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Editorial Notes

-- Prof. H. Hanko --

With this issue of the Journal we complete seven years of publication. Our subscription list has, in the meantime, grown beyond anything we had anticipated. Since we are sending the Journal to our subscribers free of charge, and since the cost of publishing the Journal has continued to rise until it has become a relatively expensive project, we want to be sure that all who receive the Journal are interested in it and want to continue receiving it. We are therefore, including in some issues of the Journal a form to be filled out by you and returned to us. If this form appears in your issue and you want to continue receiving the Journal, kindly fill out the form and return it to us as quickly as possible. If we do not receive a return form, we will assume that you are not interested in receiving the Journal and want to be taken from the subscription list. Those of our readers who do not have such a form enclosed will automatically continue receiving the magazine.

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There is another enclosure in this issue which lists the current Seminary publications along with their price. You may order these by addressing the School. Please enclose a check since this saves on bookkeeping. Generally speaking, about 4% of the cost should be added to cover postage and handling. Although the prices of some of our publications have gone up, we are still selling them at cost to us.

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All of this reminds me that our Seminary address has been changed; and we ask all our readers to take note of the change and make use of it in any correspondence to us. This change of address is because our Seminary is now located in new quarters which are beautiful and commodious and which the Seminary has now enjoyed for the last semester. The new address is:
Protestant Reformed Theological School,
4949 Ivanrest Ave.,
Grandville, Michigan 49418

We welcome to our Journal Prof. R. Decker who joined the Seminary faculty last Fall. He will be writing from time to time in these pages and will be continuing his series on the kingdom from the viewpoint of an exegetical study of the Sermon on the Mount.

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We have received over the years a number of requests for past articles in the Journal. Most of these requests we have been unable to fill because our supply of the Journals is soon exhausted. Some of our readers have offered to pay to have the articles copied. We are therefore, including a list of all past articles which have been published. If any of you desire these articles, we will have them copied and mailed to you. The cost will be 10¢ a page.

The Scriptural Presentation of God's Hatred	(H.C.H.)	26 pp.
Wisdom in Proverbs 8	(H.H.)	22 pp.
Philip Melanchthon	(D.E.)	23 pp.
The Synoptic Problem	(H.H.)	22 pp.
Book Review: Dr. Berkhouwer's "De Heilige Schrift" Vol. 1	(H.C.H.)	18 pp.
The Organic Development of Dogma	(H.H.)	14 pp.
On The Theory of Common Grace (Rev. H. Hoeksema)		26 pp.
The Genealogy of Jesus According to the Flesh	(D.E.)	12 pp.
Continuation of Berkhouwer's book	(H.C.H.)	17 pp.
The Relation Between the Lutheran and Calvin Reformation	(H.H.)	21 pp.
As To The Doctrine of Holy Scripture	(H.C.H.)	14 pp.
The Christ of History	(H.H.)	18 pp.
As To The Doctrine of Holy Scripture (2)	(H.C.H.)	18 pp.
The Christ of History	(H.H.)	19 pp.
As To The Doctrine of Holy Scripture (3)	(H.C.H.)	18 pp.
The Authority of Scripture	(H.H.)	23 pp.
As To The Doctrine of Holy Scripture (4)	(H.C.H.)	17 pp.
The Old and New Man In Scripture	(H.H.)	16 pp.
As To The Doctrine of Holy Scripture (5)	(H.C.H.)	18 pp.
"Competent to Counsel"--A Critique	(H.H.)	23 pp.
Pastoral Counselling	(C.H.)	13 pp.
Summary of Conference on Counselling	(H.C.H.)	14 pp.
The Old and New Man in Scripture	(H.H.)	24 pp.
Family Visitation	(H.C.H.)	20 pp.
Holy Spirit Baptism--A Refutation of Pentecostalism	(R.D.)	21 pp.
The Holy Spirit: His Presence, Power and Fruits	(G.V.B.)	12 pp.
The Old and New Man In Scripture	(H.H.)	24 pp.
Oecolampadius, Reformer of Basel	(M.H.)	31 pp.

Please let us know which articles you wish to have sent.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

An Exegetical Study of Matthew 5 - 7

--Prof. Robert D. Decker--

I. Matthew 5: 1-9: The Citizens of the Kingdom

There has always been a good deal of discussion within the church on the concept of the Kingdom of Heaven. Never has there been unanimity of opinion among theologians on questions such as: just what is the Kingdom? How shall the Kingdom be realized? What is the calling of the citizens of God's Kingdom here and now in this world? Of rather recent date this whole discussion has intensified among churches of "Dutch Reformed" persuasion both in North America and the Netherlands. This discussion has been provoked by "the philosophy of the law idea" promulgated by two Free University of Amsterdam professors, Herman Dooyeweerd and D. H. Th. Vollenhoven. These views have been developed and popularized by a Toronto based group known as the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (A.A.C.S.). We do not intend to add to the vast amount of critique of this movement and its philosophy. Rather, it is our purpose in this and several succeeding issues of the Journal to examine the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5 - 7 from a positive point of view. This whole discourse of the Savior deals with the concept, the Kingdom of Heaven. We are convinced that a proper understanding of what our Lord says in these chapters goes far toward giving us the truth concerning Scripture's teaching on the Kingdom. Certainly, anyone wishing to know what the Bible says about the Kingdom of Heaven can ill afford to ignore Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Because this is our purpose we shall not be giving a verse by verse exposition of these chapters nor will we be dealing with the "critical" questions of just when Jesus spoke these words and where, is this discourse the same as the one recorded in Luke 6, etc. We are interested in the contents of the Savior's Word itself and that especially from the point of view of what we may learn of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Verses one and two give us the setting of this sermon. Jesus, upon seeing the multitudes ascends the mountain. Which mountain is meant we cannot determine for its exact location is not indicated. Probably the mountain is in the vicinity of Capernaum of

Galilee. This at least would seem most in harmony with the last section of chapter four which speaks of Jesus' early ministry in that region. The text informs us that when "he was set" or seated. His disciples came to Him and He began teaching them. The scene, therefore, is this: Jesus is surrounded by an inner circle of His disciples who in turn are encircled by the great multitude from all over that region (Chapter 4: 25).

Quite unfortunately this marvelous discourse is remembered by a wrong name. It would be much better to call this "The Sermon On The Kingdom" rather than "The Sermon On The Mount." The Kingdom of heaven is really the theme and controlling concept of the entire discourse recorded in these three chapters. This is in perfect harmony too, with Scripture's description of our Lord's Galilean ministry given in chapter 4: 23, ff.: "And Jesus went about all Galilee...preaching the gospel of the Kingdom..." Several elements may be noted concerning this theme. There is both unity and progression or development of thought in the sermon. That is, what we are given in these chapters is not a mere collection of unrelated sayings or some profound thoughts of Jesus on the Kingdom just thrown together. Everything the Savior says is in amplification of that central thought, The Kingdom of Heaven.

In the broadest of terms the development of this motif, the Kingdom of Heaven, is along the following lines:

1) In chapter 5: 3-16 Jesus describes the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus speaks of the spiritual characteristics, the persecution, and the calling of the Kingdom citizens in this world. Because they are the poor in spirit, etc., they must expect to be persecuted and hated of the world just as the prophets were before them. They must rejoice in this, however, for great is their reward in Heaven. They may be encouraged, therefore, in their calling to manifest their heavenly citizenship as the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world."

2) Next, Christ expounds the Law of God, the same law which was given to Moses on the two tables of stone at Sinai and which sets forth the righteousness of the Kingdom. This righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees; in fact, this righteousness is in direct antithesis to "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." This section concludes with the well

known exhortation: "Be ye, therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Chapter 5: 17-48)

3) Chapter 6: 1-18 records the Lord's word concerning the relationship of the citizens of the Kingdom with one another; their duty to give alms, pray, and fast. All this the Savior emphasizes must be out of the heart in antithesis to the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees: "who love to pray standing in the synagogues..." Verses 19-34 of the sixth chapter speak of the calling of the citizens of the Kingdom to seek first the Kingdom of God, rejecting Mammon. They are to do this in complete trust in their heavenly Father Who knows their need. They must not even worry about such basics as "what shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (verse 31)

4) Chapter 7: 1-12 may be summed as: "love your neighbor as yourself." The chapter closes with the Savior's exhortation to enter the Kingdom."

5) Jesus concludes the entire discourse with the familiar parable of the wise and foolish builders which illustrates the difference between those who merely hear His word and those who do the word. (7: 24-29)

Finally, by way of general introduction, we must understand that Christ is in no sense of the word teaching a mere "social gospel" in these chapters. He does not give us some helpful, moral teachings which if observed guarantee good relationships among men. Christ is most emphatically preaching the Kingdom of Heaven which is conceived by God in His eternal counsel, realized in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and perfected in the new heaven and earth. This Kingdom of grace is radically opposed to and different from the kingdom of this world. In fact, Scripture teaches that this Kingdom ultimately crushes the kingdom of this world.

Turning to the introductory section (chapter 5: 3-9); commonly called "The Beatitudes," we note:

1) The marked emphasis on the BLESSEDNESS, the happiness or joy of the citizens of the Kingdom. Nine times (if we include verses 10-12) in quick succession Jesus exclaims, "Blessed..." Already at this point we are impressed by the sharp antithesis

between the citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom and those of the kingdom of this world. By every evaluation of the world these citizens are not blessed. According to the world's standards the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, etc., are judged not happy but wretched. But Jesus declares with finality: no matter how wretched or miserable the world may consider His disciples to be, they are genuinely happy.

2) Each of these "beatitudes" contains three elements. There is the statement of the blessedness of the Kingdom citizens, a description of the spiritual characteristic of the one pronounced blessed, and the Savior states the reason for the blessedness of each.

3) We may discern a definite relationship among these. These are not just isolated statements but very obviously they belong together. Notice that they are rather naturally divided into two groups of three with verse 6 the transition from the first to the second. The first three: the poor in spirit, they that mourn and the meek, all characterize the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven from the point of view of his NEED or lack. Verse 6, the transitional statement, speaks of the fact that the citizen of the Kingdom hungers and thirsts after righteousness. They seek the fulfillment of their need. The last three: the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers present the Kingdom citizen from the point of view his need being supplied and the resultant fruit. He is full of mercy, pure in heart, and a peacemaker.

As to these characteristics as such there are three fundamental principles which ought to be understood.

1) Jesus is speaking of the virtues which characterize every saint, every citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ is not describing extraordinary Christians, nor does He speak of some of the people of God. Every saint, though it be in varying degrees, is marked by every one of these characteristics. One who is a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is poor in spirit, a mourner, meek, and the rest.

2) These characteristics must be manifest in the life of the Kingdom citizen. They are not merely what he confesses to be. But the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven appears as poor in spirit, etc., in the midst of the world.

3) Finally, these are in no sense of the word natural characteristics. All men are not poor in spirit, the ungodly cannot be meek or merciful. To put it another way, as poor in spirit the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven stands overagainst the ungodly. As graced with these characteristics (and they are just that, gifts of grace) by God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit and Word of Christ, the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is a stranger in the world whose citizenship is in heaven whence also he expects his Savior (Phil. 3: 20, 21). This is precisely why Jesus emphasizes that element of persecution in verses 10-12. The citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are persecuted exactly because as poor in spirit, etc., they stand antithetically opposed to the citizens of the Kingdoms of this world.

Turning to the "beatitudes" themselves we find that Jesus describes the citizens of His Kingdom as "poor in spirit;" "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." (Verse 3) One is struck immediately by the radical difference between this judgment of Jesus Christ and that of the world. Jesus calls the poor in spirit blessed, literally happy. The world certainly would not say that. The world judges happiness by one's wealth, his influence, and his power. As far as the world is concerned poverty is a great evil. Vast amounts of money and hours are spent by the world to eradicate poverty. The world considers the poor, not happy, but wretched and most miserable. The poor have no reason for joy according to the judgment of the world. But Jesus pronounces them happy. They are blessed because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them and not to the wealthy, the high and mighty, the rich and powerful of this world.

The term "poor," in the text is derived from a verb which means to be thoroughly frightened, to cower or hide one's self in fear and this term carries the notion of one who slinks or crouches in utter wretchedness. Hence, the poor are reduced to begging and in their poverty they are completely dependent on others. This poverty must not be taken in an earthly sense. Earthly poverty is not necessarily a virtue and in itself it does not insure one of entrance into the kingdom. Jesus emphasizes that these are poor with respect to the spirit. He does not mean, however, spiritual poverty as such. All men, godly and ungodly alike, are poverty

stricken in that sense. All are dead in trespasses and sins and this surely is no reason for blessedness. In fact this is the deepest cause of man's misery. The poor with respect to the spirit are those who recognize their spiritual poverty. They know their wretched state and condition. They know their sins not only, but they know their sinful natures according to which they can do nothing at all pleasing in the sight of God. It is at this point that one observes one of the most fundamental distinctions among men. Only the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven recognizes his own lack. Only he confesses his sin and strives against his sinful nature and its inclinations. The ungodly never do. They love their sin and hate God. And loving sin they revel in wickedness. It is characteristic of the mind of the flesh that in his hatred against God and inability to be subject to the law of God that he imagines himself to be independent and quite self-sufficient. Not so the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. He is poor with respect to the spirit. He is pronounced blessed.

The reason for his happiness is: "...their's is the Kingdom of heaven." There are three emphases in Scripture concerning the Kingdom which ought to be noted at this point.

1) The first is that Scripture speaks of this Kingdom as the Kingdom of God. It is God's because He conceived of this Kingdom in His eternal counsel. God determined this Kingdom in all of its details. God determined that His Kingdom would center in and be realized through His only begotten Son in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ. He chose His people in Christ before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1: 3,ff.) and decreed the way of sin and grace, the fall and redemption through the cross and resurrection of Christ, as the way to the final perfection of His Kingdom. God also determined the final realization of the Kingdom in the new Creation which will be the perfect manifestation of His eternal glory. Not only so, but God determined all things with a view to the realization of His Kingdom, even the devil and the reprobate ungodly cannot frustrate the cause of the Kingdom of God (cf. Isaiah 43 and 45). It is the Kingdom of God also in the sense that God alone rules the Kingdom, He is its King. While He rules the subjects (the poor in spirit) by His grace so that they

willingly serve Him in love, He rules all things: great and small, good and evil, individually and collectively serve the realization of the Kingdom.

2) Scripture stresses that this Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of the Kingdom is established in the atonement accomplished by the suffering and death of Christ on the cross. The Kingdom is principally realized in the resurrection of Christ and its perfection will come when He returns at the end of the ages. It is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ because God gave Him all authority to rule in His Kingdom. In the name of God Christ rules the Kingdom. Jesus spoke of that moments before His ascension and in the context of His giving the church "the Great Commission": "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28: 18b) The inspired Apostle Paul sums this fact beautifully in Philippians 2: 5-11, one of the most profound passages in the entire New Testament:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore 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."

This passage teaches that God exalted Christ to the place of highest glory in the Kingdom through the way of the deep humility of the suffering of the death of the cross. Now Christ has a name above every name and as Lord of lords and King of kings He rules God's Kingdom. It is Christ Who speaks the Word of the Kingdom and reconciles the Kingdom-people to God; and, it is Christ Who rules the Kingdom by His grace and Spirit. It is Christ too, Who is the Judge of the Kingdom. Jesus spoke of this when He gave us the Parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25: 31,ff.):

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd

divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..."

The holy Apostle warns:

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Corinthians 5: 10)

The Kingdom of God, therefore, is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

3) Thirdly, Scripture emphasizes that the Kingdom of God and of His Christ is the Kingdom of Heaven. While we intend to return to this concept in the course of these articles let it be said that this factor cannot be over emphasized in our time. In spite of all kinds of evidence in history and especially recent history to the contrary (to say nothing of the Biblical and Confessional evidence) the old post-millennial notion of an earthly realization of the Kingdom persists in a variety of forms in our day. Over-against all such ideas is the emphasis of these chapters and all of Scripture on the fact that the Kingdom is of heaven. This means that the Kingdom of God has its origin in heaven. But it also means that the Kingdom is heavenly in character. Most emphatically the Kingdom is not of this world. The Savior spoke of this plainly in answer to Pilate's questions concerning His kingship:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18: 36)

It is the kingdom of Heaven because it is the Kingdom of spiritual blessings: of grace, of righteousness, peace, and of everlasting life. It is the kingdom of Heaven because it stands overagainst kingdoms of this world. There is constant conflict between the two as Satan, the prince of the powers of the air and the ruler of the children of disobedience, attempts to destroy the cause of the heavenly Kingdom of God and of His Christ.

Jesus characterizes the citizens of this Kingdom as "the poor in spirit" and He pronounces them blessed, happy because "their's is the kingdom of heaven." Notice, Christ says they are blessed because the kingdom is their's. Christ refers to a present joy and not to something which lies only in the future for the citizens of

His Kingdom. These are happy now because the pride of their sinful hearts has been humbled by the mighty grace of God in Jesus Christ so that they know their poverty and God's great mercy. They are blessed now because the cross of Christ marked the judgment of this world so that the doom of Satan and the children of disobedience and all the forces of evil and death is sealed. Now they are happy because the first principle of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ is in them by regeneration. They have a hope which shall never put them to shame. Thus the joy of salvation which they possess can never be affected or diminished by the circumstances of life in this world. Though the whole world stand against them, though they be tempted, scorned, persecuted and hated of all men for the sake of the gospel they are still full of joy. For they live in the joyful anticipation of the coming of the kingdom in the personal return of the Savior. And, they know that nothing can be against them or separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. All things must work for their good and salvation because God in Christ is directing all things great and small, good and evil, toward that final, great consummation of all things.

They are blessed and they shall be blessed. When, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, the heavens and the earth which are now are destroyed in the fire of God's just wrath and the new heaven and earth are created in which righteousness shall dwell (cf. II Peter 3: 10-13) they shall be blessed. That shall be the end of all their sinning for they shall be raised up in immortal, incorruptible, spiritual bodies (I Cor. 15). God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death or pain or sorrow or crying (Revelation 21 and 22). The poor in spirit shall live together with Jesus Christ in perfect fellowship with God.

Christ continues speaking of the citizens of His Kingdom in verse four:

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

One cannot help but be impressed with the "wholly other" character of the citizens of God's Kingdom. This is evident from two points of view. The statement itself appears to be an utter contradiction in terms. Happy are they that mourn? How can that be? Sorrow and happiness are antonyms. Grief precludes joy. In addition to this is the fact that this statement of Jesus is

completely contrary to the world's evaluation of things. In the kingdom of the world they that mourn are not considered to be blessed. Exactly the opposite is true. The world judges them that mourn to be wretched and most miserable. This is precisely what we mean by the antithetical nature of these beatitudes. The truth of the Kingdom of Heaven overagainst the lie of Satan is this: "they that mourn" are blessed. In this fundamental respect the citizens of the Kingdom of God are radically different from and stand opposed to the citizens of the kingdom of this world. Again, therefore, in spite of all appearances to the contrary only they that mourn are blessed. These are full of joy for only these shall be comforted.

Those, however, to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God understand the Savior's meaning. There is a sense in which all men mourn. Life on this side of the grave is "nothing but a continual death" (Form for the Administration of Holy Baptism, the Psalter). All people everywhere, whether they admit it or not, and no matter their station in life; rich or poor, healthy or sick, all suffer grief. That sorrow is of immense proportions. In fact it is well nigh immeasurable. Man is born only to die. Really he is born dead; dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2: 1,ff.). Death stalks him from the moment of his birth. It causes him the sorrow of unrealized dreams, unattained goals, and unsatisfied ambitions. He experiences the sorrow of pain and sickness and is grimly reminded by these of the grave's ultimate victory. He grieves without hope when loved ones are removed from his fellowship by death. Finally he grieves eternally when through physical death he is forever banished from the favor and fellowship of God. The root cause of this universal sorrow is sin. The shadow of the just judgment of God and the crushing burden of guilt hang over the whole human race. The power of sin's corruption grows and pervades man's whole existence. This is becoming increasingly obvious in our day. The very foundations and structure of society are crumbling all about us so that life in this world rapidly reaches the point of being impossible. This is obvious in every sphere of human existence: state, family, education, church, business and the economy. Everything is in a state of virtual chaos. Man embarked on this disastrous course way

back in the beginning when in Adam he rejected the truth of God and embraced the lie of the devil. There is no escape. Man has and still does look almost frantically for relief. He looks to education, to science and technology, to the philosophies of his fellows but there is no answer. He may attempt to drown himself in a sea of forgetfulness by madly pursuing the pleasures of sin or by indulging in drugs or alcohol but ultimately he always fails. Man has no genuine happiness. He lacks joy even though he sorrows over sin. The Scripture says, "the sorrow of the world worketh death." (II Corinthians 7: 10) Man can never get out from under the curse of God's just wrath and punishment on account of sin. Quite obviously Jesus cannot mean these by "they that mourn." These are never blessed.

Christ means the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The same ones whom He characterized as "Peop^{le} in spirit." He means His people whom He saved from sin (Matthew 1: 21). These, the kingdom citizens, are "they that mourn" in a very unique sense. They mourn, as paradoxical as it may sound, precisely because they are the redeemed of the Lord. They live out of the principle of the new man in Christ and, therefore, they see their own sin and sinful natures. They struggle against the evil lusts of the flesh every day. Indeed, the more they grow up into Christ the more they become aware of the fact that they have but a small beginning of the new obedience. It's in the depth of that intense struggle that the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven cries with the Apostle Paul, "O, wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7: 24) The mourning of the citizen of the Kingdom of Christ is a grieving over his sin. Nor is it a mourning because of the consequences of sin, this is the sorrow of the world which works death (II Cor. 7: 10). The mourning of the citizen of the Kingdom is a grieving over sin because it is offensive to the holy God.

That grief is manifest in the life of the Kingdom citizen. He takes his sin very seriously and is never careless or flip-pant about it. Daily he struggles against his evil nature and daily he confesses his sin before God. Fervently he prays for the grace of the Spirit of Jesus Christ that he may walk in

holiness before his God. This mourning is evident too, in that "they that mourn" seek with all their heart and soul and strength the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The mourner knows that he does not belong here in this world. This is not his permanent home. As a citizen of the Kingdom he is a stranger in the earth and a pilgrim. The deepest longing of his heart and the great aim of his life is to be where Christ is, in the fellowship of the God of his salvation. His citizenship is in heaven whence also he expects his Savior. (Phil. 3: 20, 21) Hence he longs for the day when he shall be delivered from the body of this death in order to praise God with all the saints in the perfected Kingdom in glory. As long as he must still remain in this life and do battle against his sin he mourns.

But he shall be comforted. The very fact that Jesus promises the mourners comfort is the source of their comfort here and now. This is true from every point of view. They that mourn have the comfort that their sins have been forgiven and that they shall surely be preserved blameless unto the day of the Lord. Even in all the turmoil of this world: its lawlessness and all its miseries and sorrows; the citizen of God's Kingdom is comforted. For he knows that all these things are for him and nothing can be against him. And they that mourn have but one prospect for the future. That is glory. They shall be comforted.

The third quality distinguishing the citizens of God's Kingdom is meekness: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (verse 5) The term itself means gentle or mild. Its use in the New Testament indicates that meekness is the very antithesis of arrogance born of a proud spirit and manifest in a selfish, domineering attitude. Gentleness out of the humility of the love of God manifest in a lowly, servant attitude; this is meekness. (For a more detailed treatment of the term, cf. Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament vol. VI, pp. 645-651.) James 1: 19-21 teaches that meekness carries the idea of "readiness to hear and do the Word of God;" this in distinction from the proud spirit which speaks out against the Word:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

The Savior summons those "babes to whom the Father has revealed the things of the Kingdom: (Matthew 11: 25,ff.)

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11: 28-30)

Meekness therefore, is fundamentally a virtue of Jesus Christ and thus too, is reflected in those for whom He laid down His life, the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Quite obviously meekness is not a natural characteristic of man a virtue which can be cultivated and developed. Apart from grace there is no meekness in men. Again the antithesis between the citizen of God's Kingdom and the citizen of the kingdom of this world stands in sharp relief. The world will never say, "Blessed are the meek..." Man apart from grace is full of pride. And that pride comes to expression in all of his life as sinful man always seeks himself. He is quick to strike out in revenge and bold to assert his "inalienable rights." His whole life is rooted in the principle of self-preservation. The trouble is that he is alienated from God. Man has turned his back to God and refuses to submit himself to the Lord's Word. He hates God and opposes God in all his life and for that very reason he hates his neighbor too. Thus, it is that the entire direction of his life is spent in the attempt to satisfy the evil lusts of his depraved nature. What meekness there is in the world is only feigned. What is more, the Scriptures teach that sinful man lacks the ability to be or do anything else. His mind is hatred against God and it is not subject to the law of God and it cannot be subject to the law of God. (cf. Romans 8: 7) It is precisely this horrible fact which explains the lawlessness and turmoil which characterize our times.

The meekness of which Jesus speaks is a spiritual virtue. It is that virtue by which the citizen of God's Kingdom is able to bear shame and suffering submissively and calmly for the Lord's sake. It is a virtue which flows out of the unshakable conviction that God by His almighty power directs all things according to His counsel for the good of His people. The citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is certain that the Kingdom of glory will surely come. Nothing can hinder its realization much less prevent it. For this reason meekness always reveals itself in the life of the Kingdom citizen as a submissive following of the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. The citizen of God's Kingdom is undisturbed by the threats, the fears, and anxieties of life. Meekness, therefore, is strength. It must never be confused with weakness. The meek endure reviling without reviling again, as Jesus did. Silently they bear the reproach and the scorn that go with bearing the name of Christ. Silently, not because they are weak and cannot or do not dare to assert themselves and gain revenge; but because as the meek they know that the kingdom is not of this earth. They remember the word of Christ Who said: "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matthew 26: 52) They know the battle is not against flesh and blood. (cf. Ephesians 6) Hence the meek count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. (cf. Philippians 3) Meekness is not then indifference to one's rights or privileges nor is it cowardliness. It is rather spiritual courage born of the assurance that God will surely avenge the cause of His Name, His people and His Kingdom.

One readily understands the radical difference between the citizen of this world and the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. It takes a strong arm and a hard, unmerciful heart to deal blows; it takes meekness to receive those blows. It takes pride, ambition, and lust to fight one's way to the top in this world; it takes the meekness of Jesus to deny one's self, take up His cross, and follow Him in this world. Thus, in direct contrast to the pride of the citizen of the kingdoms of this world the meek who shall inherit the earth are manifest as the

pilgrim-strangers whose citizenship is in heaven. These love not the world neither the things that are in the world (I John 2: 15ff.). They are the soldiers of the cross of Christ who are armed with the whole armor of God so as to be equipped to fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6).

Jesus pronounces these meek blessed, "...for they shall inherit the earth." The verb, "shall inherit," means: to receive as an inheritance, or to receive an allotted portion, or to receive as one's own possession. That allotted portion or inheritance of which the meek shall be the possessors is "the earth." Note that the Savior expressly says: "the earth" and He does not say "heaven." If Jesus had said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the blessings of heaven," we would have no difficulty understanding the meaning. But this is precisely what Jesus did not say. Our Lord promises that the meek shall inherit the earth. Various interpretations have been offered which do not meet the test of the Scriptures. It is said, for example, that Jesus meant this earth, the earth in which we now live. God's people by the exercise of Christian virtue and through a Christian influence will so permeate all areas of life and society that eventually they will become the possessors of the earth. By the power of the gospel preached by the church and exhibited in the lives of God's people this world will be overcome and the meek will then inherit the earth. In other words the Kingdom of Christ will come on this earth. There are variations on this theme but basically those who would exegete "the earth" to mean this present earth teach some kind of earthly realization of the Kingdom of God.

This view must be rejected. The passage under consideration, Matthew 5 - 7, knows of no such earthly realization of God's Kingdom. In fact, immediately after characterizing the citizens of the Kingdom the Lord speaks of the fact that these must expect persecution in this world (vss. 10-12). Besides, the Scriptures nowhere teach an earthly realization of the Kingdom. The very opposite is emphasized throughout the Word of God.

This is not to say that the Kingdom has not come. It certainly has. The Kingdom came by promise already all through the Old Dispensation; in fact, it came really moments after the fall of man into sin: God announced the coming of His Kingdom in what has often been called the "mother promise" of Genesis 3: 15:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

All through the Old Testament Scriptures God reveals that Kingdom in ever increasing light. He gives us a picture of the final destruction of the world of sin in the flood, He speaks of the children of the Kingdom and the father of believers, Abraham to whom also the Lord gave the sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith, circumcision. There is the typical realization of the Kingdom in the nation of Israel, especially at its zenith during the reigns of David and Solomon. Finally, the earthly gives way to the heavenly when in the fulness of time God sends His Son into the world. The Kingdom came, to be sure, in the Person of the Son of God in human flesh. The kingdoms of this world were crushed principally at His cross and the righteousness of the Kingdom was established there and sealed in His resurrection from the dead. The Kingdom has come too, in the hearts of the people of God by the wonder of the new birth. Yet, it must be said that the Kingdom is still coming and will finally come in the perfection of the new creation. The Kingdom has come and the Kingdom is manifest as well here and now. But it shall be realized at the end of the ages. It shall not be perfected on this earth. This earth is under the lordship of Satan. Ultimately the world will develop into the kingdom of Antichrist only to be destroyed at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The earth" which Jesus promises as the possession of the meek can only refer to the new earth. This is the hope of the meek. On this earth they may only expect persecution, suffering for Jesus' sake. They must never expect to have any positive influence for good. They must never be deceived into thinking that the power of the gospel will transform this world into God's

Kingdom. Indeed, they will have to do battle against false teachers and on account of their hope in the promise of Jesus' return they will be scorned (cf. II Peter 2 and 3: 1-4). But they shall inherit the earth, the new earth! They know that the day of the Lord is coming as a thief in the night and when that day comes the heavens are going to pass away with a great noise. The elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth too, with all its works shall be burned up. But out of that terrible destruction God is going to create a new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness! (cf. II Peter 3: 10-13) This is the hope of the meek, this is their inheritance.

For this reason Jesus says, they are blessed. The meek must suffer and it will not be long before they will endure the great tribulation spoken of by the Lord in Matthew 24. But they are blessed. They have a peace the ungodly can never know and a hope that shall never put them to shame. Their future is most blessed. They shall reign with Jesus Christ over all the works of God's hands in the new creation. And while they wait patiently for that final realization of all things they know that nothing can separate them from God's love in Christ.

These then, together with the poor in spirit and they that mourn are the citizens of God's Kingdom. Considering these three characteristics once more one cannot help but be impressed with the sharp difference between them and the world's citizens. These surely are not the wise or the mighty or the noble of this world. They belong to the poor, the foolish, the weak, and the despised. So it must be! It is divine necessity for:

"...God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

(I Corinthians 1:
27-29)

James Daane's THE FREEDOM OF GOD

(A Review)

- Prof. H.C. Hoeksema -

[THE FREEDOM OF GOD, A Study of Election and Pulpit, by James Daane;
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 208 pp., \$5.95]

In an introduction to his book, the author informs us that his book deals with the reasons for an alleged silence of Reformed pulpits on the theme of God's gracious election. Concerning this silence the author writes:

When the sound of election is no longer heard in the pulpits of churches creedally committed to the truth of election, the situation would appear to warrant an investigation to discover whether the pulpit or the doctrine is at fault. This book is an effort to uncover the reason for this strange silence. There are two parts to the answer. One reason is that Reformed theologians have differed among themselves about election so profoundly that controversy has often deeply disturbed the churches. In reaction, for the sake of peace, there has been a tendency to mute the sound of election in the pulpit. Second, as the truth of God's election was refined more and more by influential Reformed theologians, election became increasingly unpreachable. (p. 6)

It is with the second of these two reasons that Daane's book deals chiefly. And he claims that "the theological features and emphases that rendered election largely unpreachable" originated "in the decretal theology of seventeenth-century Protestant scholasticism." Francis Turretin is presented throughout the book as the epitome of such "Protestant scholasticism." Daane claims that "Reformed decretal theologians generally theologized from a commonly accepted notion of an all-comprehensive divine decree that 'accounts for all that happens in the world.'" He goes on to claim concerning what he calls throughout his book "decretal theology" the following:

All thought that God's eternal purpose in Christ must be defined within the terms of God's all-inclusive decree; the Biblically stated eternal divine purpose in Christ did not, in their thought, decisively determine the nature and purpose of God's decree. What God eternally purposed in Christ was left to be defined in the larger context of another more expansive decree. Whatever disagreements there were among these theologians occurred only within this basic commitment. (p. 7)

The author then sets forth the purpose of his book, as follows:

This book attempts to elucidate the differences between the scholastic view of God's decree and the Biblical view of

God's eternal purpose as decreed in Christ. We shall see how the scholastic version of God's decree governs most of the recent articulate proponents of Reformed theology and how this persistence of decretal theology accounts for the pervasive silence concerning the doctrine of election in Reformed pulpits. Although we shall be looking closely at the theological statements of some recent exponents of seventeenth-century decretal theology who demonstrate that such a doctrine of God's decree cannot be preached, our chief intent is positive, not critical. Our main concern is to demonstrate that God's only decree is the gracious and elective purpose that He in divine freedom purposed in Jesus Christ, and that this decree can be preached because it can be believed.

Daane then goes on to claim for his view the following:

This book projects a view of God's decree understood as an act of His freedom in Jesus Christ. It is a view that differs significantly from the divine decree that scholastic theologians see as formulated as outside of and antecedent to God's purpose in Jesus Christ. The scholastic decree contains and accounts for everything, including sin. The decree of God's purpose in Christ does not account for sin but savingly triumphs over it. (pp. 7, 8)

And while the book "makes no pretense to theological finality," the author claims for it that "it opens a window on a clearer biblical view of election than that offered by decretal theology, a view that can help return election to the pulpit."

The little introduction succeeds in setting forth the sum and substance of Daane's book. It also succeeds in mentioning just about every point on which this reviewer finds himself in disagreement with the author and critical of his book. In Daane's introduction there is probably but one statement with which this reviewer can agree. It is the statement of the author "that I have not probed all the biblical heights and depths of election, nor achieved a theologically inerrant reflection of the Bible's teaching about election." And in the opinion of this reviewer this statement is, to say the least, an understatement. Positively put, Daane has achieved a thoroughly errant view of election, one that is neither Biblical nor Reformed. Moreover, he has produced an unfair and dishonest caricature of what he calls pejoratively "decretal theology." One can recognize in Daane's

book neither the true picture of "decretal theology" in his description thereof, nor the true, biblical and Reformed doctrine of election in Daane's view over against this "decretal theology." To criticize Daane's book in detail would require a book of even greater length than Daane's. But such a book would be largely negative and apologetic, and, in our opinion, not worth writing. In this review we shall try to summarize as clearly as possible some of our main objections to Daane's presentation. We differ, of course, as to Daane's claim concerning the silence of Reformed pulpits on the theme of election. Perhaps what Daane writes on this score is true of his own denomination and of others; by experience, this reviewer can say without qualification that Protestant Reformed pulpits are not silent on this theme. We differ with Daane also as to both reasons which he adduces for this alleged silence of Reformed pulpits. We differ especially with his claim that the Reformed truth of election (and it must be kept in mind that Daane himself recognizes the outstanding Protestant Reformed theologian as having most consistently developed this truth in the manner of which Daane is critical)--we differ with the claim that this Reformed doctrine of election became "increasingly unpreachable." We differ, further, with Daane's claim that all Reformed decretal theologians thought "that God's eternal purpose in Christ must be defined within the terms of God's all-inclusive decree." Either Daane has never understood the theology of Herman Hoeksema, or he is guilty of deliberately misrepresenting it. If this reviewer understands the theology of Herman Hoeksema, he never taught that "what God eternally purposed in Christ was left to be defined in the larger context of another more expansive decree." The contrary is true.

Some of these basic disagreements with Daane we shall touch upon in the course of this review. And although Daane's book is predominantly critical, even in those chapters in which his own view is supposed to be developed, we also purpose to consider the question whether Daane's own view can at all be classified as biblical, Reformed, and preachable.

* * * * *

After a brief chapter on "The Sum And Substance Of The Gospel" Daane turns immediately to his criticism of the Reformed doctrine of election, which he characterizes as "decretal theology" and 'Protestant scholasticism.' As we said, the largest part of Daane's book is devoted to a criticism and a polemic against this "decretal theology." Even in the chapters in which Daane is supposed to develop his own view, he finds it difficult to stick to his subject, and he wanders off repeatedly into renewed criticism of the Reformed doctrine of election.

Now it is of the utmost importance that when one criticizes a view, and especially when one criticizes a view of so important a doctrine as the doctrine of election, and more especially when one criticizes a view which he himself admits to be the traditional view, that is, the view held over a long period of time and by the majority of Reformed theologians, then he must be accurate, fair, and honest in his presentation of the view which he criticizes. For one thing, he must not present a caricature of that view, but the view itself. For another, he ought to be careful to allow the representatives of that view to speak for themselves, and not to present his characterization or his slanted and prejudiced presentation of the views of those representatives. This also implies, of course, that when he quotes others, he should quote them accurately and fully. Still more, when such a critic attempts to portray that which is traditional, that which belongs to the main line of history, that which is a trend, he should be careful to choose and to call attention to that which is genuinely representative, and not merely to some aberrations. If in his critique and his polemic an author fails in these respects, his critique becomes suspect, his reliability is impeached, and his polemic, of course, becomes valueless, due to the fact that it is a polemic against a straw man.

Now it is the claim of this reviewer that Daane's book falls short precisely in the above-mentioned respects. And of this we can produce clear evidence.

Dr. Daane considers the late Herman Hoeksema to be the most consistent representative of "decretal theology." In his criticism of twentieth century representatives of "decretal theology," Daane

refers to Hoeksema more often than to any other theologian. It is but natural that our interest in this connection is chiefly in Daane's presentation and criticism of Hoeksema's theology with respect to election and reprobation. And it is with this theology that we are best acquainted, and therefore also in a position to judge whether Daane presents this theology accurately, fairly, and honestly.

And it is our judgment that if the manner in which Dr. Daane presents the theology of Herman Hoeksema is a sample, then Daane is not to be trusted when he presents the theology of any so-called decretal theologian in his book, whether that be Van Til, Berkhof, Turretin, Beza, or Calvin himself. This reviewer, for one, cannot recognize the theology of Herman Hoeksema and of the Protestant Reformed churches in the picture which Daane draws both by quotation and by direct reference. And although this may seem a heavy charge, we find it difficult to believe that the misrepresentations made by Dr. Daane are mere mistakes and misunderstandings. The misrepresentations are too obvious and Hoeksema's writings are too plain for this to be believed.

Let us check on this.

On page 26 Daane writes as follows:

Again, Hoeksema contends that when God speaks to man, He speaks not so much to man as to Himself. God's Word spoken in Christ is less spoken to man than to Himself. (Here there is a footnote referring to Hoeksema's Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 16-17.) If God spoke to man redemptively in Jesus Christ, God would be responding to a condition lying outside of Himself. Finally, Hoeksema contends that when God loves man, His love is not at bottom a response to the reality of man but to Himself, for in loving man God loves only His own image in man, and thus His love for man is primarily an act self-love.

At the end of the above quotation there is another footnote, which reads as follows:

If any divine responsive action is seen as a conditional action, and if it is rejected on that account, what meaning is left to God's judgment on sin and His wrath against the sinner? Hoeksema replies by eternalizing the wrath of God. In order to do that, divine wrath must be seen as internalized within God, with the result that it is

seen as an attribute of God, apart from any external object of wrath. Such a God is in Himself a God of wrath. What is rejected here is far more than the conditionality found in Arminianism. Conditionality as defined and rejected by decretal theology is an overkill of Arminian theology, an overkill that exacts its price within decretal theology. Cf. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 104-123.

In the above quotation and the two footnotes there are no less than three misrepresentations of Hoeksema's position. The first reference is to Hoeksema's "Introduction To Dogmatics," where he is speaking of the principles of the knowledge of God. But if one consults Hoeksema's own language on the pages referred to, he cannot find any such statement as Daane attributes to Hoeksema. With not a word does Hoeksema say that "God speaks not so much to man as to Himself." With not a word does Hoeksema say, "God's Word spoken in Christ is less spoken to man than to Himself." Hoeksema does indeed emphasize that "we must remember that also in this Word of God ad extra He does not speak in the first place to us, but of Himself and to Himself." But this is by no means the same as Daane's statement concerning Hoeksema's contention in this section. This is the first misrepresentation. The second is Daane's next sentence: "If God spoke to man redemptively in Jesus Christ, God would be responding to a condition lying outside of Himself." Daane leaves the impression as though this is Hoeksema's teaching, and therefore as though Hoeksema does not and cannot teach that God "spoke to man redemptively in Jesus Christ." Nothing could be farther from the truth. Here is the second misrepresentation. But the most serious misrepresentation is that found in the footnote concerning the wrath of God. Here Daane fails to quote Hoeksema at all. One would certainly expect that for such an important point Daane would furnish proof in the form of a direct quotation. But of all that Daane writes in this footnote, and especially of the idea that Hoeksema internalizes God's wrath, and above all of the idea that Hoeksema presents God's wrath as an attribute of God,--of all this Daane offers absolutely no proof. Meanwhile, by his reference to pp. 104-123 of Reformed Dogmatics he leaves the impression that this is indeed Hoeksema's theology. And, of course, the very suggestion that wrath is an

attribute of God, or that God is in Himself a God of wrath is abhorrent on the surface of it. Yet, the alert reader, who checks up on the page references given by Daane will discover that Hoeksema suggests this with not so much as a word, and that by no stretch of the imagination could this even be distilled from what Hoeksema writes in these pages concerning some of God's attributes. This is reprehensible misrepresentation.

Another example. On page 27 Daane writes as follows:

When the Protestant Reformed Churches divided into two denominations in 1957, the issue that produced the split was a crisis of the pulpit. Separation occurred over the legitimacy of saying in the pulpit, "If you believe, God will save you." Hoeksema rejected this formulation because of its conditionality. He saw it as a concession to Arminianism and a surrender to conditionality of God's true sovereignty. Given his position, the crisis would have been theologically the same if the issue had been stated in reverse: "If you do not believe, God will damn you." Either expression was heretical because it endorsed the kind of conditionality Hoeksema rejected.

In this one short paragraph there are at least four mistakes or misrepresentations, any one of which might easily have been avoided. In the first place, it is an error of fact when Daane states that the split in the Protestant Reformed Churches occurred in 1957. It was not 1957, but 1953. This is in itself a minor item; nevertheless it is an indication of Daane's carelessness with the facts, an indication of failure to do simple historical research. I dare say that if Daane had only checked up on some of his own journalistic writings of that time, he might have discovered this error. In the second place, it is simply not true that "the issue that produced the split was a crisis of the pulpit." Daane is here bending the facts to fit his proposition in this chapter that under "decretal theology" there is a gap between election and preaching. It is true, indeed, that the heresy which was condemned by the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1953 was a heresy that was spoken in the pulpit. It is not true, however, that the separation occurred over the legitimacyⁱⁿ as such of saying or not saying something in the pulpit. This is only Daane's unproved claim, made again in his desperate effort to show that

"decretal theology" has no gospel to preach. In the third place, Daane does not quote the statement in question in that controversy, but something entirely different. Daane makes the statement this: "If you believe, God will save you." The statement which was condemned by the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1953 was considerably different. Condemned as literally heretical was a statement which embodied the heresy of a general, conditional promise: "God promises everyone of you that, if you believe, you will be saved." And that there is considerable difference between the two should be plain from the fact that in the course of the controversy it was stated more than once that if a minister said in the pulpit, "I proclaim to all of you that if you believe, you will be saved," this would be perfectly legitimate. Now it is not my purpose at this stage to enter into the difference between the statement which was made and the statement which Daane presents as the quotation on page 27. I only want to point out the misrepresentation. Dr. Daane cannot show with a single fact that Hoeksema ever said in 1953 that the statement which he has placed in quotation marks was seen as "a concession to Arminianism and a surrender to conditionality of God's true sovereignty." And this would not be so serious, were it not for the fact that Daane gave considerable attention to the controversy mentioned at the time that it occurred. Charitably stated, therefore, we may say that Dr. Daane failed to do his research although he had sufficient access to Protestant Reformed literature to be able to do this research rather easily. Charitably stated, we may say that Daane is careless here about his facts, that he is talking "off the top of his head." But even this is both dangerous and unfair when one is making charges as serious as those which Daane here makes. And as a result of the inaccuracy just mentioned Daane makes himself guilty of a fourth one when he draws the conclusion; "Given his position, the crisis would have been theologically the same if the issue had been stated in reverse: 'If you do not believe, God will damn you.' Either expression was heretical because it endorsed the kind of conditionality Hoeksema rejected." From no writings of Herman Hoeksema or of anyone else in the Protestant Reformed Churches can Daane show, directly or by implication, that the statement, "If you do not believe, God will damn you," is considered heretical.

In all this, Dr. Daane is guilty of bending the facts in order to support his own false proposition of a gap between election and preaching. If Daane would make charges of this kind, let him come with objective evidence. It will not do facilely to avoid saying that the gospel is not heard in the Protestant Reformed Churches, the churches that follow Hoeksema's theology, by saying as Daane does that "The gospel is able to break through our theological mutations of it and gain a hearing for itself." This is only an easy way of avoiding the conclusion which Daane for some reason does not want to draw, namely, that the gospel is not heard in churches that follow this "decretal theology." Nor will it do to say as Daane does, and that without an iota of proof, that "Such a gospel can be announced--cooly, objectively, without pathos or human concern or tears--but it cannot be preached with persuasion, with the tears of Jesus and the anguish of Paul for his unbelieving fellow Jews." If Daane had only taken the trouble to consult some examples of Hoeksema's preaching on Romans 9 - 11, he would have discovered that the contrary is true. And shall I remind him that there was a time when he listened to that preaching rather often? Even if he cannot recall that, he could consult Hoeksema's writings.

Here is a third example. In his chapter on "The Single Decree" Daane writes as follows on pp. 60, 61:

What decretal theologians mean by divine sovereignty derives much of its connotation from this view of the decree. Decretal theologians, of course, do speak of God's sovereign freedom. Discussing God's speech to what is outside of himself, Hoeksema says, "It should be emphasized that this is not an act of necessity but of sovereignty, of sovereign freedom"--but then he continues: "determined by His sovereign, eternal counsel." (The reference is again to Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 16, 17.) But what is a "sovereign freedom" that is determined by a "sovereign counsel"? It is no freedom at all. God's freedom is not determined by his counsel; his counsel is an expression of his freedom. Only on this understanding can we assert that God created and redeemed the world, not out of necessity, but in freedom, and that grace is an expression of God's freedom, not a necessary reflex according to which he is merciful to himself.

Now I ask in all seriousness: does Daane consider Hoeksema to have been such a theological ignoramus as to teach what Daane

here claims that Hoeksema teaches? It is, of course, nonsense, complete and utter nonsense, to say that God's "sovereign freedom" is "determined by His sovereign, eternal counsel." It is perfectly obvious that a determined freedom cannot be a sovereign freedom. And it is certainly true, as Daane states, that God's counsel is an expression of God's freedom. But this is exactly Hoeksema's position in the quotation given. And in the light of the fact that the quotation as interpreted by Daane is nonsensical, it should have been plain to Dr. Daane that this was not Hoeksema's meaning at all. His meaning in this brief quotation is that the phrase "determined by His sovereign, eternal counsel" is an appositive to the phrase "of sovereign freedom" and to the phrase "of sovereignty." God's speaking His Word ad extra is an act of sovereignty, that is, an act of sovereign freedom, that is, an act determined by His sovereign, eternal counsel. And that this is the only possible interpretation of this statement of Hoeksema is plain from the negative part of his proposition here, namely, that God's speech ad extra "is not an act of necessity." I ask" is this carelessness on Daane's part? Is it ignorance? Or is it deliberate misrepresentation? Daane may choose.

Another example of such misrepresentation of Hoeksema's theology may be found on page 36. In the context Daane is speaking of the expression in the Conclusion of the Canons, "in the same manner." To this subject we shall return presently. In this connection Daane speaks of his claim that in traditional Reformed theology "the Canons' imbalance between election and reprobation was thus often lost (when Reformed theology gave election and reprobation equal footing, HCH); the logic of reprobation, as we shall see later, triumphed over election." And then Daane goes on to say: "When this happened a demonic element was introduced into some Reformed theologies, as is inevitable when the relation between election and reprobation is taken to be one of mutuality, for such mutuality tears the gospel apart." It is at this point that Daane again refers to Hoeksema's theology, as follows:

An example of this emergence of the demonic can be seen in Hoeksema's theology. According to Hoeksema, God decreed to reveal in Christ his own covenantal life.

Everything else in God's all comprehensive decree is a means to that end. Since Christ and the community of the elect reflect God's inner covenantal life, election at this point in his thought has a priority. Within the pattern of the decree, reprobation also serves the purpose of election, 'as the chaff serves the ripening of the wheat.' Here again election has the priority. But Hoeksema further holds that God had to reject some if he was to elect some. Reprobation was absolutely necessary for the election. 'Rejection exists to realize election: rejection was necessary to bring the elect to the glory which God had ordained for them in His infinite love.' (The brief quotations are from Reformed Dogmatics and De Plaats der Verwerping in de Verkondiging des Evangelies. HCH)

Now if God must damn some in order to elect and bless others, he is not sovereignly free in his grace. But this means that reprobation has really triumphed over election, for reprobation and human damnation are required for a disclosure of the nature of God's covenantal life. God was obliged to reprobate. He could not do otherwise. How forthrightly, and with what confidence, decretal theologians delimit the possibilities of the sovereign God! G. C. Berkouwer finds this "frightening and alarming." It is a clear instance of how scholastic decretal theologians must read alien elements into God.

Now if I may use a term which Daane himself applies to Hoeksema's theology, here we see the emergence of "the demonic" in Daane's treatment of "decretal theology." For, in the first place, if there is any Reformed theologian who does not balance election and reprobation, it is Hoeksema. In fact, this is the very point in the brief quotations which Daane makes in this connection from Hoeksema. Yet, in the context Daane is speaking of an alleged imbalance in the Canons between election and reprobation and an alleged tendency to give election and reprobation equal footing on the part of decretal theologians. But at no point in his theology, and especially in his exposition of election and reprobation, does Hoeksema give election and reprobation equal footing. In the second place, if Daane has ever read Hoeksema's theology, he knows very well--and could learn from both sources from which he quotes--that Hoeksema at no point in his theology posits a necessity of reprobation which is of the nature of an absolute necessity for God, so that God's sovereign

freedom, either in election or reprobation, is denied. And I ask: what nonsense is it to claim that in Hoeksema's theology reprobation has triumphed over election, when at every point in his theology Hoeksema makes reprobation subordinate to election? The difficulty is, of course, that Daane is here aping G. C. Berkhouwer who himself obtained his quotation of Hoeksema at this point second hand. Later, on pp. 137 and 138, Daane claims that he has shown that Hoeksema "made reprobation the precondition of election," something to which, of course, Hoeksema never subscribed.

We could go on and analyze every reference of Daane in this book to the theology of Herman Hoeksema. We would discover that at no point does Daane present this theology sympathetically. But worse, we would discover that at no point does Daane present Hoeksema's theology honestly and fairly. He puts words in Hoeksema's mouth, words to which Hoeksema would never have subscribed. And he does this in order to drive Hoeksema and "decretal theologians" into a corner in which they do not want to stand and in which they never did stand. In other words, when Daane has finished describing decretal theology at various points in his book, the result is not an accurate picture of the position of genuine decretal theology, but a caricature. And this means that in his book Daane does not fight decretal theology, but a straw man.

These few examples of the manner in which Daane misrepresents Hoeksema's theology should caution the reader against accepting uncritically Daane's presentation of other theologians, Daane's presentation of the Canons of Dordrecht, and Daane's presentation of the history of Reformed preaching or of Reformed inability to preach election. At no point in his presentation of Church History in connection with this subject and at no point in his presentation of the views of others, from Calvin to the present, is Daane to be accepted uncritically. John Calvin himself is about the only Reformed theologian whom Daane does not criticize. And yet the very fact that Daane does not correctly present Calvin probably also accounts in part for the fact that Daane does not criticize him.

Now admittedly all of the preceding has more to do with the

method of Daane than with the content of his book, even the negative content. This we freely admit. This, however, we insist is important. Daane claims to present in his book something new and better in comparison with decretal theology. In order to do so, he must first show that decretal theology is defective, and that therefore it must be replaced. But in order to show that it is defective, he must picture true decretal theology, and not rear up a straw man to shoot down. And in order to picture true decretal theology, he must present the teachings of decretal theologians as fairly, as completely, and as sympathetically as possible. In this Daane fails utterly. He himself classes Hoeksema as the most consistent of the decretal theologians. But if his presentation of Hoeksema is a sample of his presentation of Van Til, Berkhof, Turretin, Beza, and Calvin, then this reviewer would advise the reader to go back to the sources rather than trust Daane.

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This brings us to another phase of our criticism. Daane's book is supposed to be in the nature of a solution to a problem. The problem, according to Daane is that election is not preached. The reason for the problem, according to Daane, is that Reformed theologians have an incorrect view of election. And the alleged solution to the problem is Daane's better view of election.

It is but natural that the book, therefore, should begin with the presentation of the problem. This is what Daane does in his chapter on "The Gap Between Election And Preaching."

But the difficulty is that the statement of the problem is faulty. And if the statement of the problem is faulty, the solution will also necessarily be faulty.

How does Daane present the problem?

In his chapter on "The Gap Between Election And Preaching" Daane first gives his attention briefly to Arminian theology, in order to show that "the Arminian doctrine of election is not preachable." I cannot refrain from suggesting that it was at this point in his book that Daane should have seen the obvious solution to the absence of election-preaching from so many Reformed pulpits.

That solution, in the view of this reviewer, lies in the surrender of Reformed churches and Reformed pulpits to Arminian heresy. In his desperate effort to get election back into the pulpit (not into Protestant Reformed pulpits, from which it has never been absent, but into other Reformed pulpits) Daane arrives principally at the same position as that of Arminianism. That is, he denies sovereign reprobation. Thereby he adopts principally the position of Arminianism. But he himself states--and correctly so--that the Arminian doctrine of election is not preachable. And thus it takes Daane some 200 pages to reach a solution which is not a solution, while the obvious solution (forsake Arminianism and get back to the Reformed position on predestination) is ignored.

But let us note how Daane presents the problem of this alleged gap between election and preaching in Reformed pulpits. He writes on p. 19:

But the gap between the Reformed doctrine of election and the Reformed pulpit is much more serious. Not only is election scarcely whispered in most Reformed pulpits, but the Reformed doctrine of election has at times imperiled the very possibility of preaching the gospel. If Arminianism (which is shorthand for a peculiar definition of election) was unable to include election within its preaching of the gospel, Reformed theology (which is shorthand for another definition of election) was at some points in its history theologically unable, because of its view of election, to preach the gospel at all. To this history we shall now turn.

In classical Reformed theology, election does not stand alone. Although Scripture speaks of predestination to life and never, explicitly, of predestination to damnation, election in Reformed thought implies its opposite, reprobation. Election was regarded as selection, a divine choice by which some men were predestined to eternal life, and all other men were regarded as reprobates predestined to eternal damnation. With election, reprobation emerges. This dual aspect was frequently called "double predestination."

The combination of election and reprobation created considerable intellectual difficulties for theologians, as the long history of Christian thought reveals. But for those called to preach the gospel, it created an

even greater practical problem. How could one preach election?

The difficulty here stems not from election, but from reprobation. If all men were elect, the preaching of election would create no problems. One could preach election as he preaches all other Christian truth: by proclaiming it and calling people to believe it. But since some men are reprobates, the elect are not known. And if they cannot be identified from the vantage point of the preacher of the gospel, how can election be preached, even to the elect?

This is the apparent peculiarity of the doctrine of election. Every other Christian doctrine is susceptible to proclamation. None contains an inherent difficulty for the preacher. All can be projected in preaching; all can be proffered as truth that men ought to believe. But it is not so with the doctrine of election. It is true only of the elect, and there is nothing in the act of preaching that makes them identifiable. This is not to say that God's elect people cannot be known. It is only to say--and for the pulpit this is much--that there is nothing in the act of preaching that makes the elect identifiable to the preacher. Election indeed lends itself to lectures and theological reflection, but it appears impossible to preach--except to those identified as elect by some method that preaching itself does not possess.

Daane goes on to claim that reprobation is something that cannot be preached at all, because it does not meet the criterion of being "something in which men are summoned to believe and trust to the saving of their souls." From all of this it is already apparent that the Reformed doctrine of reprobation is going to be the scapegoat on which all the alleged sins of Reformed theology and the Reformed pulpit are heaped, and which is then going to be sent outside the camp. But this is not the point here. The section just quoted rather concisely states Daane's presentation of the problem of election-preaching for the Reformed pulpit.

But this presentation of the problem is entirely faulty and wholly imaginary. It is an unproved claim. Daane claims that since some men are reprobates, the elect are not known. Although this is a strange piece of reasoning, we will let the main proposition stand: the elect are not known. But the next proposition, stated emphatically in the form of a question, is the key

proposition here: "And if they cannot be identified from the vantage point of the preacher of the gospel, how can election be preached, even to the elect?" Now here is a plain case of begging the question. The presupposition of Daane at this point is that in order for election to be preached, the elect must be able to be identified from the vantage point of the preacher of the gospel. Now unless Daane means something entirely different from what he appears to say here, this is abject nonsense. Not only that, but it is a charge which in one form or another has been made by Arminian enemies against Reformed preachers of predestination many times. But why is it necessary for the preacher to be able to identify the elect in order to preach election? This Daane fails to make plain, and this he does not prove. What is indeed necessary is not that the preacher must be able to identify the elect, but that the elect must be able to identify themselves in the light of the preaching. Or rather, what is indeed necessary is that the preaching, in its content, should clearly identify the elect, so that the elect may be able to find themselves, so to speak, in the gospel preached. But this is precisely what is done by the general, or promiscuous, preaching of a particular gospel. That promiscuously preached, particular gospel identifies, marks, points out the elect according to their spiritual names and according to their historical manifestation. And so they recognize themselves and know themselves in the light of the preaching and receive the personal assurance of their election in Christ. But the problem which Daane here poses, or rather, the necessity which Daane here imposes upon the preaching of election is a figment of the imagination and an assumption which he can show neither from Scripture, nor from Reformed theology, nor from history.

It is small wonder that when Daane makes such a faulty presentation of the problem, he also arrives at the solution, and does so by destroying the problem, namely, by getting rid of sovereign reprobation.

Daane then goes on to claim that the Reformed doctrine of election "has at times even imperilled the possibility of preaching the gospel," let alone that it muted "its own sound in the pulpit." In this connection he makes reference to Scottish theologians

of the seventeenth century and to Dutch theologians in the Reformed churches during the eighteenth century. On page 22 and 23 he writes as follows:

During the eighteenth century the same problem arose in the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. Election again challenged the addressability of the gospel to all men. One side in this Dutch controversy contended that the gospel of the good news of salvation could be preached only to men whose lives gave evidence of an operation of divine grace. Only these could safely be regarded as numbered among the elect, and the good news of salvation was for the elect only. Thus identification of the elect became an indispensable condition for proper proclamation of the gospel. A person's election had to be established to the satisfaction of the judgment of others, and established apart from the gospel before his eligibility to hear the good news could be determined. Until the trustees of the gospel were satisfied that he was elect, it was not permissible for them to proclaim and for him to hear and believe that the gospel was good news for him. Curiously, this identification of a hearer as elect before he heard the gospel and without aid from it was not regarded as something forbidden by the warning against "vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High" (Canons of Dordt, I, 14).

On the other side of the controversy were those who recognized this position as theologically absurd and religiously impossible. They contended that the nature of the gospel is such that it can and must be preached as the good news of salvation to all men. It is interesting--and theologically significant--that the theologians on this side of the controversy were dubbed "new lights," that is, liberal theologians bringing a new, strange light to fall upon the relation of election and preaching. And the theologians who opposed these "new lights" and muted preaching in the name of election by making identification of the elect an indispensable condition for the addressability of the gospel were designated as "old lights," that is, conservative theologians faithful and loyal to the Reformed tradition.

Now it is worthy of careful attention that throughout this little excursion into what might be called a history of preaching in Reformed churches there is absolutely no mention of the names of theologians or preachers, nor any mention of specific churches, nor any reference to sources of information. Hence, it is impossible to check the accuracy of what Daane here relates; and it is impossible to determine from the information given by Daane whether or not he

is speaking of theologians and preachers who had a place in the mainstream of Reformed theology and the Reformed churches, or whether he is writing here of off-shoots and aberrations. This reviewer does not believe, and will not believe unless definite proof is furnished, that the picture drawn by Daane of this kind of gap between election and preaching is a picture of a phenomenon in the mainstream of Reformed theology and in the main current of the preaching of Reformed churches. That there have been and still are Hyper-Calvinists similar to those described (though not named Hyper-Calvinists by Daane) is undoubtedly a fact. But that they do not stand in the mainstream of Reformed theology and preaching is also a fact. And that the problem represented in the controversy raised by their kind of preaching is not a problem which inheres in so-called decretal theology as such is also a fact.

But all this is again illustrative of the extremes to which James Daane will go in his unjustified and unsuccessful attempt to place so-called decretal theology in a bad light, in order presumably to make room for his own proposed solution of a problem which after all is the figment of his own imagination. We repeat that we do not deny that the truth of election (and reprobation) has been muted in many Reformed pulpits. Dr. Daane could have discovered that the history of these churches shows (and this includes his own Christian Reformed denomination) that the point at which election began no longer to be heard from the pulpit was that point in history when Reformed churches began to compromise and to depart from decretal theology. If Daane's study of the gap between election and preaching had concentrated on this facet, it would have been far more profitable, and it might have resulted in a better solution being presented in this book.

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The next question we consider is this: what is Daane's attitude toward the Canons of Dordrecht? There are especially two passages in this book in which Daane speaks rather at length concerning the teaching of the Canons. We refer, first of all, to Daane's attempt to explain Canons I, 6, particularly the well known statement, "That some receive the gift of faith and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree." Daane is here

faced by the fact that the Canons here explicitly teach a single decree of election and reprobation, a doctrine which Daane abhors. He tries desperately to explain away the plain teachings of the Canons at this point by claiming that what the Canons say may not be interpreted in terms of "the single decree of a later decretal theology." He claims that the single decree of the Canons is not the same as the single decree of later Reformed theology. And thus he makes room for himself to be in somewhat grudging agreement with Canons I, 6. Possibly thinking that the best defense is a good offense, he even tries to put the onus of being in disagreement with the Canons at this point on "latter-day decretal theologians," who "read (the Canons) in terms of a post-Dort scholasticism." As might be expected, Daane, as he has frequently done in the past, and following Berkhouwer, appeals to the "in eodem modo" which occurs in the Conclusion of the Canons. We have been over this subject before, as Daane also knows. And we shall not repeat in detail what we have pointed out before. Our criticisms are two-fold: 1) The method of interpreting the Canons themselves in the light of a statement in the Conclusion is utterly faulty. The proper method would be to interpret the statement in the Conclusion in the light of the body of the Canons. Daane's method is tantamount to letting the tail wag the dog. 2) At this point and throughout the book Daane ranges far afield from the actual statement in the Conclusion of the Canons. Repeatedly in his book Daane writes as though the Canons simply reject in general the teaching that God elects and reprobates in the same manner. But this is by no means the position taken in the Conclusion. The statement made there is much more careful and much more specific. We must remember that in this section of the Conclusion there is a quotation of a whole series of false and slanderous charges made by the enemy against the doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning predestination. The Synod of Dordrecht in effect not only casts these charges far away and detests them, but also points out that those who make these charges "have violated all truth, equity, and charity, in wishing to persuade the public" against the doctrine of the Reformed churches. Now what specifically was that false charge in which the phrase "in the same manner" appears? Was it merely the

general statement, without any limitation, that God elects and reprobates in the same manner? By no means! Here is the statement: "That in the same manner in which the election is the fountain and the cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety." Operating on the principle that the fountain and that which flows from the fountain are morally identified, and proceeding from the fact that the fathers call election not only the cause, but the fountain and cause of faith and good works, and proceeding from the fact that the fathers teach a sovereign reprobation, the enemy slandered the Reformed fathers by saying that they taught that reprobation is the fountain of unbelief and impiety, even as election is the cause in the sense that it is the fountain of faith and good works. In other words, the enemy was bringing the old slander that the Reformed doctrine of reprobation makes God an evil God, the author of sin. For the fountain and that which flows from the fountain are morally identified. If what flows from the fountain is evil and corrupt, then the fountain is evil and corrupt. The only thing, therefore, which the fathers cast far from them in the Conclusion is the same thing which they cast far from them in Canons I, 15, namely the idea that God could possibly be the author of sin. But it is important to note that this kind of charge would not even be brought against the kind of reprobation which Daane wants to teach. It would only be brought against the kind of reprobation taught by the Canons and by decretal theologians, namely, a sovereign reprobation, that is, a reprobation according to which God is indeed the sovereign cause of unbelief and impiety without being the author of sin. This interpretation will stand the test of the Canons themselves. It will stand the test of the record of the Synod of Dordt, in which the opinions of the delegates appear in detail. And it is high time that Daane stops making this illegitimate use of an inaccurately cited phrase in order to corrupt the teachings of the Canons. There is a further inaccuracy in what Daane states in this connection. On page 41 he writes: "The Canons explicitly reject the idea that God is in any sense the cause of sin and unbelief." This Daane cannot possibly show. What the Canons explicitly reject is the idea that the cause of sin and unbelief in the sense of guilt, or blame, is in any wise in God.

This is the teaching of Canons I, 5.

However, when Daane returns to this subject of the Canons in his next chapter, he faces again the fact that the Canons explicitly teach a single decree of election and reprobation. And while on pp. 40 and 41 he seems to try to justify the Canons and to find a home for himself under the Canons, on page 46 it would appear that his wrath against the doctrine of a single decree cannot be restrained even when it comes to the Canons. For while he must concede that the Canons very pointedly teach that there is a single decree of God, he writes:

Whether it is possible to hold to a single decree that includes both election and reprobation and to hold at the same time that God does not elect and reprobate "in the same manner" is a rhetorical question. If God elects in one manner and rejects in another, then it is impossible to attach any actual meaning to the singularity of the divine decree. It seems clear that the rejection of the "in the same manner" introduces a distinction into the concept of singularity that makes the quality of singularity highly problematic. So while the insistence on a single as opposed to a multiple decree was useful in debate with the Arminians, it also undermines the Canons' rejection of the "in the same manner."

There are other points in the book at which Daane's hostility against the Canons shows only too clearly. For example, Daane does not like the fact that the Canons speak of the "number of the elect." (p. 137) And he does not like the fact that the Canons teach limited atonement, although he claims that they do not teach limited atonement, and certainly overlooks the Rejection of Errors when he mistakenly claims that the Canons "cite no Scripture passages to prove 'limited atonement.'"

But the deepest disagreement of Dr. Daane with the Canons is on the score of the doctrine of reprobation. This lies at the root of everything. In fact it is this denial of sovereign reprobation which is in a sense the key to all that Daane writes in this book.

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As far as the positive section of this book is concerned, we may be very brief. In the main, although even in this positive

section Daane cannot refrain from inveighing against decretal theology, this positive section consists of a chapter on "The Election of Israel," "The Election of Jesus Christ," "The Election of the Church," "The Freedom of God and the Logic of Election," "Election and Preaching." Concerning this section of the book we state the following:

1. After all Daane's criticism of Reformed theology that has held the field for centuries, one would expect that in the positive part of his book he would develop a careful and thoroughgoing view to replace what he so sharply criticizes and rejects. Instead, he produces something very scant and very vague.
2. Before Daane expects anyone to believe what he writes concerning the election of Israel (a national election) he ought at least to favor his readers with a thoroughgoing and pertinent explanation of Romans 9 - 11, rather than give this classic passage (and in fact, the whole subject) the once-over-lightly.
3. Specifically, in his treatment of the election of Israel Daane fails to reckon with the fact that election and reprobation cut right across the generations of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. He fails, too, to reckon with the fact that from the outset the reference in Romans 9 is to the election and rejection of individuals, of persons. If Daane would address himself directly to the exposition of the text in this classic passage, he would be compelled to give up his notion of a national election of Israel. He would also be compelled to give up his denial of reprobation, which begins to put in its appearance very plainly in this chapter, as, for example, in the following statements: "The unique and peculiar election of Jesus Christ itself excluded no man or family or tribe or nation in the world. It only excluded that sinful pride by which any man or family or tribe or nation would make itself the Elect of God, the man (or family, tribe, or nation) of destiny, the one through which God would deal with all other men." (pp. 107, 108)
4. Undoubtedly, from a formal point of view, Daane hits upon a key idea when he speaks of the election of Jesus Christ. But the correctness of Daane's emphasis on Christ's election is only formal. Daane completely spoils this emphasis by pouring into this idea of the election of Jesus Christ a content foreign to Reformed

theology, and one, we may add, with strong overtones of Barthianism. If Daane would pay as much attention to Herman Hoeksema's emphasis on the election of Christ (as, for example in his Christology and in his Exposition of Colossians 1: 14 ff.) as he does to Herman Hoeksema's allegedly faulty decretal theology, he might have learned something; and he certainly would have kept many untrue characterizations of Hoeksema's decretal theology in his pen. 5. When Daane finally gets around to the subject of election and preaching, he gets rid of the problem of which his book was supposed to present the solution by an explicit denial of all that has ever been considered Reformed with respect to the doctrine of reprobation (p. 200): "For Christ is the truth of election, the reason that some men are saved, but not the reason that some are not. This means that any doctrine of reprobation is illegitimate by Biblical standards except that which Biblical teaching sanctions; that he who rejects God, God rejects." Herewith, whether he will admit it or not, Daane has also lost the Reformed doctrine of election--if, in fact, he had anything left of it after his strange and speculative description of a historical decree.

Finally, after having poured into election and reprobation, into sovereignty and eternity, as well as into the election of Christ, a content foreign to the Reformed faith and to the Scriptures, Daane gets around to answering the question whether individual, or personal, election can be preached, by, in effect, saying, "Yes, by preaching Christ." Really now, does it require more than 200 pages of turning all of Reformed theology upside down and of pouring strange contents into Biblical and Reformed terms, in order to arrive at the simple conclusion that the assurance of election can only be found in Jesus Christ?

Personally, I prefer the Reformed, Scriptural, clear, and far more explicit answer of our Canons of Dordrecht.