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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

With this issue of our Theological Journal we begin Volume II of our new publishing venture. With each issue our circulation has increased. We are grateful for the many expressions of appreciation and support which we have received. If any of our readers desire to comment on the articles which appear in the Journal, we welcome your remarks. This includes questions you may have about matters discussed, points of disagreement or subjects you would like to see treated. While we cannot promise definite responses to every request, we shall surely take into account in future writings points made by our correspondents.

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We have included in this Journal a discussion of the importance of history of dogma for the Church. This subject is one sorely neglected and is, we believe, the cause of much of the trouble which plagues the Church. A healthy respect for the doctrines of the Church in the past, rooted in a reverence for the work of the Spirit promised to the Church of Christ, would solve many of the evils which are destroying the Church in these troubled times.

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An article of a little different kind appears in this issue. Our readers are urged to take special note of the reprint of the paper authored by Rev. H. Hoeksema. While it has in it much Greek and Hebrew, our readers who have no acquaintance with the original languages of Scripture need not be deterred from reading it. The article will be of considerable value. And, though written some years ago, will be very relevant to the present.

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Prof. H. C. Hoeksema's review of the second volume of Dr. Berkhóuwer's work on the Holy Scriptures will appear, the Lord willing, in our next issue. At that time questions raised in some of the correspondence will be answered.

THE ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA
Prof. H. Hanko

The scholarly and erudite student of Church history, Philip Schaff, wrote in his monumental work on this subject: "The present is the fruit of the past and the germ of the future." While this can be applied to history in general, Schaff meant it to refer particularly to the history of the Church and the history of doctrine. He used this axiom as partial justification for his careful study of Church history and to underscore the importance of knowing the development of the doctrine of the Christian Church. It is quite obvious that Schaff meant more than merely to say that doctrine as developed by the past is a worthy object of study only because curiosity impels one to delve into beliefs of generations gone by. There is practical advantage to be gained from a study of Church history. It is impossible for the Church to accomplish her God-assigned task without a thorough acquaintance with what the Church has confessed throughout the New Dispensation.

It is necessary for the Church to know her past to fulfill her present calling only because the past has produced the present; and because the present will produce the future. There is an organic relationship between past, present and future generations within the Church. There is organic development of dogma.

It can hardly be denied by any present-day student of the ecclesiastical scene that this truth is vehemently challenged and denied today. If one thing characterizes the Church today more than anything else, it is a decided distaste for and suspicion of the importance of the doctrinal development of the Church of the past.

James Orr, in his lectures before the Western Theological Seminary on the "Progress of Dogma" noted that this was something quite general already at the turn of the present century. He asks:

Can we rightly speak of a system of dogmatic truth? Systems, of course, there are--venerable, the products of age-long development, but are they truth? As you are well aware, dogmatics--theological system--is in these days in somewhat evil case. . . .¹

¹The Progress of Dogma, James Orr; Hodder and Stoughton, Fourth Edition; p. 4.

What are the positions of those who challenge a system of dogmatic truth?

There are those, then, first, who would exclude dogma from Christianity altogether, as having no rightful place there. The bond of union in Christ's religion, they tell us, does not lie in intellectual conceptions, but in participation in Christ's spirit. To make Christianity depend in any degree on "doctrines" or "dogmas" is to falsify Christ's gospel in its essence. . . .

A second class do not go so far. They grant that these ultra-radicals overshoot the mark, but they still regard the actual course of dogma as, if not exactly a mistake--seeing that it followed a path of historical necessity--yet a wide departure from the original idea of Christianity. . . . Dogma, as we know it, is, it is contended, the result of an initial misunderstanding of Christianity, which has vitiated its development all through. . . . The requirement of those who take this view, accordingly, is, that, breaking with the past, we begin de novo, get back behind even the apostles, and, starting from the immediate impression of the historical Christ, set ourselves to construct "a new theology" which shall be free from all metaphysical pre-suppositions. The air is full of this cry for a "new theology"; only the new theology which the age demands seems still to seek. . . .

Lastly--to allude only to one other phase of the attack--assault is made, not only on the completed edifice, but on the certainty of the very foundations of dogma; for criticism, in the view of many, has been brought into play with such deadly effect on the records of the Old and New Testaments--the old conceptions of revelation and inspiration have received such damage--the

progress of scientific knowledge has made it so difficult to entertain even the possibility of supernatural occurrences--that a structure of dogma built on so insecure a basis cannot have, it is thought, any claim to rational acceptance--not to say to rank among the sciences, and even vaunt itself as queen of them! . . .²

These attacks have not subsided since Orr spoke these words. In fact, on all three fronts, the attacks are pressed with increased vigor. There is, in the first place, a growing disregard for dogma as being a barrier to the real calling of the Church--a calling which can be expressed in the phrase: service to one's fellow man. The plea is made that the Church must get out of the stuffy confines of the cathedral and march in the streets. Steadily increasing is the clamor that the Church does not serve her purpose, indeed has no raison d' etre, except she abandon all concern for doctrine and pursue a social calling. This has become the main emphasis for the World Council of Churches. This is the thrust of the new "Confession of 1967" adopted last year by the United Presbyterian Church. This is the explanation for the increased activity of the Church in social action. Behind all this stands a bitter dislike for anything which has to do with the doctrine of Scripture.

Secondly, the pressures of ecumenism have forced the Church to relegate doctrine to a place of little or no importance. The calling of the Church is to seek institutional unity. No matter that this unity can be purchased only with the price of doctrinal loss. No doctrinal difference must be permitted to stand in the way. Doctrine is, by its very nature divisive. And unity can be achieved only when doctrine is abandoned as a legitimate pursuit of the Church.

Thirdly, all this conduct is justified by the desire to be "relevant". The Church, so it is said, must address itself to the Twentieth Century with its unique problems. It must speak to modern man--the modern man of affluence in suburbia; the modern man of the ghetto in his struggle for equal rights; the modern man threatened by nuclear holocaust; the modern man caught up in the racing advance of science and technology. And if the

² Ibid., pp. 5-8.

Church is to be "relevant" she must abandon doctrine and speak to man in his present need.

All this simply means that the past is discarded. Perhaps it is true that interest in the past history of the Church will never die completely. But the interest in the Church of the past by the Church of the present is comparable to the interest of an archeologist in his Egyptian mummies. And when curiosity concerning the past has been satisfied, the mummies of ancient dogmas can safely be relegated to a museum to gather some dust which is only occasionally brushed off when someone once again wishes to take a quick look at dead and useless theological systems.

It would be easy to say that this is a trend which comes to expression in the liberal ecclesiastical camp. If this were true, the whole matter could be brushed aside quickly as constituting no threat to the Church. But, sad to say, this is not true. The views of those who look to the past with scorn have deeply infected the Reformed Church world. And this is surely our concern.

This has, e.g., been consistently the position of the Reformed Journal in a limited sense. As long ago as December of 1965. Lewis B. Smedes wrote an article on "Can the Church be Trusted?" His answer to this question was simply: "It can be trusted only insofar as the Church is willing to speak to the modern generation." This speech to the modern generation involves, on the part of the Church, a willingness to confess past errors of doctrine and a willingness to reformulate the doctrinal confession of the Church. It becomes evident that this reformulation involves finally a massive overhaul of the past creedal position of the Church.³

Taking up this same subject in connection with a discussion of the "Formula of Subscription",⁴ Smedes pleads that the Church

³This was, no doubt, the position of the Synod of Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands meeting this year in Lunteren when Geelkerken was exonerated. He had been condemned for denying the historicity of Genesis 3. This is also the position of Dr. H.M. Kuitert who pleads for a whole new structuring of theology. The Reformed Journal has consistently supported such views.

⁴The Formula of Subscription is a document all officebearers in the Reformed Churches are required to sign in which they express agreement with the creeds and promise to defend them.

must allow free discussion of the creedal doctrines of the Church in order to grow theologically. The truth as it was expressed in other centuries is no longer of value to the Church today--at least past formulations of the truth. Implicit in Smedes' argument is the contention that the confessions of the Church have no binding character, are subject to constant change, and, indeed, that the truth itself is in some sense relative.⁵

In a later issue of the same periodical, H. Stob discusses another aspect of this problem. In the fifteenth anniversary issue, Stob discusses the problems facing the Church in general and the Journal in particular in the days ahead. These problems include questions concerning various fundamental truths such as the doctrine of God, of God's decrees, of evolution and creation, of common grace--especially God's love and grace, of liturgy and social issues. He pleads for a re-evaluation of the Church's traditional stand on these doctrines and of the creeds in which these doctrines are expressed. The assumption is, of course, that the past no longer is sufficient for the problems of the present.⁶

If a proper and adequate criticism is to be made of these growing trends, the whole history of the development of dogma must be put into its Scriptural perspective. What is the development of dogma all about? Has it been a mere exercise in futility? Has it been a waste of time--and, indeed, blood? Is the Church today called to turn her back upon the past? Do the demands of the age require this of us? Or at the very least, is a massive reformulation of all the creedal positions of the Church in the past necessary to make the Church relevant? Does the past mean nothing for the Church of the present? as perhaps the Church of today will mean nothing for the Church of tomorrow?

A close look at some of these questions and their answers is of considerable importance.

If we seek for a definition of the history of dogma we find one suited to our purposes in Rev. H. Hoeksema's classroom notes: "The history of dogma is. . . the development of dogma; that is, the appropriation, development, systematic expression and authori-

⁵Reformed Journal, January, 1966, pp. 13-15.

⁶Ibid., March, 1966, pp. 3-6.

tative declaration by the Church of the truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures, under the influence and guidance of the indwelling Spirit and under the necessity of the ever-pressing need of maintaining and formulating the truth in opposition to false doctrines and the philosophy of the world."⁷

The principle of all the history of dogma is the infallibly inspired Scriptures. While we cannot go into the question of infallible inspiration at this point, we must make our beginning with this truth. The Scriptures are the infallible record of divine revelation. This revelation God gave to His Church of Himself in order that through it the Church might know God in all the fulness of His revelation in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are such a complete record of a complete revelation. This point must be emphasized. God's revelation is not partial. God does not reveal only a fraction of the totality of the divine being. This is not to say, of course, that the revelation of God is exhaustive. This would be impossible. The Scriptures are a finite book, a creation. And the finite cannot exhaust the infinite. In fact, all the knowledge of God which the Church possesses is but a little light of an infinite radiance of truth and perfection. But the revelation of God must not be described as partial. It is complete. It is complete in the sense in which our Belgic Confession speak of it:

"We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For, since the whole manner of worship, which God requires of us, is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures: nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul saith. For, since it is forbidden, to add unto or take away anything from the word of God, it doth thereby evidently appear,

⁷History of Dogma, Rev. Herman Hoeksema; mimeographed notes; p. 1.

that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects."⁸

The Scriptures themselves are an organic whole. The portrait of Christ in them is perfect and complete. And in the face of Christ is revealed God Himself. The organic development of dogma is from the organism of Scripture.

Yet Scripture is not a textbook of dogma. It is revelation.

The History of Dogma has its principium in Holy Writ, even as in the closed canon it has its starting point. That which develops in the history of dogma is not the truth of revelation, for it is complete and the canon is closed; to what is revealed no tittle or iota can be added. But the reflection of that truth in the believing mind of the church and its systematic expression and definition is characterized by progress and development. One cannot properly speak of a dogma of Moses or John or Paul; and Scripture is no catalog of dogmas. It is the revelation of God in Christ. Dogmas are born as soon as the believing mind of the Church concentrates and logically systematizes the truth of revelation.⁹

However, the Church is not left to her own resources in developing the truth of the Word of God. This would make the task an impossible one. Neither the will to engage in this task nor the ability to perform it would be present. Rather, the Church is guided in her work and impelled to perform it by the Spirit of Christ. Jesus often spoke of this Spirit which He would give to His Church; especially did He speak of this on the night before He was crucified. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy

⁸Belgic Confession, Article VII. Underscoring is mine.

⁹Op. Cit., H. Hoeksema, pp. 1, 2.

Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:16, 17, 26. This Spirit of Christ Christ received at the time of His exaltation. He, as the ascended Lord of His Church, gave this Spirit to His Church when it was poured out on the day of Pentecost. This Spirit is the Spirit of revelation. It is not the Spirit of revelation in the sense of mysticism which has periodically erupted in the Church. Revelation itself ceased with the closing of the canon. The Spirit is not the divine Revealer apart from Christ and apart from the Holy Scriptures which contain the revelation of God in Christ. Rather, even as the Spirit was instrumental in the infallible inspiration of the writers of Sacred Scripture, so is this Spirit the One Who through the Scriptures reveals Christ from Whom He is sent. By the work of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people the necessary understanding is given to probe the depths of the meaning of Scripture and uncover the truth revealed in its sacred pages. Without the Spirit development of dogma is impossible.

This Spirit does not operate however, in individuals. That is, this Spirit does not operate in individuals separated from the Church of Christ. The Spirit is given to the whole Church. This Church, this mystical body of Christ, is united by the Spirit to Christ. And in this Church as a whole the Spirit operates. We must not, of course, make the Church an abstraction. It is, even in its mystical unity, composed of the many individuals who comprise the full number of God's elect. Nevertheless, this has many and important implications.

In the first place, and negatively, an individual cannot expect successfully to engage in the pursuit of the development of dogma in isolation from the Church of Christ. He cannot expect to be able to carry on this noble endeavor while separating himself from the Church which is Christ's body. This is impossible.

In the second place, the work of development of dogma is the work of the Church as a whole. This does not mean to imply that the Church produces advances in the field of theological studies only when the whole constituency engages in mammoth seminars and public forums. But nevertheless only when the whole Church pos-

sesses an ardent desire to know her God revealed in Christ; only when there is a lively longing to develop in the truth pervading the whole Church; only when there is a theological and doctrinal interest; only then can there be the proper spiritual and theological "climate" for individuals, in organic connection with the whole Church, to uncover yet newer riches of the knowledge of God.

It has been said: "The Church today is not strong enough to write or rewrite confessions." There is little question but that this is true. Tempted by the siren songs of materialism and worldliness, lulled by the false security of material prosperity, caught up in the dashing streams of pleasure madness, the Church is in no spiritual frame of mind to engage in serious theological reflection. The whole state of the Church shouts aloud that this is true. False doctrine runs rampant in the Church and few voices are raised in serious protest. Theological ignorance is the blight of the times. Only a social gospel has appeal. How presumptuous, utterly presumptuous it is that the Church should even consider writing new confessions and revising old creeds. No wonder that when it tries the product is a theological monstrosity.

In the third place, the development of dogma is not the calling of the whole Church which lives at any given time on the earth. It is the calling of the Church throughout history. One who stands in organic and living connection with the Church past as well as present is one who can engage in this endeavor. If he arrogantly separates himself either from the Church of the past or of the present he has lost his credentials, his right to labor, his ability to engage in development of doctrine.

It is precisely for this reason that the Church gives authoritative expression to dogma. This is the position which the creeds of the Church occupy in the Church's life. These creeds are authoritative. This is why Churches devoted to the truth insist that their officebearers sign declarations of loyalty to the creeds. It has been charged that this is, after all, Roman Catholicism from which we have been liberated by the Protestant Reformation. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Romish Church set herself up as an authority above Scripture. The Church declares in her creeds what she believes to be the truth of Scrip-

ture. In authoritatively formulating these truths in confessions, the Church is saying that Scripture alone has complete authority over her faith and life. The authority of the creeds is the authority of Scripture itself. When the creeds can be shown to be contrary to Scripture, then the creeds must be changed. When the creeds speak Scripture's truths they are authoritative.

This dogma of the Church has been formulated over many centuries of time. The development of the truth of Scripture began already immediately after the apostolic era. It has continued to the present. The march of the Church through the centuries is marked by the progress of dogma.

Sometimes this development of dogma has been compared with the building of a wall. The Church is then metaphorically defined in terms of a city walled in against the enemy which seeks to destroy her. The walls of this city are composed of the dogmatic expressions of the Church. Each generation adds a stone or stones to the wall. Under the pressures of attack these walls are built ever higher. Each doctrine developed and expressed puts another stone in place and affords greater protection from the fierce assaults of heresy.

There are some respects in which this metaphor adequately defines the work of the Church. Particularly the fact that every generation builds upon the work of the generation which has preceded it is emphasized in this figure of speech. But there is a glaring defect. It is quite important to a proper conception of the organic development of doctrine. If the confession of the Church grows as a wall grows then the Church in the earliest centuries of the New Dispensation had only a partial comprehension of the truth of God's Word. There were only one or two doctrines which the early Church appropriated and included in her confession while of the others she remained in ignorance. William Shedd follows this idea in his "History of Christian Doctrine". He speaks of the development of the truth as following the traditional organization of theology into six loci. In her early history the Church concentrated upon Theology and Christology. A bit later, in the Fifth and following Centuries, the Church devoted her energies to questions of Anthropology and Soteriology. This continued up to and, in part, through the time of the Reformation. Then the

emphasis shifted to Ecclesiology. And we, near the end of the ages, live in a time when the great theological questions concern Eschatology.¹⁰

There is an element of truth to this. Historically it surely is true that these various loci received primary attention in various ages of the New Testament Church. The truths of the trinity and of the doctrine of Christ were the first to be developed. This is understandable. From the viewpoint of Satan, naturally he would attack these truths first of all. They form the foundation of the Christian faith. And, from God's viewpoint--in His sovereign control over His Church, it was quite necessary that these truths be sharply defined before any others. They are the basis upon which the rest of the truth must be formulated. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God, Jesus emphasized that this confession is the rock on which the Church would be built. And built on this rock, the gates of hell could not prevail against her.¹¹

But we can perhaps find a better illustration of the development of dogma in a tree. The entire tree is present principally and organically in the seed. And at any given time in the growth of that tree, the whole tree is present. There is no part lacking. In certain stages of its development the trunk may be the dominant part. At other times the roots or the foliage may attract special attention. But there is no time when any part of the tree is missing. It always remains a complete and organic whole. It grows continuously. Sometimes in years of drought the growth is slight. Sometimes in rainy years its growth is great. But the complete tree continually grows.

So it is with the development of dogma. The seed is, of course, the Word of God itself. From that seed grows the whole tree of the confession of the Church. At any given age the whole truth of the Word of God is present. It is true that the doctrines

¹⁰pp. 21 ff.

¹¹It is striking that the doctrinal definitions of these truths in the Nicene Creed, the Symbolum Quicumque and the Creed of Chalcedon have stood unchanged throughout the centuries. The Church today confesses these truths exactly as they were defined in these historic councils.

of anthropology and soteriology were not developed extensively until the time of Augustine. But this does not mean that the Church prior to Augustine had no conception at all of these truths. Indeed she did. They were in barest outline. They were not developed. They were like a newly formed bud on a tender branch. But they were there. The Church, even then, confessed the utter dependence upon the grace of the cross. So it always is. The development of dogma has been the unfolding of the confession which the Church always maintained. This truth always present is unfolded in all its beauty and splendor. This development takes place out of Scripture and by the impulse of the Spirit of truth.

It is a striking characteristic of the history of the development of dogma that this development has taken place under the necessity to defend the truth overagainst heresy. There is almost no exception to this. The truth was not developed in the ivory tower of theological reflection. The truth was not given deeper and fuller expression by a lone individual retiring in some secret corner of the world or the Church to pour over his books and manuscripts. The contrary is the truth. Heresy arose. And, because the very existence of the Church depended upon a steadfast defense of the faith, the Church was called upon to defend her confession. She did this by developing that confession. The result was development of dogma. On the battlefield, to change the figure, the truth was hammered out as weapons of defense in the battle of faith. The perpetual attacks of Satan with the fiery darts of heresy served as a goad to prod the Church to turn again to Scripture to uncover its truths. In the defense of the faith, the truth grew. To return to the figure of a tree: the sharp and biting winds of false doctrine beating against the tree could not uproot it. These winds served only the purpose of driving the roots more firmly into the ground and drawing fresh resources to make it grow in more exciting beauty.

It remains the calling of the Church to carry on this exalted task. It shall not be completed until the Lord Himself returns and the Church is taken to glory to see Christ face to face and understand perfectly what now she knows only in part.

There is a threat abroad to destroy this task of the Church.

Involved in social action, swept in the rising tides of false ecumenism, dulled spiritually by materialism, enamoured with the idea of heaven on earth, the Church has become callous to sound doctrine. The result is that a steady plea is made to abandon the doctrinal formulations of the past. They are of another time suited to another place. They are of no value today. Some, with unbelievable spiritual and intellectual dishonesty, sign statements of faithfulness to the creeds with their tongues in their cheeks. Others, thinking the time ripe for more radical and forthright demands, clamor for new confessions and for a decent burial for old and tried confessions.

Should the Church heed these pleas, the result is ecclesiastical suicide. The Church will have forfeited her right to engage in serious and honest doctrinal pursuit. She will have surrendered her credentials. She will have lost her ability to perform this task. For there is an ethical sin involved. It is a sin of such serious proportions that it will vitiate her spiritual strength. By turning in scorn and derision upon the confession of the Church of ages gone by, the Church today mocks the fruit of the Spirit of Christ. The Church arrogantly claims she has no need of the Spirit. The Church proudly asserts her own reason as sufficient to discover the truth of God. The result will be fatal.

What is needed is a deep and abiding appreciation for the truth which the Church in the past has confessed--a truth sealed in martyr's blood. This appreciation is something attainable only through thorough acquaintance with the confessions of the Church. Only when today's Church knows yesterday's confessions can she be faithful to her calling. This knowledge of the confession of the Church must not be mere intellectual appreciation for what the Church has done. These confessions were written in blood. They were written as living declarations of what the Church passionately considered to be her salvation. And only when these confessions are the living confession of the Church today will it be possible to continue on in our task. By committing ourselves to our creeds we are not inviting stagnation and a retrogression to a by-gone age. We are precisely preparing ourselves for the work ahead. Only when the Church humbly receives what the Spirit has done yesterday

and diligently prays for that same Spirit today can the Church have the needed impulse to get on with the task of developing the truth for generations yet to come.

ON THE THEORY OF COMMON GRACE
Rev. Herman Hoeksema

A Word of Explanation

Among the personal papers of the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema I discovered two essays on "Common Grace," of which the essay here presented is the second. As far as I know, neither paper has been published previously. The first paper would also have made interesting reading; but it was not feasible to publish because the last couple pages were missing, and it was not possible to fill in the missing section editorially except by guess-work. Besides, the second essay is in more than one way the more valuable, especially because of the exegetical material contained in it.

Perhaps the reader wonders why an essay on this subject is published at this late date, especially since the author's views on the subject have been rather thoroughly and frequently expounded in various other publications. The answer to this question is two-fold. The first reason is historical. It is evident from the contents of both essays that the dates were pre-1924, and probably the very early period of the common grace controversy in the Christian Reformed Church. I do not know the exact time and occasion when they were delivered. Obviously, in the light of the fact that the author works with the Hebrew and Greek, the occasion was some kind of ministers' gathering, either an area ministers' conference or possibly a meeting of the group of ministers who wrote in "The Witness." Obviously, too, the subject of common grace had already come into discussion. Yet the time was such that supporters and opponents of the theory of common grace were still meeting and engaging in face-to-face discussions. It would seem, therefore, that these essays were delivered in the early 1920's before the controversy had reached the stage of ecclesiastical polemics. In connection with this first reason stands the second, namely, that this paper demonstrates that from the outset the Rev. Hoeksema dealt with this subject in a thoroughly exegetical manner, and that over the years, apart from some refinements and clarifications, he did not deviate from that original exegetical approach and position. His question, the question to which he insisted upon an answer down through the years, was: In the light of Scripture, what grace do the wicked receive?

Interesting, because it explains the author's approach at that

time is the introductory section of the first essay, which I will quote:

"For more than one reason I have looked forward to this occasion with eager anticipation, and I am glad that it has come. First of all, it gives me pleasure to think that the interest in matters of such a purely doctrinal nature as that of common grace is still alive in our circles. It cannot be called a characteristic of our age in general that it is deeply interested in doctrinal and theological questions. It rather busies itself with the practical problems of this world. It is, however, a sad delusion that the practical side of life can be divorced from its doctrinal foundation. And for that reason I am glad to notice in the midst of much unrest in our churches these days, that there still is a live interest in questions that pertain to our Reformed doctrine and Calvinistic life-view."

"In the second place, I like nothing better than a public and open discussion. When I say this, I mean on subjects extra-confessional, concerning which there is room for difference of opinion. Such a subject I consider that of common grace. If it were otherwise, I would not speak to you tonight. If I intended to make propaganda for any ideas that run contrary to our Reformed Standards, my place would not be here tonight. But this I do not intend to do. From beginning to end I shall remain foursquare on the basis of our Reformed Standards. The subject on which I speak to you this evening is plainly extra-confessional as I shall show presently. And on such subjects I like public discussions. That is why I am here this evening. I invite discussion. If you wish, I invite debate, contradiction. And I have only one condition: Tackle the subject, not the person. Not because I am so over-anxious about my person, but I am about my subject."

"Thirdly, I think the subject we shall discuss tonight is of grave importance. Not, of course, as long as it remains a mere question of rain and sunshine. A person asked me the other day whether I could not see that the Lord sent His rain also upon the wicked. And I told him in my opinion there would be very few umbrellas and raincoats sold if He didn't. But that is not our question tonight. But if the question is asked, not whether the

wicked receive rain and sunshine and whether they develop, but whether they receive grace, a grace they have in common with the righteous, I think it is a significant one. To my mind, as you answer this question you will answer the question of the antithesis. The reporter on the speech of Dr. Volbeda in 'Onze Toekomst' saw this clearly, I think."

"But, and after this 'but' I will plunge headlong into my subject, I realize that I have a difficult task before me tonight. And I kindly beg you to realize this with me. My view, which I will propose to you tonight, differs from the general opinion among our people on this subject. The general opinion has been trained to believe in common grace. And if this were only all, my position tonight would not be so precarious. But it is not all. Great theologians, men for whom I too have only the highest esteem, men like Dr. Kuyper, have taken a stand for this view and developed it. Over against such a giant I am but a small man. Yet, I don't agree with him. And now it is almost inconceivable that such a little man as I could possibly be right on any subject on which Dr. A. Kuyper differs with him. It even makes some people smile piteously to think of the very idea! And, therefore, I will ask you to grant at least the possibility, let us say, it's a very small, a faint one, that my view is after all correct, and that of Dr. Kuyper is misleading in this case.'

The body of the first essay was then devoted to the following items:

- 1) The demonstration that the so-called doctrine of common grace is not confessionally Reformed, that is, not a truth that has been expressed or developed in our Forms of Unity.
- 2) A brief exposition of Dr. A. Kuyper's theory of common grace.
- 3) An exposition of the Scriptural concept "grace."
- 4) A refutation of the idea that both the righteous and the wicked, the elect and the reprobate, receive grace from God in this present life.

In the last section of the paper (the incomplete section), the three-fold conclusion mentioned in the introductory part of the second essay was set forth. Hence at this point we present that second essay.

ON THE THEORY OF COMMON GRACE

--Rev. Herman Hoeksema--

The conclusion we read in our last paper was three-fold. In the first place, we maintained that there is but one grace, operating through Jesus Christ as the Mediator of redemption and based only on His atoning blood. Secondly, we explained that although the wicked are in this world organically connected with the righteous, live under the same external influences, both evil and good, develop in the same world, yet they receive no grace. All things are to them a curse. And, finally, we developed the idea that there is no such thing as a check upon sin. Sin, finding its root in the principal sin Adam committed in paradise, develops as fast as possible along the organic line of development of the human race.

The criticism passed upon our paper last time was varied. Most of the brethren did not agree with us, which was, of course, no more than I had expected. But I wish to state also that the fact became evident that there was by no means unanimity of conception among the brethren with regard to the subject we are discussing. More than one expressed the opinion that the view of the late Dr. A. Kuyper cannot be maintained as correct. I almost received the impression that some of the brethren agreed that there is but one grace. Also in regard to the conception of grace there was difference of opinion. I think there is room, after I am through, for one more paper in which the brethren meet the difficulties I raised, and which would set forth clearly the brethren's view of this theory. I may call your attention to the fact that some of these difficulties connected with the theory of common grace were simply passed by in silence. Especially would I call the attention once more to the very serious question: how is it possible that the righteous and holy God can in any way assume an attitude of lovingkindness to the wick-

ed,--I care not whether you consider them as reprobate, as unregenerate, or as actively wicked? The question is of great importance, dealing as it does with our relation to the world, and is worthy of our most serious consideration. And though I do not expect that the brethren will agree with me, over against a man like Dr. Kuyper, I humbly submit my presentation of this truth once more to you, begging at least to be heard with a certain measure of sympathy. If I am not seriously mistaken the question is an actual one even in the Netherlands. It cannot escape our attention that Dr. Hepp, of Watergraafsmeer, one of the keenest minds in the Old Country, who already disagreed with Dr. Kuyper in regard to the doctrine of common grace in his dissertation, "Testimonium Spiritus Sancti," whenever he writes "gemeene genade" employs quotation marks. And Dr. Grosheide, in a speech recently held before De Bond van J.V. op Gereformeerde Grondslag in Leeuwarden, called ~~the~~ attention to the wordly-mindedness among the "jongeren" especially, and then mentioned as one of the causes of this transformation to the likeness of the world "een verkeerd opvatten van het leerstuk der algemeene genade." The problem, therefore, is worth our most serious consideration.

The chief criticism, or at least, what I consider the chief element in the brethren's criticism was that I had not based my paper on Scripture. This was hardly correct. For, in the first place, I reasoned throughout my paper from such fundamental Scriptural truths as the covenant, the image of God, total depravity, God's righteousness, the organic development of the human race. And I regard as a Scriptural basis not only the exegesis of a few, or even of many, separate passages, but also the employment of and

deduction from those fundamental conceptions which are commonly accepted among us. Besides, I called your attention to three passages from Scripture which, according to Dr. Kuyper, constitute the classical passages for the doctrine of common grace. For more detailed work time was naturally lacking. Nevertheless, I welcomed the opportunity the brethren offered me to present to you some of the separate passages from the Word of God which may be quoted in favor of my view, as well as to offer a more or less exegetical study of the conception "grace" as revealed in Holy Writ. This I propose to do in the present paper, for the which I ask your kindest attention this afternoon.

I. We will first speak on the Scriptural Idea of Grace.

II. Secondly refute the passages that were offered for discussion by some of the brethren in support of "Common Grace."

III. Thirdly we will call the attention to a few passages in support of my view of the matter.

I. The Scriptural Idea of Grace.

There is this difference in regard to the Scriptural use of the term "grace," that in the Old Testament several words are employed to express approximately the same idea, while in the New Testament we meet with the constant use of one term, which, for that very reason, is very broad and elastic in meaning. The three words from the Old Testament which must be considered are: חֶסֶד, חַיִּיל, חַנּוּן. Of these חַנּוּן is the word which the LXX renders almost invariably by the New Testament χάρις. It is derived from the

root **נָחַן** which signifies, in the first place, "to incline toward anyone or something," denoting an attitude of the body. It is easily seen how the word further could be employed to denote an inclining of the mind and heart toward anyone, a being favorably disposed. Hence, etymologically the word **נָחַן** signifies "favor, good will, kindness, grace." Thus it is used often in the most general sense of the word, as, for example, in Genesis 18:3: **וַיֹּאמֶר**

אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהִים-נָחָם מִצָּרָתִי וְנָחָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים:

This is an expression which occurs very frequently. Thus, especially the verb is employed in cases where the opposite of God's favor might be expected, as for instance, in Psalms 6: 2, where the poet, after having implored Jehovah that He might not rebuke him in anger nor chasten him in sore displeasure, says: **חַנּוּנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֶמְלִל**

..... **אֶנִּי.** And thus also in Psalms 51: 2 where the poet, having

fallen deeply into sin, comes to Jehovah with the well-known prayer:

חַנּוּנִי אֱלֹהִים Thus the word **נָחַן** is also employed to denote that which God in His favor bestows upon His people, in contrast with His dealing with the wicked and scoffers. Thus we read in Proverbs 3: 34: With the scoffers He scoffs, but: **וְלַעֲנִיִּים**

חֶסֶד-נָחַן The word **נָחַן** then, signifies favor, good will, loving-kindness. It may denote an attitude of God, an attitude of His favor, whether revealed to those that are unworthy or without this latter connotation. And, in the second place, it is employed to express that which Jehovah in lovingkindness bestows upon the objects of that grace.

נָחַן comes from the root **נָחַן** which means, in the first place, "to delight in any person or object, to be pleased with one's presence, to be on good terms with anyone, and hence, to

have friendly association with someone." Hence, the meaning of the substantive derivative also means "good will, delight, favor, grace." Thus the word is very evidently employed, for instance, in Isaiah 49: 8:עֲנִיתִיךָ בְּצֵת רָצוֹן ("in the time of goodwill, delight, the time of grace, have I answered thee"). Also this word is used to denote concretely the benefits bestowed in good pleasure and grace, gracious gifts, or gifts of grace.

The word רַחֲמִים finally, often translated by ελεος in the LXX, comes from the root רָחַם. Its fundamental meaning also seems to be that of lovingkindness and favor; but it has the connotation of zeal and fervor. When employed with respect to Jehovah, it expresses that Jehovah is burning with zeal and eagerness to show His grace and favor to those who fear Him. In our version it is frequently translated "mercy." Yet the word is very closely akin to רָחַם, χάρις, and is used sometimes in the most general sense of that word. Thus it is employed in Daniel 1: 9: וַיִּתֵּן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-רַחֲמֵי... לְדָנִיֵּאל ("and God gave Daniel grace in the eyes of the prince of the eunuchs"), a passage where the translation "mercy" would hardly fit. The same word is used by Isaiah where he speaks of the gracious gifts of God's covenant bestowed upon David, 55:3:

רַחֲמֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים ("the faithful, or sure, mercies of David"). The word is used both to denote an attitude of God toward men and a relation of man to God. In the former case it denotes zealous love, ardent favor, and mercy. In the latter case it expresses love, gratitude, piety.

As has been said, in the New Testament there is only one word for "grace" with a variety of meanings, yet always with the same fundamental thought beneath it. And that fundamental significance

is, as we shall see, always: favor, lovingkindness, friendship. Sometimes the word is employed with a connotation closely akin to יִצְחָק and then it means that which is a delight, charming, lovely, attractive. Thus, for instance, very plainly in Luke 4: 22: καὶ πάντες μαρτυροῦν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐθαύμαζον ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος τοῖς ἐκπορευομένοις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ. where the word is very evidently used in the sense of pleasing, charming, aangenaam. The genitive, literally meaning "words of grace," is here used to denote the impression which the words of Jesus made upon His audience. His words were charming and pleasing in their effect upon their minds. He spoke gracefully.

2. In the second place, as is well-known, the same word is used to denote favor and good will in the most general sense of the word, and that both with respect to God and man. Thus in the well-known passage of Luke 2: 52, where we read with regard to the child Jesus: Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ χάριτι παρὰ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώποις. And in Acts 7:46 we read of David: ὃς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, where the word is used evidently in the same sense as often the Hebrew is employed, and signifies favor in the most general sense of the term.

3. In the third place, the word is used with the same fundamental meaning of favor and lovingkindness, but now directed toward those who are unworthy in themselves, but worthy in Christ. I may possibly insert here that the definition that was given last month by some of the brethren, as if grace is love to the wicked or guilty, is a very imperfect one. For, in the first place, it does not at all consider the fundamental significance of the word with its variety of uses; but, in the second place, it forgets that God does

not and cannot show His favor to those that are absolutely unworthy in every sense of the word. The cross of Christ is the plainest testimony of this truth in history. If God could have shown His favor to the wicked as such, the atonement becomes a mystery. ^{It would have been unnecessary} But His grace is revealed to those that have not merited it themselves, but that are worthy because they belong to Christ Jesus and are considered in Him. In this sense κατὰ χάριν becomes the opposite of καθ' ὀφείλημα and κατὰ ἔργα. Thus in Romans 11:6 : εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. And thus also in Romans 5: 20-b: οὗ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις. This grace is called ἡ χάρις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ for the evident reason that it reaches us only from Christ Jesus as its source and meritorious basis. It is the grace of God as received through faith.

4. Fourthly, the word χάρις is used to denote the operation, the action of this favor or lovingkindness of God upon the minds and hearts of His people. God's χάρις becomes through Jesus Christ an active power: regenerates, brings to faith, justifies, sanctifies, perfects. It is in this sense the word is used in Ephesians 2: 8: τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως. Thus also in Acts 18: 27-b: ὃς παραγενόμενος συνεβάλετο πολλοῖς πεπιστευκόσιν διὰ τῆς χάριτος, (who when he had arrived helped them much that believed through grace).

5. In the fifth place, the word χάρις is used to denote the result, the effect, the fruit of this operation of God's grace. And then it is used in a two-fold sense. Sometimes the word is employed to denote the entire subjective spiritual condition of him that is governed by this power of grace operative in his heart.

Thus Scripture says, Romans 5: 2: ἐστήκαμεν ἐν τῇ χάριτι. And the apostle Peter admonishes: αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνώσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (II Peter 3: 18). But the word is used concretely to denote all the gifts of grace as we receive them. Thus, most fully and beautifully in John 1: 16: ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.

b. Finally, the word is employed to signify thanks, gratitude, that is, the acknowledgement of God's lovingkindness and favors as they are received by His people. It is thus the apostle Paul uses the word frequently, as, for instance, in Romans 7: 24: Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; χάρις τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

From this brief review of the uses of the word "grace" in the Holy Scriptures it becomes evident:

1) That the term is employed with a great variety of meanings. It may mean an attitude of God towards His people, or also the operation, and again the result of that attitude of God upon and for the objects of the same. And again, both in the Old and in the New Testament it is used to express an attitude of piety and love and gratitude on the part of man to God.

2) That underneath all the uses of the word "grace" lies the fundamental meaning, always present, of favor and lovingkindness. It is this fundamental thought, or conception, that always must constitute the chief element in our definition of grace. The objects, the manifestations, the operations of this favor may vary; grace is always favor of God.

Now, if you bring this fundamental significance of the term in connection with the fact that man is created in the image of God,

and, further, on the basis of this image of God in man, with the idea of the covenant, you come to the conclusion that the grace of God, this favor, this lovingkindness, assumes the character of friendship. Favor can be shown to an inferior, to him that stands far below us, and who is by the favor that is shown to him not lifted from his inferior position. Favor can be shown to a slave, to a servant. That servant, because of the favor shown him never becomes my friend. I do not live on a level with him. I do not take him into my counsels. I do not confide to him my secrets. I do not associate with him in friendly association. But such is not the nature of God's relation to man. He willed that man should be the creature He could receive in His most intimate communion. Though always remaining creature, and in so far servant of the Most High, he should be a friend-servant. To that end, God created him in His own image. There is a creaturely likeness of God in man. In a creaturely way man lives on a level with his God. If God now reveals to that creature His favor, His grace, the result is that this favor actually assumes the nature of friendship, resulting again in friendly association. Thus we find that the saints are called the friends of God. They walk with God and they talk with God. God receives them in His counsels, and treats them as His own friends. He has no secrets for them. And thus we read also in Psalm 25: 14: "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." The original for "friendship" (otherwise also translated by "secret") here makes us think of a symposium where God exercises friendly association with His people, the people of His covenant. And the passage is most beautifully rendered in the Dutch verse:

Gods verborgen omgang vinden
Zielen daar Zijn vrees in woont;
't Heilgeheim wordt aan zijn vrinden
Naar Zijn vreeverbond getoond.

The same idea of confidential association, of a dwelling in most intimate communion, is symbolically expressed in tabernacle and temple, is tangibly realized in the incarnation of the Word, God dwelling with man, Immanuel, is often expressed in the New Testament under the symbol of supping together with God, dwelling under one roof with Him, and shall be realized most fully when the temple shall be no more in the New Jerusalem and God shall spread His tabernacle over all His people! God's lovingkindness, grace, favor, as shown and imparted to His people, created after His image and received into His covenant, assumed the character of friendship. In grace God is our friend; through grace He makes us His friends.

Now, this relation of friendship or grace God assumes and establishes only with those that are righteous before Him. As long as man stood in his original righteousness it flowed toward him directly. But he sinned; and as a sinner he is cursed, condemned to bear the wrath of God eternally, unless his state is changed. Not to the unworthy, but to the worthy God's favor is shown. And not this is God's incomprehensible grace, that He reveals His lovingkindness regardless of their sin and guilt, and with the surrender and abandonment of His righteousness; but this, that in order to establish His covenant and make His people the objects of His grace He gave His only begotten Son, Himself, in other words, to the depths of death and hell. The objects of God's grace are unworthy in themselves, truly. It is not of works that they are the objects of God's favor. Nevertheless, let us never forget, they are worthy in Christ, through Whom they are justified by faith

before God. Faith is reckoned to them for righteousness. And as righteous in Christ Jesus they enter into God's covenant-communion and are the objects of His grace. And therefore we maintain, once more, that God's grace is His lovingkindness or favor, assuming the character of friendship toward His covenant people, who receive this favor on the basis of the merits of Christ Jesus alone. Outside of Christ Jesus and His atonement there is no grace. The wrath of God abideth on them that do not believe in Jesus. It does not come upon them in some future time, but it abideth on them forever. It is for that reason that we preach a God of wrath and anger to all that refuse to believe in Christ Jesus and trample under foot the blood of the covenant. And it is for that same reason that we preach to every man that all things are a curse to him as long as he will not flee to the God of grace and salvation in Christ Jesus!

II. Refutation of the Passages Quoted in Favor of "Common Grace."

How in the light of this clear and current Scriptural doctrine of grace we can speak of a common grace, I confess is a mystery to me. Never is the word employed with respect to the wicked, I care not whether you please to designate them as wicked, reprobate, unregenerate, or unbelievers. You may take your starting-point in God's eternal counsel of peace, if you please; or you may begin at the total depravity of the sinner, whose mind is always enmity against God and the imaginations of whose heart are at all times only evil; or again, you may take your ground in the covenant-idea. I care not; never will you arrive at any other conclusion than this: grace is only for those that are in Christ Jesus.

But I will turn to Scripture. And I maintain that the Word of God never uses the word "grace" as imparted in any sense to the

wicked outside of Christ. They may live under the outward manifestation of grace. They may receive the good things of God's grace together with the righteous. They may receive the same sunshine and the same rain, the same food and drink and shelter and protection; they may sit down under the influence of the same Word of God, and be baptized with the same baptism. Yea, they may partake of the same Lord's Supper. But the wicked, the unregenerate, the totally depraved as such receive no grace. Neither do the passages that are quoted in support of this theory at all prove anything else.

See Isa: 10
 The one passage that was quoted where the word "grace" is employed is Isaiah 26: 10. There we read: יְהוָה לְשֵׁן רָשָׁע לֹא-לִמֹּד צֶדֶק בְּאָרֶץ
. נִכְחֹת יַעֲזֹל וַיִּבֹּל-יִרְאֶה גְּאוֹת יְהוָה:
 Now, יְהוָה is hophal future of יְהוָה. Apart from the context, the clause יְהוָה, therefore, means: favor is shown. But even a superficial reading of the entire text reveals very plainly that the clause may not be translated in this manner. It is evidently a hypothetical clause. It is the protasis of a conditional sentence, the apodosis of which is: yet will he not learn righteousness. The meaning, therefore, is: Even though favor be shown to the wicked it will do him no good, he will not learn righteousness. The same construction you have, for instance, in Nehemiah 1: 8, where the original reads literally: "Ye shall trespass and I will scatter you abroad among the peoples," but where the meaning is that of a conditional sentence very plainly. Hence, we remark, in the first place, that the text does not present it as a matter of fact that grace is shown to the wicked. But there is more. What is the meaning of the prophet in this passage? Does he mean to grant the possibility that the

wicked receive grace? The very opposite is true. He means to assert that they are not receptive to grace whatever. Even though they live right in the midst of the manifestations of God's grace, yet they do not receive them. This is plain from what follows: "Yet will he not learn righteousness." This is still more evident from the last part of the text: "in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah." The meaning is plain. The wicked lives in the land of uprightness. In that land God reveals the tokens of His grace. Mark, according to the context these tokens are in this instance the punishments of Jehovah. In the ninth verse the prophet had said: "when Jehovah's judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." But in the tenth verse of this same passage he singles out the wicked as an exception to this rule. They do not learn righteousness, even though they live under the manifestation of Jehovah's punishments and judgments. Though Jehovah's majesty through these judgments becomes very evident, yet he will not behold it. The passage means to express that even though you place the wicked in the midst of the outward manifestation of God's grace, yet he receives no grace. Exactly what we contended in our last paper. We do not deny that the wicked lives in the land of uprightness. But we deny that he receives grace. By not heeding the manifestations of grace in the land of uprightness these very manifestations are to him a curse.

A second illustration of common grace referred to last time is the example of Ahab. To all his wickedness Ahab had added the crime of shedding Naboth's innocent blood and depriving him of the inheritance of his fathers. Elijah is sent to him to announce God's punishment upon him. What is the punishment announced? It is

nothing short of complete destruction, extermination of Ahab and his house. Jehovah threatens to make the house of Ahab like that of Jeroboam and Baasha. For a correct understanding of this passage we must bear this in mind. The punishment threatened is final, and therefore, presupposes that the measure of iniquity is full. When this final punishment is announced, we read that Ahab humbles himself and goes in sackcloth and ashes. Note, he does not come to repentance. It is not his sin that troubles him. The next chapter reveals something rather different. No, but the hard blow of Jehovah, as announced in Elijah's prophecy simply crushed him. He is broken. This reveals that the wickedness of Ahab and his house has not as yet reached its culmination. It is not fully ripe. He still fears Jehovah's judgments. The sin of Ahab's house would become ripe only in his son. For that reason the threatened extermination, the final punishment of Ahab and his house is postponed till the next generation. Then the measure of iniquity shall be full. And then the time for final punishment shall have arrived. In other words, the passage teaches what is taught in all Scripture, that final punishment shall be inflicted when the measure of iniquity is full. Thus it was with the flood. Thus it was with Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus it will be with the end of the world. And the sign of the fulness of this measure of iniquity shall be that the world will not be frightened and humble any more even under the threats of severest punishment. Thus it was with the prediluvian world. Thus it was with Sodom. Thus, according to the Lord Jesus, it will be at the end of the world. People shall continue to live unconcernedly, marrying and giving in marriage, even though a thousand Noahs are preachers of repen-

tance and righteousness. Also this is entirely in harmony with our exposition of last month. Sin develops gradually, ripens along the historical, organic line of development of the human race. And when it is fully ripe, final punishment will be inflicted.

Another illustration of the same truth we have in the example of Nineveh. Of course, we must consider the incident of Nineveh in this connection merely as historical fact. The chief significance of the book of Jonah lies, of course, in its prophetic character. From this point of view, Nineveh is typical of the world to whom after Christ has risen from the dead the gospel shall be preached. Even as Jonah goes forth after his three days in the belly of the fish to preach the Word of God to a people outside of Israel, so the risen Christ shall go forth after a three days' stay in the heart of the earth, to preach the glad evangel to every nation. But that is not our consideration at present. We must view the matter as historical reality. And then it is presented as follows. The wickedness of Nineveh is great. And because of this fact Jonah is sent to preach its destruction. Notice, also here final punishment is preached. Extermination of Nineveh as a city Jonah must announce. The question involved also in this case is, therefore, whether Nineveh, as Sodom of old, is ripe for destruction. Jonah preaches and Nineveh humbles itself. The announcement of punishment still terrifies them. This is, as it was in Ahab's case, a sign that the time for final punishment is not yet ripe. The destruction of the city is postponed for a while. Surely, not long afterward Nineveh is destroyed. But at the time when Jonah preached against the city the wickedness of its inhabi-

tants had not reached its culmination. Hence, the Lord's final sentence is not executed. Nineveh's example, like that of Ahab, assures us that final punishment will be inflicted only when the measure of iniquity is full. And this fulfilling of the measure of iniquity takes place only along the organic line of development of the race, and even of individual tribes and families.

III. Other Supporting Passages.

But let me call your attention to other passages of the Word of God, the significance of which can hardly be a matter of dispute. As I said, it would upturn the entire structure of theology to maintain that God assumes an attitude of grace to the wicked as such, outside of Christ Jesus. But I will turn to the Word of God, which assures us in strong language, indubitably clear, that God hates the wicked, that His wrath is on them continually, that His curse dwells in their habitations. Thus in Psalm 11: 5: יְהוָה

:יְהוָה צַדִּיק יִבְחֵן וְרָשָׁע וְאַהֲב חָמָס שְׂנֵאָהוּ נַפְשׁוֹ ("Jehovah trieth the righteous, but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.") Notice the contrasts in the text. צַדִּיק "the righteous" is here contrasted with רָשָׁע "the wicked." And over against שְׂנֵאָהוּ

נַפְשׁוֹ ("his soul hateth") stands יִבְחֵן ("trieth"). The idea is evidently that Jehovah may send affliction to the righteous, but He does so in His grace, to prove, to try, to sanctify them. Even when apparently evil things come to them, they are a manifestation of His grace to them. But different it is with the wicked. His constant attitude is that of hatred. His soul hateth them. He is filled with enmity against them. And whatever they may have in this life, the fact remains that Jehovah's soul hates them. How the idea of grace in any sense can be forced into this text is a

mystery to me. The attitude of God toward the wicked is that of constant hatred.

The same idea is expressed in Proverbs 3: 33: **מְאֵרַת יְהוָה בְּבֵית צַדִּיקִים יְבָרְכָהּ** : **וְרָשָׁע וּבֵיתוֹ צַדִּיקִים יְבָרְכָהּ** . Again **צַדִּיקִים** ("the righteous") and **רָשָׁע** ("the wicked") are contrasted. And corresponding to this contrast is the other **אָרַךְ** ("to curse") and **בָּרַךְ** ("to bless"). And the idea of the text is that Jehovah's curse, His damning power, dwells in the house of the wicked. No matter how that house may appear, the curse of Jehovah dwells in the house. But the dwellingplace of the righteous is the home of His blessing. There is no exception to this text. Wherever you have the house of the wicked, however rich and abundant it may appear, there you have the curse of Jehovah; and, on the other hand, wherever the righteous dwell, in whatever circumstances you may meet them, there is Jehovah's blessing. Again, I ask, where is common grace?

Once more, the same antithesis is expressed in Proverbs 3: 34: **אֲמַלְלִים הֵיאָה-זֶה לִי וְלִעֲנָיִים יִתֵּן-יְיָ** . Here **לִי** from **לִי** ("to deride") is a scoffer, a profane person, who mocks at things sacred, who tramples under foot the things of God. Of him it is said that God assumes precisely the same attitude over against him which he assumes over against God and things sacred. God mocks him, derides him, laughs at him, makes him the object of His scorn. On the other hand, **עֲנָיִים** means the lowly, the meek, the righteous as they suffer affliction and bear it with the patience of faith. They receive grace. The implication is, of course, that the scoffers receive no grace. God assumes an attitude of grace, and bestows His grace upon the lowly, not upon the wicked. Such is evidently the implication of the contrast in the text. There is no common

grace. There is the always present and ever recurring antithesis.

Neither is this same contrast foreign to the New Testament. In I Peter 5: 5-b we read: ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν. God opposes, assumes an attitude of opposition, sets Himself against the high-minded, the haughty; but to the lowly He giveth grace. The contrast of the text is self-evident. Over against the high-minded (ὑπερηφάνοι) stand the lowly (ταπεινοί). Only the latter receive grace. The former always meet with God's opposition. And the implication is naturally that these receive no grace. The same thought occurs in I Peter 3: 12, where the apostle quotes from Psalm 34: 15, 16: ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ Κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὅτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ Κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦτας κακά. It seems to me that these passages may well be deemed sufficient to prove my contention that Scripture teaches that the wicked receive no grace. Jehovah's soul hates the wicked; He mocks at them; He assumes an attitude of opposition against them; He sets His countenance against them; He makes His curse dwell in their house. And it would not be difficult to multiply the passages of the Word of God expressing this same truth.

There is, however, one more thought we wish to substantiate by direct passages from Holy Writ. We claimed that the outwardly good things the wicked receive in common with the righteous in this world become a curse to them, and that exactly through them sin and evil flourish and develop. In proof of this contention we refer to Psalm 92: 5-7. Here the poet sings of the glory of God's works and the depth of His thoughts. "How great are thy works, O Jehovah, thy thoughts are very deep!" so the poet sings. He con-

tinues to say: "A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. Here אֵת-זֹאת is used, pointing to what follows. What then is that glory of the works of God? Of what is the poet thinking as a manifestation of the depth of God's thoughts? This is expressed in verse 7:

בְּפֶרֶחַ רָשָׁעִים כְּמוֹ-עֵשֶׂב וַיִּצְיֹא כָל-פֹּעַלִי אָן
 לְהַשְׁמָדָם עֲרֵי-עָדָּה: Then the wicked break forth as the green herb, spring as the grass, and all that work iniquity do flourish for the purpose of being destroyed forever! The niphal infinitive לְהַשְׁמָדָם here denotes the purpose of their blossoming forth, and that God's own purpose. For the poet had told us in the preceding verses that in this fact he beheld a work of God and the depth of His thoughts. Through these things, therefore, by which the wicked flourish as the green herb, God brings them to everlasting destruction. Their prosperity is their curse from God!

The same truth is expressed in Psalm 73: 18, 19. We are all acquainted with the general contents and thought of this beautiful Psalm. The poet, considering things from a merely human point of view, is grieved because of the prosperity of the wicked while the righteous suffer. He cannot understand this. Of this so-called common grace the wicked receive much more than the righteous. It is painful to the poet; and he wonders sometimes, when he looks at it all from a natural viewpoint, whether there is knowledge in the Most High of this state of affairs. But when the poet enters into the sanctuary of God, when he changes viewpoints, when he looks at this same phenomenon in the light of God's doings, all becomes plain to him. And he exclaims:

אֵךְ בַּחֲלָקוֹת תָּשִׁית לָמוֹ הַפִּלְתָּם לְמַשְׁאוֹת:

The meaning is, evidently, that prosperity becomes slippery places to the wicked, on which they slide and stumble and hasten to their

final destruction. They prosper as wicked, in the midst of these good things develop in wickedness, and with all this prosperity and through it they hasten to utter ruin. Now, notice that the poet beholds all this as the work of God. God sets them on those slippery places. God causes them (the hiphil is used here) to hasten to utter desolation. And the means God employs to this end is the prosperity they enjoy. They flourish, yes, but as wicked. And as wicked they develop only for desolation and woe. If you prefer to call this grace, I do not understand the meaning and power of grace. But the idea is very evident.

It is in this light that I would also explain passages as Hebrews 6: 4-8. Here the author speaks of: τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. We would almost receive the impression that they were people that had actually received the grace of God in their hearts. For it is here not a question of food and raiment, of rain and sunshine, but of the blessings of grace upon the church. They have been enlightened, they have tasted of the heavenly gift, they have become partaker of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. Yet they received no grace, for they are described as παραπесόντας. And they fall so deeply that: ἀδύνατον αὐτοὺς ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν. They are, therefore, people that live very near the central current of God's grace. They live in the church. They are under the influence of the good Word of God. They understand it; they even see its beauty. They live in the sphere where the Spirit of grace operates, they partake of the sacraments. And they even taste some of these things. They are sometimes enraptured by the view of the

age to come. They are very near the central stream of God's grace. But the result is hardening. They become worse than heathen. They can come to repentance nevermore. They evidently committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, doing despite to Him and trampling under foot the blood of the New Testament, crucifying Christ afresh. And the author explains this phenomenon by the illustration of a field: γῆ γὰρ ἡ πλοῦσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον πολλάκις ὑετὸν καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὖθετον ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρας ἐγγύς, ἥς τὸ τέλος εἰς καῦσιν.

Now notice the significance of this illustration. There is a field. And upon that field the rain descends often. There is no question as to the quality of the rain. It is, of course, good. If, now, so the author explains, under the influence of that rain that field brings forth the good herb, it receives blessings from God in that rain. But if it bears thorns and thistles, the field is ἀδόκιμος, not able to stand the test, disapproved, rejected. It received the rain, but it brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles. Through the rain that came often upon it the evil nature of the field was brought to light, developed. And, therefore, it is nigh unto a curse. Thus the author explains that there are some upon whom the rain of God's grace falleth often, that live under the continued influence of that rain, and yet receive no blessing. The accursed nature of their wickedness is only brought out and developed, so that they fall so deeply that they cannot be brought to repentance.

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I think I fulfilled my task. Once more, I wish to state that

it is not the best method in my estimation to call attention to individual texts. But it is very easy to do so in regard to the subject under discussion. And besides, most of the objections that were brought against my former paper are answered at the same time. I confess that some of the criticism impressed me rather strangely. More than once the remark was made that the unregenerate do good, that they receive grace subjectively, otherwise they could not do despite to the Spirit of grace! I confess, I do not understand this. How grace can do despite to the Spirit of grace is to me incomprehensible. It was said that the seeds of the doctrine of common grace were present in our confessions. And reference was made to the Heidelberg Catechism where it says that we are prone to evil. The argument was that total depravity merely means an inclination to all evil, while still the sinner may do good! And this is, then, a seed of common grace. Perhaps I do neither understand the doctrine of total depravity, nor the Heidelberg Catechism. But I will nevertheless call the attention to the fact that the latter is very explicit on this point. In the passage referred to by the critic the Catechism asks the question: "Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined, prone, to all wickedness?" And the answer is just as explicit: "Indeed we are, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God." It seems to me that if there are seeds of this doctrine in the Confessions, they must be sought elsewhere. The question was asked: what do the unregenerate do? Nothing but evil? I would answer with the word of the apostle Paul: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14: 23. And again: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11: 6. Again, the question was asked by one of the

brethren: Can we say, then, to the unregenerate, to the wicked: "All things are a curse to you?" I answer: Most assuredly. I always preach that all things are a curse to them if they do not repent. Neither can I understand the view that was expressed by one of us, that the proper receptivity for grace is special grace, all the rest is common grace! Perhaps some of these remarks must be attributed to the fact that they were improvised on the spur of the moment. What must we make of the counsel of election, of the sending of God's Son, of His humiliation and exaltation,---in short, of the entire work of God's salvation, if the sphere of so-called special grace were limited to the subjective? There is one question about which a special paper might well be written: Do the elect ever occur as sinners? My brief answer would be: they do. Nevertheless, from eternity they occur as sinners in Christ Jesus, as the objects of God's free grace. But this brings us to the entire question of supra and infra, which I cannot be expected to discuss in this connection. And, finally, as far as the rich young ruler is concerned, Edersheim is of the opinion that he was actually one of Jesus' sheep according to election, that Jesus loved him as one of His own, and that the young ruler, though turning away for the moment, and thereby proving that the rich enter with difficulty, later returned and became one of Jesus' disciples. I admit that this is a conjecture. But if you read the entire narrative carefully, there is much in favor of this supposition.

The practical significance of my view is evident. If you consistently develop the line of common grace, particularly as indicated by Dr. A. Kuyper, you are bound to lose the antithesis between the people of God and of the world, between light and dark-

ness. Everywhere you then obtain an intermediate sphere where the church and the world meet on common ground and live from a common principle. The doctrine of so-called common grace obliterates the antithesis. It is, for that reason, not so difficult to prove that there are two doctors Kuyper. The one is the man of the antithesis; the other of common grace. And the latter will lead us right into the world, as is already evident in the Netherlands and in our own church. And, therefore, we will maintain the antithesis of light and darkness, of sin and grace, of God and the devil, of Christ and Antichrist. Christ and Belial have nothing in common, least of all grace. We will continue to fight the battle against the forces of opposition. The antithesis compels. It is an antithesis between God and the devil, Christ and Antichrist, God's people and the world; but it is an antithesis, too, that is found within my own being. For the law of grace opposes the law in my members, wars against the flesh. Fighting that battle we here live as strangers and pilgrims, like the saints throughout history, the witnesses and heroes of faith. But in principle we have the victory now. And we look for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God! For the glory that is set before us we are willing to suffer with Christ. For the crown that is ours in Christ we gladly bear the cross behind Him!