

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXX

JANUARY 15, 1954 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 8

## MEDITATION

### Moab's Calling to Defend Israel

"Let My outcasts dwell with thee, Moab: be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness." — Isaiah 16:4, 5.

How glorious is the cause of Christ throughout history! How sure is the realization of every promise of God to the subjects of His sure kingdom!

How complete the protection of those whom Jehovah hath chosen to dwell with him. For, defend them He ever shall as almighty God. Oppose and destroy He always does each and every one not allied.

For the implied divine wrath in His "He that toucheth my people toucheth the apple of My eye" applies to both the actual, openly malicious persecutor of the Church as well as to the hidden, camouflaged, disdainfully proud enemy that tries to assume the neutral role of spectator. Also those that glee in watching, that applaud, that evidence their joy in the sight of disruption, downfall and persecution of the Church by the world's power of darkness . . . are condemned already by their very attitude. He that gathers not, scatters; whosoever builds not, breaks down; he that loves not, hates! Another class, yet another party . . . there is not. And God's judgment upon the so-called neutral is one and the same with that upon the spoiler.

How perfectly, how complete and in detail is His tender care. How ever mindful is Jehovah of our sure safety!

\* \* \* \*

The context in the prophecy from which the text is taken is plain. Israel, due to the hideous sins by it committed, is told that it shall suffer at the hand of the cruel Assyrian

scourge, the world power of that day. Yet this scourge is in the hand of divine love as far as the remnant according to election is concerned. He will purify them through separating the dross from it. But that also means that He will realize the promise to be a "sure refuge for the poor of His people. The Assyrian shall serve, but his satanic intent shall be prohibited. To that end the calling of the text to Moab. And now it is true, that Moab, because of its "great pride" and haughtiness, will not deign to listen to this command—yet accountable it is! Sovereignly commanded to do so it has been by the God of heaven and earth!

What a serious calling, this! Let My outcasts dwell with thee, Moab!

First of all, how proper that this command is addressed to Moab, of all nations. Moab was near to Israel both geographically and of near kinship. Moab and Israel were neighbors. It was but natural that they should help one another in their national difficulties! Descendants of Moab (Lot), though distant, they were kin to Israel. Common blood coursed through their veins. Surely, by that tie, they would be expected to take a stand against Israel's foe!

The more so might this be expected because of the seriousness of the situation here prophesied. Here there is more than the mere "love thy brother"; more than the "golden rule" superficially honored among the nations. O, that rule is their calling! But here there is something very specific! There is a specific calling here to Moab, because there exists a very peculiar relation between God and the people to be defended! They are His possession. They are MY outcasts. And though, in a general way this is the case with all things created, here there is a peculiar relation of specific and particular love. Moab! Israel's God, Who has chosen that people as His peculiar heritage, is speaking! And therefore it implies that all His glorious attributes will rise to the defense of that people. He is aroused for that people in tribulation. Occasioned by their sin though this tribulation may be, yet He will sovereignly use it to their good, and therefore sovereignly He speaks to Moab. To that end He gives to Moab a clear picture of that relation and circumstances. All excuse must be removed.

Moab, that people is "outcast" . . . thrown out of its

rightful place. That is not My ultimate purpose with them! That they should be castaways is contrary to My relationship to them. For they are MINE!

In the prophetic vision Israel is pictured as fleeing before the face of the mighty conquering hosts. Against that power it could not stand. Jerusalem's walls lay crumbled. The heathen had taken the beloved city. But with that the foe was not satisfied. It thirsted after the blood of its people. It shall therefore relentlessly pursue. And Israel shall flee to its nearest refuge—Moab. Before that comes to pass historically, the Lord prepares through command this nation: When that cast out, fleeing people comes . . . Let them dwell with thee.

First of all that means that Moab shall grant permission of entrance into its own land. Moab needs this admonition. By nature it will have nothing to do with this peculiar possession of the Lord for it is a "proud" people. But, further, it also means that Moab shall choose sides against Assyria. This is not only implied in the permit to enter. That too! There is no neutrality in respect to the cause of God! But, they are called ACTIVELY to engage against the enemy in Israel's defense.

Be thou a covert to them. Having agreed to let Israel enter, stand before the pursuing enemy and refuse them entrance to fulfill their evil intent. Tell them that they will have to fight you. Say: we are one and we will fight for them . . . even to the death! Say it in full knowledge of the wicked intent. In face of the spoiler! The spoiler, disturber of My people, seeks to prey on them, to harass to the end! Truly, a serious calling, Moab!

O, Moab will not hearken. It will, as history has plainly shown, walk in its way of pride. It will make common cause with the pursuer! And, while the foe makes sport with the Church of the living God, it will clap its hands, standing on the sidelines. Children of the world, both, Moab and Assyria, always begrudge Salem's children the peace and contentment of Jerusalem! But calling . . . it certainly is. Another reason for existence than to help bring that people to eternal rest, they have not.

\* \* \* \*

And, if there were no more, we would incline to say, speaking as the world, why risk so much; what gain would it be in face of overwhelming odds?

But this very serious calling is glorious too!

And the one reason is that no one, not Moab either, ever fights the battle for God or His cause. God fights His Own battle; maintains His Own cause. Always! He IS His Own party. He continually gains His purpose.

And that spells the doom of the enemy! Inevitably!

Listen Moab! The foe shall not triumph. The seemingly unconquerable extortioner has an end. Even though he be the despoiler! Even though his very manifestation

strikes terror into the hearts of those that see him—yet he shall have an end. In the time prophesied of it means that his power shall be broken and he shall not be able to consummate his nefarious scheme. Ultimately, always his end is eternal destruction! The only conceivable end, because it is God's end. How glorious calling then.

For the victory is the complete work of Jehovah in behalf of His people. Not only is the power of the foe broken, so that he cannot go on, but all shall be restored to former peace and safety for the oppressor shall never again bring fear. He shall be consumed out of the land. The wrath of that God, into Whose hands it is terrible to fall, shall utterly destroy the foe that attempts to tread upon His beloved elect!

Then surely Israel is safe. Then, too, her allies are blessed. To die the death of the righteous, glorious end!, is experienced in the divinely stipulated way: I will bless them that bless thee!

\* \* \* \*

And that victory of the cause of God and His Christ is sure and gives all hope for the future.

After all there is a basis for this restoration of Israel. There is and must be reason adduced for the peace of Zion of all ages! Zion because its power is restored. Hear Moab! The throne shall be established! All the covenant promises are to be realized. A king on a throne, nay! THE king on THE THRONE shall reign. In great power as unknown heretofore, that throne shall stand.

It is the throne established by the Lord God Himself. And that in mercy. Mercy as a manifestation of the eternal relation of love unto His people. And mercy shall characterize the rule of that throne over and unto its subjects. Finally, the eternal mercy of God is the very power of the throne, the dominion of the Kingdom.

And how that idea of well-placed hope in that throne is intensified by the beautiful description of its Occupant. Not a mere representative of the despised outcasts as in miserable fleeing hordes they shall approach Moab, but of the royal lineage of David is He. And one too, who belongs there rightfully, dwells, remains there. For that He shall do such in "truth" means really "continually". His rule is not to be likened to that of the Assyrian which, though it appeared indestructible, yet vanished, but of His dominion and rule "there is no end."

And more than mere man is He. God of God. For, He shall do the humanly impossible! Righteousness He SHALL bring forth. He judges! He seeks the right! And that indicates not an ignorance of what is right. He knows! Causally He shall labor to realize it. And in realizing, judges!

That is the Christ of God! All He did and aimed to

perform was to bring about righteousness. The zeal to hasten it consumed Him.

And walking that way to the end, the throne is established. And into His hand are given all things. None can oppose or withstand! In His hand all "shall surely prosper" in all the house of God. And that is the doom of the foe! He said in truth: "Now is the judgment of this world!"

That is the hope of the Church. Temporally and eternally she is safe. Let Assyria rave and rage in vain; let proud Moab vainly dream!

And let the Church have no wrong illusions as to the latter. The way will be increasingly difficult according to the flesh. New Assyrians of world power always arise. New revelation of proud Moabs will surely continue to manifest themselves. Together they will enter into an unholy alliance to hinder the cause of the truth; they will pool their satanic means and instruments to impede the progress of the weary pilgrim... the end of the ages is upon us!

And yet, there is light.

Not only shall there be deliverance in the midst of anxiety, but through the very events that stir the soul. A sovereign king have we! He sends the foe now here, then there, to guide and to chastize, as the case may be—never to harm.

Woe to the enemy that has wicked designs (and he always has!) before that KING.

Blessed forever those that are by grace of His party in the midst of the world. For we "see Jesus." Crowned!

And He promised to come again. He surely will. He is able to save to the uttermost all whose trust is in Him, for even that trust is but a proof of being His possession. When He comes to claim... to glorify... that will be glory forever!

Rev. H. H. Kuiper



When a person is going into a foreign land where he never was before, it is comfortable for him to consider, "Though I am embarking for an unknown country, yet it is a place where I have many friends, who are already settled there; so that I shall be, in fact, at home the instant I get thither." — How sweet for a dying believer to reflect that, though he is yet a stranger in the world of spirits, still the world of spirits are no strangers to him. God, his Father is there. Christ, his Saviour, is there. — Angels, his elect brethren, are there. Saints, who got home before him, are there; and more will follow him every day. He has the blood and righteousness of Christ for his letters of recommendation, and the Holy Spirit for his introducer. He also goes upon express invitation from the King of the country.

— Toplady

## THE STANDARD BEARER

*Semi-monthly, except monthly during July and August*

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

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

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

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

Subscription price: \$4.00 per year

*Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

## CONTENTS

### MEDITATION —

- Moab's Calling to Defend Israel.....169  
Rev. H. H. Kuiper

### EDITORIALS —

- Bulletin No. 2.....172  
Rev. H. Hoeksema  
Kok's Moral Confusion.....172  
Rev. H. Hoeksema  
Re The Reformed Guardian and the Rev. Petter.....173  
Rev. E. Emanuel

### AS TO BOOKS —

- De Ouderdom der Aarde.....175  
Het Evangelie in een Ontkerstende Wereld.....175  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

### OUR DOCTRINE —

- The Triple Knowledge.....176  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

### FROM HOLY WRIT —

- Exposition of I Peter 1:22-25.....180  
Rev. G. Lubbers

### IN HIS FEAR —

- Afraid of the Gospel.....182  
Rev. J. A. Heys

### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

- The Church and the Sacraments.....184  
Rev. H. Veldman

### THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

- The Canons of Dordrecht.....186  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

### DECENCY AND ORDER —

- Specially Gifted Men.....188  
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

### ALL AROUND US —

- Common Grace: The Accepted View.....190  
Rev. M. Schipper

### CONTRIBUTIONS —

- Pertinent Quotations from the Dogmatics of  
Rev. H. Hoeksema.....191  
Rev. G. Lubbers

## EDITORIALS

### Bulletin No. 2

The undersigned solemnly swear before God and men the following:

"THAT SAID HERMAN HOEKSEMA, COMMENCING EARLY IN HIS LIFE, HAS BEEN A DOMINEERING CHARACTER WHOSE WORD IS LAW AND WHO WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY OPPOSITION TO HIS CONCLUSIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS, AND THAT IN ORGANIZING THE FIRST PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS HE ASSUMED TO BE THE HEAD THEREOF AND TO DICTATE ITS POLICIES, AND WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY OPPOSITION TO HIS OWN IDEAS AND WISHES, BECAME VERY INTOLERANT, AND AS TIME WENT ON, HE CREATED A FEELING OF DISSENTION (must be *dissension*; Mr. Linsey, the lawyer, and the Rev. De Wolf do not know how to spell the word for it appears repeatedly in this form in the cross bill, H.H.) AND OPPOSITION TO HIM IN HIS CHURCH."

Hubert De Wolf

FREDERICK SYTSMA  
HENRY KNOTT  
WILLIAM STUURSMA  
LAMBERT MULDER  
ANDREW DYKSTRA  
HENRY BASTIANSE  
SIDNEY DE YOUNG  
ADOLPH VERMEER  
GERRIT SIKKEMA  
JOHN BOUWMAN  
ANDREW VOSS

By Hubert De Wolf

These same men, in 1940, signed the following:

"TO OUR BELOVED PASTOR, HERMAN HOEKSEMA, D.V.M. DO WE, ON THIS 25th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY, EXTEND OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS. HIS CONSECRATED EFFORTS, FOR WHICH WE HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR COVENANT GOD, HAVE GIVEN US A PURER AND MORE PROFOUND CONCEPTION OF THE REFORMED TRUTHS, PARTICULARLY THE MYSTERY OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY AND SOVEREIGN GRACE."

When did they lie? Then, or now in the above cross bill?

Or: how do you explain the change?

Principally: Hymenaeus and Alexander. Practically, especially after my sickness, from which they hoped I would never recover: Absalom and David.

H.H.

### Kok's Moral Confusion

Kok, schismatic minister in Holland, Mich., desperately tries, behind my back first, and now also in public, to make people believe that I am feeble minded and mentally confused, and, evidently, regrets that he does not succeed.

But I think that moral and ethical confusion, manifest in this that one does not realize that deliberate misquotation of someone else's writing is sin against the ninth commandment, lying and slander, "the very works of the devil," is much worse than mental confusion.

This is what Kok does.

And I challenge him to prove that this is not true. For this he better use space in *The Standard Bearer*. I seldom read the *Reformed* (Deformed) *Guardian* unless someone calls my attention to it.

Just one illustration to prove my contention.

He quotes me in such a way that it appears as if I wrote two flatly contradictory things:

1. A promise is never a prediction.
2. A promise is a prediction and a prediction is a promise.

How does Kok manage this? Simply by discontinuing, deliberately, a certain quotation of mine in the middle of a paragraph.

Let me demonstrate this by quoting the whole paragraph as far as it is necessary to prove my contention, putting what Kok quotes in regular type, and the rest in italics.

"Attend, please, to the meaning of these words, and you will surely acknowledge that the promise is not conditional and cannot possibly be.

"What is meant, in these words, by the promise?"

"Is it a prediction of what God will do in the future?"

"The answer is and must be negative.

"For, first of all, it is a distortion of the term to say: a promise is a prediction. (Thus far Kok. And now I continue.) *The promise, of course, (may) include a prediction and often does. Thus it is with respect to the promise of the first coming of Christ as well as with 'the promise of his coming' the second time. But even then, the main idea is not a prediction, but a PROMISE, a pledge, and oath of God that he will surely save His people and, therefore, is vowed only to the elect. The destruction of Jerusalem is also a prediction, so is the destruction of Babylon, but this surely cannot be called a promise to those cities. A promise, therefore, though it may be predicted as to its certain fulfillment, can never be called a prediction.*"

Kok, in the same article from which the above was quoted, makes more quotations in the same immoral and dishonest way, stringing together a few quotations from articles of mine that cover five or six pages.

But let this be sufficient to prove that Kok simply lies when he tries to make it appear that I contradict myself.

What I wrote is that it is a distortion of the term promise to say that the promise is a prediction because, although

it is frequently also a prediction, it is much more than that, and because a prediction is by no means always a promise.

That Kok cannot understand this is due, not to a mental, but to a moral defect, to the sin against the ninth commandment.

Deliberately he misquoted me.

For a Christian to commit the very works of the devil (H. Cat.) is very serious. It means that he is motivated by hatred of the brother.

I earnestly hope that he repents.

H. H.

## Re The Reformed Guardian and the Rev. Petter

*This is a continuation of the editorial that was written by special request of the editor.*

(Re: - Reformed Guardian - Vol. 1, Nov. 27, 1953, No. 9)

H.H.

Because of the lack of space this article, begun in the last issue of the Standard Bearer, must be completed in this issue. Hence, because of the lapse of time, too, it is suggested that our readers, once again, read the first installment that the picture presented therein may be clearly before them, as they continue this second installment.

In the fourth place, note Observation No. 4. (Ref. Guardian, Vol. 1, No. 9, Pg. 6) Rev. Petter draws the following rash conclusion: "those that have brought about the rupture now readily feel that these were no really valid grounds." The grounds to which he refers, of course, are the heretical statements of Rev. H. De Wolf. I say this is a rash conclusion because it is founded on what he and those supporting him *have simply heard* are "other grounds and causes" responsible for the split. In plain words, his conclusion is founded on *pure hearsay*. Nowhere in the records of Classis East, or in the records of the Consistory of First Church is there any indication that the grounds for the controversy has been, and is, and always will be, any other than a question of faithfulness to the Scripture; in other words, *one of pure doctrine*.

But this, of course, can never and will never be admitted by the Rev. Petter or his supporters. Hence, Rev. Petter proceeds to set the stage for the introduction of "other grounds and causes" responsible for the split and thus, divert the attention of the people from the true ground and issue, which is *one of pure doctrine*. Thus, it is from the opposition that we hear such questions as: "Is it anything more than a matter of personalities?", etc. I shall not take the time and space to answer such questions for, I am sure, our people are thoroughly aware that it is anything but a matter of *personalities*. The question of *personalities* has been introduced as a "red herring" to simply confuse the true issue and, introduced, I say, by the opposition.

However, the Rev. Petter does set forth a reason, one which he considers to be "the deepest reason" for the

split in our churches. I am sure, though, he would never have set forth this reason had he been aware of, and understood its implications. "The deepest reason," according to the Rev. Petter, is the fact that those who sought the split were possessed with the idea of distinctiveness. Rev. Petter elaborates on this idea of distinctiveness and says: "To begin with, there is the well-known expression: 'We must be distinct.' or 'we have a distinctive calling.'" With this expression we begin to assume an attitude that is not the mark of the true church, but it is in fact the mark of the sect, with its ugly distortion of the beautiful Church of Christ."

Now, Rev. Petter may not be conscious of what he says in these words, but our readers *must know* that he speaks the language of pure modernism. In these words, Rev. Petter advocates the all-inclusive church of the *modernist*. I challenge anyone to take this statement of the Rev. Petter, and the exposition which accompanies it, set it before any *thorough going modernist*, and the latter will unequivocally admit agreement with the Rev. Petter. This is so obvious that, here too, I shall not take the time and space to elaborate further. However, I do want to call the attention of our readers to the fact that while the Rev. Petter speaks about what is not the mark of the *true church*, what he actually does, is *distort* and *corrupt* Articles XXVIII and XXIX of the Confession of Faith. The true Church, to which Articles XXVIII and XXIX refer, is nothing other than the distinctive church. Hence, in substance, Rev. Petter repudiates and casts aside as "ugly" the whole position of the Protestant Reformed Churches since their inception in 1924. This is clearly seen in his remarks concerning the quotation from the Rev. H. Hoeksema's Pre-Synodical sermon of 1950, preached in Hull, Iowa. Furthermore, it speaks anything but "truth and justice", of which the Rev. Petter and his supporters claim to advocate. Notice, if you will, how the Rev. Petter interprets these remarks of the Rev. H. Hoeksema, as cited in his article (Ref. Guardian, Vol. 1, No. 9, Pg. 8). He (Rev. Petter) says, in commenting: "Those who are not 100% Protestant Reformed had better go away, had better ask for their papers. It was not said that one should *repent* (italics, the Rev. Petter's) if he compromised the Word of God; No, here the Protestant Reformed doctrine is the doctrine of the Scriptures, and if anyone still has any questions to ask, if anyone is still willing to listen to reasonable discussion of details, but is not 100% Protestant Reformed, *he had better ask for his papers.*" (italics the Rev. Petter's). "And where he goes, while he still has these questions, what becomes of him, what becomes of his wife and children—that all makes no difference. In this distinctive church there is only room for those who are 100% in agreement with what is asserted to be Protestant Reformed doctrine."

In these remarks, Rev. Petter distorts and corrupts the fundamental thought and idea of the distinctive—the true church which the Rev. H. Hoeksema was trying to con-

vey to his listeners. Furthermore, I say, this a *deliberate attempt* on the part of Rev. Petter. *For, Rev. Petter knows only too well, that he does not speak the truth here.* He knows that when he was Pastor of the former Protestant Reformed Church in Chatham, there was not total agreement—100% agreement, if you please, to the Protestant Reformed position. Nevertheless, because, at first, there was a willingness, on the part of the people to submit to instruction, that group in Chatham was organized and a Pastor was called to lead them and instruct them in the way of Truth. This Truth was set forth by the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Rev. Petter makes mention of “speaking the truth in love.” However, he deliberately refuses to recognize the fact that Chatham, as well as Hamilton, *was actually organized* because of the fact that *our people desired to speak the truth in love to these groups.* We were concerned about their welfare hence, spiritual and material assistance and support were solicited to the end that these congregations might be one with us. All this, mind you, though these people in Chatham and Hamilton *were not 100% in agreement* with the Protestant Reformed position, because of the doctrinal problems which were still before them—having just left the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands. Rev. Petter totally disregards these facts when he criticizes the Rev. H. Hoeksema’s Pre-Synodical sermon and the idea of the distinctive church.

In light of Rev. Petter’s attitude toward the idea of the distinctive church, I sincerely wonder, as many of our people do, whether Rev. Petter *really knows* what it is to be *Protestant Reformed*. *To be truly and consistently Protestant Reformed is to be truly distinctive.* In other words, *truly Protestant Reformed and distinctive* are synonymous terms. However, I doubt whether Rev. Petter will ever understand this as long as he continues on the road he now travels.

On Page 10 of his article (Ref. Guardian, Vol. 1, No. 9), Rev. Petter, in connection, with a reference to the Declaration of Principles, and a clarification of its purpose regarding those who believed in the concept of conditions, cites the response to a proposal for such clarification. In this response he writes: “Already then there was a craving for a certain pattern of distinctiveness, so that the Declaration was simply negated and answered with the threat, “that means a split.” However, what the Rev. Petter fails to see and hence, set before his readers is the fact—the *historically attested fact* that *there was always a pattern for distinctiveness.* This isn’t something strange and new. The very purpose for existing as Protestant Reformed Churches, from the time of their birth as a denomination of churches, to the present, is that these churches should be distinctive, because of their peculiar calling. The Standard Bearer for instance, clearly substantiates this fact. From the earliest volume to the most recent issue, the key-note—the ring that is heard throughout its pages

is that *ring of distinctiveness.* Rev. Petter is thoroughly aware of this, but, of course, these things cannot be set forth to support the error and hence, he conveniently overlooks them. In all seriousness, we ask: *Is this your kind of “truth and justice,” Rev. Petter?*

If Rev. Petter does not conveniently overlook these things, then we must ask the question: Where has he been all these years? Was he *never* aware of the distinctive calling of the Protestant Reformed Churches? Or, did he at one time sincerely feel he was part of this distinctive movement, but now feels he must have none of it? For, in substance, he does the latter when he repudiates the idea of distinctiveness, because it is this same idea of distinctiveness we desire today, as was set forth in 1924. It would be interesting to know how the Rev. Petter felt about this question of distinctiveness when he was ordained to the ministry, and during the time when he was ministering the Word of God and labouring in his former charges in behalf of and representing the Protestant Reformed cause.

In the light of Rev. Petter’s position, then, one can easily see how that he would *misinterpret* the remarks of Rev. H. Hoeksema, which he cites on Pages 11 and 12 (Ref. Guardian, Vol. 1, No. 9). It is plain to see, too, that he sets these remarks forth to illustrate “the utter disregard for the life and welfare of the Church of Christ.” This is understandable because he fails to see that it is *distinctiveness* and *distinctiveness alone* which really and truly *does regard* the life of the Church of Christ. It is because a church is *truly distinctive* that it is concerned with its purity in doctrine and in life. How clearly this is illustrated in the Church of the Old Dispensation. Israel was called upon to be truly distinctive hence, she was commanded to remain separate, to avoid union, and intermarriage with the heathen and ungodly nations ‘round about.’ God always calls His church (His people) to be distinctive—to be peculiar—to be holy as He is Holy. We fight the good fight of faith in the way of maintaining our distinctiveness, and not by compromising the Truth.

The desire to be distinctive is not, as Rev. Petter would have us believe a “craving” which brings forth evil results. On the contrary, it is a sincere desire to do the good pleasure of our God, and thus fulfill our calling before all the world. And it is the calling of the distinctive church to labour and instruct all those in her midst who submit to such instruction. And, the true church will do this—until such time as those in her midst reveal themselves as other than “worthy members of the flock.”

The split was there—the result of questions involving *pure doctrine.* These “other grounds and causes” which the Rev. Petter and his supporters “are given to hear” are not the grounds and causes at all. They are merely the inevitable results which must follow *because of the split.* No, the split was there already; it was merely a question of formally declaring it.

If the facts were faithfully set forth by the Rev. Petter,

he would, of necessity, be compelled to admit this. Nevertheless, I for one, would be the first to say, Let the Rev. Petter have *all the ink he needs* for, in writing this issue of the Reformed Guardian, he has certainly lifted the lid and revealed himself, and the position of his supporters. In this issue entitled: "Was the Split Necessary?" Rev. Petter stands representative of all those who support the Reformed Guardian. He speaks for each individual and repudiates the idea of a distinctive church. In other words, *he repudiates the whole Protestant Reformed movement.*

As long as there is no opposing response to what Rev. Petter has written in Vol. 1, No. 9 of the Reformed Guardian, we must conclude his supporters are in total agreement, hereby revealing themselves just as the Rev. Petter.

E. Emanuel

## AS TO BOOKS

DE OUDERDOM DER AARDE. (The Age of the Earth), by Dr. G. J. Sizoo e.a. Published by J. H. Kok, N. V. Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f.2.90.

One who is interested to learn on the basis of what arguments science concludes that the earth is millions and even billions of years old, will do well to read this book but—critically. The authors all confess to believe the biblical account of the creation of the world. In this book, however, they do not proceed from it, but only from the viewpoint of science.

We do not accept their conclusions for several reasons, such as:

1. Exegetically, it is absurd to interpret the days of Gen. 1 as long periods.
2. Science cannot draw conclusions from the present condition of the earth, which lies under the curse, to that of the original creation.
3. The history of man, concentrating around the revelation of Jesus Christ, is comparatively recent. God does not build a thousand story basement with a one story structure on top.
4. I do not pretend to be able to solve the problems of science but the flood and the fact that the first world was "standing in the water and out of the water" may well be taken into account. Etc., etc.

H.H.

\* \* \*

HET EVANGELIE IN EEN ONTKERSTENDE WERELD (The Gospel in an alienated or unchristian world), by Dr. G. Brillenburg Wurth and Rev. W. A. Wiersinga. Published by J. H. Kok, N. V. Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 8.90.

This is preeminently a Dutch book. It describes the movement of evangelization as supported by the Reformed

Churches in the Netherlands and, at the same time, develops some of the principles upon which the work of evangelization is supposed to be based.

The book is clearly written. No one that still can read the Holland language will have any difficulty to read it.

Personally, I am afraid that, if I were still in the Netherlands, I would not be an enthusiastic supporter of this movement of evangelization. I rather share the objections that are mentioned in this book and the removal of which is attempted but, to my mind, does not succeed very well. Besides, I would have more principal objections of my own. After all, "evangelization" is preaching of the gospel, and that belongs to the Church as institute and not to every member. I am afraid that if anyone that is not called assumes to "preach," even to a crowd on the street, the Word is without power. True, every believer has the calling to witness of God and His Christ, but that is something quite different from "evangelization." I am afraid, too, that by this method of "preaching" people are drawn into the church without first being thoroughly indoctrinated, and the Reformed churches will suffer the consequences.

H.H.

If you thoroughly exhaust a vessel of the air it contains, the pressure of the air on the outside will break that vessel into (perhaps) millions of pieces; because there is not a sufficiency of air within to resist and counteract the weight of the atmosphere from without. A person who is exercised by severe affliction, and who does not experience the divine comforts and supports in his soul, resembles the exhausted receiver above described; and it is no wonder if he yields, and is broken to shivers, under the weight of God's providential hand. But affliction to one who is sustained by the inward presence of the Holy Ghost resembles the aerial pressure on the outer surface of an unexhausted vessel. There is that within which supports it, and which preserves it from being destroyed by the incumbent pressure from without.

—Toplady

The Arminians suppose God to give us heaven, as the king grants a brief for building a church. The brief runs, "We have granted our most gracious letters patent." But these same most gracious letters are amply paid for before they are granted. No fee, no brief.

—Toplady

Nov. 23, 1953 our Lord suddenly took unto himself our beloved husband and father Mr. Gerrit Geers at the age of 57 years.

We deeply mourn our loss but not as those who have no hope, for we know he has gone to his eternal home, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Mrs. Gerrit Geers  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Geers  
Miss Evelyn A. Geers

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

PART III — OF THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 39

Chapter 1

#### The Question of Authority (Cont'd)

The fifth commandment, therefore, concerns principally the question of authority and obedience. And with that question we meet in every relationship of life in the world. This is the reason why the Catechism and all Reformed thinkers explain the fifth commandment as applying to every department of life. As the Catechism explains, "I shall show all proper love, fidelity, and obedience to all that are in authority over me."

The question now arises: what is authority? Negatively, we may say, in the first place, that authority is not the same as power in the sense of might or strength or ability to do something. Authority is not the same as force. Indeed, authority is also strength or power, but it is a power of a purely spiritual nature. It is a power that is vested in or conferred upon someone, although in himself he has no power whatever. A very small and physically weak policeman may exercise such power or authority by arresting a powerful giant. But authority has nothing to do with might. Might is not right. In the sinful world it is indeed very proper and expedient that authority is connected with power or might, so that authority has the power to maintain itself. But the fact remains that authority is not might. In fact, to understand the true nature of authority, we must abstract it from any natural superiority. A person may be very superior in knowledge and wisdom, but this does not put him in authority over others. Again we say that it is indeed very expedient and proper that those that are in authority are also characterized by superiority of wisdom. But the fact remains that the authority of the fool is just as much authority as that of a wise man. Because a man is wiser than I, he has no authority over me. He may advise me, and probably I will take his advice under consideration. But he has no authority to demand that I take and follow his advice. Nor does authority follow from any position of advantage in society. A man may be rich in worldly possessions, and another may be in poor circumstances. But riches does not confer upon anyone the power or authority to lord it over others. A man may be dependent for his subsistence upon another man, as a slave was in olden times upon his master, or an employee upon his employer in modern times, or even as a little child is absolutely dependent upon his parents; but even this is not a basis of authority on the part of the master, the employer, or the

parent. All these relationships may indeed be the means whereby God bestows authority upon some, and demands obedience of others; but they are not the basis or origin of authority.

Authority is a spiritual, invisible power that is vested in someone or conferred upon him. It is the right which anyone has over others to declare for those others what shall be considered right and just. Moreover, authority is the right to demand of those others that they shall conduct themselves in conformity with the laws and rules imposed upon them by him that is in authority. And thirdly, authority is the right or power vested in someone or conferred upon him to judge others according to the laws and rules laid down by him, and to maintain those laws and rules by punishing the evildoers. In other words, he that has authority has the right to impose his mind and will upon others, and to expect that they shall submit their mind and their will to his, and that too, without any force or might or physical power whatsoever. Hence, authority is always an office. It is always a spiritual power that is conferred upon someone or vested in someone. No individual man can have authority over others in himself.

This implies that ultimately all authority is from God. God is the Lord. He is Lord over all. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. He rules over all creation, over the sun and the moon and the stars, over light and darkness, over night and day, over winter and summer, over the oceans and seas and rivers, over the fish of the sea, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air. They all are subject to His laws and ordinances. These creatures belong to the brute creation. And the Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, reigns over them *without* their will. But the same Lord also is sovereign over all His moral creatures, angels and men. But here we must make a distinction between the good angels and the evil, between the righteous and the wicked. God also is absolute Lord over the devil and his host and over all wicked men. But He rules over them *against* their will. They stand in enmity over against the Lord of heaven and earth. They set their will against the will of the Lord. Nevertheless, the Lord is sovereign, and fulfills all His will and counsel in spite of all the plots and attempts of wicked men and of the devil and his host. But He also rules over the good angels, as well as over the righteous among men. But over them He rules *with* their will. By grace in Christ they are redeemed and delivered from the power of sin, and principally love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, so that they love His precepts and delight in doing His will. But whether over the brute creation, or over devils and wicked men, or over the good angels and the people of God that have been redeemed and delivered by grace, God is the Lord. He is not a lord, but the only Lord of heaven and earth. And His dominion is absolutely over all. He has all authority in Himself, and there is no authority outside of Him. Hence, no man or

group of men can possibly have authority apart from God. Authority does not rest in the mere fact that the parents have generated their children, or in the accidental circumstance that an employer gives work to his employees, or in the fact that a teacher confronts a class of children to instruct them. Authority does not rest in the will of the people that elect the magistrates that must govern over them. All these facts and circumstances may serve as a means whereby God the Lord points out who shall be in a position of authority and who shall be in a position to obey; but they are never the source of authority. Authority must be conferred. And it can be conferred only by the Lord God, Who alone has dominion over all His creatures. "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all!" Ps. 103:19. Strictly speaking, all authority is His, even the authority that is manifested among men. And again, strictly speaking, no man and no creature has any authority. Though the Lord God may exercise His authority through the creature, in the real and ultimate sense it always remains His.

The question must be asked: upon whom does God confer authority? And the Scriptural answer is, first of all, centrally God confers authority upon Christ, the Servant of the Lord, Who came in the flesh, sojourned among men and revealed the Father, died on the accursed tree, rose again on the third day, and is now exalted in the highest heaven, where He sitteth at the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high. For when He ascended up on high, He left His disciples and His church with the assurance: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. All things He hath put under the feet of Christ. I Cor. 15:27. In Christ God has revealed His exceeding great power: "According to the working of his mighty power Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet." Eph. 1:19-22. For God "also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9-11. This truth, that God has conferred all authority and power upon Christ, is also strongly emphasized in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstborn into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his

ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows." Heb. 1:4-9. And again, verse 13 of the same chapter: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" And again, in the second chapter of the same epistle, the author, quoting from Psalm 8, writes: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the power of God should taste death for every man."

This truth, that Christ should have dominion over all things, was even the hope of the Old Testament church. Of it they sang in the Second Psalm, in the midst of the raging of the heathen, and over against the vain counsel of the rulers of the earth. They sang of it, that the Lord had them in derision, and that he spoke unto them in His wrath as follows: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 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, 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." It is evident from this passage that Christ in His typical manifestation in David had dominion over the kings of the earth. The same is evident from Psalm 72: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." vss. 8-11. And in Psalm 89, the psalm that sings of the sure mercies of David, the church sings of Him as follows: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom

my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth . . . Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." vss. 19-27, 35-37. In Proverbs 8, the chapter that speaks of the Christ as the eternal Wisdom, we read: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." vss. 15, 16. And to quote no more, in Daniel 7:13, 14, we read of one like unto the Son of Man, who approaches the Ancient of days to receive his kingdom: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

It is evident, therefore, from Scripture that all authority is conferred upon Christ. When, therefore, in the Heidelberg Catechism we read that "it pleases God to govern us by their hand," it means not that God bestows or confers authority directly and immediately upon those that govern in the earth, but that all government is first and centrally bestowed upon Christ, and that through Him it is conferred on or exercised by them that have authority in the world. All power and authority is vested in Him. He has both the sword power and the key power. It is by Him that parents have the right to rule over their children. Hence, the apostle Paul admonishes the church of Ephesus as follows: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord (i.e., in Christ): for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:1-4. The same is true with respect to the authority of masters over their servants. For in Eph. 6:5-9 we read: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

In this light we must also understand what is said of the government and its sword power in Romans 13:1-6: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that desist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause ye pay tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." That authority is bestowed upon the government by God, not directly, but mediately, through Christ, is plain from all Scripture, as we have abundantly shown above. But it is also evident directly from I Peter 2:13, 14, where the term "Lord" undoubtedly refers to Christ: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

In parentheses we may add here that government as such is not instituted for sin's sake, or on account of sin's entering into the world, as is the contention of those that maintain the theory of common grace. Nor is government instituted as a blessing of common grace for the restraint of sin at the time of the covenant with Noah. It is true, of course, that the government bears the sword, and that the sword is given to the magistrates for the punishment of evildoers. But the fact that on account of sin the government bears the sword does not imply that therefore government itself is instituted on account of sin. On the contrary, as the Heidelberg Catechism plainly teaches in this Thirty-ninth Lord's Day in its exposition of the fifth commandment, government is not a special institution, instituted in a world of sin, but is developed directly from the family. Even, therefore, as in the world of angels there are different powers and principalities, and even as in the kingdom of glory there will no doubt be those that have authority and those that obey, under Christ as King supreme, so, if the world had developed from the beginning without the entrance of sin into it (which, by the way, is pure philosophy), government would still have developed from the family, with its parental authority. From the simple unit of the single family it would have developed into the broader patriarchal family. From that it would have developed into the tribe, and from the tribe into the

nation. In that case (if I may philosophize just a little farther) Adam would have been king over the entire human race. However this may be, government is not a special institution ordained by God in His common grace for the restraint of sin, but is also in our present world organically developed from the family.

From this principle it follows that all that are occupying places of authority in the world, whether the magistrates in the government, or employers in relation to their employees, or teachers in the classroom, or elders in the church, or parents in the family, must rule according to the ordinances and precepts of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Name, and for His sake. They must serve the Lord Christ.

This must be emphasized, when in the church the fifth commandment is preached.

Then it will also be evident that not in the world, by common grace, but only in the church, by believers in Christ Jesus, the fifth commandment can in principle be observed.

All that are in authority do indeed receive their authority from Christ, or rather, through Christ from God. But all that are in authority do not stand in that position by the grace of God in Christ. All are indeed responsible in their position, and answerable to Christ, and through Him to God, for the way they exercise their authority. The parent is answerable to Christ for the nurture of His children in the fear of the Lord. But only when he does so according to the Word of God from the heart, for Christ's sake, does he obey the fifth commandment. If he fails to do this, and occupies his position as parent merely from the motive of natural love, brings up his children in the world and for the world, he violates this fifth commandment, and certainly does not serve the Lord Christ. The same is true of the magistrate in the government. The magistrate rules by the grace of God only when he serves the Lord Christ from the heart, and occupies his position of authority before His face and for His sake. Only when he employs his sword power to protect the good and to punish the evildoers, and exercises his authority according to the ordinances of Christ, does he occupy his position in harmony with the fifth commandment. If he fails in this respect, plays politics, uses his authority against the good and in favor of the evildoers, he violates this fifth precept of the Decalogue. Stalin certainly did not rule by the grace of God, although he stood in the position of authority that was conferred upon him by God through Christ. Grace is never common, although positions of authority are common to the wicked and the righteous.

This, therefore, is the conclusion of the matter. All authority is from God. There is no authority in man whatsoever, whether it be in superiority of wisdom, or of power or of numbers. It is in God alone, Who has all power and dominion in Himself. It pleases God centrally to rule over all things as a revelation of His own sovereignty through Jesus Christ, the Servant of the Lord, ex-

alted in the highest heavens. And Christ, in the name of God, and as the representative of His sovereignty, rules through men, who by Him are placed in positions of authority, whether in the family, in society in general, or in the governments of the world, or even by those that exercise the key power in the church. All are responsible to Christ, and through Him to God. And only then they rule by the grace of God through Christ and keep the fifth commandment, when, from the heart, they serve the Lord Christ and rule according to His ordinances.

H.H.

## Chapter 2

### Obedience and Promise

We must not overlook the fact that the fifth commandment does not address those that are in authority, although this is naturally implied in the commandment, but those that stand in a position of obedience. It does not address the parents, but the children. Hence, the Catechism explains "that I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." Besides, the form of this commandment is positive, not negative. It approaches us with an injunction, rather than with a prohibition. Why this commandment is addressed to those in positions of obedience rather than to those in authority, cannot be determined with certainty. Perhaps, however, we may surmise that the reason lies in the fact that it is more difficult in a sinful world, and even for the sinful nature of the Christian, to practice the virtue of obedience than to exercise authority over others. However this may be, the commandment enjoins the children and all those that stand in a position of obedience in relation to others, that they shall honor them. Children must honor their father and their mother: not only their father, but also their mother. In relation to their children both of them stand in a position of authority. And, that the children are enjoined to honor their father and their mother implies that they respect them in their position for God's sake and motivated by the love of God, that therefore they submit themselves to their instruction and correction, and that they obey their precepts. This applies, according to all Scripture, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the evil and froward. There is only one limitation to this position of obedience, and that is that according to Scripture we must honor and obey God rather than men. Of this we will say more presently.

Obedience, therefore, must be practiced and inculcated, first of all, in the home. And from the home this spiritual virtue must be extended in its manifestation to all other departments of life, in the school, in society, in the church, and in the state.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Peter 1:22-25

#### II

In our former article we were occupied with the grand truth that this Scripture passage from I Peter 1:22-25 is a precept of the Gospel to the reborn church of God. We ended by asserting that Peter does not admonish the Church to become what she is not, but rather the Church is admonished to live out in holy fear and trembling what she has been made to be in Christ. More and more we must love one another fervently from the heart. That is conversion. That is true sorrow for the "spots" that cleave to our best works, and more and more having true joy in God through Jesus Christ.

Let us further make an inquiry from the text as to this matter of loving one another fervently from the heart.

It should then not escape our notice, that the *spiritual concomitant* of such a fervent love from the heart is "*having your souls purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren*". We do well in taking particular notice of the relationship in which the Apostle here places this fervent love from out of the "heart" to the purification of the "souls".

The question is: what is the relationship between these two elements in our christian experience as indicated in the text?

The grammatical connection between these two parts is indicated by the perfect active participle "Hegnikes," which allows for more than one translation in english. The King James Version translates: "Seeing that *ye have purified* your souls . . . ." According to this rendering it means that the purification is already an accomplished act. Whether that act is once or repeated. It is finished. There is also the translation which makes of the perfect participle a gerund: *by purifying*. In this latter sense Calvin interprets it. Personally we favor the latter interpretation for we believe that it points us in the proper direction. It indicates that *without the purifying* of the "soul" there will be no *fervent* love from the "heart." The two go hand in hand; they are concomitant! This concomitancy is, however, not such that the purifying of the "soul" is the "pre-requisite" for love from the "heart". That it cannot be because of the following in the text.

First, because the text is not simply speaking of love from the heart for one another, but its speaking of *fervent* love, which we are to have one for another. It is not so that we cannot love at all from the heart except we *first* do something else, that is: purify our souls. That would be pure moralism! No, the text is speaking of *fervent love*, and admonishes us to such fervency.

Secondly, because the perfect tense of this participial

form indicates not a static purity, but rather a living active faith and new life in Christ, which is constantly up to the present moment in the *activity* of purification. The Seed of regeneration is there by the Word of God that liveth forever; God preserves us in the faith through His Spirit abiding in us.

Thirdly, because the relationship of "heart" and "soul" in man is such that our "soul" does not determine the "heart" but rather our "heart" determines the life of our "soul". Strictly speaking we cannot purify our souls from a pure heart. This relationship is indicated also in the words of the Lord Jesus when he tells us that the Great Commandment is that we love the Lord, our God with all our *heart*, with all our *soul*, with all our *mind*. The *heart* is first, it is the fountain from which all life's issues are. The soul is the vehicle employed by the heart. Without the soul the heart cannot express itself. And the "heart" expresses itself through the "soul," but then consciously by means of the "mind."

From this it appears that the concomitancy between the purification of the soul and the love of the heart is not one of pre-requisite or cause. It is rather one of the only proper spiritual quality of the soul in which the love of the heart can express itself *fervently*. For the fervency of the love of the heart is really the spiritual warmth of a pure soul. In a filthy and evil soul fervent love cannot be expressed. Here the loins of the mind are not girt up in spiritual readiness.

When the text here speaks of "soul" reference is had to the spiritual soul of man, commonly spoken of as consisting of mind and will, together with the concrete attitudes of this will and mind. Now this attitude, fundamentally, can be one of the "flesh" or it can be of the "spirit". If it is the former then we do not have obedience to the truth by the Spirit; when the latter is present then it is obedience to the Truth.

Just one more observation here.

Now a purified soul is one who sees himself consciously as the "I" who has delight in the law of God after the inward man. That delight fills his soul. Thus the soul is pure. In this purity the love for the brother is *fervent*.

Oh, when we obey the entire Truth of the glorious Gospel with the obedience of faith wrought by the Holy Spirit then it is not a grievous law demanding works from us, but it is the inward must of the new life in Christ, of our having been renewed by God's Holy Spirit in true righteousness and holiness. It is self-conscious faith that asserts itself in new obedience. Such faith bows before the will of Christ. It is the man, who is enlightened in his mind, in a most delightful, astonishing, mysterious and ineffable way.

Such is the purification of which Peter here speaks.

Such is the concomitancy of the purification of the "souls" of each elect-believer, and the "fervency" of his love from the "heart". It allows for the term "require-

ment", while the term "pre-requisite" cannot possibly express this relationship. For it ought to be evident that we do not purify our souls in order to love fervently! And such is not the teaching of the text either. The text says that our purification is into brotherly love. The preposition into (eis in Greek) means more and more into brotherly love. There is no purification of the soul, the mind the will, but what we are going in the *direction of love* for the brother. Such is the quintessence of "philadelphia". Spiritually-psychologically there is no point of separation between the purifying of the soul and the fervent love. One could not possibly first do the one and then the other. That is a spiritual monstrosity. And he who tries it nonetheless would find himself once more in a hopeless impasse of being under the bondage of the law rather than in the blessedness of grace. Let a man try it once, if he wants to play with fire, and see once whether he will not land in hopeless desperation!

But we will not place such burdens of unnatural and un-Scriptural spiritual soul-care upon the dear flock of God!

We will remind the flock of God, as does Peter, of the fact that there is strong consolation for us in the imperishable and unchangeable work of God's regenerating grace.

The text reads further: "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever . . .*" Verse 23.

Let us try to see some of the implications of this last quoted Scripture passage.

First of all we would point out, that this entire 23rd verse is related to the main clause in verse 22 by the participle in Greek (anagegennemenoi) translated in the King James Version: being born again. This relationship is expressed as being a circumstantial participle. In this case it expresses cause of the purifying of the soul and having fervent love for one another. There is no such love and purity possible except out of the work of God in regeneration. When this same "cause" is viewed from the aspect of the fact, that the text is an exhortation, then the participle also expresses ground.

Concerning this new birth in Christ we ought to notice the following particulars in the text.

It is evident from the passive tense that in the work of this regeneration we are wholly passive. We do not co-operate with God in this work. Nor do we in any way experience this regenerating work of God so that we can point it out. It is solely God's work in our hearts, in the hearts of the elect in Christ, so that we are such that we are new creatures in Christ. Old things have passed away. Our hearts are fundamentally made new. The dominion of sin and darkness is once and for always broken. The works of the Devil have been destroyed in us principally. And we shall return to our former condition never again. God has created us in this regeneration unto good works in Christ. He has planted in us the habitus of faith from

which the actus of faith springs forth in purification unto brotherly love.

That this regeneration, spoken of in the text, is wider in scope than the first implanting of new life, or regeneration in the narrow sense is also evident. It is, evidently, regeneration viewed in the wider sense, as including faith, conversion and hope in God.

For proof of this interpretation we call attention to the following elements in the text and context. In the first place, notice that the regeneration here spoken of is presented by the Apostle as coming forth *out of* incorruptible seed. It proceeds from a new principle of life. And this "seed" is thus in some sense prior to the regeneration here referred to. Secondly, notice that it is a regeneration that is brought about *through* (by means of—dia) the Word of God. And this word is explicitly stated to be the Word of God, which by the gospel is preached to us.

We will reflect on this in a future essay—the last on this Chapter.

Meanwhile, it seems to me, that we here stand before the reality that "the manner of this operation cannot fully be comprehended by believers in this life". Canons of Dort, Articles III, IV, Paragraph 13.

(To be continued)

G. Lubbers



All who, with heart confiding,  
Depend on God alone,  
Like Zion's mount abiding,  
Shall ne'er be overthrown.  
Like Zion's city bounded  
By guarding mountains broad,  
His people are surrounded  
For ever by their God.  
No scepter of oppression  
Shall hold unbroken sway,  
Lest unto base transgression  
The righteous turn away.  
Thy favor be imparted  
To godly men, O Lord;  
Bless all that are purehearted,  
The good with good reward.  
The men who falsehood cherish,  
Forsaking truth and right,  
With wicked men shall perish;  
God will their sin requite.  
From sin Thy saints defending,  
Their joy, O Lord, increase,  
With mercy never ending  
And everlasting peace.

Psalm 125

## IN HIS FEAR

### Afraid of the Gospel

(10)

Conditional theology is an insult to God!

Thus we wrote in a former article. And we would have you note that we say that conditional *theology* is an insult to God. We do not say that every use of the conditional form is to be condemned. To use what, in grammar, is called the conditional form does not necessarily mean that you are presenting conditional theology and are making statements that are insults to God.

Those who formerly belonged to the Protestant Reformed Churches, at least belonged in name, but left to be free to teach and propagate conditional theology would like to deceive you into thinking that because Scripture uses the conditional form, it teaches conditional theology. But that is not so!

Just because a verse in Scripture begins with an "if", an "except" an "unless" or any such expression it does not necessarily follow that a condition is being presented. It never means that in Scripture. We will not take the time nor the space now to show how often and in how many ways we, in our every day language, make use of such words without introducing a condition.

We will not take the time now because more important things must appear in these columns at present. And as long as men continue to defend those literally heretical statements of Rev. De Wolf they must not say that they do not believe in arminian conditions! And a man who does not believe or teach the arminianism, implied not only, but also literally stated, in those two statements will condemn them and declare that they must be condemned.

What we want to share with you now is the spiritual, ethical, moral reason why Rev. De Wolf cannot see the insult to God in his statements and why his followers likewise cannot see it. We mean that! Spiritually they *cannot* see it. We pleaded with him; others pleaded with him; Classis spent seven days in the love of Christ labouring to get him to see it. And he could not and still does not.

Now we understand why. And we have been vindicated in regard to our recent writings and that at an earlier date than we dared to expect. We said that, having left the straight line of the truth, one must needs come back all the way or else go still further into error. A further error, an awful error, a clear and plain error has now been published to all the world!

Of course we mean that cross-bill filed in Superior Court by Rev. De Wolf. It explains everything! The short quotation that appeared in the last Standard Bearer revealed plenty. And we will not repeat it or what it shows. We would add just this thought to that editorial: Are we

now going to be flooded with propaganda to the effect that also these statements, to which he swore before God and man, have a different meaning than their literal form and that he meant something entirely different? And this time he had the assistance of attorneys to make such an unfortunate statement????!!!! Even with the help of a lawyer does he still make statements that are not clear and do not express what he really means?

But here is the think that you must see now. The Apostle Peter explains to us why Rev. De Wolf cannot see the error in those statements. To him and to us Peter writes, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speaking, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." I Peter 2:1, 2. Rev. De Wolf's heart and that of his supporters is so full of malice and envies and evil speakings that they cannot desire the *sincere* milk of the word. He cannot desire to cast from him those insults to God! Only in the way of putting these aside will he and his followers ever desire and hold on to the pure, unadulterated Protestant Reformed Truth. Otherwise he will only continue to desire the impure, man-exalting, God-insulting conditional theology he now defends.

We are *too* harsh?

Conscientious reader, read the following things to which Rev. De Wolf swore before God and man as representative for his whole consistory and which appears in his cross-bill:

"15. Defendants further show that said Herman Hoeksema, commencing early in his life, has been a domineering character whose word is law and who would not tolerate any opposition to his conclusions or pronouncements, and that in organizing the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., he assumed to be the head thereof and to dictate its policies, and would not tolerate any opposition to his own ideas or wishes, became very intolerant, and as time went on he created a feeling of dissension and opposition to him in this church."

"33. These defendants show that 24 churches have been organized known as the Protestant Reformed Churches, and that cross defendant Herman Hoeksema, actually, not in name, has assumed to be the head of said churches and in fact has sought to control the actions of said churches, their policies, etc. and has by his conduct at times controlled the vote and proceedings of the Classis and attempted to control the matters that came before the Synod."

"41. These defendants further show that the history of Herman Hoeksema shows a disposition of intolerance and that of absolute boss and a person whose mentality is such that he is incapable of tolerating any person or persons who might disagree with his own ideas; that he is always right and that the person who disagrees with him is always wrong, and that he intends to rule or ruin, and he and his followers are following a course of conduct which is intended to and does wreck this denomination,

causing dissension in its churches, and that no court should place its stamp of approval upon the actions of these cross defendants."

To all that Rev. De Wolf swore before God and did so as declaring that he was authorized to do that for his whole consistory.

He and his consistory are to be pitied. And yet because they intended to hold on to those statements which in their literal form are heretical and to continue in their schismatic way, it had to come to something like this. How they could ever deceive themselves into thinking that these things were so true that before God they would swear to it is to be explained only in the light of I Peter 2:1, 2 and similar passages of Holy Writ. And why do they bring a thing like that to a worldly court when as fellow consistory members with Rev. Hoeksema they never once even started to discipline a man so evil that even Korah, Dathan and Abiram would be shocked to see such playing with holy things and such a craving to rule or ruin.

Do these men think that they are going to cause anyone outside of their own circle to believe such things?

What a wonderful opportunity for the "Reformed Guardian" now really to come to the defense of truth and justice! Let the "Reformed Guardian" hasten to assure "Protestant Reformed Membership" that it is not going to defend that article quoted last time which by implication declared that Rev. Hoeksema should have submitted to the Three Points of '24. Let it defend justice and hasten to assure "Protestant Reformed Membership" that Rev. Hoeksema is a child of God and not an enemy of His Church and show that when God removed him from the scene for a time by sickness, there was no sighing of relief from such awful tyranny nor a quick readjustment of all things, lest at his recovery it would be too late to get justice and freedom from his awful, devil-inspired, unregenerated and unsanctified actions. Let it defend justice and remind Rev. De Wolf et al that Rev. Hoeksema always argued from the Word and the Confessions and that *these* ruled in our churches all these years because God gave us a man so amazingly versed in them, and that even in their original languages.

At various times lately, the leadership of Rev. Hoeksema, was questioned and declared to be untrustworthy. We were told not to follow it any more. But are these men now going to advise their friends and relatives, and those whom they have deceived, to follow such awful leadership as Rev. De Wolf has displayed as he leads them back to 1924 and says that they must start over because '24 was a schismatic action and that those decrees and pronouncements on "Common Grace" should be recognized? Groups rushed out of the Protestant Reformed Churches, a whole Classis did, to stand next to Rev. De Wolf after he left the Protestant Reformed Churches. They could not even wait to appeal to the coming Synod. Now will they rush after him *the rest of the way* back to 1924?

Are consistories in what was formerly Classis West going to come to their March session with instructions to recognize also this new act of Rev. De Wolf and to advise all the congregations that are in their fellowship to declare that the decrees and pronouncements of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924 must be acknowledged?

And those of you who were deceived and went along simply because your sympathy was aroused; and you who were deceived into thinking that Rev. De Wolf never got a fair deal in that consistory nor at the hands of Classis East, is this in your judgment a fair deal? Is this being honest with the facts?

Why did this Rev. De Wolf ever want to sit under the instruction of such a man who began so evilly so early in life? How could he even, knowing all these things, want to become an associate pastor in the same congregation with such a man! Why has he not as a pastor in that congregation ever demanded of the consistory that this evil man! be disciplined? How did he and his consistory ever get it across their consciences not to call Rev. Hoeksema's attention to his evil way whenever his consistory exercised Christian censure before each celebration of the Lord's Supper as Article 81 of the Church Order demands?

Rev. De Wolf, you swore before God that all this is true!

In His fear put all this away, and you will see what the sincere milk of the Word is, and as a newborn babe, you will desire it and not conditional theology.

Rev. J. A. Heys



The Arminians think, that in conversion God does little or nothing for men, but gives them a pull by the elbow, to awake them from their sleep. Rather, he acts as maritime officers do by their sailors; he cuts down the hammock of carnal security in which the elect are; down they fall, and the bruises and surprise they receive awaken them from their death in sin, and bring them to themselves whether they will or no.

—Toplady

May not God have mercy on whom he willeth to have mercy, without asking leave of men or angels? Is not his grace totally and infinitely free? and may not he bestow his own blessing when and where he pleases? Let not our eye then be evil and envious because his is gracious. Away, then with these anti-christian bickerings, and let none who call themselves believers, be sorry for that which makes the angels glad.

—Toplady

Unfair disputants are ever for dwelling on the most unfavourable side of an argument; like the blundering painter, who being to take the profile of a lady that had lost an eye, very injudiciously drew her blind side.

—Toplady

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### EARLY VIEWS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

*A few general observations (continued).*

In our preceding article we remarked that, beginning a series of articles on the "early views of the sacrament of baptism," we thought it not amiss to call attention to the washings and purifications in Israel in the Old Testament. We also called attention to the baptism of John, and briefly touched upon the Baptism Formula. We are now ready to continue with our "general observations" to which we purposed to call attention before deciding to write the article which appeared in the preceding Standard Bearer.

And then we wish to remark, in the first place, that a discussion of the sacrament of baptism is and must be of the greatest importance. There is no doctrine which serves to expose and reveal one's reformed or unreformed tendencies more readily and absolutely than the doctrine relative this sacrament of Baptism. And this applies particularly, we must understand, to the baptism of children. The struggle in the Reformed Church world today and during the last several years does not revolve about the baptism of adults. We realize, of course, that there is little discussion with respect to the baptism of adults. If the Baptist baptizes only adults because he insists that only the conscious believer may receive the sign and seal of justification by faith, we, too, baptize only those adults who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the struggle in the Reformed Church today does revolve about the baptism of infants. We must bear in mind that we are speaking of the Reformed Church world. The Baptist, we know, denies the baptism of infants. We may let this pass for the time being. Of greater significance for us is the sacrament of Baptism as it pertains to the children. And the question: "why must children be baptized?", will reveal a person's reformed or unreformed tendencies more surely than any other question. Do we baptize them because they are in the covenant? To this question the Synodicals and Liberated both answer in the affirmative. Only, they differ with respect to the definition of the covenant. Again, do we baptize them upon the basis of presupposed regeneration? To this question the Liberated and we both answer in the negative. Only, the reasons why we answer this question in the negative differ. The Liberated answer in the negative because they refuse to acknowledge that regeneration or present inner grace can be a ground for baptism. We, on the other hand, although insisting that inner grace can be and is a ground for the sacrament of Baptism, deny that we must presuppose this operation of grace by the Spirit of God in all the children who are presented for baptism. Again, do we baptize our children be-

cause of the promise? The promise, we understand, is the ground for baptism according to the view of the Liberated. We have no objection to this as such. Does not the apostle, Peter, declare in his Pentacostal address: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"? Does not the fact that the promise of "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" constitute the ground, according to the apostle in this passage, for their baptism unto the remission of sins and the receiving of the Holy Ghost? And, yet, it is exactly the issue of the promise which constitutes an irreconcilable contrast between the Liberated and us. They view the promise, as the basis for baptism, as merely "toezegging," God's announcement and intention of salvation for all. We, however, view the promise as realized for the children and in the children, and therefore as for the elect only. Finally do we baptize the children upon the ground of a righteousness which they may receive or a righteousness which they have already received? The latter is most emphatically our conception; the former, namely, that we baptize children upon the ground of a righteousness which they may receive was advocated by the Rev. Petter already in 1951—see the Standard Bearer of May 1, 1951, pages 345-350. For these, and many other reasons, we realize that a discussion of the history of the sacrament of Baptism should be for us of the greatest significance.

Secondly, Baptism was held in high esteem during the early centuries of the Church of God in the New Dispensation. It was not merely considered a rite, a ceremony; but as a sacrament it was considered efficacious. Baptism was to the first teachers of the Church of the New Dispensation not merely a significant symbol, representing to the senses the internal consecration and renewal of the soul, but an efficacious medium for conveying objectively to believers the blessings of the gospel, and especially the benefits of the sacrificial death of Christ. We will have opportunity later to call attention to this.

Thirdly, practically all the various questions that are usually raised, even today in connection with the sacrament of Baptism, were already under discussion in that early period. This will become plain in subsequent articles. Questions were asked and discussed pertaining to the baptism of infants, the formula used in the administration of the sacrament, who should administer the sacrament, the rebaptizing of heretics who returned into the bosom of the Church, the objections raised by heretics to any form of Baptism, etc.

Finally, the heretics opposed any form of Baptism even as some are guilty of this today. Also today we have those who claim that "Spirit Baptism" is all we need. Did not John declare that, whereas he baptized with water, One came

after him Who would baptize with fire and with the Holy Spirit? And did not the apostle, Paul, minimize the sacrament of Baptism in I Cor. 1? This opposition to Baptism also revealed itself in the early period of the Church.

*The significance of Baptism.*

From some expressions of the early Church Fathers one might easily receive the impression that they attributed efficacy to the external rite of Baptism: the power of regeneration, cleansing from sin, sanctification, such as: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, etc.

From Irenaeus we quote the following: "This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, 'And establish me with Thine all-governing Spirit;' who also as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praises to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter, who should join us to God. *For, as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity, so in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receive moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without voluntary rain from above.* For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary since both contribute towards the life of God." —end of quote. The reference which Irenaeus makes with respect to water from heaven is plain in itself. However, it is not certain whether the Church Father is referring in these words to the water of Baptism. He may simply refer to the Holy Spirit Who is from above, although we cannot explain the word "both" in the quotation: "Wherefore *both* are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God."

From Justin Martyr we would quote the following: "I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water . . . And for this (rite) we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our

birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training, in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again (?—H.V.), and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone . . . And this washing is called the illumination because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed."—end of quote. One can certainly receive the impression from this quotation of Justin Martyr that regeneration and spiritual illumination are somehow connected with the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

—H. V.



Fashionable as the doctrine of legal, conditional justification is, we may say to every individual that embraces it, There is one that condemns you, even Moses, in whom you trust, and that very law on which you rest: for its language is, He that breaketh me only in one point is guilty of all: and, cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. Show me the man who has never offended in one point: who hath continued in all things prescribed by Jehovah's perfect law; who loves the Lord with all his heart, and his fellow-creatures as himself: show me the man who, from the first to the last moment of his life, comes up to this standard, and then you will show me a man who can be justified by works of his own.

—Toplady

Still more deplorable it is, that some who even make profession of spiritual religion, and talk of an inward work of God upon their hearts, should so far lose sight of humility and of truth as to dream either that their own arm helped the Almighty to save them, or at least that their own arm was able to have hindered him from saving them. What can reflect deeper dishonour upon God than such an idea? And what can have a directer tendency to engender and to nourish that pride of heart which deceiveth men?

—Toplady

We never know so much of heaven in our own souls, nor stand so high upon the mount of communion with God, as when his Spirit, breathing on our heart, makes us lie low at the footstool of sovereign grace, and inspires us with the cry, O God, be mine the comfort of salvation, but thine be the entire praise of it!

—Toplady

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 4. The wrath of God abideth upon those who believe not this gospel. But such as receive it, and embrace Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith, are by him delivered from the wrath of God, and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them.

The English translation of this article, as given in our Psalter, is concerned, it may be granted that it is substantially correct, provided that we bear in mind that the word "receive" must be understood in the active sense, as meaning "to take to one's self." This is the clear meaning of the Latin original, as well as of the Dutch term used here, *aannemen*. It is further in harmony with the rest of the article, which speaks of embracing Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith.

Gradually our *Canons* approach the subject of divine predestination from the historical point of view. It would be quite possible, of course, to treat the entire subject in a different manner, and to begin with a maintenance of and exposition of the truth of sovereign predestination. But the *Canons*, rather than beginning there and then developing the whole truth of our salvation out of predestination as the cause, follow instead in this first chapter the inductive method. In Article 2 is presented the truth that the love of God was manifested in the sending of His son, in order that whosoever believeth on him should have everlasting life. In Article 3 the point of contact between that manifestation of the love of God and the minds and hearts of men is presented, namely, the preaching of the good tidings "to whom he will, and at what time he pleaseth." Next in order, therefore, is the question: what takes place when the gospel is proclaimed? What is the reaction to those good tidings? And this question is treated in the present article.

Here for the first time the fathers make direct mention of the fact that not all men are saved. For according to this article, there are those upon whom the wrath of God abideth, on the one hand; and on the other, there are men who are delivered from the wrath of God, and from destruction, and who have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them, or, as the original has it, "are gifted with eternal life." Not all men, therefore, are saved. There is somehow a distinction: some are saved, and upon some the wrath of God remains.

In this connection it is important to notice the viewpoint of the *Canons* once more. It can scarcely be said that the fathers speak the language of infralapsarianism here, for more than one reason. In the first place, while they do not

quote Scripture directly, nor give the Scriptural references, it is nevertheless true that they speak the language of Scripture. There is a clear reference in this article to John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And if we say that the fathers speak here from the infralapsarian viewpoint, we shall have to admit that Scripture itself speaks "infra" language. And the latter can scarcely be maintained. And in the second place, the *Canons* are not busy in this particular article with any question concerning God's decrees or the logical order of God's decrees (as is the question in regard to "supra" and "infra"), but rather with the concrete question as to what is the effect in time among men of the preaching of the gospel. The viewpoint, therefore, while it is not infralapsarian, is indeed historical. Thus it is to be explained that the fathers speak of those "upon whom the wrath of God abideth" and those who are "delivered from the wrath of God, and from destruction." The viewpoint is that all men lie under the wrath of God, apart from Christ; and that upon some men that wrath of God remaineth, while others are delivered therefrom. Some are under that wrath to begin with, and wrath is not removed from them: it remaineth. Others are also under that wrath of God by nature, but it does not remain upon them: they are delivered.

Nevertheless, we have not yet reached the subject of election and reprobation in this article. Also this distinction between those who are delivered and those who are left under the wrath of God is here viewed from the strictly historical viewpoint of *faith and unbelief*. In other words, if in this article you ask the question: who are saved, and upon whom does the wrath of God remain? You receive the answer: "The wrath of God abideth upon those that believe not this gospel. But such as receive it, and embrace Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith, are by him delivered from the wrath of God . . ." The viewpoint is very plainly, therefore, that of faith and unbelief: the unbelievers go lost, while the believers are saved.

Rather than lose ourselves in a maze of expositions as to what is faith, and what is unbelief, and why are the believers saved while the unbelievers go lost, — questions which do not belong, strictly speaking, to this article, — we prefer to let the simple proposition of this article stand. The article intends very definitely to emphasize just exactly that truth: upon those who do not believe the wrath of God abideth, and those who believe are delivered from God's wrath and gifted with eternal life. We are not called in this connection to define faith and to mention its elements of knowledge and confidence. It will do no harm, however, to note: 1. That in this article the *activity* of faith, as well as the *activity* of unbelief, are on the foreground. It is those who *receive* the gospel, and who *embrace* Jesus the Savior by a *true and living faith* who are saved. And on the other hand, the *Canons* do not simply say that those who do not receive the gift of faith go lost, but that those "*who believe not*"

this gospel go lost. 2. At the same time it is of importance to note that the real activity of faith is described by the fathers. A true and living faith is a faith by which we *embrace Jesus the Savior*. And Jesus the Savior is the only begotten Son Whom God sent into the world, and in Whom God's love was manifested. 3. And finally, while it is perfectly proper and necessary to stress the above truths, as do the *Canons*, we by all means must not overlook the fact that the *Canons* do not stop here, as well as the fact that they stress these truths exactly in the context of an exposition of the truth of divine predestination. Here, therefore, the *Canons* give us some sound instruction on how to preach on the activity of faith. And the lesson is indeed enlightening. In the first place, we are taught that it will never do to stop after we have proclaimed the truth of Article 4. And we may safely assert that to stop there is to become guilty of Arminianism. Any Arminian will agree with this fourth article without hesitation. And that means that a Reformed preacher will never stop at that point. Nor will he, in faithfulness to his ministerial vow, simply "take for granted" that his people know the rest, know that faith is not of ourselves, and know that it is only the elect who receive the gift of faith. That lesson consists, in the second place, in this, that it will also not suffice to place the truth of Article 4 and the truth of divine predestination along side of each other, without establishing any real connection between the two, or leaving the question of that connection to the imagination of the hearers, or, what is still worse, positing a contrast between these two truths, with an emphatic "but, but, but." Instead, the *Canons* go on, and they insist that we have not reached the root of the matter, and that there is another question, an important question, which forces itself upon our attention, and which demand with inexorable insistence a clear answer. That question which cannot be avoided is this: who believe that gospel, and who do not?

And let us note that this question is important not only from the point of view of the objective truth, from the point of view of our Reformed faith. It is that indeed. But let me emphasize that exactly that question is an important one for every single child of God who is concerned about his salvation. It is a practical question, a question of life or death, a question to which you and I must have the answer, or else we can have no peace. Not only so, but we must, as Christians, have the answer to that question time and time again. We must hear it for our assurance, continually, day in and day out. For mark you well, our *Canons* began with the proposition that all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and are deserving of eternal death. And to be sure, they will elaborate on that truth in such a fashion that we are left by nature in a wholly hopeless position. But already now, he who knows what it means that we have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and are deserving of eternal death, — really knows it, — will feel the hopelessness of a gospel which stops with saying, "Believe, believe, believe." He must know how to believe. He must know who they are

that believe. He must be able to flee for refuge and comfort to that gracious truth that while faith is not and can never be of himself it is the gift of God, given according to the standard of sovereign predestination. Our *Canons*, therefore, will proceed in their exposition of the truth. And in the following article, they begin to give an answer to the question, the all-important question: who are they that believe?

And the beauty of this all is that the enemy, the Arminian enemy, can never say that we deny faith, and the necessity of faith, and the activity of faith. Listen! The fathers teach it, and we confess it, because the Scriptures teach it: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." But listen! You must hear that brief expression of the gospel as but a part of the whole counsel of God!

— H. C. H.



The progress of holiness is sometimes like the lengthening of day-light after the days are past the shortest. The difference is for some time imperceptible, but still it is real, and in due season becomes undeniably visible.

— Toplady

The greatest judgment which God himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is, to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free-will.

— Toplady

God's covenant love to us in Christ is another stream, flowing from the fountain of unmingled grace. And here, as in the preceding instance, every truly awakened person disclaims all title to praise; shoves it away from himself with both hands; and not only with his hands, but with his heart also; while his lips acknowledge, not unto us, O thou divine and co-eternal Three, not unto us, but to thy name give glory!

— Toplady

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On the 11th December, 1953, the Lord delivered from the sufferings of this present time and took into His rest our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

#### PHILLIP J. BREAS

at the age of 86 years.

We are grateful for all that the Lord has given us in him as a witness of His rich and sovereign grace, whereby he confessed, "All of God, and none of self."

Mrs. Jennie Breas  
Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Breas, Jr.  
Mrs. John Batts  
Mrs. Anton Vander Klippe  
Mrs. Neil Vander Heide  
Mr. and Mrs. William Laman  
Mr. and Mrs. Christian Baker  
17 grandchildren  
32 great-grand-children.

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## DECENCY and ORDER

### Specially Gifted Men

The last time we wrote that it was possible, though not advisable, for men endowed with special gifts to be admitted to the ministry of the Word without the usual prescribed course of study in the theological school. This time we purpose to write a few lines about the gifts with which such men are to be endowed as these are requisite unto being admitted into the office of the ministry under the special provisions of Article 8.

The eighth article of our church order mentions the following: "Godliness (godzaligheid), humility (ontmoedigheid), modesty (zedigheid), common sense and discretion (goed verstand en discretie), as also gift of public address (welsprekendheid)."

The above mentioned gifts are, of course, requisite of every minister of the gospel whether he has had theological training in the seminary or not. Yet, it is not correct to say that this is an exhaustive list of ministerial credentials nor is that the intention of this enumeration. It should be clear that the thrust of this article is that no man without theological training, who is devoid of these fundamental qualifications, can be considered for the ministry of the word. This does not say that there are not other gifts which are both desirable and necessary. Nor does it infer that one who possesses only these qualities is by that token suitable material for the ministry. Undoubtedly many godly, humble, modest, discrete and eloquent men can be found who are not in the ministry.

When you stop to consider what the reasonable qualities are with which the minister of the Word ought to be endowed, you soon realize how impossible it is to compose a complete, exhaustive list. In his excellent work on "Biblical Hermeneutics" M. S. Terry distinguishes between the intellectual, educational and spiritual qualifications. Others add the category of physical requirements. Concerning these requirements the late Rev. H. Danhof wrote: "Allerlei gaven zijn noodig, en in zeer bijzondere mate, maar eene specifieke gave is onmisbaar. Deze, is de gave der profetie, I Cor. 14; de gave om te kunnen leeren, anderen te kunnen onderwijzen door de verkondiging en uitlegging en toepassing van het Woord, en in den naam van Christus. Hij moet de gemeente Gods kunnen stichten. Onder zijne leiding moet het duidelijk worden dat God in haar midden is. Deze gave wordt geschonken, doch is ook voor ontwikkeling vatbaar, en vooral dit laatste moet door ons worden begeerd." (Homeletics)

And above all these is yet the supreme requirement of all which is the call of God and concerning which the Rev. H. Hoeksema writes: "Finally, a word must be said of the minister that preaches the Word of God. In answer to the question, who is he, we must emphasize, first of all, that he

is one who is called; he is one that is sent, and, therefore, an ambassador. Of his calling the minister must be conscious as he labors, for it is his consciousness of that calling that is his strength and support in his difficult task. To this calling belongs a subjective or inward aspect: one who is called to the ministry certainly must have an abiding desire to serve the Lord Christ in the preaching of the gospel. This, of course, presupposes the consciousness that he himself is a child of God and partakes of the life of the church. It is no doubt true that God is able for a time to build and edify his church by the labors of a reprobate; but it is also true that such a reprobate can never be a true preacher of the Word of God. But there is also an external aspect to this calling to the ministry. And to this belongs, no doubt, all that is included in the way to that ministry, such as, necessary talents, power of intellect to study, and the necessary means to open the way. One need not necessarily possess extraordinary gifts or brilliant talents to be assured that God calls him to the ministry. There are ten talents, and five talents, and there is also the one talent, which may be sufficient for this calling. Nevertheless, a measure of talents must certainly be there." (Homeletics)

Yet, you will notice that many of the requirements mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs are not mentioned in Article 8 of the church order. From this we may not draw the conclusion that there are two separate standards by which applicants to the ministry are measured. This could not be. More correctly we could say that the requirements of every candidate are the same with one single exception which is that in an exceptional circumstance one that is specially gifted may be admitted without meeting the educational qualification that is normally demanded. And whereas these candidates are not under the scrutiny of the theological school it is requisite that they give evidence of certain exceptional gifts before his candidacy be approved by the churches.

The gifts we enumerated at the beginning of this article are intended as a specific enumeration of these exceptional gifts. This is evident from the original article which was punctuated with a colon (:) following the word "gifts." The meaning, therefore, is not that there be assurance of their exceptional gifts *and* their godliness, humility etc. but rather that there be assurance of their exceptional gifts *which are* godliness humility etc. Those admitted without previous theological training must be exceptionally godly, humble, modest, discrete, and eloquent. Thus once more it is seen that this provision is intended not as an easy way but rather only as an extremely extra-ordinary way into the ministry of the Word of God.

As to the gifts themselves we may note that the first three named are spiritual gifts whereas the latter three are natural endowments. The ministerial applicant under Article 8 must show evidence of exceptional godliness. He must love God; must love Him very dearly. He must be specially devoted and consecrated to God and His service. He must "exercise himself unto godliness." (I Tim. 4:7). Implied in this is

that he fears God with holy reverence; that he knows Him as He is revealed in the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ; and, that he fervently desires a constant increase of that knowledge which is Jehovah's fear. True piety is fundamental, and of primary importance.

Akin to this is the gift of humility. Very often this virtue in the christian is misconstrued and identified with timidity and diffidence which is a bad mistake. One who is quiet and reserve is counted as a humble man while he who gives expression to his convictions is soon accused of being proud. That this is an incorrect conclusion becomes plain as soon as we cite the example of Christ Himself. If ever there was one who was truly humble it was He. Yet, if ever there was a man of courage it was also He. There was certainly no evidence of diffidence in Him when, for instance, He cast the money changers out of the temple. Neither would you dare say He was timid when He time and again withstood the scribes and pharisees alone. And, yet, He was humble for humility means that one retains a low estimate of self while his boast and confidence is in God Who alone is great. Such must be the disposition of the applicant to the ministry. He may not possess pride, conceit, arrogance and haughtiness. Always he must be mindful that he is nothing and that the Lord God whom he serves is all.

Then, too, there is the gift of modesty. The main idea expressed in this word (Latin — *modestia*; Dutch — *zedigheid*) is undoubtedly that of morality. The preacher's life must be one of moral purity, above reproach and free from the unethical works of darkness: "lying, dishonesty, cheating, lust, covetousness, evil speaking, false representation, etc." for such things are immoral.

We see a connection between these spiritual gifts. They are very intimately related to one another. Godliness is first. It is basic being rooted in regeneration. Out of regeneration comes a godly life. Humility follows. It expresses the inner attitude of the godly toward self and toward God. Modesty is the external manifestation in specific sanctification of this humbled and godly heart. He, therefore, who is godly is also modest and he who orders himself in a morally upright way thereby gives evidence of a humble and godly heart. Such are the spiritual requisites of ministerial service.

There are also natural requirements. Common sense, discretion and the gift of public address are a must. One must possess a keen intellectual ability and that especially with a view to grasping and interpreting the Word of God. It is true that no intellect of man, however excellent, is able to discern the things of God (I Cor. 2:14) but it is also true that the Spirit of God does not unveil the riches of the revelation of God to those that have no mind to receive them. The minister must be intellectually able to distinguish and judge between right and wrong, good and evil. And these judgments, evaluations and findings which he makes in the study of the Word of God he must be able to convey to the congregation of Christ which he instructs and upbuilds. This must be done with clarity and ease and without serious im-

pediment. Such then are the essential qualities of one who would serve in the ministry of the Word of God.

It may be said that though one possesses all of these qualities it does not follow that a training in the theological school is then wholly unnecessary or inadvisable for such a person. Let us not forget that all these gifts are in need of development and one possessed with the same must then also know that an invaluable directive toward the development of those gifts is derived through the course of study followed in the seminary. Under normal circumstances no one aspiring to the office would wish to be without this directive. Its benefits are enjoyed throughout the years of ministerial service.

Finally, the mere fact that one possesses the gifts enumerated here does not imply that every requirement of entering the ministry is met. This article does not exclude the necessity of other things which we also mentioned earlier in this article and which are required of all candidates alike. Surely one admitted under Art. 8 must also be called. He must be physically able unto the task. Thus, only upon being examined by the Classis (and approved by Synod) and upon finding him equipped with all the necessary qualifications and endowed especially with the gifts herein mentioned may he be admitted into the ministry of the church.

— G. Vanden Berg



God knows best what to do with us. We are not qualified to choose for ourselves. The patient ought not to prescribe for the physician, but the physician for the patient.

— Toplady

For holiness, the inward principle of good works; and for good work themselves, the outward evidences of inward holiness, we are obliged to the alone grace and power of God most high. We do not make him a debtor to us, by loving and performing his commandments; but we become additionally debtors to him, for crowning his other gifts by grace, by vouchsafing to work in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight.

— Toplady

And, indeed, was not this the truth of the case, i.e. if conversion and sanctification and good works were not God's gifts, and of his operation; men would have, not only somewhat, but much, even very much, to boast of: for they would be their own converters, sanctifiers, and saviours.

— Toplady

As the setting of the sun appears of greater magnitude, and his beams of richer gold, than when he is in his meridian; so a dying believer is usually richer in experience, stronger in grace, and brighter in his evidences for heaven, than a living one.

— Toplady

## ALL AROUND US

### *Common Grace: The Accepted View.*

Most of our readers know no doubt that Torch and Trumpet, a periodical published by a group of ministers in the Christian Reformed Churches, has decided to review the matter of Common Grace. It purposes to do this by publishing a series of articles written by representative men in various church groups who will express their views on this subject. We understand that even the Rev. H. Hoeksema has been asked to write an article in this series.

Torch and Trumpet presents the first of this series of articles in Vol. 3, No. 5, written by Dr. W. H. Rutgers of Calvin Seminary and is supposed to present the "Christian Reformed Opinion." The article is much too long to present in our department of the Standard Bearer. We can give you only a general survey and a few quotations of what Dr. Rutgers has to say on the so-called "accepted view of Common Grace."

At the beginning of his article Dr. Rutgers makes three or four observations. He notes first of all the "rather significant fact that even though the teaching of common grace has been confessed by the orthodox Christian church from the earliest times, it has never been elevated to a doctrinal standard, nor has it been given precise formulation and definition." He says there are "suggestive hints in the confessional standards" such as Belgic Confession 13, 14, 36, Canons of Dort II, 5, 6; III, IV, 4, 8, 9 and Westminster Confession V, 6. But there is no precise formulation and definition of this doctrine. Secondly, he observes "that there is no unanimity of opinion relative to this doctrine among Reformed thinkers." He says there is "a wide area of fundamental agreement." But, he continues, "we do not find that specific, precise definition which determines the exact bearing and delimitation on such an important question as, for instance, the extent and validity of the knowledge of unregenerate man who has the light of general revelation, or even of such an individual who is privileged to consult the infallible disclosure of God's will as deposited in the Bible." Thirdly, he notes that there is no "agreement as to the blessings that common grace gives." And lastly, he states that "there is a difference of opinion as to whether common grace operates mediately or immediately, as to the relationship of common grace to the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ on Calvary, and as to the precise relationship between common grace and saving, sanctifying grace."

Dr. Rutgers is willing to admit that the last word has not been spoken on this doctrine of Common Grace. He claims that "just because Christianity makes the claim to be the one, final, true religion, and just because Christianity, at its best, i.e., Calvinism, has championed the implications of this fact namely, the sola gratia (by grace only) gospel,

man's spiritual incapacity, his total depravity, the firm decree of predestination with its two parts of election and reprobation; just because it champions particular grace and strictly maintains with emphasis and in the focal point of teaching and preaching the antithesis, just for that reason the question of common grace, a grace not saving and sanctifying which extends beyond the circle of the elect, a grace common to elect and reprobate alike, poses a real problem."

The professor then proceeds to define the word "Grace". He claims that the word is capable "of a more narrow and of a wider interpretation, that is, we can employ it in a more absolute or in a more relative sense." But no matter how it is used, whether in the absolute or in the relative sense, it is always unmerited favor. If grace is meant to signify salvation or any grace pertaining thereto, then the reprobate do not share grace, "and the term common grace would be misleading and erroneous. Grace, however, in its radical sense is defined as unmerited favor. With this connotation the term allows of wider latitude than saving, sanctifying grace. In the radical sense grace stands opposed to merit." Man cannot be saved by any merit of his own, as the Romish theology teaches, but he is saved by grace alone. The Calvinist draws a sharp line of distinction between common grace and saving grace therefore. He would not have the antithesis go into eclipse, and have the church end up in the arms of liberalism and modernism or pure rationalism. He says: "Our controversy with those who deny common grace has at least alerted us and forcibly reminded us of such a danger. Calvinists who maintain their faith in the teaching of common grace can hardly be said to be sailing in Arminian waters and thus heading towards liberalism. This can hardly be true so long as they emphatically preach and teach salvation solely by sovereign, irresistible grace, that the core and essence of the gospel is grace; that Christianity is the one true religion and so long as they maintain the absoluteness of Christianity, and, hence, the antithesis."

In the next division of his article Dr. Rutgers wants us to know that we have not said enough when we declare that the antithesis must be maintained and that man is saved by sovereign irresistible grace alone. He wants us to see and "acknowledge that there is in this world among the enlightened non-regenerate and even among pagans a *rich stream of natural life*. There are culture, government, a social organism, the development of the arts and sciences, shining and commendable virtues and actions." He then asks: "How can we account for all this?... How can we account for the fact that even the non-regenerate have a sense of justice, of right and wrong, have some regard for virtue, good behaviour in society? How can we explain the special gifts that men possess in the arts and sciences? How is it to be explained that some unregenerate men do good to others, speak the truth, lead outwardly virtuous lives? Are the material blessings of rain and sunshine, prosperity and the enjoyments of the inventions of science, which are

shared by elect and reprobate alike, are these a blessing, favor to the reprobate, or a curse? Are these manifestations a demonstration that God is favorably disposed even to those outside the circle of the elect? . . . What is it that curbs, restrains, checks the mad rampage of sin in this world, which if left to itself would lead to anarchy and swift destruction?"

The answer to all these questions, according to the professor, is common grace. This is also, according to him, the answer of Calvin, Hodge, Kuyper and Bavinck.

He then uses quite a bit of space to point out what especially Bavinck and Hodge teach on the matter of common grace, which I pass up now. The next paragraph he devotes to the Christian Reformed view. Says he, "The views of Kuyper, Bavinck and Hepp and the position held generally by the membership of our church is more in line with that of Calvin. The sphere of operation of common grace is as extensive as is sin in this sin-cursed world. By common grace sin is curbed, in the heart of the individual and no less in this world. By common grace we explain the relative good accomplished by the unregenerate, the virtues found among the pagans. God still witnesses to all men through nature and reason, in heart and conscience; sparks of divine glory glimmer in every part of the world; the semen religionis (seed of religion—M.S.) is ineradicable in man's heart. Man's natural gifts have certainly been corrupted, but they have not been entirely withdrawn. Reason and judgment have not been wholly lost; man still distinguishes between good and evil, truth and error, the divine logos still gives a measure of illumination to every man, leaving him without excuse; the arts and sciences are developed and these are good and necessary gifts. Due to common grace the institutions of the family and the state are maintained . . . God even allows men to share material blessings beyond the measure of bare necessity . . . We would contradict all of human experience and we would be guilty of grossest ingratitude if we did not recognize these things as precious boons, gracious favors, grace, unmerited favors coming to sinful man from the Father of Lights above, the Giver of every good and perfect gift."

Dr. Rutgers posits, finally, what he calls: "The Central Critical Question." Writes he: "In the debate about common grace the central critical question is this: Is there besides particular grace and sin, a third principle or power operative in this world, a second kind of grace creating a sphere where the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman meet on common ground and are really one? (Or to restate this in other terms: Can God *in any sense be graciously inclined to the reprobate?* Are not the reprobate *always* subjects of God's wrath?")

The professor's answer to these questions is: If you narrow "down the concept of grace to favor received and enjoyed in Jesus Christ, that is, forgiveness of sins, adoption, the title to eternal life—in a word, salvation; and

secondly, reasoning entirely from the viewpoint of God's secret decree of predestination with its two parts of election and reprobation, the only answer that could be given to the above questions is negative. Such a position logically leads to a denial of the *bona fide* offer of the gospel and the practical issue is that mission endeavor and enthusiasm becomes a rarity." The professor continues: "Biblical preaching and teaching recognizes the firm, unalterable decree of God as the ultimate and final ground for all that is and how it is; but it no less recognizes that here much is secret, known only to God. It recognizes moreover that there is a revealed will of God too, and that revealed will emphasizes man's responsibility." This Divine sovereignty and man's responsibility are not to be reconciled as far as man is concerned. And he concludes with a warning that though the doctrine of common grace is important, it should never "supplant the proper and focal emphasis of the gospel and the central strand of Reformed witness, namely, particular grace, etc."

We have some questions we would ask of Dr. Rutgers. Would you consider the Three Points of 1924 a precise formulation and definition of the doctrine of common grace? In the light of the fact that "there is no unanimity of opinion relative to this doctrine among Reformed thinkers," how do you explain that your church nevertheless took it upon herself to cast out Reformed thinkers who did not agree with her? Why didn't you explain "the precise relationship between common grace and saving, sanctifying grace"? Why does common grace pose a real problem because of the sola gratia gospel? Does not the word "grace" have another meaning besides unmerited favor? And will you please explain how you arrived at the conclusion that one who teaches common grace can hardly be said to sail in Arminian waters because he also emphatically preaches and teaches salvation by grace alone?

I have many more questions but no more room to ask them. Professor, next time, a little exegesis please. We would rather hear from Scripture and the Confessions than from the theologians who believe in common grace.

M. Schipper

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Pertinent Quotations From the Dogmatics of Rev. H. Hoeksema

Surely it is high time that the mists of confusion and misrepresentation be dispelled by the indisputably clear testimony of the recorded facts, as these are set forth in the Dogmatics Notes of Rev. H. Hoeksema, now more than a quarter of Century ago when I and Rev. B. Kok were yet students in our Seminary.

We will not weary the reader, nor our own soul, with any remarks concerning the latest outburst from the soul of Rev. B. Kok in the "Reformed Guardian," lest, by re-

futing so much misrepresentation and nonsense, we would give it an honor that it ill deserves. The "worn out and tired" Rev. H. Hoeksema can still very ably take care of and dispose of this matter if he so chooses.

However, what we will do is show from the Dogmatics Notes of Prof. H. Hoeksema that the contention of Rev. B. Kok (for "contention" (!) it is) that the warp and woof of Rev. H. Hoeksema's Theology was a conditional promise is contrary to the plain facts. If such were the positive (thetical) teaching of our former professor, one would expect that this were set forth in his Dogmatics, in the Locus called Soteriology, or applied salvation. Should one then understand matters, he would especially expect to read this in clear and unmistakable language in the matter of the proper relationship of faith and justification!

What do we then read here?

In clear and unmistakable language of the Rev. Hoeksema we read the following: (I translate from the Dutch)

"In the matter of justification we must have regard unto the following elements:

A. We must notice, that it is God Who justifies . . . .

B. We must notice the basis (grond) of this justification.

This is absolutely alone the obedience of Christ . . . .

C. We must notice the content of this justification . . . . .

D. Also we must have regard to faith as the means whereby God justifies us. It is of importance, that we have a proper conception of the connection between faith and justification.

To be rejected are the following presentations:

1. As if faith were the ground for our justification. There is in faith, also as act (ook als werk) no merit before God. The sole ground (of justification) is the obedience of Christ.

2. As if faith were a condition upon which God justifies us. There are no conditions in God's Covenant for us (to fulfil). All the benefits of God are given unto us absolutely unconditionally. Never may the 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' be presented as a condition and promise. Faith itself is a (daad Gods) act of God and a benefit of grace shown to us.

3. As if faith were a means on our part whereby we accept Christ, the hand whereby we can take hold of Him, or the taking hold of Him itself by this hand. At bottom this presentation is Remonstrant.

4. As if faith were a means whereby we bring forth good works, so that God reckons faith for works, or also, justifies us for the work's sake. It is true that James instructs us, that only by a living faith (werkend geloof) a man is justified before God, but this finds its reason solely in the fact that faith always works out of and through Christ.

The correct presentation is the following:

1. Faith is an instrument of God in as far as it is the tie that makes us one with Christ; all our righteousness is in Christ Jesus. As long as we are not ingrafted into Christ by a true faith we are in and of ourselves children of wrath. It is for this reason that God's Word employs the preposition "dia" with the genitive of "pistis" (faith) to express this (correct relationship) and thus only can we understand, that God reckons faith for righteousness.

2. Faith is also God's instrument, whereas by faith He brings us to the consciousness of our justification, and speaks of peace in foro conscientiae (in the forum of the conscience).

3. And from our side faith becomes a means whereby we now by the act of faith receive and appropriate the righteousness

of God in Christ to ourselves. For this reason the Word of God employs also the preposition "ek" (out) with the genitive of the (name) Christ. Romans 5:1: "Wherefore being justified out of faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We call attention to the following:

1. That our point in this quotation is not whether the Rev. H. Hoeksema is correct in his presentation here in his Dogmatics Notes. I believe that he is. But that is not my point in quoting them. I want to have the record speak. I am not a judge in this instance but I want to read the record. Let the readers be the judges!

2. That in the above quotation we have clear and unmistakable language free from all ambiguity, so that all who can read good English can understand if they have the Spirit of Christ. By no stretch of the imagination does Rev. Hoeksema here speak of a "conditional promise". This has no place in the Soteriological concept of Rev. Hoeksema as given here in the Notes. Fact is, that he repudiates this same "conditional promise" in no uncertain terms. See No. 2 under "rejected errors".

3. That in the positive teaching concerning the proper presentation of the relationship between faith and justification (see No. 3) Prof. Hoeksema does not teach faith to be a "subjectively fulfilled condition." That is not the language of Rev. H. Hoeksema, for the simple reason, that such is not his Theological conception of the work of God in our salvation *in* us. He speaks of the act of faith, to be sure, but this is not a "pre-requisite act". It is simply the act of faith whereby we receive and appropriate the righteousness of God in Christ. Hence, he does not fall into what Dr. Kuyper called "verkapt Arminianisme" (camouflaged Arminianism) of the Neo-Nomist, who makes faith a new law. See what Prof. H. Hoeksema rejects under 4 above.

To this we may add the observation, that it really is a pity that so many well-meaning souls are deceived by the specious arguments and the corrupted presentation of the writers in the Reformed Guardian, and also in the Concordia. There ought to be an end to insinuating quoting and innuendo; all quotation should be honest and complete together with a clear and forthright indication of the salient points that a writer wishes to set forth! Not to do this is to deceive the innocent, to disturb the consciences of the weak and to sadden the hearts of the strong. It leaves wreck and ruins in its wake. It is not teaching with health affording words!

It is a terrible responsibility to cause the people of God to be offended, for whom Christ died.

Should anyone wish to support the Theology of the late Dr. K. Schilder that is his responsibility. But then he has no right to do so in the name of the Prof. H. Hoeksema.

Let the truth be spoken, indeed, in love.

It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God because we have taken and beaten His servants. For Christ will say: bring them here and slay them before my feet!

G. Lubbers

## REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST IN SESSION

January 6, 1954

The meeting of Classis was begun by singing Psalter No. 251 after which Rev. C. Hanko, Chairman of the former Classis, leads in prayer.

Credentials from their respective Consistories are handed in by all the delegates. Eleven churches send delegates. Classis is declared constituted and is composed of 22 members. The Rev. J. A. Heys presides and Rev. C. Hanko takes the Minutes.

A good share of the morning session of Classis is required to read the voluminous Minutes of the Classis meetings of April 8-10, 14-16; May 19-23, 26-28 and October 6-9, and also those of the October 21 Classis. These are accepted with two minor corrections.

The churches of Randolph, Grand Haven, Creston and Oak Lawn request subsidy of the next year. These requests are approved by Classis and it is decided to send them to Synod.

Second Church, Holland and Hope request Classical Appointments for the next three months. A Schedule is arranged by a Committee and is adopted unmodified by Classis. It is as follows:

Second Church: Jan. 10 — G. Lubbers, Jan. 24 — G. Vanden Berg, Jan. 31 — M. Schipper, Feb. 14 — G. Lanting, Feb. 28 — G. Vos, Mar. 7 — C. Hanko, Mar. 14 — R. Veldman, Mar. 21 — G. Lubbers, Mar. 28 — M. Schipper, April 4 — H. Hoeksema, April 11 — G. Vanden Berg.

Holland: Jan. 17 — G. Vos, January 31 — C. Hanko, Feb. 14 — G. Lubbers, Feb. 21 — M. Schipper, Feb. 28 — H. Hoeksema, Mar. 7 — J. Heys, Mar. 14 — G. Vanden Berg, Mar. 21 — G. Vos, Mar. 28 — G. Lanting, April 4 — C. Hanko, April 11 — R. Veldman.

Hope: Jan. 17 — G. Lanting, Jan. 24 — H. Hoeksema, Jan. 31 — R. Veldman, Jan. 31 — G. Vos.

Since Rev. J. A. Heys will labor in Redlands, California for a few weeks Classis appoints Rev. C. Hanko as temporary Moderator of Second Church. A protest of one Consistory against another Consistory is tabled till the next meeting of Classis to give the various Consistories of Classis time to study the material till the next Classis. Another protest is also tabled to give the protestants opportunity to advise Classis whether they desire to have their protests treated in view of the radical change in their congregation.

Various protests from individuals and groups are read. Classis declares these out of order because since the time of these protests these individuals and groups have become schismatic.

A Communication from Mr. D. Langeland is read in which Classis is informed that the Kalamazoo Consistory does not recognize Classis East as the legal body of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Classis will answer them as they did the other schismatic groups.

A letter is received from Rev. B. Kok and Rev. J. Blankespoor against their being unseated by Classis on the October 6-9 meetings of the April Classis. A Committee is appointed to formulate a reply and submit their work to the Classis of April. Committee: G. Lubbers, H. H. Kuiper and R. Ezinga.

Upon a request from the Consistory of Holland, Mich., Classis decides to publish all the names of the Clerks and Treasurers of Classis East. These are as follows:

**Randolph** — Clerk: William Huizenga, Waupin, Wisconsin; Treas.: Herman De Vries, Randolph, Wisconsin.

**Creston** — Clerk: Joe King, 1302 Morgan Street, N.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. Treas.: Peter Koole, Route 5, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**First Church** — Clerk: Mr. John M. Faber, Cooper Street, S.E. Treasurer: G. E. Bylsma, Adams Street, S.E.

**Second Church** — Clerk: Nanning Klaver, 924 Godfrey Ave, S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan; Treas.: James Swart, 1007 Grandville, Ave., S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

**Hudsonville** — Clerk: Peter J. Lubbers, Hudsonville, Mich., Treasurer: G. Van Overloop, 4986 - 32nd Street, Hudsonville, Mich.

**Holland** — Clerk: Peter Schipper, 236 East 11th Street, Holland, Mich. Treasurer: James Elzinga, 5710, 19th Street, Holland, Mich.

**So. Holland —**

**Oak Lawn** — Clerk: John Fliikkema, 18288 Ada Street, Lansing, Ill. Treasurer: Sierd Schaafsma, 10929 Southwest Highway, Worth, Illinois.

**Hope** — Clerk: John Lanning, 397 28th Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. Treasurer: Anthony Langerak, Hall Street, Route 5, Grand Rapids, Mich.

**Grand Haven** — Clerk: A. Peterson, Spring Lake, Michigan. Treasurer: Ralph De Young, Sr., So. Wallace Street, Grand Haven, Mich.

**Fourth Church —**

A rather detailed report is given by the Committee called the Classical Emergency Fund Committee through their Secretary Mr. P. Lubbers. The Committee receives the advice they seek, namely, to deal with the persons who must be paid for traveling expenses.

A Consistory seeks advice in the matter of proceeding with the second step of censure. Classis advises the Consistory to proceed after light is shed of the several cases.

Delegates are chosen for Synod with the following results:

**Ministers**

**Primi:**

H. Hoeksema  
G. Vos  
M. Schipper  
C. Hanko

**Secundi:**

H. H. Kuiper  
G. Lanting  
G. Lubbers  
G. Vanden Berg

**Elders**

**Primi:**

A. Haan  
J. H. Kortering  
G. M. Ophoff  
N. Yonker

**Secundi:**

R. Ezinga  
J. M. Faber  
P. Lubbers  
R. Newhouse

The questions according to Art. 41 D.K.O. are read and satisfactorily answered. No need for advice in ruling the affairs of God's church was expressed.

In the late afternoon hour Classis adjourned. Upon request of the chair the Rev. G. Vos leads in closing prayer.

Classical Appointments for Randolph as arranged by the Classical Committee: January 31 — Student, February 7 — Candidate, February 14 — Student, February 21 — G. Vanden Berg, February 28 — Candidate, March 7 — Student, March 14 — M. Schipper, March 21 — R. Veldman, March 28 — J. A. Heys, April 4 — G. Vos, April 11 — G. Lubbers.

G. LUBBERS, Stated Clerk