ethical. He writes: "Of course he (Ophoff) did not favor that letter, in that respect Rev. Ophoff has been rather consistent, but at that time the *potent* argument for me with Rev. Ophoff was that Rev. Hoeksema had *no objections* to the letter (take notice of these Italics. They are Rev. de Jong's).

Rev. de Jong must not defend his doing. We may never try to induce a person to go against his own conscience and especially not by means of falacious reasonings. That certainly is very wrong.

Here follows that passage from Rev. de Jong's article with which I deal in this article.

"It is correct that Rev. Ophoff hesitated to sign the proposed letter when I confronted him with it."

(Remark, the word "hesitated" is much too weak here. Rev. de Jong knows that he should have written: "It is correct that Rev. Ophoff stated that he could not sign the letter for conscience sake").

"If there was a certain measure of pressure on my part to have Rev. Ophoff sign the letter, that pressure, if one wants to call it such, certainly was on

the level, open and above board, and a matter of conviction on my part that we were doing the right."

(Remark. Here Rev. de Jong admits that he used pressure on me. Here then we have proof from his own pen that he had encountered in me a very serious objection to signing the letter—the objection which I just stated and that his final argument was what I said it is).

"And *knowing* Rev. Ophoff I feel *absolutely* positive that he never would have signed the letter if Rev. Hoeksema *had in any way at all* expressed his objection against the content of the letter."

(Remark. Take notice of the Italics in this sentence. They are all Rev. de Jong's. Here Rev. de Jong means to establish with absolute certainly that Rev. Hoeksema raised no objections either to the form or the content of the letter. But I am satisfied that I have overturned this whole argument of his. The readers may judge).

"No, but knowing that the Rev. Hoeksema had *not* voiced his objection either to the *contents* or the *form* of the letter, Rev. Ophoff had really little argument left why he should not sign the letter."

(Remark. First, Italics J.D.'s. How fantastically fallacious this reasoning of J.D.! This, too has been made clear.)

"Of course he (Ophoff) did not favor (take notice, *favor*. Much too weak a term in this connection for reasons already stated—O) that letter, in that respect Rev. Ophoff has been rather consistant, but at that time the *potent* argument for me with Rev. Ophoff was that Hoeksema had *no objections* to the letter."

(Remark. Here Rev. de Jong says that in raising objections to signing the letter, I was consistant. This can mean but one thing, namely that the objection that I raised to signing the letter in my private meeting with Rev. de Jong is the same objection that I at the time had in public all along been raising against the Liberated churches and our churches becoming sister churches. This objection was that the theology of the Liberated smacks of arminianism. Here then we have more proof from the pen of Rev. de Jong that in my private meeting with him I told him that I could not sign the letter for conscience sake. Rev. de Jong should have told this to his readers. But he didn't. He also refrained from revealing to his readers the *real* reason for my signing the letter. And he so wrote as to leave the impression that the reason I signed the letter is that Rev. Hoeksema raised no objection to it. This is wrong of Rev. de Jong. To his assertion that Rev. Hoeksema had no objection to the letter, I have already replied. Rev. Hoeksema stated that he did not like to beg implying that the letter was a begging one. This may not be a principle objection but it is nevertheless an objection to the content and form of the letter).

"And it seems to me Rev. Ophoff acquiesed in signing the letter when he read from Rev. Hoeksema's *own hand* that the letter was *perfectly alright for the purpose."*

(Remark. I trust that it has become plain that also this statement from the pen of Rev. de Jong is fantastically untrue. And I am also certain, as I said, that Rev. de Jong is not quoting Rev. Hoeksema here literally. Will Rev. de Jong do so. Will he please publish that communication of Rev. Hoeksema, which he still has in his possession. And by the way, also these *italics* are J.D.'s).

Now I suppose that Rev. de Jong and more of our people won't like this article. I can't say that I like it myself. But what could I do? That article of Rev. de Jong had to be answered. For, as he says, the records must be kept straight by all means. I haven't been writing controversial articles for a long time. And it wasn't my intention to be breaking out into controversy in this issue of our paper. But we are simply being driven to it. Also by the kind of articles that Rev. Kok has been placing in our papers. These brethren seem to be determined to keep the pot boiling. That is all right, too.

G. M. Ophoff

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CHURCHES

Classis East, at its last session on Jan. 9, 1952, decided that Rev. A. Petter is eligible for a call.

Classis East—D. Jonker, S.C.

CLASSIS WEST of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Rock Valley, Wednesday, March 5, 1952.

M. Gritters, S.C.

Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm:
Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm.

As surely as He overcame,
And triumphed once for you;
So surely, you, that love His name,
Shall triumph in Him too.

THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

PART TWO

Of Man's Redemption

LORD'S DAY XXXI

3

The Preaching of the Promise (cont.)

It is self-evident that if the preaching of the gospel is to be a key-power, to open and to shut the kingdom of heaven, it must produce a very definite sound. It must not be a vague, general offer of salvation, but must proclaim the whole counsel of God. The more definitely and sharply the promise is proclaimed in the preaching, the more effective an instrument it will be for Christ to open and to shut the kingdom of heaven. As was said before, the preaching must have a four-fold effect. It must confirm believers in the assurance that they are in the kingdom of heaven. It must call those that before their own consciousness are still without to enter into that kingdom. It must expel those that, as far as the church visible is concerned, are within but nevertheless have no part in the kingdom of Christ. And it must bar those that belong without from ever entering into the church of Christ.

This is true, as far as the effect of the preaching of the Word is concerned upon the consciences of the hearers, even for the hypocrites. It stands to reason that a real hypocrite is not easily expelled from the church visible on earth, even by the most definite preaching of the gospel. He speaks as a believer and acts as one, although inwardly he is an unbeliever and knows it. Nevertheless the preaching of the Word must be so definite that even the hypocrite is condemned in his own conscience, and knows that he has no part in the kingdom of God. The preaching of the Word, therefore, as a key power must produce a very definite sound.

This is also the clear teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 84. To every believer the preaching declares that whenever they receive the promise by a true faith, all their sins are forgiven them for the sake of Christ's merits.

Here the promise of God is declared to be only for the believers.

Now it is certainly true that the believer is the same as the elect. It is also true that it must be clearly preached that faith is a gift of God, and is the fruit of His sovereign grace. Moreover, it must be clearly proclaimed in the preaching that this gift of grace is bestowed only upon the elect, and upon none other. Always the whole counsel of God must be proclaimed. There is no assurance of faith in the error of Arminianism. Nor is there in that false doctrine any key-power to shut the kingdom of heaven against unbelievers. The preacher, therefore, that leaves the impression in any way that man has of himself the power to "accept" Christ distorts the Word of God and his preaching does not serve to open, nor to shut, the kingdom of heaven.

But this does not mean that the preaching of the Word may consist in an abstract proclamation of the doctrine of election. On the contrary, in as far as the preaching of the Word addresses the believing church, whether those that have only the power of faith or those that have already received Christ by a conscious and active faith, it must always *call* the elect to believe and to repent. Moreover, it must constantly explain to them and confront them with the obligation to keep their part of the covenant of God, not, to be sure, as a condition for God's part of the covenant, but as the fruit of the realization of God's covenant in them as rational and moral creatures—an obligation not to fulfill an outward law of precepts, but to keep the law of love in virtue of the law that is written in their hearts. Always the preaching of the Word must exhort the whole church to cleave to and trust in the God of their salvation, to love Him with all their hearts and minds and soul and strength. It must exhort them to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It must admonish them to walk in brotherly love, to lay aside all malice and guile and hypocrisies and envies and evil speakings, and thus as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby. Through the preaching of the Word they must constantly be reminded of the fact that the works of the flesh are manifest, such as, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and that those which do such things have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, and that, on the contrary, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and that in that Spirit they must walk. In this way they must be admonished to make their calling and election sure. And they

must understand that only in the way of sanctification can they be sure of their election and calling. They must give diligence to add to their faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity; so that they are not barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the preaching of the Word must not fail to call the elect by their spiritual name: they are believers in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and sanctified in Him. They are those that have the certain spiritual knowledge of Christ, and not a mere cold, doctrinal, intellectual knowledge. They are those that put all their confidence in Him as the revelation of the God of their salvation, trusting that all their sins are forgiven only for the sake of Christ's merits. They are those that labor and are heavy laden, and constantly come to Christ to receive from Him the rest and the peace that passeth all understanding. They are the poor in spirit, whose alone is the kingdom of heaven. They are those that mourn because of their present state of sin and tribulation in the midst of the world, and that shall certainly be comforted. They are the meek, that are able to endure tribulation and the suffering of this present time for Christ's sake. They are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who in principle love the commandments of God and do them. Unto all these the kingdom of heaven is promised, and the preaching of the gospel must not fail definitely to assure them that they are children of the kingdom.

Moreover, the preaching of the gospel must also be very definite in describing the present condition of the children of God in the world. It must indeed assure them that they are perfect in principle, in virtue of the life of regeneration that is implanted in their hearts. But they must also be brought to a clear understanding of the truth that they have, and until the day of their death will have, only a small beginning of the new obedience, and that there is still much carnality in their old nature. They must understand that the picture which the apostle Paul draws of himself in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans is a very faithful representation of him that is in the kingdom of heaven in his present condition and in the midst of the present world. To be sure, he never says that he would rather continue in sin, in order that grace may abound. For to live in sin is impossible for him. Nevertheless, he knows that that which he does he allows not, what he would he does not, and what he hates that he does. The good that he would do, he does not; and the evil that he would not do, he performs. He therefore is the man that can truly cry out: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

All this must be definitely proclaimed to the whole church of God in the world. And to those believers that thus hear and heed the Word of God the assurance must be given that they are indeed in the kingdom of heaven. For the Catechism teaches us that the preaching of the Word testifies "to all and every believer, that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits." The remission of sins is here presented as the content of the promise of the gospel. This does not mean, as we have explained before, that remission of sins is the only blessing contained in the promise of God. For the promise includes the application of all the benefits of Christ, which He merited for us by His perfect obedience. Nevertheless, if the preaching of the gospel is to be a key-power, whereby believers are assured that they belong in the kingdom of heaven, the promise of the forgiveness of sins through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord is not only sufficient, but must be considered the chief and principal element of the promise. For, in the first place, objectively the blood and merits of Christ are the sole gate to the kingdom of God. Another passage into that kingdom there is not. Not the works of the law, not self-righteousness, not any measure of religiousness, in a word, nothing of man himself, but only the cross of Christ and His perfect obedience gives entrance into the kingdom of God. And that gate is subjectively the gate of humiliation and sorrow after God. One can never pass through that gate with a stiff neck and a proud heart. Only on his knees can the sinner enter through the gate of the kingdom of heaven. And that means that he must have forgiveness, and that only when Christ Himself, through the preaching of the gospel, assures him that his sins are forgiven, he may be confident that he belongs in the kingdom of Christ. And therefore it is not to the perfect, not to those that have no sin, nor to sinners in general, but to penitent sinners that hear and receive the promise of forgiveness, that the gate of the kingdom of heaven is opened. Besides, even as the righteousness of Christ is the sole basis for all the other benefits of salvation, so the forgiveness of sins is the key that opens for the contrite and troubled heart all the blessings of grace. And therefore the Catechism is certainly correct when it states that the kingdom of heaven is opened by the preaching of the gospel when "it is declared and publicly testified to

all and every believer, that whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits."

Nor must in the preaching of the gospel to the church of Jesus Christ in the world the congregation be divided into different groups, as was often done in past years, when the sermon was characterized by a separate application. In fact, in those cases the application was often considered to be the most interesting and most important part of the sermon. The expository part of the sermon frequently induced the congregation to go to sleep, in order to wake up when the minister began with the applicatory part. In the main the congregation was divided into converted and unconverted, although the former were often again distinguished into assured children of God, seeking souls, those that were constantly in doubt, etc. But this is an error. The whole Word of God must be proclaimed to the whole church. And that whole church consists, according to the Reformed conception, of believers and their seed. Of them we confess at the moment of baptism that God establishes His eternal covenant of grace with them, that their sins are forgiven them, and that they are adopted in Christ Jesus as children of God. Of them we confess that they are sanctified in Christ, and that they are obliged to walk in new obedience, to love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, to forsake the world, to crucify their flesh, and to walk in a new and holy life. That whole church must be called to repent, and all without exception must heed the Word of God, put off the old man and put on the new. And to those that thus heed the Word of God the promise must be proclaimed that their sins are forgiven them for the sake of the merits of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nor is this all.

The key-power of the Word does not only concern believers, but also unbelievers. Hence, the Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 84 teaches us that "on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted." These the key-power of the Word expels and definitely places outside of the kingdom of heaven. The Catechism here speaks of unbelievers and such as do not sincerely repent. They are not necessarily the reprobate in the same sense that believers are necessarily the elect. For of course it is possible that the unbelievers can still be converted, and that those who do not sincerely repent are by the grace of God brought to true sorrow and repentance of their sins. Hence, the Heidelberg Catechism speaks in the same sentence of those who are still unconverted. Besides, even as the preaching of the gospel does not address the elect in the abstract, but speaks to them as believers, so it does not address the reprobate as such, but speaks to them as unbelievers and those that do not sincerely repent. Nevertheless, the preaching of the Word as a key-power expels them from the church and declares unto them that they have no part in the kingdom of God.

We may, of course, distinguish, as evidently does the Catechism, between unbelievers and those that do not repent, although the two are, of course, inseparably related. Unbelievers are those that either openly deny the truth of the Word of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, or reveal by their entire attitude that they do not possess the true and living faith in Christ. They do not know Him with a certain spiritual knowledge as those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. They do not put all their confidence in Him alone for the forgiveness of their sins, trust in their own righteousness, and trample under foot the blood of Christ. And those that do not sincerely repent are not filled with a true sorrow after God, do not crucify their old nature, do not forsake the world, but rather walk in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And they are those who are really excommunicated from the table of the Lord by the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper when it declares: "Therefore, we also according to the command of Christ and the apostle Paul, admonish all those who are defiled with the following sins, to keep themselves from the table of the Lord, and declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ; such as all idolaters, all those who invoke deceased saints, angels or other creatures; all those who worship images; all enchanters, diviners, charmers, and those who confide in such enchantments; all despisers of God, and of his Word, and of the holy sacraments; all blasphemers; all those who are given to raise discord, sects and mutiny in Church or State; all perjured persons; all those who are disobedient to their parents and superiors; all murderers, contentious persons, and those who live in hatred and envy against their neighbors; all adulterers, whoremongers, drunkards, thieves, usurers, robbers, gamesters, covetous, and all who lead offensive lives." To them must be proclaimed, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and eternal condemnation so long as they remain in their unconverted state.

Only when the gospel is thus definitely preached, and gives no uncertain sound, is and can the preaching be the power of the keys, to open and shut the

kingdom of heaven. Thus the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers, weak or strong, small and great, assured or hesitant. For to them all the certain, indubitable promise of God is proclaimed that they have the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's merits, and that therefore all the blessings of salvation are theirs. And thus the kingdom of heaven is shut to unbelievers as those that stand exposed to the wrath of God, and who will be judged according to the testimony of the gospel both in this life and in the life to come. And if thus the gospel is definitely and truly preached, according to the Scriptures, there can be no doubt that what is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Once more we must emphasize that this preaching of the gospel could have no power at all, if it were not that the preaching stands in the service of the living Word of Christ. Christ has the key-power, and He alone. He opens, and no man shutteth; and He shutteth, and no man openeth. And only when Christ Himself, through His efficacious Word binds the preaching of the gospel according to the Scriptures upon the conscience of every hearer, can it be a savour of life unto life to those that believe, and a savour of death unto death to those that do not repent and believe. For it is never the word of man, but "the Word of God that is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

H. H.



BOUND VOLUME XXVII

Volume 27 to be bound are now at the book binder and should be ready in about thirty days. Those residing out side of Grand Rapids and who have a standing order for this volume should forward *at once* their loose issues to Mr. C. Kregel, 1250 Philadelphia Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, or to Mr. J. Faber, 829 Oakhill St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

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Book Comm., R.F.P.A. Board

OUR DOCTRINE

The Hexaemeron or Creation-Week

(12)

THE CREATION OF MAN (5)

We were busy in our previous article with a discussion of the conception known among us as the Covenant of Works. We quoted from Prof. Berkhof and presented his Scriptural foundation for this doctrine. In this article we wish to continue with this discussion and will first of all quote once more from the same author. In this quotation he presents to us the various elements of the covenant of works.

Quotation from Prof. Berkhof

"The following elements must be distinguished.

1. *The Contracting Parties.* On the one hand there was the triune God, the Creator and Lord, and on the other hand, Adam as His dependent creature. A twofold relationship between the two should be distinguished:

a. *The natural relationship.* When God created man, He by that very fact established a natural relationship between Himself and man. It was a relationship like that between the potter and the clay, between an absolute sovereign and a subject devoid of any claim. In fact, the distance between the two was so great that these figures are not even an adequate expression of it. It was such that a life in communion with each other seemed to be out of the question. As the creature of God man was naturally under the law, and was in duty bound to keep it. And while transgression of the law would render him liable to punishment, the keeping of it would not constitute an inherent claim to a reward. Even if he did all that was required of him, he would still have to say, I am but an unprofitable servant, for I have merely done that which it was my duty to do. Under this purely natural relationship man could not have merited anything. But though the infinite distance between God and man apparently excluded a life of communion with each other, man was created for just such communion, and the possibility of it was already given in his creation in the image of God. In this natural relationship Adam was the father of the human race.

b. *The covenant relationship.* From the very beginning, however, God revealed Himself, not only as an absolute Sovereign and Lawgiver, but also as a loving Father, seeking the welfare and happiness of His dependent creature. He condescended to come

down to the level of man, to reveal Himself as a Friend, and to enable man to improve his condition in the way of obedience. In addition to the natural relationship He, by a positive enactment, graciously established a covenant relationship. He entered into a legal compact with man, which includes all the requirements and obligations implied in the creaturehood of man, but at the same time added some new elements. (1) Adam was constituted the representative head of the human race, so that he could act for all his descendants. (2) He was temporarily put on probation, in order to determine whether he would willingly subject his will to the will of God. (3) He was given the promise of eternal life in the way of obedience, and thus by the gracious disposition of God acquired certain conditional rights. This covenant enabled Adam to obtain eternal life for himself and for his descendants in the way of obedience.

2. *The Promise of the Covenant.* The great promise of the covenant of works was the promise of eternal life. They who deny the covenant of works generally base their denial in part on the fact that there is no record of such a promise in the Bible. And it is perfectly true that Scripture contains no explicit promise of eternal life to Adam. But the threatened penalty clearly implies such a promise. When the Lord says, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," his statement clearly implies that, if Adam refrains from eating, he will not die, but will be raised above the possibility of death. The implied promise certainly cannot mean that, in the case of obedience, Adam would be permitted to live on in the usual way, that is, to continue the ordinary natural life, for that life was his already in virtue of his creation, and therefore could not be held out as a reward for obedience. The implied promise evidently was that of life raised to its highest development of perennial bliss and glory. Adam was indeed created in a state of positive holiness, and was also immortal in the sense that he was not subject to the law of death. But he was only at the beginning of his course and did not yet possess the highest privileges that were in store for man. He was not yet raised above the possibility of erring, sinning, and dying. He was not yet in possession of the highest degree of holiness, nor did he enjoy life in all its fulness. The image of God in man was still limited by the possibility of man's sinning against God, changing from good to evil, and becoming subject to the power of death. The promise of life in the covenant of works was a promise of the removal of all the limitations of life to which Adam was still subject, and of the raising of his life to the highest degree of perfection. When Paul says in Rom. 7:10 that the commandment was unto life, he means life in the fullest sense of the word. The principle of the covenant of works was: the man that does these things shall live thereby; and this principle is reiterated time and again in Scripture, Lev. 18:5; Ezek. 20:11, 13, 20; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12.

3. *The Condition of the Covenant.* The promise in the covenant of works was not unconditional. The condition was that of implicit and perfect obedience. The divine law can demand nothing less than that, and the positive command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, relating as it did, to a thing indifferent in itself, was clearly a test of pure obedience in the absolute sense of the word. Man was, of course, also subject to the moral law of God, which was written on the tablets of his heart. He knew this by nature, so that it did not have to be revealed supernaturally, as the special test was. Essentially, the moral law, as Adam knew it, was undoubtedly like the ten commandments, but the form was different. In its present form the moral law presupposes a knowledge of sin, and is therefore primarily negative; in Adam's heart, however, it must have had a positive character. But just because it was positive, it did not bring to his consciousness the possibility of sin. Therefore a negative commandment was added. Moreover, in order that the test of Adam might be a test of pure obedience, God deemed it necessary to add to the commandments of which Adam perceived the naturalness and reasonableness, a commandment which was in a certain sense arbitrary and indifferent. Thus the demands of the law were, so to say, concentrated on a single point. The great question that had to be settled was, whether man would obey God implicitly or follow the guidance of his own judgment. Dr. Bavinck says: "Het proefgebod belichaamde voor hem (Adam) het dilemma: God of de mensch, Zijn gezag of eigen inzicht, onvoorwaardelijke gehoorzaamheid of zelfstandig onderzoek, geloof of twijfel (the probationary command embodied for him (Adam) the dilemma: God or man, His authority or own opinion, unconditional obedience or independent inquiry, faith or doubt—translation of undersigned, H. V.)"

4. *The Penalty of the Covenant.* The penalty that was threatened was death, and what this means can best be gathered from the general meaning of the term as it is used in Scripture, and from the evils that came upon the guilty in the execution of the penalty. Evidently death in the most inclusive sense of the word is meant, including physical, spiritual, and eternal death. The fundamental Scriptural idea of death is not that of extinction of being, but that of separation from the source of life, and the resulting

dissolution or misery and woe. Fundamentally, it consists in the separation of the soul from God, which manifests itself in spirituaal misery, and finally terminates in eternal death. But it also includes the separation of body and soul and the consequent dissolution of the body. Undoubtedly the execution of the penalty began at once after the first transgression. Spiritual death entered instantly, and the seeds of death also began to operate in the body. The full execution of the sentence, however, did not follow at once, but was arrested, because God immediately introduced an economy of grace and restoration.

5. *The Sacrament(s) of the Covenant.* We have no definite information in Scripture respecting the scrament(s) or seal(s) of this covenant. Hence there is a great variety of opinions on the subject. Some speak of four: the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, paradise, and the sabbath; others of three: the two trees and paradise; still others of two: the tree of life and paradise, and still others of one: the tree of life. The last opinion is the most prevalent one, and would seem to be the only one to find any support in Scripture. We should not think of the fruit of this tree as magically connected with the gift of life. In all probability it must be conceived of as an appointed symbol or seal of life. Consequently, when Adam forfeited the promise, he was debarred from the sign. So conceived the words of Gen. 3:22 must be understood sacramentally."—thus far the quotation of Berkhof.

H. Veldman

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Orange City Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy with our brother Deacon H. Pals in the death of his sister.

Mrs. S. Faber

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved family and relatives.

Consistory of Orange City, Iowa
Rev. W. Hofman, Pres.
M. De Jager, Clerk

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Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to pardon all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Let me feel them flow within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee:
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Protevangel as the Unifying Idea of all the Scriptures

III. We now come to the epoch in the series constituted of a new and marvelous work of God. It is an epoch or dispensation of grace that set in with the Egyptian bondage of the people of Israel, and ended with the Lord's entering with His people into the typical rest of Canaan. The Lord brings His people into Egypt where it is enslaved by Pharaoh. Humanly speaking, the state of the church is again hopeless, as hopeless as it was before the deluge. But the Lord delivered His church by His outstretched arm through the destruction of the adversary by the waters of the Red Sea. He leads His people to Sinai, where He gave them His covenant. Eventually He entered with His people into the rest of Canaan.

It is plain that we deal here with a new epoch of sacred history.

As to the salvation of the people of Israel from the clutch of Pharaoh, there was a negative and positive side to it. Its negative side was Israel's deliverance from the oppression of Pharaoh. Its positive side was the Lord's entering with His people the rest of Canaan. Herewith this epoch closes. The Church is again on the heights, so to speak.

How plainly Christ—*the* seed of the woman —stands out in this segment of sacred history, first in the blood of the pascal lamb, and second in Moses, the Mediator of the Old Covenant and in this capacity the type of Christ, and third in the entire ritual that was instituted at Mt. Sinai. For the soul of this ritual are the sacrifices by blood all pointing to Christ.

In this third epoch the two seeds and the enmity between them take on a new distinctiveness. Here the seed of the woman is the house of Israel, the twelve tribes according to election. The seed of the serpent is prominent in the persecuting Pharaoh, second in the Canaanite tribes under the ban of God and extirpated by the sword of Joshua, and third in the carnal, reprobated Israel.

The enmity on the side of the serpent is seen in Pharaoh's oppression of the people of Israel, in the hard bondage to which he subjected them, and especially in his ordering the infant males among the Hebrews to be killed at birth. The seed of the woman had to be destroyed. The serpent was determined. For in the loins of this seed was the Christ. The enmity on the side of the seed of the serpent is seen

further in the wars that the coalitions of Canaanite tribes initiated against Joshua. For tho Joshua had orders to extirpate the Canaanites, the wars between these races and the people of Israel were always begun by the Canaanites. They would not repent and cast themselves upon the mercies of Israel's God. For, so the sacred writer remarks, the Lord hardened their hearts as it was his purpose to destroy them. Finally, the enmity on the side of the seed of the serpent is seen in the rebellion and apostacies of the carnal, reprobated Israel.

As to the enmity on the part of the seed of the woman with regard to the seed of the serpent, it is seen in Moses' bringing over Egypt the ten plagues of God, whereby the deliveranve of Israel was effected. It is seen further in the judgments of Christ by which the carnal, reprobated Israel was destroyed during Israel's wanderings in the desert. It is seen finally in the extirpation of the Canaanites by the sword of Joshua. What we have here are so many triumphings of the seed of the woman over the malice of the serpent, so many initial crushings of the serpent's head by this seed. All these triumphs at once look ahead to the victory of Christ over all His and His people's enemies legally through His cross and actually at His appearing at the end of time.

We have now arrived at the fourth epoch in the series, to the fourth dispensation of grace, and constituted of a new and different work of God. It began with the choas that characterized the age of the judges. And ended with the accession of David and Solomon to the theocratic throne in Israel.

Shortly after the death of Joshua, whose deeds of faith belong not to this epoch but to the preceding, Israel forsook the Lord. In punishment thereof the enemy came, as sent by the Lord, and overran God's country.

The capture of the ark terminated the services at the sanctuary. At the close of Saul's reign the whole of Israel groaned under the yoke of the adversary. From the point of view of nature the plight of the church was again hopeless. But the Lord sent deliverance. He anointed David. The rejected and demented Saul tried to kill him. After a number of unsuccessful attempts on David's life, he died in a war with the Philistines, and David was king. He made war against Israel's enemies. And the Lord was with him. He finally returned his sword to its scabbard with all Israel's enemies his footstool. On the ruins of their kingdoms, he built a mighty empire, extending on the east to the Euphrates and on the West to the Mediterranean Sea. David passed to his reward and was succeed by Solomon, the king of glory.

How plain that the series of events of which Solomon's accession was the climax constitute a distinct epoch in sacred history, a new dispensation of grace.

In this fourth segment of sacred history Christ is set forth in a new light.

First we see Him, the Christ, in the person of David persecuted by Saul, as the suffering servant of Jehovah, who must pass through suffering to glory; again we see Him, again in the person of David now in the throne, as Israel's glorified and exalted warrior-king fighting the battles of Jehovah. In the language of Ps. 2, the kings of the earth—Israel's adversaries—were setting themselves, and the rulers were taking counsel together against the Lord and His anointed, in the first instance King David but in the final instance Christ as typified by David. They said, did these kings, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us," in the first instance the bands and cords of David as ruler of the heathen nations that he in his wars of conquest had made his footstool; but in the final instance again the bands and cords of Christ exalted at the Father's right hand in the highest heavens. So these heathen kings were speaking. So the kings of the earth now at the present time are speaking. But again, in the words of the Psalm, God in heaven laughs, as He had laughed with David in the theocratic throne. And He speaks now as He then had spoken. He says again in the words of the Psalm, "Yet have I set my king"—in the first instance David, but now in this present dispensation of the word, Christ —"upon my holy hill in Zion"—in the first instance the earthy Zion in the land of Canaan but now the Zion above. "I will declare the degree." And this is the decree that He, the Lord, declares, "The Lord has said unto me"—in the first instance David and in the second instance Christ —"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." As referring to David it means, "This day have I formed thee and set thee in my throne and sustain thee by my mighty arm and Spirit. But this same language, God is now addressing to Christ. The Psalm continues, "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen as thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as thy possession." This, too, has reference in the first instance to David. The Lord gave him the heathen kingdoms included in Israel's ideal boundaries. So has God given to Christ all the kingdoms of the earth. Thus in the final instance the reference is again to Christ. The Psalm continues, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." David did so with all the heathen kingdoms included within Israel's ideal boundaries. By his sword he subdued them one and all, and they became the vessels of

David. But of this prediction Christ is again the fulfillment in the final instance. The exalted Christ as the Lord of lords and the King of kings breaks the kings of the earth—the anti-christian power in this world, formed, as it is, of the kings and judges of the earth—with a rod of iron; he dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Think of how these kings through all the ages of the past have been making war against one another. Think of the wars of our day—world wide in their scope. Think of the war now pending. Men are saying that it will spell the end of our civilization. It will be that ruinous. But it is all the work of the exalted and glorified Christ. Through these wars, through the agency of these very kings, he continually breaks them and their kingdoms with a rod of iron, and dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And as a result of this work of the exalted Christ the world and all that is of the world is passing away continually before our very eyes, and through it all *the kingdom of Christ is coming.*

And through this doing of Christ the wrath of God is continually being revealed from heaven over all unrighteousness of these kings and their subjects. But because God has his elect also among the kings of the earth, and in order that the reprobated kings and judges of the earth—our own president and the congress and every judge in our land and the governors of our states, and thus every ruler here and abroad—may be without excuse, the Psalm closes with the admonition, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son (in the first instance David and in the second instance the exalted Christ) lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

David—what a remarkable prophetic type of Christ was David in his capacity of theocratic king. What a remarkable development the promise of the protevangel undergoes in the person of David and the events of sacred history connected with his person.

David and his reign and wars of conquest are the type of the glorified Christ as He is now engaged in breaking with a rod of iron the wicked kings of the earth in whose midst he reins and must reign until they all, without exception, shall have been made his footstool in the final judgment day and when as activated by carnal fear they shall confess that Jesus is the Lord. It will mean that all rebellion against Christ on the part of the reprobated will have ceased.

(to be continued) G. M. Ophoff

SION'S ZANGEN

Niet Ons, O Heere! Niet Ons

(Psalm 115; Slot)

De vorige maal, dat we bij dezen psalm stilstonden hebben we vers negen behandeld, en zagen, dat Israel vermaand werd om op den Heere te vertrouwen. Ook gaf de dichter aan hoe zij dat konden doen: Hij was hunne hulp en hun schild.

En nu zien we in het volgende vers, dat het huis Aarons dezelfde vermaning ontvangt: "Gij huis Aarons, vertrouwt op den Heere; Hij is hunne hulp en hun schild."

We hebben iets gezegd van de groote waarheid dat God een hulp en schild is voor Zijn volk, dus behoeven we dat niet weer te doen. Toch moeten we wat zeggen van dat huis Aarons. Dat huis Aarons was het priesterlijke huis, en in den engsten zin van het woord, het Hoogepriesterlijke huis. Eigenlijk moeten we teruggaan op het huis van Levi, den vader van Aaron.

Levi is de naam van Lea's zoon. Zij had zeer geworsteld om de liefde van haar man te bekomen. Jakob had Rachel lief, veel liever den Lea. Wat zal die arme vrouw geleden hebben. Door bedrog was zij zijn vrouw geworden. En nu is het wel waar, dat Laban de meeste schuld daaraan had, doch Lea is niet vrij te spreken. En toch erkent God Lea als de huisvrouw van Jakob. Eigenlijk had Jakob geen andere vrouw mogen verkiezen. God maakte ééne vrouw voor Adam: dat is het klassieke voorbeeld. En als afwijking daarvan moet als zonde gebrandmerkt. En nu weet ik wel, dat men mij tegen zal werpen, dat Jakob toch de twaalf patriarchen moest voortbrengen, en dat die twaalve uit vier vrouwen waren, maar dat verandert de zaak toch niet. God voert Zijn raad uit ook dwars door onze zonde heen, maar zonde blijft zonde, en de veelwijverij der patriarchen is gebrandmerkt zonde to zijn. Het is er mee als met den moord van Jezus. God gaf Zijn Zoon, en die Zoon moest gekruist, doch wee den mensch die Hem kruisigt. De ergernissen moeten komen, doch wee den mensch door wien zij komen. En later schijnt Jakob het ook zoo te zien, want hij zet het lichaam van Lea bij in de begraafplaats van Machpela waar de vaderen en de moeders in Israel begraven waren. Maar Rachel's lichaam wordt daar niet begraven.

Welnu, toen Lea haar derden zoon ontving, zeide zij: Nu zal zich ditmaal mijn man bij mij voegen, dewijl ik hem drie zonen gebaard heb: daarom noemde

hij zijnen naam Levi. Levi beteekent bijvoeging, aankleving.

Nu was Lea zich niet bewust dat er meer in dien naam zat dan het zooeven aangehaalde. Maar God had een zeer bizonder werk to doen voor Levi, een werk, dat schoon door zijn naam uitgedrukt wordt. De Heere zou later zijn zaad over de andere stammen strooien, en dan moest Levi een aankleving worden, waardoor zijne broederen aan elkander zouden kleven, en tezamen God aankleven. Levi is de priesterstam, en de priester brengt God tot het volk en het volk tot God. Levi zou zich straks toespitsen in het huis van Aaron, en dat huis van Aaron zou voor zeer langen tijd zich toespitsen in één man, en dat is goed, want naar Gods raad zal er straks één Man komen om Israel voor eeuwig aan elkaar te doen kleven, tezamen hen doen aankleven aan God, en God zal Zijn verbindende liefde in dien Man openbaren, de verbindende liefde van Zijn eeuwig verbond. Aaron is de Hoogepriester, en alle Hoogepriesters zijn met Aaron typen geweest van Jezus, den beteren Levi en Aaron.

Gij huis Aarons, vertrouwt op den Heere!

Hoe zou Aaron of zijn huis ooit het grootsche werk van priester en Hoogepriester volbrengen zonder dat vertrouwen op God? Vertrouwen is zich zelven laten zakken en zinken op de Rots. En de Rots is God.

"Gijlieden die den Heere vreest, vertrouwt op den Heere, Hij is hunne hulp en hun schild."

Eerst Israel, dan Aaron's huis, en nu allen die den Heere vreezen; het is compleet. Deze laatste vermaning komt tot al het volk van God. Deze zanger dacht natuurlijk aan de kerk van zijn dag. Maar de vermaning komt tot alle kinderen Gods van alle eeuwen.

Den Heere vreezen is een zeer particulier werk. Dat doet de mensch van nature nooit. Dat kan, wil en durft hij niet. Van alles wat de natuurlijke mensch haat, haat hij God het meest. Hoe zal Hij Hem dan ooit kunnen vreezen?

O ja, er is wel vreezen bij den natuurlijken mensch, doch het is het sidderen van den slaaf die zich kromt onder de zweepslagen van zijn meester. En die vreeze is wezenlijk haat. Als God Zich openbaart in Zijn oordeelen is er ook een soort vreezen bij den natuurlijken mensch, maar daarin is geen liefde, en die houding wordt door God's Woord veroordeeld. In Gods Woord wordt hetzelfde woord gebezigd, beide voor den angst die de goddeloozen hebben als ze iets van den levenden God zien, en voor het beven voor God, dat Gods volk kenmerkt. Beide godvruchtigen en goddeloozen beven voor God, doch bij den een komt die gewaarwording op uit haat, en bij den ander uit liefde. De wacht bij het graf van Jezus vreesden met groote vreeze toen ze iets zagen van de glorie Gods, en ze werden als dooden; Gods kind vreest God, en zijn vrees is rein; ze opent een fontein van heil, dat nooit vergaat. Die vreeze is het beginsel der wijsheid, en is vrucht van Gods genade.

Nu dan, die den Heere vreezen met de lieflijke vreeze der liefde, worden hier aangespoord om toch op den Heere te vertrouwen, en dat past. Ze zullen zich laten zinken op de rots der eeuwen die van geen wankelen weet, en de Rots is Christus.

Ook is er goede grond voor dat vertrouwen. God is hun tot hulp en heil. Hij is hunne hulp en hun schild. God helpt hen elken dag. Hij loopt hen vooruit, opdat zij zich niet zouden stooten aan eenigen steen. Hij is hun tot een achterhoede en beschermt hen op den weg die de verstandigen naar boven leidt. Hij staat hun terzijde en Hij beschermt de vromen, want Hij is hun tot een Schild. Dat is schoone beeldspraak. God vangt de slagen op die op hen gemunt zijn. Over die gedachte zou men wel een boek kunnen schrijven. God is het Schild van Gods volk. En dan zou het thema wel het Kruis van Golgotha moeten zijn. Daar zijn zware slagen neergekomen, en al die slagen zijn op God neergekomen, en niet op ons. De slagen van den toorn Gods, van de haat Satans en van de haat der wereld: Jezus heeft ze allen opgevangen. O ja, God is het Schild van al Zijn volk. Vertrouwt daarom gerust op hen.

"De Heere is onzer gedachtig geweest, Hij zal zegenen, Hij zal het huis Israels zegenen, Hij zal het huis Aarons zegenen. Hij zal zegenen die den Heere vreezen, de kleinen met de grooten."

Hoe aanbiddelijk schoon! Och! had Kalamazoo slechts geluisterd naar deze Godsspraak: hoe zou het verloop onzer geschiedenis gansch anders geweest zijn! Wat kan men toch tegen deze dingen zeggen? God zal zegenen die den Heere vreezen! Waar zal dan de goddelooze en zondaar verschijnen? Als God toch alleen zegent die den Heere vreezen, dan blijft er toch niet dan vloek over voor de armzalige menschheid die Hem haat? Er zijn toch geen drie wegen?

En de fontein van dat zegenen van Gods volk is dit: De Heere is onzer gedachtig geweest!

Elders zingt Gods volk: Hij heeft gedacht aan Zijn genade! Zijn trouw aan Israel nooit gekrenkt! Wat is dit anders dan de eeuwige liefde Gods voor Zijn erfdeel? Dat is het Evangelie en niets anders. Als God niet aan ons gedacht had was er eenvoudig niet één mensch behouden geworden. Wij dachten niet meer aan God; wij dwaalden allen als schapen, *wij keerden ons een iegelijk naar zijnen weg!* Maar de Heere heeft gedacht aan Zijn genade! En het resultaat is, dat de Heere Zijn volk zegent.

En wat beteekent het nu, dat de Heere het huis Israels zegent, de kleinen met de grooten? Dat be-

teekent dit: alle dingen werken U mede ten goede! En alle dingen beteekent daar *alle dingen,* niets uitgesloten. Dat is het Evangelie. Het onveranderlijke hart van God denkt altijd aan Zijn volk ten goede. Hij spreidt Zijn vleugelen steeds uit boven Zijn volk. Hij weert alle kwaad van hen, of Hij keert het hun ten beste. Als Hij Zijn eenigen Zoon niet spaarde, doch overgaf voor alle kinderen Gods, zal Hij dan niet met Hem hun alle dingen schenken? Hij vaart op den hemel ter hunner hulpe, en met Zijn hoogheid op de bovenste wolken. De eeuwige God is ten allen tijde hun tot een woning, en van onderen zijn altijd Zijne eeuwige armen; Hij verdrijft den vijand van voor hun aangezicht, en zegt: Verdelg! En dan komt er een land vol van koren en most. O! Gods volk is zoo veilig, zoo geheel en al veilig!

Als dan de Heilige Geest dat volk ziet in de vlakke velden van Moab, dan roept die getrouwe Getuige uit: Welgelukzalig zijt gij, o Israel, wie is U gelijk? Gij zijt een volk verlost door den Heere!

O zeker, des Heeren zegen is over Zijn volk.

Ik zal het U schetsen, opdat ge op Hem vertrouwen moogt ten allen tijde. Toen Jezus, en Hij is Jehovah, naar den hemel terugging, toen breidde Hij Zijne gezegende armen uit over dat kleine hoopje amechtige volk, dat Hem gevolgd was op de glooiing van den Olijfberg, en toen sprak Hij lieflijke woorden, vertroostende woorden. Niemand weet hier op aarde wat die woorden geweest zijn, maar ik geloof, dat ik den algemeenen inhoud ken. Hij zal ongeveer dit gezegd hebben: De Heere zegene U en behoede u! De Heere doe Zijn aangezicht over u lichten en zij u genadig! De Heere verheffe het licht Zijns aanschijns over u en geve u Zijnen vrede!

Daar waren ongeveer 120 zielen bijeen. Ik denk, dat dit 120-tal ook kleine kinderen insloot, want Gods zegen is over de kleinen met de grooten.

O zeker, de Heere is immers Israel goed!

En dat, O Kalamazoo, is uwe veroordeeling!

Want ge hebt in 1924 gebazeld van den zegen Gods over de verworpenen.

"De Heere zal den zegen over ulieden vermeerderen, over ulieden en over uwe kinderen."

Uw leven hier op aarde is daar bewijs voor. Als ge geboren wordt, dan roept God Zijn zegen over U uit. Luistert naar Goddelijke klanken: Gij hebt mij doen vertrouwen, zijnde aan mijner moeders borsten. Op U ben ik geworpen van de baarmoeder af, van den schoot mijner moeder af zijt Gij mijn God! En Gods leeraren zeiden: Ik doop U in den Naam des Vaders, en des Zoons en des Heiligen Geestes! Hij omhulde U met Zijn zegen alle de dagen Uws levens. Hij *vermeerderde* Zijn zegen, want ge leerdet meer en meer kennen den levenden God en Jezus Christus dien Hij zond. Straks zijt ge begonnen te stamelen, en als klein kindeke hoorden we U zeggen: 'k Leg mij neder om te slapen; goede God die altijd waakt! Wil mij in Uw gunst bewaren als het kwade mij genaakt! En Hij heeft gehoord; Hij hoorde steeds naar de stamelende bede van Zijn volk. En Hij vermeerderde den zegen. Want ge zijt bevende gekomen en naamt Zijn Naam op Uwe lippen. Wacht! ik zal het uit Gods Woord overschrijven. Uwe woorden van belijdenis doen op den kerkeraad lagen gereed voor eeuwen. "Deze zal zeggen: Ik ben des Heeren, en die zal zich noemen met den naam Jakobs, en gene zal met zijne hand schrijven: Ik ben des Heeren, en zich En zoo zal Hij voortgaan om Uwen zegen te vermeerderde Uwen zegen, want ge hebt belijdenis gedaan. En zee zal Hij voortgaan om Uwen zegen te vermeerderen, over U en over Uwe kinderen.

Moet ik hier nog bij zeggen, dat Gij en Uwe kinderen ziet op het uitverkoren volk? Dat weet ge toch wel? Alle Kains, Ezaus and Judassen zijn buitengesloten.

De vermeerdering zal doorgaan, totdat de gansche kerk van Christus aankomt daarboven om naar lichaam en ziel zalig te worden. En dan zal diezelfde Jehovah roepen van den troon: Komt gij gezegenden! beërft het Koninkrijk, dat voor U bereid is van voor de grondlegging der wereld.

En zij begonnen vroolijk te zijn.

"Aangaande den hemel, de hemel is des Heeren; maar de aarde heeft Hij der menschen kinderen gegeven."

Het oogpunt is hier de kerk die door God op de aarde gezet is met slechts één doel: ze zullen den Heere prijzen. We zullen ons niet bekommeren om den hemel. Die hemel is Gods troon. Daar wonen de gezaligden rondom Christus met de Engelen Gods. En die prijzen den Heere volmaaktelijk. Doch wij zijn op aarde. En God wil, dat we Hem hier op aarde prijzen zullen. Daarom volgt hierop: "De dooden zullen den Heeren niet prijzen, noch die in de stilte nedergedaald zijn; maar wij zullen den Heere loven van nu aan tot in eenwigheid. Hallelujah!"

Deze verzen bedoelen niet te zeggen, dat als Gods kind gestorven is, dat hij den God niet loven en prijzen zal. Maar ze bedoelen te zeggen: Gods volk! Uw verblijf op aarde bedoelt, dat ge den Heere prijzen zult alle de dagen Uws levens. Als Uw mond verstomd werd in den dood, en Uw lichaam bijgezet wordt in het graf, dan is het prijzen van God *op aarde* voor U ten einde. En daarom: prijst en looft Hem terwijl Uwe zaaiperiode geschonken werd!

Roept het daarom allen uit, Uw gansche leven: Hallelujah! Looft den Heere!

G. Vos

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Matthew 5:31-32

The Scripture passage to which we would call the attention of the reader in this essay reads as follows: *"It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."*

We would warn the reader, that, in considering this Scripture passage, we must with might and main remember the warning of Jesus to us, as the children of the Kingdom of heaven, not to have the terribly mistaken notion that He has come into the world to destroy the law and the prophets. Let us see the full implication of His assertion, that He has come to fulfil the law and the prophets to the last iota and tittle. Any other attitude in studying these words will simply make it spiritually impossible to understand their real implication for our lives; we shall then not be able to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Let us therefore, beware!

Jesus did not intend this word of warning to be considered as a sort of mere introduction to the body of the teaching cocerning the law proper; nay, this warning is woven into the very warp and woof of all of this teaching of the Chief Prophet.

We shall have to notice this also when Jesus lays open to our spiritual understanding the implication of the Seventh Commandment in relation to the inviolableness of the institution of the marriage state. The great all-controlling principle is: What God hath put together let not man put asunder. Thus it was from the beginning before the hearts of men were calloused and made obtuse and hard by sin. And that shall evermore be the standard of the perfection of the Kingdom of heaven. Wherefore let us beware what we hear and read. For he that hath shall receive and he that hath not from him shall be taken what he thinketh or seemeth to have. He that hath ears to hear let his hear. And blessed is he, who hearing the words of Jesus, also performs them. He shall be likened unto the wise man who builds his house upon a rock, while those who are disobedient are likened to the foolish man building on the sand.

Before we turn to the implication of this passage itself it is well to be reminded, that the meaning of the Seventh Commandment extends not merely to the external deed of adultery, but that it has reference to the very desires of the heart. He that looketh on a woman to desire her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. Therefore the eye as the medium of lust and the hand as the emblem of its execution must be wholly mortified by us. For lest this be done by us we shall wholly be slaves of sin, be ruled by lustful passions as is the world; the end of all such is destruction. For the wrath of God is upon all such as work iniquity.

Certainly this principle of the Seventh Commandment also has meaning to its last iota and tittle for the Marriage State, for the relation of man and wife in holy wedlock. It is to this that Jesus refers in the Scripture passage now under consideration.

Jesus insists that no one, be he rich or poor, bond or free, of high or low estate, shall ever break the marriage vows, the bond of matrimony, except in those cases where it is already broken by the sin of adultery. This is simply applying the principle of the Seventh Commandment as to it spiritual nature and governing the heart, to the marriage relationship. From the very nature of the New Testamant Dispensation of the Covenant of grace Jesus does not enter into a detailed account of every possible angle of this question. He simply lays down the eternal principle of the Kingdom and says with a warning finger: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling into the least commandments of your existence. Be ye perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect. Let the simple learn wisdom. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. Do not kick against the pricks of the exaltedness of this inviolable law of the Kingdom.

But what are some of the points in which Jesus gives definite and conclusive instruction?

Among the workers of iniquity, who very loudly said: Lord, Lord, honoring God with their lips while their heart was far removed from Him, there is also the sin of putting away wives for all trifles. For truly such is the horrible plight of man by nature that he holds down in unrighteousness all the truth of God, also the truth of the sanctity of marriage. Such was also the case even in the teaching of the Pharisees and Scribes. Because of the blindness of their eyes and the hardness of their hearts they interpret Moses' law very perversely and read their own sins into the perfect law of Moses. They made the law of God an excuse for their sins, wresting its meaning to their own destruction. How did they do this in this particular case? They said: Moses commanded us in Deut. 24:1 to give our wives a writing of divorcement if we found something in them that did not please us. They interpreted this word of Moses so that it gave them much room for their sinful practices and the lust of

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their hearts and eyes. They perpetrated crimes in the name of Moses!

But the Greater than Moses, Who nevertheless honors the whole Moses, the law and the prophets, unmasks this hypocricy.

Overagainst this corrupting of the meaning of Deut. 24:1 Jesus places His: "But I say unto you. . ." What does He say? Listen: *Every one who putteth away his wife except for the cause of fornication causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.*

We should notice that the putting away of our wives would never be heard of or even arise in the heart of man in a perfect state. All putting away of wives is to be considered ab-NORMAL. It is contrary to all the laws of God and the pure desires of man. It all must be explained out of evil lusts, out of the hardness of the hearts. God did not make man so evil and perverse. But man by the act of his will through the instigation of the Devil has deprived himself of all the excellent gifts, also of the gift of continency and of fidelity in marriage. From the beginning this was not so. Compare Matthew 19:8. This is abundantly evident from the reproachful attitude of Adam toward Eve immediately after the fall. But this state of affairs, as come about by reason of original as well as actual sin, is not the rule in the church of Jesus Christ. Here we are instructed to flee from all uncleanness in heart and mind; we are not to try to justify our sins with an appeal to the law of Moses for such is always the way of those who are veritable children of the Devil. Such we are not to be.

This should stand before our eyes as the guiding star: From the beginning it was the rule, that a man shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh; what God has joined together let not man put asunder. This must be our guiding star in life, and, therefore, also in the proper understanding of this Word of God in its spiritual application. Whoever does not see this is very really blind to the things of God's kingdom.

One may only put away his wife when she has played the harlot. Why? Because in the Kingdom of heaven the positive purpose of life is to maintain the law and the prophets as fulfilled in Jesus, and as they lead us on to the perfection of God's design in marriage. This latter really becomes impossible under the law of being executed; one cannot realize the perfection of marriage as it depicts the relationship of Christ to His church where adultery has entered in. The covenant has been broken according to the law of Moses. Wherefore no one longs for the state in which Moses *permits* the putting away of his wife. But if things have come to such a state that it is impossible for the husband to continue to live with her as long as she lives in this sin, such a man would be one flesh with an adulteress. And he would thus be living in sin. Oh, what a pain there must be in the heart of the man or woman who finds this to be true in their help-meet. The way to heaven's perfection shut off except by the putting away of the wife! Here is deep purpose of the love of God. It is the same as being obedient unto authority unless it makes obedience to God impossible. Here cleaving to the wife is the rule unless such remaining with a wife makes it impossible to abstain from all uncleanness, accursed of God.

Such is the underlying principle of the righteousness that is more abundant than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

In the light of the foregoing we immediately sense, do we not, that all other putting away of our wives is itself rooted in hatred for God and the lust of the flesh. He who puts away a Godfearing wife surely causes her to stand outside of the ordinance of God as given from the beginning. She stands in the place where the adulteress must stand. She is done cruel injustice. She is very really debauched. She is set forth as an adulteress, while she really is not one. She cannot live the life of a faithful spouse which she so fervently desires to do as a subject of the Kingdom. She would reverence her husband in all things, but this she can now no longer do. The way to sanctification is cut off for her in the place where God has set her. What a plight!

Thus it shall not be in the Kingdom where the righteousness is real and genuine and which will be consummated when the heaven shall be rolled away. For in this Kingdom all shall be as the pure and undefiled bride, the faithful spouse.

There is for her only one way open. She must continue to seek God, flee from all filthiness of the flesh and of the mind as her reasonable service. If her husband will not have her again that is his responsibility. She is free in the Lord, and is one whom the Lord will avenge. But she cannot be married by another as long as her cruel husband lives. Should any marry her he simply makes himself and her an adulterer and an adulteress. Why? Because God maintains the marriage state as it was from the beginning. In the Kingdom of heaven the rule is not that the law and the prophets are destroyed. Far be it. The rule is that the last iota and tittle of the law shall be fulfilled.

Such is the implication of the law of the Kingdom. Moses stands in his "permission," but Christ has come to fulfill the law to make this "permission" forever unnecessary among His saints. G. Lubbers

YOUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING....

TO BE HELD

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 23, 1951 AT 8 O'CLOCK



Nominations for Office Bearers

Elders

Seven Elders are to be chosen from the following nomination:

Simon DeVries	Richard Monsma
Martin Doezema	Lambert Mulder
Andrew Dykstra	Rev. G. M. Ophoff
John Faber (Oakhill)	Donald Rietema
Frank Helmholt	Gerrit Sikkema
Hubert Luyk	Wm. Stuursma
Ralph Meyer	Gerrit Zwak

The Retiring Elders are:
E. Bylsma, B. Bouwkamp, W. Brummel, P. De Vries, J. M. Faber, S. Newhof, and A. Wychers.

Deacons

Three Deacons are to be chosen from the following nomination:

Peter Blanker	Marvin Kroondyk
Peter Decker, Jr.	Richard Teitsma
Arthur Knott	Wm. Wierenga

The Retiring Deacons are:
J. Heys, T. Hoolsema, and R. Pastoor.



The proposed budget for 1952 may be found on the back side.

Proposed Budget For 1952

	1951	1952
Pastor's Salary—Rev. Hoeksema	$2,225.00	$2,225.00
Pastor's Salary—Rev. De Wolf....	4,500.00	4,500.00
Pastor's Salary—Rev. Hanko.....	4,500.00	4,500.00
Janitor's Salary	3,692.00	3,900.00
Janitor's Social Security Tax		58.50
Outside Janitor's Salary	308.00	250.00
Pulpit Supply	150.00	150.00
Fuel	800.00	1,100.00
Phone, Gas, Electric, Water.....	1,100.00	1,100.00
Stationery, Bulletins, Budget Boxes	900.00	1,000.00
Organists	550.00	550.00
Janitor's Expense	300.00	500.00
Incidentals	500.00	500.00
Sunday School	500.00	500.00
Consistorial Expense	100.00	100.00
Insurance	900.00	900.00
Communion Expense	50.00	50.00
Interest on Debt	125.00	60.00
Payment on Debt	2,000.00	2,000.00
Outside Painting of 2 Parsonages and Church		(BALANCE OF DEBT) 1,200.00
Maintenance of Buildings	2,000.00	2,000.00
Replace Sidewalks		2,000.00
Synodical Expense (520 @ 2.00)	700.00	1,040.00
Classical Expense....(520 @ 3.50)	1,600.00	1,820.00
Needy Churches.....(520 @ 9.50)	5,565.00	4,940.00
Mission Fund.....(520 @ 6.00)	7,420.00	3,120.00
Theo. School Fund....(520 @ 7.00)	3,710.00	3,640.00
Theo. School Bldg....(520 @ 2.00)	530.00	1,040.00
Student Fund.....(520 @ 1.00)		520.00
Emeritus Fund.....(520 @ 1.00)	530.00	520.00
Radio	10,000.00	12,311.00
Support of one Missionary.....	7,000.00	
Mission Endeavor.....		10,000.00
TOTAL	$62,255.00	$68,094.50

Weekly Budget for 1952—$2.50

Report of Classis East. . . . IN SESSION JANUARY 9, 1952 AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

For the January session Classis East met at the First Church of Grand Rapids. The opening exercises were conducted by Rev. G. Lubbers, who later functioned as clerk, while Rev. M. Schipper presided at this session of Classis.

After Classis has been declared constituted, the minutes of the previous meeting of Classis are read and approved.

Classis decides to grant the request of Grand Haven for Classical appointments. The chair appoints the following committee to draw up a schedule: Rev. E. Knott and the elders H. Rutgers and A. Peterson.

This committee, later in the day presents the following schedule, which was adopted by Classis:

Jan. 20	Rev. G. Vos	Mar. 2	Rev. H De Wolf
Jan. 27	Rev. G. Lubbers	Mar. 9	Rev. J. Blankespoor
Feb. 3	Rev. R. Veldman	Mar. 16	Rev. E. Knott
Feb. 10	Rev. J. A. Heys	Mar. 23	Rev. G. v. d. Berg
Feb. 17	Rev. M. Schipper	Mar. 30	Rev. C. Hanko
Feb. 24	Rev. B. Kok	Apr. 6	Rev. H. H. Kuiper

The Stated Clerk reports that he has sent the letter, composed by the former Classis, to the group at Hamilton and that he received a reply to this letter.

That reply is now read and received for information. An instruction from Holland, dealing with this Hamiton case is also read.

Classis decides to place this reply and the instruction of Holland, in the hands of a committee who shall report to the Classis on this matter in the afternoon session. Comm.: Revs. H. H. Kuiper and C. Hanko, and Elder R. Regnerus.

A letter from Chatham is given into the hands of the Classical Committee to formulate an answer that shall be sent to Chatham by Classis East.

The Committee suggested the following answer for the group at Hamilton, which was adopted by Classis.

> "In answer to this (letter from Hamilton) your Committee suggests the following:
>
> 1. "It grieves us that the correspondents feel no sense of guilt in having proceeded in a church politically sinful way by wrongfully presenting public charges against their pastor.
>
> 2. "Once more we strongly urge them to by all means walk the way directed by Scripture in regard to any assumed charges against Rev. H. Veldman.
>
> 3. "Also in regard to the Declaration they are obliged to walk in the church political way of appeal to Classis and Synod.
>
> 4. "Finally, as long as they continue in their sinful way they have no right to the Protestant Reformed name, doctrinally nor church politically.
>
> a) "Their conception of the truth of Scripture and the Confessions is quite evidently in conflict with what has always been maintained by our Churches.
>
> b) "Their procedure is in conflict with our Church Order, cf. Art. 31, including the decision appended."

In answer to Holland the committee suggested the following, which was also adopted by Classis.

> "In regard to Holland's overture, your committee is of the opinion that we cannot recognize the group in Hamilton as having the right of existance, and therefore they are not the objects of labor of our Classical Committee. If there should prove to be a few families still interested in our Churches they should be made the objects of our Mission endeavor."

The following letter was suggested by the Classical Committee, and adopted by the Classis to be sent as an answer to Chatham's letter:

> 1. "The Classis East of the Prot. Ref. Churches earnestly admonishes you to return from your sinful way of schism and from the attempt to create further schism in our Churches, since the blessing of the Lord can never accompany you in that way.
>
> 2. "The proper way would have been the way of protest from Consistory to Classis and Synod. If you have objections against the Declaration of Principles, present them in the church political way after you have returned with true sorrow from your sin of schism.
>
> 3. "Until the time that you have returned to the way of the Lord the Classis cannot discuss with you the objections that you raise against the Declaration of Principles in points 1 and 2 of your letter.
>
> 4. "Your sin of schism is aggravated by the fact that you were very well aware of the position of our Churches in regard to the Covenant and the Promise, and that you were earnestly admonished at the time of your organization not to organize unless you could declare yourself ready to give an affirmative answer to the second question of baptism in our Churches."

Classis East also decided that the money that was collected for the purpose of purchasing a parsonage for Chatham, which has not been done, that this money should now be returned by Chatham to the various consistories from whom they received it and that the Classical Committee inform them of this decision.

The First Church asks that the status of Rev. Petter be established, since he has appealed to the Consistory of the First Church for Emeritation.

"Classis refers the Consistory of the First Church to the report of the Classical Committee, and also the report given by the Rev. Petter, which states that, in the

Chatham debacle the Rev. Petter was not under censure, but simply was forced outside the communion of the Chatham Church because he with deacon Scheele refused to go along with them in their sinful way."

Classis decides to pay Rev. Petter's salary on the basis of $3,500.00 per year and to take this money from the needy churches fund. Classis also decided that the churches should continue to pay the rent of Rev. Petter's home until next Synod.

Classis also decided that Rev. Petter "retains his eligibleness to a call."

An overture from Oak Lawn dealing with the necessary publicity of our Mission work, is sent through to Synod.

Synod was advised to grant the subsidy as requested by Oak Lawn, Randolph and Grand Haven.

The following Synodical delegates were chosen:

MINISTERS		ELDERS	
Primi	**Secundi**	**Primi**	**Secundi**
C. Hanko	J. A. Heys	A. Haan	J. Kortering
H. Hoeksema	M. Schipper	G. M. Ophoff	N. Kunz
G. Lubbers	G. v. d. Berg	R. Regnerus	D. Langeland
G. Vos	R. Veldman	N. Yonker	H. Zwak

The next meeting of Classis East will be held at the First Church of Grand Rapids, April 2, 1952.

D. JONKER, S.C.